

THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION - JULY
1908 TO APRIL 1909; ITS IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

by

Tachat Ramavarma Ravindranathan

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Allan Cunningham
Senior Supervisor

William Cleveland
Examining Committee

Hanna Kassis
Examining Committee

Name: Tachat Ramavarma Ravindranathan

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: The Young Turk Revolution - July 1908 to April 1909:
Its Immediate Effects

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ABSTRACT

It is almost half a century since the Ottoman Empire was turned into a republic as a consequence of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. That the Young Turks should seek to modernize an archaic state was understandable and highly commended, but their dismissal of the Caliph himself was the most revolutionary act. However, the difficulties of dismantling a theocracy have only come to light since 1908, and the following study offers relatively little on the deposition of Abdulhamid II as no one at the time foresaw this possibility much before it actually happened, and even less did anyone think of its consequences. The great motive force in the revolution was the Committee of Union and Progress, a political organization dominated by the army officers and the progenitor of modern Turkish Republic. If the C.U.P. retained much of its shadowy character in this thesis that is because there is still very great confusion as to the early membership and activities of the Party and the Committee. Consequently, it is a good deal easier to say what happened than to say who was responsible for the revolution. As the thesis title indicates, the emphasis of this study is upon the reactions, at home and abroad, to a series of half-understood events which nevertheless transformed an ancient Empire. Because this upheaval took place in 1908-1909 it produced anxious reactions at the courts

of the great powers and the Balkan capitals. Succeeding chapters deal with one or the other of these questions, and the thesis culminates in the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid, an event which by no means was conclusive in the summer of 1908. Students of the origins of the First World War may well decide that the revolution of 1908, which took the new Turkey on to the German side, was the very event which released all the accumulated tensions of the Balkan Peninsula. If the thesis reveals to the reader some of this significance, and if it further reveals the degree of research still remain to be done, it will have served a useful purpose.

PREFACE

This study is an effort to interpret a crucial phase of modern Turkish history, namely, the chaotic but hopeful period between July 1908 and April 1909. During these nine months, the ill-fated constitution of 1876 was revived and the period ended in the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid. The period signified the end of one epoch and the beginning of another, when foreign and domestic observers awaited anxiously to find out whether Turkey was finally ready to enter the modern world as a constitutional state. Little work has been done on this critical period so far by other historians and, hence, the reason for selecting the present topic for study.

In the wake of the Young Turk Revolution, a number of books and articles were published, mainly by journalists and travellers. A large proportion of these books were of a colourful nature, paying more attention to the aura and mystique of the East, with little analysis or interpretation of the revolution. Certainly, a number of books, such as McCullough's The Fall of Abdulhamid, and Ramsay's Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey, published before World War I, are of great significance and these are attempts to understand the events of 1908-1909, despite the fact that they are more in the nature of personal observations and not definitive history. Also by piecing together all the scattered articles that were published

immediately after the revolution, a diligent historian may be able to draw a realistic picture of the Young Turk Revolution. In the English speaking world, Ernest Ramsaur's The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908 established a new landmark in the study of the Young Turk movement. The book published in 1957, stopped with the granting of the Constitution in July, 1908 and this was followed, in 1962, by Serif Mardin's Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, a highly illuminating work on the intellectual origins of the Young Turk movement. Feroz Ahmad, in his study, The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914, has made a valiant effort to fill the gap by taking up the story from where Ramsaur had left off. In the present study, I have attempted to analyse and interpret the basic issues and problems that confronted the new regime after Abdulhamid restored the Constitution on July 24, 1908. As a result, it was felt necessary to include a chapter each on the Bulgarian declaration of independence and the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, both of which were of great importance to Turkey in 1908-9 as they threatened the very existence of the Ottoman Empire. The former incident is discussed scantily in most historical studies and the latter always in its wider European perspective. Hence, it was found essential to focus the two issues in their Turkish context, thus filling the gap left by Ahmad and others, no doubt due to the very nature of their studies.

I have not dealt with the question of Crete as it would have posed innumerable problems and distorted the structure of the thesis. In the same fateful week of October 1908, when Bulgaria declared independence and Austria seized Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Cretans voted for union with the mainland Greeks and set up a provisional government to assume authority in the name of King George. But no formal recognition was given by the powers or Turkey and the question was not resolved before 1912. Consequently, it is difficult to fit the question into the July 1908-April 1909 framework and still expect a satisfactory interpretation of the dispute, whereas the Bulgarian and Bosnian questions were resolved in early 1909. Moreover, no realistic explanation of the Cretan dispute is possible without an adequate discussion of the Greek war of independence of 1829 and all the subsequent problems in Turko-Greek relations. This is beyond the scope of the present study.

As the outcome of the Young Turk Revolution was first decided in the towns of Macedonia and then the capital, Salonica and Constantinople initially played a far greater role than the rest of the Empire put together. Hence, this study, unavoidably, is biased in favour of developments in the Balkans and the capital. This in no way implies that the revolution did not have its wider repercussions in Anatolia and the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. In Chapter VI, an effort has been made to describe in some detail the

effects of the revolution in those areas. Nonetheless, considerable difficulties were encountered in dealing with the impact of the revolution in Anatolia and the Arab lands, primarily because of the paucity of material and a general lack of adequate information. Consequently, the demarcation of power in the Asiatic provinces between the C.U.P. and the Porte is never clear and the diplomatic despatches, more often than not, throw little light on the subject. The issue is further confounded by the absence of secondary sources dealing with the impact of the revolution in those areas.

In completing Chapter VI, my own ignorance of Turkish and Arabic contributed to the difficulties as I was largely dependent on the British Foreign Office documents for information.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION

One historian has suggested that the Young Turk movement primarily took place in three waves!¹ The first wave of Young Turks, or Young Ottomans as they are known today, was set in motion in the 1860's when a number of prominent Ottomen intellectuals flocked into European capitals to escape from the clutches of a reactionary bureaucracy. Individuals such as Ibrahim Shinasi,* Ziya Bey,** Namik Kemal,*** among others, had fallen out of favour with the bureaucracy they once served

1. Cunningham, Allan. The Wrong Horse? - A Study of Anglo-Turkish Relations before the First World War. St. Antony's Papers, 1965, November 17, Middle Eastern Affairs, Number 4, Passim.

* Ibrahim Shinasi (1824-1871), along with Ziya Bey and Namik Kemal, is one of the pioneers of the new literary movement of 19th century Turkey. Shinasi was sent to France during the period of reform in the Ottoman Empire in 1840's and, while a student in Paris, he participated in the revolution of 1848. During his French sojourn, Shinasi is said to have made the acquaintance of Lamartine as he was to be much influenced in later life by the writings of the French poet. After his return to Turkey, he joined the Civil Service as a member of the newly created Council of Education. In the meanwhile, he also did a substantial amount of translation work from French prose and poetry. In 1854, Shinasi was dismissed from his job because of his allegedly western mannerisms. For instance, he offended a number of his colleagues by shaving his beard, an unusual practice in the Ottoman Empire of the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1858, he was once again reinstated in his old position in the Council of Education. For the next thirteen years, until his death in 1871, Shinasi was mainly occupied with literature and journalism - "a new profession and a new form of occupation" in Turkey. In 1862, he founded a journal Tasvir-i Efkar, which became popular among the intelligentsia in Constantinople. Three years later, afraid of the bureaucracy's wrath for his mild criticism of the government, Shinasi fled to Paris and he did not return to Turkey till 1869. By this time, Shinasi had come to the position that any rapid transitions in the Empire were bound to fail because of the prevailing mass illiteracy. Consequently, he came to the conclusion that the first pre-requisite in building a modern State was to raise the level of mass literacy.

Shinasi was no liberal in the western sense of the word. He only criticised the worst aspects of Turkish life. Otherwise his writings contained no radical criticisms of the existing Ottoman structure. His political philosophy is expressed in a poem that he wrote in appreciation of Reshid Pasha's (a leading Turkish statesman) reform efforts, shortly after his return to Turkey from France:

"Life, property and honour are the candles
of our hearts,
Your justice is a lantern to guard us from
the blast of oppression.
You have made us free, who were slaves to
tyranny,
Bound as if in chains by our own ignorance.
Your law is an act of manumission for men,
Your law informs the Sultan of his limits."

**

Ziya Bey (1825-1880), the second of the literary pioneers, was born the son of a clerk in the Galata customs house and he joined the government service at the age of seventeen. In 1854, he became secretary to Sultan Abdulmecid, but a few years later, due to palace intrigues, he lost his job. It was during his years in the palace that he mastered the French language, which he subsequently used to translate the works of Moliere and Rousseau

into Turkish. After his dismissal from the palace, he held various minor posts and participated, along with Namik Kemal and others, in the discussion groups, which became the nucleus of all discontented intellectuals in the capital. In 1867, faced with the prospect of banishment from Constantinople, he fled to Paris with a number of his associates. He spent the next five years abroad, making his home first in Paris, and then in London and Geneva. During these years in exile, Ziya wrote some scathing articles directed at the Turkish government. In 1872, he was given permission by the authorities to return to Turkey and, under the new constitutional government in 1876, he was appointed the Governor of Syria.

Ziya Bey, despite his exposure to western ideas and literature, was a conservative in his cultural and religious outlook. Nonetheless, he was an ardent spokesman for the cause of constitutionalism in Turkey. Wrote Ziya:

"Now condescend to look at the states of this continent of Europe. Apart from Russia, does arbitrary government remain anywhere? And is not even Russia gradually trying to immitate the systems of government of the other European states? Are the Emperors of France and Austria, the Kings of Italy and Prussia, the Queen of England less than the Russian in might and majesty?-----Since the lofty Dynasty [the Ottoman Empire] is also considered one of the family of Europe, it is not within the bounds of possibility for us to remain in this way at variance with all the world."

*** Namik Kemal (1840-1888), the last of the gifted trio, unlike Shinasi and Ziya, was born to an aristocratic family. Like Ziya, at the age of seventeen, he joined the government service, working for the translation office of the Porte - "Turkey's open window to the west." He worked with Shinasi in Tasvir-i Efkâr and, after Shinasi's flight to Europe, he took over the editorship of the journal himself. In the beginning Namik Kemal's contributions were limited to translations, but soon he began to write articles on

external issues such as the Polish insurrections of 1863-64 and the American Civil War. His essays and articles on Turkish affairs brought him into conflict with the authorities and he fled to Europe in 1867. Kemal spent the next four years in London, Paris and Vienna where he wrote in various opposition journals. He also did a number of translations from French to Turkish. He returned to Turkey in 1871 and, two years later, wrote his famous play Vatan Yahut Silistre (Fatherland or Silistria), which glorified the Turkish defense of the fortress of Silistria against the Russians during the Crimean war. It appealed to all Ottomans, not simply the Turks, to fight for the greatness of their fatherland. This feeling of national identity and a sense of belonging, however remote, was something entirely new in Turkish life. Suspicious of Kemal and the success of his play, the authorities deported him to Cyprus and he emerged from there only in 1876, after the proclamation of the ill-fated constitution. He soon fell foul of the new Sultan Abdulhamid and spent the rest of his days in exile in one part of the Empire or the other.

In subsequent pages, Shinasi, Ziya and Kemal have been labelled the representatives of the liberal wing of Ottoman society. The very fact that they and their associates were the only ones who wanted to put a stop to the Sultan's absolutism through constitutional restraints made them the most liberal element in Turkey. But this in no way implies that they were liberals or radicals in the western sense of the word. Compared to their European contemporaries - Bakunin, Mazzini or Marx - Ziya, Kemal and others were conservative in their outlook.

See Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, London, 1966, Chapter V, Serif Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, Princeton, 1962, Chapters VIII, X and XI.

dutifully as patriotic Ottoman subjects.² This wave was followed by a second, which was a reaction to Hamidian despotism and it reached significant proportions by the 1890's. The third wave consisted of the men who actually carried out the revolution of 1908.³ Unlike the two previous waves, the first of which dissipated itself in philosophical and political abstractions, and the second of which devoted as much time to internal struggles as feuding with the Sultan, the men of the third wave were able to consolidate as a movement, and as they were not in exile, they were able, when the crucial opportunity came, to capitalize on this internal strength and expedite a successful revolution. This chapter, after a brief discussion of the first wave, will primarily concern itself with the second wave of dissenters, without which it will not be possible to understand the significance of the latter group in the Young Turk Revolution. As the thesis, in large measure, is about the third wave of dissenters (i.e. the men who actually carried out the revolution), their role and importance in the revolution will become clearer in subsequent chapters.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

The Young Ottomans, i.e., the first wave of dissenters, derived their inheritance from the Turkish Reform Movement of 1826-1876, known as the Tanzimat. Many of the prominent Young Ottomans of 1860's and 1870's had, earlier in their career, participated in this reform movement. It was only after the realization that the Tanzimat, instead of bringing about much needed reforms in the Empire, was drifting more and more towards bureaucratization and corruption, that they began to raise their voice in dissent. Consequently, no discussion of the origins of the Young Turk Revolution will be complete without a few words on the broad aims and achievements of the Tanzimat.

With the massacre of the Janissaries, the "central repository" of military power in Turkey for nearly three centuries, in 1826, Sultan Mahmud II officially inaugurated the era of the Tanzimat. During the next thirteen years of his reign, until his death in 1839, the Sultan established military academies, made attempts to introduce advanced techniques of education into these institutions and encouraged the founding of newspapers. During his reign, he also sent students abroad from the schools of engineering, medicine and military science, which he had helped establish himself. Mahmud further instituted the tradition of sending more gifted administrators of his government as officers and ambassadors to foreign countries. Every one of the reforming leaders of

the next half a century following 1826 had, at one time or the other, served in a foreign legation. For instance, the three architects of the Tanzimat, Reshid Pasha, Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha had all served in foreign legations.⁴ Reshid was attached to the Turkish embassy in Paris in 1834, Ali was in Vienna in 1836 and Fuad served in London in 1840.⁵ They were influenced by the political, economic and other institutions of the west and, when they returned to Turkey, took back vivid memories with them. Hence, when Mahmud died in 1839, the work of reform had already begun in the Ottoman Empire and this paved the way for the famous reforms edicts of 1839 and 1856. The edicts were nothing less than the proclamation of intent to reform the Ottoman Empire into a modern state. The Imperial Rescript or Hatt-i Humayun of 1839, more widely known as the Hatt-i Serif of Gulhane, promulgated under the influence of the outstanding Minister of Foreign Affairs, Reshid Pasha, guaranteed, among others, the security of life, honour and property of all Ottoman subjects.⁶ It promised the establishment of a regular system of conscription with the reduction of service from lifetime to four or five years. The decree orgained public trials,

4. Lewis, Bernard, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, London, 1966, p. 87.

5. Ibid.

6. Vucinich, Wayne, The Ottoman Empire: Its Record and Legacy, New York, 1965, p. 160.

according to regulations, before convicting offenders of law in both civil and criminal cases.⁷ It also promised the abolition of tax-farming and bribery.⁸ The most extraordinary promise of the Hatt-i Serif of Gulhane was the affirmation "these imperial concessions are extended to all our subjects of whatever sect or religion they may be. They shall enjoy them without exception."⁹ Thus the reformers hoped to create the concept of State and citizenship among the Ottoman peoples, increasingly in a secularized western pattern. It was also the hope of the reformers, because of their failure to recognize the full implication of growing nationalism in the Balkans, that equal protection under the law would increase the loyalty of the subject races of the Empire and would thus help diminish the separatist tendencies.

The Hatt-i Humayun of 1856 was an extension of the edict of 1839, but far wider in scope in comparison to the Gulhane decree. The pledges of 1856 promised the abolition of tax-farming and bribery as in 1839. The equal liability of Muslims and non-Muslims to military service was repeated. The other stipulations of the decrees of 1856 went beyond the promises

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., pp. 160, 161.

9. Ibid., p. 161.

of 1839. They included, among others, the strict observance of annual budgets, establishment of banks, the codification of commercial and penal law and the establishment of mixed courts for Christians and Muslims.¹⁰ The question of equality received substantially more emphasis in 1856. As mentioned earlier, Muslims and non-Muslims were to be equal in matters of military service as well as in the administration of justice, in taxation, in admission to civil and military schools, in public employment and in social respect. In the preamble of the Hatt-i Humayun of 1856, the concept of patriotism as the bond among all the subjects of the Empire was emphasized more vigorously. It also assured that provincial and communal councils were to be reconstituted to ensure the fair choice of Muslim and non-Muslim delegates and according to them the freedom of discussion in the councils. A Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances was to include representatives of the non-Muslim millets* and the millet structure itself was to be recast, so that the lay clergy also would have a say in the working of its affairs. The biggest difference between the edict of 1856 and 1839 was that, in the former instance, it did not spare a word on the sacred law, the Koran, or the ancient laws and glories

10. Ibid., pp. 162, 163.

* In the Ottoman Empire the word "millet" denoted the various organized and legally recognized religious communities, such as the Greek Christians, the Armenian Christians, the Jews and others. Muslims too belonged to a millet.

of the Empire and to that extent the entire decree looked ahead and not backwards.)

Undoubtedly many of the proposed reforms of the Tanzimat never succeeded in seeing the light of day. According to one historian "the Tanzimat stopped at the doorstep of the Sublime Porte."¹¹ Such statements are indeed fallacious and more recent scholarship has revealed some of the lasting features of the 1826-1876 reforms. To quote an eminent Tanzimat historian, Roderic Davison:

"Though like all governments the Porte was more successful in making plans than in putting them into effect, something had been accomplished. Administration was a little more efficient. The organs both of central and of provincial government were better adapted to the demands of the age, though good men to fill the offices were still in short supply. Justice was a little better. The westernized codes were enforced in part. Where in 1839 the emphasis was primarily on security of life and property, enough had been achieved in this regard so that by 1876 the emphasis was on equality. The educational system was improved. An active press had developed, partly with government encouragement and partly despite government. The non-Muslim millets were better administered despite the many flaws still present. The representative principle had become established in government, both local and national. The Constitution of 1876 - developing out of the Tanzimat decrees since 1839, the vilayet and millet reforms, and the New Ottoman Program - was the culmination of the reform movements. Given the temper of the times, and the psychological resistance to change, the achievement was considerable. It by no means measured up to the standards set by the

11. Lewis, Geoffrey, Turkey, New York, 1965, p. 38.

reform decrees themselves, but perhaps this is a false standard. It is as fair or as unfair to compare Ottoman performance to promise as it is to compare the performance of elected western governments to their campaign platforms. The important fact is that the tone of public life had by 1876 changed perceptibly. The Ottoman Empire was now irrevocably committed to the path of modernization and westernization. Some progress had been made. The creeping fact was more significant than the sweeping promise."¹²

[It was within the framework of the Tanzimat that the first criticisms of the government started appearing in Turkey. They found guarded expressions in the newspapers and literary journals of the 1860's, guided and inspired by prominent members of the first wave of dissenters (Young Ottomans) such as Ziya Bey and Namik Kemal.] [In their attempts at reform, the Young Ottomans came into frequent conflict with the entrenched bureaucracy. Finally, unable to convince the bureaucracy of the merits of representative government, they found no recourse other than to seek sanctuary in European capitals.] In Europe they founded two influential newspapers, Muhbir (Informer) and Hurriyet (Freedom), which became popular among the intelligentsia in Constantinople. During the years they spent abroad from 1867-1871, theirs became the only voice of open dissent against the policies of the Empire. It is true that these clandestine publications drew only a limited audience, because

12. Davison, Roderic, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876, Princeton, 1963, pp. 406, 407.

of the comparatively low educational levels and the difficulties of smuggling the newspapers into the country; nonetheless, they had an impact on various segments of the bureaucracy.

The years between 1871 and 1875 were plagued by economic disasters among large sections of the population. The Empire passed through a series of droughts, crop failures and other natural disasters. The condition of the Turkish peasant was usually worse than that of the Balkan Christian peasant. This was increased by the governments' policy of conscripting half-starved Anatolian peasantry to keep the Balkan rebels in check. To add insult to injury, Sultan Abdulaziz and his ministers borrowed and spent money recklessly and, as a result, in 1875, the finances of the Empire broke down with catastrophic effects on her credit rating in Europe.¹³ Slowly it began to dawn on a good number of people that conditions could not go on forever in such a disorderly fashion. With Christian revolts in the Balkans, European diplomatic intervention and general economic chaos, by mid-1876, most of the differing groups in the Empire had come to recognize the necessity of getting rid of Sultan Abdulaziz. The divergent groups included civil officials, military leaders and even sections of the conservative ulema. Finally, their combined efforts resulted in the coup

13.. Devereux, Robert, The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament, Baltimore, 1963, p. 25.

d'état of May 30, 1876. The backbone of the whole struggle was Midhat Pasha, an important administrator and statesman of the Tanzimat era. Abdulaziz was succeeded by Murad V, who was considered a constitutionalist and, hence, favoured by the liberals. Unfortunately a series of misfortunes occurred in the personal life of the Sultan and finally he had to be proclaimed mad and deposed.¹⁴ Midhat and his friends approached Murad's younger brother, Abdulhamid, and the latter promised them that he would promulgate a constitution without delay and that he would consult his advisers before taking governmental action. Abdulhamid also promised that he would appoint as palace secretaries individuals such as Ziya Bey and Namik Kemal in order to protect liberal interests from palace intrigues.¹⁵

It is not possible, in this short chapter, to go into the details of the first constitutional movement in Turkey. Suffice it to say that, immediately after his accession to the throne in August 1876, the Sultan started to demonstrate an independent frame of mind. With utter disregard of his earlier promises to Midhat Pasha, he appointed his own men to palace positions, thus conveniently leaving out Ziya, Namik and other liberals. When he proclaimed the Hat, announcing the constitution to the people,

14. Lewis, Emergence, pp. 158, 159.

15. Devereaux, p. 42.

On September 10, 1876, Abdulhamid reduced the specific programmes of Midhat to generalities.¹⁶ Instead of clarifying the issues of constitutionalism, he talked of the necessities of observing the religious law. Also, from the beginning of his reign, the Sultan did his best to undermine Midhat's position. He was amply rewarded in these efforts against Midhat by the inveterate attacks on the latter's policies by both the conservative and liberal factions. The conservatives disliked Midhat's reformist tendencies and the latter led by Namik Kemal and Ziya Bey found his measures entirely inadequate.* The constitution was officially proclaimed on December 23, 1876 and the Sultan, despite his hatred, appointed Midhat Pasha as the new Grand Vizier. The appointment was conveniently timed to coincide with an ambassador's conference to be convened in Constantinople to discuss the crisis in the Balkans and, since Midhat's prestige was very high in Europe, through this new arrangement, Abdulhamid hoped to create a good impression among the powers.] The conference lasted till the end of January and, on February 5, 1877, Midhat was fired as the Grand Vizier. His

16. Midhat, Ali Haydar. The Life of Midhat Pasha, London, 1903, pp. 106-112.

* In his eagerness to obtain a constitution at any cost, Midhat had conceded a lot to the Sultan. Article 4 of the Constitution, for one thing, had declared that the Sultan was not responsible for his actions to the parliament. This in effect meant that he did not have to abide by the Constitution. Also, there was a provision in the Constitution (Article 113) that anyone deemed dangerous by the police could be exiled and the Sultan was given control of the police department. See Devereux, The First Ottoman Constitutional Period, pp. 63-66.

term in office lasted slightly over a month. In the process, a number of Midhat's liberal opponents found themselves in exile in remote parts of the Empire.

The Constitution itself lasted slightly longer. The first Ottoman Parliament met on March 19, 1877 and it constituted a senate of twenty-five nominated officials and a chamber of 120 "elected" deputies. The deputies were elected under official pressure and by procedures that were in conflict with the new Constitution.* Yet, it gave the puppet parliament a veneer of legality and popular support. Abdulhamid bided his time, waiting for the opportune moment, to dissolve parliament. The Sultan's task was made easier by the Russian war, which had begun in April 1877 and ended with the armistice of 31 January, 1878. He now felt strong enough to move against his detractors. On February 13, 1878, Abdulhamid was provided with the very opportunity that he was waiting for. The deputies had demanded that certain ministers should present themselves in the chamber and defend the charges of corruption and incompetency that had been brought against them. The next day, ^Ton February 14, 1878, eleven months after the first meeting of the national assembly, Abdulhamid dissolved parliament. With the dismissal of Midhat and other opponents of his rule, there was no one in the capital to oppose the Sultan's actions. ✓

* See Devereux, Chapter VI.

The Ottoman Parliament did not meet again for the next thirty years. The era of Hamidian despotism had begun.

In conclusion, it could be said that the intellectual stimulus provided by the Young Ottomans coupled with the backing of the armed forces and the bureaucracy, led to the short-lived coup d'etat and Constitutional Experiment of 1876-1877. The weakness of this first wave of dissenters was that they believed the "parliamentary mechanism would export easily, an error which the subsequent history of their country was to expose mercilessly."¹⁷ Nonetheless, it is quite true that the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress was not the first group to direct itself against the authoritarian rule of the Sultan. The "Secret society had roots in the Ottoman past not only in the vague sense that it was conditioned by earlier Turkish history, but in much more precise sense that it included among its ranks men who had been involved in an earlier stage of Ottoman activity, that it received its impetus from specific social processes which had been set in motion one generation earlier, and it adopted as its own an ideology already elaborated in the 1860's."¹⁸

17. Cunningham, p. 63.

18. Mardin, Serif. Libertarian Movements in the Ottoman Empire 1878-1895, Middle East Journal, Volume 16, Washington, D. C., 1962, p. 171.

During the suspension of the Ottoman Parliament, between 1878 and 1889, under the heavy hand of Hamidian despotism, all open dissent in the Empire came to an abrupt stop. Only two attempts of any importance occurred to undermine Abdulhamid's position and they succeeded one another closely. In May, 1878, Ali Suavi, one time employee of the Ministry of Education, attempted an unsuccessful coup against Abdulhamid and this was followed within a few months by a conspiracy under the guidance of an Ottoman Greek named Cleanthi Scalieri.¹⁹ Both were attempts to bring back Murad V to the throne. Murad, as mentioned earlier, unlike his younger brother Abdulhamid, was considered by many Turkish liberals as the only salvation of the Empire and it was generally believed that he was not averse to the idea of being relegated to the position of a constitutional monarch. The Scalieri conspiracy to oust the Sultan brought into focus the influence of Masonic Lodges upon the Young Ottomans, since the Greek was a Master of Prodos Lodge in Constantinople. One of the participants in the Scalieri intrigue was Ali Sefkati Bey, a friend of Namik Kemal; Ali Sefkati at this time was editor of the newspaper Istikal and at a future date was to be much admired by the students of the Military

19. Ibid.

Medical Academy. The Scarlieri plot was uncovered and Ali Sefkati fled to Europe from where he continued to publish his paper intermittently and copies were often smuggled into Turkey. [The illegal newspaper was avidly read by the students of the Military Colleges.]

[In 1889 a group of students met at the Imperial Medical School in Constantinople with the purpose of over-throwing Abdulhamid and this marked the next phase of the struggle against the Sultan's despotism.] The moving spirit behind the group was an Albanian named Ibrahim Temo.* Temo, while on visits to Brindisi and Naples, seems to have acquired a certain measure of understanding of Italian history and politics, and thus gained an appreciation of the role of the Carbonari in Italian unification. He then decided to set up a similar secret society in Turkey. [The first Young Turk committee which was constituted soon after his return to Turkey was called "Progress and Union" instead of the more familiar "Union and Progress" of later times, and its similarity to the Carbonari was evident from the beginning.] For instance, like the Carbonari, the members were known to each other only as numerical fractions. The impact of the movement soon spread from the Military

* Also in the group were individuals such as Ishak Sukuti, Abdullah Jevdet, Cherkes Mehmed, Reshid Sherefeddin, and others. All of them, in subsequent years, played important roles in the fight against the Sultan. For a detailed discussion on these people see Şerif Mardin's Genesis.

Medical School in Constantinople to other institutions such as the Veterinary, Artillery and Engineering schools as well as the Naval Academy.

There were many reasons why the discontent with Abdul Hamid's rule should first receive expression in the military academies. A tolerably adequate education was possible only in the military type of institution. The only other types of schools that existed in the Empire were the theological seminaries and these meted out a vigorous and one-sided religious education with a conservative outlook. Moreover, in the Ottoman Empire, there were not many careers open to men of upper class families other than to join the civil service or military establishments, especially the army. It is also possible that the secular approach pursued in the military establishments was likely to produce radicals. Consequently, unlike Western European countries,^{*} the intelligentsia of the Empire emerged

* One could perhaps draw a parallel between the Ottoman Empire and Imperial Russia up to 1825. [Until 1825 most of the educated people in Russia came from the various military establishments that had been maintained by the State to train future officers from the gentry, but it came to an end with the failure of the Decembrist uprising against Tsarist autocracy. From that point on the forward looking elements in Russian society ceased to develop from the military. In fact, after 1825 the military came to represent all that was evil and reactionary in Russian society. The outcome of this in Russia was the gradual growth of an intellectual class that was to lead the country to the upheavals of this century. Conversely, in Turkey, it was the military that became the expression of the revolution in and after 1908.]

From these twin institutions of the Army and the Civil Service.)

For example, Abdullah Jevdet, a product of the Military Medical School, though a doctor by profession, translated works from French, Italian, English, German and Persian into Turkish.

It was ironic that this relative laxity of control in the military schools made these institutions the strongest link in the fight against Hamidian despotism. This created serious problems for Abdulhamid. On the one hand, he was not averse to the idea of having a well-trained and well-educated officer-class, but on the other hand he obviously did not favour fostering a radical element that questioned the very validity of the existing system. Abdulhamid tried to resolve the dilemma by intermittently strengthening and weakening the military, but, in the last analysis, such methods only increased the vexation of his officers. Given the desire of the Sultan to preserve his Empire by the most modern Western methods of military and technical education, and at the same time his great reluctance to permit radical change to affect any other feature of Ottoman life, it is not surprising he became involved in such contradictions.)

All the young revolutionaries, of the second wave in military schools, were avid readers of the works of Namik Kemal, Ibrahim Sinasi, Ziya Bey and other Young Ottomans of the previous generation.²⁰ They often met in secret groups to discuss the

20. Ramsaur, Ernest. The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908, Princeton, 1957, p. 19.

works of their august predecessors. In 1892, Abdulhamid got wind of the intrigues that were being directed against his authority in the military schools and he reacted to it sharply. After initial arrests and questioning of a number of persons, the Sultan appears to have come to the conclusion that the threat was not of a serious nature. The very fact that there were no mass expulsions from these institutions tends to support this contention. Consequently, after giving vent to his initial wrath, through a number of arrests and expulsions, Abdulhamid left matters much as they had been before. Unfortunately, for the Sultan, the society kept on growing. For a while, after this affair, the Committee restricted its activities to the government schools within the Constantinople area. Even here the Committee was cautious as they were not confident of winning over the Softas^{*} and other religious elements to their way of thinking./

By 1894, the older elements in the group were again coming under increasing suspicion and, in order to escape from Abdulhamid's spies, they began to remove themselves from Constantinople to Europe. This slow but constant trickle in the main found refuge in Paris, where, ever since the prorogation of parliament in 1877, a colony of liberal Turks had established themselves. The leaders of this colony were Halil Ganem, a Syrian Christian from Beirut, and Ahmed Riza, the most durable of all Young Turks in Europe./ Halil Ganem was a delegate from

* See Glossary.

Syria to the first Ottoman parliament and had been involved in various journalistic activities from the time he fled Turkey for Europe.* Ahmed Riza, the future President of the Turkish National Assembly in 1908, had left the Empire in 1889, prior to which, he had served in the capacity of Director of Public Instruction in the Vilayet of Bursa. Purportedly the son of an Austrian or Hungarian mother and a Turkish father, he was educated in France and he spoke and wrote French to perfection. He was a sincere individual, but his honesty and single-minded devotion to a particular cause made him intransigent in many of his views and, consequently, he was never popular in the circles that he frequented.²¹ Despite the seeds of revolt that were being sown in military schools, there was a conspicuous absence of Army officers among the second wave of refugees to European capitals. The discontented officers, unlike the civilians, in most cases, adapted themselves to the existing realities and their military stoicism, perhaps, enabled the former to accept matters with more resilience. ✓

* He fled Turkey in 1878 and during the intervening period he founded a journal La Jeune Turquie in Paris, and, previous to this, he had also published a newspaper from Geneva called The Crescent. He was also a contributor to various European journals. Due to financial difficulties, both newspapers eventually failed.

See Lewis, Emergence, p. 193.

21. Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

In 1895, in conjunction with Halil Ganem and certain other exiles, Ahmed Riza became involved in the publishing of a bi-monthly newspaper called Mechveret.²² [The Mechveret in subsequent years, as the official organ of the Committee of Union and Progress, became increasingly the private domain of Ahmed Riza.] Also, Riza's adherence to the Positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte alienated him from most of his more traditionally-minded collaborators. Unlike Riza, despite their long exposure to 19th Century European life, most of his fellow émigrés were unable to break with their cultural past and wholeheartedly endorse the rational positivist idealism then current among men such as Comte, St.-Simon and others. The schisms were to open wider in the ensuing years. Nonetheless, initially the Committee had a semblance of unanimity insofar as they agreed on the principle of "Ottomanizing" the inhabitants of the Empire.

[While the émigrés were active in Europe the movement was not idle in Constantinople. Conspirators were active and they were busy recruiting members for the movement. With the slow circulation of the Mechveret in the Empire, it was becoming obvious to the government that a society of some sort in the capital was still conspiring against the regime.] During the same period, 1895-96, Murad Bey, a teacher at the Civil College,

22. Ibid., p. 23.

took it upon himself to write to the Sultan notifying him of a series of reforms that he considered necessary for the survival of the Empire, and, no sooner had he done so, than he removed himself to Egypt, thus putting a safe distance between himself and the Sultan.²³ In Egypt he found an anti-Hamidian newspaper Mizan.^{*} Attempts to merge the two publications, Mizan and Mechveret, as a united front against the Government, failed because of Ahmed Riza's intransigence. Distance also hindered the merger as Paris was too far away from Egypt. Riza insisted on using the term "Order and Progress" instead of "Union and Progress" for the society, as a reflection of his theory of orderly progress. Though a minor point, the two factions were unable to agree. His espousal of the cause of Positivist thinking laid Riza open to attacks of atheism and this further diminished his esteem in the eyes of the Mizan group. They correctly argued that the propagation of such ideas would only expose them to a government counter-attack with charges of atheism. In a profoundly religious society such as the Ottoman Empire, charges of this nature would be effective and damaging.

23. Lewis, Emergence, p. 194.

* The Mizan was already being edited from Constantinople before Murad's self-inflicted exile. Murad had also written a six-volume General History as well as a one-volume Ottoman History. Murad's origins were interesting insofar as he was not a Turk. He hailed from the mountainous Daghestan, the land of the famous Shamil, and he probably left the Caucasus for Constantinople due to the repressive policies of the Tsarist government in the area.

See Ramsaur, pp. 27, 28.

Unable to patch up the differences, the Mizan continued to be published from Egypt and Mechveret from Paris as independent newspapers.

[By the fall of 1896 most of the leading Young Turks had converged on Geneva or Paris and, with the arrival of Murad in Paris in 1896, the entire operation against Abdulhamid came to take its direction from the continent of Europe. Individuals like Ibrahim Temo, Ishak Sukuti and others were also arriving in Paris and Geneva. Murad Bey had been asked by the Young Turk Committee to leave Egypt as that government was becoming restive about his activities. No sooner had he arrived in Paris, than Murad immediately took control of the anti-Riza faction.²⁴ Riza agreed with Murad insofar as he deemed it necessary to Ottomanize the population, and he also agreed on the goal of the restoration of the Turkish constitution of 1876, but disagreed on tactics.]²⁵ For instance, unlike Murad, he abhorred the use of violence in accomplishing the removal of the Sultan, and this no doubt stemmed from his "civilized" values. [Murad, apart from his achievements in literature and history, was also revered by many Turkish Muslims for his soul-stirring Pan-Islamic views.] In order to understand Murad's popularity among the Young Turks, it is necessary to discuss the

24. Ramsaur, p. 37.

25. Ibid., p. 38.

emotional value of Pan-Islam to Muslims.

Pan-Islamic concepts probably originated in the teachings of Jamaledin Afghani, a Persian, who had had a stormy career in Afghan politics. He first appeared in Constantinople in 1870 and, in the course of the next two decades, his influence grew considerably. In the 1870's, the Ottoman Turks were very much aware of the existence of other Turkic-speaking Muslims in inner Asia.* Tashkent, Bokhara and Samarkand were under Russian domination, while Khiva and Kokhand were being threatened by the Tsarist government.²⁶ The Panthais, Chinese Muslims in Yunnan Province, had revolted in 1860 and set up a state of their own and Yakub Beg had also established a Muslim state centered around Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan in 1870. The Turks were in no position to wage a war beyond the Caspian, but even in areas closer to them they were unable to be of any assistance to their fellow Turks. This was shown clearly in the case of

* Babur, the founder of the Mogul Empire in India spoke Turkish and he wrote his autobiography in that language. There was considerable knowledge of the Uzbeks in spite of the fact that they were isolated from the Turks by the Ismaili presence in North Persia. Travellers to Mecca came into contact with their fellow Turks in Arabia. Moreover dervishes from Central Asia often came to Istanbul and Tekkes (tents) were provided for their maintenance.

26 Sumner, B. H., Russia and the Balkans, London, 1962, pp. 36-37, 45-46, 51-52.

the Caucasus. Though the Ottomans sympathized with the aspirations of the Circassians, and with the doughty Shamil in Daghestan in the 1850's, they had to sit by helplessly and watch the Russians absorb these areas into their empire. It was only natural that the Turks tried to efface their military impotence by appealing to the emotions of educated Muslims in Turkey and abroad. Pan-Islam also had its origins outside the Ottoman Empire. Some Indian Muslims nostalgically looked back to the days of Babur and Akbar and were encouraged by some Englishmen in the hope that this would put a stop to further Russian penetration into Asia. It is also likely that Pan-Slavism, which had come of age a decade earlier in the 1860's, helped to produce this Pan-Islamic reaction.

On accession to the throne, Abdulhamid embraced Pan-Islamic ideology as his own. He appointed a Tunisian Muslim as Grand Vizier and he surrounded himself with Syrian Muslim secretaries, Kurdish henchmen and a number of Albanian bodyguards.²⁷ He showed a good deal of interest in the affairs of Indian Muslims and he also re-settled Muslim minorities

27. Luke, Sir Harry. The Old Turkey and the New, London, 1955, p. 128.

from other countries in his empire.* The Hijaz railway probably was the final fruit of Abdulhamid's ideals, but, being primarily preoccupied with his own survival, nothing much came of Pan-Islam as a political force. The Western powers with the exception of Germany, did not take Abdulhamid's Pan-Islam very seriously, to his continual annoyance. Kaiser Wilhelm II, during his spectacular visit to Jerusalem

* In the words of Sir Harry Luke, "he now manifested a solicitious interest in the affairs of Moslems in Africa, in India, in the Far East; he gave asylum to groups of war-like Chechens from Daghestan after the Russians had completed the penetration of their wild valleys on the Caspian slopes of the Caucasus.. Acting on the same principle he settled colonies of Moslem Circassians on his Arab marshes. When dissatisfied with Russian rule these stealers of horses and sellers of daughters but doughty and truculent fighters withal emigrated from their homes to the shores of the Black Sea; he established Bosnian Moslems in Palestine and elsewhere in his Asiatic provinces after the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was taken over in 1878 by Austria-Hungary."

See Sir Harry Luke, The Old Turkey and the New, p. 128.

and Damascus in 1889, had declared that the Sultan* was "his friend and ally whom three hundred million Mohammedans throughout the world revere as the Kalif".²⁸

The success of Pan-Islam as a political force was doomed from the beginning; the diversity of peoples cultures and environments of which it was made, rendered the problems of unity almost insurmountable. In the rather flamboyant style of Professor Vambery:

"In letting pass before my eyes the sturdy and plain Ozbeg, the Turko-men together with the sly and cunning Tadjik and Sart of Central Asia, in holding review over the Moulin of India, the Beduin and the Wahabi of Nejed, the vainglorious Akhond of Persia, the self-conceited Arab of Syria, the honest, much advanced and hard-working Tartar of Russia, the plain and grave Osmanli of Anatolia, and ever so many other members of the Moslem community, I cannot help noticing the wide gulf which separates one from the other - a gulf which cannot be so easily bridged by the Kalima and by other uniting forces of Islam."²⁹

* In Britain and France, Abdulhamid was being called the "Great Assassin" and the "Red Sultan". The man who coined the phrase "Abdul the Damned" when he later apologized to the Sultan, did so in the following manner:

For a world where cruel deeds abound
 The merely damned are legion, with such souls
 Is not each hollow and cranny of Tophet crammed?
 Though with the brightest of Hell's aureoles,
 Dost shine supreme, incomparably crowned,
 Immortally beyond all mortals damned.

See Allan Cunningham, The Wrong Horse, St. Antony's papers, p. 57. Also Basil Williams' introduction in Edwin Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid, London, 1917.

28. Ibid., p. 129.

29. Vambery, Arminius. Pan-Islam, The Nineteenth Century, Volume 60, London, 1906. 2, p. 550.

Despite the rather colourful and exaggerated tone of Professor Vambery's remarks, he does give one some idea of the problems with which Pan-Islam was faced.

Undoubtedly, inside and outside the Empire, the Young Turks were also influenced by Pan-Islam's emotional appeal. Consequently, given Murad's Pan-Islamic proclivities, it was only natural that this enhanced his standing in the eyes of many Young Turks. Due to his disagreements with Riza, the more popular Murad became the president of the Committee of Union and Progress and, in May 1897, the headquarters was moved from Paris to Geneva, from where he continued to publish Mizan. Ahmed Riza persisted with the publication of his Mechveret as an organ of the society from Paris. In theory both were responsible to the Committee in Constantinople, of which very little is accurately known.

In June 1897, Murad Bey published a booklet in which he attempted to show that the fundamental causes of the Empire's problems were Abdulhamid's satanic rule and the treachery of the big Powers. He also took the Armenians to task for their petty nationalism and for spurning his offer of cooperation to bring down the Hamidian regime. Murad's conclusions were that Islam in no way was a direct cause for the Empire's weakness; that though depraved and incompetent the dynasty was capable of reforming itself and

[that the Turks were ready for constitutional government.]³⁰

The above observations showed a complete lack of understanding of the fundamental problems facing the Empire on the part of Murad and his supporters. The position of the subject nationalities was hardly touched upon, except for the rather unalluring prospect of becoming "Ottoman". Every malaise that affected the Empire was held to be the personal fault of the Sultan, an opinion rather than an analysis. Murad and his followers refused to look at the Ottoman society in its totality - its structure, composition and institutions or its historical record. It is noteworthy that in none of these did Ahmed Riza in any way disagree with the opinions of his enemy and, hence, it would be true to say that the fundamental reasons for the split were not ideological.³¹

[While the Turkish exiles were bickering among themselves, the society in Constantinople had planned a coup against the Sultan in August, 1896. Whether Paris or Geneva knew anything of the proposed coup is uncertain. The choice of August, 1896, as a date probably had much to do with the gravity of the Armenian situation.] It had reached significant

30. Ramsaur, p. 42.

31. Ibid., pp. 44, 45.

proportions during that month.* The Young Turks were not especially enthusiastic about Armenian separation and they were afraid the affair would be used as an excuse for intervention by the Powers. They were bent on avoiding such a

* The period of 1876-1883 was the Golden Age for Armenian revolutionaries in Russia. The whole Armenian population had been kindled with the idea of liberation. The poet, Kamar-Katiba, called upon Armenians to defend themselves and exhorted them "not to rely upon Europe, which was too far, or upon God, who was too high." The great Raffi denounced the clergy and stated that "fortresses would be of more use than convents, arms of more use than sacred vows, and the smoke of powder more agreeable than incense." But in 1883 the reaction of Alexander III and his erstwhile comrade, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostsev, set in in the Caucasus as a result of which the National and Revolutionary movements went underground. In 1893, these groups combined to form an Armenian revolutionary council which came to be known as the Dashnaqtzoutian. The Dashnaks were to survive well into the 20th century, when for a brief period of three years (1917-20) they were the leading party in Armenia, before she was absorbed into the Soviet Union. Slowly the Dashnaks penetrated into the Ottoman Empire. Revolutionary groups were organized and after certain minor exploits, the revolutionaries organized an effective rising among the Armenian mountaineers of the Sassun region in the province of Bitlis. The rising which took place in 1894 was crushed by the tough and fanatic Kurdish brigades of the Sultan, in the process of which some twenty-five villages were destroyed and about fifteen thousand perished. A cry of outrage went out in Europe, but the Sultan maintained that a revolution had taken place and all that he had attempted to do was to put it down. The upshot of the whole affair was the English, French and Russian ambassadors gathered in Constantinople to work out a scheme whereby reforms could be carried out in the six eastern vilayets. Abdulhamid managed to avoid most of these proposals since the Russians were averse to too much autonomy for the Armenians. But in August 1896 this was not apparent. See William Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, New York, 1965, Chapter V, Louise Nalbandian, The Armenian Revolutionary Movement, Berkeley, 1963, passim, and Richard Hovannisian Armenia on the Road to Independence, Berkeley, 1967, passim.

contingency. The conspirators also feared that Abdulhamid was on the verge of losing Crete,³² where bloody insurrections had broken out sporadically for a number of years.

The conspirators abroad initially had the support of a number of leading officials in the capital, including the Commandant of the First Division in Constantinople. The plot of August 1896 was not lacking in support since it had a fairly large following, but unfortunately, on the eve of the proposed coup, one of the conspirators leaked out the details to a police official. As a result, the conspirators were rounded up and exiled to remote parts of the empire. It is strange that Abdulhamid should have pursued such a course instead of executing the 'subversives' for high treason. Many of them lived to spread their views once more all over the empire, and this dispersal only gave wider circulation to their endeavours.

Despite the failure of the coup, the movement was strong enough to survive in the military schools and academies of the capital. Arrests and other repressive measures became common, but they still could not stamp out the movement. The blow to the movement actually fell from abroad. Murad Bey, who had referred to the Sultan as the satan two months earlier in his booklet, gave up the struggle by returning to Constantinople

32. Ahmed, Rafiuddin. A Moslem's View of Pan-Islamic Revival, The Nineteenth Century, Volume 42, London, 1879. 2, p. 519.

to make his peace with Abdulhamid. This turn-about took place because of a change of approach in the Sultan's method of dealing with his disenchanted citizens abroad. Earlier his method had been to put pressure on foreign governments to censure the activities of the Young Turks. The utter futility of this method was proven when, after being convicted of using abusive language (cheat, hangman, bloody majesty) against the Sultan, a French tribunal let the defendants go with the light fine of sixteen francs.³³ Such bitter experiences forced the Sultan to devise new methods. In the case of Murad, the Sultan dispatched his confidant Ahmad Jellaledin Pasha, a Circassian, and the latter convinced Murad that Abdulhamid was not actually averse to reforms, but the activities of the Young Turks gave him no other recourse. Jellaledin promised a marked difference in the Sultan, provided the émigrés stopped hurling insults at him and, instead, started to treat him with respect. Jellaledin also offered complete amnesty for all exiles and political prisoners, if they stopped their fight against the Sultan.³⁴ Nonetheless, Murad's motives for return are still obscure.

Murad's defection turned out to be a great blow to the movement. Murad has been amply defended by his apologists, but considering his earlier position, it was incredible that he took

33. Cunningham, p. 64.

34. Ramsaur, p. 48.

the course of action that he did. After this, the Young Turk movement almost collapsed,³⁵ but for the fact that Ahmed Riza and his associates carried on the battle. Most of Murad's followers either went back to Constantinople to serve the Sultan or stayed back in Europe to continue their studies. During the ensuing two years, i.e. from 1897-99, nothing much happened, apart from the fact that a new Young Turk organ called Osmanli appeared in Geneva under the direction of two of the original founders of the Society of Union and Progress, Ishak Sukuti and Abdulla Jevdet. But early in 1897 the Sultan struck a bargain with the Osmanli group in Geneva. In return for the papers' suspension, he promised to free political prisoners in Tripoli, whose harsh treatment of inmates was intolerable even by Hamidian standards. Having had personal experiences of the appalling conditions that prevailed in the area, it was quite conceivable that in agreeing to suspend the publication of Osmanli both Sukuti and Jevdet were primarily motivated by humanitarian reasons.³⁶ After this episode, the lone battle was carried on by the Mechveret group.*

35. Lewis, Emergence, p. 196.

36. Ibid., p. 197.

* There were a few other anti-Hamidian newspapers at this time. There were one or two publications coming out of Egypt and Ibrahim Temo published one from Rumania. But these were haphazard efforts and, unlike Mechveret, could not trace back their ancestry to the original exile society.

During December, 1899, and the early part of the present century, winds of misfortune began to blow the Hamidian way. The Sultan's brother-in-law, Damad Mahmud Pasha, fled the country with his two sons, Princes Sabaheddin and Lutfulla. This was soon followed by the defection of Ismail Kemal Bey, an Albanian who had occupied a number of important posts in the Ottoman Empire.³⁷ Abdulhamid tried hard to woo his brother-in-law back to Constantinople, to no avail. Among others, he despatched the arch-mediator Jellaleddin and even the Khedive of Egypt dropped in at Damad's in Paris to see how he could alleviate the situation. Damad spurned all offers and it finally dawned on the Sultan that his brother-in-law meant business.

As soon as he was settled in France, Damad sent a letter to Abdulhamid in which he attacked him mercilessly. He accused the Sultan for presiding over the worst type of tyranny and for his lack of concern for the people. Twenty-four million people, said Damad, were being put through all kinds of misery due to the egotism of the Sultan. He also accused Abdulhamid of many of the crimes of the Empire and said it was necessary for him to expose all the evils prevalent in the Empire, since the Sultan refused to listen to reason.³⁸

37. Ramsaur, p. 60.

38. Ibid., pp. 59, 60.

The eldest son of Damad Pasha, Prince Sabaheddin, managed to acquire a following of his own among émigré Turks. It soon became apparent, now that Murad was gone, that he was going to emerge as the chief personal and ideological rival of Ahmed Riza. Sabaheddin, who took himself very seriously and who was constantly in search of a solution to Turkish problems, was attracted by the work of the French author, Edmund Demolins, entitled À quoi tient la Supériorité des Anglo-Saxons.³⁹ In brief, Demolins in his work praised the Anglo-Saxons - British and American - for their individuality and daring in exploring the unknown and he criticized the Frenchman for his communistic outlook and his lack of individual initiative. He considered France, Germany, Russia, Italy and Spain as countries based on what he called "State Patriotism" and in order to survive these governments had to draw the attention of the people from internal difficulties by continually resorting to warfare. The Anglo-Saxon, on the other hand, said Demolins, had a different attitude toward God and country. His patriotism was founded on the sanctity of his home and his private life and whenever he was forced to fight, he fought for his individual independence rather than for his country. As an analysis of the bourgeois mentality of the

39. Bodely, J. E. France, Quarterly Review, Volume 188, London, 1898, pp, 178-180; also Ramsaur, pp. 81-89.

French of those times Demolins' work was noteworthy, but he ignored "the influence of geography, environment, past history and all of the tremendous forces which shape the destiny of any country".⁴⁰

While Sabaheddin was "profoundly" involved in the study of Demolins' work, a solidarity congress of the different anti-Hamidian groups convened in Paris on February, 1902, and Sabaheddin himself presided over the congress. As it turned out, it disunited the Sabaheddin-Riza factions permanently and the final split was caused by the Armenians. The Armenians who took part in this congress sought the intervention of the Powers as a guarantee of the effective reforms in the Empire. Riza and most of the members of the Committee of Union and Progress disagreed, but Prince Sabaheddin agreed with the Armenians. The former argued that any outside intervention would be unnecessary and even harmful. With the support of the Sabaheddin faction, the Armenians succeeded in passing a resolution to the effect:

"that it is their [Europe's] duty in the general interest of humanity to ensure that the clauses in the treaties and international agreements concluded between themselves and the Sublime Porte are put into effect in such a way as to benefit all parts of the Ottoman Empire."⁴¹

40. Ramsaur, p. 84.

41. Lewis, Emergence, p. 198.

The antagonism of the two groups towards one another, from this point onwards, should be considered as one between Turkish nationalism and Ottoman liberalism. Riza represented the first and Sabaheddin became the spokesman for Ottoman liberals.

Sabaheddin's first reaction after the congress was to found a new society in Paris, with the rather unwieldy name of "The League for Private Initiative and Decentralization"! He believed that a parliamentary democracy patterned on Great Britain would provide the Ottoman Empire with a minimum of central government, after which, the varied nationalities of the Empire could pursue their aspirations and protect their rights in regional and local self-government and in a public life released from collective or governmental control.⁴² These naive notions of a federalized, decentralized Ottoman state collapsed very soon in the face of realities. Sabaheddin avoided facing the issues of Islam altogether and he showed poor comprehension of the disruptive forces of nationalism. The Armenians and the Balkan Christians that he tried so hard to woo had little faith in realizing their goals within an Ottoman Federation.⁴³ In the eyes of the Turks, the

42. Ibid., p. 200.

43. Ibid.

decentralization plan of Sabaheddin was nothing shorter than suicide in view of the expanding peril of dissident nationalism and European imperialism.⁴⁴ [The burgeoning influence of the Army in the revolutionary movement, especially after 1906, made it drift towards authoritarian centralism. To the Prussian trained officers of the Turkish Army, private initiative and decentralization held little appeal. In the last analysis, one cannot say too much in praise of Sabaheddin's intelligence. Only a politically unsophisticated person could have conceived the transplanting of what was essentially a European institutional framework into an Empire which was at a totally different stage of development.]

[It should be kept in mind that, since the days of Murad's defection, the Young Turk movement had become practically non-existent within Turkey. Murad's reconciliation with the Sultan had been taken hardly by his followers in Constantinople.] Murad was the acknowledged leader and spokesman of the movement and in his person they exemplified their dreams of a rejuvenated Ottoman Empire. With his abrupt defection their spirits were broken and most of his followers gave up the struggle. [Consequently, no organization of any importance survived in the Empire in the period of 1897 and 1906.] This does not imply that there was no discontent among the students, in military or

44. Ibid.

government schools, and others. Due to the establishment of a permanent court-martial after the conspiracy of 1896 and the expansion of a Hamidian spy network, there was little anyone could do without adequate leadership. (In 1906, an event of some importance took place by the forming of a society in Damascus called "Fatherland and Freedom Society" under the leadership of Mustapha Kemal. The same group is also supposed to have played a role in the formation of a committee among the officers of the Third Army Corps stationed in Salonica.)⁴⁵ The new organization, in order to avoid internal squabbles, refrained from electing any definite head of the society.* Salonica, prominent for its freemasonry institutions, was a reasonable place for the recruitment of prospective adherents to the movement. The influence of freemasonry in shaping the Young Turk Revolution has been highly exaggerated by a number of Western writers. Yet, a limited sort of influence through contact with the freemasons was inevitable, as in the Ottoman Empire, at times, one could not talk of trivial things without

45. Ibid., p. 201.

* A number of Turkish historians have argued that this is part of the Ataturk myth. There is a tendency among Turks to exaggerate the role of Ataturk in the formative stages of the Young Turk Revolution. The evidence on the subject is extremely scanty.

continued....

Ataturks biographers - Armstrong, Kinross, Froembgen, Ikbal Ali Shah, Wortham and others - acquired the sketchy details of this period of his life from the insufficient collections of reminiscences and anecdotes published by the Turkish press in 1926. Often the Turkish press borrowed material from each other, without adding anything substantially new on Ataturk's activities prior to 1908. Many of these accounts were reverential in nature and were attempts to prove his far-sightedness and "hidden power" long before he became the President of the Turkish Republic. According to Husrev Sami Kizildogan, writing in a Turkish journal in 1937, Ataturk addressed a group of conspirators in Salonica in 1906 in the following manner:

"Friends, the purpose of assembling you here this evening is this. I do not see that it is necessary to tell you that it is a critical moment in the life of the country. All of you understand this. Towards this unfortunate country we have a solemn duty. To set it free is our sole aim. Today Macedonia together with a portion of Rumeli want to separate from the Yoke of the fatherland. Foreign influence and power have --- penetrated into the country. The Padishah is a detestable character, debased by sensuality and power, who will perpetrate any shamefulness. The nation is crumbling from injustice and tyranny. Death and complete destruction are the lot of a country which is not free. Liberty is the mother of all progress and salvation. History today imposes great burdens on her children. In Syria, I founded a society. We commenced the struggle against absolutism. --- I invite you to your duty, to answer an enslaving absolutism with revolution, and to overthrow an unfit administration which has become obsolete, to cause judgement to be passed on the nation - in short, to deliver the fatherland."

To this one of the participants is said to have replied:

"Mustapha Kemal, our protector, we shall follow you; even death, the hangman, martyrdom will not turn us from our decision----."

For more see, Ramsaur, pp. 95-100.

being suspected of sedition.*

* Here is an interesting anecdote quoted by Ramsaur from an account of a French writer travelling in Turkey. Tired of excessive censorship of his articles, the Frenchman finally sought out the Director of Censorship, Rifat Bey himself and asked him what he was allowed to write and speak. Here is a conversation that followed:

"You may speak of everything".

"Of everything?"

"Absolutely. Of everything, except you understand, of crownheads, of foreign governments, of anarchy, of liberty, of the rights of the people, of foreign policy, of domestic policy, of religion, of churches, of mosques, of Mohammed, of Jesus, of Moors, of the Prophets, of Atheism, of free thought, of the authorities, of feminism, of the harem, of Fatherland, of nation, of nationalism, of internationalism, of republics, of deputies, of senators, of constitutions, of plots, of bombs, of Midhat Pasha, Kemal Bey, of Sultan Murad, of the Crescent, of the Cross of Macedonia, of Armenia, of Reforms, of grasshoppers, of the month of August, and a few other subjects, corresponding more or less to these."

"Good God, what remains?"

"What remains?" "Everything. The rain, good weather, provided you do not mention rain in August or the light of the moon. You may speak of dogs in the streets provided it is not to demand their extermination. You may speak of the authorities so long as you do not point abuses. You may speak of His Imperial Majesty to sing his praises. In short, you have full and entire liberty to speak whatever seems good to you."

If this was the case, then the lot of the writers was indeed unenviable. But as far as Rifat was concerned, one could argue that he clearly had a sense of humour and to that extent he was a most desirable person to head the Department of Censorship.

See Ramsaur, pp. 104, 105.

Events moved rapidly. Under the Murzsteg Agreements of 1903, Macedonia was being policed by an International Commission constituted of French, Italian, British, Russian and Austrian troops.* The Third Army stationed in Salonica thus came into

* Between 1898 and 1903 Macedonia was plunged into a situation of general chaos. In 1893, a number of Bulgarian Macedonians had gathered in the Macedonian town of Resna and established a secret revolutionary body known as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) to prepare the inhabitants of that province for a great uprising against the Turks in order to obtain autonomy. IMRO opposed the partitioning of Macedonia, instead it favoured a South Slav federation embracing all the different Christian nationalities. Within a few years, the movement spread throughout Macedonia. Men were trained and arms were acquired in preparation for a mass uprising. In 1897, Turks discovered the activities of sections of the IMRO organization and reprisals followed. Consequently, in self-defence, the secret organization was forced into a series of violent actions. They constituted themselves into bands and attacked Turkish troops and Muslim villages. Though the original intentions of the bands were to fight on the defensive, between 1898 and 1903, they engaged the Turkish troops in more than 130 hostile encounters.

The culmination of this wave of anarchy in Macedonia was the Bulgarian uprising of August 1903. IMRO guerillas seized most of Monastir vilayet and they partially succeeded in liberating the vilayets of Kossovo and Salonica, thus moving in the direction of completing their victory in Macedonia. The uprising, despite these initial successes, soon foundered due to the lack of external assistance. Sofia had been caught unguarded and, as a result, she was unable to provide any organized assistance. Moreover, after the early set-backs, the Turks poured in troops and ultimately succeeded in quelling the revolt. The repression was so brutal that they destroyed nearly 200 Bulgarian villages and about 70,000

continued....

persons were left homeless.

These events drew the attention of the great powers and out of it developed the Mursteq programme of November 24, 1903, which aimed at the international control of Macedonia. The programme was drawn up by Nicholas II of Russia and Franz Joseph of Austria with the assistance of their Foreign Ministers Count Landsdorff and Count Goluchowski. It was based on a note delivered by British Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne on September 29, 1903, to the Sultan suggesting "that the province [Macedonia] should have a Christian governor, or at least Christian assessors to help him if he were a Turk, that his gendarmerie should have Christian officers, and that Turkish irregular forces should be withdrawn from the territory." But the final note delivered and reluctantly accepted by Sultan Abdulhamid was a highly watered down version of the Mursteq proposal. It was decided that a European should command the gendarmerie and each of the powers was given the responsibility to police specified areas of Macedonia. As to the British proposal for the withdrawal of Turkish troops, no other great power was willing to support it with force. The commander of the forces was an Italian with a senior officer under him representing each of the powers. In various ways, they tried to frustrate each others efforts. The Turks cleverly played upon this general animosity and managed to keep control of the executive branches of the province in their own hands.

See: L. S. Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, New York, 1961, pp. 519-523, Christ Amastasoff, The Traagic Peninsula, St. Louis, 1938, pp. 115-20 and Ferdinand Schevill, History of the Balkan Peninsula, New York, 1966, pp. 435, 436.

contact with the Europeans and the Turkish officers were soon aware of their inadequacies in comparison to their European counterparts. The Europeans looked resplendent in their uniforms and manners, whereas the Turks seemed slovenly in their shabby uniforms. Hence, on the one hand, they admired the European officers, yet on the other hand, they resented that they were being deprived of such amenities.⁴⁶ This gave rise to the growing dichotomy of the "determination to get rid of them along with an almost pathetic desire to emulate them."⁴⁷

(As for the common soldier, he was still loyal to the Sultan and nationalism was an ideology beyond his comprehension. Yet, conditions had grown so bad that the common soldier was finally ready to rebel. A number of petty mutinies took place all over Anatolia, but most of them were aimed at retrieving back-pay and also for a general improvement in living conditions.)

The exiles in Europe came to know of the secret society in Salonica only in 1907 and it was chance, more than anything else, which brought the two groups together. In early 1907, Abdulhamid's spies began to suspect that there was a secret society in existence in Salonica, though they were not aware

46. Cunningham, p. 66.

47. Ramsaur, p. 118.

of the exact strength or nature of the society. In March 1907, two members of the Salonica Committee, Omer Naji and Husrev Sami, suspecting that the Sultan's spies were after them, fled to Europe in order to escape arrest.⁴⁸ [In Paris, they got in touch with Ahmed Riza and, a few months later, the Salonica Committee merged with the Paris group. The former joined the Riza faction, instead of Sabaheddin, as they were more inclined towards the centralizing policies of Ahmed Riza rather than the decentralizing efforts of Sabaheddin.] The merger of the two factions was achieved not without difficulty. The Salonica Committee's willingness to use violence to get rid of the Sultan's absolutism stood in the way of Riza's positivism. Finally, Riza was persuaded to sacrifice his principles for the overall good of the Empire.

[In September 1907, a document was released in which the newly constituted Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.), a name adopted in recognition of its predecessor, outlined its intentions:

"The 'Osmanli Terakki Ve Ittihad Society' (Ottoman Society of Union and Progress) with its center in Paris and the 'Osmanli Hurriyet Society' (Ottoman Freedom Society) with its centre in Salonika have united under the name of the 'Osmanli Terakki Ve Ittihad Cemiyeti' as from ----- 27 September 1907 with the following stipulations:

48. Ibid., p. 121.

Article 1 - The Society shall have two headquarters, the one being internal and the other external. Of these the external headquarters will be in Paris, and the internal headquarters will be that now located in Salonika, and the two centres will have separate chiefs.

Article 2 - The fundamental purpose being to bring into force and continue the constitution of Midhat Pasha published in 1292 [1876], the Society, in order to attain this goal will have two separate sets of regulations for at home and abroad, taking into consideration local requirements and tendencies and defining the organization and the duties of individuals.

Article 3 - In the realm of financial affairs, the headquarters, no matter how independent, are required to aid one another in case of necessity.

Article 4 - The internal headquarters deeming direct communications inadvisable, branches and individuals within the country will, in order to correspond by means of Paris headquarters, be subject to the internal headquarters.

Article 5 - The external headquarters will, in addition to being the head office of the branches abroad, fulfil the duty of representing the Society to the outside world. Relation with foreign governments and press are the responsibility of the external headquarters, and the responsibility for internal undertakings and activities is entirely with the internal headquarters.

Article 6 - The headquarters are empowered to modify one and another's operations only through persuasion.

Article 7 - The Society's instruments of public dissemination at the moment are the Turkish 'Surayi Ummet' and the French 'Mesveret' newspapers. Together with aid and support of the internal headquarters in the 'Surayi Ummet' published by the foreign headquarters and in all Turkish publications the external headquarters is required to take contributions into consideration and to share the responsibility with the internal headquarters.

14 September 1323---

Osmanli Terakki Ve Ittihad Cemiyeti
Internal and External Affairs Official
Dr. Bahaeddin [Shakir]

"49

Thus the union of the two groups was effected and it was clear from the beginning that the Salonica Committee did not want any meddling in its internal affairs by the Paris group. The Mechveret was allowed to pursue its own policies on external affairs, but on all internal questions it had to consult the Salonica Committee first.

Meanwhile, under the auspices of the Armenian Nationalist Society, the Dashnaqtzoutian, another congress was convened at Paris in December, 1907. Both the Riza and Sabaheddin factions presented themselves at this congress. Theory and ideology played only a secondary role on this occasion, as the participants unanimously felt that some concerted action was necessary, if they were to save the Empire from Abdulhamid's misrule. For the sake of unity, the Turks and Armenians compromised and the Congress made a list of recommendations specifically geared to fight Hamidian despotism. These included:

- "1) armed resistance to acts of oppression;
- 2) unarmed resistance in the form of political and economic strikes, including strikes by government officials and the police;
- 3) passive resistance in the form of refusal to pay taxes;
- 4) the circulation of propaḡanda in the army - propaḡanda inviting the soldiers to refuse to march against the people or against revolutionary groups;
- 5) general insurrection if necessary;
- 6) such other means of action as might be imposed by circumstances."⁵⁰

50. Ibid., pp. 126, 127.

Certainly, not all the discontented groups in the Empire participated in the 1907 congress. For instance, two Armenian groups, the Hunchaks and the Armenists (see Chapter VI), did not participate, nor did the Albanians or the Greeks send any of their representatives. Moreover, despite the temporary truce at the congress, the cleavage between Riza and Sabaheddin was widening. Riza still held fast to the view that Sabaheddin's ideas of decentralization would be the ultimate ruin of Turkey.

[Anyway, in actual fact, the Paris Congress of December 1907 had little effect on the outcome of the Young Turk Revolution. Initiative now was very definitely in the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonica and they were hardly concerned with the bickerings of the émigrés, so long as it did not directly affect them. Before moving on to discuss the actual outbreak of the revolt in the ensuing chapter, it should be emphasised again that there never was any real coordination between the Mechveret group in Paris and the Committee in Salonica. Ahmed Riza's later ascendancy to the Presidency of the Turkish chamber was more in recognition of his untiring struggle against Abdulhamid rather than for any actual role he played in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.] When it occurred, Riza was taken as much by surprise as most people in Turkey and abroad.

CHAPTER II

OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLT

The young Turk revolution of July 1908 was allegedly planned for the autumn of 1909, but the fear of further foreign intervention in Macedonia and the active campaign against the Committee of Union and Progress by the palace in early 1908, precipitated an earlier revolt.¹ As a result, in a series of secret meetings held in May 1908, the decision was taken to strike earlier in order to avoid suppression of the movement and also to convince the powers of the existence of a powerful group within the Empire which was capable of introducing real reforms in Macedonia.² With this in view the Committee drew up a manifesto and mailed it to all the major European cabinets. The document was also posted in the foreign post offices in Salonica.³ It called for the attention of the powers

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1. Knight, E. F. Awakening of Turkey: The Turkish Revolution of 1908, Oriental Series, Vol. XXI, Boston, 1920, p. 118.
 2. Ibid., p. 119.
 3. Ibid.

to refrain from efforts to introduce reforms in Macedonia as in the past such attempts had always met with defeat. | Instead of alleviating the situation of Macedonians, the manifesto claimed, it had only worsened matters for the local populace.

"We are told that the object of European reforms is to insure the happiness of Macedonia, in answer to which we assert that Europe, in spite of all her efforts, has been unable to attain this object and never will attain it. ---- The intervention has been useless for Europeans, injurious to the Ottomans. The Great Powers themselves admit the failure of the measures adopted by them, and yet now, Europe, instead of honourably withdrawing from this business, is, so it appears, about to make Macedonia the arena of yet further experiments. ---- we Mussulmans and christians, united under the name of the Ottoman committee of Union and Progress, not influenced by national or religious fanaticism, are working together to deliver our country from foreign intervention, and to obtain our personal and political liberty from the existing Government. We positively assert that the plans of England and Russia would sever Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire. We therefore cannot accept these proposed measures, which would lead to the general ruin of the Empire and are opposed to justice and civilization. We are determined to employ all means to obtain our natural rights."⁴

4. Ibid., p. 121.

The manifesto also accused the Governments of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia of consciously fomenting trouble in Macedonia to attain their own annexationist ends. As a result of this policy, bands were roaming all over the countryside with the sole aim of keeping the province in a continual state of chaos and the interference of the powers only helped to increase the anarchy. Despite the genuineness of the grievances, it should be added in defence of the powers that much of the reform efforts in Macedonia failed because of Turkish resistance to the idea. The latter inclined to look upon these attempts at reforms as a Christian conspiracy directed against the Muslims of the province and the intrigues of the neighbouring Balkan governments gave further substance to their convictions.

Being the first public declaration of the Committee of Union and Progress within Macedonia, this was a very interesting document, but it was not taken seriously by any of the European powers. There were numerous reasons for this. The Committee was suspected of being weak and few in numbers and, moreover, it was embarrassing for existing governments to hold regular correspondence with a group that was dedicated to the task of overthrowing a legitimate government. The manifesto was published in a few European newspapers with little comment.⁵

5. Ibid., p. 122.

Soon after the Committee's dissemination of the manifesto, the Reval meeting of June 10, 1908 between Edward VII and Nicholas II took place.* In a joint communique the two countries took the pledge to work closely in introducing reforms in Macedonia, but no specific reform scheme was proposed.⁶ In the Ottoman Empire this meeting was interpreted as a sinister prelude to the final solution of the Eastern question. It was, perhaps, fresh in their memory that an Anglo-Russian entente had been concluded the previous year with satisfactory provisions made regarding Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet. In Europe, the Reval meeting was seen as the event that sparked off the revolution.⁷ This was because few Europeans were aware of the existence of a Committee of Union and Progress in Macedonia or elsewhere in the Empire.⁸ "They noticed that

* After the ententes of 1904 and 1907 with France and Russia, Great Britain was once again ready to grapple with the Macedonian problem. Through the agreement of 1904, France recognized the British position in Egypt and the British in return also recognized the leading position of France in Morocco. The Anglo-Russian entente created a Russian sphere of influence in Northern Persia and the Russians recognized Great Britain's supremacy in the south-eastern part of that country. Britain's predominance in Afghanistan was also recognized and both countries agreed upon the neutralization of Tibet. In March, 1908, the British Foreign Minister, Edward Grey, proposed that in future the Inspector-General of Macedonia, through a Turkish subject, should have the approval of the powers before his appointment. Grey also proposed that the Inspector-General be assigned a number of European officers to assist him in the administration of the province and that these officers be paid from the revenues of the province. The proposals were accepted by France and Russia after a certain amount of hesitation. At the Reval meeting of June 1908, Grey's Macedonian proposals were discussed by the two Emperors and their advisers and it was later produced as the Isvolsky-Hardinge project of reform, named after the Russian Foreign Minister and the British under-secretary of Foreign Affairs Ahmad, Feroz. The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914, Oxford, 1969, p. 2.

6. Ibid., p. 3.

7. Ibid., p. 3.

8. Ibid.

the revolutionary outbursts coincided with the Reval meeting and concluded that the former was directly related to the latter."⁹ With the knowledge at our disposal at present we can only say that the Reval meeting provided a further impetus for the rebels to strike early and fast. It also gave them a greater sense of urgency to strike and introduce reforms in the Empire before the powers did so.¹⁰

In early 1908, the Palace became exceedingly worried by reports arriving from garrisons in Macedonia. Turks in the Ottoman Empire were used to pay being in arrears, lack of ration and other forms of scarcity but due to the influence of younger officers, many of whom were members of the Committee, a great deal of disaffection had already been spread among the rank and file. This culminated in February in the refusal of a number of reservists in Macedonia to obey a call for service in the distant Hijaz.¹¹ This worried the sultan to such an extent that in March he despatched a commission from Constantinople to Salonica, under Ismail Mahir Pasha, a palace favourite, to report to

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, June 22, 1908, in Documents of British Foreign Office Series (F. O. hereafter) 371/544, No. 346.

him directly on the conditions of the Macedonian garrisons. Despite numerous denunciations and arrests, Mahir failed to break into the central organization of the Committee. Yet he was able to report to the sultan accurately about the existence of a dedicated group of conspirators in the garrisons of Macedonia working towards the Sultan's downfall. The commission was unable to do much about the dissatisfaction in the Army, other than to suggest to the Sultan to ring the garrisons with spies. Abdulhamid promptly followed this policy and by June a considerable number of palace spies were moving back and forth between the main centres of Macedonia and Constantinople. It was curious that the Sultan adopted such a weak policy. It would have been more effective, if he had switched garrisons or recalled certain officers, but, perhaps, this was due to his inability to recognize the imminence of a revolt.

Meanwhile, the dissatisfaction in the army continued unabated. On June 8, 1908 the officers of the 88th Brigade, a unit of II Army Corps of Adrianople, stationed at Kirjali, sent a telegram, signed collectively, to the Sultan threatening to cross over the frontier into Bulgaria unless their salaries were paid promptly and until such time they refused to do their duty.¹² The demand, the first of its kind by

12. Consul Samsun to Barclay, Adrianople, June 8, 1908. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, June 12, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 330.

Macedonian officers as an open show of frustration against the Sultan, certainly set a precedent during the ensuing weeks for others to follow. Abdulhamid tried to reassert his authority by withholding promotions to the mutinous officers and by placing his own henchmen in key positions. This speeded up the resistance against the Sultan. The disaffection soon spread to most of the garrisons of the II Army Corps both in Adrianople as well as the outlying vilayets.¹³

The Committee was certainly alarmed by the infiltration of the garrisons by palace spies. In mid-May, they gave a stern warning that anyone known to be working for the palace would get harsh treatment from the Committee and within weeks they carried out their threat. On June 11, an attempt was made on the life of Nazim Bey the "commandant de place" and one of the Sultan's chief spies in Macedonia.¹⁴ In February, about ten or twelve subalterns had been arrested for sedition and it was generally known

13. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 11, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 380.

14. Consul-General Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, June 12, 1908, enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, June 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 353.

that Nazim Bey had conducted an enquiry on behalf of the palace.¹⁵ Nazim also waged a personal feud with the popular commander-in-chief, Essad Pasha, of the Third Army Corps in Salonica. Essad tried to stem the tide of corruption and nepotism that dominated the Third Army and he even removed some of the more blatant offenders. In the process he had come into conflict with Nazim and other forces of reaction.¹⁶ The assassination attempt upon Nazim Bey was undertaken at a time when he was contemplating another trip to Constantinople.¹⁷ The Committee suspected that Nazim's visit to the Sultan would be followed by more denunciations and arrests and, perhaps, even by the recall of Essad Pasha.* Unfortunately for the rebels, they only managed to wound Nazim slightly and, consequently, he was able to leave for Constantinople the very next morning.¹⁸ Nazim obviously had no ideas of returning from Constantinople

15. Ibid.

16. Moore, Arthur, The Orient Express, London, 1914, pp. 203, 204.

17. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, June 12, 1908 enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Constantinople June 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 353.

* It should be pointed out that after the outbreak of the revolt on July 3, Essad and his chief of staff, Ali Riza Pasha, were recalled to Constantinople and replaced by Mushir Ibrahim Pasha, a palace supporter, as the commander of the Third Army.

18. Ibid.

as he instructed his family to dispose of his personal property and follow him to the capital.¹⁹ A man purported to be his assailant was arrested a few days later, but, the day after the arrest, he disappeared with his prison guard. It was generally believed that the attempt on Nazim's life was made by an officer belonging to the group of discontented officers.*

19. Ibid., enclosure 2.

* According to Arthur Moore, Nazim was the brother-in-law of Enver Bey, the young hero of the 1908 revolution. The former was married to Enver's sister. She knew from her brother that her husband was going to be assassinated, and being an ardent committee supporter, she was supposed to have assisted the assassin, by keeping the dining room window of her residence open. In Moore's own words:

"She offered to assist the murderer in his task, and on June 11th, the day of the Valis' fete at Salonica, an assassin stole to the window of the room in which Nazim Bey sat dining with his wife. The latter had carefully left the curtains undrawn, so that a clear view could be obtained, and had placed a strong light behind her husband. In this wise husband and wife sat and dined, he talked in high good-humour, all unconscious that she who sat opposite him was waiting for his death with an expectation which grew tenser as the moments rushed on. Suddenly a shot rang out, which may well be called the first in the Young Turk Revolution. The would-be assassin missed his aim, and Nazim was but slightly wounded. There was a stir of sentries and the alarm was immediately given, but the conspirator escaped."

Moore allegedly obtained this information from Enver himself in 1910.

There is considerable evidence that Enver was exaggerating his role in the assassination attempt and he seems to have found an excellent bait in Mr. Moore. For instance, in the dispatches of the British Consul-General, Charles Lamb, in Salonica reporting the attempt, no mention was ever made of Enver's sister. Also, according to Lamb, at the time of the attempt on his life, Nazim was in the company of another officer. The latter was wounded more seriously.

For more on this see: Arthur Moore, Orient Express, pp. 204-206.

On his return to the capital Nazim gave alarming reports to the Sultan and a second commission of inquiry under Ismail Mahir Pasha was sent to Salonica on June 20. The ostensible purpose of the mission was to inspect arsenals and military stores in the Third Army, but in actuality it was another one of Abdulhamid's spy missions.²⁰ Soon after Mahir Pasha's arrival in Salonica, Essad Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army, and his chief of staff, Ali Riza Pasha, were recalled to Constantinople and the former was replaced by Mushir Ibrahim Pasha, a palace supporter and previously in command of the Ninth Division in Serres, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army. Mahir held Essad and his chief-of-staff responsible for the sad state of affairs in the Third Army and he had little trouble in convincing Abdulhamid of his point of view. In the course of his investigations Mahir came into conflict with Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General of Macedonia, and at the instigation of the latter he was recalled to the capital in early July. Not having really discovered anything new about the secret societies, Mahir resorted to the

20. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 26, 1908. Enclosure in Ambassador Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 447.

usual denunciations. He accused Hilmi Pasha and other high officials in Macedonia as sympathizers of the Young Turk movement,²¹ without really being able to provide any concrete evidence. When the Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, reminded Mahir that his own political record was not without blemishes, he attacked the Grand Vizier's son-in-law, Ali Pasha, as a traitor working against the Sultan.²² Finally, Ferid Pasha made it quite clear to the Sultan that it was impossible to function as the head of a cabinet when people like Mahir held so much influence in the Empire and he threatened to resign.²³ The Sultan came out with a truly Hamidian solution to the problem and that was to banish Mahir to Bursa.²⁴

The flag of revolution was officially raised in July 3, 1908 by Ahmed Niyazi, an adjutant-major commanding troops at Resna. The decision was taken after a secret meeting was held in the house of a certain Haji Aga on June 28.²⁵

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21. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 392.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Ibid.
 24. Ibid.
 25. Knight, p. 141.

The meeting was also attended by high officials in Resna, which included Niyazi's friends Jemal Bey, the President of the Municipality of Resna and Tahir Effendi, the local Police Commissioner.²⁶ At this secret meeting, the decision was taken to set the date for the insurrection for Friday, July 3 and there was some urgency in doing so. Niyazi had previously been tried by court-martial for advanced ideas, but was acquitted due to insufficient evidence and allowed to return to his post against the wishes of the Vali of Monastir.²⁷ In late June, to Niyazi's consternation, an alay muftisi, regimental chaplain, who was also the palace spy in Monastir, infiltrated his group and, in order to avoid its break up, he was forced into quicker action.²⁸ The mufti eventually was shot dead by a Turkish soldier on July 12 while he was entering the train at Monastir on his way to Constantinople to submit his report to the Sultan.²⁹

26. Ibid.

27. Colonel Surtees to Barclay, Constantinople, July 15, 1908 enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 392.

28. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 10, 1908. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 388.

29. Ibid.

Immediately after the June 28 meeting, Niyazi sent his friend Jemal to the Committee headquarters in Monastir and secured the permission to start the revolt on July 3. * 30

Hence, on July 3, while most of the officers of the garrison were at their Friday prayers, Niyazi obtained easy access into the garrison arsenal under the pretext of sending out detachments to fight the Bulgarian bands around the area.³¹ After procuring seventy-five Mauser rifles, fifteen boxes of ammunition and £540 (Turkish) from the regimental treasury, Niyazi disappeared into the hills with his friends, Jemal, Tahir and the tax-inspector, Tahsin Effendi.³² He was also accompanied by over hundred

* The role of the C.U.P. Central Committee and its headquarters are shrouded in mystery. The Committee has always exaggerated its role in the insurrection, conveying the impression that the movement was at all times under control, planned and executed by its agents. In reality, it is doubtful whether they ever had such a water-tight organization.

30. Knight, p. 144.

31. Surtees to Barclay, Constantinople, July 15, 1908 enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 392.

32. Ibid.

soldiers and about the same number of civilians.* Within a few hours Niyazi was joined by another hundred odd people and he constituted them into a Young Turkish band.

The day after his defection, on July 4, Niyazi came out with a series of proclamations addressed to the local towns in the Monastir vilayet as well as to the Vali and the Inspector-General, Hilmi Pasha. He asked the people of the area not to obstruct him and his men who were fighting for their liberty, to give them security of life, honour and property.³³ His men would need food and shelter for sustenance and in this he asked for the cooperation of the populace. In a separate proclamation to the authorities

* In the documents and other sources, there are references to a Serbian schoolmaster of Resna being taken as a hostage by Niyazi. A sister of the famous Bulgarian band leader Christe had approached him regarding her child who had been carried off into the mountains for ransom by a rival Serbian band. While in the hills, Niyazi was able to exchange the schoolmaster for the child and thus gained the confidence of the Bulgarians as to the good intentions of himself and the Committee of Union and progress.

For more see: E. F. Knight Awakening of Turkey, p. 144.

33. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 100.

at Ochrida and Monastir, Niyazi said that in return for food, clothes and other necessities of life requisitioned from the villagers he would issue cash vouchers and any official found not accepting the vouchers would be dealt with mercilessly.³⁴ He also asked the people not to pay anymore taxes to a corrupt and inefficient government and instead asked them to turn the tax money over to his men and accept the same cash vouchers in return.³⁵ Initial reception, especially on the part of Christians, to this cash voucher proposal was one of suspicion. In order to receive a return on their investment, the movement, first of all, had to succeed. This was not at all apparent during the early weeks of the revolution. Moreover, the Christians were afraid of a movement sparked off at Muslim initiative and they were doubly suspicious to find a former persecutor, Major Niyazi, so recently in charge of hunting down Christian bands active in Monastir vilayet, suddenly in the guise of a fellow sufferer. An underlying theme in all of Niyazi's proclamations was that the current revolt was different from all others, in so far, as it was aimed at the betterment of conditions, regardless of race

34.. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

and religion, and eventually many Christians were convinced about the sincerity and good motives of the revolutionaries. In all these manifestos Niyazi spoke, not as a C.U.P. representative, but simply as the leader of his men, probably because the Committee had not as yet taken over the direction of the movement.³⁶

Niyazi's example soon found adherents in other garrisons in Macedonia. Junior and senior officers, among whom were Lt. Col. Nouri Bey of the staff, Major Enver Bey an aide-de-camp to Hilmi Pasha, and lieutenants Seladdin and Hassan Beys, disappeared into the hills with the avowed intention of joining up with Niyazi's group.³⁷ At the time of Mahir's investigations, Enver had been invited to proceed to Constantinople with promises of promotion and gifts.³⁸ The offer was renewed again in the case of Enver, and Nouri also was promised promotion, both to Major-Generals.³⁹ They wisely

36. Ahmad, p. 6.

37. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 167.

38. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 26, 1908. Enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 447.

39. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 167.

turned it down. Enver's actual role in the insurrection was insignificant, in spite of the popular acclaim given him after the successful conclusion of the revolt.⁴⁰ The defectors, officers and ordinary soldiers, moved from one district to the other propagandizing and seeking support from the local populace. These minor military insurrections were in themselves of no value, but they helped set a chain reaction which ultimately freed the C.U.P. to take the initiative into its own hands and direct the movement accordingly. Had this not been the case, the Committee could have stayed inactive for some time to come. "The Committee's first act of participation was its manifesto of 6 July 'to the Vali of the illegal government in Monastir.' Thereafter the initiative passed into the hands of C.U.P. organizations in the towns of Macedonia where the outcome of the constitutional movement was decided."⁴¹

Until the assassination of Shemsi Pasha on July 7,

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40. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 26, 1908. Enclosure in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908 in F. O. 371/545, No. 447.
41. Ahmed, p. 7.

the palace made light of the Macedonian situation in diplomatic circles. With Shemsi's assassination there was no question anymore about the gravity of the situation. It was one thing to get rid of palace spies, but quite a different matter to kill in broad daylight a general of the Ottoman army. Shemsi had stopped over in Monastir on July 7 on his way to hunt down Niyazi and the insurgents and he had told his troops that they were being taken to quell a revolt in Macedonia, instigated by the Serbs.⁴² It was the policy of Abdulhamid to present the uprising at Resna as a Serbian insurrection. He also presented the C.U.P. to the rank and file as a pro-Christian, anti-Islam movement and, to the powers, the Committee was described as an anti-Christian and anti-European nationalist movement.⁴³ Shemsi arrived in Monastir with Bashi-Bozuks, fanatical Muslim irregular troops, since the two regular battalions stationed there had refused to march against the Resna rebels.⁴⁴ The general spent most of the day in

42. Consul Heathcote to Barclay, undated enclosure 2 in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 100.

43. Ahmad, p. 9.

44. Surtees to Barclay, Constantinople, July 15, 1908. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 16, 1908 in F. O. 371/544, No. 392.

telegraphic communication with his superiors in Constantinople and, while emerging from the post office, he was shot dead by an officer disguised as an ordinary soldier. The troops fired half-hearted shots in the air without making any attempts at capturing or killing the assailant and he managed to escape without incident.⁴⁵ The assassination of Shemsi gave courage to the Committee and they followed this up with a series of terroristic acts aimed at neutralizing the palace supporters. On July 6, Hakki Bey, a member of Mahir Pasha's commission, was shot dead in Salonica.⁴⁶ On July 10, a regimental Mufti was murdered in Salonica, en route to Constantinople.⁴⁷ On July 12, as mentioned earlier, the Mufti who had infiltrated Niyazi's group was cut down at the Monastir railroad station, while waiting for his train to the capital. The very next day, Sadek Pasha, an aide-de-camp of the Sultan, was shot and wounded by an Albanian on board the French steamer Sidon which was taking him to the capital from Salonica.⁴⁸ On July 17, while reading a telegram from the Sultan to his officers, the commandant of the

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45. Heathcote to Barclay, Monastir, July 8, 1908. Enclosure 2 in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 388.
46. Ibid.
47. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 388.
48. Ibid.

Monastir garrison, Major-General Osman Hidayet Pasha was severely wounded* by one of the officers, although he was allowed to escape.⁴⁹ Within a few days of the outbreak of the revolt, the British Consul in Salonica, Charles

* It is useful to note the chronology of assassination attempts on palace spies and supporters:

- June 11 - Nazim Bey and his companion wounded.
- June 18 - Sami Bey, the Inspector of Police in Monastir murdered.
- July 6 - Assassination of Hakki Bey.
- July 10, 12 - The attempts on the two Muftis.
- July 16 - An unsuccessful attempt on the life of the commissioner of Police in Monastir.
- July 17 - Osman Hidayet Pasha wounded at Monastir.
- July 18 - Col. Mustapha Bey killed in Serres.
- July 19 - Kaimakam Naim Bey wounded in Salonica.
 - A non-commissioned officer and a Greek spy killed in Salonica.
 - Hussein Husni Bey, Mutessarif of Dibra, assassinated.
- July 21 - A Kanon killed in Salonica.
- July 22 - unsuccessful attempt on the life of another Col. Naim Bey, while embarking for Constantinople.

For more see: Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 22, 1908. Enclosures 1 and 2 in Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 425.

Also Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 21, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 170.

49. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 167.

Lamb, was able to predict the outcome of the insurrection accurately. According to him, the majority of the officers in the Third Army Corps were in sympathy with the revolutionary movement and they would try to carry it through to the utmost extent.⁵⁰ The British representatives in all the major Macedonian towns noticed a general change in atmosphere. Politics was discussed openly in cafes and other places and there was little fear of spies anywhere.⁵¹ In spite of the general sympathy for Niyazi's cause among the officers, many complained that the insurrection was ill-prepared and premature.⁵² They concluded that the uprising of July 3 was precipitated by individuals who felt their lives were being threatened by the revelations of the Mufti of Monastir, without any direct orders from the higher echelons of the Committee. Now they had little choice but to support the rebels, hoping more officers would come around to their point of view. Attempts were made to exploit this initial phase of pessimism among the officers

50. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 169.

51. Heathcote to Barclay, undated. Enclosure 2 in Barclay to Grey, in F. O. 371/544, No. 100.

52. Ibid.

by the palace. On July 14, to appease the Junior officers and win their support, the palace promoted large numbers of them to higher ranks⁵³ and, in the last analysis, the effort backfired. The promotions in actuality meant little. It did not mean the prompt payment of arrears or even higher pay in most cases.⁵⁴ The officers were simply allowed to wear uniforms of a higher rank which in itself was of little consequence and the fact that these promotions were given out in profusion made them more worthless than before. Moreover, to complicate matters, the moment the officers received their promotions, the same was demanded by regimental imam, doctors and others.⁵⁵

The committee sought hard to eradicate its anti-Christian, anti-foreign image. They went out of their way to assure Christians that the movement was not directed against them and all their rights would be constitutionally safeguarded. Shemsi Pasha's tactless decision to use Bashi-Bazouks, who were well-known for their anti-Christian fanaticism, and his subsequent murder by the Committee

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53. Samsun to Barclay, Adrianople, July 15, 1908.
Enclosure 1 in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 308.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.

restored the faith of many christians in the constitutional movement. If not outright support, they were willing to offer the rebels benevolent neutrality. The Committee sent manifestos to European consulates in Macedonia and Rumelia and wherever possible despatched its emissaries to reassure the foreign officials. That these measures of the Committee were successful could be seen from the following observations of a British official after he was contacted by a young Committee officer, Rushen Bey.

"It is difficult to prophesy how far this movement will go, but there can be no doubt whatever in the mind of anyone who saw what I did today that it is thoroughly earnest and thoroughly well organized, and, what is more, that it has the thorough support, in the provinces at all events, of any Turk, old or young, who loves his country and is utterly disgusted with the present regime..... One thing is certain, that if there are many officers of the calibre of Rushen Bey engaged in this movement it will go far. He is the true type of the revolutionary leader of men, eloquent, feverishly energetic, blind to any difficulties there may be in the way of the cause which is his existence.

In a conversation with him this evening at which no other officers but some of the leading Turks and Greeks were present, he explained to me at length the policy of the Young Turkey organization, which consists of insistence in constitutional government; death to all, race, creed and position apart, who oppose the movement; scrupulous respect for the lives, property, and honour of all Christians, and the exercise of every possible means to induce them to join in the national movement; great insistence on the brotherhood of all nationalities under the

Ottoman flag, instant punishment of all crime and misdemeanour against unoffensive people, finally, the march on Constantinople if the Sultan refuses concessions. He further said that they would prove themselves worthy by their conduct of the esteem of the Great Powers, and intended to give their sympathy for what was a true and genuine movement for reform from within."⁵⁶

The Albanians of Ferisovitch have been credited with turning the tide of the revolt in favour of the insurgents. The incident in itself had rather curious origins. On July 5, about eight thousand Albanians crowded into the little town of Ferisovitch to protest a picnic arranged by the Austro-German Railway school to Saratishta, a scenic village in the vicinity.⁵⁷ In the meanwhile, workmen at Saratishta were erecting platforms for dancing and decorating the picnic areas with Austrian flags. Soon the word got around that large numbers of Austrian families were going to be moved into the area on a permanent basis

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56. Lt. Colonel Bonham to Barclay, Drama, July 23, 1908. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 423.
57. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 166. Also Vice-Consul Satow to Lamb, Uskub, July 11, 1908. Enclosure 1 in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 17, 1908, F. O. 371/544, No. 393.

and this increased the suspicion and animosity of the Albanians. On July 6, they chased the workmen away from the premises and all day more and more Albanians converged on Ferisovitch till they exceeded more than ten thousand in numbers.⁵⁸ At this point, the Railway school abandoned their picnic plans. This gathering of an unruly mass of Albanians was exploited by the C.U.P. members and represented as a pro-constitution group. This was a noteworthy victory for the C.U.P., since few of the Albanians had any idea or interest in the constitutional struggle at the time of their departure for Ferisovitch. On July 16, the Albanians telegraphed the Sultan to restore the constitution of 1876.⁵⁹ The telegram caused the final rupture in relations between Ferid Pasha, the Albanian Grand Vizier, and Abdulhamid. Ferid was all along opposed to the idea of escalating the struggle and he had earlier advised the Sultan to make concessions to the insurgents.⁶⁰ This attitude was against the wishes of the palace Camarilla

58. Ibid.

59. Satow to Lamb, Uskub, July 16, 1908. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 22, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 408.

60. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 416.

and, since the beginning of the revolt, his position had been precarious.⁶¹ When the Albanians joined the fray, Ferid found himself in a position of mixed loyalties. The natural tendencies of the Sultan inclined to look upon an Albanian Grand Vizier, at this point, as something undesirable and he solved Ferid's dilemma, as whether to be loyal to the Sultan or his own Albanians, by relieving him of his position. Two former Grand Viziers, Said and Kiamil Pashas, were brought back into the cabinet and the former replaced Ferid as the Grand Vizier.*

On July 20, there were outbreaks in a number of towns in Monastir vilayet. The people of Grebana, Elasura, Kozana and other places in the district revolted against the existing system and demanded a constitution. The Vali of Monastir sent a telegram to the Sultan asking him to meet the demands of the insurgents, but his appeal was met

61. Ibid.

* The fall of Ferid Pasha was seen in diplomatic circles as a fall in German prestige. Ferid had supported the Germans on the Baghdad scheme and, on the eve of his dismissal, had been awarded the prestigious decoration of Black Eagle by the German Emperor. Hence, his replacement with Said and Kiamil, both of whom on different occasions had taken refuge in the British Embassy, was taken favourably by the British diplomats in Constantinople.

with a cold reception.⁶² Consequently, the Vali, resigned his post.⁶³ The next day the officers of the Committee captured power in Monastir itself. A number of priests and officers made their way into public buildings and forced the employees to swear fidelity to the constitution of 1876.⁶⁴ They also captured the military supplies in the town. Similar incidents took place in Serres and other towns in Macedonia and in every instance the Committee went out of their way to assure the foreign diplomats that they would prevent any unnecessary shedding of blood. The Sultan, in the meanwhile, had tried to restore his authority by bringing in presumably loyal troops from Anatolia. The Committee had already infiltrated the troops in Smyrna and by the time they landed in Salonica (between July 16 and 24) the troops had been won over to the constitutional cause. On July 22, the Committee kidnapped Marshal Osman Pasha, who was despatched earlier by the palace to take charge of the Monastir garrison, as a precursor to the proclamation of the constitution. The very next day the constitution was proclaimed in Monastir

62.. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 176.

63. Ibid.

64. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 23, 1908, F. O. 371/544, No. 177.

and in a few hours it spread like wildfire to other Macedonian towns and elsewhere. Towns such as Uskub, Presba and Serres followed the Monastir example within a few hours.

The demand for the proclamation of a constitution in Monastir came through the wires to Salonica and from noon to dusk on July 23, officers and civilians in all walks of life - Turks, Jews, Bulgarians and Greeks - delivered speeches to the people assembled below from the balconies of hotels and government and municipal offices. Many important personages spoke in favour of restoring the constitution, including the President of the municipality, the President of the commercial court, the director of the technical school, the editors of local newspapers, a secretary of the financial commission and even an aide-de-camp of the Inspector-General of Macedonia.⁶⁵ Until late at night, civilians and soldiers paraded through the streets waving flags of the Empire and C.U.P. and they had an enthusiastic audience to applaud them wherever they went. At ten o'clock in the evening on July 23 a telegram arrived

65. Lamb to Barclay, Salonica, July 23, 1908. Enclosure 1 in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 430.

for Hilmi Pasha from the palace declaring that "the question as to whether the convocation of Parliament would be injurious or otherwise to the state was under consideration and that the people should be induced to await the decision with calm."⁶⁶ When the gist of the telegram was read out in the public gardens of Salonica it was met with disapproval from the crowd since they clamoured for the immediate restoration of the constitution. Nonetheless the C.U.P. members in Salonica were satisfied with the results as they could clearly smell victory in the air.⁶⁷ Also they had already fixed the date for the proclamation of a constitution in Salonica for July 27 and the telegram from the palace gave a further boost to their morale. A few hours later, at two o'clock in the morning (July 24), Hilmi Pasha received another telegram to the effect that Abdulhamid "had decided to accede to the wishes of the people and reconstitute the Assemblée Générale."⁶⁸ The news quickly spread and a deputation went to his residence

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Lamb to Grey, Salonica, July 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, unnumbered.

to meet him. Hilmi came out and read the telegram and requested the local Committee to disband itself as the Sultan had acceded to all their requests. The C.U.P. members of the deputation refused saying that Abdulhamid had not invoked the constitution, but that it was forced on him against his will. Finally, demoralized at the turn of events and unable to organize support behind him, the Sultan gave up the policy of repression for one of conciliation.

An Imperial irade was promulgated on July 24 decreeing the convocation of Parliament and the decision was communicated by a circular telegram to all the vilayets and it asked the Mutessarifs to hold elections for representatives.⁶⁹ Three days later on July 27, the Young Turks, with bitter memories of 1876, forced the Sultan to swear on the Koran that he would not repeal the constitution, and the oath was taken and registered by the Sheikh-ul-Islam.⁷⁰ This oath religiously bound not only Abdulhamid, but also his successors in the Caliphate to govern in accordance with the constitution

69. Enclosure in Barclay to Grey, Therapia, July 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 417.

70. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 201.

and became a part of the Sheriat. Once he was forced to grant the constitution, Abdulhamid tried to make it appear as if the constitution was never abrogated,* or that he was never against the idea. He pretended that the traitors among his advisers had misused the trust he placed upon them and guided the Empire in a different direction in opposition to his wishes. This was a hard pill to swallow for the C.U.P. as the Sultan had over three decades at his disposal to remedy the situation, yet he had done nothing till the very last moment. Nonetheless, in the wake of the cabinet reshuffling that took place immediately prior to and after the revival of the constitution, it gave the illusion that the Sultan was establishing parliamentary democracy in the Empire voluntarily.

In concluding the chapter the following observations may be made. The suddenness of the movement, which surprised the instigators themselves, was hailed with delight by a large proportion of the Christian population in the

* Indeed, officially the constitution of 1876 was never abrogated, but, for all practical purposes, it ceased to function during the next thirty years.

Empire. There was general agreement that however the tide turned, Abdulhamid would never be able to return to his old autocratic ways. Yet the Committee was divided on the question of whether to let the Sultan be the nominal ruler of the Empire, despite the fact that much practical power had been withdrawn from him. Many were afraid that a person as resourceful as Abdulhamid might again make a recovery to injure the smooth march towards constitutionalism. Finally, they decided to let the Sultan and his cabinet continue, but they made sure that no cabinet could rule without their approval.

CHAPTER III

IMMEDIATE REACTION - DOMESTIC
AND FOREIGN - TO THE REVOLUTION

The revival of the constitution had an immediate effect on the roving bands of Macedonia. Most of the Macedonian band leaders such as Christi, Lazo, Aldo, Sandanski, Panitza and others gave up arms to the responsible government officials and came down from the mountains. In the wake of the general political amnesty awarded them by the new government the bands recognized the pointlessness of persisting in the hills. Some were obviously suspicious, but they were willing to give the new regime a chance and others, according to their political sympathies, openly supported the Committee on the grounds that the Balkan powers, with their irredentist aspirations, were equally responsible for the chaotic conditions in Macedonia.¹ The Committee on its part arranged theatrical receptions for the returning band leaders. For instance the Bulgarian

1. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908 in F. O. 371/545, No. 447.

Khomitadjis, Sandanski and Panitza, notorious for their murders and political assassinations, were feted in royal style by the C.U.P. when they arrived in Drama. Neither the C.U.P. nor the bands found this newly established friendship embarrassing, though it posed certain problems of diplomatic nicety. To cite an example, in Drama, the senior British staff officer in Macedonia, Lt. Col. Bonham, was approached by the Committee to attend a ceremony in honour of Sandanski and Panitza. Bonham, the stiff-lipped British officer, did not relish the idea of attending the ceremony, yet he wanted to appear friendly in the eyes of the Committee. In his own words:

"The presence of Sandanski and Panitza made me hesitate to comply with this request. But as I was anxious not to give anyone a handle for saying that the British officers were not in sympathy with the national movement, and as, in my opinion, the fact that the committee has been able already to bring in a large proportion of the bands of both nationalities, while the remainder have dispersed or are dispersing, is an achievement of very real importance, I consented to attend the reception in uniform and with my officers on the condition that we should not be expected to hold any personal intercourse with either Sandansky or Panitza."²

2. Lt. Col. Bonham to Barclay, Drama, July 28, 1908 enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, July 31, 1908 in F. O. 371/545, No. 436.

In spite of the C.U.P.'s weak position in Constantinople, as a result of the Hamidian repression of 1897, the constitution was acclaimed with the same fervour in the capital as in Macedonia. In Anatolia and the Asiatic provinces the constitution was accorded a favourable reception. At Samsun, after great rejoicing, a ceremony was held in which Greeks and Turks fraternized with each other, certain Turks going so far as to embrace the Greek Archbishop.³ In Trebizond, after an initial scepticism encouraged by the pro-palace bureaucrats, the restoration of the constitution was hailed by the populace. The same was true in Van, Bitlis, Konya, Beirut, Damascus and a number of other places in the Asiatic provinces. Everywhere instructions were given to the hodjas to preach about the constitution in mosques.⁴ Consequently, there was much talk in the Empire about working in harmony with the Christians in order to make the new won liberty a reality.

In the aftermath of the proclamation of the constitution there were large prison outbreaks in Macedonian towns like

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3. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 453.
 4. Ibid., enclosure in Vice-Consul Doughty-Wylie to Lowther, Konya, August 1, 1908.

Drama and Salonica. The populace in general had taken a sympathetic attitude by choosing to see these people as languishing in prisons solely because of Hamidian misgovernment and despotism, and as such they deserved to be set free. In a number of cases in Macedonia, the younger C.U.P. officers encouraged this mass exodus from prisons,⁵ especially since most of the escapees had been imprisoned for political crimes under the old regime. Prison outbreaks occurred in Anatolia as well, but of a different nature. When the troops returned from Salonica to Smyrna they opened the jails and set all the prisoners free. As a result, nearly three thousand criminals of various types -- petty thieves, murderers and others -- were suddenly let loose all over the vilayet of Smyrna. In Konya, after getting tired of crying themselves hoarse for liberty, the prisoners attacked and killed two guards. In the subsequent firing that took place a number of prisoners were also killed. At this point, the Committee wired from Salonica that in future such actions as throwing open prisons would be dealt with mercilessly. This

5. Bonham to Lowther, August 1, 1908 enclosures 3 and 4 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 447.

certainly had an effect; and after mid-August no such prison outbreaks were reported.

After the granting of the constitution on July 23 the position of the palace 'camarilla' became precarious. From the beginning the C.U.P. took a strong attitude against the former advisers of Abdulhamid. The most hated of all was the Sultan's second secretary, Izzet Pasha, and the Committee wanted to remove him from office immediately. After a good deal of vacillation, Abdulhamid gave in and exiled him to Damascus.⁶ It was soon apparent that Izzet had not left for Damascus and it was rumoured that he had taken refuge in a steamer sailing for Egypt.⁷ The rumour was proven wrong; instead Izzet escaped to England in a British ship named 'Maria'. A prominent deputation headed by Enver Bey visited the British consul, Charles Lamb, in Salonica to protest Izzet's escape. The C.U.P. deputation made it clear that the protection of a notorious criminal such as Izzet by the British government would cause unnecessary rift between the two countries and the

6. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 199.

7. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 208.

Committee wanted him to be returned to them.⁸ The consul refused the request with the explanation that under the existing rules of extradition between the two countries there was nothing he could do.

The other undesirable elements of the Sultan's 'camarilla' were Tahsin Pasha, his first secretary of thirteen years, Ramsi Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, Mendou Pasha, the Minister of Marine, Fehim Pasha, the former Head of the Secret Police, Selim Pasha, the Minister of Forests and Mines, and others.⁹ Fehim Pasha, a favourite of the Sultan, was exiled to Bursa sometime before the outbreak of the revolution because of too much opposition to him within the palace circles. Fehim's notorious activities in the capital reached a point where the Sultan was unable to protect him any longer. As soon as the constitution was proclaimed, Fehim tried to escape from Bursa to Europe, but, during the first leg of his journey, he was accosted by an irate crowd and lynched in the little town of Yeni

8. Lamb to Lowther, Salonica, August 2, 1908 enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 462.

9. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 6, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 217. Also Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, July 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 204.

Shahir.¹⁰ Selim Pasha, the Minister of Forests and Mines, managed to escape from the country with the connivance of the Italian Embassy in Constantinople.¹¹ Mendow Pasha, the Minister of Marine had consistently robbed the country and amassed a fortune for himself. He was dismissed by the Sultan and the same course was followed in the case of Ramsi Pasha, the Minister of the Interior.¹² Tahsin Pasha was exiled to the interior of Anatolia in ignominy.

Most of the dismissals occurred because of the pressure put on the Sultan by the C.U.P. from behind the scenes. Through the Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, and after his dismissal on August 7, 1908, through the new Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha, the Committee had let the Sultan know in no uncertain terms that a further continuance in power of his former advisers would not be tolerated. The C.U.P. also propogandized to win popular support for the dismissals. It urged the departments of Police and Justice

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10. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 462.
 11. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, July 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 204.
 12. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 452.

to put the 'camarilla' under detention. After the escapes of Izzet and Selim the C.U.P. were worried lest the rest of the corrupt officials would succeed in fleeing abroad with the connivance of foreign missions in Turkey. Apart from the ones already mentioned, the important members of Abdulhamid's inner circle were put under detention in the Ministry of War by the new government. While being removed from their houses to the ministry buildings the notorious chamberlains of Abdulhamid, Rehib and Faik Pashas were roughly handled by onlookers.¹³ Faik Pasha was the Crown prosecutor in the trial of Midhat Pasha at the beginning of the Sultan's reign and had played an important part in throwing the latter in the dungeons of Yemen. Others also received similar treatment from the angry mob. Head of the Ordinance Department, Zeki Pasha and the deposed Prefect of Constantinople, Reshid Pasha, were beaten up by the crowds.¹⁴ Sheik Abdulhuda, a well known Pan-Islamic ideologue and the chief perpetrator of the Armenian massacres of 1895 and 1896, was saved from lynching only because of

13. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 462.

14. Ibid.

the strong physical protection given him on his way to detention.

The newly arrived British Ambassador to Turkey, Sir Gerard Lowther, was approached on a number of occasions by the friends and relatives of the detainees to put in a good word for them at the Porte. Lowther met the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, on several occasions on behalf of detainees and obtained his promise to get their release. In most cases, the Grand Vizier kept his promises. The British dragoman Fitzmaurice was also active making representations in various quarters to secure the release of the arrested individuals by putting pressure on the C.U.P. He met privately with prominent Unionists like Ahmed Riza, Nazim Bey, Talaat Bey and others and requested them to refrain from taking people into custody without any due process of law. He warned them that it would be harmful to the image of the new government abroad, especially in Great Britain with her long parliamentary traditions. Fitzmaurice also told the Unionists that such actions were reminiscent of the old regime and not in keeping with the aims of a Constitutional Government.

The distrust of Abdulhamid, as mentioned previously, was deepseated and Said Pasha, in spite of his disagreements with the Sultan, was still suspect in the eyes of the

Committee. Consequently, it was only natural that on August 7, two weeks after the proclamation of the constitution, he was dismissed from the Grand Vezirate and Kiamil Pasha nominated to that position. Before forming his new ministry Kiamil consulted the C.U.P. and secured their approval. The latter made certain that the new cabinet was composed of strong opponents of the old regime.* Yet the

* For instance, Ekrem Bey, a well known literary figure and the minister of evkaf had undergone considerable suffering as a result of Hamidian despotism. Same was true of Arif Pasha, the new Minister of Marine. He was renowned for his honesty and integrity. Interestingly enough, Arif's father also headed the Ministry of Marine immediately after the Crimean war. He was the commander of the Turkish squadron in Crimea and was well known in British naval circles of the day.

Other members of Kiamil's cabinet were: Tewfik Pasha - Foreign Affairs, Reshid Akif Pasha - Interior, Rejab Pasha - War, Ziya Pasha - Finance, Hassan Fehmi Pasha - Justice, Gabriel Efendi - Public Works, Cordato Efendi - Mines and Forests, Hakki Bey - Public Instruction, Tewfik Pasha - President of the Council of State.

In accordance with the constitution, two Christians, Gabriel Efendi and Cordato Efendi, were members of this cabinet. Rejab Pasha the Minister of War, who was popular in the army, died within two weeks of his nomination to the ministerial post. This was a great blow to the Young Turks as he was one of their strongest supporters in the cabinet.

For more on the above see:
Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 227.

Also: Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 12, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 473.

Committee, at this time, showed no desire to assume power directly. While it carried the prestige of successfully concluding an insurrection and the mystique of a secret society, it lacked experience in governmental administration.¹⁵ Mehmed Javid, a top-ranking unionist and a future Finance Minister of Turkey, explained to Hohler, the first secretary of the British embassy, that the Young Turks "were all young men who lacked experience in administrative work, however much they might have studied; also the respect, which in all countries is conceded to age, is far greater here than elsewhere."¹⁶

There were also other reasons which prevented the Committee from assuming power immediately. The Committee of Union and Progress had no centralized nationwide organization. Any real organization that it had was centred in the Macedonian provinces with its Salonican headquarters and, when the insurrection succeeded, the limited number of branches in the rest of the Empire were totally unprepared to seize control of the administration.¹⁷ Also, under Hamidian despotism, various secret societies had

15. Ahmad, The Young Turks, pp. 15-18.

16. Ibid., p. 18.

17. Ibid.

mushroomed in the Empire, but were scattered, isolated and unknown to each other. With the revival of the constitution, all of them came into the open, with divergent policies and no recognized leadership.¹⁸ Under these circumstances, the committee could not assume power openly and, hence, they wisely left it in the hands of veteran statesmen like Said and Kiamil Pashas. Thus this dispersal of power between the palace, the Porte and the Committee became the dominant feature of the Empire till the deposition of Abdulhamid in April 1909. For a number of months, the Porte and the Committee, despite constant disagreements, were forced to cooperate because of their mutual distrust of the palace.

In early August, the first struggle between the executive and the C.U.P. occurred over the right to appoint the Ministers of War and Marine.¹⁹ According to Article 27 of the 1876 constitution, the Sultan was invested with the powers to appoint the Ministers of War and Marine. Article 10 of the revived constitution, announced on August

18. Ibid., p. 19.

19. Ibid.

2, 1908 in the Tanin,* reiterated these powers of the Sultan. This meant that, in the last analysis, Abdulhamid would still be able to control the crucial armed forces. In addition, as in 1876, the Sultan was also given the prerogative to appoint the Grand Vizier and the Sheik-ul-Islam. The C.U.P. were unwilling to let the Sultan have any voice in the appointment of the Ministers of War and Marine. Consequently, they opposed Article 10 of the constitution and strongly attacked Said Pasha for drafting it.²⁰ The Committee were also suspicious of Said Pasha for having released common criminals along with political prisoners. They also held the Grand Vizier responsible for the escape of Izzet and other corrupt officials of the old regime. In their fight against Said, the Committee also secured the assistance of Cemaluddin Efendi, the Sheik-ul-Islam, who steadfastly held to the view that Abdulhamid

* The other fourteen clauses of the charter guaranteed the inviolability of domicile, freedom from arbitrary arrest, permission to travel abroad, freedom of joint commercial ventures with foreigners, equality of all Ottomans, and projects to reorganize the ministries and provincial administration with the approval of parliament.

See Ahmad, p. 19.

20. Ibid., p. 20.

did not have the right to appoint the two ministers to the cabinet. Said had earlier justified his position with the argument that since the Sultan was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, it was only natural that he should have the rights to appoint ministers of the armed forces.²¹ His critics in the cabinet, along with the C.U.P. and Cemaluddin, argued that the offices were civil and not military in character and, hence, the Sultan had no authority to appoint his nominees to the two positions. In the face of such stiff opposition, Said Pasha was forced to resign his office on August 5, 1908.

With this background of internal developments, we will now take a look at the immediate foreign reaction to the events of July, 1908. The Young Turk Revolution had caught all the nations of the world, big or small, by surprise and in that one respect the immediate foreign reaction to the revolution was identical. The interpretations varied according to the extent to which the national interests of the countries concerned were affected. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the impact of the revolution abroad, i.e. among the powers and

21. Ibid.

Turkey's Balkan neighbours, the ones who had more than a passing interest in the affairs of the Empire.

In the Foreign Office the official view was that the event had evoked the warmest sympathy in Great Britain and the regeneration of Turkey was earnestly desired. Barclay, the acting ambassador, was instructed to convey to the Grand Vizier that past British interventions in Macedonia, Armenia and other parts of the Empire were never motivated by animosity towards Turkey, but were designed to improve the administration of the districts and once this had been established there would be no further British interventions.²² Furthermore:

"In view of the statements made at the Porte that the bands have disappeared during the last few days, His Majesty's government, having no desire to cause embarrassment to the new Turkish Government, and having confidence in the determination of the Grand Vizier to maintain order and security of life and property for all in Macedonia, are reconsidering the question of making any further representations in this sense so long as tranquility prevails and an earnest effort is made to preserve it."²³

22. Grey to Barclay, Foreign Office, July 27, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 134.

23. Ibid.

Nonetheless, Barclay was instructed not to make any public announcements regarding future British position on Armenia or Macedonia. Such announcements could be made only after consultation with the Powers and even then on a collective basis. With the differing interests of the Powers, it certainly was a foregone conclusion that it would have been possible to work out a uniform position for the Empire among the powers. Hence, this initial British response had no further significance other than being a vague expression of sympathy towards the Young Turk cause.

The foreign staff officers in Macedonia were rebuffed on a number of occasions by the local authorities.²⁴ Very few Turks were willing to accept directions from the British or French officers.²⁵ Consequently, the British staff officers were given orders not to perform their duties with the gendarmerie until further orders to the contrary. There was no doubt the Young Turk officers, who considered the very presence of foreign officers in Macedonia an

24. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 27, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 193.

25. Barclay to Grey, Constantinople, July 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 198.

insult, were consciously trying to make the work of the foreign gendarmerie (see Chapter I) more difficult. On occasions, they expressed this sentiment openly. To cite an example, the Turkish military attaché in St. Petersburg told the British ambassador that one of the major aims of the Young Turks was to rid Macedonia of the foreign elements, despite their intentions of keeping good relations with all the powers.²⁶ Hence, it was up to the Powers to show faith in the new movement by withdrawing the foreign gendarmerie.

When the new Turkish government decided to invite foreign experts to undertake reforms of the navy, police, army and finance, Lowther, the British ambassador, was approached to find out the British response to such a scheme.²⁷ In the beginning it concerned only the army and Von Der Goltz was the person the Turks had in mind for the task. The attitude of the Foreign Office was that any such selection should be postponed till the Turkish Parliament had met in December and the position of the constitutional government had firmly

26. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, July 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/544 No. 130.

27. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 231.

been established.*

Gerard Lowther's welcome on his arrival in Constantinople was extremely cordial. He was met at the Sirkeji railway station by a huge crowd and a number of speeches were made heralding a new era in Anglo-Turkish relations.²⁸ The performance was repeated while Lowther was returning to the embassy after his first audience with Abdulhamid on August 7. The entire four mile route was thronged with people and a number of friendly speeches were made in front of the Sublime Porte and the British embassy by members of the C.U.P.²⁹ Such demonstrations and speech making

* In the words of Grey: "The question of the appointment of foreigners is one for grave consideration, and as there are so many distinguished Turkish Generals, it may be found that one of them would be considered by the army to be more acceptable. If foreigners other than Englishmen, were nominated immediately as Financial and Military Advisers. Much disappointment would certainly be felt here. We do not, however, desire to oppose the employment of General Van Der Goltz in particular, nor to be responsible in any way for influencing the decision of the Turks with regard to the appointment of an expert."

See Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, August 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 161.

28. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 218.
29. Ibid.

continued unabated for a number of weeks after the restoration of the constitution. Here is the sample of a speech delivered by the spokesman of the medical students that demonstrated in the British embassy garden in early August.

"We have come hither to tender the sincere sentiments of our free hearts to Great Britain. May that country, which is the establisher of absolute justice, be ever prosperous, ever more powerful than any other place in the world, may her battle-ships fill the sea; may the shadow of her ships cover the land. We know England as a protectress of humanity and freedom throughout the whole world. For this we love the English. We are the weak medical students of a nation which desires learning and progress. In the name of a hapless nation streaking in its heart we entreat Great Britain to be the official witness of the freedom we have obtained. Long live England! Long live freedom!"³⁰

The Turkish Ambassador in London attempted to gain Grey's support in securing the non-intervention of Bulgaria in Macedonia. The ambassador was not too concerned about Serbian or Greek intrigues since he considered the latter to be in a weak position to interfere in Turkish affairs. It is not clear why he underestimated the Greek potential for intrigue. As he was uncertain about Bulgaria, he approached the Foreign Office to use its influence in

30. Barclay to Grey, Therapia, August 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 427.

Sofia.³¹ Grey promised to use all the influence within his power to discourage outside movements from upsetting the reform programme in Macedonia. The Turkish Ambassador also sought more British investments in the Empire, which according to him had been dwindling for a number of years. Grey gave the unsatisfactory internal state of the Empire as the reason and promised further inflow of British capital under improved conditions.³² There were also contacts at other levels between prominent members of the C.U.P. and the Foreign Office. In mid-August Ahmed Riza who was still in Paris had a discussion with Bertie, the British Ambassador. He was introduced to Bertie by Sherif Pasha, the son of a Kurdish chieftain and a one time foreign minister of Turkey.³³ At this time there was a rumour being circulated to the effect that a coup on the Turkish model was being hatched in Egypt. Riza was taken along as a spokesman of the Young Turks to assure the British that, in the event of any such developments, the

31. Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, August 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 338.

32. Ibid.

33. ^{Ambassador} / Bertie to Grey, Paris, August 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 315.

insurgents in Egypt would receive no support from Constantinople.³⁴ Riza also wrote a letter to Grey defining the views and aspirations of the Young Turks. The main object of the letter was to obtain the approval of the Powers to the Young Turk programme of building the base for a constitutional government without foreign intervention in Macedonia and elsewhere.

The relations between France and the new Turkish administration during the first months of the revolution were more or less similar to those described above between Britain and the Young Turks. France with her investments and in her role as the protector of Catholics in the Empire had considerable interests in Turkey, but she was in no way committed to a preservation of Hamidian despotism. If the Near Eastern question could be solved along a line which would lessen German influence without upsetting the French position, it would have been quite acceptable in Paris. As the Young Turk revolution was interpreted in many quarters as a blow to German prestige and economic interests, this was the way it was understood by most French observers of the scene. Consequently the relations between the two governments, Turkey and France, were amicable. The French Minister of Finance, Caillaux, who was in Constantinople during the early part

34. Ibid.

of August, put pressure on the Porte to hire a French financial expert³⁵ to restructure the Turkish economy.* Lowther in Constantinople wanted to talk the Grand Vizier out of this scheme, but he was advised by the Foreign Office to desist. The Foreign Office felt it unlikely the Turks would accept a foreign financial adviser and an

35. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, August 9, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 221.

* In 1875, the Ottoman Government defaulted the charges on a foreign debt of two hundred million pounds sterling and six years later a contract was concluded between the Porte and the representatives of its foreign and domestic creditors for the resumption of payments on Ottoman bonds. An agreement called the Decree of Mouharrem (named after the Turkish month in which it was drafted) established European control over a part of the imperial revenues and this newly constituted international body was called the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. Its executive Committee, variously known as the "Council", the "Public Debt," or merely the "Debt" was composed of six foreign delegates representing Britain, Holland, France, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary. A seventh member looked after Turkish interests. Being composed of diverse nationalities, the Council represented seven differing forces. No single power was able to obtain preponderance of influence in the financial affairs of the Empire. In reality, the competition was between Britain, France and Germany. Italy and Austria-Hungary had only a limited capacity to export capital and, as a result, their interests clustered around the German Deutsche Bank. The British and French interests similarly were centred around the Anglo-French Ottoman Bank. Hence, in pursuance of their further interests, Britain, France and Germany vied with one another to get their own nationals nominated to the various advisory positions opening up in the Ottoman Empire.

See, D. Blaisdell in European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire, New York, 1929, pp. 1, 2, 236.

For the investment of European capital in the Ottoman Empire generally see Herbert Feis, Europe: the World's Banker, 1870-1914, New Haven, 1930.

unnecessary British intervention in the affair would cause friction with France, the ally of Great Britain. Lowther was told not to raise the question unless the Turks did so themselves first.³⁶ In such a case, the ambassador was advised to dissuade the Turks from hiring a French financial expert. In the last analysis, the Turks did hire a French advisor, but British sentiments were more than appeased when the services of a British admiral were sought to reorganize the navy.*³⁷

36. Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, August 12, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 148.

* In mid-November, 1908, Charles Laurent, a Frenchman, was appointed Financial Adviser to the Porte. In December of the same year Admiral Douglas Gamble of the British Navy was appointed to reorganize the Ottoman Navy. In January 1909, the Porte also hired an Englishman, Richard Crawford, as the Customs Adviser.

See: Bertie to Grey, Paris, September 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 369.

Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, December 8, 1908, in F. O. 371/559, No. 476 and

Grey to Rifaat Pasha, Foreign Office, January 4, 1909, in F. O. 371/559, unnumbered.

37. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 21, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 235.

In Russia, the news of the revolution was received with apprehension. Russia did not like the prospect of having a rejuvenated Ottoman Empire as neighbour as she was afraid of the effect this would have on her own suppressed Muslim populations, in the Caucasus and the Central Asian Khanates of Bokhara, Khiva and Samarkand. Moreover, three years earlier in 1905, the autocracy had been forced to give a fairly broad-based representative government. Nicholas II acceded to the wishes of the liberal elements in Russia with great reluctance and even then only in the midst of extreme political turmoil. Endless political assassinations and Russia's humiliating defeat in 1905 in her war with Japan, coupled with the increasing degeneration of her economic and social structure, had finally forced the Tsar into giving this broad-based representative government. Nicholas II, unlike his father Alexander III* who

* Abdulhamid admired Alexander III and he approved the harsh way in which Alexander suppressed the revolutionaries. When the Sultan was congratulated by his officers on the defeat of his old enemy Russia by Japan in 1905, his reaction was not one of elation. He said that the event called for no great jubilation because the defeat of the Tsar was a blow to the principle of autocracy and the only autocrats left in Europe were himself and the Tsar of Russia. His words were: "I have no reason to be pleased with the result of the war. It will, in all likelihood, bring about a revolution in Russia. The Tsar is the last absolute ruler in Europe, except myself, and anything that shakes his throne will shake mine as well."

See Allen Upward, East End of Europe, London, 1908, p. 345. Also Charles Eliot, Turkey in Europe, London, 1907, p. 426.

successfully quashed the revolutionary movement in Russia after the assassination of his father Alexander I in 1881, was unable to contain the revolutionary tide and finally gave in to liberal demands in order to avoid a complete catastrophe. In other words, when Nicholas finally agreed to convene a Duma (parliament) it was done against his will. As a result, at the first opportune moment, the Tsar dissolved the First Duma (1906) and the electoral laws were changed in favour of the wealthy and propertied classes. By 1908, the conservative forces were once again in full ascendance in Russia.

It was during this period of conservative reaction that the Young Turk Revolution broke out and, hence, it was not surprising that the official conservative press spoke out against the restoration of the constitution in Turkey. Novoe Vremya, the prominent conservative Petersburg newspaper, edited by Chekov's friend Alexey Suvorin, focused its attention only on the nationalistic character of the Young Turk aspirations.³⁸ Novoe Vremya, along with the rest of the conservative press establishment in Petersburg and Moscow, also interpreted the Young Turk Movement as essentially antagonistic to the interests of the non-Muslims in the Empire. The memorandum submitted to the consuls by the C.U.P. promising equal civil rights for all

38. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, July 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 340.

Turkish subjects regardless of race or nationality was seen as a hoax meant for foreign consumption. The newspapers also accused the officers who were in actual administrative control of various districts in Macedonia as following a policy directly opposed to the professed aims of the Committee.

As to the Russian socialist press abroad, it did not give too much prominence to affairs in Turkey as it was preoccupied with problems of its own. The Russian socialists abroad, in cases where they did not view the Young Turk movement as no more than a power-play by discontented elements of the military and bureaucracy with little consequence to the populace, were not sufficiently acquainted with Turkey to comment on her affairs. Moreover, in 1908, there were few adherents of the socialist cause within the Ottoman Empire. With the exception of some Armenian exiles in Russia, who slipped across the Turkish frontier to propagate their views, few in the Ottoman Empire were exposed to socialist ideas and no mass conversions occurred as a result of the former's activities. The Muslims were apathetic and so were the majority of the Armenians themselves. Also Turkey played no role in the international socialist congresses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, as a result, was unable to influence the thinking among European socialists. For instance, in the famous international socialist congress of 1907 in Frankfurt, which was attended by all the famous socialists and revolutionaries of the time -- Wilhelm and Karl

Liebnecht, Jean Jaures, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Angelica Balabanov, Plekhanov, August Bebel and others -- none represented Turkey, despite the fact delegates were present from far away places such as India and Persia.

The official Petersburg view, ostensibly, was to leave the Turks alone, provided the plight of the Slavic races in Macedonia were remedied. Otherwise the Christians were assured of full support from Russia. To this extent, Russia agreed with Great Britain that the Turkish administration should be given an opportunity to consolidate and remedy the situation in Macedonia without undue foreign interference.

In Vienna as in Great Britain and France, the Turkish constitution evoked a great deal of interest. The initial feeling was one of skepticism and the local press was non-committal merely stating the obvious. The Austrian conservatives, which included the officials of the Empire, were not at all happy at the prospect of a constitutional Turkey. This made Bosnia-Herzeogovina the only area in the Balkan peninsula without a paper constitution. The Austrian government also did not look forward to the idea of having to deal with a constitutional, anti-foreign Turkey, which they feared would be a tougher adversary in commercial dealings, unlike the Palace clique. Certain sections of the press interpreted the introduction of a constitution in the Empire as detrimental

to the policies of Britain and Russia in Macedonia as this would put an end to the application of the Reval schemes. They even prophesied a total withdrawal of the foreign gendarmerie from Macedonia, though there were no indications of this nature. The movement of 1876 was seen as the work of an active minority, whereas 1908 was the expression of the will of the people. Under such circumstances, this section of the Austrian press, with the Reichpost as the primary spokesman, saw the beginning of the end of ambassadorial rule in Paris.³⁹ They saw the whole movement as anti-foreign, rather than anti-despotic with the permanent establishment of European tutelage as the grievance and not the misrule of the Sultan. There were other newspapers which took an opposing point of view on the question of foreign intervention. Fremdenblatt, for example, was of the opinion that foreign intervention was not finished in Turkey by any means, since neither Britain nor Russia had withdrawn their proposed schemes of reform for Macedonia.⁴⁰ This newspaper took the point of view that as Austria-Hungary wished well for the peoples of Macedonia, she should work in cooperation with the powers. By stating the obvious, nowhere did the Austrian

39. Ambassador Carnegie to Grey, Vienna, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 104.

40. Ibid.

pres or officials discuss the problems that really affected them and thus managed to hide the true significance of the Young Turk Revolution, as it affected the Monarchy's interests, from the Austrian public. In January, 1908, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Baron d'Aehrenthal, had announced his intention of linking the existing railway of Bosnia through the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar with the Mitrovica-Salonica line.⁴¹ Such developments, among other things would have definitely separated Serbia from Montenegro preventing their union. Also this would have deprived Serbia of an Adriatic outlet. Austria followed her railway campaign with a smear campaign against Serbia and, at the outbreak of the Young Turk revolt, the smear campaign was at its height. According to Aehrenthal, on the completion of the connections of the railway systems of Bosnia and Turkey, it would be possible for Austrian trade to move in the direction of Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. With the speedy connection of a railway line between Turkey and Greece (Salonica-Larissa), Aehrenthal hoped to establish a direct Vienna-Budapest-Sarajevo-Athens-Piraeus line that would be the shortest route from central Europe to Egypt and India.⁴²

Austria formally requested the Sanjak Railway Concession in Constantinople on December 27, 1907, assuring Abdulhamid

41. Wank, S. Aehrenthal and the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar Railway Project, Slavonic and East European Review, XLII, 1963-64, pp. 356-57.

42. Ibid., passim.

that the Monarchy's Balkan policy was a peaceful one and minimized the military importance of the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, despite the fact that in September, 1907, in a confidential memorandum, Aehrenthal had minimized the economic importance of the Sanjak and stressed its political value. Finally with Germany's assistance, Austria successfully persuaded the Sultan to issue an irade on January 31, 1908, giving the Austro-Hungarian Government a concession for the Sanjak railway.

When the Young Turks seized power in Turkey, Austria was left in a quandry. She gained the railway concession under the old regime and now she was uncertain as to the attitude of the new regime towards the Monarchy's designs on the Balkans. The Young Turk Revolution also made it imperative that Austria came to some swift decisions on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been awarded the Monarchy for temporary occupation in 1878 under Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. It was stipulated in the Treaty that Austria should eventually evacuate the two provinces, without actually prescribing a time-table for withdrawal. The Turks, even under Abdulhamid had steadfastly held to the view that the loss of the two provinces were only temporary and that Austria was under treaty obligation to return the provinces to the Ottoman Empire at a future date. As a result, the Austrian Foreign Office, when it heard of the constitutional restoration in Turkey, became greatly

preoccupied with the Bosnian question, but it carefully avoided any open discussion of the subject. The question of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be discussed in detail in the ensuing chapter.

✓ When the revolution broke out in Turkey in 1908, a raging controversy was going on in the German press about the waning power of the Reich in the Near East.* The revolution was as

* It all started out with a rumour in the German press in May and June that Von Marschall was going to be recalled from Constantinople as a concession to Russia and Britain. Apparently, the rumour was started by an unknown diplomat in Berlin, but the news was given wide coverage in South German newspapers and the public indignation was great because of Marschall's popularity. From the Von Marschall question the controversy extended further to other aspects, where even trifling matters were given great diplomatic significance. For instance, Germans had built a hospital in Turkey in 1844 with German money and it was stipulated in the statutes of the institution that only Germans or German protected subjects in Turkey would be elected to serve on the committee which made policy decisions. The fact that a Swiss under Austrian protection in early 1908 was elected the chairman of the committee in violation of the statutes as well as the decision that only six out of nine members of the committee need be Germans was cited as an example of German diplomatic failure in Constantinople. The German colony in Constantinople was reported as being against this policy and the government was asked to do something about it. From this unimportant incident the conclusion was drawn that the Swiss, Austrians and others were slowly gaining the upper hand everywhere in the Ottoman Empire at the expense of Germans. In the Anatolian Railway German was being replaced by French as the official language, despite the fact the line was constructed by German engineers and German capital. The simple fact that most Turks knew more French than German was forgotten in the heat of the argument. The contract for the line which was being doubled at the time from Haidar-Pasha to Pendik was given to the French assisted by Swiss engineers and the irrigation projects in the Konya plain were entrusted in the care of a Dutchman, who in turn was assisted by more Swiss engineers and Levantine assistants. German diplomacy was blamed for all the reverses and one newspaper lamented that the only German involved in these projects was working in the capacity of an insignificant clerk, which undoubtedly was a lot of nonsense. For more see: Cartwright to Grey, Munich, June 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 72.

unexpected in Germany as elsewhere yet the pretensions were otherwise. The Germans conveyed the impression to the world that the Imperial Government was consulted by the Sultan before agreeing to bestow the constitution. The German press used the occasion to attack Great Britain and to over-play the disinterested role of Germany in Turkey. The South German paper Neueste Nachrichten attributed the granting of the constitution as the only realistic policy against British intrigues in Constantinople.⁴³ The newspaper also attacked Britain for stifling parliamentary democracy in Egypt and India and the Turkish incident was seen as a blow to the former's aspirations in the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, it predicted the parliamentary experiment in Turkey as destined for failure as was the case with Persia two years earlier. The Frankfurt Gazette saw Germany as the only disinterested party in the Turkish situation.⁴⁴ It predicted that once the Palace "Camarilla" was out of power the new regime would put an end to the petty intrigues of the powers. According to the newspaper, Russia had no interest in a stable Macedonia, since the last thing she desired was a regenerated Ottoman Empire. The Balkan states desired it even less as they were unprepared to put an end

43. Cartwright to Grey, Munich, August 6, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 88.

44. Ibid.

to their visions of aggrandizement. All taken into account, Germany was only interested in the prospect of seeing "in Turkey a strong and free people living under the rule of an enlightened sovereign."⁴⁵ Germany did not covet any Turkish possessions, whereas both Britain and Russia did. The newspaper also went on to say that a war between Germany and Turkey was impossible, but could not say the same with regard to the other powers. War between Turkey and these powers had taken place in the past and there was nothing to show that a similar situation would not arise again.⁴⁶ The German newspapers or public officials said very little about the constitution as such and this was a reflection of their basic dislike of a democratic government in Turkey.

The official position was put forward by the Kaiser in a conversation with the British Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles.⁴⁷ The German Emperor attributed the revolution to be a consequence of the Reval meeting. The Young Turks feared that a close understanding between Britain and Russia would lead to the imposition of reforms in Macedonia by foreign agencies and, to thwart the Sultan from yielding

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47.. Ambassador Lascelles to Grey, Hamburg, August 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 348.

to such pressures, they decided to act. According to the Kaiser, the carefully organized movement was not directed against the person of the Sultan, but only against his corrupt entourage. Once he realized his inability to oppose the movement, the Sultan was wise to place himself at the head of it, thus acquiring considerable popularity. The Emperor also warned the British ambassador, in case Turkey became a genuine constitutional state, similar demands would be placed upon Great Britain by the peoples of India and Egypt.⁴⁸ It was another way of telling Great Britain not to get overly involved on the side of the constitutionalists in Turkey.

It would also be useful to take a look at the reaction of Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria to the upheaval in Turkey. The change of regime in Turkey occurred, while Serbia was in the middle of her 'pig war' with Austria. Until the abdication of King Milan in 1889, Serbia was firmly committed to a pro-Austrian course. Alexander, also of the Obronovich dynasty, who succeeded Milan vacillated between Austria and Russia in a futile effort to find support for himself and his unpopular Queen Draga. In 1903, both Alexander and Queen Draga were murdered which led to a change of dynasty and to an alteration in general national policy. As a result of this change of national policy, dependence on Austria gave way to a more independent and nationalistic course and it was reflected in the

'Pig War', an economic conflict with heavy political overtones. The main reason for the 'Pig War' was Austria's continued attempts at dominating Serbian politics and economics. In April 1881, Serbia had signed a trade agreement whereby a customs union was established between the two countries. As a result of this agreement, Austrian manufactured goods and Serbian agricultural products were exchanged virtually without any customs duties. Thus Serbian agricultural products were dependent on Austrian markets and her industries continued to be dominated by the Monarchy.

With the accession of Peter Karadjordjevich to the Serbian throne in 1903, Serbia started to take a more independent attitude in her commercial dealings with Austria-Hungary. In the meanwhile, Hungarian agricultural interests were demanding protection against Serbian products. When the Austro-Serbian tariff treaty came up for renewal in 1905 a stalemate ensued between the two countries. Serbia used this opportunity to sign a far-reaching trade agreement with Bulgaria, which projected an eventual customs union between the two countries within a decade. Austria interpreted this as a Serbo-Bulgar intrigue, with Russian backing, to curb the Monarchy's influence in the Balkans. Hence, Austria demanded that the Bulgarian treaty be annulled and, when Serbia refused to comply, the former closed her borders to further imports of

Serbian livestock under the pretext that Serbian cattle suffered from diseases. This was how the 'Pig War' between Austria and Serbia started. The Austrian press reminded Serbia that she was dependent on her trade with the Monarchy and if she continued to antagonize Austria she (Serbia) would suffocate in her own swine fat.⁴⁹ Moreover, as a result of the 'Pig War', Serbia gave her arms contracts to France, thus breaking the monopoly of the Austrian Skoda works, which till then was the sole supplier of armaments to Serbia.⁵⁰ The 'Pig War' finally came to an end only in 1910, after the two countries signed a new customs pact and by that time Austria had lost her monopoly of Serbian trade.

As mentioned earlier, when the Young Turk Revolution occurred in July, 1908, Serbia was in the midst of her 'Pig War' with Austria. In Serbia, the popular view of the revolution was that it was a product of German intrigues. The proponents of this view argued that Germany, finally tired of Austria's intrigues in the Balkans and Constantinople, wanted to check her activities in those areas. What method, they asked, could be better than changing the government in Turkey,

49. Vucinich, Wayne. Serbia Between East and West, Stanford, 1964, p. 182.

50. Ibid., pp. 193-98.

since the Young Turks were likely to cancel many of the concessions that Austria had wheedled from Abdulhamid and the palace clique. This belief was also tinged with a certain amount of wishful thinking as what Serbians desired most was something that upset Austrian plans in the Balkans.

The theory of Germans as the instigators of the Young Turk Revolution was not taken seriously by the foreign diplomatic corps in Belgrade. In their eyes, it was a strange argument considering the fact that Germany had made most headway in the Ottoman Empire during the decade before the revolution and they felt that the Reich had little to gain by a change of regime in Turkey. Moreover, without German prestige and backing, Austria would not have obtained the Sanjak Railway Concession and other commercial privileges in Turkey. The British ambassador O'Reilly, reflected the general disbelief among foreign diplomats in Belgrade, about the theory of German intrigue in Constantinople, when he stated that "it is symptomatic of the Serbia mind that the more far-fetched was any story, and the more darkly compounded of high politics and deep intrigue, the more readily did it find acceptance here."⁵¹ The Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not agree with the popular Serbian view. It correctly recognized the

51. Ambassador O'Reilly to Grey, Belgrade, August 6, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 57.

Young Turk revolution as a spontaneous movement, internal in its origins. Serbia was not unhappy at the turn of events as she preferred, for the time, to see Macedonia within the Ottoman structure. In an autonomous Macedonia the Serbs would have been heavily outnumbered by Greeks and Bulgars and this was a prospect they did not desire. Serbia was quite willing to give the new Turkish administration an opportunity to put through reforms and pacification programmes in Macedonia. On the whole, Serbia was quite pleased about the change of order in Turkey as she was now convinced that this would place many obstacles in the way of Aehrenthal on his railway scheme as well as the foreign minister's future designs on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ever since Greek independence was formally recognized by the powers and Turkey by the Protocol of London (1830), the new state's main pre-occupation was to try and liberate those Greek inhabited regions that were still under Turkish rule. This national urge towards fulfillment in the beginning did not directly conflict with the interests of other Balkan nationalities, but it quickly degenerated into a utopian dream of rebuilding the Byzantine Empire under the Greeks. The 'Great Idea' as this conception came to be called became the main ideological and political slogan throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and the repercussions of this orientation

were far-reaching, both in domestic and international politics. Through skilful demagoguery Greek politicians exploited the 'Great Idea' to shelve all pressing internal problems under the pretext that these had to wait until the larger national dream had been realized. The 'Great Idea', during the course of decades, soon expressed itself in the form of uncontrolled and intransigent nationalism and this led to a type of chauvinism which pushed the country into conflict with similarly motivated neighbouring Balkan countries, a conflict which haunts Balkan relations to the present day. The key question in this Balkan struggle was the future of Macedonia, the heart of the peninsula. Macedonia soon became the scene of an intense diplomatic propaganda and armed struggle between all the Balkan nationalities each putting forward historical, demographic and diplomatic arguments to claim the whole area for themselves. The crushing defeat of Greece by Turkey in 1897 put a halt to the 'Great Idea' in its pure form, most Greeks finally recognizing the glaring contradiction between the professed aims of building 'historic Hellas' and the utter bankruptcy of the Greek State. It was understood on all sides that profound structural reforms were needed before another military venture could be carried out successfully.

When the Young Turks upset the power balance in Turkey in 1908, the junior officers in the Greek Army were also

conspiring to introduce a new constitution in Greece to limit the power of the King to intervene in politics as well as to carry out a radical purge of the administrative apparatus. With the temporary relegation of the 'Great Idea' to the background coupled with the Army's desire to institute changes in the country, for once, the Greek press and public were prone to look upon the new developments in Turkey favourably. The Athens press had little room for any other news and, for a number of weeks, various aspects of the revolution were widely covered. Even the chauvinistic newspaper Patria, an unabashed supporter of the 'Great Idea', appeared with a picture of King George and the Sultan side by side and both were acclaimed as the liberators of their people.⁵² A few days earlier, the same Patria had shown nothing but contempt for Abdulhamid. Until the revolution in Turkey, Abdulhamid was known in Greece only for his 'horrendous crimes.' But suddenly the Sultan was portrayed as the saviour of his people. The Greek Patriarch in Constantinople was strongly attacked by the Greek press for making guarded statements to the effect that the Young Turk professions of good will towards minorities alone were not sufficient to change the existing realities of the Empire, since such promises were given in the past with no appreciable effect. The Patriarch cautioned his flock not to be too

52. Ambassador Young to Grey, Athens, August 12, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 117.

optimistic about the turn of events in Turkey, lest they be disappointed in the future.⁵³ The Greek press in unison agreed that the Patriarch's remarks were uncalled for and the latter was accused of being unnecessarily antagonistic toward the leaders of the new regime in Turkey.⁵⁴ A major reason for the Greek rejoicing at the new developments in Turkey was due to the widely held belief that in a constitutional government the Greeks would be more effective in comparison with the other minority groups, as the Greeks considered themselves to be better educated than most other ethnic groups in the Empire. This was only a generally held belief and there is little evidence to substantiate the thesis.

In Sofia, the news of the revival of the constitution was received with scepticism. It was seen as one more of Abdulhamid's delaying actions. Sofia was certain that at the opportune moment Abdulhamid would wrest the power away from the constitutionalists and it would be followed by repressive measures against the Christians and the Young Turks. Within two weeks of the revolution, opinions began to change in the principality.⁵⁵ They recognized that the revolution was there to stay and, whatever happened, Abdulhamid would never be able to make a recovery. Nonetheless, Bulgaria did not

53. Young to Grey, Athens, August 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 17.

54. Ibid.

55. Ambassador Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 71.

want a better administered Macedonia under the C.U.P., as this would have deprived her of excuses for interference in Macedonia. This assertion is all the more true in view of the fact that, after the revolution, the Bulgarian government frequently asked Bulgarian professionals - lawyers, doctors, school teachers and others - who had settled in the principality, to use the privileges of their amnesties granted them by the new Turkish regime, and return to their places of origin in Macedonia.⁵⁶ This element played an important role in later Balkan politics directed against the Turks. Bulgaria also attacked the restoration of the constitution of 1876 as outdated in the conditions of 1908. She argued that the 1876 constitution made no adequate provisions for the exercise of franchise and she accused the new regime of having failed to lay down any regulations in electing the provincial and communal councils with regard to the Christian populations. It is true that the elections of 1876 to the Turkish parliament were highly irregular as the framers of the constitution failed to introduce any specific laws regarding the eligibility of voters and, to that extent, Bulgaria was correct in attacking the constitution of 1876 as obsolete by the standards of 1908. Nonetheless, the accusations were made rather hastily, considering the fact that they were made in

56. Ibid.

the middle of August (1908), barely three weeks after the restoration of the constitution in the Ottoman Empire. The new government in Turkey, despite the revolution, was still faced with the larger problem of having to administer a widely disparate Empire, still very much in the midst of a painful struggle. Between July 20 and August 7, 1908, two Grand Viziers resigned and when Bulgaria made her attacks on Turkey, the new Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, had been in office only for a week. Consequently, the Turkish government had not had the time to work out a procedural method for elections to the parliament or the provincial and communal councils of Christians. Many liberal Turks were aware of the importance of the electoral questions raised by Bulgaria, but with more pressing domestic problems in hand it is only natural that the liberals in the cabinet and C.U.P. postponed these disputes to a future date. When, in mid-September, 1908, it was decided to elect one deputy to the parliament for roughly every fifty-thousand inhabitants, the Bulgarians inside and outside the Empire attacked the Turks. The reason for the attack on this particular occasion was that, under the newly devised electoral laws, the Bulgarians of Macedonia could expect no more than half a dozen deputies in the Ottoman parliament.*

* The elections are discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI.

They wanted special privileges for themselves, but the new Turkish government was not willing to humour them as it would have put them at odds with the Greeks, Serbs and other minorities in the Empire. The extreme nationalist wings of Macedonian organizations wanted to exploit the tenuous situation of the new regime, but they were kept in check by Sofia.⁵⁷

There were also indications to believe that in late July, early August, Abdulhamid made overtures to Prince Ferdinand for collaboration. The Sultan is alleged to have wanted Bulgaria to threaten war on Turkey in order to scare and bring down the Young Turks.⁵⁸ In return, he promised Bulgarian independence without diplomatic interference from Turkey. The offer certainly was attractive to Prince Ferdinand who had visions of himself as the absolute monarch of Bulgaria. This curious suggestion was made to the Bulgarian foreign minister, General Paprikov, by the Imperial Ottoman commissary and Kiamil Pashal certainly had knowledge of it, even if he was not an actual party to the scheme.⁵⁹ Perhaps, such things had a good deal to do with the distrust with which

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57. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, July 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/544, No. 15.
58. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, August 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 71.
59. Ibid.

the Young Turks viewed Kiamil and it became worse with the passage of time. Nothing came of these proposals because of two reasons. Firstly, the C.U.P. was able to assert its power more rapidly than the Sultan had bargained for and secondly, the Bulgarians were uncertain as to who spoke for Turkey. For all they knew, this could be a ploy of the C.U.P. to ensnare them into a trap and the Bulgarians were bent on avoiding a public exposure at all costs.

In diplomacy, the sole motive of the new Turkish regime was to appease the powers. The explanations of Munir Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador to France, widely reported in the Paris press, aptly summed up Turkish diplomatic objectives of those early days. According to Munir, all the educated Turks spoke French and, in most cases, had received a French education.⁶⁰ Moreover, all the modern laws and institutions in Turkey were modelled on France and, consequently, French culture had become a part of Turkish heritage as well. He also said that the role of France during the Crimean war was still remembered in Turkey and given such close ties, the two countries could be nothing but friends. As for England, Turkey always valued her traditional friendship. In the crises of the previous century -- the wars with

60. Bertie to Grey, Paris, August 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/545, No. 312.

Mohamed Ali, the Crimean war, the Cretan rebellion of 1866-69 and the Russo-Turkish war of 1878-79 -- Great Britain had given unstinted support to Turkey. Munir was even so gracious as to say that Great Britain occupied Egypt only as a last resort.⁶¹ She was driven into taking the step and the negotiations for evacuation between the Foreign Office and Constantinople, which took place during 1888-89, failed only because of Turkish ineptitude.⁶²

The Turkish ambassador denied that the constitutional movement was inspired by any anti-German feeling. He quickly pointed out that many of its leaders were German trained military officers. He paid tributes to Germany for her non-interference in Macedonian affairs. Obviously Munir made these statements in Paris to assure the Reich that the Young Turks in no way were hostile to Germany. In the case of Russia, the ambassador claimed the traditional enmity between the two countries had ceased to exist as Russia did not covet Constantinople anymore.⁶³ This obviously was an illusion and the ambassador himself could not have taken it seriously, especially in view of the hostile reception the new regime obtained in St. Petersburg.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

Much of what Munir said was sheer nonsense. For instance, contrary to his pronouncements, all the educated Turks did not speak French, nor were the modern laws and institutions in Turkey solely based on French models. And, as mentioned earlier, the sudden disinterest of Russia in Constantinople and the 'straits' was also untrue. Yet, in these explanations of Munir, we see the new regime's longing to avoid foreign complications at any cost. Unfortunately, less than two months after Munir's Paris press conference, the Empire was once again plunged into a diplomatic crisis as a consequence of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bulgarian declaration of independence. It is to these we have to turn our attention now and the ensuing two chapters will deal with the Bosnian and Bulgarian questions.

CHAPTER IV

CRISIS IN DIPLOMACY:
TURKEY AND THE ANNEXATION
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In the words of one historian:

"It is difficult to judge how sincere the Young Turks may have been in their promises and proclamations of freedom and equality; it is, however, undeniable that the immediate response of Europe and of the Balkan Christians to the heart lifting events of July 1908 was what, in Turkish eyes, could only be described as aggression and betrayal. Austria seized the opportunity to proclaim the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria declared her independence. . . ."¹

Before discussing the Bosnian crisis of 1908, it is necessary to provide a brief historical background of the area. Otherwise, the reader may find it difficult to understand how Bosnia-Herzegovina came to play so explosive a part in the events of 1908. A similar approach will be followed in the next chapter, while discussing the Bulgarian declaration of independence. The main characteristic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is that it is a border area and just as

1. Lewis, Emergence, p. 210.

Alsace-Lorraine is the transition zone between the German and French ethnic groups, Bosnia is the transition zone between the Serbian and Croatian peoples as well as the Orthodox and Catholic religions.² With the Turkish conquest of the provinces in the 15th century, Islam was also introduced into the area. This ethnic and religious diversity explained much of the stormy history of the area, corresponding to the turbulent past of Alsace-Lorraine.³

At the time of the great insurrections of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1875-78) in the nineteenth century, the area had already been under Turkish rule for over four hundred years. Large sections of the local population had already accepted Islam, some in the hope of preserving or improving their status under the conquerors or others like the great feudal lords to retain their lands. The number of Turks, who actually settled in the area, unlike Bulgaria, was very small and, consequently, the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina had more Croat or Serb blood, not Turkish, flowing in their veins.

During the centuries of Turkish occupation, the two provinces virtually governed themselves. Despite the fact

2. Stavrianos, L. S. The Balkans Since 1453, New York, 1961, p. 235.

3. Ibid.

that the Sultan's envoys resided in places like Belgrade, Sarajevo, Travnik and others, the real power lay in the hands of the great Begs, Agas and the Slav feudal families who had converted to Islam in return for privileges. At the turn of the nineteenth century, this small but powerful oligarchy was immune from all western influences, but they were equally hostile to any idea of interference from Constantinople.⁴ The periodic risings which marked the first half of the nineteenth century, were in substance a protest of the old feudal order against the encroaching authority of the Porte. Under Omar Pasha, a Croat who fled the Hapsburg territory and made a successful career in Constantinople, attempts were made to break the power of Bosnian feudalism.⁵ Omar, during 1850-52, tried to reform the administration as well as introduce new methods of taxation in the provinces, for taxation had by now outstripped the means of even the long suffering Bosnian peasantry, but because of the general tendency towards nationalism in the Balkans, the Christian peasantry were more and more inclined to compare their plight with their fellow kinsmen across the frontier in Serbia and Montenegro. By

4. Sumner, B. H. Russia and the Balkans, London, 1962, p. 135. Also Stavrianos pp. 235-237.

5. Ibid.

1850, a close contact had developed between southern Herzegovina and Montenegro and when war broke out between the latter and Turkey, in 1858 and again in 1862, its impact flowed across the frontier into the whole of Herzegovina and Bosnia as well. Thus during the sixties unrest had become a way of life in the two provinces. Its culminating point was the rising of 1875, which began at Nevesinje in southern Herzegovina and, in the beginning, it was purely local in character. But soon it spread into Bosnia and thwarted all Turkish efforts to repress it. The insurgents openly declared their aim of uniting with their kinsmen in Serbia and Montenegro in the event of which one would have witnessed the creation of a single southern Slav federation in the Balkans, which would have not only affected Turkish territorial integrity, but also the interests of the powers, especially Austria and Russia. Hence, it was only natural that the insurrections of 1875 saw the intervention of the powers, once again, in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The insurrections in Bosnia and Herzegovina broke out in July 1875 and until December no real efforts were made by the powers to stop the fighting. Since the creation of the Dual Monarchy the Hungarians had come to play a dominant role within the Habsburg ruling framework and they were averse to the idea of absorbing more Slavs into the Empire as they were constantly in conflict with the existing Slav groups

under their jurisdiction. Consequently, there was much opposition from the Magyars to the idea of an annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia did not wish to destroy the Ottoman Empire, her idea was to simply create a series of autonomous states under Christian rulers in the Balkans, similar to Rumania and Serbia, which in the long run would reduce all Turkish influence in Europe. As a result of this policy, Russia suggested that the two provinces be given autonomy under Turkish suzerainty. The plan was turned down by Austria because of the deep religious divisions within the provinces as well as the well founded fear that a grant of autonomy would lead to similar demands from Bulgaria and a potential war between Turkey and her enemies, Serbia and Montenegro. But by December 1875, the situation had become very serious. There was considerable support from Montenegro and Serbia for the cause of the insurgents. Nicholas of Montenegro, from the beginning of the insurrection, covertly supplied the provinces with arms and ammunition.⁶ Despite his hesitance, King Milan of Serbia was forced by his subjects to support the cause of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians.⁷ The war also brought out all the

6. Anderson, M. S. The Eastern Question, London, 1966, p. 179.

7. Ibid.

Panslav influences in Russia and elsewhere into the open and it soon developed into a sort of crusade against the infidel Turks. Consequently on December 30, 1875 the Andrassy Note, drawn up by the Austrian Foreign Minister, was presented to the powers. It proposed that the "Porte grant the two rebellious provinces religious liberty, that tax-farming there be abolished and that the Turkish government help the peasants of the area to buy land from their lords and thus reduce the acute agrarian discontent which had produced the revolt."⁸ A mixed commission of Christians and Muslims were to supervise the project and the Sultan was asked to give in writing his intentions of carrying out the reforms.⁹ The proposals were accepted by the Powers and Turkey reluctantly agreed to it in early 1876. The proposals failed because of Turkish financial incapacity to put through the reforms as well as the official cynicism within the provinces. The Christian peasantry had absolutely no faith in any Turkish promises. Moreover, the growth of Pan-Slavism everywhere, coupled with the clamour for war against Turkey in Serbia and Montenegro, any hopes of immediate peace became a mere illusion.

Three months later on May 13, 1876 as a result of

8. Ibid., p. 182.

9. Ibid.

discussions between Andrassy and Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, there emerged another proposal known as the Berlin Memorandum. A two month armistice was proposed between the Porte and the insurgents and a more limited programme of reform, in comparison to the earlier Andrassy note, in Bosnia and Herzegovina was suggested and its execution was to be supervised by the consuls of the powers in that area.¹⁰ It was also agreed during this discussion between the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Austria that, in case of Ottoman collapse, the latter was to receive parts of Bosnia and southern Bessarabia would go to Russia. Thus it was in the Berlin Memorandum that Austria, for the first time, openly admitted her interest in occupying the two provinces. The Berlin Memorandum too failed to resolve the dispute because of British objections to its programme. Disraeli, the British premier, complained that the two powers were "asking us to sanction them in their putting the knife to the throat of Turkey, whether we like it or not." The attitude of Great Britain considerably diminished the chances of the Memorandum being accepted by the Turks.

The fate of Bosnia and Southern Slavs at this historical juncture heavily depended on Austria and Russia. Though rivals

10. Seton-Watson, R. W. Britain in Europe, New York, 1968, pp. 516, 517.

in the Balkans, it is often forgotten that the two powers had cooperated with one another during the last two centuries at successive crises, based on mutual recognition of spheres of influence - Austria along the Adriatic in Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia, Russia, along the Black Sea in the Danubian principalities and Bulgaria. Certainly, they often trod on each other's toes, but in the main they had observed the unwritten laws of the previous centuries, a balance of interest and previous mutual understanding before they started their quarrels with Turkey. Hence, it was imperative that the two countries came to an agreement on the present crisis as well. With this in view Alexander II and Franz Joseph, along with their foreign ministers, met in July 1876, at Reichstadt and concluded a secret agreement, with the intention of meeting the rival contingencies of Turkish victory and Turkish defeat.¹¹ In June, 1876, Serbia and Montenegro, finally giving up the policy of covert support to the rebels in Bosnia-Herzegovina, had declared war on Turkey. In case of Turkish defeat, a partition of Turkey in the Balkans was envisaged at Reichstadt.¹² Serbia and Montenegro would be allowed a common frontier and a little extra territory, but Bosnia-Herzegovina

11. Langer, W. L. European Alliances and Alignments, New York, 1956, p. 92.

12. Ibid.

was freely conceded by Russia to Austria, as a price of latter's cooperation in the Balkans. Unfortunately, Serbia suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Turkey and the calculations of Reichstadt became, for the time being, a wasted effort.

By the autumn of 1876, public opinion in Russia was clamouring for war with Turkey. The suppression of the Bulgarian revolt and the continued military occupation of a good part of Serbia by Turkey was too humiliating for the Pan-Slavs in Russia and they wanted their government to do something about it. But the Tsar and his ministers were unwilling to go to war with Turkey without the absolute certainty of Austrian neutrality. Austrian benevolence was doubly important, since, in case of war with Turkey, the former could lead an advance from Transylvania and Galicia that could have cut Russian communications. Consequently, in a series of further secret negotiations dating from September 1876 to March 1877, Russia secured Austria's promise to observe benevolent neutrality in the former's war with Turkey. In return Austria was allowed to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina at a time of her own choosing and Serbia, Montenegro and the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar were to constitute a neutral zone and were to be invaded by the forces of neither power. Russia was allowed to recover southern Bessarabia and the two powers promised to support each other in any future conference of the powers convened to discuss the

territorial changes brought about by the war. It was only after the final signature of this document on March 18, 1877 in Budapest that Russia felt at liberty to declare war on Turkey and it was done five weeks later on April 24, 1877.

Thus the fate of Bosnia had already been decided long before the Congress of Berlin met in June, 1878. Certainly, much diplomatic plotting and scheming went on between the period of the Russo-Turkish war and the Congress of Berlin but time, space and relevancy to this chapter makes it unnecessary to go into the details. Suffice to say that the Anglo-Austrian negotiations of May, 1877, inspired largely by Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, to woo the Austrians away from Russia, did not meet with success in the beginning. It was only after San Stefano and Russia's advocacy of a 'big Bulgaria' that an irate Andrassy, convinced of Russian duplicity and a breach of the secret agreements, began to throw his full weight behind the British in his discussions, which finally led to the Congress of Berlin. Hence, at the Congress, when Lord Salisbury, the British foreign secretary, formally proposed an Austrian mandate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia was in no position to oppose the motion. She had explicitly stated on a number of occasions, during the past two years, that she would not stand in the way of the Monarchy's desire to occupy the two provinces.* In

* A month before the Congress convened, on May 8, 1878, in order to reduce British influence and gain Austrian support on other issues, Russia despatched another secret memorandum to Vienna reasserting their earlier promises to stand by the Monarchy on the Bosnian question.

1878, Austria could have easily annexed the provinces without too much opposition from the powers. That Andrassy and Franz Joseph refrained from this course was due to the possibility of obstruction in both the Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, since there was considerable opposition in the Monarchy to the idea of absorbing an additional one and a half million Slavs into the Empire. The final solution of the problem was thus left to the next generation.*

The next thirty years of Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina was far from a happy prospect to the

* After a series of confused and complicated negotiations Russia on July 13, 1878, agreed to the Austrian occupation of the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar as well. Thus Austria managed to block the possibility of a union of Serbia and Montenegro for another generation. The Turkish government at first refused to comply with the Austrian occupation of the Sanjak or the two provinces. Finally, when Andrassy agreed to sign a document admitting the temporary nature of the Austrian occupation, without affecting the sovereignty of the Sultan over the two provinces, Turkey also put her signature to the Treaty of Berlin.

local inhabitants.* The occupation from the beginning was

* A. J. P. Taylor has partially disputed this view, or perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that he has helped further to confuse the issue. According to him the Habsburgs exported to Bosnia and Herzegovina, its "surplus intellectual production" - administrators, road-builders, archaeologists and ethnographers - and the local people derived the concomitant advantages from this policy. Yet, in the last analysis, Taylor only has contempt for the Austrian efforts. To quote him:

"The two provinces were the 'white man's burden' of Austria-Hungary ----. The two provinces received all the benefits of Imperial rule: ponderous public buildings; model barracks for the army of occupation, banks, hotels, and cafes, a good water supply for the centres of administration and for the country resorts where the administrators and army officers recovered from the burden of Empire. The real achievement of Austria-Hungary was not on show: when the Empire fell in 1918, eighty-eight percent of the population was still illiterate. Fearful of South Slav nationalism, the Habsburg administrators prevented any element of education on self-government. Kallay, the common Finance Minister who directed the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than twenty years, forbade there the circulation of the History of Serbia which he had himself written ---- The Mohammedans were the large landowners, and Habsburg administration therefore preserved the feudal system of land tenure which had been the worst feature of Turkish rule. Even the public buildings were in a bastard-Turkish style, truly expressive of the Imperial spirit. For the Christian majority there was only one change: they could no longer revolt against their rulers. This discharged the 'mission' of the Habsburg dynasty."

See A. J. P. Taylor in The Habsburg Monarchy: 1809-1918, London, 1948, pp. 153-54.

received with the greatest disfavour. The Orthodox Serbs had no desire to exchange Turkish for Austrian rule, but wished to join either Serbia or Montenegro. They distrusted the predominantly Catholic Dual Monarchy as much as their Muslim Ottoman counterpart. The latter in turn resented the transference of authority from Turkish to the Austro-Hungarian, despite the provision that technically they were still the subjects of the Sultan. Moreover, both the religious groups were under the illusion that the occupation was a temporary measure and eventually it would be terminated for something better. With the passage of time they began to realize the permanence of the situation and they started to cooperate on the basis of their common enmity to Habsburg rule.

In addition, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina soon began to realize that the corruption of the Turkish period of control was in no way being changed under the Habsburg rule. The Austro-Hungarians were either unwilling or unable to send well-paid and efficient staff to the two provinces and consequently the administration continued to be as bad as before. The Habsburg officials also failed to understand the local customs and traditions. Each of the three religious groups - Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic - cherished its unique characteristics and held on with great tenacity to the legacy of its past. Muslims who desired to make a pilgrimage to the Ottoman Empire or immigrate from the provinces were often hindered

from doing so. The Orthodox complained of official interference in their civil, military and religious affairs and many fled to Serbia and Montenegro. Despite all the promises, the Habsburgs failed to introduce any effective reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Few changes were made, and these failed to meet the requirements of the time and they were in no way able to check the growth of anti-Habsburg feeling. Such was the situation in 1908.*

The Young Turk revolution caught

* Curiously, just prior to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Austria settled a long standing dispute with the Muslims of the two provinces. In 1900 the Bosnian Muslims had, once again, petitioned the authorities in Sarajevo for self-government in religious and educational matters. The discussion dragged on till 1908, but in that year a complete accord was reached. The unsettled question of the Menschura, namely, granting full powers to the religious head of the Bosnian Muslims by the Sheik-ul-Islam in Constantinople, was also worked out in the following way. By the terms of this new arrangement, Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina were allowed to nominate three persons to the post of Reis-ul-Ulema or head of the church and their names were to be submitted to the Emperor of Austria, who in turn would select one of them. The name of the Emperor's nominee was then submitted to the Sheik-ul-Islam for approval. Thus the ultimate authority was transferred to Constantinople from Vienna. This made a favourable impression on the Muslim inhabitants of the provinces and, as a result, the Bosnian Muslims did not protest strongly against the Austrian annexation of 1908.

See Ambassador Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 1, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 135.

Austria, as elsewhere, by surprise. To Baron d'Aehrenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, the revolution suggested other ideas. He was afraid that he might meet with greater difficulties from the new Turkish régime and, as a result, he came to the conclusion that he must go forward and annex the two provinces.¹³ There was also a more important reason which had immediate significance. Andrassy, in a document presented on July 13, 1878 to the Turkish delegation at the Congress of Berlin had given a solemn promise that the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not only infringe the Sultan's suzerainty, but also the occupation was to be only provisional. In view of the new spirit in Turkey, if it became more necessary to grant political freedom to the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aehrenthal was prepared to forestall by annexation any tendencies on the part of the provinces to leave the Monarchy. Nonetheless, the plan to annex the provinces had taken shape much earlier in the Austrian's mind. When Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, visited Vienna in late September 1907, with the intention of bringing out the 'straits question' before the powers, Aehrenthal told him that he could take no immediate action till his government had decided when to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina.

13. Schmitt, Bernadotte. Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, New York, 1947, p. 78.

Isvolsky made no protest to this suggestion and thus cleverly Aehrenthal was able to link the question of the straits with that of the annexation.¹⁴ While waiting for the Russians to make the next move, by the end of 1907, Aehrenthal secured cabinet approval for annexation at the opportune moment. The moment arrived in the shape of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

In order to obtain the cabinet approval for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aehrenthal had told the ministers that no difficulties would be encountered from Russian quarters. This statement was based solely on the premise of his meeting with Isvolsky in September 1907. The fact that the Russian did not object to the idea of annexation at that meeting in Vienna was no justification for Aehrenthal's optimism, especially in view of the fact that he was not in touch with Isvolsky regarding the question for another year. In other words, the Austrian was putting the cart before the horse when he told the cabinet that there would be no resistance from Russia in the event of an Austrian occupation of the two provinces. It was Aehrenthal's belief that once Russia, as the chief rival of Austria in the Balkans, assented to the annexation of the provinces it would eventually be recognized without difficulty by the remaining powers as well.

14. Ibid.

With this in view, two months after the outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution, he met Isvolsky again at Buchlau on September 15, 1908. At this meeting Aehrenthal spoke of a possible annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina under certain circumstances without defining the exact nature of these circumstances.¹⁵ Neither did he say that any decision had been taken on the question of annexation now that it was imminent. When Aehrenthal asserted that the question was solely the concern of Austria and Turkey, Isvolsky correctly argued that it also included the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.¹⁶ When the Austrian suggested the renunciation of his government's treaty rights to the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, Isvolsky told him that it was not sufficient compensation for Russia or the Balkan States.¹⁷ * Despite the unsettled nature of his discussions

15. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 56.

16. Ibid.

17. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 380.

* As to the personality conflicts between Aehrenthal and Isvolsky and the subsequent controversy as to what actually transpired between the two at Buchlau, are questions beyond the scope of this short chapter. Our main concern here is the effect of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Turkey. The former question is discussed in great detail in Luigi Albertini's Origins of the War of 1914 (Volume I, Chapters IV and V). Bernadotte Schmitt's, The Annexation of Bosnia, 1908-1909 is also useful in this connection.

with Isvolsky, Aehrenthal went ahead with his plans for preparing the way for the annexation. On September 26, he wrote to the German Chancellor, Prince Bulow, informing him of Austria's decision to annex the provinces and on September 28 a similar letter was sent to Hardinge, the British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.¹⁸ In neither instance the date of the annexation was not given. Aehrenthal did this on September 29, when he prepared in advance autographed letters from Franz Joseph addressed to the reigning heads of the great powers.¹⁹ The respective Austro-Hungarian ambassadors were asked to deliver the letters either on October 5 or 6.²⁰ A note of October 3 to the governments of the powers was instructed to be delivered on the day the annexation was proclaimed. All these notes developed the theme that, since the Young Turks took power in Turkey, the Monarchy had decided that it was no longer necessary to maintain its garrisons and rights in the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar. In view of the political maturity of the provinces, during the course of the years, they were now ready for a constitutional regime,

18. Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 10th, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 148.

19. Ibid. Also Pribram, A. F. Austria-Hungary and Great Britain: 1908-1914, London, 1951, p. 96.

20. Ibid.

but it could be done only after regularizing their position, which in actuality meant the annexation of the provinces.

Turkey was officially informed of the annexation only on October 7, a day after the annexation was proclaimed. The note presented to the Porte was in content identical to the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph. The initial response in Constantinople to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was mild in comparison to the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence, which preceded a day earlier. As a result, the Austrian ambassador in the Turkish capital, Pallavicini, was hasty enough to telegraph his government on October 9, a mere two days after the annexation, that the whole affair was closed as far as Turkey was concerned. There were good reasons for this. The Declaration of Independence by Bulgaria seemed more humiliating and was more injurious to Turkish interests than the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from the loss of Turkish sovereignty over Bulgaria, the former also lost her suzerainty over Eastern Rumelia, of which Prince Ferdinand was merely the Vali. Moreover, there was a large Muslim population in Eastern Rumelia and, the province being close to Constantinople, Turkey felt more directly threatened by an independent Bulgaria. Hence, initially, Kiamil's cabinet decided to protest to the powers only on the Bulgarian issue. In the case of Austria's annexation, a reply to the Austrian note was sent to the effect that Turkey reserved all her rights

under the treaties and simply protested the violation of these treaties by Austria. The reaction in Britain, France and Russia to the annexation was unfavourable to Austria. The Young Turk Revolution had modified the attitude of Foreign Office and British public opinion in favour of Turkey.²¹ The reaction of France was also similar. Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France, severely condemned the Austrian action as a serious infringement of contractual obligations and, if the incident was allowed to pass, he warned that it would create a dangerous precedent against public morality. He wanted Britain and France to withhold recognition of the annexation until a conference of the powers had thoroughly discussed the question. In Russia the annexation gave rise to a great deal of public indignation. Stolypin, the Russian Premier, was doubly disturbed that Isvolsky had never disclosed the contents of his discussions with Aehrenthal to anyone. On October 3, three days prior to the declaration of the annexation, the Austrian ambassador in Paris, Count Khevenhuller, told Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, that Austria had received the concurrence of the cabinets of St. Petersburg, Rome and Berlin to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.²²

21. Pribraum Austria-Hungary, pp. 99-101.

22. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/551, No. 380.

Isvolsky vehemently denied any Russian collusion in the affair, especially since in Russia the annexation was seen as a great let down of Slavic kinsmen in the provinces. Isvolsky, maintained his position at Buchlau that Europe could not accept this blow dealt at the Treaty of Berlin,²³ and agreed with Clemenceau that a conference of the powers should be convened at the earliest opportunity before coming to any decision. The immediate plans to convene a conference were shelved in view of Grey's objection that it was not advisable to propose a conference before agreeing on its agenda. He was of the opinion that the conference would find it difficult to limit itself to the two immediate questions, e.g. Bulgarian independence and the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, consequently, issues such as the 'straits' question and others were bound to be raised. Under the circumstances, it was necessary to make preparations before convening a conference of the powers. Moreover, Grey was unsure of the Turkish position on the proposed conference. The Quai d'Orsay immediately agreed with Grey's position and, after consultations, Isvolsky was also prevailed upon to concur.

Even Austria's ally Germany was not pleased with the former's action, when Aehrenthal met Herr Von Schoen, the German

23. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/551, No. 389.

foreign secretary, at Berchtesgarden on September 5, 1908, he gave the latter the impression that the annexation was a remote possibility without any immediate consequence.²⁴ Yet within a month Aehrenthal had proceeded to annex the provinces. Schoen complained to Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin that "he after seeing Baron d'Aehrenthal, had been under the impression that the annexation would not be carried out for some little time, perhaps, for a year."²⁵ Consequently, it was not a simple case of German acquiescence in the Austrian absorption of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Initially, Wilhelm II was also very upset at the fact that he was not consulted before the annexation. He complained that he had been "deeply wounded in my feelings as an ally that I was not previously taken in the least into the confidence of His Majesty." Marschall Von Bieberstein, the pro-Turkish ambassador in Constantinople, bitterly opposed annexation and urged the German Foreign Office to follow an independent policy of its own, Marschall, in order to save the Germans from the stigma of the annexation as an ally of Austria-Hungary, went to the Porte and formally declared that the action was taken without Germany's knowledge. But Chancellor Bulow, with not distant memories of Austrian support during the Moroccan crises

24. Lascelles to Grey, Berlin, October 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/551, No. 53.

25. Ibid.

of 1905-6, and at the subsequent Algiciras Conference, had recognized her as the only ally left for Germany in Europe, and persuaded the Kaiser to support Austria on the issue, thus temporarily defeating Von Marschall's efforts.*

Hardly had Pallavicini telegraphed Vienna assuring his government that no serious resistance was to be expected from Turkey, on October 13 he had to report that a boycott had begun against Austro-Hungarian goods and shops in the Empire. The annexation crisis in the main was a problem of pre-war

* Furthermore, the Germans stood to gain nothing from this Austrian adventure, other than to lose three decades of commercial and diplomatic victory over the other powers in the Ottoman Empire. The annexation also gave the Austro-Hungarian public the idea that their country had at last emerged from her shell and shown independence and strength, thus knocking the bottom out of the legend that she was a mere satellite of Germany. In the words of Goschen, the British ambassador in Vienna "For the most bigoted believers in this legend cannot possibly think that the present stroke of policy which may, in certain eventualities, be of some detriment to German influence in Turkey, can have been dictated from Berlin. That Germany should raise no protest against Austria-Hungary's action does not prove that she instigated it, but is a proof of the value she attaches to the Austro-Hungarian alliance."

See Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 10, 1908, in F. O. 371/551, No. 148.

European diplomacy and, with the exception of the boycott movement, at no stage did it directly bring Austria and Turkey into conflict. The incident, if deemed worthy of mention at all, is always dismissed with a stroke of the pen by most historians of the Bosnian crisis, despite the fact that it was supported by the Turkish population and was a complete success. The losses sustained by Austrian commerce and industry were immense and it gave considerable anxiety in Vienna. Hence, it would not be out of place to discuss the boycott movement in some detail.

On October 16, 1908, Aehrenthal was presented with a petition by the President of the Austrian Industrial League and the League was astute enough to realize, from the beginning, the potential harm the movement could do to Austrian commercial activity in Turkey. Aehrenthal was requested by the League President to take up the matter immediately with the Turkish government. To quote the petition in its entirety:

"According to numerous reports which have reached us, the boycotting movement is assuming dimensions which are seriously endangering the security of property in our commercial centres and the lives of employees. Threat accompanied by plunder, incendiarism, and actual insults, are the order of the day, while the Turkish authorities are failing to take the measures which are at their disposal to prevent it. We are accordingly besieged by requests from numerous businessmen and merchants to ask for help from the Austro-Hungarian government. We beg to draw attention to the reports in question, and urgently to request your Excellency to make

speedy and imperative representations to the Turkish government with a view to securing protection of Austro-Hungarian subjects. We ask further that it may be made clear to the Turkish government immediately and in unmistakable terms that they will be held responsible for any damage that may result from the movement, and that compensation will be demanded. We are confident that your Excellency will take into consideration this request, which is addressed to you in the name of Austrian industry, and that you will communicate the result of your decision and thus allay the anxiety of the persons interested."²⁶

The attempt on the part of the Industrial League to camouflage the truth with the implication that it was Turkish vandalism and not the boycott movement which was troubling Austrian trade was understandable, as it was only a tactical ploy to undermine the real impact of the movement. It would be made clear during the course of further discussion.

Apart from the anxiety of Austrian traders and merchants in Turkey, most diplomats in Constantinople, including the Austrians, did not expect the boycott movement to last long.²⁷ The Austrian ships were instructed not to interrupt their sailings to Turkey.²⁸ As a result, several incidents occurred in

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26. President of the Austrian Industrial League to Baron d'Aehrenthal enclosure 1 in Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 153.
27. Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 55.
28. Ibid.

November and December, which seriously affected the import of Austrian goods coming either from Austria or in Austrian ships. The sugar merchants of Trieste, to prove that it would be possible to unload sugar at Constantinople, sent a consignment which the Turkish longshoremen refused to unload and it had to be sent back to Trieste.²⁹ The matter ended in a lawsuit with the Constantinople merchants pleading force majeure against their being forced to carry out their contract immediately and their Trieste counterpart insisting that the boycott movement did not constitute force majeure.³⁰ In the meanwhile there was a great shortage of sugar in the city and the price of sugar soared. Similarly, a consignment of tea from Ceylon arriving in an Austrian ship was not unloaded in Constantinople and rice from Burma destined for the II Army Corps was refused by the longshoremen of Dedeagatch. The movement was also effective in Jedda, Beirut and other places in the Empire.³¹ By mid-December it even spread into Albania.³² Mr. Summa, the British Consul at Scutari, reported that after a visit to Constantinople, Chakki Bey, the mayor of the town, convoked a meeting of the notables and asked them to follow

29. Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 798.

30. Ibid.

31. Consul-General Cumberbatch to Lowther, Beirut, October 30, 1908, enclosure in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 798.

32. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 22, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 107.

the example of the other towns by boycotting Austrian goods. Soon the Austrians began to complain that the lives of their nationals were being threatened in Albania, which was the former's way of accepting the effectiveness of the boycott.

As a result of this boycott, by mid-December, seven of the large Lloyd steamers (the steamship company that carried the bulk of the cargo in the Austro-Turkish trade) were put out of commission.³³ Austria attempted to retaliate by sending goods through ships of other countries, but these attempts failed. For instance, the Lloyd steamers, when unable to receive or discharge cargo in Salonica, tried to introduce Austrian merchandise after transshipment at Venice under the Italian flag and similar efforts were made in Smyrna and other places as well.³⁴ Invariably the ruse was discovered and the longshoremen refused to touch the goods.

Many incidents between Austrian nationals and Turkish subjects occurred as a result of the boycott movement. Two sailors of the Austrian ship Taurus were alleged, when drunk, to have trampled on the Turkish flag in a tavern in Galata. It soon became an international incident. The Porte asked

33. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 227.

34. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 867.

the Austrian embassy for an explanation and after an enquiry the Austrians contended the incident had been exaggerated out of proportion. Needless to say, incidents such as these increased the hostility between the Turks and Austrians. By the end of November, the Constantinople merchants started advising all commercial houses to refrain from sending any Austrian made goods or forward products of other countries in Austrian ships. The boycott had certain adverse effects on German trade as well due to the identity of language in the two countries. Many Turks mistook German goods for Austrian and refused to accept them.

In November, the Austrians made representations to the governments of France and Britain requesting them to intervene on their behalf. Pichon replied that the boycott was altogether a political matter and the best way of solution, as it appeared to him, was to come to terms with Turkey bilaterally.³⁵ The other alternative was to cooperate with Britain, France and Russia in convening a conference.³⁶ Since Aehrenthal refused the rights of a conference to discuss the annexation, the second French alternative did not in the least appeal to the Austrians. In late November, Pallavicini approached Lowther

35. Grahame to Grey, Paris, November 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 489.

36. Ibid.

to explain his country's feelings towards the boycott movement. The Austrian ambassador, after conceding that the Turks were free to buy where they chose, questioned the legitimacy of the waterfront worker's refusal to handle Austrian goods. According to him the longshoremen attached to the custom-houses and ports were government employees and their refusal to work constituted a breach of the commercial treaties between Austria and Turkey.³⁷ This was a situation, he claimed, that Austria was unable to tolerate. Lowther, who had earlier taken offence at Austrian insinuations that he was responsible for giving the idea of boycott to the Turks,* tried to convince Pallacivini that he had given no such advice to either Kiamil or Tewfik. It was a matter, said the British ambassador, which did not concern him and he reminded the Austrian that Great Britain was also an indirect sufferer since goods

37. Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 27, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 808.

* There was a certain measure of justice in Pallacivini's apprehensions about British involvement in the boycott movement. Individual British representatives seem to have given encouragement to the movement. For instance, the British consul in Haifa openly supported the efforts of the Young Turks in organizing the boycott and, as a result, became popular with the local Committee. The consul frequently entertained the Committee members and these were invariably followed by anti-Austrian and anti-German demonstrations in the town. Hence, Pallavicini was justified in thinking that Lowther had a hidden hand in the affair.

For more see: Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 221.

destined for and paid by British firms remained undelivered as they had arrived in Austrian ships. He also told Pallavicini that:

"the government had done all within its power that a boycott, however much to be regretted, was an aim of the weak against the strong, and that it had been organized as a result of a naturally very deep feeling of resentment against Austria for what they considered a great act of injustice; that the Austrian government had had the remedy in their hands if they had come forward with some fair compensation, or in any case a basis for negotiation, but they had assumed from the first an attitude of non possumus."38

Pallavicini ended this particular meeting with a threat to leave Constantinople, in case of further dissatisfaction from the Turkish government, and he even hinted to Lowther that all this could eventually lead to a war. Obviously this was no more than an idle threat, but, to some extent, it showed the gravity of the situation. In a similar vein, Count Metternich, the Austrian ambassador in London, complained to Grey that "no one could deny the right of people to refuse to buy, but Turkey was bound by Treaty to permit the disembarkation of goods and the porters were a guild more or less connected with the Turkish government."³⁹ But the ambassador

38. Ibid.

39. Grey to Goschen, Foreign Office, December 8, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 334.

had forgotten that, in annexing the two provinces, Austria was also acting in violation of treaty obligations. Metternich also accused the Young Turk Committee as the prime movers of the boycott. Grey countered by arguing that the guilds were more in the nature of trade-unions and the Turkish government in no way was responsible to supply dock workers under the terms of treaty rights. As to Metternich's accusation of Young Turk intrigues, to quote the Foreign Secretary:

"I told him that the Committee were not the government. They rather represented public opinion, which was beyond doubt often stronger than governments, and which could not be controlled. The fact of the matter was that Baron d'Aehrenthal had forgotten the forces which were beneath the surface, and by breaking the surface he had brought all these forces into motion. He had brought into the surface the feeling in Turkey, the feeling in Montenegro and Serbia, the Slav feeling in Russia.....I did not accuse Baron d'Aehrenthal of having done all this designedly, in the contrary, I thought the present situation was due to lack of forethought."⁴⁰

When Metternich commented on the hostile attitude of the British press towards Austria, Grey bluntly told him that "if I were to allow myself to be irritated by what the foreign press said about us, the foreign policy which came from this room would be very different to what it was. I could imagine nothing more irritating and provocative than the way in which

40. Ibid.

the Austrian press was writing at the present time, the Austrian press wrote as if we and not Baron d'Aehrenthal had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina and disturbed the status quo and made all the trouble, whereas all along we had, as a matter of fact, been working for a settlement."⁴¹

The Austrian charge that the porters and stevedores of the customs were employees of the state and their refusal to work constituted a violation of treaty agreements by Turkey was a preposterous argument. The longshoremen belonged to guilds and, though recognized by the government, they were not government agencies. Also, the men were not paid by the Turkish government, but by private merchants. Moreover, Kiamil tried his best to get the dockers to go back to work. The Grand Vizier was never in favour of the boycotts. At the earliest stages of the boycott, Kiamil had sent in for the chiefs of the water-front workers and persuaded them to call off the movement.⁴² When this effort failed, most of the water-front workers being Kurds, he even procured a Kurdish Sheikh to exhort his kinsmen to give up the struggle and go back to work.⁴³ Kiamil also promised immunity to blacklegs.

41. Ibid.

42. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 820.

43. Ibid.

But this turned out to be difficult, as any person who handled the banned goods, at his return to the cafe to join his comrades, was spat upon in the face and it was considered the most intolerable way of insulting a person in the country.⁴⁴ Consequently, there were few people willing to be 'strike breakers'. At this point, it had become clear to the Grand Vizier that the feeling against Austria had penetrated every individual and, with the best of wills, it would be extremely difficult to eradicate the ill-feeling. Once it became obvious that any further interference would affect his cabinet's popularity among the masses, Kiamil was unwilling to move. As mentioned earlier, at the inception of the boycotts everyone, including the Austrians, had considered the movement a joke and doomed for failure. But the increasing intensity of the movement soon changed its complexion. The Austrians soon realized that the Turks could obtain their supplies from other quarters, whereas the former were dependent on Turkey for many cheap raw materials. Despite the immediate satisfaction at Austrian troubles, certain diplomats of other nations were apprehensive of a sustained movement of this sort. They felt that it could lead to wider complications in the future. A supreme expression of this school of thought was Consul-General Lamb in Salonica. Lamb, ever

44. Ibid.

apprehensive of British interests and any form of growth, real or implied, in power of the 'natives' had the following to say about the boycott movement:

"The Vali and the Inspector-General are, I believe, at least sincere in their declarations of helplessness; but the committee merely professes to shelter itself behind a public opinion in the lower classes of the population which it has itself created, and which it could easily control. The worst point about this state of affairs is the proof which it affords of the administrative anarchy that now exists. When the committee is unwilling to move no authority can make itself respected, and the committee itself is at once irresponsible and inaccessible, particularly now that most of its more prominent members have quitted Salonica.... The boycott undoubtedly is a powerful weapon, but it is also a dangerous one and requires to be wielded with discretion. The way in which it has been handled here has, on the contrary, been such as to inflict serious inconvenience and no little loss on many non-Austrian interests and to create a strong feeling of irritation in commercial circles, where the irrational and disingenuous attitude of the committee is severely criticised.⁴⁵

Lamb was correct in stating that without the lead of the Committee the boycott movement and the subsequent phase of anti-Austrian public feeling would not have come into being. But he was mistaken in his assessment that, once the pendulum started to swing, the Committee had the power to stop it. By

45. Lamb to Lowther, Salonica, November 23, 1908, enclosure in Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 820.

mid-November the boycott's existence had a solid reality and it was almost impossible to get the assent of the general public to its abrupt conclusion, without any obvious reason or satisfaction.*

The boycott movement continued unabated and, in mid-January, Pallavicini suggested to Kiamil Pasha that Austria was ready to make certain concessions to Turkey in return for a speedy recognition of the annexation. The ambassador said that Austria was willing to abandon her protectorate of the Albanian Catholics and to abolish her post-offices in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶ Moreover, she would also agree to an increase of fifteen percent of Turkish customs duties as well as to withdraw from the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar and guarantee its integrity.⁴⁷ Pallavicini's argument was that Turkey would derive financial gains from this arrangement and it was ample compensation for the annexation. But, in reality, apart from the abolition of Austrian post-offices, she was not making any

* Considerable support was given to the movement by various organizations such as the Merchants Clubs. Obviously, there were self-seeking merchants who tried to abuse the movement for their own ends, but, when caught in the act, they were ostracized by their compatriots.

For more see: extract from Yeni Asir of November 22, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 820.

46. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, January 14, 1909, in F. O. 371/558, No. 419.

47. Ibid.

concessions at all. The Austrian claim of protection over Albanian Catholics had never been recognized by Turkey. The idea that the Sanjak was militarily worthless, whatever the merits or defects of this argument,* had been gaining ground for sometime in the highest military circles of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁴⁸ The military felt that it was too expensive to

* At the beginning of 1909, while Austria and Turkey were negotiating their agreement, Kiamil told Pallavicini that Serbia was threatening to occupy the Sanjak and create disturbances in Macedonia, if the Porte came to an understanding with the Monarchy. On January 20 Kiamil asked whether Austria would provide Turkey with a secret statement guaranteeing that she would not allow Serbia and Montenegro to take possession of the Sanjak. The Grand Vizier asked for a three year guarantee after which he felt Turkey would be in a position to ward off any attacks, singly or collectively, from the three Slav Balkan states. Aehrenthal was unwilling to proceed beyond diplomatic support and this was considered by some as an amazing lack of understanding, on the part of the foreign minister, and his military advisers, about the importance of the Sanjak. They argued that during the Balkan wars the Austrian garrisons in Novi-Bazar could have exercised a decisive influence on the evolution of the conflict. Moreover, they contended that the whole purpose of the original occupation of the Sanjak was to avoid a union between Serbia and Montenegro and Aehrenthal's reasoning that, with the Turkish retention of the Sanjak, the two countries would still remain separate was without much foundation in view of the latter's incapacity to defend it. Aehrenthal's detractors further argue that he should have accepted Kiamil's offer and, if this had been done and the existence of the pact known, the Balkan League either would never have come into being or would have been concluded on a different basis. In any case, the outcome of the Balkan wars would have been different.

48. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 21, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 225.

police and garrison the Sanjak and, with its limited strategic value, it was no longer worth the effort to hang on to the area. Hence, Austria was conveniently passing on the burden of garrisoning the area to Turkey, which would have, as it eventually did, incurred heavy expenditures for the latter and one could hardly call this a concession. The other arrangement, the increase in customs duties, required the consent of the powers and Austria was well aware of the complication before she made the proposal. In all, there was little wonder that Kiamil turned down the proposals.

Nonetheless, by the end of January, Austria was in a hurry to come to terms with Turkey. The abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, which allowed Austria the temporary occupation of the two provinces, was necessary to legitimize the annexation. The powers were unwilling to do this before a conference had convened and discussed the matter and Austria refused to take part in a conference that proposed to question her right to annex the provinces. Austria felt her position would be more secure, if she could somehow come to a bilateral agreement with Turkey and then it was only a question of time before the powers recognized the annexation. Moreover, the losses sustained, due to the boycotts, by Austrian commerce and industry had run into over 100,000,000 kronen and they were eager to resume trade with Turkey once again. In view of these difficulties, in early February, Aehrenthal proposed that

Austria paid Turkey an indemnity in return for the recognition of annexation. After preliminary discussions at Vienna and Constantinople, on February 26, 1909, in return for paying an indemnity of £2,200,000 as compensation for the loss of Bosnia-Herzegovina,⁴⁹ Turkey officially recognized the annexation. Aehrenthal also reached an agreement with Turkey which, according to his thesis, entitled him to demand recognition of the annexation from Serbia and the powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin.

It was indeed a relief to Europe when Turkey formally recognized the annexation. Henceforth Aehrenthal became a pillar of European peace. In the words of G. P. Gooch:

"The Young Turks knew that Bosnia had been lost long ago, and the annexation was a blow less to their interests than to their pride. For the rest of his life Turkey gave no trouble to the Austrian statesman, who, having sown his wild oats, henceforth posed as an unswerving champion of the status quo."⁵⁰

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49. Miller, William. The Ottoman Empire and its Successors: 1801-1927, Cambridge, 1934, p. 483. Also Graves, Philip. Britain and Turk, London, 1941, pp. 119, 120.
50. Gooch, G. P., Before the War, New York, 1967, p. 415.

CHAPTER V

CRISIS IN DIPLOMACY;
TURKEY AND THE BULGARIAN
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

It is customary to blame Turkish rule for the backwardness of Bulgaria after the fourteenth century, yet much of the backwardness existed before the advent of the Turks.¹ In reality, Turkish rule established a degree of order which the east Balkans had not known at any previous time and until the latter part of the sixteenth century it was the order of an aggressive and expanding empire.² Drawing generously on Venetian and Genoese skills and personnel, the Turks in this period extended their rule in Europe over the Danubian basin towards the gates of Vienna and in Asia and Africa over most of the lands inhabited by the Arabs. In Bulgaria the native feudal landowners were displaced, and the land was converted into fiefs for the support of the Ottoman army commanders and provincial governors, who were agents of the central administrative system, and of the ayans, who held fiefs on condition of service to the Sultan.³ The Sultans drew a significant

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1. Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, New York, 1961, p. 365.
 2. MacDermott, Mercia, A History of Bulgaria 1393-1895, London, 1962, p. 36.
 3. Ibid, pp. 26-28.

portion of their civil and military officials from a levy of christian youths, who, after conversion to Islam and an intensive period of training, could rise to the highest positions in the government, while still retaining the technical status of slaves of the Sultan.⁴ As long as the Empire was expanding and acquiring new territories, and the government in Constantinople was in able hands, this system of government was reasonably efficient and gave to its subjects the benefits of strength and order, if not always a full measure of personal freedom or fiscal exemption.

Within the confines of this Turkish system, Bulgarians were able to play an active role in the conduct of their affairs. Since Bulgaria had no native class of aristocratic landowners, it could be argued that under Turkish rule they developed a sense of general welfare and social egalitarianism which was destined to have a lasting effect on their society. With the decline of the Turkish system after the sixteenth century order was replaced by oppression and this oppression was made all the more intolerable due to the new standards and aspirations which resulted from the penetration of new ideas from western Europe.

The desire to develop their society along western patterns, has been the chief motivating force in the history

4. Davison, Frederic, Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876, Princeton, 1963, p. 11.

of modern Bulgaria and this goal had its origins in the later period of Turkish rule, when western ideas penetrated the Ottoman Empire. These ideas reached Bulgaria by way of the Danubian trade routes or were brought back by Bulgarian students in Greek, Serbian, Rumanian, Turkish and later Russian and American schools and universities.⁵ In other instances, during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, they were introduced by Catholic missionaries from Rome, Protestants from America and by Russian nationalists. By the 1830's, many Turkish leaders were also influenced by similar trends and under Turkish rule Bulgaria moved ahead in the direction of modernization. The Ottoman reform movements which began during the 1839-56 period, projected broad administrative and financial reforms, which had some effect on provincial governments. The fact that these reforms were not executed in detail did not necessarily invalidate Turkish good intentions. Many able Turkish statesmen devoted a good deal of their time selflessly on these projects.* Consultations were held between

5.. MacDermott, see Chapter VI (The Struggle for Cultural Independence), *Passim*.

* For instance, the two Ottoman statesmen, Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, worked tirelessly to reform the Empire. In 1858, Christian delegates were appointed to sit on a Grand Council composed of ministers and dignitaries. Inspection tours of outstanding Ottoman administrators were arranged for the benefit of Balkan Christians, whereby the latter obtained the opportunity to place their complaints before a responsible administrator from Constantinople. Attempts were also made to reform the administration of justice, taxation, public employment and others.

See Stevrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, pp. 385-88. Also B. Lewis, Emergence, pp. 112-122 for an interesting discussion on the personalities of Ali and Fuad see: Sir Henry Wood's Spun yarn from the Strands of a Sailors Life Afloat and Ashore: forty-seven years under the Ensigns of Great Britain and Turkey, Vol. I, London, 1924, pp. 258-67.

native leaders and Turkish officials, differences in the status of Muslims and Christians were reduced, and an attempt was made to place taxes and finances on a more equitable basis.⁶ In 1864, a new effort at administrative reform was inaugurated and in the Danube Vilayet* a model province was established.⁷ It embraced a sizable part of the territory inhabited by Bulgarians and Midhat Pasha the famous reformer, himself of Bulgarian Muslim origin, was appointed the governor of the province. In three years of Midhat's governorship much was accomplished. He convened a provincial assembly regularly. Agrarian banks were established and efforts were made to implement the Ottoman reform legislation. ⁸

Apart from the development of political institutions under Turkish rule, Bulgaria made significant strides in the economic and social spheres. The creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in

6. Davison, pp. 40, 43.

7. Ibid., pp. 151, 152.

* For details on reforms in the Danube Vilayet see: R. Davison's, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876, pp. 151-157.

8. Ibid., pp. 152, 153.

1870,* independent of the Greek church, was a further step toward political autonomy and cultural freedom in the province. The system was administered with the active cooperation of

* The establishment in 1870 of a national church known as the Exarchate was the first great victory for Bulgarian nationalism. The origins of the movement for a national church dates back to the 1820's when sporadic demands were made to redress the financial abuses and for the appointment of Bulgarian bishops to head Bulgarian dioceses. For centuries, the Bulgarian church was under the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople and the Greek bishops. No Bulgarian was ever appointed to any of the bishoprics. Also, Greek was the language used in Bulgarian schools and churches. By 1860, because of renewed attacks by Bulgarians, there grew an element within the Greek church, led by the Patriarch Joachim, willing to allow the use of Bulgarian in churches and schools. This group was also ready to offer a few bishoprics to Bulgarians for the sake of maintaining the unity of the church. Their efforts were thwarted by Greek laymen who found in this new Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence a threat to the future of Hellenism. Moreover, as a result of this continued struggle of four decades, by the 1860's, nothing short of a national church would have satisfied the Bulgarians. The Bulgarian aspirations were finally realized, when the Porte issued a firman on March 11, 1870 establishing an autonomous Bulgarian church or Exarchate. It is significant to note that the nature of the conflict was more political than religious. The struggle was the embodiment of contending Greek and Bulgarian nationalisms rather than being a dispute of religious doctrines. Both the ethnic groups waged an all-out struggle under the guise of an ecclesiastical issue, while trying to mask the nationalist nature of the dispute.

For a lucid account of the differing aspects of the Exarchate question, see: Stavrianos' The Balkans Since 1453, pp. 371-375.

clergy and layman for filling the higher church bodies with limited elections and, all through the period of Turkish rule, by preserving monastic schools, the Bulgarian church prevented the disappearance of literacy.* During the last twenty-five years of Turkish rule, Bulgarian commercial activity was extended to western Europe and, as a result, they were still further exposed to western ideas and political institutions. Despite these indications of progress under Turkish rule, it was the prevailing opinion that only with the attainment of political independence could Bulgaria hope to acquire a civilization comparable to the western nations.

The impact of western political ideas upon the subsequent emergence of the Bulgarian national movement are beyond the scope of this chapter.** Suffice it to say that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, there were two main trends of political thought in the province. The moderates, led by the Bulgarian colony in Constantinople, wanted to resort to

* The movement for a modern school system grew outside of the church as well. With the support of the guilds and the more prosperous merchants and peasants, starting in 1835, a considerable network of schools was established and by the period of the Congress of Berlin the process had gained substantial ground.

** Interested readers are referred to C. E. Black's article, *The Influence of Western Political Thought in Bulgaria, 1850-1885*, in American Historical Review, XLVIII (1942-43), pp. 507-520.

negotiations with Turkey in improving Bulgarian conditions as they feared that popular uprisings would only end in disaster, particularly for themselves. Moreover, their methods had freed the Bulgarian church from Greek domination. Also, in the eyes of the moderates, an independent Bulgaria would be an easy prey to its neighbours and the intrigues of the powers. The radical party had no faith in the possibilities of reform within the Ottoman Empire. It looked to France, England, Italy and to some extent to Switzerland and the United States as the guiding light for a modern Bulgaria. The radicals felt that within a parliamentary or federal structure, they could curb the more blatant abuses of power. In the case of Russia, the radicals looked to her for aid, but their goal was independence from Russian meddling in their internal affairs. In the words of the famous Bulgarian radical Karavelov "if Russia comes to liberate, she will be met with great sympathy, but if she comes to rule, she will find many enemies....".

The radical trend in political thought was accompanied by an active revolutionary movement. There were a number of popular uprisings before and after the Crimean war and by the 1870's the movement was organized into a cohesive unit.⁹ As the activities of the revolutionaries spread, with uprisings elsewhere as in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, the position

9. Black, C. E. The Influence of Western Political Thought in Bulgaria 1850-1885, American Historical Review, XLVIII (1942-43), p. 510.

of Turkey in Europe was further weakened and the powers were once again ready to concern themselves with the perennial Eastern Question. Bulgaria broke out into open revolt in April 1876, and the repressive measures of the Turkish forces, known to history as the "Bulgarian horrors", brought the powers once again into the tangled affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

Due to the diplomatic situation of the times, the powers initially were inclined to pursue a policy of gradualism, asking Turkey to grant local self-government to the Christian population of European Turkey.¹⁰ The Ottomans were willing to make gestures in the direction, but on the question of foreign supervision they disagreed.¹¹ They were unwilling to admit any foreign observers to supervise the reforms. Because of the lack of customary British diplomatic support (public opinion had been worked into a frenzy against the Turks in Great Britain) for Turkey,¹² Russian troops felt strong enough to cross the Danube in June 1877 and reached the outskirts of Constantinople by the following January. The Treaty

10. Hyde, Arthur, A Diplomatic History of Bulgaria 1870-1886, Urbana, 1928, p. 59.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid, p. 51.

of San Stefano concluded in March 1878 marked the high point of Russian influence in the Balkans and it represented the fullest practical expression ever given in Russian foreign policy to the Pan-Slav ideal.¹³ An elected prince was to be the ruler of an autonomous Bulgarian state tributary to the Sultan.¹⁴ The territory of this state was almost as extensive as the Empire of Simeon (893-927) when Bulgaria extended from the Black Sea in the east to the southern slopes of the Carpathians in the north, the confluence of the Sava and the Danube in the northwest, and included Macedonia in the southwest. However, despite the fact that large stretches of the Thracian coastline were awarded Bulgaria under the Treaty of San Stefano, it did not include any significant ports like Salonica or Dedeagatch.¹⁵ The Bulgaria of San Stefano would have been potentially much more powerful than any other state in the Balkans and the creation of this state was the chief achievement of the peace treaty.¹⁶

To Britain and Austria, this sudden expansion of Russian

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13. Anderson, M. S. The Eastern Question, London, 1966, p. 203.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Ibid.
 16. Ibid., p. 204.

influence in the Balkans appeared an intolerable challenge to their own position and authority in the area. Under great pressure from the powers, Russia was forced to reopen the peace settlement of San Stefano and at the Treaty of Berlin concluded in July 1878 an independent Bulgarian state under Turkish suzerainty was created. This new Bulgarian state was only one-third the size of that projected at San Stefano and was situated between the Danube and the Balkan mountains. To the south a smaller province of Eastern Rumelia, also inhabited predominantly by Bulgarians, was restored to Turkish rule but placed under a Christian governor. Macedonia and western and eastern Thrace, ceded to Bulgaria at San Stefano, were returned unconditionally to Turkish rule.

San Stefano had provided that Russia should occupy and administer Bulgaria for two years, but Berlin reduced this period to nine months. With Russia's departure, the doctrine of nationalism asserted itself and the Bulgarians started looking towards the south and the southwest where many of their fellowmen were still under alien rule. The various nationalities in the area were considerably mixed and a quarter of the population in the newly created kingdom of Bulgaria itself consisted of Muslim Turks. Emotions ran high and it soon became the prevailing point of view in Bulgaria that unless the Bulgarians in Macedonia, Thrace and Eastern Rumelia were liberated the so-called national independence would not amount to much.

In 1879, Alexander of Battenberg was elected the prince of Bulgaria by the Tirnovo assembly. He was a cousin of Alexander III, a German prince, son of an Austrian General and related to the British royal family and thus reflected accurately in his person the interests of the great powers. In four years he fell out with the liberals, who had worked out an enlightened constitution for the country. He suspended the constitution with Russian help and then freed himself from Russian influence by a curious cooperation with conservatives and liberals, and finally reconciled himself again to a government by the liberals. In 1885, Battenberg's popularity rose to its zenith when he accepted the results of a military plot that succeeded in annexing Eastern Rumelia to the Kingdom of Bulgaria. He also successfully repulsed an attack on the part of Serbia which feared Bulgarian expansion.* In 1886, Turkey recognized the annexation, with certain minor territorial adjustments in her favour.

With the annexation of Eastern Rumelia, Bulgaria was for all intents and purposes a totally independent nation.

* Since this is only expected to serve as a brief background to the problems posed in 1908, the writer is in no position to penetrate deeper into the complex questions of 1879-1885 with regard to Alexander of Battenberg and his relations with the powers. Much can be gleaned from Charles Jelavich's Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, especially Chapter 6, (Russia Against the Prince) 9, (Triumph of Bulgarian Nationalism) and 10 (The Collapse of Russia's Bulgarian Policy).

The Prince of Bulgaria theoretically was still the Sultan's suzerain and the expansionist elements in the country had not realized their aims towards Thrace and Macedonia. None of this had any practical significance in terms of running the affairs of the country. The Turks had in no way put any obstacles in their task of working towards social and economic progress. It should also be pointed out that even if the Turks desired some form of action detrimental to Bulgaria, they were in no position to indulge in such luxuries. The Treaty of Berlin in granting autonomy to Bulgaria had stipulated that a portion of her budget should be devoted to the payment of the Ottoman Public Debt and a lesser amount was fixed for Eastern Rumelia. But in actuality between the Congress of Berlin of 1878 and the Declaration of Independence of 1908, despite the lapse of three decades, Turkey hardly received anything worth mentioning from Bulgaria. Certainly, conferences and conventions were held to discuss the question and perennially new arrangements of payments were made, but in the last analysis Turkey invariable came out the loser.*

* From 1878 to 1887 payments were almost non-existent and from 1887 to 1894, as a result of a convention, new arrangements were worked out and payments were kept up by Bulgaria. In 1894, the Bulgarian government purchased the Ruschuk-Varna railway from its owners, who in turn had given substantial credits to the Ottoman government. The former contended that this outstanding loan to the owners of the railway liquidated the annual payment to Turkey and Bulgaria had no more obligations to the Ottoman Public Debt. There were now conventions and further bickerings between the two countries and the Declaration of Independence in 1908 necessitated further negotiations. See Blaisdell, The European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire, New York, 1929, pp. 115, 116.

It was an insignificant event which finally developed into the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence on October 5, 1908. On September 12, Abdulhamid held a gala dinner in the palace for all the foreign heads of missions but he did not invite Mr. Gueshov, the Bulgarian representative in Constantinople.¹⁷ Apparently, it was the custom of at least a decade to invite the Bulgarian representative also to such functions.¹⁸ In Sofia, General Paprikov, the Bulgarian foreign minister, interpreted the incident as a Turkish attempt at raising the question of Bulgaria's international position. He concluded that the new Turkish regime was trying to bring back the principality into a state of vassalage.¹⁹ On September 13, Mr. Gueshov left for Sofia, while informing the Turkish foreign minister that his secretary would be in charge of the agency in Constantinople. Afterwards, the Bulgarian claimed that Turkish foreign minister Tewfik Pasha refused to accept the letter he sent him regarding his departure on the grounds that it was not delivered through proper channels and that such communications should first be addressed to the Grand Vizier and the Minister of the Interior, who were responsible for the province of Eastern Rumelia. This was later proven to be a story concocted by

17. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 17.

18. Ibid.

19. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 18, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 18.

Bulgaria to further exacerbate the situation. Kiamil Pasha did give a private audience to Gueshov where he explained the Turkish position to the Bulgarian. According to the Grand Vizier, if such persons as Gueshov were treated on equal footing with the heads of missions in Constantinople this could be resented by the ambassadors and, moreover, what would prevent someone like the Egyptian envoy from requesting similar privileges. When the Bulgarian representative dwelt on the possible effect of the snub on the relations between the two countries, Kiamil was supposed to have told him that "if we fall out there are friends who would reconcile us."²⁰ Kiamil also refuted Gueshov's claim to ambassadorial status on the grounds that he was present, along with other heads of missions, at the palace on the eve of the proclamation of the constitution.²¹ His presence, said the Grand Vizier, was not due to any initiative on the part of the Turkish Government as he was introduced into the Sultan's presence because of the carelessness of the Grand Chamberlain.²² In other words, the Bulgarian at that time was simply an uninvited guest.

20. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, September 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 573.

21. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, September 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 585.

22. Ibid.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by the Imperial Commissioner in Sofia when approached by the Bulgarian under-secretary for foreign affairs. The Turkish newspapers unaniously supported the position of Kiamil. The moderate newspaper Ikdam continuously referred to the Bulgarian as Gueshov Efendi as a constant reminder of his position as a Turkish official. Tanin, the official organ of C.U.P. contented that the entire episode was the unfortunate legacy of the old regime and in future stricter rules should be applied at diplomatic functions. * 23

The action of Gueshov was acclaimed by every section of the Bulgarian press. Nonetheless, Bulgaria moved with caution.

* In a private conversation with Lowther, Kiamil told him that in July, 1907 a favourable customs concession had been accorded Bulgaria under the understanding that the principality was still an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. Under the terms of this agreement, Bulgaria was exempt from all import duties, whereas every other state paid an eleven percent tariff on most imported goods. Under the circumstances, argued the Grand Vizier, it was improper for the Bulgarian to claim a seat among the representatives of foreign powers.

For details see: Firsts secretary Hobler to Grey, Therapia, September 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 585.

23. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, September 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 573.

She first approached Russia to get her reaction to the incident. The response in Petersburg was cold. Isvolsky told the Bulgarian charge d' affaires that according to the Treaty of Berlin, Bulgaria certainly was not an independent state and, consequently, Turkey was within her rights to refuse her representative equal treatment with those of the powers.²⁴ The charge responded to this by saying that his government considered the withdrawal of Gueshov as hasty and they had since then revised their views,²⁵ which was substantially untrue in terms of later developments. The British position was that it was a mistake for the Turks to raise the question, but their action was strictly within their treaty rights. If Bulgaria pushed matters to a rupture, she would receive no support from Great Britain.²⁶ The French Foreign Office saw the question as a consequence of the intrigues of Austria, Germany, Italy and Russia and was of the opinion that, even if this diplomatic problem was to be solved amicably, Bulgaria, with the prodding of the four powers, would dig up something else to keep Turkey at bay.²⁷ This interpretation

24. Ambassador Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg, September 22, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 173.

25. Ibid.

26. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 23.

27. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 51.

was totally fallacious. With the exception of Austria-Hungary, as will be shown later in the chapter, no other power desired the current trouble between Bulgaria and Turkey and they all supported Turkey with regard to the Gueshov incident.

The Gueshov incident was the prelude to wider possibilities. It is difficult to say exactly when the idea of a unilateral declaration of independence became popular in Bulgarian cabinet circles. In early September 1908, a week prior to the Gueshov incident, Mr. Stanicov, a well known Bulgarian diplomat, was despatched to Karlsbad for a meeting with Isvolsky and Mr. Malinov, the Prime Minister, was in Paris meeting with French officials.²⁸ On both occasions the question of a Bulgarian declaration of independence was raised, but only as a long range possibility. Similar approaches were made to sound out the British as well. It was assumed at the time by British and French officials that Russia, though anxious to avoid serious complications, in the last analysis would welcome a settlement in favour of Bulgaria as she was afraid of Austria undermining her position in Sofia.²⁹ Moreover, despite her professions of benevolence, Russia was far from pleased with the new situation in Turkey. A view prevailed in Russia that Turkish rule in Europe would have come to an end

28. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 75.

29. Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg, September 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 180.

under the old regime, whereas they were apprehensive of the Young Turks with their liberal tendencies, lest it lead to a movement among the Muslims of Russia.* 30 Neither Malinov nor Stanicov received any encouragement in their aspirations, nor was it clear at the time to France or Russia that Bulgaria would declare her independence within a month. Grey in Foreign Office gave no encouragement to Bulgaria and Buchanan in Sofia concurred with the former's views in his outward

* The situation was not all that clear to the Russians. In a conversation with Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister, Isvolsky told him that Russia had made it quite clear to Bulgaria that if the latter were so foolish as to declare independence, Russia would certainly abandon her to her fate. Similar sentiments were also expressed by the Russian deputy foreign minister Tcharykov. He told the Bulgarian agent in St. Petersburg, Mr. Zokov, that as a result of the declaration of independence if her territory was occupied by Turkey, Russia would not lift a finger in her defense.

See: Ambassador Egerton Grey, Rome, October 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 39 and Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg, October 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 182.

30. Ibid.

expressions.*

The Gueshov affair was exploited by Bulgaria in view of the "cold" response she received from the powers in her plans to declare independence. The incident timely served her purpose. Nonetheless, this was not sufficient to stir up nationalist sentiment to its needed pitch.³¹ In spite of

* After agreeing with Grey that the new situation in the Balkans would be undesirable from the point of view of peace and stability in the area, he had the following advice for Foreign Office: "I would now only record my belief that, with the establishment of constitutional government in Turkey, the severance of the ties which bind Bulgaria to that Empire would be to the advantage of all concerned, provided that it could be accomplished by an amicable arrangement between the two governments. Her present somewhat anomalous position of a semi-independent State, affords Bulgaria facilities of various kinds of mixing herself up in all that passes on the other side of the frontier, while the question of independence, if disposed of one year, invariably presents itself the next, and will have to be faced sooner or later perhaps even under circumstances more unfavourable than at present. As a necessary condition to her transformation into a kingdom, Bulgaria would have to renounce all idea of any further interference in the affairs of Macedonia, and to content herself with development of her internal resources. Such an arrangement could it be brought about by diplomatic means, would, I venture to think, undoubtedly promote the cause of peace in the Balkans."

See Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 16, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 75.

31. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 84.

strong press support and sympathy of Bulgarian officialdom, the Gueshov incident was at first received with indifference by the public at large.³² Within ten days of the Gueshov affair, it was hammered into the people that the international situation of Bulgaria was at stake and if she yielded in this issue of etiquette, in future, she would be required to surrender other rights and privileges, acquired by a series of precedents regardless of the Treaty of Berlin.³³ Arguments were produced to prove that Bulgaria was not a vassal state, but an autonomous tributary principality, which had never paid tribute, except for Eastern Rumelia, united to the principality in 1885 and held under a different tenure. Bulgaria further argued convincingly, in the eyes of her people, that the suzerainty invested in Turkey was of no intrinsic value to the latter and it only impeded the good relations between the two countries.³⁴ The way out of the dilemma, according to Bulgaria, was to declare herself independent.

On September 23, Prince Ferdinand paid a visit to Budapest, where he was received by the Austrian Emperor, Franz Joseph, and accorded all honours due a European crownhead.

32. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, unnumbered.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

During his absence the decision was taken by the cabinet to seize the Bulgarian section of the Oriental Railway. Earlier, soon after the Gueshov affair, Bulgaria had incited the employees in the railway to strike in order to obtain a pretext for its seizure.³⁵ The strike stopped all traffic in Southern Bulgaria and on September 25 the Bulgarian section of the line was occupied by troops. This introduced a fresh and more serious controversy into the political situation. When the Oriental Railway company requested Bulgaria to evacuate the line, she refused on the grounds that it was impossible for her to entrust the operation of a line in Bulgarian territory to officials who made their decisions from Constantinople. Hence, she proposed to keep control of the line until an agreement had been reached with the company, thus safeguarding the economic and strategic interests of the country. Bulgaria also argued that she had done nothing in violation of the Treaty of Berlin since only a small portion of the line had been built at the time of the treaty.³⁶ Moreover, the railway was designated the Eastern Rumelian Railways and subsequently Eastern Rumelia was united to Bulgaria and it only stood to reason that she had proprietary rights in her own territory.³⁷

35. Lowther to Grey, Thessalonica, September 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 273.

36. Lascelles to Grey, Berlin, September 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 435.

37. Ibid.

At the same time, Bulgaria assured the company that its proprietary rights would be respected. When the Porte demanded the immediate restoration of the line, Bulgaria contended that it was a matter between her and the company and thus Turkey's claims to a voice in the matter was completely ignored. The seizure of the line, as mentioned earlier, coincided with Prince Ferdinand's visit to Budapest. The cabinet was afraid the confiscation of the section of the Oriental Railway traversing Bulgaria, being predominantly Austrian owned, could cause friction between the two governments. As a result Mr. Liapcheff, the Minister of Commerce, was secretly sent to Vienna to thrash out the question with the Austrians.³⁸ The meeting with Austrian officials failed to resolve the dispute, but Prince Ferdinand, not to mar the festive occasion of his visit, promised Baron d'Aehrenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, that the question would not be settled against Austrian interests.³⁹

On September 28, Prince Ferdinand returned to Sofia and, the next day, at a meeting of the cabinet, the decision was taken to purchase the concessionary rights of the company, but not before the entire cabinet threatened to resign rather than yield in the matter, as the prince was opposed to the idea. On

38. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 78.

39. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 84.

September 30, after a series of lengthy cabinet meetings, it was also decided to declare the complete independence of Bulgaria. The cabinet spent a great deal of time arguing about a suitable title for the prince. A good number of the members in the cabinet only desired to declare Bulgaria independent without trying to change the title or position of the prince. This sentiment was also shared by sections of Bulgarian public, as they were afraid of the additional expenses that a royal crown might entail, but the question was never debated in public.

On October 3, the ministers left Sofia for Ruschuk on the Black Sea and they were joined by the prince in his yacht. A Cabinet Council of several hours' duration was held aboard the yacht and the prince was reluctant to give his permission for the Declaration of Independence. The cabinet once again threatened to resign en masse and he finally gave in and the following morning, on October 5, Bulgaria declared her independence.*

* The declaration took place with great pomp at Tirnovo the ancient capital of the Bulgarian Empire. Ferdinand was met by the local officials at the railroad station and he proceeded to the historic church of the Forty Martyrs. At the end of a short service, the manifesto was read proclaiming Bulgaria an independent kingdom. Malinov, the Premier, then requested the prince to accept the title of Ferdinand I, Tsar of Bulgaria. The same day a telegram was sent to the Sultan justifying the act as a consequence of the desire of the Bulgarian nation and also to remove the causes that had estranged the two governments for a considerable time. As was to be expected, the Grand Vizier's reply expressed astonishment and regret at this open violation of an international treaty.
See Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 84.

To sum up, in a period of two weeks the Bulgarian public became engrossed by the Gueshov incident, the occupation of the Bulgarian section of the railway by order of the government and the reception of Prince Ferdinand by the Emperor of Austria on the footing of an independent sovereign. The three questions were separate in themselves, but it was exploited by Malinov's cabinet into a general desire for national independence. It was ironic that when Prince Ferdinand evolved a similar plan in 1907 for his acclamation as the King in Tirnovo he was resisted by an unsympathetic public that accused him of being motivated by self-interest and not the welfare of his people. Yet, within a few weeks in September 1908, as a result of the above-mentioned incidents, the circumstances were drastically reversed and Bulgaria was able to declare her independence.

During the crises of September 1908, between Bulgaria and Turkey, the Ottoman government made a number of concessions. On September 23, Refik Bey, the secretary in charge of the Ottoman commission in Sofia paid Paprikov a visit with a message from the Grand Vizier.⁴⁰ In this message Kiamil steadfastly held to his initial position that the Bulgarian agent had never formed part of the diplomatic body and for his attending an official ceremony on equal footing with other heads of missions he could only thank the mistakes of palace

40. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 78.

functionaries. Curiously enough, the very next day, the Turkish cabinet revised its earlier decision.⁴¹ Refik was asked to communicate to Paprikov that Turkey, in future, would accord the same rights to the Bulgarian envoy as was accorded to the heads of other missions and embassies. Paprikov refused to accept this communication of apology in view of what had transpired earlier between the two governments as he found it difficult to reconcile the principles enunciated in the first communication with the latter one. The Bulgarian foreign minister advised Refik to get his government to define exactly what the Porte thought the position of the Bulgarian agent in Constantinople might be, instead of vacillating from one position to the other. This way Paprikov was able to buy time to keep the controversy going.* Turkey also made another concession by promising to transfer the lease of the railway from the company to the Bulgarian government, provided the latter agreed to give the

41. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, September 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 23.

* Mr. Malinov was out of the country at this time and Paprikov was the acting premier. Ostensibly, to elucidate the matter, Paprikov requested a copy of the first note of the 23rd which was read out to him by Refik Bey. He also said that he could not take any action till the return of Malinov to Sofia. Malinov returned only on the 29th and the very next day the decision to declare independence was taken. Hence, we could conclude that there was no way the Turks on their own could have averted a Bulgarian declaration of independence.

line back to the company for a temporary period and thus not in violation of Turkish rights.⁴² Turkey wanted the question to be settled through negotiations and not by confiscation. The proposal had no immediate impact on the Bulgarian government.

By late September 1908, it was common knowledge among diplomats in Sofia that a scheme for declaration of independence was afoot in Bulgaria. Nevertheless the rapidity with which it was announced came as a great surprise to everyone. On October 2, Buchanan warned Paprikov that a Declaration of Independence might lead to a disastrous war in which Bulgaria could find herself pitted against a united Turkey, which, in the last analysis, would do immeasurable harm to her interests.⁴³ Grey warned the Bulgarian agent in London that Britain had welcomed the new administration in Turkey and that she was determined to do all in her power to make the new reforms a success.⁴⁴ Grey further stated that his government "would have no sympathy for the Bulgarian government in questions raised arbitrarily by them which would be likely to defeat the reform movement, which had made such a happy beginning in Turkey, and, any attempts in this direction would be greatly

42. Grey to Berie, Lascelles, Nicolson, Goschen and Egerton, Foreign Office, undated, in F. O. 371/550, No. 145.

43. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 35.

44. Grey to Buchanan, Foreign Office, September 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 53.

resented by public opinion in this country."⁴⁵ Both France and Russia similarly tried to dissuade Bulgaria from declaring independence. The German Foreign Minister, Herr Stemrich, had earlier advised the agent in Sofia to protest in strong terms the Bulgarian occupation of the orient railway.⁴⁶ On the question of Bulgarian independence there was considerable opposition to the idea in German diplomatic circles. Von Marschall in Constantinople advised his government to make strong representations in Sofia. The rumour about the impending annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria was rife at this time and it was strongly suspected that the latter tacitly supported Bulgarian aspirations. Because of Germany's alliance with Austria, Bulow and Stemrich were hesitant to follow Von Marschall's advice; instead they adopted a 'wait and see' attitude towards the independence question. Despite the pressures from Britain, France and Russia, within a month of the Gueshov incident, Bulgaria declared her independence and hence the

45. Ibid.

46. Lascelles to Grey, Berlin, October 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/550, No. 51.

reason for the surprise in diplomatic circles.*

At the time of the Declaration of Independence, Bulgaria had about 100,000 men under arms and for inexplicable reasons she somehow expected an early recognition from Turkey and the powers. Bulgaria did not desire a war, nor did they believe that Turkey would regard the step as a casus belli. But the situation she created brought war within sight, since there was much hostility to the independence movement in Turkey. Bulgaria was unprepared to give Turkey time for military preparations as her only chance of success lay in a short war (or, at least, so went the argument) without giving

* The event was also viewed with great anxiety by diplomats in Sofia. In the words of Buchanan "How long this satisfaction is likely to last when the first enthusiasm has blown over and when the country has had the time to count the cost is another matter. I have already pointed out in previous despatches, the severance of these ties from vassalage could have been accomplished by means of a friendly arrangement between the two States, would undoubtedly have removed many causes of friction that have so long endangered the maintenance of peace. Unfortunately, however, the Gueshov incident, convinced Bulgaria that under the new regime her status as Vassal State was to be accentuated, and that if she allowed the favourable moment to pass she might not be able to enfranchise herself for years. Her desire to acquire the same independent status as the other emancipated Balkan States was, no doubt, a natural one, but neither the moment nor her mode of procedure was well calculated. Her semi-independence, moreover, sat so lightly on her that it hardly afforded justification for exposing herself, the Balkans and Europe to the dangers which the action has conjured up."

the enemy the time to mobilize. Moreover, Bulgaria was in no economic condition to keep an army in a state of perpetual readiness for war. She was averse to the idea of taking part in a conference of the powers to decide the fate of her declaration of independence. Bulgaria feared that a proposed conference would offer Turkey sufficient time to mobilize and she felt no confidence in winning a protracted war. Yet she could not take a step backwards and annul the Declaration of Independence, which was a measure that nobody in Bulgaria desired. Bulgaria had three alternatives - to subject herself unconditionally to the decisions of a conference, to negotiate directly with Turkey, or to present an ultimatum at Constantinople - all of which were difficult propositions and the slightest provocation could turn the scales towards war. During the initial weeks after the declaration no attempts were made to establish contacts in any of the above three directions.

On October 12, Turkey started to call up reservists from Anatolia and Macedonia and it was done purely as a precautionary measure.⁴⁷ Only 35,000 troops were mobilized⁴⁸ against Bulgaria's 100,000 men under arms. Attempts were made to strengthen the garrisons in Adrianople, Monastir, Salonica and Constantinople.⁴⁹ Protest meetings were held all over Macedonia and

47. Bertie to Grey, Paris, October 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 73. Also Lamb to Grey, Salonica, October 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, unnumbered.

48. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 337.

49. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 660.

the Empire against the actions of Bulgaria and Austria in the Balkans. The local branches of Young Turk Committees in Macedonia-Salonica, Monastir, Uskub and other towns and cities - demanded a declaration of war on Bulgaria, in case of failure to attain adequate satisfaction from the latter, after a conference of the powers had met.⁵⁰ There was no clamour for an immediate declaration of war by the Young Turks in Constantinople and the news of independence was received with mixed feelings by Macedonian Bulgars.⁵¹ Many openly doubted the wisdom of the move.⁵² In Asiatic Turkey - Aleppo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Erzerum, Bursa and other places - in many cases, demonstrations were held in front of the British Consulate, while telegrams of protest were addressed to the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin. Much of the protests followed the same pattern as in Adrianople, described by Major Samsun

"A meeting of the citizens of this town convoked by the Mayor was held in a park on the outskirts this afternoon. Speeches were delivered by the Mayor, by Fehim Efendi, a leading Haja and various other persons. The tenour of these speeches was to urge the population to remain calm under the provocation caused by the acts of the Bulgarian

50. Satow to Lamb, Uskub, October 10, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 666.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

and the Austro-Hungarian governments, and to await the action of the Great Powers in the matter. The speakers were united in opposing a resort to the arbitrament of arms, and pointed out that such a course would probably have the effect of destroying the new found liberty of Turkey. ----- A noticeable feature of the meeting, at which, I am informed, some 5000 persons were present, was the absence of officers, due doubtless to the recent circular of the Minister of War on the subject.* The meeting expressed itself as entirely at one with the sentiments of the speakers, and it is likely to have a calming effect on public opinion, which was beginning to ask whether the government proposed to quietly acquiesce in the actions of Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. Although, the meeting was convened by the Mayor, I am inclined to think that it was in reality organized by the committee."53

The Turkish press was full of caution. War, according to the press, destroyed the previous Constitution of 1876, and war would likely destroy the new Constitution and consequently war should be avoided at all cost. The Balkan crisis was ascribed

* In mid-September the Minister of War had sent a circular to all the commanders of provincial garrisons asking them to stop their officers from taking part in political affairs. The circular was ineffective in most places, but, Nazim Pasha, the tough commander of the 2nd Army Corps in Adrianople, was remarkably successful in blocking his officers from any form of political participation.

53. Consul Samsun to Lowther, Adrianople, October 10, 1908, enclosure 2 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 667.

by the newspapers to the defects of the old regime. Under Hamidian despotism, the Balkan nations with designs on Macedonia were content to wait, conscious of the fact that Turkey was digging her own grave. The success of the constitutional movement in Turkey changed the course of the Empire from one of disintegration to rejuvenation and Turkey's enemies realized that their only chance of success lay in seizing the areas before the former had the opportunity to consolidate. Bulgaria had for thirty years, while virtually independent, made the most of her vassal position for economic purposes and Austria found in the new Turkish regime a terrible inconvenience and between the two they decided to deal it a death blow with an aggressive policy. In order to attain this end, Austria and Bulgaria certainly would have to provoke Turkey into doing something stupid and nothing would be more suicidal than an immediate resort to warfare.* Once Turkey started mobilizing Prince Ferdinand,

* The following extracts from Ikdam and Tanin expressed the desire for moderation on the part of the Turkish press. Wrote Ali Kemal in the Ikdam of October 13th. "The Eastern question is now entering a new phase. The majority of the States of Europe are favourable to us and wish to see justice done to us. The cause of this change in the attitude of the Great Powers is the declaration of the Ottoman Constitution-----In trying

to find a solution to the Eastern Question the Powers will not tolerate any hostile actions on our part. Europe has now discovered that the constitution will solve the problem in the easiest and the quickest way -----Before the constitution the powers were vieing with one another in seizing portions of our territory and had almost decided on banishing us entirely from Europe and sending us back to Asia. The constitution has now put an end to these projects-----We must show Europe, especially during the interval which will elapse before a conference is summoned, that our constitution has a sound basis and that we are sincerely anxious to apply it to the full-----We must preserve our constitution for any return to the old regime would be fatal to us."

According to Tanin, the mouthpiece of C.U.P., "our strength today and our prospects of safely emerging from the crisis are in proportion to our moderation and attachment to the constitution. But in the current crisis we have two firm friends - England whom we have never ceased to love, and France whose fondness for freedom and the policy of the entente cordiale will induce her to follow England's lead. It is rumoured that Russia also has designs on the Berlin Treaty, but we cannot believe without confirmation that she will oppose the policy of her ally - France." Thus by following a moderate policy, argued the two newspapers, Turkey would enlist the support of her friends, who otherwise would be tempted to desert her ranks.

The extract from Ikdam see, enclosure 3 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 667, and Tanin see Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 668.

unlike many of his officers and ministers, thought twice about waging a war.⁵⁴ On October 16, he sent a telegram to the President of France, Fallières, expressing his willingness to negotiate with Turkey.⁵⁵ This communication in turn was shown to British and Russian foreign offices and the Prince requested that the three powers approach Turkey and convince her that negotiation would be in her interest. It was in this communication to President Fallieres that the idea of settling the dispute with Turkey by paying her a compensation was first suggested by Prince Ferdinand. Unfortunately, the Prince had sent the message to Fallières at his own initiative without consulting his cabinet.⁵⁶ Malinov was told only a few days after the despatch of the communication. As a result, the cabinet insisted that Turkey had no financial claims on Bulgaria and the Prince was solely to be held responsible, neither the cabinet nor the people of Bulgaria, for the message to Fallières.⁵⁷ The government maintained that the Prince had no right to engage in such matters without prior consultations with the cabinet. They were also afraid that,

54. Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg, October 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 206.

55. Ibid.

56. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 58.

57. Ibid.

in case they yielded on the compensation issue, the opposition press in the country would try to exploit the situation.* 58

It was only after a series of discussions, diplomatic pressures and political exigencies, spread throughout mid-October to mid-December, that the idea of compensating Turkey was finally accepted by the Bulgarian cabinet. Initially, Paprikov, the Bulgarian foreign minister, only agreed to discuss the question of disbanding the reservists and entering into direct negotiations with the Porte on the settlement of the railway problem. He completely ruled out the possibility of any compensation for Turkey. Britain and France put a good deal of pressure on

* Prince Ferdinand was not entirely without support in his actions. The Army Chief of Staff, Major-General Saroff, backed Ferdinand in his efforts. In a conversation with Colonel Ducane, the British military attache in Sofia, the General went on at great lengths to praise the new Turkish regime and he was clearly anxious to avoid hostilities with Turkey. Saroff was confident of working out a satisfactory agreement between the two countries, provided the Grand Vizier promised an eventual recognition of Bulgaria by Turkey at some future date. Under such conditions, Bulgaria would be more than willing to pay Turkey a just compensation for declaring independence. The former also asked for a Turkish assurance that she would cease her military preparations, especially in the vilayet of Adrianople.

For more of the Saroff - Ducane conversation see Colonel Ducane to Buchanan, Sofia, October 14, 1908, enclosure 1 in Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 85.

58. Ibid.

Paprikov to change his attitude on the compensation issue. They made it clear that if Bulgaria resisted the option the powers would be inclined to take an attitude of "no compensation, no recognition". Finally Paprikov conceded by stating that no objection would be raised to the question being referred to the decision of the powers at a conference. But the foreign minister still held fast to his view that under the existing state of public opinion in Bulgaria, he could not in advance agree to the question of compensation. The conference could discuss the question, but should not expect any guarantee from Bulgaria ahead of time.

Despite Bulgarian intransigence on the compensation issue, Britain and France nevertheless persisted with their attempts at bringing a solution to the problem. They argued that it would be to Bulgaria's advantage to settle all Turkey's claims to compensation by the payment of a large lump sum.⁵⁹ This was the best way the latter could avoid questions of the Bulgarian tribute and her share in the Ottoman Public Debt being submitted to the decision of a conference.⁶⁰ In the event of a conference, it was argued, Turkey could make such a good case for herself and expect a verdict in her favour from the conference.

59. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, November 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 100.

60. Ibid.

The initial Bulgarian response was that Turkey would never accept any sum that she offered and Britain and France immediately set out to remedy this situation. In a conversation with Rifat Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, Grey advised him not to dispute the questions of form, as in the case of Eastern Rumelia, but to forget these questions of form and, instead, get as much substance in return for the changed conditions in the principality.⁶¹ In order to achieve this end, Grey suggested that Turkey accept the idea of a lump sum as the compensation from Bulgaria for declaring independence. He cautioned Rifaat that "it would be unwise to prolong disputes about questions of forms and still more unwise to go to war about them."⁶² *

61. Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, October 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 434.

62. Ibid.

* In order to get Turkey to agree quickly on the compensation issue, Grey made a number of good will gestures towards her. During the financial reforms in Macedonia (1903-1907) the powers had agreed to a three percent increase in Turkish customs, from 8 toll percent, and Great Britain, especially assented to it only on condition that the increased revenue would be devoted to the improvement of the Macedonian administration and Turkish custom-houses. A week after Grey raised the issue of the lump payment from Bulgaria, Rifaat approached the British foreign minister again seeking his permission for a further increase of customs dues in the Ottoman Empire. Grey not only favoured the proposal, but he agreed to the Porte having full control of the revenue and, as to the exact rate of increase, he entirely left it up to the Porte. The only qualification he put to Rifaat was that the money should be employed in increasing the security of objects for which the Porte had already pledged her revenue. This in itself was a vague qualification and open to varied interpretations. See Goschen and Grey, Vienna, October 21, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 58, and Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, October 20, 1908, F. O. 371/553, No. 388.

In November, the Bulgarian Finance Minister, Liaptcheff, went to Constantinople to discuss the terms of the compensation.⁶³ The Turks at first demanded 14 million pounds, but Liaptcheff in a series of counterclaims was able to bring down Turkish demands to a considerable degree without any actual settlement on the sum.⁶⁴ Finally he proposed the sum of 1,520,000 pounds and it was supposed to have covered the tribute for Eastern Rumelia, the Oriental Railway, quarantine, lighthouse and other dues.⁶⁵ Liaptcheff also insisted that the offer was binding only in case of an immediate settlement. When Lowther told the special envoy (this was the Bulgarian's title during his mission to Constantinople) that the sum appeared awfully small and that a much higher sum would be adjudicated to Turkey by a conference his reply was that "the Turks would have to go to Sofia to fetch it."⁶⁶ Kiamil took the position that the matter should be left to a conference of the powers, as he considered the compensation offered inadequate. During the discussions, all taken into account, the Grand Vizier's position on Bulgaria was quite moderate. He dropped all political

63. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 407.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

considerations and was willing to negotiate on the basis of recognizing the complete independence of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, without the introduction of political conditions, provided the latter agreed to a satisfactory financial accommodation. In the words of Grey "This was evidence, on the part of the Turks, of moderation and a desire to come to a friendly settlement, and it was a reason for Bulgaria to be liberal in financial compensation which she offered."⁶⁷ * Certainly, Young Turks such as Ahmed Riza and Nazim Bey wanted to impose political conditions to the negotiations, but this was not the attitude taken by the Grand Vizier and his cabinet.⁶⁸

While these negotiations were taking place between Turkey and Bulgaria, there were frequent reports of frontier incidents between the two countries. As an example, in November two

67. Grey to Buchanan, Foreign Office, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 75.

* In a conversation with the Bulgarian charge in London, Grey also told him that he was unsure as to what Turkey would accept or reject by way of compensation. To quote the British foreign secretary further "I told him I could not say what the Turks would accept. I had not discussed details with them. He must understand that I had not been advocating to him anything at the request of Turkey, or anything I knew which Turkey would accept. I had already discouraged Turkey with regard to the introduction of political conditions into the recognition of independence. I quite understood that as there were difficulties on both sides all the sacrifices could not be on one side. He should remember that if Bulgaria secured the recognition of her complete independence, then a liberal financial settlement could not be discreditable to her." See Grey to Buchanan, Foreign Office, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 75.

68. Ibid.

incidents occurred in the Sanjak of Drama. Some Turkish peasants cutting winter fodder were shot at by the Bulgarian frontier guards and, as a result, a Turkish peasant was killed. Turkish officials claimed that the shooting occurred inside her border and accused the Bulgarian guards of having crossed into Turkey with the intention of transporting the corpse to their side of the frontier.⁶⁹ The timely arrival of a Turkish patrol guard, according to Turkish sources, staved off the move and the Bulgarians were forced to make a hasty retreat, leaving the corpse behind. In another incident, a Turkish soldier was abducted across the frontier and then killed.⁷⁰ Bulgaria refuted these allegations, and as is usual in such cases, accused Turkey of border violations. The press in both countries showed moderation while reporting the frontier incidents.

One of the things that plagued Bulgaria was the extent to which a settlement with Turkey would speed up her recognition of independence by the powers. Despite a settlement with Turkey, she was uncertain whether the powers would recognize her independently, without convening a conference first. Austria was opposed to the idea of a conference as she was not prepared to include the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the agenda.

69. Lamb to Lowther, Salonica, November 20, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 27, 1908, in F. o. 371/557, No. 807.

70. Ibid.

Austria argued that it was a matter between her and Turkey and it could be resolved only through bilateral negotiations. But Turkey had protested to the powers against Bulgarian declaration of independence as well as the Austrian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and desired that both the questions be settled by the powers at the conference. It was also difficult to say whether the solution of the Bulgarian question would have solved automatically the Bosnian question. Finally, Bulgaria was told by the representatives of Britain, France and Russia that if Austria continued to block the way to a conference, they would favour the recognition of her independence by an exchange of notes, provided all her differences with Turkey were settled. No promise of separate action was given to Bulgaria, but the possibility of a speedy recognition made her more reasonable on the issue of compensation, though it was not apparent before January 1909.

The financial negotiations wore on without any change in Bulgaria's attitude and, Turkey, on her part, showed no willingness to make further concessions. Buchanan in Sofia put pressure on Paprikov to accept Turkey's reduced demand for £4,800,000, but the foreign minister hinted that, if not for Britain's support of Turkey, the latter would forego her

claims and recognize Bulgaria's independence.* Buchanan refuted the thesis with the objection that it was solely due to Britain's good offices that Turkey abandoned her original claims of £14 million.** Finally, tired of Paprikov's attitude, Buchanan tried to side step the cabinet altogether and negotiate directly through the Prince.⁷¹ For this purpose, he approached Prince Ferdinand's private secretary, Dobrovitch, suggesting that a

* There was an element of truth in Paprikov's accusations. Earlier, Buchanan had complained to Grey that the violently hostile language of the British press was making his work difficult in Sofia. This reflection of British press and public opinion was, naturally enough, interpreted by Paprikov as also the view of official Britain.

** In a subsequent conversation with Paprikov, Buchanan told him that this constant hedging of the question of compensation by Bulgaria, in the long run, would only cause her more grief. The lack of recognition would undermine her standing in international money markets and this would eventually lead to stagnation of trade. In the last analysis, warned Buchanan, Bulgaria would end up by paying a larger compensation to Turkey. Paprikov held on to his original position. He insisted that any further claims by Turkey could be made good only with the use of force. Buchanan concluded the conversation with the blunt retort that, in case of war, Bulgaria would either be crushed or starved into submission, neither of which were satisfactory solutions to the country's problems.

See Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, December 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 86.

71. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, December 6, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 87..

change of ministry, perhaps, would ease the situation.⁷² Buchanan told him that the Malinov cabinet were inclined to look upon everything from a party angle and he wanted to know whether a change of ministry would not be desirable.⁷³ The Prince gave an unfavourable reply saying that he had no intention of parting with his ministers. This was not so much because he liked the Malinov cabinet, but the Prince's hands were tied domestically. The telegram that he sent President Fallières, committing the country to the compensation idea without consulting his ministers, was an unpopular move. The Prince suddenly became responsible personally for any financial sacrifice the country was called upon to make. He was unpopular with the army and a good number of Bulgarians from all classes detested him. When he was attacked by the opposition, on the compensation issue, in the Sobranje, he was defended half-heartedly by his own cabinet. Though incensed by this, he lacked the courage to dismiss Malinov and his ministers, despite their agreement to resign voluntarily, as he was fearful of their proving vindictive in opposition. Some of the ministers certainly were of dubious loyalty. Mr. Takev, the Minister of the Interior, was an avowed republican for a long time and

72, Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, December 9, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 102.

73, Ibid.

Ferdinand, probably, was quite correct in thinking that he was capable of leading an anti-monarchist movement in opposition. This explained in great measure his fear of assuming the responsibility for the payment of a larger compensation than his cabinet was willing to sanction.

A new trend in the internal politics of the country finally changed Malinov's attitude towards coming to a speedy arrangement with Turkey. By early January 1909, the opposition parties in the Sobranje were getting restive of Paprikov's evasive tactics and Mr. Danev, head of the powerful Zankovist Party in the opposition, spread the word around in diplomatic circles that he was willing to lead a coalition government which would speedily resolve its outstanding problems with Turkey. Such opposition moves to overthrow the cabinet, whether real or implied, had its effect on the cabinet. Paprikov made a statement to the Sobranje openly professing his willingness to compensate Turkey.⁷⁴ This was followed, in mid-January, by a circular from the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry to the diplomatic agencies of the powers in Sofia. The note began by denying that the declaration of independence was inspired by any hostile or aggressive designs against the Ottoman Empire or that it was in any way connected with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁷⁵ It cited examples of Bulgaria's peaceful intentions and her

74. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, January 3, 1909, in F. O. 371/558, No. 104.

75. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, January 17, 1909, in F. O. 371/558, No. 127.

willingness to compensate Turkey for her losses.⁷⁶ It showed pain and surprise at the speech from the throne, delivered by the Sultan, at the opening of the Parliament on December 17, when Abdulhamid referred to Prince Ferdinand as the Prince of Bulgaria and Vali of Eastern Rumelia, who for some unknown reason had departed from his attitude of loyalty and declared his independence.⁷⁷ In moderate terms the circular asked the Young Turks to face up to realities and recognize the existence of an independent Bulgaria. Bulgaria also insisted that she had no alternatives but to mobilize in view of Turkish military preparations.

The tone of the circular was so moderate that from here on matters progressed smoothly. The Powers in their anxiety to avert a general war, especially Britain, France and Russia, used their good influences both in Constantinople and Sofia for a speedy settlement. There were still problems about the amount that Bulgaria was willing to pay and what Turkey was willing to accept. Finally in February 1908, as in the case of Greece in 1829, Russia proposed to advance Bulgaria the difference between \$4,800,000 claimed by Turkey and the

76. Ibid.

77. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, December 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 421.

£1,520,000 which Bulgaria undertook to pay.*⁷⁸ A preliminary Russo-Turkish protocol was signed at Petersburg on March 16, by Isvolsky and Rifaat Pasha and this was followed by the signing of another protocol on April 19, 1908, by Rifaat Pasha, the Turkish Foreign Minister, and Mr. Liaptcheff, the Bulgarian Minister of Finance.⁷⁹ The independence of Bulgaria was then recognized by the Powers as well as Turkey.

Before concluding this chapter, it would be interesting to speculate to what extent there had been a collusion between the governments of Austria and Bulgaria in the events of October 1908. As mentioned earlier, after the Buchlau meeting, on September 23, 1908, when the Bulgarian ruler arrived in Budapest to visit Franz Joseph, the former was accorded all the honours due a European crownhead. Aehrenthal at the time had told the prince that he should make use of any opportunity that presented itself to realize Bulgaria's legitimate desires and, in case of friction

* In reality, no cash ever changed hands. Turkey still owed Russia, as a result of the 1877 conflict, 74 annual instalments in war indemnity. The latter cancelled 40 of these so as to enable Turkey to borrow £4,800,000, which she claimed from Bulgaria. Bulgaria, instead of paying the £1,520,000 to Turkey, agreed to pay this sum to Russia in annual instalments. Russia then recovered the £4,800,000 she had first lent Turkey as payment toward the remaining 34 instalments!

78. Stancioff, Anna. Recollections of a Bulgarian Diplomatist's Wife, London, undated, p. 238.

79. Ibid. Also The Times, April 20, 1909.

with Turkey, should not leave unused the military superiority of the principality. Aehrenthal had also made it clear that the Turkish revolution would soon force Austria-Hungary to take decisions over Bosnia-Herzegovina. These suggestions obviously tempted the Prince to proclaim himself independent. From Budapest he went to Vienna, where he was joined by the members of the Bulgarian cabinet who strengthened the Prince in his resolve. Such was one line of argument and the other one was to accuse Austria and Bulgaria outright of collusion without providing any evidence.

In retrospect, the situation seems to be a lot more complicated. According to Crozier, the French Ambassador in Vienna, during Prince Ferdinand's visit to Budapest, Aehrenthal had hoped to delay the declaration of independence by flattering the Prince with royal honours.⁸⁰ At the time it was construed as Austrian compliance to Bulgarian aspirations, but this belief, said the ambassador, was untrue. Ferdinand came to Vienna with the intention of leaving for Paris, but he was met there by Bulgarian delegates who impressed upon the Prince the necessity of declaring independence without further loss of time.⁸¹

80. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 110.

81. Ibid.

Consequently, Ferdinand left in a hurry for Sofia without seeing Aehrenthal again. This upset Aehrenthal's plans as he expected the Balkan situation to be complicated by Bulgarian actions. In order to prevent any serious opposition from the powers at a later date, Austria considered it necessary to secure her hold on Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁸² In other words, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not have occurred the way it did, but for Bulgaria's hasty decision to declare independence.* Zokov, the Bulgarian agent in St. Petersburg, assured Nicolson, the British ambassador, that there had been no collusion between Austria and Bulgaria in the timing of the annexation and the declaration. It was known in Sofia that Aehrenthal intended to announce the annexation shortly, and the question to be decided was whether to declare Bulgarian independence before or after the Austrian action.⁸³ It was considered

82. Ibid.

* This line of thought perhaps was plausible. When Count Khevenhuller, the Austrian ambassador in Paris, met Franz Joseph at Witschl on two occasions during the end of August, despite the political discussions between the two, the Emperor never mentioned a word about the proposed annexation. Khevenhuller claimed that the decision was taken between September 1 and 14, or even later, and the actual cause of it remained somewhat a mystery to him.

See Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, December 21, 1908, in F. O. 371/558, No. 225.

83. Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg, November 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 551.

in Sofia that, if Bulgaria declared her independence subsequent to the annexation, it would appear that she followed the example of Austria at her own initiative and Turkey might attack her. On the other hand, if the proclamation immediately preceded the announcement of annexation, Turkey and others would consider this a pre-arranged plan with Austria, and Turkey would hesitate to take any active measures against Bulgaria for the fear of Austrian intervention. The results, according to Zakov, turned out as expected and all the world firmly believed that Austria and Bulgaria had arranged matters between themselves, and any danger from Turkey was averted.⁸⁴

Since no secret document of any sort has emerged during the writer's research, it would be difficult to prove that there ever was any definite agreement between the two governments. But there was no question that the overlapping of the two incidents of October made it easier for both Austria and Bulgaria to face the powers. Instead of one Turkish grievance, they now had two to contend with and consequently less pressure was brought upon the 'offenders'. And this did ease the situation considerably during the ensuing months. As to Austrian feelings in the Turko-Bulgar affair, her sympathies were completely with Bulgaria. Baron Call, the Austrian Under-Secretary of State, bluntly told Goschen, Cartwright's predecessor in

84. Ibid.

Vienna, that the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence would initially produce an outcry in Turkey, diplomatic relations would be ruptured and there would be talk of an impending war.⁸⁵ This outrage would be strictly of a temporary character and matters would soon settle down to normal. The suzerainty of the Sultan, along with the question of the Rumelian tribute, was a myth and Turkey gained nothing from the artificial tie rather than constant bickering and worry. In the event of a war, Turkey would start out with nothing substantial on hand and at the end of it she could expect less. The Young Turks could not fail to recognize this, and they would soon realize that the independence of Bulgaria was a blessing in disguise. A number of continually recurring and vexatious problems would disappear under the new order and, with the departure of the Bulgarian Exarch from Constantinople, Turkey would be rid of Bulgarian interference in Macedonian affairs.⁸⁶ This conversation between Goschen and Call had taken place on the eve of Bulgarian Declaration of Independence and the latter was speaking not as an individual, but as a spokesman for his government. Hence, we have to conclude that Austria tacitly

85. Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 5, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 141.

86. Ibid.

supported Bulgaria's aspirations.*

* Goschen also confronted Aehrenthal on October 4, 1908. Aehrenthal professed disbelief in the imminence of the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence. Goschen was highly sceptical of the Austrian's reaction and warned the Foreign Office: "I felt very strongly during our conversation that the statements were somewhat intended to mislead, and when therefore, he told me that he had seriously warned Prince Ferdinand at Budapest not to engage in an adventurous policy, I asked him straight out whether his warning was a reply to any statement on the part of the Prince, and whether he had given his Royal Highness to understand that the Austro-Hungarian Government deprecated a Declaration of Independence on the part of Bulgaria. His Excellency, however, did not take up the challenge, and contented himself with saying that he had told me what he had said to the Prince, and that his Royal Highness had taken his observations in good part." This was indeed a very evasive answer, as Goschen immediately recognized.

See Goschen to Grey, Vienna, October 4, 1908, in F. O. 371/553, No. 138. Also G. P. Gooch, Before the War, New York, 1967, pp. 401, 402.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ORDER

As has been seen, the Young Turk revolt occurred against a background of international events which were of the most ominous importance for the sovereignty and security of the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turk revolution was itself a response to this challenge, the proclamation of Bulgarian independence and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina being major infringements of international law as well as great blows to the remnant of Ottoman power in the Balkan peninsula. Hence, it is only reasonable that in an Empire of so widely dispersed territory, the pooriness of communications in general and the defective quality of the press in particular allowed only the most blurred understanding of what was happening to reach the man in the street. In the Turkish case, the man in the street in most instances also happened to be illiterate, consequently it is no surprise that the revolution of 1908 meant very different things to different people. To the relatively sophisticated urban dweller, who had access to fresh news in his papers and at his local coffee-house, the Revolution represented a patriotic closing of the ranks in response to the Young Turk call for unity.

To the village headman in Anatolia, the farmer in the patchwork fields of Konya, or the poor Bosphorus fisherman, such occasions were more an opportunity for settling old personal scores - with the Christian neighbour, the Armenian creditor or the local tax-collector. Istanbul might be the centre of decisions, but the ripples of the revolution ran very far, and reactions were extraordinarily varied. In Salonica or Constantinople, men of all denominations are said to have embraced in the streets as the age of fanaticism gave way to the age of fraternal toleration; but in South Anatolia the Revolution was a moment for strife and revenge, and the passionately religious partisans of the deposed Sultan slaughtered their Armenian brethren in Van and Diarbekir. Above the slaughter, the rejoicing and the general speculation, Kiamil's government had to produce a semblance of order and stability out of a situation which, in fact, contained neither ingredient.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the full meaning of the constitutional changes in the capital, Macedonia and Rumelia were not clear to the population in the Asiatic provinces of the Empire. The Kurds in many instances interpreted the changes as an open invitation to attack the Christians in their area. They attacked Armenian villages in the provinces of Van, Diarbekir, Mosul and elsewhere mercilessly. On numerous occasions, the Muslim troops despatched to quell such

disorders openly sided with the offenders.¹ In the Sanjak of Jerusalem, with the proclamation of the constitution, the peasants thought that they would not have to pay taxes anymore. Others, without any definite ideas on the subject of constitutionalism, simply assumed that some great event had taken place and expected tangible results immediately.² They failed to recognize that no immediate advantages would be forthcoming in view of the chaotic situation in the Empire.

Initially, the active propaganda of the C.U.P. was slow in reaching remoter areas. The Committee partially remedied the situation by telegraphing instructions to provincial cities and by sending military delegates to explain to the populace the true significance of their revolution. Here also the C.U.P. encountered a variety of problems. The delegates were often obstructed in their work by the basic conservatism and suspicion of village headmen, hodjas and others, who still wielded great local power throughout the Empire. For instance, in Mosul, where the brother of the notorious Izzet Pasha was the Vali, the Committee's representative met stiff opposition and, because of the former's powerful position in the vilayet, they were afraid to dismiss him. Meanwhile Kurds were attacking

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1. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 18, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 498.
 2. Bonham to Lowther, Drama, October 24, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 27, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 719.

and looting the villages of Nestorians in the Mosul area, with the blessings of the Vali. Finally, when the C.U.P. sent a personal envoy to restore order in Mosul and the surrounding district, he switched sides and joined the Kurds* in their pillaging activities. In Syria, the big landowners around

* Kurdish unruliness was finally brought to a temporary halt through the surrender and capture of the famous Ibrahim Pasha, a popular chieftain among his people. Ibrahim, a leader of the Hamidieh under the old regime, was the scourge of Armenians and Christians in the Empire and his exploits covered a wide territory stretching from Anatolia into northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Under Abdulhamid, he was given free rein to plunder areas of his own choosing and the Young Turk revolution of 1908 in no way checked his activities. The month of July found him in the Diarbekir area and he continued to attack Armenian villages. But finally in October he was brought to heel by government troops. This had a great impact among the other Kurdish chieftains and their people. A considerable number of them, realizing that the era of free license under Abdulhamid was of the past, agreed to surrender Armenian lands and villages seized during the massacres of the 1890's in return for political amnesty.

For more on Ibrahim Pasha see: Lowther to Grey, Therapia, September 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/559, No. 624.

Also enclosure 2 in Captain Dickson to Lowther, Van, September 30, 1908, in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 705.

Aleppo and Damascus exploited the initial apathy of the peasantry towards the Young Turk revolt by attempting to suppress any form of C.U.P. propaganda.³ They were afraid that under parliamentary rule the peasants might eventually get the vote, thereby reducing their political power. The landlords were also fearful of prospective land-reforms, which they somehow felt inevitable in a parliamentary democracy. They need not have feared as no major agrarian reforms ever took place during the Young Turk rule in the Ottoman Empire.

Soon after the proclamation of the constitution, the Empire was troubled by a series of strikes between August and October. The first to strike were the longshoremen of Constantinople docks and they were followed by the Porters of the Haidar Pasha railroad station.⁴ In both cases the workers refused to handle any in-coming or out-going goods, without better pay and lesser working hours. In early September, the workers of the British owned Smyrna-Aidin railway too went on strike asking for higher wages and a ten hour working day.⁵

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3. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 705.
 - 4.. Consul General Eyres to Lowther, Constantinople, August 18, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 501.
 5. Consul-General (acting) Heath-cote Smith to Lowther, Smyrna, September 14, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, September 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, No. 277.

When the British officials tried to use blacklegs, the workers used force to keep them off the job. Some placed themselves in front of the locomotives and stopped all trains from moving.⁶ The workers threatened to destroy the railway terminus in Smyrna and troops had to be deployed for its protection.⁷ In the meanwhile, the tobacco industry was paralyzed both in European Turkey and Anatolia with shut downs in Salonica, Samsun and other places, and the employees of the four major European newspapers in the capital - Stamboul, Turquie, Moniteur Oriental and the Levant Herald - also went on strike.⁸ In most cases, the employers were foreigners and they invariably threatened the workers with lockouts. The demands of the workers were reasonable, with moderate requests for pay raises and ten hours working days and their foreign employers could have easily met the demands, had they been willing to take a cut in profits. Unfortunately, the industrialists tackled the situation quite differently. They appealed to their respective foreign offices to take up the matter with the Turkish government. For instance, Rathmore, the London based director of the Smyrna-Aidin railway, requested Grey to send a British war vessel to Smyrna as a mark

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6. Rathmore of the Ottoman Railway (Smyrna-Aidin) to Grey, London, September 28, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, unnumbered.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Eyres to Lowther, Constantinople, August 18, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 501.

of Great Britain's displeasure at the state of affairs in the city.⁹ For different reasons, Gerard Lowther in Constantinople supported Rathmore's suggestion.¹⁰ The British ambassador was worried for the safety of 5000 British residents in the city and, in case of any need for evacuating the residents, as a precautionary measure, he felt it a good idea to have an English ship stand off the coast of Smyrna. Grey, assuming that the Smyrna episode was nothing more than growing pains in a period of transition, wisely turned down the suggestions of his ambassador.*

In all of these industrial disputes, for higher wages and shorter hours, the C.U.P. played a mediator's role. A delegate was sent to Haidar Pasha, where he convened a meeting of the porters. He told them that they were free men and, that

9. Rathmore to Grey, London, October 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, unnumbered.

10. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 7, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, No. 299.

* In Smyrna, the anti-foreign feeling was so intense, the Muslims began to buy revolvers and rifles to fight the company. Under the new regime it was relatively easy to procure arms. Moreover, the strikers had the sympathy of all the major newspapers in Smyrna. A number of people were killed in Smyrna during the period of the strike.

For more see: enclosures 1 and 2 in Consul-General Barnham to Lowther, Smyrna, October 6 and 7, 1908, in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 11, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, No. 105.

if they had any complaints, the Committee would resolve the disputes with the foreign companies. Under the circumstances, it was not quite the opportune moment to resort to strikes and he requested them to return to work.¹¹ The porters took his advice and returned to work. Similarly, the newspaper strike in the capital was settled through the mediation of a C.U.P. delegate, Riza Bey. The directorate of the foreign newspaper establishments had formed an employers association in conjunction with the master printers in Constantinople and had threatened to import outside labour into the capital to replace the strikers. Riza persuaded the strikers to return to work, convincing them that the import of outside workers would further complicate the issue. And in the same way, the Smyrna-Aidin strike was also brought to a halt on October 10, through the mediation of the C.U.P. Except, in the latter case, where they were awarded an increase in wages, the other strikes were concluded without the workers gaining any additional pay or shorter hours. Part of the reason was the C.U.P.'s own weak bargaining position as well as the class bias of the Young Turks. Few in the C.U.P. organization had any real egalitarian concept of society and they failed to recognize that patriotic rhetoric alone was insufficient to fill the bellies of the

11.. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 25, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 514.

underprivileged. Also, at this time, the foremost preoccupation of the C.U.P. was to get as many of their representatives as possible elected to parliament in the forthcoming elections. Consequently, they were only concerned to bring the labour disputes to an end and it mattered little to them whether the settlements favoured the employees or the employers.

A very crucial task of the new regime was to appoint reliable men to responsible posts. But following the restoration of the constitution, various self-proclaimed C.U.P. organizations sprang up in such provincial capitals as Baghdad.¹² These organizations claimed to belong to the central organization and began to interfere with the running of provincial affairs. They pressured the local authorities into accepting their nominees to various provincial administrative positions. If the former did not respond to these demands, as often was the case, they then perpetrated demonstrations and made it generally impossible for the authorities to conduct their day to day affairs peacefully. In reality, most of these so called C.U.P. organizations which sprang up in August and September, 1908, in the provinces, had no connections whatsoever with the central committee in Salonica. The latter were making efforts

12. Ramsay to the Government of India, Baghdad, September 14, 1908, in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 662.

to build an Empire wide organization of their own and the last thing they wanted was competition from these upstarts. Finally, Kiamil, with the blessings of the Salonica Committee, directed the local valis not to recognize any such organizations without his authorization and, in cases of continued interference, gave the valis permission to use military aid to disperse the trouble-makers provided this use of force was approved beforehand by the Minister of War. In these efforts, despite the surface agreement, the objectives of the Grand Vizier and the C.U.P. differed considerably. Kiamil was attempting to establish the preponderance of cabinet rule, against the claims of usurpers, whereas the Committee supported the Grand Vizier only in order to be rid of potential rivals. Hence, when the problem was finally brought under control in late October, the Committee, to the chagrin of Kiamil Pasha, was already well on its way in setting up provincial organizations of its own. The Grand Vizier, did not attempt to reassert the supremacy of cabinet rule as he now lacked the necessary political power to do so. Yet, the C.U.P. at this time played only a supervisory role, keeping close watch on the activities of the authorities without undue interference.¹³ As mentioned earlier,* immediately

13. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, August 31, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 528.

* See Chapter III.

after the revolution, many corrupt officials had either been dismissed or forced to resign. In the case of a number of high officials, the Committee acted swiftly and replaced them with more reliable men, holding the former responsible for much of the injustices under Hamidian despotism. On the other hand, they found it difficult to punish minor officials who were forced to accept bribes solely because of their will to survive; they were either poorly paid or paid irregularly and had they renounced the practice of bribery they and their families would have died of starvation. As a result, initially they only fired the most corrupt officials and left the rest to the National Assembly to resolve.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the vacancies were not filled by good substitutes.¹⁵ Part of the reason, perhaps, was due to the unavailability of competent individuals or often the unwillingness of such individuals to serve. Also, in many instances, the Committee were not seeking to oust corrupt men from power, but to provide sinecures for friends and relatives, a practice no different from the Hamidian days.

The financial situation of the empire was chaotic. Undoubtedly, financial wretchedness was not anything new in the

14. Consul Devy to Lowther, Damascus, October 1, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 697.

15. Ibid.

Ottoman Empire.* The Minister of Finance had absolutely no idea as to what was happening in the economic sphere. He did not know the exact amount of the floating debt in the country, nor

* The historian Kara Techelebizade writing in 1654 stated "cet accroissement excessif des dépenses entre-t-il dans les desseins de la Providence? Est-ce une fortune attachée au khalifat?" And in 1778 Sultan Abdulhamid I, writing to his Grand Vizier, said "Cette préoccupation du manque d'argent ne me laisse de repos ni le jour ni la nuit, cette penvirie magite, je vous le jure, au point de mi' enlever le sommeil." In 1854, as a result of the Crimean war and the subsequent fiscal problems, Turkey, for the first time, was forced to resort to foreign loans and, despite the efforts to establish financial order, it failed to succeed. In 1861, Lord John Russell, then the Foreign Minister of Britain, wrote to the British ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, at the Porte that the accession of Sultan Abdulaziz was a favourable occasion for Turkey to free herself from financial embarrassments. From 1862 on, edicts and imperial rescripts followed one another in rapid succession, accompanied by successive loans from abroad, but the nation continued to live in perpetual financial crisis till the crash in 1876. The creation of the Ottoman Public Debt in 1881 changed the situation somewhat for the better, nonetheless, under the continued misrule of Sultan Abdulhamid a permanent solution to the problem eluded even the experts of the Public Debt.

See: Enclosure 1 Adam Block's memorandum on the financial condition of the Ottoman Empire, in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 27, 1908, in F. O. 371/549, No. 722.

could he state with precision the revenue and expenditure of the Empire. He had little or no idea about the future as well. The finance minister's task was indeed an unenviable one as during the last fifteen years of the Hamidian era, fictitious budgets, annual deficits, unpaid salaries, ever increasing floating debts, unchecked palace extravagance and continual borrowings had brought the treasury once again to the brink of bankruptcy. In order to cut expenditure, the first object should have been to reduce the number of employees in the inflated bureaucracy and army. As the prime movers of the revolution, nobody dared touch the army, nor did any significant retrenchments take place in the bureaucracy, except the dispersal of Hamidian spies. The proper collection of revenue depended on an efficient and well paid administration, but the initial impact of such a venture would have incurred additional expenditures. The economic well being of the Empire depended on the peasant and he was already overburdened with taxes and exploitation. And neither Kiamil's cabinet nor the C.U.P. showed any willingness to place additional taxes on the rich landlords as a source of further revenue. Consequently, the government became totally dependent on foreign loans to see it through this

difficult period.*

* A number of efforts were made to improve the financial situation by providing incentives to trade and commerce. Under the auspices of Adam Block, the British representative on the Ottoman Debt, a proposal was made to found an Anglo-Turkish national bank. The bank was to have been called the "National Bank of Turkey." The chief object of the bank besides ordinary banking business, was to facilitate the development of commerce, and industries as well as to promote public works programmes. It also hoped to supply landholders with the means of carrying out improvements by granting them loans on the security of their lands. Adam Block used his excellent private connections with the Young Turks to get them interested in the project and Kiamil also went along with the idea. Thus the proposed banking group received the blessings of both the government and the C.U.P. Block was convinced that the national and patriotic nature of the bank would make it a success and he requested the Foreign Office to get British bankers interested in the proposed collaboration with the Turks. The board of directors would have consisted one-half of Turks and the other half British. On the Turkish side it included Prince Said Halim, a grandson of Muhammad Ali of Egypt and a prominent Young Turk, Refik Bey, another important Young Turk, Hassan Fehim Pasha, the Minister of Justice, Said Pasha, the former Grand Vizier, Jemil Pasha, a Young Turk and the Sheik-ul-Islam's son-in-law, Nubar Pasha, a prominent Egyptian Armenian and a number of others. Great Britain was to be represented by Adam Block, Edwin Whittall, Mr. Esseyan, a British Armenian subject, and certain others.

Gerard Lowther wanted to exploit the current Anglo-French popularity and proposed a dual financial control of the Ottoman Empire by Great Britain and France to the exclusion of Germany. Lowther felt that it would safeguard British interests further if alongside the French financial adviser (see Chapter III) an Englishman were also appointed. Grey opposed the idea on the grounds that Germany had already built up a stake in the financial fortunes of the Empire and would not allow a dual control of the finances. He advised his ambassador that it was not the appropriate time to raise such issues with the Turkish government.

See: enclosure 1, Adam Block's memorandum in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 10, 1908, in F.O. 371/549, No. 764 and Grey to Lowther, Foreign Office, September 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 190.

See also: Lowther to Hardinge, Constantinople, August 30, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, unnumbered.

It was in the midst of these varied crises - diplomatic, administrative and fiscal - that the Committee made its electoral preparations. The electoral unit was the old Sanjak, which was divided into Kazas (districts) and Nahie (town wards). The voter's lists were compiled by Presidents of the Councils in the Nahies and Kazas, imams, priests and headmen of the villages and other local notables. When the lists were completed they were revised by a Commission of Control under the presidency of the mayor of the chief town in the Kaza and the final list was posted for a fortnight all over the Kaza, in order to publicize the elections. Then it was left to the Mutessarifiat to decide the number of deputies to be elected to the parliament from the Sanjak.¹⁶

The elections were conducted in two stages. In the primary elections 250 to 750 people were represented by an elector of the second degree, 750 to 1250 by two electors and so on and, at the conclusion of the primary elections by ballot, the successful candidates of the second degree were sent to the Sanjak, headquarters, where they met to elect deputies to the National Assembly.¹⁷ The elections were held in such a way that, in this second stage of the election, one national

16. Enclosure 4. Summary of electoral law in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 620.

17. Ibid.

deputy would represent 25,000 to 75,000 people, two would represent 75,000 to 125,000 and so on.¹⁸ To cite an example, in Constantinople about 250,000 people were eligible for the vote in the primary elections and 500 electors of the second degree were chosen to elect ten national deputies from the area.¹⁹ All males over twenty-five years of age were allowed to take part in the primary elections with the exception of "foreigners and natives in the service of foreign powers, criminals, undischarged bankrupts, non-payers of taxes, persons in private service notorious for ill-conduct, private soldiers except when they are on furlough in their homes, and residents of under one year."²⁰ The stipulation that would-be voters had to satisfy these varied conditions of age, foreign nationality, foreign service, payment of taxes as well as discharge of legal proceedings, some of which involved complicated questions of law, left a great deal to the discretion of the electoral commission and, on a number of occasions, the latter used its power unscrupulously to include or exclude candidates.²¹

18. Ibid.

19. Buxton, Charles. Turkey in Revolution, London, 1909, p. 186.

20. Enclosure 4. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 620.

21. Buxton, pp. 190, 191.

Also the tax clause eliminated a considerable number of poor people from the voting list.

The C.U.P. Central Committee in Salonica, published its electoral programme in mid-August, 1908 and, no sooner had it done so than the Committee came into conflict with the aspirations of the minorities in the Empire, especially the Bulgarians. The C.U.P. programme had asked for the abolition of the Senate as it was constituted in 1876 and it promised political liberty to all associations, provided they were not directed against the integrity of the Empire.²² It also promised the application of the principle of local autonomy within the limits of a federal-provincial structure, but failed to explain how the principle was to be put into practice. Turkish was made the official language in all branches of the administration and it was decided to maintain the existing administrative structure till the parliament had convened, before tackling the question of re-adjustments. The pledge of equality of races and religion was reiterated as had been stated on earlier occasions, conspicuously in 1856 and 1876. The Christians were assured of admission into the armed forces and the public service and it was decided to place all schools under the supervision of the government.²³ It was further proposed that mixed and public schools should

22. Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, August 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/540, No. 73.

23. Ibid.

be founded for the purpose of providing a uniform education for all Ottoman subjects. Instruction in the primary schools was to be given in the mother tongue of the ethnic groups as well as in Turkish, whereas in the mixed and higher schools Turkish should be the only medium of instruction.²⁴

Macedonian Bulgarians living in exile in Sofia immediately attacked the C.U.P. electoral programme. They objected to the vague treatment of the question of autonomy and also disapproved the clause dealing with higher education as they were convinced that this would involve the suppression of existing Bulgarian schools. The semi-official Vreme warned from Sofia that such efforts would be detrimental to Turkish interests and would be interpreted as a direct attack on the educational privileges so far enjoyed by the Bulgarian element. But the spokesmen for the Vreme forgot to mention that, in 1906, the Principality of Bulgaria herself had made Bulgarian compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, despite continued Greek protestations, thus forcing the latter to close down their schools. The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) had technically disbanded after the restoration of the constitution, but in reality it functioned all over Macedonia as Bulgaro-Macedonian political clubs which, under the new order of things

24. Ibid.

in Turkey, were allowed to operate in the open. From September 20 to 26, a general congress of these Bulgaro-Macedonian political clubs met in Salonica and proposed a number of measures which were unacceptable to the C.U.P. Central Committee. Firstly, they proposed that the official language in each nahie should be that spoken by the majority of the inhabitants and that provincial parliaments be established to run local affairs.²⁵ They also demanded that the peasants become proprietors of the land they tilled, financial assistance be given to them at low interest rates, taxes be collected in proportion to the revenue and value of property and that government establish legislation regarding the rights of labour.²⁶ The first proposal for making the majority language of an area the official language would have brought about innumerable problems in the polyglot world of Macedonian ethnic divisions. This would have immediately pitted Bulgarian against Turk, Turk against Greek and Greek against Bulgarian, not to mention the Serbs, Jews, Albanians and others in the province.* The creation of local parliaments

25. Enclosure 4. Programme accepted by the General Congress of Bulgaro-Macedonian political clubs held at Salonica from September 20 to 26 and communicated by their central office to the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 9, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 138.

26. Ibid.

* The Macedonian question in the latter half of 1908 was as confused as ever and a brief discussion of the area's past history is necessary in order to understand how these complications arose. The division of nationalities in Macedonia could be drawn in the following lines.

continued....

The areas close to Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian frontiers can be classified as being predominantly Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian in character. The rest of the population, with the exception of Turks Vlachs, Jews and Albanians, were clearly Macedonian. The Macedonians spoke a dialect of their own, but as a result of various cultural characteristics were considered a South Slav group. They were late in developing national consciousness, consequently Macedonia was claimed by Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. Serbia claimed the area on the grounds that Macedonian cultural life in certain respects paralleled her own and that this would not have been possible without some roots in the Serbian past. Bulgaria maintained that the Macedonian dialect was nothing more than a variation of the Bulgarian language and set forth to prove this contention. Greece was of the opinion that since most Macedonians were Greek Orthodox Christians, under the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople, she was the only one with a clear title to the province.

Initially, the Greek influence was the most predominant among the Macedonians. The medium of instruction in schools was Greek and all the high ecclesiastical posts in the church were occupied by Greeks. Nonetheless, it failed to Hellenize the population. The vast majority of it was peasants and, being illiterate, they continued to speak the Macedonian dialect or the other languages (Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and others) and dialects of the area. With the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 (see Chapter V), the Greek hegemony in Macedonia was successfully challenged for the first time. This Bulgarian incursion into Macedonia drew the suspicions of Serbia and Greece. After Austria took over the administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, the former advised Serbia to turn her eyes in the direction of Macedonia. In 1886, Serbia founded an organization with the intention of encouraging Serbian nationalism in the province and similar efforts were pursued by Greece as well to diminish the threat of Bulgaria's encroachments. In 1908, at the outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution, the three Balkan States and their assortment of supporters in Macedonia were deadlocked in a frenzied struggle for the control of the province. Because of the very nature of this deadlock, they were unable to intervene directly in the activities of the new administration in Turkey.

See Wayne Vucinich, Serbia Between East and West, Stanford, 1964, Part Six (The Macedonian Imbroglia), pp. 122-64. Also H. N. Brailsford, Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future, London, 1906, passim.

to govern Macedonia would have effectively split up the Empire into a number of federal provinces, which, in the last analysis, would have placed the province in a position of virtual autonomy or chaos. In that case Macedonia could either declare independence or proclaim her own union with Bulgaria. It was also possible that Macedonia would break up, as it did in 1912-13. The Young Turks were obviously unwilling to play into the hands of those who, while disclaiming all intentions to separate Macedonia from Turkey, were likely to transform the province virtually into a Bulgarian domain. The last four demands were too socialistic and against the interest of the powerful propertied elements within the C.U.P. and, consequently, the Committee was unwilling to accommodate the Bulgarians.*

* The Bulgarians in Macedonia were divided into four separate groups - the partisans of Sandansky, the peasantry and the Internal Organization and its Central Committee representatives in Sofia. Sandansky was a self-proclaimed socialist of sorts and, hence, opposed to the idea of Bulgarian ascendancy. The peasantry were primarily preoccupied with better administration and the pursuit of their own day to day goals. The Internal Organization was working towards an eventual annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria. It was also hopeful that the latent antagonism between the members of the old regime and the C.U.P. would result in anarchy in Macedonia, thus providing them with the excuse to sever the provinces connections with the Ottomans. Sandansky had already promised absolute support to the Young Turk cause against all comers, including the Bulgarians. His influence was, however, confined to the Serres district, whereas the Internal Organization's power extended over the greater part of the province. Nonetheless, the C.U.P. took heart at Sandansky's position, thus giving them the strength to hold their own against the encroaching Bulgarian demands.

See Buchanan to Grey, Sofia, August 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 72.

The Armenians too caused immense problems for the C.U.P. The Armenians were split into three groups in the elections - the Dashnaks, the Huntchaks and the Armenists. The first two, with little faith in Turkish goodness and being nationalist in orientation, made an electoral alliance with one another, agreeing not to oppose each others candidates.²⁷ The Armenists were moderates willing to cooperate with the Turks and they had the limited support of the higher clergy, the landowners and merchants of the Armenian Community. A leading spokesman for the Armenists was the Patriarch Izmirlian, who confided to the British dragoman Fitzmaurice that the only hope for his race was to work closely with the constitutionalists in Turkey.²⁸ According to him, it was easy for the Bulgarians and Greeks to antagonize the Turks in their midst because of their proximity to Europe, whereas, his people, buried away in the almost inaccessible provinces of eastern Anatolia and continually at the mercy of disorderly elements, had no alternative but to cooperate with the new Turkish regime.²⁹ But the nationalists, the

27. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 705.

28. Enclosure 1. Memorandum by Fitzmaurice in Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 821.

29. Ibid.

Dashnaks and the Huntchaks, made his position untenable claiming that the C.U.P. had failed to provide any justice whatsoever under the new order and they were able to convince the majority of Armenians to this point of view.

The attitude of the Armenian nationalists reawakened Turkish animosity and suspicions towards that race in no time. By the beginning of October, observers began to detect a rapid increase of Turkish animosity towards the Armenians in the eastern vilayets. Undoubtedly, the nationalist activities were not the sole reason for this restiveness. In areas like Van, the Turks were a minority composed mostly of government employees, Zaptiehs, small landholders and tithe farmers. Nonetheless, under Abdulhamid, they were able to pose as Bashi-Bazuks and were continually involved in schemes to exterminate the Armenians. Suddenly they had to accommodate themselves to different realities and they were not content at a state of affairs which reduced their powers to supplement their living by plundering the Armenians. The Armenians on the other hand, became bolder and the rhetoric of the nationalists made the Turks all the more sullen.

The Young Turk Revolution created a curious situation for Tsarist Russia. The Turkish Armenians now enjoyed greater political freedom than their Russian counterparts. Formerly, it was a common practice for Armenians in Turkey to cross illegally into Russia and pass on for Russian nationals. Now

many Armenians started emigrating back to Turkey. The Russians thus were left with two choices - either to give a more liberal regime in the Caucasus or stir up trouble in Turkey to make the Armenians dissatisfied. They chose the latter alternative by letting Armenian organizations smuggle arms from Russia into eastern Anatolia, hoping that the nationalists would keep the pot boiling. In the midst of all these intrigues, there was a curious group of Muslims and Armenians in eastern Anatolia plotting the annexation of Azerbaijan to Turkey.³⁰

Under the circumstances there is little wonder that the elections were fought out with tense ethnic overtones. The inexperience of the electoral authorities, and the historical, religious and ethnic circumstances peculiar to Macedonia, gave rise to innumerable protests, mutual recriminations and wholesale abstentions from the polls.³¹ For instance, in late September, the C.U.P. had endorsed the candidature of Bulgarian representatives put forward by the Bulgaro-Macedonian clubs, who, as mentioned earlier, were considered to be the mouth-piece of official Bulgaria, taking orders from Sofia. In the aftermath of the Bulgarian declaration of independence,

30. Dickson to Lowther, Van, September 30, 1908, enclosure 2 in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 705.

31. Lamb to Lowther, Salonica, November 9, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 783.

Sandanski persuaded the C.U.P. to replace a number of such Bulgarian candidates with his own men.³² This created a great deal of animosity among the Bulgarians of the Internal Organization and, whenever their candidates were replaced by Sandansky's men, they advised their supporters to abstain from taking part in the elections, thus creating the feeling that the elections were unfair. The Armenians in Anatolia complained that their districts had been so parcelled out as to swamp their votes with that of the Muslims. The Greeks also had similar complaints. For instance, by removing the Island of Thasos from the voting list of the Sanjak of Drama, they claimed that the C.U.P. had deprived them of a deputy.³³ The C.U.P. initially had promised a Greek deputy to the parliament from the Sanjak, but with the separation of the island from the Sanjak of Drama the Greeks were effectively split into insignificant groups, thus successfully depriving them of any claims for a national deputy. A number of prominent C.U.P. members openly defended their position by saying that it would be better for all concerned if, for a number of years, the Turkish element was over

32. Ibid.

33. Bonham to Lowther, Drama, November 5, 1908, enclosure 2 in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 783.

represented in the parliament. The C.U.P. also agreed that the national minorities had nothing to fear since they could depend on a constitutional regime aided by liberal opinion in Europe to safeguard their interests.*

Electoral disputes were widespread throughout Anatolia and Asiatic Turkey. In Konya and Adana an Armenian majority was elected in the primary elections because the Armenians massed their ballots and voted for selected candidates. The Turks on the other hand spread their votes and a good many stayed away from the polls altogether.³⁴ The subsequent success of the Armenians caused a series of disturbances in both Adana and Konya and finally a number of Armenian candidates, in order

* It was indeed hard for the Christians to accept such abuses of the electoral laws. As a result, in early November, the Greeks began to smuggle arms into Macedonia from Epirus. When confronted by the Turkish ambassador in Athens, the Greek foreign minister's reply was that the Christians in Epirus were procuring arms not to fight the Turks, but to defend themselves against the Albanians, who were supposedly arming to fight the Greeks.

See Ambassador Elliot to Grey, Athens, November 15, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 48. Also Elliot to Grey, Athens, November 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 152.

34. Doughty-Wylie to Lowther, Konya, October 25, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 735.

to ease the tension, had to withdraw in favour of the Turks.* 35
 In Damascus, a leading ulema was accused of malpractices in the elections and an armed conflict between his partisans and opponents was averted only by the prompt arrival of the Vali with a considerable force. A number of similar incidents could be cited, but the examples above should be sufficient to indicate the trends in these electoral squabbles.

* In Konya, the situation was more complicated. Originally, there was an electoral alliance between the reformers of the various national groups - Turks, Greeks and Armenians - to vote for each other's candidates. Hence, when a number of Armenian 'reform' candidates were forced out in favour of the Turks, the Committee, in accordance with the electoral agreement, intervened on behalf of the Armenians. They disqualified Turkish replacements to Armenians on the grounds that the former could barely write their own names. The action of the C.U.P. was acclaimed by the Armenian community, but in no way did it endear them to the Muslims. But soon rumours of massacres became widespread in Konya and this effectively disposed of the alliance concept; since no Muslim would vote for a Christian or vice versa. The Hodjas of Konya, notorious for their conservatism, gleefully exploited the new state of affairs by preaching in the mosques that "there could be no civilization outside of the Koran."

See: Enclosure 2, Wylie to Lowther, Konya, October 25, 1908, in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 3, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 735.

35. Ibid.

Much of the problem, especially in Asiatic Turkey was due to the incomprehension on the part of the Muslims of the idea of nationality. In many areas of the Empire the attitudes had not changed since the days of the Tanzimat. The C.U.P.'s role was far from enviable; they had to appease the minorities without antagonizing the Muslims. In the last analysis, the Committee failed in this effort, primarily because of the hopelessness of the situation itself. A classic example, one of many of this nature during the latter half of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire, may show how tenuous the conditions were. Under the old regime, the Jews of Baghdad, despite their lower social position, had become prosperous. There was little ethnic or racial tension between the Jews and Muslims in that ancient city. With the arrival of the C.U.P. and the 'new order', the Jews began to show an attitude of independence that was interpreted by the Muslims as insolence. In early October the Salonica Committee despatched three delegates - Hamid Bey, Suma Bey and Umar Bey - to oversee the conditions in Baghdad and the surrounding areas. All three had been deported from Baghdad under the previous regime, the first a rich landowner, for carrying on a correspondence with the son of Midhat Pasha, in exile in England.³⁶ On their arrival in Baghdad, they were received by a large number of Jews at the station. The Muslims

36. Devy to Lowther, Damascus, October 18, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 697.

immediately concluded that the three had arrived in Baghdad to support the Jews against the Muslims. The Vali also resented their arrival, assuming that his powers were likely to be curbed and that the three would spy on his activities and report to the Salonica Committee.³⁷ The tensions mounted and on October 14, the Muslims attacked Jewish homes and plundered their shops. The rioting lasted for several hours and it cost the lives of many people. Such outbreaks* were caused primarily because of the lack of understanding of issues on the part of many Muslims and the C.U.P.'s own incapacity to act without antagonizing one ethnic group or the other.

* There was a number of incidents, insignificant in themselves, which taken collectively, showed the religious animosity of the differing ethnic groups. An argument between a Christian woman and a Muslim youth, about some petty trifle, ended almost in a racial riot in Beirut. At Scutari, in Albania, the Catholics along with a few Muslims formed a club with the idea of founding a newspaper and propagandizing for the establishment of Albanian schools. The majority of the Muslims in Scutari opposed the idea and, as a result, went on a rampage of the Catholic sections of the town and then demanded the dissolution of the club as well as the suppression of the local C.U.P. organization. It was only the more serious Bulgarian and Bosnian questions that finally put a temporary stop to the feud.

See: Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 24, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 705.

37. Ramsay to the Government of India, Baghdad, October 19, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 796.

The foreign consuls, in many instances, interfered in the local elections. The Greek consulates in Anatolia, in Adana, Smyrna, Konya and other places were the worst offenders. They would first spread rumours of an impending massacre of Christians with the tacit consent of the Russian consulate and then use this as an excuse to interfere in the elections. When Vice-Consul Doughty-Wylie, hearing of imminent massacres, rushed to Mersin, he found nothing beyond ordinary electoral squabbles.³⁸ His informant was the Greek Consul in Konya. In Adana, the Greek Consul took his post by the polling booth offering advice to voters. He came into conflict with a prominent C.U.P. member, who insisted that a Foreign Consul had no business there. Tempers flared and a riot was only averted due to the intervention of more moderate souls.

While ethnic tensions were mounting in Macedonia and Asiatic Turkey, the forces of reaction were also raising their heads in the capital. As mentioned earlier, the idea of equality with the Christians, was still foreign to the Muslims of the Empire. Moreover, the notorious corruption and lack of scruples of the Sheik-ul-Islam were well known and the conservatives were able to exploit this by impairing the validity of the fetva* in the eyes of the Muslims. The main organ of the

38. Doughty-Wylie to Lowther, Mersin, November 11, 1908, enclosure 3, in Lowther to Grey, Pera, November 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 783.

* A judgement or ruling on the law given by the appropriate Islamic religious authority.

conservatives, at this time, was the Mizan, published by Murad Bey and his assistant Nazif Surruri. From August to October, they wrote a series of articles in the Mizan aimed at the extreme fanatical elements. The Bulgarian and Bosnian crises gave an excellent opportunity for the Mizan editors to attack the constitutional regime more openly. They also received support from the crowd of dismissed officials, regardless of whether such individuals were dismissed for misbehaviour, incompetence or simply as being superfluous.* In August, Murad had played an important role in talking the then Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, into giving general amnesty to many

* The ministries and public offices under the old regime contained two to four times the employees they required and in the case of the Turkish Navy, there were 7500 officers on the active list, while the British Navy numbered under 5000 officers. Nonetheless the discharged officers were sore that the new regime had not secured alternate employment for them. The discontentment of such dismissed officers and public officials spread among their relatives and friends and such people numbered in the thousands. Also, under the old regime, the police were in the habit of receiving extra money from the palace as well as plenty of "bakshish" from the public. The situation was different after the revolution and this made the police and the former spies an unhappy lot.

See Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 23, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 690.

ordinary criminals along with political prisoners. But with the elevation of Kiamil once again to the Grand Vizierate, he lost his temporarily close association with the government as the new Grand Vizier denied him a high position in the administration. Until early October, the C.U.P. took a moderate attitude and did not directly interfere in the activities of this faction of extreme conservatives. The Committee were not acting so much from any principles of moderation, but more from the belief that they still did not have the strength to take resolute action. In the wake of the Bosnian and Bulgarian crises, placards and writings on walls started to appear in different sections of Constantinople, vilifying the Sheik-ul-Islam and calling upon true believers to murder him.³⁹ In mid-October, allegedly at the instigation of Murad and Molla Jemil, the son of a former Sheik-ul-Islam, who was also dismissed from a high post in the office of the Sheik-ul-Islam due to his previously close connections with the 'palace Camarilla', a certain Ahmad Hamidi attacked a preacher in a mosque and ran amok among the congregation, terrorizing people.⁴⁰ The incident was similarly repeated by Kieur Ali, when he attacked

39. Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 14, 1908, in F. O. 371/560, No. 670.

40. Ibid.

Muslim women in a theatre for not veiling themselves properly. He blamed the liberal regime for this fall of standards in morality. Molla Jemil also succeeded in rallying to his cause a number of fanatical mollas, and they constituted a nucleus of discontentment against the new regime.⁴¹ Finally alarmed at the above incidents and trends, the C.U.P. closed the Mizan offices and arrested Murad, Surruri and Jemil. They also publicly executed Kieur Ali as an example to others.*

41 Ibid.

* Also on October 22, the Shurayi Ummet, a newspaper that supported the C.U.P. made a declaration in the name of the Committee, warning that in future all troublemakers would be dealt with mercilessly:

"The first aim of the Committee, which only fears the Almighty, is to save the fatherland, and it will make every sacrifice to uphold the constitution. In order to carry out the sacred task it has set itself, the Committee relies, after the Almighty, upon the loyal patriotism of the land and sea forces. The Army, like the Committee, is ready to shed its blood for the fatherland and liberty. It would be a grave error to attribute their reserved attitude and the patience they display in critical moments to powerlessness. Those who reason in this manner will soon find they have been mistaken.

These two great powers [the Committee and the Army], which constitute the majority of the Ottoman Empire, are able to exterminate at any moment the partisans of despotism and absolutism. Reserve does not denote powerlessness, and patience does not denote depression. They have already shown how crushing a blow they can deal to the enemies of justice and liberty. Those who are attempting to overthrow the new regime in order to return to despotism feign to ignore the wishes of the nation. But the nation, which desires its liberty, made known its wishes through the Committee, and insisted upon their being recognized and respected by the Army. It is absolute folly to attempt to overthrow the new regime, and the partisans of absolutism are only trying to serve their own selfish interests. The Ottomans desire their liberty, and they will never become slaves."

See enclosure 1, extract from the Shurayi Ummet in Lowther to Grey, Therapia, October 23, 1908, in F.O. 371/560, No. 690.

The arrest of the Mizan group and the execution of Kieur Ali did not bring the October reaction to an end. On October 31, the 7th and 8th regiments of the 2nd Division of the Imperial Guard Corps quartered at the Tash-Kishla barracks mutinied.⁴² These regiments had been ordered to be transferred to Jedda, but the soldiers refused to go and demanded immediate discharge from the army. They piled up their arms outside the barracks and, when ordered by General Chukri Pasha to return back in, they refused to obey his orders.⁴³ Later in the evening, Marshal Shevket Pasha, the Commander of the 2nd Division, also failed to persuade the soldiers to return to the barracks. Finally, Commander of the First Army, Mahmud Mukhtar Pasha, called in loyal troops from Salonica to crush the mutineers. In the ensuing skirmishes, three people were killed and another three wounded.⁴⁴ An Imperial Irade was proclaimed, primarily at the instigation of Mukhtar Pasha, sanctioning the public execution of the mutineers, but it was not carried out because of Kiamil's objections. The mutineers were put away in Stamboul prisons and the rest of the 2nd Division was placed under the

42. Surtees to Lowther, Constantinople, November 2, 1908, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 4, 1908, in F.O. 371/560, No. 739.

43. Ibid.

44.. Ibid.

war ministry, instead of the palace.⁴⁵

In mid-November, there was a short lived movement in Albania directed against the constitutional regime and, ironically, it originated at the very same Ferisovitch, which played such a significant role in forcing Abdulhamid to revive the constitution. About five hundred people demonstrated in Ferisovitch to show their displeasure of the new order.⁴⁶ The leading spirits of the movement allegedly were three Albanian brigands - Hassan Hussein, Rustem Kabash and Issa Bolyetinatz - and the latter sent telegrams to all the principal towns in Albania asking the people to revolt against the constitution.⁴⁷ Javid Pasha, the Commandant of the Mitrovitza garrison, was despatched to control the demonstrators in Ferisovitch, but the three leaders had escaped before the troops arrived. Javid sent troops to hunt down the three leaders and their followers. He succeeded in killing Issa, while losing a number of his own troops in the process, but the other two, Hussein and Kabash, escaped. In order to make amends for the harm done to the constitutional cause because of the Ferisovitch affair, a special commission of prominent

45. Ibid.

46. Satow to Lamb, Uskub, November 22, 1908, enclosure 1, in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 811.

47. Lamb to Lowther, Salonica, November 25, 1908, enclosure 3 in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 811.

C.U.P. members went on a tour of the major Albanian towns impressing upon the people that the constitutional government was in accordance with the shariat.⁴⁸

None of these reactionary outbursts had any leadership or organization and, hence, the reason for their speedy suppression. The fear of the palace exploiting the reaction forced the Porte to cooperate with the C.U.P. in dealing quickly with men like Murad, who could have provided sophistication and direction to the movement.

It was under the above circumstances that the elections were finally completed. Originally the parliament was supposed to have assembled on November 1, 1908, but because of organizational problems, after a delay of a month and a half, the parliament finally met for the first time on December 17. Despite all the electoral squabbles, the candidates finally elected were largely of the C.U.P. persuasion. They either had the complete support or approval of the Committee. The only opposition to the C.U.P. came from the Ahrar party (The Liberal Union), which was officially founded in mid-September and, on account of this factor, they had little time to organize for the elections. The Liberals failed to win a single seat in the capital, even with famous individuals such as Prince

48. Enclosure 4. The extract from Yeni Asr of Salonica, November 24, 1908, in Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, November 29, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 811.

Sabeheddin running on a liberal platform, and their only successful candidate, Mahir Said Bey, came from Ankara.⁴⁹ After assuring its strength in the Chamber of Deputies, the Committee strengthened its position in parliament by weakening the Sultan's control over the Senate. Article 60 of the constitution had given the Sultan the power to appoint members to the upper chamber.⁵⁰ But, in early December, the Committee put enough pressure on the Sultan to remove a number of his original choices as the former felt that these men were tainted under the old regime.* Finally, when the elections were

49. Ahmad, Feroz. The Young Turks 1908-1914, Oxford, 1969, p. 28.

50. Ibid., p. 29.

* The Sultan had on numerous occasions expressed to Gerard Lowther his admiration of the high position given to the House of Lords in the British constitutional system. Unfortunately for Abdulhamid, only three members of the old Senate survived into the present one and, curiously enough, they represented the three main races of the Empire - ex-Grand Vizier Said Pasha, the Grand Logothete, a high official of the Greek Patriarchate, and Abraham Pasha, a prominent Armenian. The ex-Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha was carefully excluded from the list and Kiamil did not reserve a place for himself in the Senate either. The newly composed Senate was conspicuous in its absence of any strong figures. The main consideration in their selection obviously was to minimize the risk of conflict between the two Houses at the outset of Turkey's parliamentary career.

See Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, December 19, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 873.

completed, the chamber of deputies was composed of 147 Turks, 60 Arabs, 27 Albanians, 26 Greeks, 14 Armenians, 10 Slavs and 4 Jews.⁵¹

In his speech to the Parliament Abdulhamid again held his advisers responsible for the suppression of the Constitution in 1878. The Sultan claimed that he was counseled by his advisers to postpone the Constitution until the people had been prepared for it through a general raising of educational standards.⁵² With this in view, he had set about establishing schools all over the Empire. The Sultan continued:

"That object having fortunately been attained, and the level of ability of the various classes of my people having been raised, thanks to the spread of instruction, I, acting in accordance with a wish which was expressed, and being satisfied that the fulfilment of this wish would promote the present and future happiness of my Empire and country, proclaimed the constitution anew without hesitation, in spite of those who hold reins and opinions opposed thereto; and I ordained that elections should be newly held in conformity with it, and that the Chamber of Deputies should be summoned to meet."⁵³

51. Ibid., p. 28.

52. The translated text of the Sultan's speech on the occasion of the opening of the Turkish parliament, enclosure 1 in Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 17, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 808.

53. Ibid.

He concluded the speech by expressing his decision to govern the Empire under the constitution as being 'absolute and unalterable'.⁵⁴ Abdulhamid was clearly trying to curry favour with the Parliament by reproaching his advisers for his own past misdeeds. The Sultan had a fair amount of success in this direction. Even an implacable enemy as Ahmed Riza was impressed by the Sultan's speech and won over to his side for a brief spell.⁵⁵ In their replies, both the chambers were equally generous to the Sultan. They praised his good sense and unselfishness in restoring the Constitution and condemned his advisers for having misguided him.⁵⁶

With the convening of the parliament, the divergent interests of the C.U.P. and Kiamil Pasha clashed. The C.U.P., after the revolution, had gradually appeared on the scene as an executive and administrative body that undertook to maintain order and inaugurate the new liberal era. Despite its cooperation with the new and unstable government of Kiamil, it frequently interfered in the policy decisions of his cabinet, while still denying its members from participating directly in his cabinet.⁵⁷ With the disappearance of the period of absolute chaos (July to September) that followed the revolution, the C.U.P.

54. Ibid.

55. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 20, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 870.

56. Ahmad, p. 30.

57. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 855.

had expended most of its energies in getting its members elected to the parliament, hoping that by doing so they could finally emerge as the dominant ruling group in the Empire. On the surface it succeeded, though in reality a number of deputies from Anatolia and Arabia, despite their nomination as C.U.P. deputies, were not in sympathy with its views. This would become apparent only during the April mutiny of 1909. Such individuals joined the C.U.P. bandwagon for various temporary benefits. Till December both the C.U.P. and Kiamil treated each other as mutually undesirable allies and neither felt strong enough to oppose the other. The Committee was unable to take control openly, yet it needed someone independent of the palace to rule.⁵⁸ Kiamil was willing to tolerate the Committee so long as it continued to neutralize the palace, but it was impossible to maintain this delicate balance indefinitely as one party could not come on top without the extinction of the other.⁵⁹

The Grand Vizier was also unhappy at the various diplomatic dealings of the Committee. He resented the self-styled diplomatic missions of Ahmed Riza to Europe, especially so since the Grand Vizier was never consulted. He was offended when the C.U.P. invited Noel Buxton and his Balkan Committee

58. Ahmed, p. 27.

59. Ibid.

again without consulting him, to an official dinner at the Palace and the Grand Vizier's private residence.⁶⁰ Kiamil openly showed his annoyance at using his home as a "Committee restaurant".⁶¹ The C.U.P. refused to alter their programme and the matter was taken to the Sultan. The Sultan sent for Kiamil and asked him to arrange matters with the C.U.P. delegates, Rahmi Efendi and Major Hakki Bey. Kiamil relented and agreed to invite the Balkan Committee on a day of his own choosing, but did not make a secret of his displeasure. He accused the Committee of meddlesome dealings and also stated that they had no business inviting an unofficial body such as the Balkan Committee, which arrived in Constantinople without the recommendation of either the Turkish ambassador in London or the British embassy in the capital.⁶²

The C.U.P., realizing that Kiamil's popularity was largely due to the pro-British sentiments prevailing in various sections of the country, attacked him for giving the shoddy treatment to an important political body like the Balkan Committee, which represented British public opinion. Also articles and letters to the editor started to appear in Tanin

60. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 855.

61. Ibid.

62. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, December 12, 1908, in F. O. 371/557, No. 415.

insinuating that Great Britain was indifferent to whether Kiamil continued as the Grand Vizier or not.⁶³ Kiamil tried to stop this "intrigue" by persuading a prominent Young Turk Maniaszade Refik to join his cabinet as the Minister of Justice. Hilmi Pasha, who had sympathized with the Young Turks while he was the Inspector-General of Macedonia, became the Minister of the Interior, replacing Hakki Bey.⁶⁴ Hakki had become very unpopular because of his nomination of incompetent provincial officials, though one should say in justice to the ex-minister that his fall in popularity was partly due to the impossibility of satisfying the appetites of the hordes of office seekers. The above actions of Kiamil brought about a temporary truce between the Grand Vizier and the C.U.P.* This situation lasted till January 13, 1909, when it was reversed once again.

On January 13, 1909, Hussein Cahit, a deputy from Istanbul and an inveterate critic of Kiamil, attacked the

63. Lowther to Grey, Pera, December 13, 1908, in F. O. 371/546, No. 855.

64. Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, December 2, 1908, in F. O. 371/561, No. 818.

* During mid-December, early January there was much discussion in the principal dailies of the capital whether the C.U.P. as an administrative and executive body should not altogether disappear from public life. Obviously, the Committee now accustomed to the exercise of power was far from willing to do so. They were clearly afraid that Kiamil might secure a majority in Parliament and shake himself free of their influence.

Grand Vizier on his internal and external policies. He demanded that the Grand Vizier give an explanation of his policies to the chamber. Kiamil read out a statement to the House and then a vote of confidence was taken. The cabinet received an overwhelming vote of confidence. Kiamil, who by this time was openly identified with the Liberal Union, saw in this success a great victory for his own policies and a defeat for the Committee. The convincing vote of confidence seemed to justify Kiamil's estimate of his strength in the chamber, but in the process he also made the mistake of underestimating the C.U.P.'s strength.⁶⁵ "If the Liberal Union saw this event as a victory for the C.U.P. the C.U.P. did not see it as a victory for the Liberal Union."⁶⁶ Now with the chamber behind him, and with satisfactory progress in his negotiations with Austria and Bulgaria, Kiamil decided that the time had arrived to consolidate his position.⁶⁷ On February 10, he appointed Nazim Pasha, the Commander of the 2nd Army Corps in

65. Ahmad, p. 33.

66. Ibid.

67. Kemal, Ismail. The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey (edited by Somerville Story) London, 1920, p. 324.

Adrianople as the Minister of War replacing Ali Riza Pasha and Hussein Husni Pasha replaced Arif Pasha as the Minister of Marine. Curiously enough, the former Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, had been driven out of office on account of his insisting that the Sultan had the right of appointing the Ministers of War and Marine.⁶⁸ Certainly, no one could accuse Nazim of being a tool of the old regime as he had suffered under Hamidian despotism. In fact he had only recently emerged from exile, but, while commanding the 2nd Army Corps at Adrianople, he had prohibited all political association among his officers. This affected the activities of a number of young C.U.P. officers and, consequently, Nazim was not popular with the Committee. The cabinet changes were immediately communicated to the palace by the Grand Vizier and the Sultan was asked to issue an irade sanctioning them.⁶⁹ Abdulhamid promptly complied.

The crisis had only begun. On February 12, Hilmi Pasha, Minister of the Interior, tendered his resignation saying that "he could not form part of a cabinet in which the president made such changes without consulting his colleagues."⁷⁰ * His resignation was followed by Maniaszade Refik, Hassan Fehmi and

68. McCullough, The Fall of Abdulhamid, London, 1910, p. 40.

69. Ahmad, p. 34.

70. Kemal, p. 324.

* Here is the full text of Hilmi's letter of resignation.

"During the cabinet council on Thursday your excellency gave us some explanations of the reasons which included you to dismiss two Ministers. You told us that the reasons were of two sorts, one sort apparent, the other hidden. The first sort consisted in the fact that the said Ministers had themselves resigned. The second consisted in the fact that, fifteen days before, you had discovered that the Minister of War was plotting to dethrone the Sultan. Now it was the duty of Your Excellency, as Prime Minister of a constitutional country, to convoke a cabinet council as soon as you learned of this dreadful plot.

But up to yesterday Your Excellency failed to inform the cabinet and, in particular, myself, the Minister of the Interior, whom are responsible in the highest degree for the internal peace of the country, of this criminal design. This is absolute proof that Your Highness does not respect the rule regarding the collective and individual responsibility of the Ministers, and that you have not given them the collective and individual confidence which you owe to them. This being the case, I am obliged to resign my office as Minister of the Interior, and I have the honour to place my letter of resignation in your hands."

See McCullough, p. 35.

Ziya Pasha and a Salonica paper carried the news that Abdulhamid had been deposed and that his brother had succeeded him to the throne.⁷¹ The Committee issued an official proclamation denying the rumour and the Tanin accused Kiamil of attempting to usurp power under false pretexts.

When the chamber met again on February 13, Kiamil Pasha was asked to come and defend his position on the ministerial changes. He asked for a postponement till February 17 and it has been alleged that the reason for his failure to appear was because, at the time, the Grand Vizier was in conference with the Austrian ambassador and, consequently, could not get to the chamber at once.⁷² In that case, it was still mysterious why he asked for a four day postponement. The C.U.P. saw in this a trick to outwit them and consolidate his own position. Despite repeated invitations the Grand Vizier refused to come before the 17th. Finally a note arrived from Kiamil claiming constitutional rights to postpone the interpellation. But the chamber had already proceeded with a motion of no confidence on the Grand Vizier. The outcome was a crushing defeat for Kiamil and he was voted out of office. The following day, Hilmi Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier.

71. Ahmad, p. 34.

72. Kemal, p. 325.

CHAPTER VII

THE APRIL MUTINY AND THE
DEPOSITION OF ABDULHAMID

The fall of Kiamil Pasha, after a stormy debate in the chamber, as mentioned in the previous chapter, brought in Hussein Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General of the three Macedonian provinces, as Grand Vizier. Hilmi, known for his industry and frequent disagreements with the Palace under the old regime, was considered trustworthy by the C.U.P. and the latter had confidence in his loyalty in all essential matters. Kiamil's fall was a setback for the Liberal Union and various other anti-C.U.P. elements. A month earlier, in January 1909, Kiamil had asked for and received an overwhelming vote of confidence in the chamber, yet now, on February 13, he was voted out of office by the very same chamber. On this occasion only eight deputies, mostly of the Ahrar persuasion voted in favour of the Grand Vizier. With this new strength in the chamber, the Committee was once again able to assert its position in the capital. It was now apparent to the opposition that it would be impossible to overthrow the C.U.P. constitutionally in the foreseeable future and that the only other alternative was through an armed insurrection.¹

1. Ahmad, Feroz. The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914, Oxford, 1969, p. 36.

Throughout March and early April, 1909, the C.U.P. and its opponents waged a war of words and they used the now uncensored press as the primary tool for this purpose. In the ensuing battle of words, the Committee was hopelessly outnumbered. As against its mouthpiece, Tanin, were five opposition newspapers, namely, Ikdam, owned by Ali Kemal, Yeni Gazete, under the direction of Kiamil's notorious son, Said, as well as Volkan, Mizan and Serbesti. The first two papers were of liberal inclination and the last three were conservative beyond dispute. The Volkan was the organ of a religious organization called Ittihad Muhammedi* (the Society of Muhammed), supported by some of the more conservative ulema and by large numbers of theological students, and Mizan was a conservative resurrection of the old anti-Hamidian émigré paper, still under the guidance of the renegade Murad Bey.** Serbesti was edited by an Albanian, Hassan Fehmi, a one time associate of Ahmed Riza in the publication of Mechveret, who had turned from Committee conspirator to conservative. Mizan accused Ahmed Riza of being an infidel. The Serbesti said that the Young

* The Society of Muhammed was officially established only on April 5, 1909, the prophet's birthday, but the organization had been in existence at least a month prior to this. The society consistently worked on the fanaticism of the private soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the Constantinople garrison.

** See Chapter I, pp. 24, 25.

Turks "having none of them either faith or religion" were about to force Muslims to wear European hats instead of the fez and, now that they were secure under the protective wing of the army, the C.U.P. men were leading a life of luxury with no thoughts of the people.² The dislike of the London Times and the British embassy, after Kiamil's fall, towards the Committee was fully utilized by the opposition press. On one occasion, Serbesti even declared that "Turkey will not gain the confidence of Great Britain till the Committee disappears."³ To all such attacks the Committee organs paid back in the same coin. Matters took a turn for the worse in early April. On April 6, Hassan Fehmi, the editor of Serbesti, was murdered while crossing the Galata bridge and his assailant was alleged to have been wearing the uniform of an infantry officer.⁴ The murderer escaped in a boat and disappeared into oblivion. The opposition accused the C.U.P. as the perpetrators of the crime, which the latter denied. In view of the disagreements between the C.U.P. and Fehmi, it was highly unlikely that the former would have attempted anything of this sort as the Committee would have been the first ones to be suspected of the crime.

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2. McCullagh, Francis. The Fall of Abdulhamid, London, 1910, p. 58.
 3. Ibid.
 4. The Times, April 8, 1909.

Either the assassin was used by the right wing to put the onus of the crime on the Committee or the murder was a case of individual action, committed in isolation without any political connections. Fehmi was a 'muckraker' and his attacks on individuals in the Serbesti often resembled that of the scandal sheets and the editor often showed little respect to the feelings of others. Hence, it was conceivable that he was murdered by one of the victims of his attacks.⁵ The news of the crime provoked student demonstrations and about a thousand students demonstrated before the Porte. Hilmi Pasha was obliged to appear on the steps and calm the crowd with promises of apprehending the murderer soon. The students, after cheering in front of the Serbesti offices, marched to the chamber of deputies and called upon the President, Ahmed Riza, to ensure that justice be done.⁶ Meanwhile Mutid Bey, an Albanian deputy in the chamber, passed a motion to the effect that the minister of the Interior take immediate action and bring the culprit to justice. The House voted in favour with no opposition from the C.U.P. block.⁷ The next day, on April 7, the funeral of Fehmi was used by the opposition as a demonstration against the C.U.P.⁸ This is denied by certain leading spokesmen for the

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ahmad, p. 39.

opposition and, according to them, the large attendance at Fehmi's funeral was a reflection of the popular disapproval of Young Turk rule. In the words of Ismail Kemal, the leader of the Ahrar party:

"An imposing popular demonstration took place at the funeral of this victim of the so-called liberal regime of the Young Turks, the public being roused to fury as much by the attitude of the authorities and the police as by the murder itself. One might have thought the whole of Constantinople was attending this funeral in order to protest against those who were trying thus to stifle the voice of liberty by criminal means."⁹

Against Ismail Kemal's feeling of the presence of the whole of Constantinople at the funeral, the Times placed a more conservative estimate of five thousand,¹⁰ which in no way, at the time, implied a popular involvement in the question. Nonetheless, the ensuing days witnessed further attacks on the C.U.P. by the opposition press. Ikdam charged:

"The brutal crime of two nights ago proves that genuine freedom does not yet exist in our country and that political servitude in all its ugliness continues to survive."¹¹

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9. Ismail Kemal Bey. The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey (ed. by Somervill Story), London, 1920, p. 329.
10. The Times, April 9, 1909.
11. Swensen, Victor. The Military Uprising in Istanbul, 1909: A Reappraisal, Presented at the Second Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, University of Texas, November 1968, p. 8.

Dervis Vahdeti, the fiery editor of the Volkan, appealed directly to the common soldiers for support:

"Here is a cruelty! Here is a Constitution!
The remedy is a general consensus of opinion
(icmaa-i i ummet). The nation expects the
immediate assistance of her soldiers."¹²

Muslim fundamentalist divines spread the message into the barracks. They accused the C.U.P. of "working to overthrow the Sheriat, destroy religion, despise the Sultan, deprive Muslim ladies of their veils, make the soldiers wear hats and otherwise usher in what Volkan called the age of devils."¹³ In the midst of this heated political controversy, Hilmi Pasha's government was unable to do much and the public life in the capital was completely paralyzed. On April 13, goaded by hojas and Softas, the troops at two of the Constantinople barracks, consisting primarily of Macedonian troops, mutinied and, in the process, imprisoned or drove away their officers. They sent messages to their comrades in other barracks, calling upon them to join the mutineers in the defence of the Sheriat, which according to them was in danger from the irreligious committee. It was not certain whether the demand for the Sheriat meant the establishment of a new government under the Society of Muhammad or the Liberal Union.¹⁴ In fact, it seems in retrospect, that most

12. Ibid., p. 8.

13. Ibid., p. 9.

14. Ibid.

soldiers had no idea as to what they wanted and they were used by men of varied political objectives.

The most striking paradox of the April mutiny is in the fact that it started among the crack Macedonian troops which had been brought in the first place to Constantinople by the C.U.P. to protect the July Constitution. In October, 1908, three battalions of sharp-shooters had been brought to Constantinople from the Third Army Corps in Salonica in response to the signs of growing tension in the capital.¹⁵ The soldiers in these battalions were experienced and had seen action against the brigands of Macedonia and were the instrument of Hilmi Pasha's pacification program in that province. They were properly trained and disciplined by officers, who themselves had passed out of the best military academies in the country.

There were a number of reasons for this change of attitude of the once loyal Macedonian troops. One reason was the officers themselves. In due course, the officers were drawn into the hectic political and social life of the capital and began to neglect their troops by absenteeism. Most of the officers had close friends in the C.U.P. organization and as leaders of the battalions known as the "Guardians of the Constitution", they were often invited to official gatherings, patriotic drama performances, and political banquets.¹⁶ As a result, the Macedonian

15. Ibid., p. 3.

16. Ibid., p. 4.

troops were left more and more under the care of their corporals and sergeants and slowly it began to affect the discipline in these battalions. The C.U.P and its officer allies lost touch with the problems of the soldiers and their disparaging attitude towards the religious beliefs and provincial ways of the soldiery made the situation worse.¹⁷ Mahmud Mukhtar Pasha, the commander of the First Army Corps,^{*} complained after the uprising that "the educated officers whom I had gradually introduced into the cadres in place of "ranker" officers did not, unfortunately, make any effort to study the psychology of the soldier and to make themselves appreciated and loved by him."¹⁸ This parting of the ways, between the officers and the soldiery is vividly portrayed by Ali Cevat Bey, First Secretary at the Palace. A rugged Anatolian soldier explained in an encounter with Ali Cevat the reasons for his supporting the rebel cause:

"They curse our religion and ridicule our morals. By God, its a sin!" I replied: "Who curses and ridicules you? Look, my boy, I beat this man as well." I pointed to Hasan Aga, one of the coffee makers at the secretariat, who was with me that day.

17. Ibid., p. 6.

* The First Army Corps was permanently garrisoned in Constantinople and the majority of its officer Corps were drawn from the ranks. They were poorly trained and religious in outlook and, as a result, were more susceptible to the intrigues of the fundamentalist Muslim divines.

18. McCullough, p. 68.

I was very fond of him but on occasion while fasting I had struck him." A man has to be beaten once in awhile by his officers and superiors, especially in the Army, so what is the matter?" He leaned his head toward me and said: "My Aga, I would let you kill me. Go ahead, hit me between the eyes, it would not matter. But the ones who beat us are children, babies, and their mouths are full of curses. They curse our beliefs and our religion. Now that's a sin, isn't it?"¹⁹

The C.U.P. and the officers often seem to have forgotten that common soldiers even if illiterate are men with some convictions, intelligence and volition.²⁰

The April 13, mutiny developed into a full scale revolt because of the incapacity of the government in Constantinople. Hilmi Pasha tried to negotiate with the Softas and other religious elements in order to find out exactly what they desired. They demanded the dismissal of the Minister of War as well as the President of the Chamber, Ahmad Riza.²¹ Moreover, they wanted the restoration of the Sheriat, and the confinement of Muslim women to their homes.²² Finding himself in a quandary Hilmi Pasha tendered the resignation of his cabinet and it was immediately accepted by the Sultan. In

19. Swenson, p. 7.

20. Ibid.

21. Ahmad, p. 40.

22. Ibid.

retrospect, it seems to the writer that had the civilian and military authorities been more forceful, they could have suppressed the revolt at an early stage. Unfortunately, the minister, flustered by the turn of events, did not dare take action and they ordered Mahmud Muktar Pasha, commander of the First Army Corps, to refrain from using force against the rebels. The First Army had not yet mutinied. Muktar Pasha refused to use force on his own initiative without orders from above and, consequently, his troops began to get restive and deserted the ranks in droves. Soon they started to fraternize with the agitators. At this point Muktar resigned and his entire force went over to the enemy.* On April 14, Tewfik Pasha, a former foreign minister, was appointed Grand Vizier. Abdulhamid tried to preserve for himself the prerogative of appointing the two

* After his resignation, the ex-commander barely escaped the wrath of an irate crowd. He was chased by an angry mob of sailors and soldiers, but Muktar escaped over a wall into the home of Sir William Whittal, a well known British resident of the capital, and Lady Whittal refused to turn him over to the mob. After waiting around for awhile, the crowd finally dispersed and Mahmud Muktar made good his escape from the Whittal residence disguised as a sailor. He was given asylum by the German war vessel Lorelei. (The Great Powers were each allowed a light-war vessel to be stationed in Constantinople after the Armenian massacres of 1895. This concession was achieved after laborious negotiations with Abdulhamid and, ostensibly, the reason for it was the fear that the next outbreak might take an anti-European form.)

ministers to the armed forces, but Tewfik refused to accept office under such conditions and the Sultan backed down.²³ However, he had already managed to appoint as the Minister of War, Edhem Pasha, who had led the Turkish armies into war against Greece in 1897.²⁴ Also on April 14, the Chamber, with only sixty deputies present, elected Ismail Kemal Bey as its President to succeed Ahmed Riza²⁵ and the C.U.P. deputies. either absconded from the capital altogether or were in hiding.

There is little evidence that Hilmi Pasha or the two other ministers who resigned with him - the Ministers of War and Education, felt that they were being squeezed out of office by the intrigues of Abdulhamid or the opponents of the C.U.P. The cabinet resigned willingly and, moreover, Tewfik Pasha's cabinet included seven members from the previous cabinet. It also issued a statement on April 15 to the chamber of Deputies promising to pursue the same policy as Hilmi Pasha's cabinet. At the request of the new cabinet, Lowther instructed British Consuls in Macedonia and Asiatic Turkey to assure the population that the Constitution would be upheld.²⁶ But in a few days, it

23. Ibid., p. 41.

24. Graves, Philip. Britain and Turk, London, 1941, p. 127.

25. The Times, April 15, 1909.

26. Ismail Kemal, p. 343.

became apparent that Constantinople was not the effective centre of government anymore. Despite the defeat of the Committee in the capital, it still remained for the new Grand Vizier to convince the all powerful Third Army in Macedonia that the mutiny was spontaneous and in no way unconstitutional.²⁷ By April 17, the central committee of the C.U.P. in Salonica had decided to seize control of the government and restore the Committee to power once again.

In the provinces, both in Macedonia and Asia, the distinction between the C.U.P. and the governmental administration was confused. Much of the leadership in both military and civilian spheres in the provinces came from staunch C.U.P. supporters. These men had come to power as a result of the Young Turk revolution and with remarkable solidarity they now resolved their divided loyalties in favour of the C.U.P.²⁸ Telegrams poured into the Porte, often insulting and threatening in tone and in unison they refused to recognize the new cabinet.²⁹ They also bombarded the Palace with telegrams, accusing the Sultan of attempting to destroy the constitutional government as in 1876 and promised retaliation.³⁰ From

27. Ahmad, p. 43.

28. Swenson, p. 14.

29. Ibid.

30. Ahmad, p. 43.

Salonica the Central Committee demanded the arrest of prominent Liberals such as Ismail Kemal.* Such threats had a demoralizing effect in Constantinople. Ali Fuad Turkgeldi has the following to say in his memoirs:

* Ismail Kemal who spent a number of years in exile wandering about Europe as a victim of Hamidian despotism, curiously enough, drew closer to the palace during the crisis. In his memoirs, while discussing these crucial days of the mutiny, he has shown considerable tolerance, if not actual affection, for Abdulhamid. The Sultan was equally interested in building amicable relations with the newly elected President of the chamber and their meeting of April 15 throws some light into Abdulhamid's mental framework at this time. To quote Ismail Kemal:

"He made elaborate excuses for all that had passed between us, and said he was now convinced of the sincerity of my sentiments towards him and of the value of the counsels I had given him in the past. He criticised very bitterly the conduct and attitude of those who had provoked the present events, the seriousness of which he recognized, and he begged me to give him the frankest and most sincere advice for dealing with the situation. He added that he was happy at the existence of the new regime, which he intended faithfully to maintain, as he considered it the sole guarantee now for his personal glory and the good of the country. He was, he said, so convinced of the advantage of the new order of things, that he swore upon the Prophet and the Koran that, even should his people beg him to resume the absolute power, he would not consent because he believed it was the last effort made to save the Empire, and if it also should unhappily fail, the Empire would be lost."

Despite Abdulhamid's bravado, for an experienced conspirator, if such indeed was the case in this instance, the Sultan sounded pitiful. As a result of Kemal's advice, he appointed Nazim Pasha the commandant of the First Army Corps as replacement to Mukhtar Pasha.

For more see: Ismail Kemal, pp. 341-342.

"Although, Tewfik Pasha, met these threats with his customary calm, a number of ministers took them personally and began to get nervous. For example, every time the Finance Minister Nuri Bey came to a cabinet meeting he would say: 'Today again, I received a great bunch of telegrams saying, we do not recognize you, the unconstitutional Minister of Finance in the unconstitutional Cabinet! Now how come we are unconstitutional? I don't recognize any of those men. What right do they have to threaten me like this?'"³¹

On April 17, the Committee passed on from words to action and the 'Action Army' left Salonica, officially to restore discipline among the mutinous troops and to restore order in the capital.³² Most of the mobile troops came from the Vilayet of Salonica and volunteers from the Albanian districts of Monastir, Ochrida and Resna, the cradle of the July revolution. The 'Action Army' contained Muslims, Bulgars, Jews, Greeks and others;³³ at least, for a brief period this army was the embodiment of the varied races and cultures of the Empire which were able to cooperate with one another. A number of people from student and professional groups - doctors, lawyers, professors - signed up with the 'Action Army' as volunteers. The Christian population, especially the

31. Swenson, p. 15.

32. Ahmad, p. 44.

33. McCullough, p. 199.

Bulgarians in Macedonia, despite their disillusionment with the policies of the constitutional regime, were not inclined towards the new regime which they feared might take them back to the pre-July days. Hence, they were mostly in favour of the C.U.P.

Reported The Times:

"Sandansky and Panitza and their followers profess great enthusiasm for the cause of the Young Turks and promise to support it with their armed forces. The Macedonian revolutionary circles here are also disposed to favour the Young Turks regarding the Sultan's professions of attachment to the Constitution as insincere and as designed to veil the gradual re-establishment of the former regime."³⁴

The 'Action Army' was placed under the command of Mahmud Shefket Pasha*, the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army Corps

34. The Times, April 21, 1909.

* The Oliver Cromwell of the so-called Turkish counter revolution, Mahmud Shefket Pasha, had caught the eye of Von Der Goltz, in the 1880's, during the German inspired military reforms of Turkey. For awhile, he was a professor of Algebra and the theory of gunnery at the Higher Military School in Constantinople. On Goltz's recommendation he was sent to Germany and France for higher military training and he spent nine years in Europe. During this period, he also did his duty as a consultant to his government in a number of arms procurement enterprises. In 1901, while on a government mission to the Hijaz, he happened to travel in a steamer, Muruvet (Generosity), with hundreds of political prisoners destined to be imprisoned in different lonely fortresses. In his conversations with them he was exposed to their idealism and, moreover, their wretched living conditions appalled him. These experiences, coupled with his western and central European sojourn, at least according to one writer, were the determining factors of his conversion to a confirmed anti-Hamidian. In November 1908, after Hilmi's departure from Salonica to take up the post of Minister of the Interior, Shefket Pasha was appointed to replace him as the Inspector-General of Macedonia, while retaining his post as the Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army Corps.

See McCullough, pp. 152-154.

in Salonica. The news of the impending arrival of Shefket's troops resulted in panic in Constantinople. The cabinet deemed it wise to send a deputation to meet the 'Action Army' before it reached the capital and to reassure the troops that the constitution was safe.³⁵ Deputations were sent, but the Committee was in no mood to negotiate. Most of the C.U.P. deputies had converged in San Stefano, a mere thirteen miles from the capital, awaiting the arrival of the Macedonians.

There were last minute attempts to salvage at least something from the worsening situation in the capital. Abdulhamid issued a statement declaring that he welcomed the idea of the Macedonian troops entering the city as long as no violence was involved. Ismail Kemal sought the help of the powers as a last desperate measure to stop them from marching into the capital.³⁶ The Germans flatly rejected any idea of mediation between the capital and the 'Action Army'. Zinoviev, the Russian Ambassador, bluntly told Kemal that the Sultan and his ministers would be left to get out of the mess themselves.³⁷ Lowthe, was not wholly averse to the idea, provided Kemal could persuade the Grand Vizier to propose such a measure, as the Sultan's requests could no longer make a favourable impression in Great Britain.³⁸ Tewfik Pasha was unwilling to shoulder any

35. Ahmad, p. 44.

36. Ismail Kemal, p. 344.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

such responsibility and Kemal had to give up his attempts*

By April 22, some twenty thousand troops and volunteers, the latter led by Sandansky and his ferocious lieutenant Panitza, had reached the western suburbs of Constantinople. The actual fighting was simply a series of skirmishes and this occurred on April 23 and 24. The only ones to put up any serious resistance were the Macedonian guard detachment that had initiated the mutiny on April 13 and a group of theological students, who made a last ditch stand in one of the mosques in Stamboul.³⁹

* In his memoirs, Ismail Kemal, is very critical of the policies of Great Britain, France and Russia towards the C.U.P. He observed:

In spite of all their unconstitutional acts, the Ambassadors of Great Britain, France and Russia, either through their feeling the influence of some of their personnel who had been won to the Young Turk cause, or else through false judgment of its merits, shared a sympathy which was little worthy of their positions, and, which, furthermore, did not show much more perspicacity. The French Embassy became the rendezvous of the chiefs of the Party. M. Andre Mandelstam, the First Dragoman of the Russian Embassy, was to all intents and purposes their chief adviser. Mr. Fitzmaurice, the First Dragoman of the British Embassy, was the only member of the diplomatic corps who had formed a proper opinion of the mentality and the mischievous policy of this group of mysterious people, the unionists; but, unfortunately, his predecessor, Sir Adam Block, who was the English representative of the titles of the Ottoman Debt, was devoted to them, body and soul, and used his influence with Sir Gerard Lowther on their behalf. We greatly deplored this sympathetic policy, which helped to encourage the unionists in their work of mischief in the country." See Kemal: Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey, p. 349.

39. Groves, p. 132. McCullough, p. 235.

As the ringleaders of the mutiny, the former, perhaps, expected severe treatment from their adversaries and this explained the reasons for their stiff resistance. The theological students were massacred by Sandansky's warriors. Yildiz and its garrisons remained permanently outside the range of military operations, but, under Shefket's orders, the Palace was carefully watched by reserve detachments. On April 24, when the battle was lost elsewhere in the city, two battalions of the Yildiz garrison surrendered piecemeal and the rest of the soldiers fled in every possible direction. The following day, left without any troops, the commander of the guards requested the Macedonians to send soldiers for the protection of the Sultan and Shefket obliged by despatching four battalions to occupy the barracks and depots of Yildiz.

In Arab Asia, the Young Turk rule had never been popular. The Arabs had not been dealt with fairly in the parliamentary elections by the committee and, since the elections, a number of prominent Arabs had been dismissed from their posts. Under the old regime, many leading elements in the Sultan's entourage had been Arabs. Also, Abdulhamid's Pan-Islamic ideology had certain appeal among the Arabs and throughout his reign the Sultan had cultivated their company. Consequently, there was some support for the mutineers in the Asiatic provinces. But this support of the mutineers, i.e. the Constantinople Softas and others, was expressed through religious fanaticism and

terrible massacres of Armenians took place in Adana and Alexandretta. The Adana massacres had been in preparation for sometime, but the revolt in Constantinople ignited the spark. In Alexandretta, the Muslims surrounded the city and destroyed many Armenian farms in the vicinity and it was only the despatch of a British war vessel, on April 18, which finally brought the situation under control.⁴⁰ The Arab support for the rebels soon died out, after the murder of Arslan Bey, who was not only a deputy representing the almost exclusively Arab constituency of Lattakia, but also a Druze Emir with powerful connections in Syria. He was mistakenly murdered on April 16 and his assailants did it under the impression that he was Javid Bey, the editor of Tanin.⁴¹

The victory of the committee was complete by April 26. The entire episode lasted two weeks. The ringleaders of the mutiny were shot or condemned to long terms of imprisonment. Attempts to constitute a permanent court-martial did not materialize. The rank and file offenders were merely disarmed and they were despatched to serve the remainder of their service on road-gangs. The leaders of the Ahrar party were prosecuted under a court-martial, but most of them were

40. The Times, April 21, 1909.

41. Ismail Kemal, p. 344.

subsequently exonerated. But the party was never to be the same again as its offices were raided, and papers were confiscated thus forcing the organization to disband itself.⁴² Most of the newspapers that supported the Ahrar line were also forced to close down.

On April 27, a National Assembly, composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, proclaimed its decision to depose Abdulhamid and replace him with his younger brother, Reshad Efendi, as Muhammed V. A fetva was obtained to this effect from the Sheik-ul-Islam thus providing legitimacy for the succession under Islamic law. A parliamentary deputation of four, which included General Essad Pasha and a prominent Salonican Jew, Carasso Efendi, were charged with conveying the news to Abdulhamid. The Sultan accepted his fate resiliently with a single request that the lives of his children and himself be spared.* He was deported to Salonica with a small entourage

42. Swenson, p. 17.

McCullough has vividly described the last scene between the Sultan and the parliamentary deputation. It was recounted to him personally by Essad Pasha. To quote him:

"The deputation advanced into the centre of the room. The Sultan's secretaries, Galib Bey, Djevad Bey, and a number of eunuchs and valets remained near the door. Looking haggard and worn, Abd-ul-Hamid rose and, advancing from behind the screen, said 'Why have you come?'

continued.....

Whereupon General Essad Pasha gave the military salute, took two steps forward and replied: Essad Pasha: In conformity with the fetva that has been pronounced, the nation has deposed you. The National Assembly charges itself with your personal security and that of your family. You have nothing to fear from anybody. Be reassured!

Abd-ul-Hamid: I am not guilty-----It is my destiny (Kismet)-----is my life, at least, in safety? (Carasso Efendi says that Abd-ul-Hamid had tears in his eyes as he asked this question).

Essad Pasha: The Ottomans are noble and magnanimous. They never commit injustice.

Abd-ul-Hamid: Swear to me on what you say, for your declarations may soon be modified. Swear to me, then, in person that you shall not go back on what you say.

Essad Pasha: I repeat to you that the Ottomans are noble and that they do not commit injustice. Your life is in every way guaranteed by the National Assembly. Do not, therefore, be uneasy.-----

Abd-ul-Hamid: I gained the Turko-Greek war, and history will bear witness to the fact that I have done much for the interests of the nation. I am by no means guilty.

Essad Pasha: It is impossible, under the constitutional regime, to punish anyone unless he is guilty. Condemnation can only be pronounced after a careful investigation."

See McCullough, pp. 269-70.

and placed under house arrest at the Villa Allatini,⁴³ He was returned, during the Balkan war of 1912 to one of his Palaces on the Bosphorus, where he died in 1917.

This chapter would not be complete without looking into the inner meaning of the reaction of April 13, 1909. In order to obtain a measure of insight into this complicated problem, at least, three main questions have to be considered:

- 1.) Was the Constantinople uprising a purely religious movement directed at the C.U.P.?
- 2.) Was it a military mutiny organized by Abdulhamid as alleged by the C.U.P.?
- 3.) Or was it deliberately provoked by the Committee itself to give the excuse required for crushing the Sultan?

The first interpretation is probably too simplistic. The exponents of this theory interpret the mutiny as a struggle between the traditional and westernized segments of Turkish society. According to them, the July revolution was a movement organized by the Europeanized elements, whereas the uprising of April 13 was promoted by a fanatical soldiery, independent of its officer corps, tradition bound Muslim divines and theological

43. Abbot, G. F., Turkey in Transition, London, 1909, p. 266.

students. But as The Times observed on April 15:

"As further details of yesterday's outbreak come to hand it grows evident that it would be unfair to describe the movement against the Committee as purely reactionary, though it was undoubtedly aided by reactionary elements both among the Hodjas and the soldiers. Many of the former who took part in it are described as men of considerable enlightenment who only joined in the attack on the committee regime, when they were convinced that it was exposing the state to a variety of dangers-----."44

Moreover, a number of the leaders of the Ahrar party were as familiar with western ideas as any of the leading Young Turks. Hence, it would be fallacious to see the dispute solely as a struggle between Muslim tradition and western values.

As to the second possibility, much has been made of Abdulhamid's attempts to bribe individuals and institutions to get rid of the C.U.P. Yet no shred of evidence has appeared so far to incriminate him. Many writers have pronounced him guilty without providing the documentation to support their assertions and a number of examples may be cited. In February 1909, according to Tewfik Fikret Bey, a well known poet and director of the Galata Saray Lycée, Abdulhamid withdrew two million Turkish pounds and deposited it in foreign banks. His alleged intention was to use the

44.. The Times, April 15, 1909.

money in order to stir up trouble against the C.U.P.* On April 9, in the wake of Fehmi's murder, The Times correspondent in Vienna gave a curious warning to its readers:

* Fikret, at this time was a prominent C.U.P. member and his hatred of Hamidian despotism was well known. In 1898, he had described the decay of Constantinople under the tyranny of Abdulhamid in the following manner:

"Once more a stubborn mist has swathed
your horizons---
A dusty, fearsome darkness, which the eye
Takes care not to pierce, for it is afraid
But for you this deep, dark veil is right
and fitting,
This veiling becomes you well, O scene of
evil deeds-----
Yes, veil yourself, O tragedy, veil yourself
O city;
Veil yourself and sleep forever, whore of
the world!"

In July 1908, under the flush of victory he was more optimistic:

"Now we are far from that accursed night,
The night of calamity has joined the night
of oblivion,
Our eyes have opened to a radiant morning.
Between you, O world of renewal, and that
ill-omened night,
There is no kinship; You are noble and great.
There is no mist or shade about your face, only
splendour and majesty,
A bursting brightness like the dawning sun."

The 'counter-revolution' was a blow to all his hopes and his accusation of Abdulhamid of bribery, without producing evidence, occurred only after the event. In view of his close connections with the C.U.P., it strikes the writer as a rather suspicious story.

See Lewis: Emergence, p.206.

"How desirable it is to judge with reserve incidents like the assassination of Hassan Fehmi Efendi may be gathered from the circumstance that at Constantinople many competent observers have been for some time inclined to attribute the violent campaign carried on against the committee of union and progress by the Serbesti and a non-vernacular journal to the influence of financial institutes interested in discrediting the new regime."⁴⁵

The correspondent failed to report from whom or how he obtained the information about the impending disaster, nor did he specify which financial institutions were backing Serbesti and the non-vernacular journal. It was also alleged that Ali Kemal, the editor of Ikdam, who fled Turkey for Paris on April 15, received ten thousand Turkish pounds from the Sultan before his final flight.⁴⁶ Apart from rumours, there is no proof to indict the Sultan on this instance either. Edwin Pears, in his biography of Abdulhamid, has stated that in the midst of the mutiny the Sultan despatched Yusuf Pasha, an Albanian, to raise a party in his favour in that country.⁴⁷ Apparently he was apprehended and arrested by Shefket Pasha's men. The latter were supposed to have found large sums of gold hidden away

45. Ibid, April 9, 1909.

46. McCullough, p. 51.

47. Pears, Sir Edwin. The Life of Abdulhamid, London, 1917, pp. 317, 318.

in packets in his luggage. Shefket also on two different occasions told McCullough that he had documentary evidence to prove the Sultan's guilt in the mutiny.⁴⁸ Despite McCullough's faith in the marshal's honesty, no such document has ever seen the light of day. Shefket Pasha's excuse was that the publication of the Sultan's correspondence would ruin half the public men in Turkey as well as a number of prominent diplomats.

Against the proponents of the conspiracy theory, we have the positive assertions of people like Kiamil Pasha and Ismail Kemal Bey that the Sultan was not a party to the mutiny. Said Kiamil:

"He was a broken man, broken in health and in spirits. I had continual intimate relations with him for many months, and I knew that he could not have engineered this Mutiny, as he was in extreme fear for his life and would have been very well satisfied if allowed to remain on the throne, no matter how much his power was circumscribed. The Mutiny was the result of a ferment in the army, provoked partly by the mistakes of the committee and partly by the reactionary propaganda of the Mohammedan Association; the dislike which the soldiers entertained for the Young Turk officers; the comparatively overworked condition of the rank and file; the intrigues of the discharged 'ranker' officers; perhaps the memory of the old Janissary revolts which men yet living have seen, and a hundred other causes. If money was found on the soldiers, it was given them by the Mohammedan Association, not by the Padishah; but little

48. McCullough, p. 49.

money was found, if any. The Sultan was more frightened than anybody else when the revolt broke out, and, when Hilmi Pasha handed in his resignation, what could the Sovereign do but appoint a new cabinet and take that cabinet's advice on the question of amnesty?"⁴⁹

The above indeed is a persuasive argument. Ismail Kemal corroborated this view, after his first audience, on April 15, with the Sultan:

"My conviction gained from this audience was that the Sultan was in no way responsible for the events that had just taken place, and that he was quite sincere in the declarations he had made, not on account of his oaths, but because I realized that he actually found a certain repose and security from his former continual fears in the new regime, which gave satisfaction all around."⁵⁰

In the midst of so much controversy, it is difficult to believe in the conspiracy theory.

The third possibility that the mutiny was consciously provoked by the committee to crush Abdulhamid is also almost certainly false. On April 13, the committee did not desire an insurrection in the capital any more than anyone else. But once the revolt had taken place, they made full use of the situation. They could not allow themselves to admit their failures and, as they had the power to dethrone the Sultan,

49. Ibid., pp. 48, 49.

50. Ismail Kemal, p. 342.

they conveniently shifted the burden of responsibility on to him.⁵¹ It was also necessary to advance the conspiracy theory in order to justify the march of the army and to preserve the prestige and reputation of the C.U.P.⁵² The C.U.P. disposed the Sultan as a scapegoat for its own political shortcomings and as a proof of the existence of the reactionary conspiracy. Consequently, one is forced to agree with Swenson that "the Istanbul mutiny was less the product of a clever intrigue [by the Sultan] than it was the consequence of human misjudgment, incompetence and timidity."⁵³ As to Abdulhamid's responsibility, Philip Graves has summed it up succinctly:

"He may have been guiltless of complicity in the mutiny, but history records other instances of the punishment of its villains for crimes that they had not committed. The moral and material damage that he had inflicted on his people, and to some extent on the Muslim world, endured after his dethronement."⁵⁴

In the last analysis, the mutiny of April 13 could not have succeeded, especially the way it was conducted. It lacked organization and had no intelligent officers to guide the troops in battle. After the 'Action Army' started their march

51. Swenson, p. 18.

52. Ibid., p. 2.

53. Ibid., p. 1.

54.. Graves, p. 132.

towards the capital, depression and defeatism became rampant among the rebels. On the other hand, Shefket Pasha was able to carry his troops with him remarkable well; consequently he was able to crush the mutineers with ease.

EPILOGUE

The striking characteristic in the fight against the despotism of the Sultan was the difference in attitudes between the Paris-Geneva group of Young Turks and the officers of the Third Army. The former were philosophical and liberal in their inclinations and, in the majority, were non-violent, despite the readiness of some to use violence as a last resort to get rid of Abdulhamid. On the other hand, the Army people who carried out the revolution were less educated and less given to the luxury of disagreement. They were also readier to act, whereas the exiles in Europe did not possess a timetable for action. These contradictions between the two groups were to open wider during 1908-1914 and, as a result, it would be correct to say that the liberal civilians helped to make the revolution of 1908, but it was the dictatorship of the C.U.P. which made the war.

It is also unclear as to what exactly the Young Turks wanted after the deposition of Abdulhamid. The civilians never questioned their own confident assumption that all oppressed Christians were thirsting to be good Ottomans. It was their considered opinion that all they had to do was to change the insufferable Sultan and the problems of the Empire would eventually sort themselves out, culminating in a rapprochement between Christians and Muslims. It is understandable that a Stratford Canning could think in this manner, in the pre-Cavour,

pre-Bismarckian age, but there was no excuse for expecting such a communion of peoples by 1900. The electoral bickerings of 1908 and the Balkan politics of the ensuing four years proved this point beyond dispute.

The Young Turks who made the revolution were non-liberals, who made a revolution to save the Empire. They saved it for six years, but, in the process, they also lost Macedonia. So they were not very realistic either, if they thought an Empire could be sustained in a world where even a Serbo-Bulgar-Greek coalition could defeat them, as was shown during the First Balkan War of 1912-13.

One can see the evidence of these developments in the critical July 1908-April 1909 period. The revolution broke out in July 1908 and for about two months there was an aura of high expectation, especially among the Christians. But in the face of Muslim hostility in Anatolia, the Arab lands and the capital, it was soon apparent that the revolution meant different things to different people. The unstable coalition of the C.U.P. and Kiamil's cabinet, made any realistic action impossible. The C.U.P. continually undermined the strength of the civilian cabinet and it was only the excessive fear of the Sultan which forced the two contending factions to cooperate. This in itself created a delicate balance and was destined to last only as long as Abdulhamid was on the throne. Also, the fact that the Balkan powers, Austria and Russia were unwilling to provide the new

regime with the needed time for reforms made the task of the Young Turks more difficult. Bulgaria's declaration of independence and Austria's seizure of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in blatant violation of international law, were simply the prelude to the events of 1912-13 and the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918.

It is also unfortunate that the Young Turks, especially the ones of the military persuasion, did not recognize the need for changing social and cultural values as part of modernization. They were unable to modify their Islamic cultural heritage. Even if they had, it probably was too late to save the Empire. For instance, the idea of "Ottomanism" was adopted at least a century too late to have had any hope of success. The Young Turk dream of creating a common Ottoman citizenship for all the people in the Empire similar to that of the nation States of Western Europe was highly unrealistic. They failed to take into account the different historical background and simpler ethnic composition of countries like Britain, France and Germany and the Ottoman Empire. It is feasible that a true Ottoman allegiance could have been established in the Empire by the twentieth century, provided the Turks had not administered their territories under the millet system and if they had succeeded in converting the populace to Islam. Since none of these happened, the end result was that the Empire remained from beginning to end a conglomeration of self-governing communities.

By 1908, it was already too late to merge them into a single cohesive unit. Also the rise of nationalism had stirred the sentiments of these communities and they desired nothing less than total independence.

In the last analysis, "Ottomanism" itself was abandoned after the Balkan wars. This policy had its origins, as early as September 1908, when the Young Turks attempted to make Turkish compulsory in all mixed and higher schools. Indeed after the loss of Macedonia during 1912-13, it no longer was necessary to accommodate the Greeks and the Slavs. The Albanians also had departed from the Ottoman federation in 1912, proclaiming their total independence. It now left only the Armenian and Arab minorities within the Empire to contend with and, after the Balkan wars, it was thought that the latter could be reconciled through Pan-Islam. It was assumed that the Sultan and the dynasty would continue to provide the focus of loyalty for Turks and Arabs. Pan-Islam would satisfy the needs of Arabs and Pan Turanianism, an extreme version of Turkish nationalism, that of the Turks. In the last analysis, both Pan-Islam and Pan-Turanianism proved to be mere dreams.

A head that loomed large in Turkey during the 1878-1909 period undoubtedly was that of Sultan Abdulhamid. After the July revolution of 1908, the Sultan's power waned considerably, yet the fact that he was still held under suspicion by both the Porte and the Committee made him into a force to be reckoned

with. The Young Turks continued to view the Sultan as the cause of all evil in the Empire and the mutiny of April 13, 1909, provided them with a convenient opportunity to get rid of him once and for all. This certainly was based on a shaky analysis and no one person could be held responsible for all the woes of a declining empire. Also recent scholarship by Bernard Lewis and others suggest that under Abdulhamid the whole movement of the Tanzimat "of legal, administrative and educational reforms - reached its fruition and climax." One could refute this thesis by arguing that, at the time of Abdulhamid's accession to the throne in 1876, Turkey was already at the crossroads of history and, with or without him, it was inevitable that the Empire made some advances in administration, education, communication and others. Nonetheless, unlike the Young Turks who found in the Sultan an absolute villain, many Europeans close to Abdulhamid had a different image of him. The fact that they did not look upon the Sultan as a potent and unforgiving adversary gave these individuals the opportunity to view him more clemently. To illustrate this difference in perspectives between the Young Turk opponents of the Sultan and his European sympathizers, let us take a list of qualities attributed to Abdulhamid by Professor Vambery:

"Benevolence and wickedness, generosity and meanness, cowardice and valour, shrewdness and ignorance, moderation and excess, and many other qualities have alternatively found expressions in his acts and words."¹

Taking up the point of shrewdness and ignorance, it is presumed that Abdulhamid recognized the need for an efficient army and civil service and, during his reign, the Empire witnessed the growth of military schools, academies and hundreds of secular schools. These institutions, especially the military schools and academies, provided an education of reasonable standards. But the Sultan dreaded the possibility of too powerful an army and to solve the problem, he created an army within an army by establishing special sections for his favourites and spies. A similar method was adopted in the civil service also. The curriculum was made easier for such individuals and they were very often promoted to the highest positions. Such policies only led to the creation of even greater opposition than had originally threatened him. In the light of this, one could not really say that the Sultan fully recognized the nature of his difficulties or made any genuine display of foresight. To the Young Turks, it was only further evidence of his dangerous

1. Vambery, Arminius. Personal Recollections of Abdul-Hamid II and His Court, Nineteenth Century, Volume 66, London, 1909.2, p. 69.

stupidity. In their eyes, if anything, the Sultan displayed an inventive genius for delaying the inevitable and they argued that true statesmanship consisted in facilitating the inevitable, not fighting it. But the Young Turks themselves were to find out that, in the affairs of nations, it is not always possible to recognize the maladies in advance. In their fight against the nationalistic disintegration, the Committee sadly found out that they also were battling insuperable odds and their statecraft proved no better than Abdulhamid's. On the other hand, Vambery and others inclined to give the Sultan some credit for the establishment of schools and similar achievements during his reign. Unlike the Young Turks, the latter were unwilling to interpret the Hamidian era as one big void in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Yet they were not unaware of the basic theme of the Sultan's policies: Once again, to quote Arminius Vambery:

"The main-spring of all his actions was the fear of losing his throne and life, and all his efforts tended to ward off even the most distant danger he had suspected. It was his perpetual terror which made a ruthless tyrant, sometimes even against his own will, and in this feeling of constant anxiety he had to have recourse to the vast number of spies and agents provocateurs in his service."²

2. Ibid., p. 78.

Yet Vambory was of the opinion that Sultan Abdulhamid was a remarkable man:

"A prince who could have left a great name behind him if he had a proper education, if he had found an influential minister to mitigate his passions and if the throne he inherited had not been beset with so many insuperable difficulties, dangers and trials."³

The observations above are in no way an attempt to justify Hamidian despotism. It certainly humiliated and degraded large numbers of people in the Ottoman Empire. But the record of ten year's of Young Turk rule from 1908 to 1918 continued to show much of the worst features of Hamidian despotism. The brutalization of public life by violence, repression and terror did not stop with the disappearance of Abdulhamid.⁴ The meddlesome activities of the army in politics led to the twin evils of a militarized government and a political command. The hopes raised by the revolution swiftly degenerated "and the orderly progress of constitutional government was ended in the wretched cycle of plot and counter-plot, repression and sedition, tyranny, humiliation and defeat."⁵

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Lewis, B. Emergence, p. 222.

5. Ibid., p. 223.

GLOSSARY

- Aga - originally a military title of medium rank which in general use denotes any person of standing.
- Ayans - Originally tax farmers in the 16th century, then became the landed gentry of the Ottoman Empire. The tax farming responsibility dwindled away in the 17th century.
- Bashi-Bazuks - Local irregular forces raised and employed at the discretion of the provincial authorities.
- Bey - Formerly some minor noble, it later on meant any person in authority.
- Dragoman - Translator or interpreter, usually attached to the foreign diplomatic missions or the Sublime Porte.
- Efendi - Common courteous form of address, deriving from term for literate or learned man.
- Evkaf - Income from a pious foundation, e.g., a privately endowed mosque or school.
- Fetva - A judgement or ruling on the law given by an appointed authority on Islamic Law.
- Firman - Court promulgation usually a document conferring authority or full powers upon an imperial official, more rarely, a document for public promulgation concerning official administrative policy.
- Hamidieh - Mounted militia taking their name from the Sultan, not a standing force but conscripted only for special situations. Expenses paid out of imperial treasury.
- Hodja - A functionary attached to a mosque responsible for teaching the elements of religious life in a local community. Usually responsible also for providing elementary education and so rather like a village school teacher.

- Irade - An imperial pronouncement on a matter of general principle.
- Janissary - Literal translation "new soldiers." Initially these were convert recruits from the non-Muslim population, primarily the Balkans, but by the 17th century they had become a closed, hereditary warrior class.
- Kaimakam - strictly means "deputy", but often an honorific title for the senior man of a town and a community.
- Kaza - A sub-unit of a Sanjak (see Sanjak).
- Khomitadji - Loosely used to mean guerilla leaders, but originally were local dignitaries responsible for raising and paying peace keeping forces in return for tax exemption or landholding privileges.
- Millet - A largely autonomous religious community.
- Molle - A man of some religious learning.
- Mufti - An appointed authority on Islamic Law and religious matters for a province, city or district. Also an interpreter of Islamic Law.
- Mushir - Normally a Pasha of 'three tails' and therefore the governor of a Pashalik or vilayet, though occasionally only of a Sanjak.
- Mutessarif - The governor of a Sanjak.
- Nahie - A sub-unit of a Kaza.
- Pasha - A title dating from the 13th century used particularly to denote the governor of a province.
- Sanjak - An administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire, comparable to a provincial district in western countries.
- Sheriat - The Holy Law of Islam.
- Softa - A theological student in a mosque school.
- Ulema - Experts in the Holy Law, responsible for providing authoritative interpretations to ensure that all public law accords with the precepts of Islam.

Vali - The governor of a vilayet.

Vilayet - An Ottoman province.

Zapateih - A Turkish policeman.

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