

## CHAPTER V

### REFORM AS GOOD POLICY, 1839-1841

THE DEATH of Mahmoud II and the defeats at Nezib and Alexandria did not have the disastrous effect on the reform movement in Turkey that one would normally expect. The apparent failure of Mahmoud's policies together with the accession of a young, rather incompetent ruler would normally mean a reaction in favor of the old Turks; yet such was not the case in 1839. To explain the developments of the next two or three years with the statement that the *tanzimat* fever had not yet run its course, or that the opposition forces were too divided to present a united front against the tendency toward westernization is to undervalue the strength of the reform group in Turkey and above all their realization that internal reform was the best means of insuring the favor of western nations, particularly Britain. In short, reform became good policy during the first years of the new Sultan.

Abdul Medjid, who succeeded Mahmoud July 1, 1839, was not prepared to carry on where Mahmud left off. Not yet seventeen years of age, physically weak,<sup>1</sup> he was further handicapped by the fact that under Mahmoud II he had been allowed few opportunities to develop his natural limitation of powers,<sup>2</sup> a policy which rendered him incapable of pursuing an energetic policy. Well-intentioned, if not brilliant<sup>3</sup> Abdul's greatest

<sup>1</sup> "La nature l'avait peu favorisé et l'éducation n'avait pas corrigé l'œuvre de la nature." Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, p. 35. Cf. also Moltke, *Briefe*, Letter #65 (August 10, 1839), pp. 406-407.

<sup>2</sup> Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, V, 217.

<sup>3</sup> Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, II, 80. Canning wrote to Lord Aberdeen January 28, 1842, after his first audience with Abdul Medjid "the graciousness of his manner, and the intelligent, though gentle and even melancholy expression of his countenance, warrant a hope, perhaps a sanguine one, that with riper years and a more experienced judgment he may prove a real blessing and a source of strength to his country." *Ibid.*, p. 81.

weakness was instability; <sup>4</sup> the fact that he was easily swayed by divergent councilors endangered the security of all his ministers. Moreover, since so much power was concentrated in the hands of the Sultan, Abdul Medjid's accession might well be regarded as an absolute barrier to further progress and the beginning of a reactionary policy.<sup>5</sup> The British theory that "reform was to be achieved through the Sultan," <sup>6</sup> would have had to have been revised, if not discarded completely, had not this weak Sultan been dominated by a few strong men who appreciated the gains of the previous decade and wished to go further.

The first problem to be faced was the Egyptian question, a favorable solution of which depended on the good offices of the powers, especially Britain. France at this time definitely favored Mehemet Ali; Russia might be expected to use the crisis as a pretext for strengthening her hold on the Sultan's power, provided it did not lead to war with England; Austria was not particularly interested in Turkey at this stage. Thus, Turkey turned more definitely toward reforms which would win the favor of her most logical ally, England.

Abdul Medjid was convinced by his minister of foreign affairs that he could not expect effective assistance from without until he adopted a policy for correcting abuses within his state. In this way, reform became a political lever by means of which enlightened ministers attempted to raise Turkey from the low state to which it had fallen. Now that Mahmoud was gone,

"... the government of his (Mahmoud's) successor has not profited by the errors of the late Monarch; we see the same indecision in his acts, the same absence of sound enlightened policy — now truckling to the Rayah by granting some half measure of reform, and then stopping short to calm the effervescence of the privileged class — a system of governing which can never permanently succeed in attaching any." Edmund Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850*, 2 vols., London, 1851, I, 261.

<sup>5</sup>"The main obstacle to the growth and permanence of reforms in Turkey, . . . [has been] the absolutism of the Sultan, . . ." *Fortnightly Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 653. ". . . the old imperial prerogatives of deceiving or over ruling his ministers behind their backs, or rating them in his presence, or dismissing them individually at a moment's notice, were fully retained by Abdul Medjid." Temperley, "British Policy," *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 167.

reconciliation with Egypt was much more likely, but at least one of the Sultan's advisers appreciated that the Egyptian problem was only one danger, the solution of which *per se* would not make Turkey a strong state.<sup>7</sup> No man was more aware of the necessity of permanent reforms for the Turkish state, nor more convinced of what the effect a definite reform program would have on the powers at this time than the Foreign Minister, Reschid Pasha.<sup>8</sup>

Reschid Pasha was a statesman of high caliber,<sup>9</sup> one of the few which Turkey produced in the decades prior to the Crimean War; more far-sighted than most of his colleagues, he is today regarded as one of the most outstanding Turkish statesmen of the nineteenth century. Little is known of Reschid's early life; he was probably born in 1802 at Constantinople, where he died in 1858 at the age of fifty-six.<sup>10</sup> It may be assumed that he was given the usual education of a well-to-do Turkish family,<sup>11</sup> and prepared early for the government service. His first

<sup>7</sup> Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, Appendix III, p. 272.

<sup>8</sup> "Ces moyens qui causeraient évidemment une amélioration sensible dans la position de tours, présenteraient aux hommes actuellement à la tête des affaires une occasion de gagner la bienveillance des puissances Européennes." Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, August 12, 1839, Appendix III, p. 274. The Hatti Sherif was promulgated on November 3, 1839. Two days after its promulgation Reschid wrote Baron von Sturmer, Austrian Internuncio at the Porte: "Le Gouvernement de S. H. espère que les puissances amies apprécieront le bien qui doit résulter de ces institutions dans l'intérêt de l'humanité et de l'Empire Ottoman et qu'elles y verront un nouveau motif de réserver les biens qui les unissent à la Turquie." Reschid à Sturmer, le 5 Novembre 1839, H. H. u. St. A., Wien, Türkei VI, fasz. 51. According to Rosen, to set forth a definite program of reform would place Turkey "in die Reihe des liberalen Reiches." Rosen, *op. cit.*, II, 14-15. Cf. also, Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, 29; A. Du Velay, *Histoire financière de la Turquie*, Paris, 1903, p. 89; F. Rouvière, *Essai sur l'évolution des idées constitutionnelles en Turquie*, Montpellier, 1910, p. 56; C. R. von Sax, *Geschichte der Machtverfalls der Türkei bis ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Vienna, 1913, p. 278; Soubby Noury, *Le Régime représentatif en Turquie*, Paris, 1914, p. 39; G. Franco, *Développements constitutionnels en Turquie*, Paris, 1925, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> F. O. 78/225, Ponsonby to Palmerston, December 19, 1833. Missionaries regarded Reschid as "one of the most enlightened and liberal men in the Empire." Cf. *Missionary Herald*, vol. 42, 1846, p. 97.

<sup>10</sup> Not to be confused with Reschid Pasha, the general, who was defeated and captured by Ibrahim's forces at Koniah in 1833; the general later committed suicide to atone for his disgrace.

<sup>11</sup> Reschid's father was an official in one of the many bureaus of the Porte. Cadalvène and Barrault, *op. cit.*, II, 272.

position was that of secretary to Ali Pasha; later he was taken over by Izzet Pasha, the Grand Vizir, in the same capacity. Reschid's ability was recognized early, and he held various positions in the Sultan's bureaucracy; here he became acquainted with the intricacies of the Turkish governmental system, noting the strong but especially the weak spots which needed strengthening. This experience proved invaluable later when he became leader of the reform movement under Abdul Medjid.

Reschid's shrewd, yet honest, approach to the problems of the Porte inspired confidence and eventually made him a popular figure with the more broad-minded Turks. "A just, though severe man, . . . highly respected,"<sup>12</sup> he had "that kind of moral authority with them (i.e. the clerks and officials in the government) which a leading man in any profession exercises over its inferior members."<sup>13</sup> As far as the Sultan was concerned, Mahmoud did not always agree with Reschid's policies, but he never questioned his fidelity.<sup>14</sup>

Reschid Pasha's courage, his natural calm in a crisis, not to mention his mastery of languages, qualified him particularly well for diplomacy and foreign affairs, in which field he later so distinguished himself. In 1833 he assisted in the arrangement of the Peace of Kutayia, and during the next four years was ambassador both at London (1834-1836) and Paris (1836-1837).<sup>15</sup> After Pertew Effendi's fall (1837) Reschid was recalled from Paris to become Minister of Foreign Affairs under Grand Vizir Raouf Pasha.<sup>16</sup> Reschid held this post several times before attaining the highest position offered by the Porte, namely that of Grand Vizir. However, it was as minister of

<sup>12</sup> F. O. 78/276, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #116, July 15, 1836.

<sup>13</sup> Ashley, *op. cit.*, II, 347.

<sup>14</sup> F. O. 78/276, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #116, July 15, 1836.

<sup>15</sup> Cadalvène and Barrault, *op. cit.*, II, 272; Du Velay, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92. Reschid was ambassador at Paris a second time, 1840-1841, and again at the Court of St. James, 1843-1845. He frequently relinquished his portfolio of Foreign Affairs to go on special missions for Mahmoud II.

<sup>16</sup> Pertew Effendi was an honest, straightforward minister, yet his devotion to the old Turkish principles made him insufferably intolerant. Ubicini, *Letters*, II, 113. Pertew was particularly fanatical against Christians. Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, V, 211.

foreign affairs that he performed his greatest service toward the establishment of a reformed Turkey.

Though Reschid fully appreciated the significance of the abolition of the Janissaries and the other reforms of Mahmoud II, Turkey's defeat in 1833 convinced him that the Ottoman Empire could never become a strong state until it adopted European methods. He was cautious, however, about expressing his views to the Sultan, knowing only too well the fate of overzealous advisors. In the years that followed, his plans were modified from time to time by the realization that Turkey was not France or England, and that, even though the Sultan were won over, the people were not able to manage western institutions.

> The only accomplishment for which Reschid was primarily responsible prior to 1839 was the reorganization of the Council and bureaus of the Porte. Instead of one council, three were established in 1838;<sup>17</sup> the *Medjliss Cumouri Askerize*, composed of the Seraskier and ten army officers, was set up to manage military affairs; at the same time a council for finance and interior civil matters, the *Medjliss Cumouri Naziri*, came into being; but most important was the *Medjliss Ahkiami Adlie*, a committee of eight men who examined all proposals of the two lower councils; all laws had to be passed by this group, which corresponded to the old Privy Council, before being submitted to the Sultan. Unfortunately these councils, while a real step forward, did not function well because of the jealousy of the personnel. Within two months Reschid's colleagues were intriguing against the Minister of Foreign Affairs because of his creation of these chambers of divided power "in imitation of England," though Ponsonby maintained that the cabal was managed by Russians, especially a Mr. Stepowitch, Chief Dragoman of the Prussian Mission, "indubitably an agent of the Russians."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> F. O. 78/330, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #79, March 26, 1838 and *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, #131, May 5, 1838.

<sup>18</sup> F. O. 78/331, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #125, May 21, 1838.

For these reasons Reschid never fully outlined his whole reform program, even to his foreign friends, until after Mahmoud died in July, 1839. Reschid Pasha was at that time in London, to which place he had gone late in 1838<sup>19</sup> with the hope of negotiating an Anglo-Turkish alliance against Mehemet Ali.<sup>20</sup> Though unable to secure definite support from the British Foreign Office, he stayed on in London until the middle of August, 1839; when, after Mahmoud's death, Abdul Medjid became Sultan, Reschid was called to Constantinople to resume the office of Foreign Minister.<sup>21</sup>

Reschid was somewhat dubious of the future of Turkey under Abdul Medjid, fearing that his extreme youth and inexperience would cause him to become the tool of the reactionary forces already at work in Turkey.<sup>22</sup> For this reason he hoped to obtain assistance from the friendly powers, believing that the new ruler would perhaps be more amenable to advice than the older, more experienced Mahmoud. If the powers intervened in Eastern affairs, he hoped they would do so through the usual channels, and that such intervention would be jointly undertaken by all the powers. Reschid did not wish the precedent of 1833 to be repeated, both because it was a bad precedent and because he was genuinely afraid of the motives of Russia "dont l'intérêt serait l'affaiblissement de l'empire Ottoman."<sup>23</sup> These ideas were recorded in a memorandum in Palmerston's handwriting, dated August 12, 1839, undoubtedly written immediately after an interview with Reschid at which the status of Turkey was the principal topic of conversation.

<sup>19</sup> Reschid presented his credentials, November 29, 1838. *London Gazette*, vol. 166, p. 2777.

<sup>20</sup> F. O. 78/460, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #322, November 30, 1839. Rouvière maintains that he was sent on this mission partly because his ideas were too liberal for the aging Sultan. Rouvière, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Cf. also *Manchester Guardian*, September 5, 1838.

<sup>21</sup> Reschid left London August 17, 1839, returning via Paris and Marseilles. *London Times*, August 19, 1839. He arrived in Constantinople September 4, 1839. F. O. 78/358, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #243, September 5, 1839.

<sup>22</sup> Before Reschid returned from London Nourri Effendi and Sarim Effendi attempted to prevent him from becoming foreign minister, but Raouf Pasha was firm. Khosrew then tried to delay his return. F. O. 78/357, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #176, July 12, 1839.

<sup>23</sup> Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, Appendix III, p. 275.

In Reschid Pasha's opinion the immediate crisis in the Levant was not the central issue. With the friendly offices of the powers, especially England, Mehemet Ali could be returned to his place in the empire without weakening the structure. What was more fundamental was to strengthen the Sultan's waning power so that the process of disintegration would not continue in the future. Reschid had been considering genuine reforms for several years; after Mahmoud's death he was less fearful of expressing and more hopeful of effecting them than before.

Reschid sought a remedy which would not weaken in any way the power of the Sublime Porte, because such a reform would meet the immediate disapproval of the majority of his countrymen.<sup>24</sup> He favored the establishment of a fixed governmental system as the best means of insuring permanent reform. That he meant by "*un système immuablement établi*" government based on well-established principles rather than the arbitrary will of the Sultan, there is little question. The difficulty of affecting genuine reforms as long as each minister's tenure depended on the good will of the Sultan was an experience with which he was thoroughly acquainted. Moreover a fixed system based on law would be the best guarantee of life and property which he held sacred. Execution of opponents and the confiscation of their property was one of the most deplorable of the Sultan's prerogatives argued Reschid. Equality before the law, public trials for offenders, quick and sure sentence for convicted criminals, — all were impossible under the existing regime, and unless these weaknesses were corrected, the Sultan could not expect his people to support the state in a crisis. Such was Reschid's philosophy of government as he outlined it to Palmerston on August 12, 1839.<sup>25</sup> Three months later the

<sup>24</sup> "Mais, dira-t-on peut-être, le remède à ce mal ne sauroit être apporté sans une sorte d'invasion sur le terrain de l'administration intérieure de la Sublime Porte, une semblable conduite serait contraire aux droits respectifs des nations; d'ailleurs la soumission aveugle des musulmans aux lois du Coran, et leur fanatisme reconnu, ne manqueraient pas de leur faire repousser toutes propositions dictées par les puissances Européennes." Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, Appendix III, p. 273.

<sup>25</sup> Reschid Pasha's Memorandum, Appendix III.

Sultan issued the famous Hatti Sherif de Gulhané (November 3, 1839). The similarity of the ideas of these two documents is convincing evidence that Reschid was the author of the "Hat," and causes one to wonder how far Englishmen were responsible for the proclamation and the ideas it contained.

A wide variety of opinion exists as to who among the British statesmen interested in Turkey was more important in encouraging Reschid in his desire to westernize Turkey. Lane-Poole insists that Stratford Canning was the original sponsor of the decree of 1839, having advised it as early as 1833. Yet, there is an admission in the quotation from Canning's memoirs that Reschid merely sought the advice of Canning on means of affecting an idea which was really his own. Recalling a conversation he had with Reschid in 1832, Canning writes: "I remember that he opened himself to me on the subject of reforms in Turkey. It was evident that he looked to taking an active part in the new policy inaugurated by the overthrow of the Janissaries, and stimulated by the example of Mohammed Ali in Egypt."<sup>26</sup> It seems more than probable that Lane-Poole, realizing that Reschid and Canning had known each other since 1832, read back into their early relationships the friendly advice which Canning offered so freely at the time of his ambassadorship in Constantinople.

Although Lord Ponsonby was close to Reschid, a study of the ambassador's reports after 1833 reveals little evidence that he was in any way responsible for Reschid's determination to reform the Turkish state;<sup>27</sup> nor did he assist in the execution

<sup>26</sup> Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, II, 105.

<sup>27</sup> Ponsonby applauded the Hat after it was proclaimed, however. On November 5, 1839 he wrote Palmerston: "What has been done is excellent in conception and execution. It is in perfect unison with the religion and interest and feelings of the people, and at the same time provides security for the great interests of every class of subjects, whilst it infringes no right or privilege of any. It is a victorious answer to those who say that this empire cannot be saved by its ancient government, and that the spurious regeneration to be worked out by the Pasha of Egypt is its only preservative." F. O. 78/360, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #301, November 5, 1839. Palmerston received the news of the Gulhané decree with equal enthusiasm. Cf. F. O. 78/353, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #181, December 2, 1839.



of Hatti Sherif, though he remained in Constantinople until 1841. As has already been stated, Lord Ponsonby's principal contribution to the betterment of Turkey was the Commercial Treaty of 1838, which provided for the abolition of the monopolies, and in this he was motivated largely by selfish interests. Eighteen months before the promulgation of the Gulhané decree when Reschid outlined his plans for the reform of the Turkish administration, his proposals met with little enthusiasm from the English ambassador.<sup>28</sup> (Ponsonby was primarily interested in undermining Russian influence at the Porte and in convincing the Sultan that Britain was his only true friend.)

While Ponsonby's advice on diplomatic affairs was frequently sought by Reschid Pasha, it was not until September, 1839, after the reformer had returned from his mission in England, that he requested Ponsonby's support for alleviating the predicament of the Turkish state. When Ponsonby visited Reschid, September 10, 1839, to congratulate him upon his return, the minister of foreign affairs expressed "his entire confidence in the good will and friendship of England" and stated that he hoped the British government would "do some *act* that would confirm . . . the kind intentions of that government, for it was the constant endeavor of the Russians to persuade the Porte and the world that England would do nothing, whatever England might say, . . ." <sup>29</sup>

When Reschid disclosed his plans for effecting measures to give security of life and property to all Turkish citizens, Ponsonby recommended that "caution should be united with energy in the pursuit of such inestimable ends." Ponsonby suggested that the civil and military powers in Turkey vested in the Pashas be separated, that the imposts be uniform for all districts and be collected by a new official, and that the Convention of 1838 be strictly executed because this "would tend

<sup>28</sup> F. O. 78/331, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #119, May 10, 1838.

<sup>29</sup> F. O. 78/358, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #249, September 10, 1839. Two weeks later Ponsonby reported that one of the chief Mollahs was anxious to have a foreign power intervene to ameliorate the situation in Turkey. F. O. 78/359, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #264, September 24, 1839.

forcibly to establish security of property amongst the Turks as well as the Rayahs;"<sup>30</sup> Ponsonby's statements, carefully guarded lest he involve his government, were of little value to the reformer.<sup>31</sup> As one reads Ponsonby's dispatches during these months, one longs for an ambassador who, though he might at times act on his own initiative counter to the Foreign Office, would not have let slip such an opportunity to strengthen the Ottoman state. Lord Ponsonby was no Stratford Canning; perhaps it was fortunate he recognized his limitations and merely carried out the commands of his chief.

7 Of all English statesmen, Palmerston was probably closer to Reschid in the 1830's than any other Englishman. The Foreign Secretary's influence is most difficult to gauge, however, because his and Reschid's remedies did not always coincide. Palmerston was not ready to sponsor the constitutional ideas which Reschid entertained for Turkey, and Reschid for his part could not avoid the belief that Palmerston's military and naval missions were not striking at the real root of the problem. Though their solutions varied, they did agree on the fundamental difficulties in the Ottoman state. In fact, the similarity of the ideas of the memorandum in Palmerston's handwriting and the decree of November 3 is most striking.<sup>32</sup>

Both documents speak of Turkey's advantageous geographical position, the fertility of her soil, and the aptitude and intelligence of the people. Both deplore the excessive burdens placed on the people, the mismanagement of finances, and the arbitrary exercise of authority by the Sultan and his agents, which have broken the spirit of all but the official class. Both

<sup>30</sup> F. O. 78/359, Ponsonby to Palmerston, September 30, 1839. Palmerston approved all these suggestions. Cf. F. O. 195/158, Palmerston to Ponsonby, October 23, 1839.

<sup>31</sup> On October 22, 1839, after reporting that the chief ministers of the Porte had prepared a plan for securing the subject against capital punishment without a trial, and for protecting property from arbitrary power, the ambassador added: "I do not know how they intend to proceed to establish such a vast good, nor to secure it. I think it prudent not to enquire much into the matter lest I should incur responsibility." F. O. 78/359, Ponsonby to Palmerston, October 22, 1839.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Appendices III and IV. Cf. also P. Imbert, *La Rénovation de l'Empire Ottoman, affaires de Turquie*, Paris, 1909, p. 190.

documents are certain of the future welfare of the Ottoman state if institutions guaranteeing the lives, honor, and fortune of its citizens can be established. Internal reform was necessary if Turkey was to stand alone. Yet, the mere fact that the two statesmen generally agreed on the problems to be solved is no proof that the British Foreign Secretary was Reschid's principal sponsor and guide. That Palmerston rendered moral support to the hopes and plans of the Turkish statesmen no one can deny, but there is nothing in the documents to show any positive influence of the Foreign Secretary on the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané. Of course the documents do not provide the complete story of Palmerston's attitude toward Reschid's reform program, but they are indicative of the attitude of the Foreign Secretary toward the reformer in the twelve months before the Hat was issued.

Reschid arrived in London on November 24, 1838. A fortnight later (December 8, 1838) he wrote Palmerston asking for an interview. The repetition of the request ten days later would indicate that the first request had been ignored. On the same day Palmerston refused to accept the Turkish order Reschid wished to confer upon him by order of the Sultan.<sup>33</sup> No further communications between the two men appear in the documents until March, 1839. On the eleventh of that month Reschid sought an interview with the Foreign Secretary; that Palmerston planned to grant him an audience is shown by the note on the back of the letter in Palmerston's hand "Tomorrow at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past Two. P. 11/3/39;"<sup>34</sup> no details of the discussion show up in any later dispatches. Late in April Reschid asked Palmerston for a draft of the treaty which would put an end to Mehemet's desire for independence.<sup>35</sup> Palmerston did not reply until May 6, saying that he would send it in the course of a few days.<sup>36</sup> Reschid's request for an interview on May 3, 1839

<sup>33</sup> F. O. 78/347, Palmerston to Reschid, December 18, 1839.

<sup>34</sup> F. O. 78/383, Reschid to Palmerston, March 11, 1839.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, April 26, 1839.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Palmerston to Reschid, May 6, 1839.

was not answered for a week.<sup>37</sup> Another conference was probably held on May 30th.<sup>38</sup> Insufficient as these letters are to draw any general conclusions, they do impress one with a certain indifference and coolness on the part of the Foreign Secretary toward Reschid. During the first six months of Reschid's stay in London it appears from the official documents that only three of six interviews requested were granted. Whether private unreported meetings were held is not known, but it does seem that if the Foreign Secretary was seriously interested in improving Turkey's status, more details would show in the records.<sup>39</sup> In 1839 Palmerston was no more interested in administrative reform than he had been five years before; his interest still centered on the army.

But if there is no proof that Palmerston inspired the proposals outlined in the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané, like many Englishmen he did applaud Reschid's efforts to establish a firmer basis for the Turkish state. As soon as he learned of the promulgation of the decree of Gulhané he wrote Ponsonby to congratulate the Porte "upon a measure which is fraught with incalculable advantage to the Ottoman Empire, and which redounds highly to the honor of the Statesmen by whom it has been framed."<sup>40</sup> Palmerston promised support in carrying out "the excellent principles which are set forth in the Hatti Sherif." But in another dispatch written the same day he instructed Ponsonby "to point out to the Turkish government how much it would be to their advantage to profit by the military skill and acquirements of a few European officers, for the purpose of reorganizing their army." Palmerston favored the Porte's

<sup>37</sup> Palmerston's notation: "Tomorrow at Four, and tell him the messenger is delayed. P. 10/5/-39." F. O. 78/383, Reschid to Palmerston, May 3, 1839.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, May 29, 1839. Palmerston's note: "Tomorrow at ½ past 3. P. 30/5/39."

<sup>39</sup> No further communications appear until just before Reschid left London for Constantinople. Reschid had an audience with the queen to announce the accession of Abdul Medjid, August 9, 1839. On the 10th he had a conference with Palmerston and the next day sent the Foreign Secretary the Memorandum on the state of Turkey. Cf. *ibid.*, August 9, 1839; F. O. 78/387, Domestic various July-September, 1839.

<sup>40</sup> F. O. 78/353, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #181, December 2, 1839.

granting "actual command of troops to some few good European officers, either English or German," as well as the creation of a small model corps the example of which "would spread the spirit of improvement through the rest of the Turkish army."<sup>41</sup> While aware of the many evils which existed in the Turkish administration, Palmerston felt these were problems which would have to be solved by the Turkish statesmen themselves.<sup>42</sup> Yet, this is not to deny that Palmerston had no part in the improvement of Turkey's status in 1839-1840. (By effecting a reasonable solution of the Egyptian crisis and by forcing the Russians to limit their influence in Turkey with the forfeiting of the Unkiar Treaty, Palmerston exerted indirectly more influence on the reform movement than any other person.)

The reconciliation of Mehemet Ali and the Sultan, the scrapping of the Russo-Turkish treaty of 1833, and the establishment of the Straits Convention were accomplishments<sup>43</sup> which insured the freedom and independence of Turkey in the future, and thus placed internal reform, which was primarily the business of Turkish statesmen, within the range of possibility. Since this appears to have been Palmerston's primary aim, the success of his Eastern policy cannot be questioned. The settlement of the Eastern Question must be regarded then as more than a purely diplomatic triumph for Palmerston; (it was also his greatest contribution to the reform movement in Turkey between 1833 and 1841.)

From another point of view, the fact that Britain had assisted Turkey at one of the most critical periods of her history was a triumph for Reschid as well. In a word, his reform pro-

<sup>41</sup> F. O. 78/353, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #182, December 2, 1839.

<sup>42</sup> Palmerston felt in 1839 in much the same way as he later expressed himself to Lord Russell. "Our power (in maintaining the Turkish Empire) depends on Public Opinion in this country, and that Public Opinion would not support us unless the Turkish Government exerts itself to make reforms." Palmerston to Russell, December 13, 1860, Russell Papers, G. D. 22/21.

<sup>43</sup> For a complete account of the crisis and its settlement, see Rodkey, *The Turco-Egyptian Question*; Vicomte de Guichen, *La Crise d'Orient de 1839 à 1841 et l'Europe*, Paris, 1922; A. Hasenclever, *Die orientalische Frage in den Jahren 1838-1841*, Leipzig, 1914.

gram had proved to be good policy.<sup>44</sup> Yet, this is not to question the sincerity of that Turkish statesman's motives. (Reschid Pasha's attempts to make real the promises of November 3, 1839 during the years that followed is sufficient proof that he regarded the *tanzimat* as more than a diplomatic gesture to curry the favor of the western nations.)

Almost any study of great reform movements furnishes sufficient proof for the fact that the essential qualifications of a successful reformer are patience and political opportunism. These qualities were especially necessary for anyone who hoped to improve a state as backward as Turkey in the nineteenth century. The great protagonist of Turkish reform was richly endowed with both these prerequisites. Much as he chafed at Mahmoud's inability to make substantial reforms, Reschid seldom gave vent to his irritation; instead he patiently awaited the time when the need of reform would make agitation unnecessary. The defeat of the Sultan's army at Nezib, followed immediately by the surrender of the fleet at Alexandria and the death of Mahmoud II, seemed to Reschid the long sought opportunity to come forward with a definite program of reform.

To most Turks these losses were no more than the normal risks of war, which, if they did not prove fatal, could be made up for at a later date. To Reschid however these defeats had a deeper significance; they were the result of Mahmoud's failure to make his state the equal of that of his vassal. Moreover, the problem could not be rectified merely by a reasonable settlement with Mehemet;<sup>45</sup> unless these defeats were to be re-

<sup>44</sup> The impression which the Hatti Sherif created both at home and abroad corresponded with the aim of its creator. "Die Verherrlichung des freisinnigen Ministers Abdulmediids in der europäischen Presse, vor allen in England, fing an, dem Lobe Mehmed Alis die Wage zu halten." Rosen, *op. cit.*, II, 18. The *Journal de Constantinople* stated that "il semble ouvrir réellement une nouvelle Ère à l'Empire Ottoman." *Journal de Constantinople*, #2, 27 Novembre 1839, p. 1. The *London Times* of November 28, 1839 carried a lengthy description of the preparation and promulgation of the Hat as well as a translation of the decree itself, while the Mehemet crisis was treated in three short paragraphs.

<sup>45</sup> "Le véritable but ne saurait être atteint par le simple fait de la garantie de l'intégrité et de l'arrangement de l'affaire d'Égypte." Mémoire, 10 Mars, 1841. Appendix V, p. 280.

peated, — if not in Egypt, in other parts of the empire, — real reform of the civil and military organization of the state was needed at once. Reschid was convinced that to delay longer in presenting his program would spell defeat. Now the Porte would be forced by the failures of the armed forces and the near-bankruptcy of the treasury to use its reason to mend its ways. Moreover, the young Sultan, untainted by having experienced the old regime, would be more amenable to reform than his predecessor.

Little is known as to the preparation of the reform program issued on November 3, 1839.<sup>46</sup> Letters from newspaper correspondents indicate that daily councils of the Divan were confined to the discussion of administrative measures.<sup>47</sup> Army reorganization was put off since the leaders believed that if new taxes were levied upon the exhausted people revolt might result.<sup>48</sup> Officials who opposed reform were sent off on special missions,<sup>49</sup> while Reschid concentrated on the best form in which the program might be announced. The result was the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané of November 3, 1839.<sup>50</sup>

Probably few nineteenth century documents have been more misunderstood or misinterpreted than this first decree of Abdul Medjid. Yet, even the most cursory examination of the document convinces one that it was not, as it is so often sentimentally labelled, a constitution. Though there is little doubt but that constitutional forms had been considered by the author of the Hat, Reschid never regarded it as anything more than an outline of the necessary reforms toward which the Porte should strive.<sup>51</sup> Reschid knew only too well that the slightest imitation

<sup>46</sup> Ponsonby reported November 1, 1839, that he and the Austrian Internuncio were "indefatigable in our endeavors to encourage Reschid Pasha and his colleagues to persevere in the wise policy they have adopted," but he did not give any details of that wise policy. F. O. 195/150, Ponsonby to Palmerston, November 1, 1838.

<sup>47</sup> No reports were made public. *London Times*, October 13, 1839, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, October 8, 1839, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Nourri Effendi was sent to Paris as Envoy Extraordinary, and Keani Bey was made Mousselim of Brussa. *Ibid.*, October 14, 21, 1839.

<sup>50</sup> For a description of the promulgation of the Hat, see Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, 35 ff.; Ubicini, *Letters*, I, 28.

<sup>51</sup> Wholesale adoption of western forms would have met with strong opposi-

of the constitutional governments which existed in western Europe was impossible in Turkey in 1839 where the great majority of the people were entirely ignorant of the purposes and advantages of a parliamentary system.<sup>52</sup> Reschid was too clever a politician to even vaguely mention a constitution, a word which he realized was anathema to all the old Turks. The promises of security of life, honor, and property have led scholars to misinterpret the decree as the Magna Charta of modern Turkey.<sup>53</sup> The Hatti Sherif was neither a constitution, nor did it provide the basis for one.<sup>54</sup> In only one respect did this decree limit the arbitrary power of the Sultan,<sup>55</sup> which from some points of view was its principal weakness.<sup>56</sup> The sanction of the Sultan was necessary for all laws; without it a law did not exist.<sup>57</sup>

On the other hand, it is unfair to regard the Hat merely as an expedient method of renewing the faith of the citizens in the Turkish Empire, in order to prevent complete collapse following the disastrous defeats at Nezib and Alexandria. There is no doubt but that Reschid recognized the moral effect the promulgation of this "charte des libertés"<sup>58</sup> would have on

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tion, Reschid knew. His task was to convince the people that the proposed changes were a return to the old principles, and did not controvert the Koran. *Ibid.*, I, 133.

<sup>52</sup> Mémoire, 10 Mars 1841. Appendix V, p. 285.

<sup>53</sup> Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, II, 82n.

<sup>54</sup> "Der Hattisherif von Gulhane nicht selber ein Gesetz war, sondern nur die Grundsätze darlegte, nach welchem eine Reihe organischer Gesetze erlassen werden sollte." Rosen, *op. cit.*, II, 24.

<sup>55</sup> The guarantee of security of life was a renunciation of the hereditary right of life and death over every subject. Though this was the only limitation, it was a significant one, because it foreshadowed the end of the old power of the Sultans. *L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 74. In this sense it may be considered "une des révolutions les plus mémorable du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle." J. Pharon, et T. Dulau, *Études sur les législations anciennes et modernes*, Paris, 1839, p. 467. The Hat was revolutionary in that it removed all religious distinctions wherever life, honor and fortune were involved. Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, 37; Rouvière, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> For this reason one writer calls it "la première parodie constitutionnelle." *L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 65.

<sup>57</sup> Rouvière, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>58</sup> Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, 36. Franco describes the Hatti Sherif as "une expression indiquant un état d'esprit, une attitude politique." Franco, *op. cit.*, p. 13.



the oppressed peoples as well as upon friendly powers, but he expected far more from it than that. The most reasonable interpretation of the Gulhané decree is that it established a program which if carried into execution would make Turkey once again a strong state. A glance at the Hat itself is the best proof of this fact.

The Hatti Sherif de Gulhané promised to establish the security of all Turkish subjects, regardless of religious belief, against all violations of their honor, life, and property.<sup>59</sup> Criminal as well as political offenders were to be protected henceforth by public trial before being sentenced. As regards the excessive taxation, an insufferable burden to the majority of the Turks, the decree provided that in the future all taxes would be more equally distributed over all classes in the population, and that the method of collection of these taxes would be less arbitrary. The third outstanding plank in the new platform was that a systematic method of recruiting soldiers for the army would be created and enforced in the future. Beyond these three points the decree is hardly more than an expression of a more hopeful future. The ideas of the Hatti Sherif were not new, having been expressed by Mahmoud II,<sup>60</sup> but never had they been set forth as a definite program of reform, since he was too much of an absolutist to admit any limitations to his power.<sup>61</sup> Promulgation of a reform policy was but the first step, and no one realized more than the author, Reschid Pasha, that it was one thing to set forth a policy, and quite another thing to effect it in the Turkish state.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Such a declaration provided the basis for political equality in Turkey. If fully carried out, it would break down the old religious prejudice and create in its place a genuine feeling of national unity. Rouvière, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>60</sup> Rosen, *op. cit.*, II, 16. "Reschid ist weder Begründer noch der erste Adept der neuen Türkischen Staatsweisheit, aber ihm gebührt das Lob, selbständiger, durchgreifender und mit mehr Verständniss des wirklichen Bedürfnisses vorgeschritten zu sein, als seine unwissenderen Collegen." *Ibid.*, p. 272. Cf. also Ubicini, *État présent de L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 1; Cadalvène et Barrault, *op. cit.*, II, 287; Rouvière, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> Mahmoud "restait turc avec le désir de ne plus l'être." Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, I, 23.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. J. A. Blanqui, *Voyage en Bulgarie pendant l'année 1841*, Paris, 1843 p. 344.

Reschid immediately recognized his chief opponents with the Council itself. Khosrew Pasha, the Grand Vizir, leaned definitely toward Russia.<sup>63</sup> Halil Pasha, the new Seraskier, had long been a personal enemy of Reschid, and was likely to be an obstacle to reform.<sup>64</sup> Raouf Pasha, President of the High Council, Minister of Commerce Said Pasha, and the other ministers, Nuri, and Riza Pasha were less outspoken, and Reschid hoped that they might counter-balance Khosrew and Halil Pashas in effecting the pledges of the Hatti Sherif.<sup>65</sup>

Though Reschid was aware of the difficulties, he went ahead with a confidence based on the knowledge of certain advantages in his favor. His long service in the Turkish government provided him with a better understanding of the difficulties to be overcome than most Turkish statesmen; he thought he understood the psychology of the Turkish people; and finally, his study of European systems of government, finance, and army organization prepared him for the great tasks ahead. Yet, more important than any of his own personal qualifications was the framework of the Turkish government. The Sultan was the final authority; he possessed both legislative and executive powers.<sup>66</sup> The fact that the present Sultan was a young man, without any experience in ruling such a large empire, was another advantage. For more than a year Khosrew and Halil held second place to Reschid Pasha in the young Abdul Medjid's favor, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs made the most of his position. As long as that situation continued what did it matter that many of the reforms which he hoped to establish ran counter to Moslem law and tradition? If the Sultan could

<sup>63</sup> Cadalvène and Barrault. *op. cit.*, II, 270. Khosrew and Reschid had formerly been friends, but the elder statesman's jealousy of Reschid's courage and intelligence forced him to oppose whatever Reschid favored. Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, IV, 239.

<sup>64</sup> Ponsonby reported September 22, 1839 that Khosrew and Halil Pashas were supporting Reschid, but that they were unstable and likely to shift, as they did as soon as Turkey's condition improved. F. O. 195/160. Ponsonby to Palmerston, #257, September 22, 1839.

<sup>65</sup> The reactionaries were motivated for the most part by self-interest and prejudice. Temperley, *The Crimea*, p. 245.

<sup>66</sup> Ubicini, *Letters*, I, 33.

be won over, he could force the *ulema* to promulgate the new decrees.<sup>67</sup>

Reschid Pasha did not overlook the fact that the arbitrary authority of the Sultan might be advantageous to the opposition as well. Abdul Medjid's inability to appreciate the power in Reschid's reform policy, and his lack of courage to maintain the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the face of old Turk opposition actually did terminate Reschid's career abruptly and thereby retarded the reform movement. Aware of the possibility of such an outcome Reschid attacked the problem of effecting the promises of 1839 with vigor and enthusiasm, determined that the Gulhané decree should not become a dead letter. Reschid knew that he must act quickly if he was to accomplish anything before the inevitable reaction thwarted his plans. Delay in execution of the Hat would be an admission of defeat, whereas an immediate success would win converts to his cause.

Simultaneous with the promulgation of the Hatti Sherif an investigation was ordered to determine the actual amounts paid by each district in taxes, and how this money was spent for the upkeep of the army, navy, and civil administration.<sup>68</sup> At the same time the Porte decided to affect in the two provinces nearest the capital, Broussa and Gallipoli, the following system:

That a table shall be constructed exhibiting the sums received.

1. For the Treasury.
2. For the valis and voivodes.
3. For the expenses of travelling functionaries.
4. The amount of contributions in kind to different departments, paid in saltpetre, corn, timber, etc.
5. The value of labour to which certain towns and districts were liable under the denomination of Angaria (corvée).
6. The sums paid for local police, judges, etc.

It was also resolved by the Council:

That an exact statement or balance sheet be prepared of the whole revenue, fixed and casual, of the state. Henceforward every tax unauthorized by the ancient canon shall be abolished.

<sup>67</sup> Abdul Medjid by his personal leadership inaugurated "une ère nouvelle à l'église." *L'Empire Ottoman, op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>68</sup> MacGregor, *op. cit.*, II, 178-179.

The properties of the high functionaries of the state, whether military or civil, and the persons attached to the services shall be equally assessed with those of the nation. Every exemption from taxation, and every privilege through which the common burdens were avoided shall cease. The imposts shall be imposed with complete impartiality, at a rate of so much per thousand, which shall yearly be settled in the month of March, according to the new ordinance.

Each individual shall receive a ticket bearing the seal of the community, stating the amount of his contributions, and these sums shall be entered in the public register of each municipality. Men of recognized probity and intelligence shall be commissioned, at the public expense, to prosecute the necessary inquiries throughout the empire. . . .

From the date of the execution of this order, the two provinces designated (Broussa and Gallipoli) shall be exempt from the payment of the impost termed "Ichtisab," i.e., internal customs.

Such a proposal affected many Turks so directly, it was no wonder that they believed that a new era had begun for Turkey.<sup>69</sup>

In December, 1839 the Council decreed that beginning March 1, 1840, governors of provinces, cities, and burghs were to be paid fixed salaries, that promotion to more important governments would be made on the basis of merit, and that governors should exact only the established imposts;<sup>70</sup> the people entered upon their tasks with new vigor following this announcement. Though a costly reform,<sup>71</sup> it immediately changed the spirit of the Turks from one of hopeless desperation to one of optimistic progress. Vice Consul Suter, after visit-

<sup>69</sup> Ponsonby described the Hat as "a victorious answer to those who say that this Empire cannot be saved by its ancient Government. . . ." F. O. 78/360. Ponsonby to Palmerston. #301, November 5, 1839. He later reported that it was "universally approved of, and that Ottoman and Rayah subjects desire with equal anxiety to see it carried into execution." F. O. 78/360, Ponsonby to Palmerston. #313, November 24, 1839 and #334, December 17, 1839.

<sup>70</sup> F. O. 78/360, Ponsonby to Palmerston. #346, December 31, 1839. *Itizam* (sale to the governor of the revenue levied within his government) had been one of the worst abuses of the old regime. The *Kharatch* (head tax on Christians) was abolished January 9, 1840. Cf. F. O. 78/392, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #15, January 16, 1840, and *London Times*, February 7, 1840.

<sup>71</sup> The immediate deficit occasioned by the abolition of the sale of offices was made up by a loan raised among the monied men of Constantinople. F. O. 78/392, Ponsonby to Palmerston. #46, March 3, 1840.

ing Smyrna reported January 5, 1840 that "it had already produced so much greater feeling of confidence in the security of property, that purchases of land had been made, and additional impulse had been given to the extension of cultivation in many parts of the Country."<sup>72</sup>

A Supreme Council of State and Justice (Medjliss Aali) was established in December, 1839 to frame the laws which were to be decreed by the Sultan. All laws were discussed by this body, and no decree was to be made without the approval of a majority of its members.<sup>73</sup> The president of this council, Raouf Pasha, was also a member of the Privy Council. Raouf was encouraged by Reschid to begin a study of the codes and to continue the investigations already begun on the tax system. The Supreme Council was not taken seriously,<sup>74</sup> however, and was little more than an investigating and drafting committee. The real power in Turkey continued to remain with the Sultan and the Privy Council, in which Reschid Pasha was still the dominating influence.

Upon learning of these reforms, Palmerston ordered Ponsonby to congratulate Reschid Pasha "upon the perseverance he had shown in his systematick endeavors to reorganize the Country, and upon the success with which those endeavors have already been attended."<sup>75</sup> The Foreign Secretary stated that "H. M. Gov't also take the deepest interest in the regeneration of Turkey, are delighted to find that Reschid Pasha is going to work in so wise and judicious a manner; and that instead of endeavoring to set up prematurely new Institutions, which would be repugnant to the habits and prejudices of the Turkish Nation, He is progressively improving and developing the old Institutions of his Country, and in truth bringing them back to their ancient purity and vigour. Reschid Pasha seems

<sup>72</sup> F. O. 78/392, Suter to Ponsonby, January 5, 1840, enclosed in Ponsonby to Palmerston, #4, January 7, 1840. This information was derived "from native agents engaged in the sale of British goods and the purchase of produce, and who had the opportunity of observing these improvements, . . ."

<sup>73</sup> *London Times*, January 6, 1840, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Engelhardt, *op. cit.*, II, 17.

<sup>75</sup> F. O. 78/389, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #17, February 4, 1840.

to understand the force of the well known maxim that they who wish to improve things should preserve ancient names, and by that means avoid rousing needless jealousy, and exciting unnecessary distrust." 70

Reschid was quick to perceive that the principles laid down by the Gulhané decree could not be achieved without revision of the ancient codes, especially the separation of the civil and criminal codes from the religious and moral codes. Before life, honor, and fortune could be made secure a revision of the penal code, in particular, was necessary. This task was undertaken in February, 1840 by the Council of State and Justice,<sup>77</sup> and in May (1840) the new penal code, *Kanouni Djeraim*,<sup>78</sup> was ready for promulgation. The *Kanouni Djeraim* established equality for all subjects regardless of race or faith; it further decreed that all trials terminating in capital punishment should be reviewed by the Supreme Council of Justice and that no capital sentence could be effected without the signature of the Sultan. While these decrees were not always completely fulfilled, the mere fact that they existed was a great advantage over the previous system of arbitrary arrest and punishment. It was no wonder that contemporaries regarded this and other reforms promulgated between 1839 and 1841 as inaugurating a new era in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Since all of Reschid's reforms limited the power of those who had formerly been in authority, the inevitable reaction showed itself sooner than he himself expected.<sup>79</sup> When Khosrew Pasha was ousted from the council (July 8, 1840) for embezzling public money, his friends conspired against Reschid, but

<sup>76</sup> F.O. 78/389, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #18, February 4, 1840.

<sup>77</sup> Assisted by Reschid, Riza, Halil, and Achmed Fethi Pashas. Ubcini, *Letters*, I, 163.

<sup>78</sup> F. O. 78/394, Ponsonby to Palmerston, #110, May 26, 1840. Printed in Ubcini, *Letters*, II, Appendix I.

<sup>79</sup> Ponsonby reported more than a year before Reschid finally resigned that "the state of Society in this Country has not prepared it for the transformation of a Theocratic Despot into a Constitutional Monarch, and the apeing the forms of Representative Governments may produce worse things than the ridicule it excites here." F. O. 78/393, Ponsonby to Palmerston, March 16, 1840.

Raouf Pasha was made Grand Vizir at Reschid's suggestion and the conspiracy was quashed. (From that time the anti-reform feeling spread rapidly among the old Turks who became fanatically anti-European, anti-Christian, and above all hateful of Reschid.) The desire to return to Mahmoud's system of more gradual reform had been stimulated by the radical, sweeping nature of Reschid's improvements;<sup>80</sup> others tried to encourage the Sultan to pursue a strictly Turkish policy. Within a year Khosrew Pasha had united the moderates and the Turcophils in opposition to Reschid's policies. Eventually Raouf turned against Reschid in favor of Khosrew and the reactionaries.<sup>81</sup> Reschid concluded that it was useless to carry the fight further, and on March 29, 1841 he and Achmed Fethi Pasha, the Minister of Commerce and brother-in-law of the Sultan, resigned their positions.<sup>82</sup>

" There is some reason to believe that this resignation was merely a Bismarckian attempt to force his policy through. Failing to find strong advisors, the Sultan would recall him, thereby making his position stronger than ever in Turkey. This policy is suggested by a letter from Reschid to Baron von Sturmer, Austrian Internuncio, dated March 7, 1841.<sup>83</sup> On that date he wrote as follows:

L'événement inattendu qui vient d'avoir lieu démentira et fera tomber, sans aucun doute, les bruits qui circulaient depuis quelques jours. Toutefois, je ne sais si ce qu'on a fait est vraiment *sincère* ou bien si cela n'est qu'une espèce de ruse pour me faire servir sans ralentissement de zèle jusqu'à la conclusion finale de la grande affaire qui nous occupé. Dans tout les cas, ce doute ne pouvant être éclairci que par les procédés dont on usera envers moi par la suite, ce ne sera que peu à peu que je saurai à quoi m'en tenir.

<sup>80</sup> Reschid's reforms were no more opposed to Islamic ideas than some of Mahmoud's. Temperley, *The Crimea*, p. 245. But Reschid's presentation of the reforms was suggestive of a complete revolution. Many liberals thought the best policy was to strive for justice, efficiency, and honesty within the old framework. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>81</sup> Khosrew Pasha was as much a power out of office as in it. Juchereau de Saint Denys, *op. cit.*, IV, 387.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>83</sup> Reschid to Sturmer, 7 Mars 1841, H. H. u. St. A., Wien. Türkei VI, fasz. 57.

Reschid also suggested that the powers be called in to force the necessary reforms on the Sultan, even as they had forced a settlement of the Egyptian question. At such a conference, at which Turkey would be represented, means of carrying out the reforms already proposed could be discussed. Reschid felt that the mere advice of the great powers would not be sufficient to make the Porte pursue the correct course; active intervention was what he desired more than anything else, but here Reschid overlooked the fact that for almost a decade Britain, the strongest supporter of the Turkish reform movement, though generous with advice had very definitely refused to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Sultan. Such a conference of the great powers, however, might have the effect of frightening the Sultan into pushing forward his reform policy, especially if the suggestion of a partition of the Ottoman state was brought forward, as it undoubtedly would be.<sup>84</sup>

These thoughts were expressed not from any personal desire to remain in office on the part of Reschid Pasha, but from the deep-seated conviction that his reforms could forestall the steady decline of Turkish power. They do suggest, however, that Reschid did not consider his labors at an end with his resignation, but continued to work toward his goal. When the conference idea did not meet with an enthusiastic response, Reschid finally resigned himself to his fate, accepted the Ambassadorship to France which he had been offered.<sup>85</sup> He remained at that post for two years, 1841-1843, during which time his political enemy, Rifaat Pasha, gained steadily in power.

The fall of Reschid Pasha is usually attributed to a cabal of the reactionaries led by Rifaat Pasha, but as one reads the dispatches one is convinced that agents of the foreign powers were also involved in his dismissal. In a letter to Baron von Sturmer,

<sup>84</sup> Mémoire, 10 Mars 1841, Appendix V.

<sup>85</sup> Reschid is described at this time as "grave, pensif, triste aussi des nombreux obstacles qu'avaient rencontrés ses efforts pour régénérer l'Empire, voyait alors très-clairement, sans en convenir, la faute qu'il avait commise de prêter son appui à la politique exclusive et violente de l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre." Blanqui, *op. cit.*, p. 345.



April 9, 1841, when all hopes of being restored to his position had faded, Reschid explained his fall as the result of Rifaat's intrigues with the Sultan through the English ambassador. According to the Reschid version,<sup>86</sup> he and Ponsonby had disagreed on a number of issues. Reschid had opposed Ponsonby in the settlement of the Mehemet affair; Ponsonby had complained of the use of Frenchmen in the service of the Porte, a policy which Reschid sanctioned. In the winter of 1840-41 Ponsonby became interested in the cause of a group of English Jews who wished to establish themselves in Jerusalem. The Turkish Council rejected the English ambassador's proposal because they foresaw political inconveniences. About the same time the Porte refused the advice of certain English officers who arrived in Constantinople, largely because to introduce a new system would disrupt this part of the service which seemed to the Porte satisfactory under the Prussian system then in use.<sup>87</sup> / Ponsonby regarded these refusals to cooperate as a personal affront, and complained of the treatment he had received, blaming Reschid. Reschid, unaware of Ponsonby's feelings toward him, continued his efforts to secure a house for the English ambassador nearer the Porte. This attempt to strengthen the relations of the Turkish government and the British representative was defeated by Riza Pasha. Ponsonby, disappointed at the outcome of events, instead of complaining to the Sultan, informed Riza of the affair, who thereupon established a liaison between himself, the English ambassador, and the Sultan through which he worked against Reschid. Finally, when Riza's efforts succeeded and Abdul Medjid decided to remove Reschid,

<sup>86</sup> Reschid to Sturmer, April 9, 1841, H. H. u. St. A. Wien, Türkei, fasz. 58.

<sup>87</sup> In October, 1840 Palmerston sent a group of medical men under Dr. Davy to improve the medical service in the Sultan's army. F. O. 78/415, Palmerston to Davy, October 27 and 30, 1840; F. O. 78/391, Palmerston to Ponsonby, # 218, October 29, 1840 and # 220, October 31, 1840. Recommendations of Davy were not accepted and he returned to England September, 1841. Captain Williams who went out to advise improvements in the artillery was likewise unable to overcome the reactionary conservatism of the time. Finally Ponsonby advised Palmerston not to send further missions without the Porte's consent. Cf. F. O. 78/431, Ponsonby to Palmerston, # 70, February 21, 1841.

if he did not resign of his own accord, Ponsonby intimated that this would not hurt the course of events in Turkey, though he did believe that Reschid should be rewarded for his long service to the Turkish state with some public award.<sup>88</sup>

Ponsonby's version of Reschid's dismissal is quite another story. On April 7th, 1841 he wrote to Palmerston as follows: <sup>89</sup>

On Sunday preceding the deposition of Reschid Pasha, and Ahmed Fethi Pasha; Reschid presented to the great Council a Commercial Code for approval. Somebody observed that the code ought to have been based upon the Seer Sherif (the Holy Law of the Koran). To this Reschid replied that the Holy Law had nothing to do with such matters; on hearing this one of the Cadeshew and others of the Ulema expressed great disgust at the want of reverence to the Holy Law, and some altercation ensuing then declared they would never again enter the council where like things were permitted; — there followed much upon this, and there was great confusion, Ahmed Fethi Pasha supporting Reschid Pasha. At last order was restored by the intervention of Riza Pasha and others. This affair was reported to the Sultan that night and His Highness immediately ordered the deposition of Reschid Pasha and of Ahmed Fethi Pasha, which order was carried into execution next morning.

From this dispatch one is led to believe that Reschid's dismissal was an affair of the moment, the result of his lack of reverence for the Moslem code, and an incident in which the British ambassador played no part directly or indirectly.

Whatever Ponsonby did or did not do, he was acting counter to his chief's policy, though specific instructions from the Foreign Office regarding the intrigues against Reschid (under the date of April 1, 1841) arrived in Constantinople several weeks after the Turkish minister had been forced from office. In that dispatch <sup>90</sup> Palmerston advised Ponsonby to cooperate with the Austrian ambassador in supporting Reschid, whose loss at this

<sup>88</sup> Reschid claims he did not seek the ambassadorship; he would have been happy to live a quiet life with his family during his remaining years, and finally accepted the post in Paris only as a means of protection from his enemies in Turkey. Reschid to Sturmer, April 9, 1841.

<sup>89</sup> Ponsonby to Palmerston, # 128, April 7, 1841. F. O. 78/433.

<sup>90</sup> F. O. 78/427. Palmerston to Ponsonby, # 54, April 1, 1841.

time would have been most regrettable, since he was the one man capable of effecting the reforms planned for in the Hatti Sherif de Gulhané. Palmerston's feeling for Reschid and the decree of 1839 was expressed as follows:

He [Reschid] is understood to have been the principal author of the Hatti Sherif of Gulhané, and to entertain liberal and enlightened views as to the Improvement which ought to be introduced into the general administration of the Turkish Empire, and especially into the practical dispensation of Justice between man and man with a view to affording to all classes of the Sultan's subjects, security for Person and Property; and Reschid seems to Her Majesty's Government the Person most likely to have the will and the means of enforcing practically throughout the Empire the faithful Execution of the Hatti Sherif of Gulhané, a Task which Her Majesty's Government are well aware is one of more difficulty and which will require more time than many People may be disposed to think.

This dispatch concludes with speculation as to who may succeed Reschid, should he be forced out, and with what consequences. Before Palmerston received Ponsonby's account of Reschid's dismissal the Foreign Secretary again (April 21, 1841) exhorted his agent to protect Reschid from injury if he was the victim of the opposition, but to do everything possible to maintain him at the helm of the Turkish state.<sup>91</sup> In short, Palmerston feared the dismissal of Reschid would be the end of the reform movement which was undertaken with the promulgation of the Gulhané decree two years before. How far he was correct will be treated subsequently.

<sup>91</sup> F. O. 78/428, Palmerston to Ponsonby, #91, April 21, 1841.