

## CHAPTER IV

### PALMERSTON AND TURKISH REFORM, 1834-1839

AN INTERESTING counterpart of the expansion of British commerce in the Near East is the development of a foreign policy, the aims of which were two-fold, namely; (to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire against foreign aggression and, secondly, to encourage the internal development of that state so that it would become free and independent.) That the year 1833 and the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi between Turkey and Russia marks the beginning of this new policy has already been suggested. Prior to 1833, the British Foreign Office did not consider Russia a dangerous rival in the Near East. France, which had just begun to establish a great overseas empire in Algeria, was regarded as the more dangerous to British trade and the new trade route to the East via the Mediterranean. The Foreign Office, slow to recognize Britain's interests in the Levant, continued its semi-defensive policy in that region until 1834. In order to understand fully why Palmerston was so slow in recognizing the significance of the Near East in British policy and to what extent his policy once adopted was a distinct departure from that of his predecessors, a brief review of the Eastern policy which he inherited is worthwhile.

Viscount Castlereagh had little interest in the welfare of Turkey, except in so far as a Russian invasion of the Sultan's domains in the interests of the Greeks might lead to general war in Europe.<sup>1</sup> His successor in the Foreign Office, George Canning, whose view of British policy was more worldly, less continental, looked upon Turkey as of secondary importance compared with the South American states with whom trade had

<sup>1</sup> C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822*, London, 1925, pp. 255, 343.

increased tremendously in the preceding decade. Canning refused to guarantee the independence of Turkey against aggressors; as for Russia he preferred to foil her intentions by acting in concert with the Tsar. England's entrance into the Greek trouble in 1827 was the result of two accidents, one diplomatic, the other military, namely Wellington's unfortunate visit to St. Petersburg in 1826, and the battle of Navarino, October 20, 1827, just two months after Canning's death (August 8, 1827). Whatever Turcophil tendencies Canning possessed were tempered by the wave of Philhellenism which swept across Britain during his term in the Foreign Office. In short, Canning pursued a frankly opportunist policy,<sup>2</sup> realizing that Turkey was but one, and perhaps a minor one, of Britain's many interests abroad.

In the troublesome interlude which followed, before the Foreign Office acquired a worthy successor to Castlereagh and Canning, Wellington, realizing that Britain had steadily declined in the Porte's favor since Navarino, was anxious to re-establish British influence at Constantinople more securely, yet he was not enough of a diplomat to know how to do it. Wellington opposed the French expedition to Algiers on the ground that any change in the *status quo* in the Mediterranean would menace the integrity of Turkey.<sup>3</sup> Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary in the Wellington Cabinet, did not wholly share his chief's solicitude for the Ottoman Empire, believing that "the hour long since predicted" was at hand, and that "independently of all foreign or hostile impulse this clumsy fabric of barbarous power" was about to "crumble to pieces from its own inherent causes of decay."<sup>4</sup> Aberdeen at this time, as well as in 1844, was less interested in regenerating the Ottoman state than in determining what was to be done with the pieces

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Swain, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Aberdeen to Gordon, November 31, 1828, F. O. 78/179. Quoted in A. H. Gordon, *Earl of Aberdeen*, London, 1893, pp. 85-86. Gordon regretted his chief's stand-off policy; he favored definite support by Britain to prevent Turkey's extinction. F. O. 195/85, Gordon to Aberdeen. #2, January 5, 1830.

when the inevitable crash came. His interest in the Algerian trouble was in checking the growing ambitions of France rather than in indirectly bolstering up a decadent Turkish Empire.

Through 1829 and 1830 Wellington continued his efforts to prevent the loss of Algiers to France. When intervention by France was certain, Aberdeen instructed Gordon, the British Ambassador at the Porte, to induce the Sultan to force the Dey of Algiers to settle his quarrel with the French.<sup>5</sup> Following the failure to prevent the expedition to Algiers, Britain then attempted to limit the extent and influence of its operations.<sup>6</sup> In March, 1830, Aberdeen complained to Polignac that French plans indicated destruction of the local authority "rather than the infliction of chastisement."<sup>7</sup> British protests against this violation of the Sultan's sovereignty continued, but Stuart's suggestion of a conference was not well received in Paris. In July, 1830, Charles X was overthrown by a revolution and French national aggressiveness turned to Belgium and the Rhine; interest in this quarter temporarily blinded the British Foreign Office as to what was really going on in the Mediterranean. These facts<sup>8</sup> are interesting in that they show a negative interest in Turkey's welfare. Palmerston's predecessors, far from having a definite policy as regards the strengthening of the Turkish state or of bolstering British influence at Constantinople, merely sought to delay the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire,<sup>9</sup> a process which not only endangered their interests in the Mediterranean, but also might lead to a general war.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> F. O. 78/188, Aberdeen to Gordon, January 20, 1830.

<sup>6</sup> F. O. France 27/405, Aberdeen to Stuart, June, 1830.

<sup>7</sup> F. O. 27/405, Aberdeen to Stuart, March 5, 1830.

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed account of English policy during this crisis, see Swain, *op. cit.*, ch. V.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon's belief that the regeneration of Turkey was feasible with outside assistance was not shared by either Wellington or Aberdeen. Cf. F. O. 78/181 Gordon to Aberdeen, November 11 and December 15, 1829; Wellington, *Despatches*, VI, 192.

<sup>10</sup> As late as March 7, 1832 Sir Robert Peel expressed great apprehension as to the maintenance of peace, if French aggression in the Mediterranean continued. Hansard, *op. cit.*, X, 1229.

The Englishmen who first went to the bottom of the problem of the Eastern question were Stratford Canning and David Urquhart. Canning's sojourn in Turkey in 1831 convinced him of the need of reform in the Ottoman administration, and he was anxious that England should assist the Turks in getting their house in order.<sup>11</sup> On March 7, 1832 he wrote Palmerston portraying the mildly successful attempts of the Sultan to reconstruct his dominion, and outlining the need of a new administrative system, an efficient army and an improvement in finances. "I think the time is near at hand, or perhaps already has come," he concludes, "when it is necessary that a decided line of policy should be adopted and steadily pursued with respect to this country. The Turkish Empire is evidently hastening to dissolution, and an approach to the civilization of Christendom affords the only chance of keeping it together for any length of time."<sup>12</sup>

Again on May 17, 1832<sup>13</sup> Canning reported that "the Sultan and a few of his most favoured adherents are daily opening their eyes more and more to the weaknesses of the Empire, and to the necessity of seeking support in some well-chosen foreign alliance, in order to obtain leisure for completing their military establishments, and counsel for proceeding with their present system of improvement on sound principles." After reiterating his lack of confidence in Russia, Canning remarked, "If ever they form an Alliance with that Power, fear and helplessness will drive them into it." In view of events a year hence Canning appears to have had the gift of prophecy as well as diplomacy. Canning's lengthy memorandum of December 19, 1832 further outlined his views on the Eastern Question, but it failed to move the Foreign Secretary.<sup>14</sup>

About the same time Urquhart wrote, "The political state of Turkey is brought to a crisis, which if favourable will, I

<sup>11</sup> Lane-Poole. *op. cit.*, II, 74.

<sup>12</sup> F. O. 78/209, Canning to Palmerston, #12, March 7, 1832.

<sup>13</sup> F. O. 78/210, Canning to Palmerston, #34. *Confidential*, May 17, 1832.

<sup>14</sup> The marginal notes show how far Palmerston was from a definite Turkish policy. Cf. Appendix I.

believe, be the means of her speedy regeneration; and if unfavourable, of her speedy dissolution; the long and industrious, and hitherto eminently successful labours of Russia are therefore on the point of being crowned with complete success, or of being entirely frustrated.”<sup>15</sup> Yet even this failed to arouse the Foreign Office.

As has been indicated in a previous chapter,<sup>16</sup> Russia's domination over Turkey, as a result of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, roused many Englishmen to the significance of the Eastern question in British policy.<sup>17</sup> In the years that followed, many deplored the humiliating subserviency<sup>18</sup> of the Porte, and although Palmerston did little, he was formulating a policy. In the King's address on the opening of Parliament in 1834, William IV stated that he hoped there would be no “change in the relations of that Empire (Turkey) with other powers, which might affect its future stability and independence.”<sup>19</sup> Palmerston in reply to this address declared, “it was, . . . of the utmost importance to the interests of this country, and to the preservation of the balance of power in Europe, that the Turk-

<sup>15</sup> Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, p. 218.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Chapter I, pp. 59 ff. Palmerston gained valuable experience and learned many details about the troublesome Eastern Question in 1833. H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston*, New York, 1936, I, 180.

<sup>17</sup> Prior to this time the majority of Englishmen were indifferent to the affairs of Turkey or despaired of successfully influencing its reformation, believing that the best policy was to let the Sultan travel by his own road, either to destruction or enlightened despotism; either appeared more advantageous to Britishers than the hopeless state Turkey was then experiencing. *Turkey and Russia*—By a merchant, London, 1835 was a typical example of the new attitude toward Turkey. The merchant concludes with the plea to “Let England declare to Russia that the independence of the Turkish Empire is the *sine qua non* of her friendship.” *Loc. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> One example of Russian domination over the Porte was in their forcing the Sultan to accept some honorary medals against the dictates of Moslem law. The Sultan was forced to use the police, stimulating them with the threat of a conspiracy, in order to keep his people quiet, at the acceptance of the proffered medals. F. O. 78/252, Ponsonby to Wellington, #18, January 28, 1835 and #22, February 11, 1835. For other descriptions of Turkey's subserviency see C. B. Elliott, *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia and Turkey*, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1839, I, 131; *London Times*, January 1, 1836, January 28, 1836, February 16, 1836, February 17, 1836, March 30, 1836.

<sup>19</sup> Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. 21, February 4, 1834, p. 3.

ish Empire should be maintained in its integrity and independence.”<sup>20</sup> Yet the year 1834 finds the Foreign Office resigned to the fact of Russia’s power in the East. The next year, 1835, the reaction to Russia’s aggressiveness came more in the open. The press provided an outlet<sup>21</sup> for pent-up feelings. The *Times* since 1833 had been outspoken in its demand for adequate defense against Russia.<sup>22</sup> India not Turkey was in the minds of many of these men. While they felt certain that Russia was in no position to deprive England of her Indian possessions, . . . “nevertheless the security of our Indian territory should be placed beyond all doubt, by the adoption of every safe-guard that the wisdom of our statesmen can devise, . . .”<sup>23</sup>

To demand a policy and to prepare one were two different things. Palmerston proceeded with the utmost caution, and more than two years passed before his intentions were obvious to everyone. Supported by DeBroglie he declined to recognize the treaty of Unkiar, intimating that further aggressive acts by Russia would be resisted by force, if necessary.<sup>24</sup> He then negotiated “the Quadruple Alliance of 1834, which grouped the Constitutional Governments of Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal in mutual defence against the autocrats of Russia, Austria and Prussia,”<sup>25</sup> . . . who had revived the Holy Alliance the year before by the Münchengrätz Convention (September, 1833).

At the same time he strengthened the Mediterranean squadron and ordered the Levant fleet to act upon the authorization of the British ambassador at the Porte should the Sultan need

<sup>20</sup> Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. 21, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Chapter I, pp. 56, 59.

<sup>23</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 307. According to Bell, Palmerston was worried as much by Mehemet Ali’s aims as by those of the Tsar. Mehemet must not be allowed to control both the Suez and the overland route; modernization of Turkey’s army and navy was the best way to prevent Egyptian aggression. Thus the news of Koniah was partly responsible for Palmerston’s new policy of active intervention in the Near East. Cf. Bell, *op. cit.*, I, 181.

<sup>24</sup> F. O. 65/206, Palmerston to Bligh, #101, December 6, 1833.

<sup>25</sup> *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, 289.

assistance against Russia.<sup>26</sup> Palmerston did not expect war,<sup>27</sup> but he did wish to be ready for any eventuality.

With Russia we are just as we were, snarling at each other, hating each other, but neither wishing for war. Their last communication on Eastern Affairs is anything but satisfactory. However, there is nothing at present to be done by us, because there is no danger of anything being done by them. They cannot return to Turkey unless invited by the Sultan, and the Sultan will not invite them unless he is again attacked by Mehemet Ali; but Mehemet Ali will not stir as long as we beg him not to do so, because he knows that our fleet could effectually prevent him. . . . Our policy as to the Levant is to remain quiet, but remain prepared.<sup>28</sup>

Eventually this pacific policy of watchful waiting became a positive policy of action. That he disapproved of the 1833 settlement, there is no doubt,<sup>29</sup> and he was determined that

<sup>26</sup> Secretary Stanley to Vice Admiral Rowley, January 31, 1834, enclosed in F. O. 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834. Cancelled by Wellington 1835; cf. F. O. 78/251, Wellington to Ponsonby, March 16, 1835; renewed on successive occasions until 1840. Cf. Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations," *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>27</sup> Palmerston was neither an "alarmist" nor a "false-alarmist" as far as the Russian menace was concerned. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Lytton Bulwer, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1871, II, pp. 182-183. This statement is interesting, not only because it outlined British policy during the ensuing months, but because it proves that Palmerston perceived the importance of the fleet in foreign affairs, and finally because Palmerston realized that a general war could be prevented by working on Mehemet as well as upon the Sultan. Palmerston had no fear of Russia's power. On March 10, 1835, he wrote to his brother William: "The fact is that Russia is a great humbug, and that if England were fairly to go to work with her we should throw her back half a century in one campaign. But Nicholas, the proud and insolent, knows this, and will always check his pride and moderate his insolence when he finds that England is firmly determined and fully prepared to resist him." Palmerston to Temple, March 10, 1835, Bulwer, *op. cit.*, III, 5. Lord Durham after traveling to St. Petersburg from Constantinople during the summer of 1835 was "convinced that the Tsar did not have the power, even if he had the will, to call suddenly into action a sufficient force to take Constantinople." Durham's Report on the State of Russia 1836 in S. J. Reid, *Life and Letters of the First Earl of Durham*, 1792-1840, 2 vols., London, 1906, II, 29 ff. After 1833 Palmerston held the "balance between Durham at St. Petersburg and Ponsonby at Constantinople." Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations," *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> In general instructions to Colonel Campbell, February 4, 1833, Palmerston expressed regret that territorial cessions on the part of the Sultan had been necessary. F. O. 78/226, Palmerston to Campbell, February 4, 1833.

further disintegration of Turkey must not be allowed. Moreover, Palmerston perceived that British influence in Turkey could not be enhanced without a limitation of Russian domination there, and the best way to wean the Porte away from the Tsar was to assist in the reformation of Turkey, because only a strong state could assert its independence in the face of a powerful Tsar.<sup>30</sup>

After the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826, the Sultan had continued his efforts to reform his state, but not with great success because of the war with Russia 1827-1829, which resulted from Navarino and the Greek trouble. Following the signing of the treaty of Adrianople (1829) which concluded the Russo-Turk War and established the independence of Greece, Mahmoud again took up the cause of reform. He abolished feudal officials in the provinces. He established the beginnings of a modern cabinet in which officials could be held more responsible for their particular tasks. He took steps to overcome bribery.<sup>31</sup> A passport system was established. Lighthouses were built at certain dangerous points on the coast to protect shipping. Improved methods of controlling cholera and other diseases were established by the inauguration of a more rigid quarantine. In 1830 a military college and a college of medicine to train for the army and navy were established.<sup>32</sup> Mahmoud encouraged the introduction of new printing presses in order that his people might become educated up to his reform ideas.<sup>33</sup> With the aid of a French publisher, Monsieur Alex-

<sup>30</sup> Though this policy was conceived in 1833 and 1834, it was not executed forcibly until 1838. Cf. Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>31</sup> Mahmoud refused fees on the appointment of pashas and forbade subordinates to do so. Walsh, *op. cit.*, II, 307; *A. B. C. F. M. Report*, 1839, p. 64. He also fixed salaries for officers of central government. Rosen, *op. cit.*, I, 271. Fixed salaries were extended to pashas December, 1839. Cf. *supra*, Chapter V, p. 198.

<sup>32</sup> Rosen, *op. cit.*, I, 205-207.

<sup>33</sup> Books previously imported from abroad were now published in Constantinople. Emin estimates that but eighty works were printed in Turkey to 1828; between 1830 and 1842 one hundred and eighty-eight were published there. Cf. A. Emin, *Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press*, New York, 1914, pp. 25, 27. Contemporaries were most enthusiastic at these attempts



ander Blacque,<sup>34</sup> an official gazette, *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, was begun in 1831.

While these improvements demonstrated the wide variety of interests as well as the tireless energy of the Sultan, they did not materially improve the unhealthy condition of his Empire.<sup>35</sup> These reforms merely glossed over some of the surface cracks without removing the real source of the decay within. The complete absence of a well organized program on the part of the Sultan is significant throughout Mahmoud's reign.

Turkey had been left bankrupt by the Russian war,<sup>36</sup> which came at a time when she was just beginning to show life.<sup>37</sup> Her finances were disrupted; the army which Mahmoud had created following the destruction of the Janissaries needed reorganization. For these reasons the Sultan's authority was not respected in the provinces. In 1831 the Albanians revolted, but in spite of Mahmoud's inadequate military means, these haughty mountaineers were broken and humbled by the Grand Vizir. Many Turks, overlooking their own weakness or the strength of the enemies, attributed the disasters which had befallen their state to the hasty, ill-conceived reforms of their chief, in whom they had momentarily lost faith.<sup>38</sup> The great

---

to create an enlightened public opinion. Cf. *Missionary Herald*, vol. 28, 1832, p. 244, and Walsh, *op. cit.*, II, 279.

<sup>34</sup> Blacque went out to Smyrna in 1825 where he established the *Spectateur d'orient* (later called the *Courrier de Smyrne*). His friendship with Sultan Mahmoud lasted until his death at Malta in 1836. Another journal, the *Echo de l'orient*, was founded by M. Bargigli in 1838.

<sup>35</sup> F. O. 195/86, Gordon to Aberdeen, #66, August 21, 1830. Gordon deplored Mahmoud's lack of a basic plan for reforming the state.

<sup>36</sup> Not until January 29, 1834, was a treaty signed between the Tsar and the Sultan freeing Turkey from bondage exacted by Treaty of Adrianople five years before. By the new arrangement the Tsar relinquished all but four million ducats of the indemnity in return for the cession of the Pashalik of Akisla. Russia retained Silistria as pledge of final payment. *British Foreign and State Papers*, XXVI, 1245-1248.

<sup>37</sup> Reform would have been easier before Navarino. Cf. F. O. 352/24, Canning to Palmerston, "Private," February 14, 1832.

<sup>38</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232. Marmont, an observer who had a reputation for his precision, gave a gloomy picture of Turkey in 1834. "Formerly the abuses were greater than at present, and the exactions more frequent, but Christians alone were then the victims of these evils, for until the destruction

majority, however, were attached to the ruler who was also defender of their faith and on this assumption, Mahmoud went ahead with his plans.

Mahmoud's many reforms were nibbling attacks<sup>39</sup> on the great problem. This was Mahmoud's great weakness. Too inconsistent to adopt a definite program of westernization such as Mehemet Ali had done, he wasted his energy on many minor reforms, and he was too obstinate and pig-headed, too bent on reasserting the declining power of Constantinople to see how he might benefit more from less effort. Here was where the assistance of some foreign power could be important. The need of outside support was recognized by Englishmen both at home and abroad. In 1834 after commenting on the increases in commerce due largely to reduced duties on silk, figs, currants, and oils, McCulloch significantly added: "nothing, however, would contribute so much to its (i.e. commerce) extension, as the establishment of order and tranquillity throughout the country. But this, we fear, is beyond the ability of the Ottoman government. The abuses which have reduced the empire to its present state of degradation seem to be inherent in the structure of Turkish society, and to be in harmony with the habits and prejudices of the people. And if such be the case, that reform, which is so much to be wished for, must come from without, and not from within."<sup>40</sup> If Palmerston, through

---

of the Janissaries, the Turks preserved their power and retained their wealth; but now they are joint sufferers with the other inhabitants, living in equal wretchedness and degradation. The natural result of the present condition of the people is, that the cultivation of the land is neglected, and the Turks merely sow sufficient to produce a crop for the immediate support of their families and the payment of their taxes." Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>39</sup> The changes decreed in dress, for example, appear of no significance, yet "oriental dress was a great barrier which separated the people from Europeans, . . ." Walsh, *op. cit.*, II, 318.

<sup>40</sup> McCulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 395. See also "The Diplomacy of Russia," *British and Foreign Review*, Vol. I, #1, 1835, p. 129. Foreign intervention in Turkey's behalf was suggested as early as May, 1833, not by Ponsonby, but by one of his subordinates, James Brant, Vice Consul at Trebizond. "It is easier to point out an evil than to suggest an appropriate remedy," he wrote, "but I cannot refrain from remarking that in order to strengthen the Sultan's Government its system must be changed. It should be placed under the tutelage of an enlightened power, and be constrained to do what its own interests so imperatively demand.

his agents could convince the Sultan of the need of concentrating on one or two problems, Turkey would again become a strong power.

The crisis of 1832-33 was in reality a blessing in disguise, partly because it stimulated action on the part of Britain, and also because it made the Sultan realize that his reform policy to date had not been very successful and thereby made him more amenable to foreign advice. Thus when the British Foreign Minister suggested through his ambassador that what Turkey needed was, not constitutional reform, but an immediate strengthening of the civil service, the army and navy, and above all the financial administration, the Sultan was more ready to accept British suggestions than ever before.

One of the most difficult obstacles to good government in Turkey was the problem of the civil service. While its condition was worse in the provinces, even the central administration was honeycombed with bribe-taking officials. Mahmoud was usually able to keep these men from rising to the highest positions in his government, thereby keeping his cabinet and council clean; nevertheless, they were a hindrance to reform, as Urquhart unwillingly admits:

If, indeed, the re-organization of Turkey depended on the skill, the intelligence, and the honesty of any central administration, the case

---

The Country is rich almost beyond example in everything, but its resources are fritted away, and the treasures it should produce, are not brought into use through want of proper management on the part of the Government and the deplorable system of monopoly and oppression exercised as well by the Government itself, as by all its subordinate Pashas, Governors, and Employes. I am aware how difficult it would be to induce the Porte to submit to the necessary tutelage, and how impossible to introduce an enlightened system of Government without it. I am not less aware how delicate a thing it is to dictate the adoption of a particular line of conduct to an independent Sovereign. But I feel a strong conviction that such an interference as will produce good Government can alone save the Country from serious internal dissensions and ultimately from falling into the possession of Russia. If therefore interference should not be considered proper or convenient to be adopted, it is at least time to reflect how British Interests may be affected by the Country becoming Russian, and how they can best be secured whenever that event may take place." Observations on the supposed views of Russia, etc., by James Brant, Vice Consul at Trebizond, dated March 26, 1833, enclosed in F. O. 78/223, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #1, May 22, 1833.

would be hopeless. Shameless venality, unblushing ignorance, inveterate corruption and favouritism, are its characteristics, without a shadow of patriotism or a spark of honor.<sup>41</sup>

Also it should be noted that the Sultan, like many another absolutist ruler, kept to himself the plans he had for his state and in this way the few able, ambitious, and honest officials became disillusioned and used their positions for their own betterment. What was needed was a group of enlightened men who would follow Mahmoud's leadership to the new day.<sup>42</sup> Until these appeared Mahmoud would have to direct the reforms himself. Had he attempted to create an intelligent civil service he would have been less spectacular but more genuinely a reforming Sultan because he would have laid the basis for a truly modern state. Unfortunately Mahmoud was primarily interested in the army.

Following the disasters of 1829 and 1833, a new army was recruited and equipped, but it lacked training. This army was forced by the Sultan to adopt European dress and tactics, a policy which was repugnant to all but the younger men who had little prejudice toward the former system. When old soldiers were mixed with the new recruits, this merely made the situation worse. The Turks were naturally good fighters, especially when they were attacking a power which threatened the existence of their state, but they lacked leadership. Time was needed to train the fighting forces, but what was more important were officers to instruct the recruits and to lead them in battle. Mahmoud appreciated this weakness and had established a few military schools. After 1829 he continued the process and improved the instruction in those already functioning, in order to provide officers of ability and intelligence.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, p. 117. The above sentence is crossed out by ink lines in the revised version.

<sup>42</sup> Marmont claimed Turkey had none of these. While this was an exaggeration, it probably was true that "an administration calculated to create and husband resources does not exist in Turkey." Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> "The great end and aim of the Sultan's exertions is the formation of a military force, capable of maintaining his authority at home, and of enabling him to recover the station, which he has lost for the present, with respect to

Marmont, whose observations of the military organization were especially cogent, described the situation in 1834 as follows:

The inefficiency of the Turkish army is admitted, and it is conceived to be the result of the three following causes:

- 1st. An injudicious system of recruiting; <sup>44</sup>
- 2nd. A deficiency of intelligent officers; and
- 3rd. An erroneous system of tactics.

These defects are remediable, and remembering the gallant feats of the Turks in former days, when they threatened all Christendom, we may rest satisfied that if their army were well organized, and skillfully employed, they would soon be able to defy their Northern neighbors, for there is no reason to question the bravery of the Turkish people, however unsuccessful in their recent wars.<sup>45</sup>

In the troops of all the other powers of Europe there are two admitted titles of precedence: birth and merit. The former has its basis on a higher social grade, which, by giving opportunities for better education leads to the expansion of the mind; the latter, on the experience and information resulting from previous service. In Turkey there are no gradations in the social order and the son of a water-carrier is on a par with the Visier's child, having often the same education. Hence there is no admitted superiority in those invested with power, and the previous equality indisposes others to obey authority obtained through mere caprice.<sup>46</sup>

In Turkey it does not seem contrary to reason to invest with a military dignity requiring strength, energy, and courage, a degraded being whose condition implies weakness and pusillanimity, and who can never be supposed to acquire an ascendancy over the minds of other men.<sup>47</sup>

As a consequence of this state of things not only the private soldiers, but also the superior officers, are taken from among the mass of the people, the latter being selected sometimes in consequence of their higher attainments, but more frequently according to the caprice

---

Foreign countries." F. O. 78/209. Canning to Palmerston, #12, *Confidential*, March 7, 1832.

<sup>44</sup> "The frequent levees made by the Porte to maintain the army ranks was a great source of irritation. F. O. 78/236. Ponsonby to Palmerston, #55, May 14, 1934.

<sup>45</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

of those in authority. Here is one great cause of the present defective state of the Turkish army; and if it be an evil to appoint incompetent persons to situations of responsibility, it is no less so to remove the deserving from such places from mere caprice or prejudice. This, however, is so frequently the case in the Turkish service, that the officers never feel secure in their position, and therefore neither acquire confidence in themselves, nor obtain the respect of their men. So long as this mode of treating the officers may continue, the Turkish army can never attain to any great degree of excellence.<sup>48</sup>

These defects in the Turkish army could be remedied, argued the Marshal,<sup>49</sup> first, by the creation of talented officers who could command the confidence and respect of their men; this was a prerequisite to obedience, discipline and order. Second, by placing promotions on a merit basis and eliminating excessive favoritism. Third, the establishment of a model battalion which could be split each six months into two regiments. These were the first steps which must precede the creation of a whole new army, and though the process might involve ten years, the result would be more satisfactory. The Turks followed the French system of field movements which according to military authorities was less suited to the Turks than that of the British or the Prussians. In short, the army needed a complete renovating in organization, personnel, tactics, and equipment. What has been said of the army was equally true of the navy, though that was but a small part of the Sultan's armed forces.

Early in 1834 the Sultan ordered formation of national militias (akaciri).<sup>50</sup> The objects of this plan of defense had been summed up months before as follows:

- 1st. To augment through the Empire the means of public security and comfort, which rest on the inviolability of the territory.
- 2nd. To attain this result without in any degree diminishing the agricultural wealth of the country.
- 3rd. To obviate, in the event of war, levies of troops made hastily and without discrimination; and to avoid all the inconveniences of precipitation.

<sup>48</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64 ff.

<sup>50</sup> F. O. 78/236, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #55, May 14, 1834.

4th. To put a period to the fruitless expenses which burdened the inhabitants.

To relieve the people [says the manifesto] from those heavy burdens, to prevent disastrous depopulation, and at the same time to insure the integrity of the Ottoman territory by an imposing number of able and well disciplined troops, his Highness wishes that hence forward every Mussulman in the vigour of life should be instructed in the use of arms and military exercise: devoting to those exercises only his intervals of leisure, without quitting his native town, and without renouncing the labours of his profession.<sup>51</sup>

While this was a big step forward there was still much to be done to make the Sultan a worthy opponent of his powerful vassal in Egypt.<sup>52</sup>

When one scans the many evils in the Ottoman state, together with the interruptions which Mahmoud suffered, it is to be wondered that he accomplished anything in the way of reform. A less determined ruler would have been discouraged at the start as were many contemporary observers of the situation.<sup>53</sup> Urquhart was not very hopeful of regeneration in Turkey unless encouraged by some outside power. Marshal Marmont, after discussing conditions in Turkey, remarked that "there being no means in Turkey of establishing an improved and equitable system, the present course of disorder must continue."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, January 10, 1834, #82 quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 103. For the Imperial Firman establishing the Khavas (guards) directly responsible to Seraskier Pasha, see *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, #78, January 22, 1834 enclosed in F. O. 78/235, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #25, March 1, 1834.

<sup>52</sup> For the condition of the army and defenses of the state, see H. von Moltke, *Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835 bis 1839*, Berlin, 1841. Moltke estimates the Turkish army at 80,000 by 1839. Cf. also Slade, *Records of Travel in Turkey and Greece*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, Appendix I.

<sup>53</sup> "The destruction of the Janissaries dissolved its internal bond of union, relieved it from the pressure that had brought it so low, but threw off entirely the weight which had steadied so long the jarring elements of which it is composed. Rebellion has been successful, habits of resistance have been formed, the hands of the government have been weakened, its authority insulted, and it may be truly said at this moment, the political organization is in a state of paralysis; authority, under whatever name it is exercised, whether of the Sultan or Mehemet Ali, is only a form; and this vast body lies with life in each articulation, without corresponding sympathies, without a ruling mind, or the powers of common action." Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, advertisement.

<sup>54</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

The necessities of the government will become daily greater, forming an excuse for fresh exactions, which will increase proportionately with the capacity of the Sultan's agents, who, under the pretext of contributing to the wants of the state, will pillage from every one within their jurisdiction. To effect the required amelioration of these provinces the throne of Constantinople should be filled by a man of commanding genius, with sufficient energy of character to disengage himself from such a miserable throng as now surrounds the present Sultan; and even a sovereign so qualified would require the assistance of a number of enlightened and able men, not only well informed as to the feelings of the nation, but acquainted with its capabilities, and competent to apply the latter for the utmost advantage of their country. In short, the required combination of circumstances does not now exist and can not be created.<sup>55</sup>

That this was an overstatement of the problem, Marmont admits, when toward the end of his book he observes:

The regeneration of Turkey can only be effected by her acquiring such a physical force, as will enable her to become independent of Russia, and by her adopting such a system of civil government as will give security to life and property, and promote agriculture and commerce. When the occupiers of the land shall have a certainty, that no demand will be made beyond such a fixed tax, as will leave them a fair remuneration for their labour, agriculture will necessarily flourish; and in order to produce this certainty, little else appears to be requisite beyond the regular payment, from the public revenues, of the district pasha, with all their subordinates, and the establishment of severe penalties on any functionary, who may make exactions from the people.<sup>56</sup>

Obviously this reform had to begin in Constantinople and the nearby provinces where the population was predominantly Turkish and also free from outside interference.<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion, Marmont states that he was convinced that

<sup>55</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191. Like most Frenchmen, Marmont favored Mehemet Ali, and the contrast between Turkey and Egypt impressed him. "All the requisites for organization of which Turkey is deficient, have suddenly sprung up in Egypt, . . ." Marmont believes that if Mahmoud were victorious over Mehemet, Egypt would soon revert to its old state. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323. On page 319 he claims his object to be to prove that "Turkey may again become a formidable empire."

<sup>57</sup> Syria and Palestine were in Mehemet's grip at this time, while the northern provinces were subject to Russian or Austrian interference.



Turkey's "army and navy may be put upon a respectable footing, that England is of all powers the most able to assist her in affecting these objects; . . . that from her interference, Turkey has nothing to fear, and everything to hope; and lastly that no other power can fairly impugn the motives of England."<sup>58</sup> At the very moment that these observations were being made by Marshal Marmont, Palmerston was considering the situation, and he too concluded that it was to England's interest to assist in the creation of a new army by means of which Turkey could assert herself against Russia and Mehemet.

Convinced that the best way to assist Turkey was to help her reform herself,<sup>59</sup> Palmerston urged the Sultan to keep peace with Mehemet until he had put his army and finances in order.<sup>60</sup> At this time Palmerston appears to be less interested in the constitutional development of Turkey than in her military and financial reform, in short in that which would make her independent of Russia's domination and insure Britain freedom of intercourse in the Near East. In view of this, Ponsonby was instructed to exhort the Turkish ministers to pursue "with increasing energy and perseverance that wise system of organization, military, naval, financial and administrative which had already been so successfully begun."<sup>61</sup> How far Palmerston's interest in the military development of Turkey was a result of his recognition of this as the basic problem and how far it was

<sup>58</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 333. "England is, of all powers, the most able to exercise an influence in the regeneration of Turkey, and from her position is perhaps the least likely to have the honesty of her intentions either doubted by the Porte, . . . If she will therefore exert her energies in such a cause, Turkey can still be saved from the grasp of Russia, whose future interest, whatever may be her present wishes and professions, will be advanced by destroying the Turkish Empire." Statement of Lt. Colonel Sir Frederick Smith, K. H., in 1839. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. iv.

<sup>59</sup> Harold Temperley, "British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey (1830-1914)," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. IV, #2, London, 1933, p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> F. O. 78/251, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #40, November 4, 1835. Palmerston also advised Mehemet not to disturb the *status quo* by separating from the Porte and declaring himself independent. F. O. 78/244, Palmerston to Campbell, #14, October 26, 1834.

<sup>61</sup> F. O. 78/251, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #3, December 8, 1835.

a result of his interest in military affairs, a result of his war office experience, is hard to determine.

The natural aversion of many Turks to any new thing demanded the greatest subtleness on the part of foreign powers advocating reform of Ottoman institutions. That sheer necessity was the strongest force which caused the Turks to change their system no one appreciated more than Palmerston. In 1834 and 1835 he was a little uncertain how British assistance could be most effective, but he wisely chose indirect rather than direct action. Since the Porte was powerless against outside powers or obstreperous pashas within the empire, Palmerston advised a complete reorganization of the Turkish army. After Koniah it was not difficult to convince the Turkish authorities of the necessity of modern equipment and trained leaders; that disaster was standing evidence of the superiority of Mehemet, who had adopted western methods.

Though Palmerston offered to furnish muskets and supplies to the Sultan for his new army,<sup>62</sup> it was quite another thing to supply the Turks with military instructors without seeming to interfere too much in the Sultan's affairs. Palmerston's first offer to furnish officers to train the army was turned down by the Reis Effendi.<sup>63</sup> In December 1834 Palmerston went out of office and was succeeded by Wellington in the conservative Peel ministry. Five months later the Whigs returned to power and Melbourne restored Palmerston to the Foreign Office. In February 1835 the Turkish Seraskier requested through the Turkish ambassador at London, patterns of muskets used in the British service,<sup>64</sup> and the following month for permission for a number of qualified students to enter the academies at Woolwich, Portsmouth, and Sandhurst.<sup>65</sup> Though the second

<sup>62</sup> "If the Turkish government should be in want of muskets with which to arm its new levies, His Majesty's Government could supply them with any quantity out of His Majesty's stores in this country, and at a very moderate price." F. O. 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #24, June 1, 1834.

<sup>63</sup> F. O. 78/237, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #115, August 16, 1834. On the need of trained officers for the Turkish army, see Marmont, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-330.

<sup>64</sup> F. O. 78/268, Namic to Wellington, February 3, 1835.

<sup>65</sup> F. O. 78/268, Namic to Wellington, March 28, 1835.

request was refused because the Turks were too old,<sup>66</sup> it did show the Porte was ready to be advised. Upon his return to the Foreign Office Palmerston decided to try an experiment. Not knowing what his reception would be, in 1835 Palmerston sent one Chrzanowski, a Polish officer in the British service, to Constantinople with the suggestion that he be attached to the quartermaster's division of the Sultan's staff. Through Chrzanowski Palmerston hoped to be kept informed of developments in Turkey and to prepare plans for "reorganization of the militia."<sup>67</sup>

About the same time the request of Nourri Effendi, that several young Turks be allowed to study at Woolwich, the request which Wellington had refused, was granted with pleasure by the Foreign Minister.<sup>68</sup> Captain DuPlat and Lieutenant Colonel Considine followed Chrzanowski to Turkey to assist in the military reorganization. But Palmerston's plans did not meet approval in Constantinople. Though Chrzanowski stayed on for some time,<sup>69</sup> he was not received with enthusiasm.<sup>70</sup> A few months after he landed in Constantinople, Considine returned to England upon being informed that it was impossible to become more than an instructor of the Turkish forces. Palmerston persuaded him to return to Turkey, but he did no more than make a tour of inspection of Asia Minor. DuPlat made a report of conditions in European Turkey, but he accomplished little. Mahmoud was more ready to accept the assistance of Helmuth von Moltke whose character and approach to the problem had won the confidence and admiration

<sup>66</sup> F. O. 78/268, Wellington to Namic, April 8, 1835.

<sup>67</sup> F. O. 78/271, Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 7 and 29, 1836. For detailed discussion of these reforms cf. Rodkey, "Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey," *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 570-593.

<sup>68</sup> F. O. 78/268, Palmerston to Nourri, May 26, 1835.

<sup>69</sup> In 1836 Chrzanowski was ordered to Asia Minor. F. O. 78/271, Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 7 and 29, 1836.

<sup>70</sup> Chrzanowski reported "that the influence of England in this country, however fluctuating or depressed before, has never been at so low an ebb as at this moment. . . ." F. O. 78/309, Fraser to Backhouse, February 3, 1837. Cf. also Chrzanowski's Memorandum, F. O. 196/145, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #8, January 6, 1838.

of the Sultan.<sup>71</sup> By the end of 1837 it was evident that Palmerston's military missions were of little value. How far the Russians may be blamed for this failure to accept Palmerston's proffered assistance it would be difficult to gauge accurately, but there is little question but that they were in part responsible.

Yet Palmerston was not one to lose hope at once; <sup>72</sup> there were other means of enhancing the recuperation of "the sick man." The Ottoman fleet at this time was in more deplorable condition than the army.<sup>73</sup> Ponsonby requested from the Sultan (May 10, 1838) two ships of the line over which English officers would have absolute command and upon which young Turks could learn the business of naval officers.<sup>74</sup> This request was not granted. In July, 1838, Palmerston suggested the assistance of a naval mission to strengthen the naval power.<sup>75</sup> The Porte agreed but when the British naval officers, Messrs. Walker, Legard, Massie, and Foote, arrived they were received much as the army men had been.<sup>76</sup> A portion of the Turkish fleet cruised in the Eastern Mediterranean with the British Mediterranean squadron but little else was accomplished.

Failure in this particular endeavor did not discourage Palmerston. Confident of ultimate success his most immediate concern was that war should not break out in the Near East; war must be avoided because not only would it destroy all that had been accomplished, but with Russia in alliance with the Sultan, and France favorable to Mehemet Ali a general conflict might

<sup>71</sup> Moltke and his Prussian companions served without military titles. Other reasons why the Porte refused to employ English officers were: first, it had no desire to change its system; second, it was afraid Russia and France would make similar demands. Cf. F. O. 195/142, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #272, November 7, 1837.

<sup>72</sup> F. O. 78/300, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #62, August 4, 1837.

<sup>73</sup> F. O. 78/328b, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #12, January 8, 1838.

<sup>74</sup> F. O. 78/331, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #119, May 10, 1838.

<sup>75</sup> F. O. 78/329a, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #146, July 25, 1838, and F. O. 78/349, Foreign Office to Admiralty, August 3, 1838.

<sup>76</sup> Russian protests were partly responsible for this reversal of attitude. Cf. Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

ensue. With these thoughts in mind the Foreign Secretary again urged the Porte's representative in London, Achmed Fethi Pasha, to caution the Sultan to abstain from attacking Mehemet whose army was superior in every department. He argued that if the Porte was not disastrously defeated in such a war, his Empire would be weakened and more subject to Russian domination. "The Sultan ought to employ himself in organizing his Army, and Navy, and in improving his revenue," suggested Palmerston, in order to "make himself strong enough to be able to beat Mehemet Ali by his own means."<sup>77</sup> Specifically Palmerston advised the Porte to substitute for a conscripted<sup>78</sup> army an army of voluntary recruits, Christian as well as Turk. Such a national army would be more efficient in rendering real security to the state, if the Sultan became embroiled with his vassal.<sup>79</sup>

Though improvement of the military status of Turkey was Palmerston's primary interest, he did not lose sight of the other needs from which the Porte suffered. In fact a reorganization of the Turkish army could not be achieved unless certain other changes were brought about simultaneously. To equip, feed, and clothe an army of even moderate size in ordinary times was expensive,<sup>80</sup> and as has already been pointed out the last dec-

<sup>77</sup> F. O. 78/329a, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #185, September 15, 1838.

<sup>78</sup> Conscription was not given up, nor was it made efficient until 1843. Cf. Temperley, *The Crimea*, *op. cit.*, p. 404, note 48.

<sup>79</sup> Mahmoud had established a reserve corps (*redif mansouri*) in 1834 to keep order at home when the national army was at the front. F. O. 78/236, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #55, May 14, 1834, and #95, July 24, 1834 (F. O. 78/237). E. Cadalvène and E. Barrault, *Deux Années de l'histoire d'orient*, 1839-1840, 2 vols., Paris, 1840, II, 49.

<sup>80</sup> Marmont reported that the Sultan never spared himself in his dealings with his army. In 1833, the Marshal observed: "The lot of the Turkish soldiers is a very happy one. They are better fed than any other troops in Europe, having an abundance of provisions, of excellent quality, and partaking of meat once, and of soup twice a day. Their magazines are filled with stores, and their regiments have large reserves. The pay of each soldier is twenty piasters per month; the whole of which he receives, as there is a prohibition against withholding from him any part of that sum. In short, everything has been effected that could promote the welfare of the soldier." Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 61. This in addition to the new equipment needed, made the creation of a large national army a great burden on the already weakened treasury.

ades of Mahmoud's reign were far from normal. Palmerston recognized that the Russian war had left a great burden on the Turkish treasury which was in no way eased by the revolutions which followed it, particularly the struggle with Mehemet in 1833. Turkey was a wealthy country, yet such a small proportion of the taxes collected ever reached the Sultan's coffers, he barely had enough to meet the ever-increasing costs of administration.<sup>81</sup> More than once the Foreign Secretary pointed out that financial reform was as necessary as military reorganization.

That the Sultan recognized the deficiencies in his tax system is shown by his ordering that imposts should be collected by officers cooperating with, yet independent of the Pashas.<sup>82</sup> This decree was never carried out, "whether from a difficulty of finding persons calculated for the office, or from other causes, . . . and the cupidity and injustice of the Pashas and Mutzelims were never greater than at present."<sup>83</sup> These injustices were a direct cause of under-production, and tended to keep the population in poverty. "Turks as well as Christians neglect the cultivation of the land," writes Marmont, "knowing that others will reap the fruits of their labour, and in every direction the population is diminishing."<sup>84</sup>

In April, 1834 another firman was issued abolishing the col-

<sup>81</sup> Financial difficulties, brought on by ancient fiscal evils, such as *avantias* (extortions by the pashas), was one of the causes for the promulgation of the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané in 1839. A stronger government was necessary to overcome the critical financial situation faced by the Sultan in 1838-1839. MacGregor, *op. cit.*, II, 166. Ponsonby reported in 1837 that "the Ottoman Treasury is empty, . . . that the work at the new palace, . . . had been suspended for want of money — that orders on the Treasury granted by heads of Departments in payment to Merchants for goods, etc. have been left unpaid, and the reason assigned was want of money." F. O. 78/306, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #298, November 21, 1837. On the income and expenditures of the Porte, see Ubicini, *Letters*, I, #13 and #14. Temperley estimates the total revenues in 1837 at £8,000,000. Cf. Temperley, *The Crimea*, p. 405, note 53.

<sup>82</sup> *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, #78, January 22, 1834, enclosed in F. O. 78/255. Ponsonby to Palmerston, #25, March 1, 1834. This Imperial Firman and the one of February 21, 1834 were intended to correct some of the worst abuses which had developed among the provincial tax-collectors.

<sup>83</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

lectors of the *Kharatch*, and instituting in their place a commission made up of both *rayahs* and mussulmans. All collection charges were abolished since the commission was to serve without pay. At the same time the *rayahs* were divided into three classes and a definite quota was established for each class.<sup>85</sup> That this firman was joyously received by the *rayahs* goes without saying. Between 1834 and 1839, through his ambassador, Lord Ponsonby, Palmerston continually encouraged the Sultan to make further improvements in his finances, pointing out that this was necessary before the army and navy could be placed on a firm basis.<sup>86</sup>

To erect and maintain a strong state more was required, however, than merely a renovation of the military and financial systems. A complete change of the methods of administration in the central government was also necessary.<sup>87</sup> In the sum-

<sup>85</sup> *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, #81, April 26, 1834, quoted in Ross. *op. cit.*, p. 88. The tax was fixed at fifteen, thirty, or sixty piastres according to class. Ubcini, *Letters*, I, 269.

<sup>86</sup> The first warning of this kind came in June, 1834. "The financial arrangements of the country are no less important than the military; and it is to be hoped that the Porte will direct its attention to that subject with a view to establish some order and system in the collection of the revenue, and to secure the means of maintaining the military force in a state of efficiency." F. O. 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #24, June 1, 1834.

<sup>87</sup> Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, IV, 310-311. Canning perceived that administrative reform was basic as early as 1832. Writing in March of that year he stated: "The main, and perhaps insuperable obstacle to the establishment of a large national army in this country consists in the necessity of adopting at the same time a totally new system of administration. Without a basis of this kind, the Sultan will labour in vain to erect a military structure of any real strength and utility; and, hampered as he is by the vices of a worn-out system founded on religious faith, and by the incongruous elements, of which the population of his Empire is composed.—to say nothing of his Commercial Treaties with Foreign Powers, and more particularly of his various entanglements with Russia, it is difficult to conceive by what means so great and perilous a task can be achieved. . . ." "The great question to be resolved is this: how far is it possible to introduce into the present system of administration those improvements, without which the army and the finances of the Country must be equally inefficient?" F. O. 78/209, Canning to Palmerston, #12, March 7, 1832. After the 1833 crisis Palmerston was of the same opinion. In June, 1834 the Foreign Secretary stated: "Anxious as the British government is that the Turkish Empire should retain its integrity and independence, we must always see with pleasure the development of its internal resources by which alone its independence can be permanently secured." "Your Excellency is therefore instructed to use all the

mer of 1834 an assembly of notables was held at Constantinople to examine this question. Following their deliberations the matter was taken up by the Council, but beyond gathering a great quantity of information little was accomplished.<sup>88</sup> Attempts to further restrict the power of the pashas and establish greater administrative unity in the empire in 1836 were no more successful.<sup>89</sup>

Many believed that the Municipal Principle of which Urquhart speaks so frequently had to be extended into the higher organizations, if Turkey is to be regenerated; according to Ross this was "as necessary as the admission of the blood of the heart to circulation in the head."<sup>90</sup>

We are aware [he continues] that there are many persons in Europe, and even in Turkey, who express fears that from the development of this principle will result the subdivision of the Empire. We answer, with the firmest conviction of the truth, that it is the development of this principle which had annihilated the Janissaries, and therefore saved the empire; and that this very principle has alone sustained the supremacy of the Sultan, when no material force was yet organized to replace that which had been destroyed.

Order in the public service could be secured only through a proper distribution of authority and the abolition of favoritism. The number of men who held government posts and received their share of the treasury's outgo was appalling. Abolition of these offices was necessary before economies could be effected. Moreover most of the officials were attended by the *Kavasses*, police officials, who should have been abolished for the way

---

means in your power to encourage the Turkish government to persevere in the course of improvement which it has begun, in spite of all the endeavors which jealousy or interested views may prompt other powers to make for the purpose of paralyzing the efforts of Turkey to place her internal organization upon a respectable footing." F. O. 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, # 24, June 1, 1834.

<sup>88</sup> *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, #86, August 30, 1834, quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>89</sup> Cadalvène and Barrault, *op. cit.*, II, 49. "The great fault of the Ottoman Government is its want of power to secure a pure and uncorrupt administration. . . . it should be strengthened at the core, and so enabled to acquire a more efficient control over the administration of its distant representatives, pashas, and other functionaries, . . ." Ubicini, *Letters*, II, 439.

<sup>90</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 23.



in which they mistreated the people who failed to obey the laws; they were particularly hard upon the Jews, who were the most degraded of all infidels according to the Turkish code. Many other examples might also be cited.

In short, Turkey in the 1830's needed such a complete overhauling the Sultan could not be blamed for not having accomplished more than he had. *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, the official Turkish gazette, did not overstate the problem when it explained (1834):

The dilatoriness of the Turkish Government in its work of reform is a consequence of the reforms required, being points of practice and detail and not theory, and no one well acquainted with the country will be disposed to reproach the government for its tardiness in this respect. Much more labour and consideration are required to restore an entire system to its primitive simplicity, than to build up the complicated systems, which exist in some countries; — it is more difficult to clear the ground than to encumber it. It is not our business to raise the veil which conceals the plans which are meditated on in silence by the government, but by taking a review of the principal acts done by it in these few years, we may be enabled to appreciate, by anticipation, the spirit in which all that remains to be done, will be conceived.<sup>91</sup>

While in no sense of the word an apology for the "dilatoriness of the Turkish government" the above statement describes the principal task of reform, namely, clearing the ground without encumbering it.

Why Palmerston did not openly encourage constitutional reform of the Ottoman state has long been a puzzling question to students of Anglo-Turkish relations in this period. Nothing in the documents gives a clue to this vital question. Palmerston, unlike his predecessor in the Foreign Office — George Canning — whose policies he admired, was an ardent advocate of constitutionalism in Europe,<sup>92</sup> but he never promoted the idea in Turkey, nor did he favor it in lands subject to Turkish rule. In 1835 Milos, the semi-independent Prince of Serbia, was

<sup>91</sup> *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, quoted in Ross. *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>92</sup> In Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Piedmont.

forced to promise a constitution for his state. Though the constitution was favored by both Tsar and Sultan, Palmerston supported Milos in his despotism.<sup>93</sup> In 1848, Palmerston supported the Hungarian demand for constitutional freedom and advised the Pope and others to grant constitutions to forestall revolutions, but his policy as regards Turkey remained constant.<sup>94</sup>

Palmerston's paradoxical support of reform and his indifference (if not real opposition) to a constitution for Turkey is explained by the fact that he believed an enlightened despotism, not parliamentary government, was the better remedy for the existing abuses in Turkey at that time.<sup>95</sup> Parliamentary government to function properly required honest, fearless, able leaders supported by an intelligent public opinion both of which were lacking in Turkey in the 1830's. Until these prerequisites were established, parliamentary government in Turkey was dangerous. David Urquhart was likewise disinclined to press for a constitution for Turkey. In 1833 Urquhart had put it as follows:

On the chances of reorganization of the Turkish empire, I have but one concluding but very important remark to make. A man who would be considered in Europe perfectly ignorant, may be in Turkey, if he is only honest, an able and excellent administrator, because he has no general questions to grapple with, no party opinions to follow — no letter of the law to consult, because not only is he never called on to decide on and interfere in questions of administration and finance, but his power is only honestly exercised when he prevents interference with the natural self-adjustment of interests. Therefore is it that Europeans form a false estimate, by an erroneous standard, of the administrative capacity of the Turks, and add to the real dangers which surround Turkey, others gratuitously suggested by their European prejudices. If a European thinks, with a minister of France, that the whole art of government resides in fixing a tariff, and "in

<sup>93</sup> Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 158. Cf. also Harold Temperley, *History of Serbia*, London, 1919, pp. 222-23.

<sup>94</sup> "Her Majesty's Government have not advised the Sultan to follow the example of Pope Pius IX and to grant constitutional instructions in the Ottoman Empire." F. O. 65/360, Palmerston to Buchanan, #102, April 20, 1849.

<sup>95</sup> Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 158.

reconciling the liberty which commerce requires with the prohibitions which manufactures require," he will set down the Turk as incapable, who looks on such science as childish nonsense. Others, perhaps, will consider this untutored conviction as a happy protection against proficiency in a science only to be acquired by deplorable experience. The same is to be observed in every other department of government. A Turkish reformer required no instruction in fund or bank monopolies, none in bankruptcy laws — not in the mysteries of conveyancing — none in corporate rights; there are no laws of entail or of primogeniture to be discussed or amended. In fact, there are no systematic evils; the reformer requires but honesty and firmness of purpose. Taking, in all things, the law as it is, he has to restore, or rather to fix, the currency — to separate the judiciary from the civil authority — to reduce the pashas to their real functions of prefects of police; he has to organize the army — and there all reforms ought to cease. Above all things, religiously abstaining from legislating for the municipalities or the rayahs. If the municipalities be found afterwards capable of forming higher representative combinations, the structure will be reared in its own good time, and on the sound foundation that already exists. That consummation will be little helped even by judicious forcing, and may be retarded by injudicious interference.<sup>96</sup>

Palmerston's interest in Turkish reforms is ably summed up by Temperley, who writes:

On the whole there does not seem much doubt that his (i.e. Palmerston's) chief interest in Turkey was to reorganize finances, and that his chief aim of such reorganization was to improve the army and navy. Now the army and navy was not likely to be improved by a Turkish Parliament. Hence, probably, one reason why Palmerston never advocated it. Another was his belief that it was wrong to encourage change in Turkey until it was absolutely necessary. . . . He was not of course anxious for parliamentary reform in England and he favored a complete *quieta non movere* in that respect in Turkey.<sup>97</sup>

Palmerston's indifference to constitutionalism in Turkey, an interesting attitude in itself, was noteworthy in that he established a precedent for the remainder of the century. Palmerston's successors in the Foreign Office, Disraeli, Lansdowne,

<sup>96</sup> Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>97</sup> Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 165.

Derby, Salisbury, whether liberal or conservative, following the same policy, believing with Gladstone that a constitutional regime would place Christians more at the mercy of the Moslem group. The first Foreign Secretary to sponsor a constitution for Turkey as the best method of correcting her backwardness was Sir Edward Grey in 1908.

While Palmerston's policy as regards internal affairs in Turkey was not as successful as his diplomacy in the years 1839-41, it was not without insight and showed a remarkable knowledge of the situation. It is interesting to speculate as to what might have been the outcome had Palmerston adopted earlier in his career as Foreign Minister such a policy as he pursued in 1834-41. While he might have forestalled Russia and prevented the Treaty of Unkiar, nevertheless his program might have been pursued with less vigour without the threat of Russia, and Turkey might have been even less receptive than she was. There can be little doubt but that while the sponsoring of internal reform in Turkey showed little outward results, it was the invisible item which made the Foreign Secretary's diplomacy between 1839 and 1841 successful and eventually freed Turkey from the Tsar's control. Yet, before discussing the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané and its accompanying events, an evaluation of Lord Ponsonby and David Urquhart's influence on the *tanzimat* is worth while.

Although the majority opinion is that Lord Ponsonby's influence on the internal reform of Turkey was negligible, one cannot disregard the ambassador at Constantinople entirely; his influence, while indirect was nevertheless significant, though because it was indirect it is much more difficult to measure. The absence of Ponsonby's original instructions dated December 11, 1832<sup>98</sup> make it difficult to determine how far his accomplishments approach the hopes his chief had for him. Though specific instructions were sent to Ponsonby from the

<sup>98</sup> Lord Ponsonby, until then Ambassador at Naples, was appointed November 27, 1832. His instructions are not in Ambassadorial Archives, F. O. 78/220, nor in consular materials F. O. 195/109.

Foreign Office from time to time, the absence of the original orders is a distinct loss. To maintain British prestige while conducting the affairs of state, the fundamental purpose of any ambassador, was unquestionably Ponsonby's appointed task. "To destroy the adverse prepossessions of the Sultan and to establish in their place a large confidence in England" was by no means an easy task; however, by December, 1855 Ponsonby felt that he had partially achieved this end.<sup>99</sup>

As one studies Ponsonby's reports to his chief, one is impressed by the frank assertions of British self-interest in Turkey's welfare. In January, 1838 he informed Palmerston that he had "always told the ministers of the Sublime Porte, that I was of the opinion that the interest of my own Country required the prosperity and so forth of the Ottoman Empire and that the two countries were, to a certain degree, almost identified in policy, that, therefore, I was sincerely and warmly attached to the interest of the Porte, and desirous to assist in everything tending to its prosperous administration."<sup>100</sup> Again, in the months that followed when the commercial convention was being drawn up, Ponsonby insisted upon the rigid fulfillment of all the old engagements between the two powers,<sup>101</sup> until they were replaced by new agreements. And finally, the Commercial Convention itself, Ponsonby's greatest achievement, is another example of his anxiety to save Turkey for England's sake.

Another striking characteristic of Ponsonby's dispatches to the Foreign Office between 1833 and 1841, a natural corollary of the ambassador's determination to maintain Turkey as an outlet for British commerce, is the Russophobia of the ambassador. The fact that Ponsonby was more anti-Russian than he

<sup>99</sup> F. O. 78/256, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #23, December 29, 1835.

<sup>100</sup> F. O. 78/329b, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #10, January 8, 1838.

<sup>101</sup> "If the Sultan shall not concur substantially in the measures proposed by England for the amelioration of a system (i.e. monopolies) that will, if maintained, destroy the life of the Turkish Empire, Her Majesty's government must necessarily look to the protection of the commercial Rights and Interests of Her Majesty's Subjects and insist upon the rigid fulfillment by the Porte of all obligations derived under the Capitulations and Treaties between the two Powers." F. O. 78/330, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #101, April 21, 1838.

was pro-Turk tended to force him to use more direct methods to break Russia's power in Turkey and at the same time raise Britain's prestige to its rightful place. Shortly after his arrival in Constantinople in May 1833, Ponsonby joined the French Chargé in a protest against the prolonged stay of the Russian fleet in Turkish waters. After the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was known, Ponsonby was even more unwilling to credit the Russians with any sincerity either in action or thought, insisting that the treaty of 1833 confirmed Russia's mastery of the Straits as well as giving to her a dominating position in the Near East.

Ponsonby's policy seems to have but two aims: first, to discredit Russia in the eyes of the Turks; second, to arouse the Foreign Office against the Tsar. He forwarded evidence to show that Russia was becoming entrenched in the principalities, that the Tsar was cooperating with Mehemet Ali to thwart Colonel Chesney's efforts to survey and establish the Euphrates as a possible alternative to the Red Sea route. He attempted to make the arrest of a British merchant a test of strength between Britain and Russia. He encouraged Bell and Company to send the *Vixen* to Soujouk Kale in order to raise the question of Russia's claim to Circassia, but when war with Russia seemed certain, the Foreign Office peacefully smoothed out this affair with the Tsar,<sup>102</sup> showing its unwillingness to become the victim of its agents' trickery, a policy which might have led to war between the Russian and the English people.

The Foreign Office was never as firmly convinced of the Russian menace as was its agent; nevertheless Ponsonby's continued reiteration of the Russian danger was a potent influence in stimulating new methods to reestablish Britain's favor at the Porte. Ponsonby's arguments<sup>103</sup> were studied and sup-

<sup>102</sup> For details of this affair, cf. Puryear, *International Economics*, pp. 49 ff.

<sup>103</sup> Ponsonby maintained that Turkey would be a strong bulwark in what he regarded as the inevitable Anglo-Russian conflict. If Turkey were "well managed," he wrote in 1834, after pointing out the potentialities of the Sultan's state, "we shall find abundant power to give us all the support we should desire or want in a struggle against Russia." F. O. 78/240, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #187, November 25, 1834. "Turkey may be easily managed by England when-

ported by King William IV, but the Foreign Office clung to its more pacific policy<sup>104</sup> which further exasperated the Ambassador. As far as reform of the Turkish state was concerned, Ponsonby felt Britain would be more successful in her own aims if she allowed the Sultan to pursue his own course, assisting when called upon.

For the foregoing reasons, Ponsonby did not support Palmerston's military missions, knowing perhaps how they would probably be received by the Turks. After three years, discouraged by the ineffectiveness of Palmerston's attempts to reform the Turkish army and navy, the British Ambassador reverted to other methods. In 1838 Ponsonby used his influence to establish closer relationship of Turkey and Britain by means of a loan of £3,000,000 which British capitalists were then negotiating. If the Sultan could be definitely obligated to Britain, British prestige might be raised, argued Ponsonby. Nothing came of this, however, because although the Foreign Secretary did not object to this transaction, he finally refused to guarantee the loan,<sup>105</sup> and without this the English bankers refused to risk their money.

In 1834 and again in 1837 Ponsonby urged his government to accept a proposal for an Anglo-Turkish alliance against Mehemet Ali, arguing that if Britain assisted the Sultan in

---

ever England may think proper to manifest her determination to defend and direct Turkey." F. O. 78/255, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #178, September 27, 1835. ". . . the true interest of England is to consolidate and increase the power of the Ottoman Empire, . . ." Ponsonby to Pisani, May 17, 1835 enclosed in F. O. 78/253, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #110, June 30, 1835. If Russian aggression could not be checked by a joint statement of England and France (to which Austria would very likely agree) then Britain must be prepared to use force to maintain Turkey's integrity. F. O. 78/277, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #194, October 19, 1836.

<sup>104</sup> In 1836 Palmerston instructed Consul Brant to "watch with vigilance any proceedings on the part of that (i.e. the Russian) Agent which may have a bearing either upon the commerce of Russia, or upon that of other nations; or which may indicate an attempt to have the way for eventually extending the political influence of Russia in the districts in which you reside." But he thoughtfully added not to commit the government in any way. F. O. 78/289, Palmerston to Brant, #7, November 19, 1836.

<sup>105</sup> F. O. 78/391, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #279, December 30, 1840.

crushing his vassal, British influence would become supreme at Constantinople, and the Tsar would be compelled to relinquish control of the Straits. An English fleet in the Black Sea would effectively prevent Russia from helping Mehemet Ali, Ponsonby contended.<sup>106</sup> Though nothing came of this, Ponsonby increased his efforts toward that end, as the Sultan became more aware of the Russian danger.

Ponsonby is sometimes erroneously given credit for the maintenance of peace in the Levant 1833-1839. A study of the dispatches to and from the Foreign Office, however, shows that the Ambassador carried out his chief's instructions in this direction very reluctantly, believing that a Turkish assault (supported of course by the British fleet) upon Egypt would not only raise Britain's influence but possibly break the domination of the Tsar.<sup>107</sup>

Only on one occasion and that before his Eastern policy had been fully worked out did Palmerston seem to adhere to the war policy of Ponsonby. In January, 1834 Vice-Admiral Sir Joseph Rowley was secretly instructed to assist in defending Constantinople against a Russian attack, should the Turkish government require such assistance, and request the same through the British Ambassador, Lord Ponsonby.<sup>108</sup> The Tsar, however,

<sup>106</sup> F. O. 78/238, Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 15, 1834 and F. O. 78/305, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #182, August 8, 1837.

<sup>107</sup> Metternich stated that Ponsonby was partly responsible for the Sultan's war-like attitude in 1838-1839. Metternich to Apponyi, May 2, 1839. Prince de Metternich, *Mémoires*, 8 vols., Paris, 1844-1846, VI, 365-366. Temperley does not agree with those who say that Ponsonby encouraged the Sultan to attack Mehemet in 1839. Ponsonby, maintains Temperley, was not satisfied with the *status quo* and did promote unrest in Syria against Mehemet Ali, but did not actually favor the war until it had been begun. Temperley, *The Crimea*, pp. 423-425.

<sup>108</sup> F. O. Turkey 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, March 10, 1834 ('Secret'). In July, Ponsonby reported that Russia was encouraging the Sultan to renew the struggle in order to be able to apply the Unkiar alliance. The ambassador sought power to use the fleet to prevent this action as well as to protect Turkey if war did break out. F. O. 78/224, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #35, July 12, 1834. A year later these general instructions regarding the use of the fleet were countermanded by Wellington when the great fear of Russia's designs had lessened after Russia had refused to support the Sultan in his meditated attack upon Mehemet Ali in the autumn of 1834. F. O. Turkey 78/251, Wellington to Ponsonby, March 16, 1835.



was too wise a diplomat to attempt to cash his blank check with Turkey; <sup>109</sup> aware that such a policy would stir England to the point of war, not to mention what France, Austria, and Prussia might do, Russia determined to sit quietly until Turkey disintegrated of itself.<sup>110</sup> In short, Russia pursued in the 1830's a form of "peaceful penetration" so popular during the decades after 1870. For the moment (1834) Palmerston was taken in by the war group who saw advantages for Britain in a Russian war,<sup>111</sup> but before he did or said anything which might cause war with Russia, he reverted to a wiser, more subtle policy.

Thus, the most reasonable conclusion is that while Ponsonby's contribution to the *tanzimat* was of no importance, the audacity of some of his schemes caused a more subtle policy to emanate from the Foreign Office which in the long run was more effective. As has already been pointed out, the Balta Liman Convention of 1838, so significant in strengthening Anglo-Turkish friendship and economic relations, was Ponsonby's work. Ponsonby also was partly responsible for Reschid Pasha's journey to London in 1838, the Ambassador believing that Reschid's presence there "would be a guarantee of close accord between England and Turkey and might render the Russo-Turkish treaty of 1833 void in fact."<sup>112</sup> But if British prestige with the Sultan gained steadily during Ponsonby's stay in Constantinople, this was due less to Lord Ponsonby than to skillful direction from London.

<sup>109</sup> Russia could succeed in Turkey "only by preventing any collision from taking place." *British and Foreign Review*, quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-482. Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>110</sup> "Russia dare not proceed to any overt act against our Indian possessions, until she has rendered Turkey so completely subservient to her, as to be compelled to co-operate in shutting out the British fleet from the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. For if, as we contend she ought to do, England were to send a formidable fleet into the Black Sea, she might then threaten the line of operations of the Russians, and check their advance towards the Indus. But so long as the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi is respected, so long will the English fleet be prevented from passing through the Bosphorus, and Russia will be at liberty to pursue her course of conquest and aggression." Marmont, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-320.

<sup>111</sup> "To England a war opens up positive advantages, independent of the object," *British and Foreign Review*, quoted in Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-482.

<sup>112</sup> Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

Another Britisher, whose influence on the *tanzimat*, though equally indirect, is nevertheless worthy of note, was David Urquhart (1805-1877). From the time that he was first sent out (in 1831) as a commissioner to help complete the separation of Greece from Turkey until his death he was a specialist in Eastern affairs. The fact that he had the absolute confidence of the Turks<sup>113</sup> placed him in a strong position as a go-between between London and Constantinople. In 1832 and 1833 Urquhart explored the commercial possibilities of Turkey at Palmerston's request and his report,<sup>114</sup> published under the title *Turkey and Its Resources* (1833),<sup>115</sup> was widely read.

Like Ponsonby, Urquhart suffered from Russophobia but his campaign in Turkey's interest with the British public was more pro-Turkish than it was anti-Russian.<sup>116</sup> More than anyone else he appreciated the fact that Turkey was an almost limitless market which Britain might exploit to her advantage. He warned that if Russia gained Turkey she would be in a position to acquire world dominion. As a result of his writings Englishmen began to ask "shall Turkey, with its space, and seas, and positions, and wealth, materials and arms, be used for aggressive or conservative purposes? Is Turkey to be placed in the scale of Russia, or in the scale of England?"<sup>117</sup>

Urquhart also recognized the relation of the survival or decay of Turkey to the maintenance of the *status quo* in Europe.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Urquhart was called "Daoud Bey" by his Turkish friends.

<sup>114</sup> F. O. 78/239, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #159, October 11, 1834, enclosure #1.

<sup>115</sup> Urquhart's thesis was that Mahmoud's destruction of the Janissaries rendered reform of Turkey possible, if principles of self-government already existent in Turkey were developed; that Turkey needed help in regeneration and England was best qualified to give it; England would profit from trade if Turkey's resources could be developed.

<sup>116</sup> "While Urquhart became anti-Russian mostly because he was pro-Turk, Palmerston and Ponsonby became pro-Turk only because they were anti-Russian." G. H. Bolsover, "David Urquhart and the Eastern Question, 1833-1837," *Journal of Modern History*, December, 1936, p. 466. Cf. also Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations," *op. cit.*, pp. 62-66.

<sup>117</sup> "The Diplomacy of Russia," *British and Foreign Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>118</sup> "Its position implicates its interest with those of all the great states of Europe, or at least of four out of five. One has for its chief end, to create

His attempts to embroil England with Russia, in addition to his inability to cooperate with Ponsonby,<sup>119</sup> caused him to be removed as first secretary to the Constantinople Embassy in 1837.<sup>120</sup> Back in London he continued the *Portfolio*, a journal which aimed to promote British activity in the Eastern Question. The articles which appeared therein were most influential with British public opinion. According to Ross, Urquhart's "laborious researches shed an entirely new light on the subject, before so obscure, on the institutions of the Ottoman Empire, on the causes of the decline and on the means of its regeneration."<sup>121</sup>

David Urquhart's greatest contribution to the regeneration of Turkey, however, was his firm conviction that the decadent Empire could be given new life. Writing in 1833, he said:

In 1831, after visiting Albania and the greater portion of European Turkey, during the struggle between the Porte and the Albanians, I returned to England with very little hope of seeing the country tranquillized, or the Turkish rule prolonged; but a few months afterwards, returning to that country, I visited almost every portion of it, and was perfectly amazed at the incredible change which had taken

---

anarchy in Turkey; one that order and tranquility should be maintained, but under the most despotic form of government; the third endeavors in vain to conciliate a general system of support with a particular scheme of dismemberment; and the fourth, which alone has a direct and philanthropic interest in preserving its integrity and in reforming its abuses, unfortunately, by the very absence of specific and interested object, is either unprepared, or interferes too late. It is the deep conviction, that the future condition of Turkey hangs at this moment on foreign policy, and that to this country will belong, as the event will decide, the honor or the reproach, nay, more the profit or the loss, of her preservation, or her destruction, that induces the writer of the following pages, at so critical a moment, to publish his opinions on the elements of re-organization which Turkey possesses. . . ." Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, p. vi. In the edition revised by Urquhart there appears above the word "anarchy" a pencilled R, over "one" an A, after "third" an F in parentheses and over "fourth" a B. After reading this and other books by Urquhart, the abbreviations for the countries seem superfluous.

<sup>119</sup> Ponsonby thought Urquhart "mad" and demanded his removal. F. O. 78/301, Ponsonby to Palmerston, February 10, 1837.

<sup>120</sup> Urquhart was made the goat in the Vixen affair, but Ponsonby was equally responsible. Cf. Bolsover, "David Urquhart," *op. cit.*, p. 466.

<sup>121</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Bolsover maintains his lack of restraint which prevented him from being a great diplomat was an asset as a publicist. Cf. Bolsover, "David Urquhart," *op. cit.*, p. 467.

place. It was then that I set myself seriously to inquire how the misfortunes of Turkey might be remedied; how the Sultan could attach himself to the Greek and Raya population, the proofs of which attachment met me at every turn. It was then that I clearly saw the value of the elementary municipal institutions, and the facilities for political reorganization which they afforded.<sup>122</sup>

Such faith was sure to win new converts and helped to insure the support of Britain which Urquhart believed indispensable.

The frankness of the arguments set forth by Urquhart for the regeneration of the Ottoman state appealed alike to both manufacturer and worker. His report makes no attempt to shroud his real aims, but, on the contrary, states most succinctly that to unloose "those administrative chains, those commercial prohibitions that lock its resources from the light" might render Turkey "the largest mart in the world for English manufactures."<sup>123</sup> To achieve this end he not only favored the abolition of the Turkish system of monopolies, but he also made a plea for the reduction of prices on English goods so that it would be advantageous for the Turks to buy from English merchants.<sup>124</sup> Probably no Englishman exhibited Britain's

<sup>122</sup> Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>123</sup> "A manufacturing people our first element of prosperity is abundant and cheap materials, what unlimited supplies would this country not afford? What natural facilities of transport by sea and on her now unfrequented road — What bounds to the production of cotton, of the finest qualities of silk, of tobacco, of wool, drugs, of corn, oil, hemp, tallow, floss — The facilities of exchange render production comparatively cheaper, than in any other of the countries from which these articles are at present exported in quantities. Her forests and inexhaustible mines, offer richer natural sources than are elsewhere to be found — . . . Were the commerce of Turkey thus emancipated (i.e. from the administrative chains) so immense would be the production that the price of raw materials would fall throughout the world and a revolution in commerce would take place similar (since there is nothing greater to which to compare it) to that produced by the discovery of America." Urquhart's Report enclosed in F. O. 78/239, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #159, October 11, 1834.

<sup>124</sup> "Were England to make some concession in favor of the produce of Turkey in return for the facilities Turkey affords for the introduction of our manufactures, these results whether as to the strengthening of Turkey, our controul over her counsels, the production of a greater supply of cheapened raw materials or greater demand for our wares — would be greatly hastened — but above all things, would such a measure be advantageous as the means of preserving to ourselves the chief benefits of her future prosperity, if anticipating a connexion the advantages of which no other nation forseees at present but which will hereafter become the object of rivalry and competition." Urquhart's Report, *loc. cit.*

material interests in Turkey more than David Urquhart, yet this fact in no way detracts from his own, or that of his followers' determination to reform the Ottoman Empire.

Urquhart preached that Russian aggression was the greatest menace to the Levant trade and to the route to India. Like Ponsonby he believed, and he tried to convince others that Russia constantly encouraged Mehemet Ali to revolt in order to further enfeeble the Turkish state.<sup>125</sup> These ideas were accepted by a great body of the English public who regarded him as an authority on Eastern Affairs. As far as the government was concerned, the unfriendliness which eventually resulted in a complete breach with the Foreign Secretary was apparent two years before he was dismissed from the diplomatic service (1837), though Urquhart still influenced his chief's eastern policy, by means of his close friendship with Sir Henry Taylor, secretary to William IV.

Close economic relations with the Ottoman Empire were favored by Urquhart for three reasons: first, because the British manufacturer would benefit; second, because Turkey would be strengthened; and finally, because a strong Turkey would act as a buffer state to Russia in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>126</sup> Needless to say the editor of the *Portfolio* regarded the Convention of 1838 as a triumph for Britain, a triumph in which he was proud to have had such a large part.<sup>127</sup> When the dispute over Persia occurred the same year, Urquhart took a much stronger position against Russia than did the Foreign Minister. Palmerston accepted Nesselrode's explanations, while Urquhart maintained that England was unjustly accused.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> *Portfolio* I, # 7, p. 16. Urquhart maintained that Russia in one way or another always managed to retard Turkey's growth, if she seemed to be progressing too rapidly, as in 1833. The mere presence of an English fleet in the eastern Mediterranean would have stopped Russian aggression in that crisis, he was convinced.

<sup>126</sup> "Sur le contrôle commercial que l'Angleterre possède vis-à-vis de la Russie," *Portfolio*, II, 37-44.

<sup>127</sup> Urquhart's ideas were the basis for the treaty though Ponsonby received credit for it because he negotiated it. Bolsover, "David Urquhart," *op. cit.*, p. 462. Cf. also Temperley, *The Crimea*, p. 406, note 62.

<sup>128</sup> Analysis of the Note of the Russian Cabinet of October 20, 1838, appended to David Urquhart, *An Appeal against Faction*, London, 1843.

Thereafter the Foreign Secretary and his former agent remained at odds, yet Palmerston never absolutely disregarded Urquhart's opinions.

While Urquhart and Ponsonby continued to cry out against Russian aggression, Palmerston believed the most formidable enemy of the Sultan was not the Tsar but Mehemet Ali. Throughout the thirties Palmerston did everything he could to prevent the seemingly inevitable collision between Mahmoud II and his insubordinate vassal, a policy difficult to pursue because of Ponsonby's personal conception of the Near Eastern problem. Ponsonby was of the opinion that the Ottoman state would "crumble to pieces" if the Egyptian menace continued. The ambassador looked upon war between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali as a "fever which the Turks might easily recover from."<sup>129</sup> All Turkey lacked for complete recovery was "moral force" which Britain could supply by assisting the Sultan against his subjects.<sup>130</sup> Again and again Palmerston instructed his agents in the Levant to use their influence on both Mehemet and the Sultan to prevent the renewal of hostilities.<sup>131</sup>

In July, 1834 Ponsonby reported that the Sultan had resolved to renew the struggle regardless of the dangers involved. Palmerston not only ordered his ambassador to forestall the conflict,<sup>132</sup> but in September requested the Admiralty to have a British fleet maintain a watch for the Turkish fleet and turn it back should it attempt an engagement with Mehemet's force.<sup>133</sup> Conflict must be avoided in the Near East, for even though

<sup>129</sup> F. O. 78/255, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #186, October 11, 1835.

<sup>130</sup> F. O. 78/277, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #194, October 19, 1836. Cf. also F. O. 78/332, Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 5, October 3, 13, November 9, and December 31, 1838.

<sup>131</sup> Palmerston also dangled an alliance before the Sultan's eyes but refrained from consummating it in order to keep Mahmoud from declaring war on Mehemet Ali. Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>132</sup> F. O. 78/234, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #41, August 23, 1834.

<sup>133</sup> F. O. 78/250, Foreign Office to Admiralty, September 19, 1834. Prince Metternich also thought that the best way to assist reform of the Sultan's administration was "removing from him the distraction of external politics; that for this purpose it is necessary that the dispute between England and Russia should cease. . . ." F. O. 195/130, Lamb to Palmerston, #6, August 5, 1836.

the Tsar did not become involved, and general war did not upset the balance of power, Turkey could ill afford a war of any kind until the reforms begun by Mahmoud had progressed further.

As has been already indicated, the material value of British assistance to a reforming Sultan was not great. There is little question but that the Prussians under the direction of Moltke were more effective in improving the Turkish army than the combined efforts of both the British and Russian commissions. The moral support of the British Foreign Office, however, was very important.<sup>134</sup> When Mahmoud became convinced that Britain was definitely favorable to his policy he set to work with increased vigor to correct the faults in his army, navy, and financial system. Mahmoud's aim in all this was quite different from Palmerston's. While the Foreign Secretary had aimed to strengthen Turkey in order to free it from Russia, the Sultan's great purpose had been to become strong enough to beat Mehemet into submission. Within four years Mahmoud thought himself ready.

By 1837 the grouping of the powers on the Eastern Question had changed. With both Austria and Prussia becoming more suspicious of Russia the Münchengrätz Convention showed signs of weakening. Likewise the western powers, France and England, were further apart than before, France definitely leaning in the direction of Mehemet. Aware of these changes in April 1837 Mahmoud appealed to Britain for an alliance against the Egyptian.<sup>135</sup> Palmerston rejected this proposal but indicated in his reply that he hoped to see Turkey strong enough to recover Syria unaided.<sup>136</sup> Mehemet sensing trouble countered by increasing his defenses in Syria.

<sup>134</sup> Britain had strengthened the fleet at Malta in order to insure the security of Turkey, a fact which Ponsonby frequently reminded the Sultan. F. O. 78/331, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #119, May 10, 1838.

<sup>135</sup> G. H. Bolsover, "Great Britain, Russia, and the Eastern Question 1832-1841," thesis, summarized in Institute of Historical Research, *Bulletin*, vol. XI, #32, November, 1933, p. 131.

<sup>136</sup> Though Palmerston understood Mahmoud's predicament he refused to support the Sultan against his vassal lest he involve his state in war. Instead he

Early in 1838 Palmerston instructed the British Consul-General in Egypt, Colonel Patrick Campbell, to warn Mehemet against attacking Turkish territory, and to seek an explanation of his extensive military preparations.<sup>137</sup> When Russian intervention seemed imminent (May 1838) Palmerston revived his friendship with France, and reminded the Tsar's government that England would not fail to object, by force if necessary, to a repetition of Russia's acts of 1833.<sup>138</sup> Palmerston was afraid that hostilities between Mahmoud and Mehemet would be an opportunity for Russia to seize the Straits.<sup>139</sup> Finally Palmerston proposed a five power conference to meet in London to settle the whole question of the Near East.<sup>140</sup> Such were Palmerston's methods of forestalling application of the treaty of 1833. The conference idea failed because Mehemet gave up his demand for absolute independence<sup>141</sup> whereupon Russia

---

advised the Porte to construct new forts and train its army officers more efficiently. F. O. 78/307, Palmerston to Vaughan. #29, May 11, 1837.

<sup>137</sup> *British Foreign and State Papers*, XXVI, 694. Palmerston's disfavor of Mehemet was obvious. He was irritated with the Egyptian because his armaments had delayed reform in Turkey, and because Mehemet's conquests on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf threatened Britain's control of India. Palmerston wrote Granville June 8, 1838 that he was determined to support the Sultan vigorously against Mehemet. E. Ashley, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, 2 vols., London, 1879, I, 355.

<sup>138</sup> F. O. 78/272, Lamb to Palmerston, #72, September 8, 1838.

<sup>139</sup> Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>140</sup> Palmerston believed that the threats made by Mehemet Ali were sufficient to allow the Porte to appeal to England, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia "to enter jointly into engagements with the Porte with a view to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire." Russia could not object to this as a violation of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, maintained Palmerston, because the Sultan could reply to all objections that the dangers demanded as many friends as possible. The real aim of this proposal, however, was to prevent the Russians from invoking the Treaty of 1833, and possibly to substitute another arrangement for it. The best way to devalue the Russo-Turkish alliance, thought Palmerston, was "to merge it in some more general compact of a somewhat similar nature . . ." F. O. 78/329a, Palmerston to Ponsonby. #185. September 15, 1838. Cf. Bell, *op. cit.*, I, 294. Palmerston thought a conference would be embarrassing to Russia. Mosely, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>141</sup> Mehemet hoped to enlist the support of the arbiters of European affairs by a show of moderation, so he offered to withdraw his troops from the contested area, provided the Turks would do likewise, and provided he were granted Egypt and a major portion of the occupied territory in hereditary possession. This was practically what he secured in 1841.



took the stand that now there was nothing to discuss.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, since the Sultan was unwilling to make concessions of any kind, successful discussion of the Eastern question was unlikely. That the failure of compromise in 1838 was largely the result of the lack of agreement of the Sultan's foreign advisors, there is no doubt. Ponsonby, who was as much opposed to Mehemet Ali as he was anti-Russian, did not discourage Mahmoud's aggressive demands, even though he recognized the Sultan's weakness, the incapacity of his ministers, and Russia's aims.<sup>143</sup> Roussin, the French admiral, tried to hold the Sultan back. If these two men had cooperated in trying to prevent trouble, the disaster of 1839 might never have taken place.

In the spring of 1839 war at length broke out between Sultan and Pasha. Metternich immediately suggested an informal conference at Vienna, while Britain and France cooperated to prevent Russian intervention at Constantinople. Austria's vacillating policy left Russia more or less isolated, fearful of taking definite action in the face of Anglo-French opposition. Mehemet's victory on land at Nezib, June 25, 1839,<sup>144</sup> the surrender of the fleet at Alexandria, and the death of the Sultan almost spelled complete defeat for Turkey.

Palmerston was no idle spectator in 1839 as he had been in 1833. The Foreign Secretary immediately came forward with the dictum that only the restoration of Syria would guarantee peace in the East. This declaration was accompanied by an order that the fleet return to the Straits.<sup>145</sup> On July 27th the Ambassadors of the powers at Constantinople issued a joint declaration favoring the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey. France's sympathies were so strongly on the side

<sup>142</sup> Bolsover, "Great Britain, Russia, and the Eastern Question," *op. cit.*, p. 131. Russia had accepted the conference idea because to agree with Palmerston would prevent him from allying with France. The Tsar knew he could not maintain the Unkiar Treaty without war with England and it wasn't worth the price. Bell, *op. cit.*, I, 298.

<sup>143</sup> F. O. 195/159, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #149, June 19, 1839. Cf. note 107, p. 160.

<sup>144</sup> Full details of Turkish side of this battle in Moltke, *op. cit.*, #64, pp. 378-401.

<sup>145</sup> Rodkey, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

of Mehemet that she could not agree with Palmerston's declaration with regard to the restoration of Syria. The Tsar sensing division in the ranks of his opponents sent Brunnow to London to support the plan of the English Foreign Minister. Nicholas expressed his willingness to surrender the Treaty of 1833, provided Palmerston would recognize the Black Sea as a "mare clausum." Palmerston, supported by Austria, was willing to back such a proposal.<sup>146</sup>

But the Foreign Minister did not have the support of his own nor of the French government. He was unable to persuade his colleagues in the cabinet to go forward without France, and he found it impossible to induce France to coerce her protégé, Mehemet Ali, to cease his attacks against the Sultan. The question of the closure of the Straits was as baffling as ever. Finally he was forced against his will to suggest partition of Syria. Austria supported this, but France remained adamant. Palmerston then persuaded Austria, Russia, and Prussia to sign with England (July 15, 1840) a convention promising Mehemet Ali hereditary control of Egypt, and Acre for life, but Syria was to be retained by Turkey. The Straits were to be closed when the Sultan was not at war. It was not easy to force this through, but when Palmerston presented his colleagues<sup>147</sup> with the dreaded either-or, either this or continued trouble in the East, not to mention a renewal of the Unkiar Treaty, he secured the backing of his cabinet. The Straits Convention was finally signed July 13, 1841.<sup>148</sup>

While the war of 1838-1839 and the crisis following it was generally regarded as a set-back to the reform movement in the Ottoman state, the death of Mahmoud II (June 29, 1839),<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup> "In 1839, Palmerston, like a true Canningite, found in cooperation with Russia the means of freeing the peace of Europe from the threat of independent Russian action in Turkey under the terms of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi of July 8." Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>147</sup> Some of whom wanted an alliance with Mehemet.

<sup>148</sup> For Palmerston's triumph over obstacles at home and abroad, see Bell, *op. cit.*, I, ch. 14; Temperley, *The Crimea*, bk. II, ch. 4 and 5.

<sup>149</sup> Mahmoud was fifty-four when he died. His premature death (the result of lung and liver complications) was undoubtedly hastened by the failures of

which occurred within a week after the catastrophe at Nezib, at a time when the status of Turkey was at one of its lowest ebbs, was looked upon with mixed feelings. While some regarded the death of this extraordinary Sultan <sup>150</sup> as a calamity, others were hopeful of greater reform under another type of ruler. Mahmoud's chief minister, Reschid Pasha, who was at that time on a mission to London, looked upon the death of the proud, vain, flattery-loving Sultan as somewhat of a blessing in disguise. "Il est à croire que la mort du Sultan Mahmoud," wrote Reschid, "apportera du soulagement à cet ancien mal du Gouvernement de la Sublime Porte." While not denying that Mahmoud at times showed great energy and power, Reschid resented the fact that Mahmoud was wont to deal harshly with those who disagreed with his policies, and Reschid Pasha was more than once one of that category. As for Mahmoud's reforms, Reschid felt that they were mere pretensions which added "nouvelles vexations aux tyrannies du passe."<sup>151</sup> Mahmoud's lack of good judgment, wrote Reschid, prevented him from becoming a great administrator, and after his destruction of the Janissaries in 1826, reform was retarded by the Sultan's refusal to adhere to the advice of his agents. In no other way could Reschid explain the general discontent in the Empire in 1839, except as the result of the Sultan's "tyrannie insupportable."<sup>152</sup>

Yet one must not accept uncritically Reschid's opinion of Mahmoud II, since it is well known that his travel and study in western Europe had enlightened him to the extent that he could not accept his chief's absolutism; one must weigh his conclusions with those of other contemporaries who had less

---

his last years and his addiction to liquor. "Sultan Mahmoud hat ein tiefes Leid durch Leben getragen: die wiedergeburt seines volks war die grosse Aufgabe seines Daseins, und das Mislingen dieses Planes sein Tod." Moltke, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

<sup>150</sup> Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, V, 204. Moltke did not regard Mahmoud as outstanding; thought his reforms a failure. Moltke, *op. cit.*, Letter #66, pp. 407-420. Cf. also Spencer, *op. cit.*, I, 260-261.

<sup>151</sup> Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, Appendix III, p. 271.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

personal interest in the Ottoman Empire. The man who was perhaps more responsible than anyone else for the Sultan's low estate, Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mehemet Ali, maintained that Mahmoud failed because, unlike his father, he had "taken civilization by the wrong side."<sup>153</sup>

An indefatigable worker, though not always free from favorites,<sup>154</sup> maintaining a self-possession "which neither the reverses of fortune nor the injustice of cabinets could vanquish,"<sup>155</sup> Mahmoud II pointed the way to a more efficient state, though he achieved little during his reign.<sup>156</sup> The Sultan's reforms would have been more effective had he developed a more specific program once the Janissaries were destroyed. In 1839 Marmont wrote:

Their fame (i.e. the reforms) has resounded throughout Europe, and it has been thought that the Sultan has created a new order of things, and commenced an era of civilization in Turkey, whereas in reality, little more has been effected than the destruction of the Janissaries, and the establishment of a new military force. The former

<sup>153</sup> "Turkey still possesses in itself seeds of improvement and strength, but they must be well directed. The Porte have taken civilization by the wrong side; — it is not by giving epaulettes and tight trousers to a nation that you begin the task of regeneration; — instead of beginning by their dress, and dress will never make a straight man of one who is lame, they should endeavor to enlighten the minds of their people. Look at us — we have schools of every description — we send our young men to be educated in Europe. — We are also *Turks*, but we defer to the opinions of those who are capable of directing our own, — whereas no regard is paid by the Porte to advice that is not their own. — Their men would make very good soldiers, but their officers. . . . — The only man they had, capable of conducting their affairs, is the late Grand Vizir, Reschid Pasha. . . . You see the treatment which he experienced at their hands. . . ." Memorandum of M. Alexander Pisani's report of his interview with Ibrahim Pasha at Kutaya, dated March 10, 1833, enclosed in F. O. 78/209, Canning to Palmerston, #12, March 7, 1832.

<sup>154</sup> F. O. 78/209, Canning to Palmerston, #12, March 7, 1832.

<sup>155</sup> Ubicini, *Letters*, II, 110.

<sup>156</sup> "Dennoch lebt sein Werk weiter und wird leben, so lange es ein türkisches Reich gibt. Nicht dass Vollbrachte, sondern das Erstrebte und muthig Begonnene ist der Massstab. den ihm die Nachwelt anzulegen hat, und dieser Massstab wird ihn immer zu einer ausgezeichneten Erscheinung stempeln." Rosen, *op. cit.*, II, 301. Cyrus Hamlin, missionary and founder of Robert College, wrote November 1, 1839, regretting that Mahmoud "had carried none of his reforms to that point where they did not still need his singular and fearless energy to sustain and perfect them." *Missionary Herald*, vol. 36, 1840, p. 173.

was an useful and important act, for which the Sultan is deserving of the highest praise; but the troops by which the Janissaries have been replaced, are far from realizing the hopes that were conceived of them; and as to the boasted reforms, they bear only on matters of a frivolous nature, such as the change of titles, or of dress. Thus the turban has been proscribed; the Reis-Effendi has changed his name to that of "Minister of Foreign Affairs;" the power of the Grand Vizir has been curtailed; the extent of some of the provinces altered; and the army is recruited by conscription, according to the arbitrary will of the Pashas. . . .<sup>157</sup>

Another resident in Turkey during Mahmoud's reign wrote:

During the reign of Mahmoud have been abolished the state and etiquette which were formerly the occupations of the court. An economy and simplicity have been introduced into several departments of the state, which is really surprising. The expenditure has been reduced to one-fifth of the former charges. The power of life and death has been withdrawn from the pashas. The Christians have been relieved from those burdens and prohibitions which galled them before. The revenue, notwithstanding the deficiencies caused by the loss of the contributions of Greece, Albania, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Servia — for many years of Egypt, Syria, Candia, Bagdad, Akhaltzik, and lately of Kars and Erzeroom, that is of nearly one half of the empire — is yet in a state to meet the increased demands of the new organization. Political culprits and rebels have not only been pardoned, but trusted according to their political capacity. The prisons of Constantinople are empty. There are no heads on the seraglio

<sup>157</sup> Marmont, *op. cit.*, p. 91. About the same time (1833) David Urquhart, to be sure an admirer of Mahmoud II, observed: ". . . the extirpation of the Janissaries — fell like a thunderbolt on the nation. Their sultan appeared in the character of an avenging angel; with the most extraordinary good fortune seemed combined in him the utmost fertility of resources, sternness of purpose and sanguinariness of disposition; so far his character was only calculated to strike terror; but when the ruthless executioner was seen entering the cot of a peasant, inquiring into his condition, asking for plans for its amelioration, subscribing for the erection of schools and churches, (or at least, reported to have done so), is it to be wondered at that he became the object of the idolatry of the Greek and Christian population, or that the measures which he adopted for thoroughly breaking the pride of the Turks, gained him the confidence and attachment of the rayas — much more important than the applause either of the stubborn Turk or of his European judges? He has effected three things, which have each been the principal objects of every sultan since Mahomet the Fourth: the destruction of the Janissaries, the extirpation of the derebeys, and the subjugation of Albania, which has not admitted the supremacy of the Porte, even in its days of conquest." Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources*, p. 115.

gates. Numerous academies have been built and endowed by the Sultan; and there are now seven thousand young men receiving in these establishments an education which, without pretending to embrace the higher branches of science, is exceedingly well calculated to make them useful and respectable members of society, and efficient servants of the government. In some of the regiments, the whole of the men have been taught handicrafts, in the exercise of which they are made to occupy their spare time; the profits of their labour are applied to the improvement of their own condition. These are facts which do not cease to be so, because they are not known in Europe because Europeans will not take the trouble to know them.<sup>158</sup>

These are the views of contemporaries. Historians have been more kind to Mahmoud II. Present-day scholars, viewing his reign from the vantage point of a century, seem in general agreement that more than any other Sultan of the 19th century he aroused the thought, especially among the more enlightened Turks, that reform was possible and this new spirit was responsible for significant changes later in the century. The destruction of the Janissaries, the creation of a new army, and the extension of civil rights were real accomplishments; the development of roads, a postal service, and improved revenues were steps in the direction of a more modern state. Had he lived longer there seems to be little doubt but that he would have learned to construct as well as destroy. All recognize today that before constructive reform was possible "the various forces within the Empire, . . . which hampered the omnipotence of the central power,"<sup>159</sup> had to be destroyed, and this was the work of Mahmoud II.

<sup>158</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 233n. "Turkey participates in the renovating movement which toils everywhere. She does not plunge herself blindly into an adventurous course, but she studies herself, tries her forces, and will apply them with energy as soon as she has discovered, on mature consideration, the end she should have in view, and the means by which she is to arrive at it. Let her abstain from the honied poisons of Europe. Let her place once more confidence in her ancient institutions, and in the moral character of her children. Let her give to the former, vigour and efficiency for the direction of society, and to the latter, the free possession of all those riches on which their feet tread; and soon, in spite of the predictions of genius itself, she will see grandeur and power return to her hands, and then there will be no question of a partition of her empire, but of imitating her example, and conciliating her friendship." *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>159</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, X, 548.

But Mahmoud was not destructive alone, nor did his reforms merely correct the worst abuses in the state. On the other hand some of his reforms, though very inadequate, did foreshadow some of the promises of the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané. Two examples stand out; his attempt to prevent the muzzellims, agas, and pashas from inflicting punishment on their subjects, unless authorized by the *cadi* and signed by a judge,<sup>160</sup> was fostered by his desire to protect the lives of his subjects; also the Sultan's respect for property as well as life is shown by his refusal to confiscate the property of condemned men.<sup>161</sup> Mahmoud never gave expression to these sentiments with high-sounding words as did Abdul Medjid on November 3rd, 1839, but his own personal actions speak what was in his mind. His institution of the French language in the army, and in the military schools which he had established,<sup>162</sup> and his changing the titles of two members of the Divan in 1836,<sup>163</sup> although minor changes, did express his anxiety to improve his state along western lines.

According to Temperley, Mahmoud was "a genuine reforming sovereign" who accomplished what he did "by his own vigour and energy."<sup>164</sup> Few are willing to concede that Mahmoud was one of the great Sultans because his reforms were so "ill conceived and poorly coordinated."<sup>165</sup> Yet, ". . . apart from an occasional excess of fanatic rage, he was a man of good judgment, . . ." who ". . . scorning the slippered ease of the palace compound, . . . had the unusual energy to shoulder the heavy burden imposed upon him by his autocratic inheritance."<sup>166</sup> That he strengthened that inheritance in spite of the fact that it was actually diminished in size by the loss

<sup>160</sup> Walsh, *op. cit.*, II, 307.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308; Ubicini, *Letters*, I, 129n.

<sup>162</sup> *Missionary Herald*, vol. 33, 1837, p. 403.

<sup>163</sup> Kahlia Bey was henceforth called Minister of Interior and Reis Effendi was changed to Minister of Foreign Affairs. A.B.C.F.M., *Report*, 1837, p. 50.

<sup>164</sup> Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 158; cf. also La Jonquière, *op. cit.*, II, 429.

<sup>165</sup> F. Schevill, *History of Balkan Peninsula*, New York, 1933, p. 348.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345. Mahmoud essentially a military man cared not for costly style or pretense.

of Greece, Syria, and Egypt, there is little doubt, and he did this against great obstacles,<sup>167</sup> — the insurgent pashas, the rebellious *rayahs*, the old Turks, not to mention the greed and avarice of the neighboring states. No Sultan in the nineteenth century applied more thought and energy to the problem before him than Mahmoud II, and in that sense he was a true reformer and a great Sultan.<sup>168</sup> This Peter the Great<sup>169</sup> of the Ottoman Empire paved the way for the real *tanzimat* some forty years later, even as Peter's accomplishments made the glories of the reign of Catherine II possible a century earlier.

In conclusion, what may be said as to the real effect of Palmerston's policy on Turkey and the *tanzimat* to July 1839? Palmerston's refusal to agree to even the most limited defensive alliance unless that could be "interpreted by Britain in any given contingency" and his offer of "advice on the introduction of reforms, . . . thus helping the Turks to help themselves" may be regarded as not squarely meeting the issue. One writer terms his policy "near-sighted" and not "permanently constructive."<sup>170</sup> Generalizations of this type should be avoided in dealing with a policy as subtle as Lord Palmerston's. The only adequate yardstick for measuring Palmerston's success is a comparison of the situation in Turkey in 1839 with Palmerston's hopes five years before. As had been pointed out, following the crisis of the 1833 Palmerston sought both to prevent a renewal of Russian intervention in Turkish affairs, and, if possible, undermine the dominating position acquired by Russia in the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. To accomplish this, peace must be maintained in the Near East and British prestige must be raised. In these respects Palmerston's policy must be judged successful. The inevitable struggle between Mahmoud and

<sup>167</sup> Ubicini maintained Mahmoud was greater than Peter I of Russia because the obstacles which he had to overcome were greater. Ubicini, *Letters*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>168</sup> "As long as Mahmoud lived he was the best proof of the argument that the Sultan was the best reformer." Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>169</sup> Walsh maintained that Mahmoud was greater than Peter the Great, because he not only subdued his subjects, he subdued himself (after 1826). Walsh, *op. cit.*, II, 319.

<sup>170</sup> Puryear, *International Economics*, pp. 102, 12.



Mehemet Ali was postponed until 1839 due largely to Palmerston's efforts, and Britain's friendly attitude went far toward making the Sultan look more to London than to St. Petersburg.<sup>171</sup>

➤ On the other hand the plans which Palmerston worked out for the rejuvenation of Turkey however did not meet with the unqualified approval of the Sultan and hence were not successful. Though England stood ready to help in every possible fashion (except a binding Anglo-Turkish alliance), the reforms of the thirties were definitely Mahmoud's reforms. Within the next two years Palmerston was finally successful in breaking Russia's authority in Turkey, thereby prolonging Turkey's existence as an independent state, a fact which not only tended to raise Britain to first place in the favor of the Porte, but also make further reforms possible.<sup>172</sup>

The success of Palmerston's policy between 1839 and 1841 was directly proportional to his accomplishments of the five years previous. Between 1834 and 1839 Lord Palmerston had learned to appreciate the significance of Turkey's continued existence to British prosperity.<sup>173</sup> During this same half decade the Porte became fully aware of the power of England and her anxiety to maintain the unity of the Turkish state.<sup>174</sup> Thus, it was the period in which the integrity of the Ottoman Empire became a definite part of British foreign policy.<sup>175</sup> Thereafter Turkey was an important factor in the balance of power which England sought to maintain.<sup>176</sup> That this was the most lasting

<sup>171</sup> Even Mr. Puryear admits that 1838 was "one of British ascendancy at Constantinople, . . . in sharp contrast to the preceding five years. . . ." Puryear, *International Economics*, p. 71.

<sup>172</sup> This was undoubtedly one of the Foreign Secretary's aims, for Palmerston did not believe the Turkish state "a sapless trunk," "a dead body." If Turkey could have "ten years of peace," "there is no reason whatever why it should not become again a respectable power, . . ." Bulwer, *op. cit.*, II, 298-299.

<sup>173</sup> Puryear, *International Economics*, p. 11.

<sup>174</sup> Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>175</sup> Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>176</sup> "In a short, but notable speech, delivered on March 1, 1848, in reply to an attack of the Russophobe Urquhart, he (Palmerston) said he held that the surest guarantee of peace was the establishment of a permanent balance of power; that is, stated differently, the prevention of any one State from assum-

achievement of Lord Palmerston, few will deny, but there were others also. The Foreign minister's influence on the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané of 1839 deserves a separate chapter.

---

ing a position of hegemony in the World. Now, the States whose ambitions he most dreaded were Russia and France. In order, therefore, to place a curb upon Russian aggression he felt it desirable that Denmark and Germany in the north, and still more the Austrian and Turkish Empires in the south, should be strong and in agreement." *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, 336.