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LORD PALMERSTON'S POLICY FOR THE REJUVENATION OF TURKEY, 1839-1841.¹

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Alexander Prize Essay

Read 13 June 1929

DURING the period from 1839 to 1841, when the Concert of Europe intervened in the second Syrian war between Sultan Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali Pasha of Egypt to save the Ottoman Empire from destruction, Lord Palmerston the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs energetically opposed a return to the *status quo ante bellum* in the Levant, risked the development of a serious international crisis in Near Eastern affairs, and played a leading rôle in the negotiation and execution of an arrangement by which Syria and Crete were restored to the direct rule of the Sultan and by which the authority of Mehemet Ali was confined to Egypt. The story of these developments is a familiar one; yet it is not generally known that at the same time when Palmerston was energetically attempting to exploit events in the East to bring about a settlement of the Turco-Egyptian Question in the interest of the Sultan he was also actively elaborating and extending a policy for the rejuvenation of Turkey which he had outlined in a period of peace in the Levant between 1833 and 1839.

Eager to encourage the reorganisation of the Ottoman army after its defeat by the Egyptians at Nezib in June, 1839, the British Foreign Secretary instructed Lord

¹ "People forget that a community never can grow old and die of decay."—PALMERSTON.

Ponsonby, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, to point out to the Porte how much it might profit by the military skill and acquirements of a few European officers. Palmerston believed at that time that the best move the Turkish Government could make would be to give actual command of its troops to some few good officers, "either English or German," and that if a small model corps was thus organised the Porte would soon find that the example set by the new organisation would spread the spirit of improvement through the rest of the Turkish army. In order to avoid jealousy such a corps could be composed of *rayahs* or Albanians raised by voluntary enlistment.¹

The Porte hesitated to follow Palmerston's advice literally, but it did consent to have Chrzanowski a Polish officer in the British service draw up plans for its defence in Asia Minor, and it accepted propositions outlined by Captain Walker of the Queen's Navy for the improvement of naval training in Turkey.² Approving these beginnings of reform Palmerston, in May 1840 instructed Ponsonby to impress upon the Ottoman ministers that there was one thing which had hitherto impeded the British Government from carrying fully into effect its anxious desire to assist the Sultan. This was the general opinion, "exaggerated no doubt, but nevertheless too prevalent," that the Sultan had in 1839 been entirely stripped of all means of self-defence and that the whole task of protecting him must fall upon his allies. Hence in proportion as the Sultan revealed that he had been successful in the reorganisation of his means of defence it would become less difficult for Great Britain to give effect to her "good wishes" in his behalf.³

After the Treaty of 15 July 1840 had been signed, and

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 182, 2 Dec. 1839, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/353.

² Walker to Ponsonby, 20 Apr. 1840, Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 86, 25 Apr. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/393; Ponsonby to Palmerston, Nos. 100 and 103, 13 and 15 May 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/394.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 69, 20 May 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/389.

it became evident that the four Powers—Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia—would have to employ force against Mehemet Ali to accomplish their common purpose in the restoration of Syria and Crete to the authority of the Sultan, Palmerston directly initiated a number of practical moves to further Ottoman military reform. While a British fleet and a small detachment of the Queen's troops were coöperating with the Turks along the Syrian coast, arms and ammunition were supplied to the Sultan's forces on liberal terms from Her Majesty's stores at Malta, various officers seeking military adventure were encouraged to apply to the Porte for employment, and the Ottoman Government was frankly informed that it "must find and furnish the means" to produce pressure by land upon the Egyptians.¹ Also the British Foreign Secretary, without waiting for petitions from the Porte, dispatched special missions to the Levant to aid the Turks directly in the reform of their military system.

One of the special detachments which Palmerston sent to Turkey in 1840 was a group of medical officers headed by Dr. Davy. Davy and the five men under his direction were instructed to make immediate provision for the medical wants of the forces which were upholding the Sultan's cause against Mehemet Ali; they were to assist the Turkish Government in placing the medical department of its army on a proper footing; they were to work for the establishment of a school of medicine for native Turks at Constantinople; and they were to pay careful attention to the nature of the plague, to determine whether it was contagious, and to give the Porte their opinions on quarantine.² Ponsonby was directed to support Davy's mission and to point out to the Ottoman authorities the great advantages which they might derive from sending a few

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 105, 129, 140 and 154, 17 July, 3, 22 and 31 Aug. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/390; Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 201, 254, 257 and 276, 17 Oct., 30 Nov., 21 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/391.

² Palmerston to Davy, Nos. 1-4, 27 and 30 Oct. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/415.

intelligent young Turks to England to be educated in medicine.¹ Davy and his men, like many others who preceded or followed them on special missions to Turkey, found Ottoman conservatism so formidable that they were unable to make much progress in the attainment of their aims. Davy studied conditions in the Turkish medical service, he drew up reports upon a college of medicine at Pera and upon various military hospitals in the neighbourhood of the Turkish capital, and he submitted to the Ottoman Government plans for the reorganisation of the medical department of its army.² However, the Porte, as frequently was its custom during the nineteenth century, delayed action upon all recommendations which were designed to bring about practical reforms. Having failed to achieve their main objective, Davy's group of medical officers could claim when they eventually withdrew from Turkish territory (September 1841), that they had performed some immediate medical service for the subjects of the Sultan and that they had obtained a promise for the dispatch of eight or ten Turkish youths to England for the completion of their medical education.³

Another special mission which Palmerston sent to the Levant during the crisis of 1840 was composed of officers who were to superintend the provisioning of the Anglo-Turkish forces in Syria and, if practicable, to assist in the establishment of a permanent commissariat for the Turkish army.⁴ Apparently the prospects for the accomplishment of the second objective of this mission were far from bright. "I am afraid," Ponsonby wrote on 14 October 1840,

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 218 and 220, 29 and 31 Oct. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/391.

² Davy to Palmerston, 29 Nov., 11 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/415; Davy to Palmerston, 1 Feb., 4 Mch., 11 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/460; Davy to Ponsonby, 30 Jan. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/430.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 296, 20 Sept. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/437; Davy to Palmerston 22 Mch., 13 July, 1 and 18 Sept. 1841, Palmerston to Davy, Nos. 7, 10 and 11, 28 Apr., 4 June, 15 July 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/460.

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 173, 15 Sept. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/390; Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 263, 11 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/391.

“that it would not be agreeable to the Turks to put foreigners forward in this line [the Commissariat], and I do not believe it would be in the power of the British commissaries to render any service at Constantinople, because I believe they would have to support the blame of failure without having been the cause of it.”¹ As the British Ambassador believed this mission was doomed to failure he did not insist on the employment of its members by the Porte and the commissariat of the Turkish army remained unreformed.²

A third detachment dispatched to Turkey by the British Government proved more successful; it was made up of officers and men of the Royal Artillery and Engineers under the command of Captain Williams.³ The detachment left England in January 1841, and though its employment by the Turks remained doubtful for a time, Williams was able to report in May 1841 that he had received directions from the Turkish Government to establish himself at Tophana “for the purpose of reforming and remodelling the whole material of the Artillery and Engineer-[ing] Departments” of the Sultan’s army.⁴ Williams’s mission may not be judged to have revolutionised the Ottoman ordinance service, but it at least succeeded in the establishment of an “artillery laboratory” for the casting of guns, howitzers, and mortars at the Turkish artillery headquarters of Mehemet Ali Pasha of Tophana, and before reaction destroyed the hope of reform in Turkey its commander frequently supplied both Turkish ministers and British ministers with advice upon Ottoman military affairs.⁵

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 237, 14 Oct. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/397.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 88, 9 Mch. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/432.

³ Palmerston to Williams, 11 Jan. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/461.

⁴ Williams to Palmerston, 14 May 1841, *ibid.*

⁵ Williams to Ponsonby, 7 June 1841, Ponsonby to Palmerston, 8 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/434; Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 272, “Confidential,” 28 Aug. 1841, with several enclosed copies of letters from Williams, Williams to Ponsonby, 28 Sept. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/437; Bankhead to Aberdeen, No. 24, 29 Oct. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/438; Williams to Canning, 24 Feb. 1842, Williams to Aberdeen, 22 July 1842, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/505.

Determined to leave no stones unturned for the improvement of the defences of Turkey, Palmerston maintained in Syria, as long as he remained in office in 1841, a detachment of the British soldiers who had helped the Turks to clear the country of Egyptians. In instructions to the commander of these men the British Foreign Secretary directed that they should assist in the organisation of Turkish troops as well as superintend the repair of fortifications along the Syrian coast.¹

Foreseeing that Palmerston's numerous attempts to thrust military advisers upon the Turks might occasion a reaction against all innovations proposed from abroad, Ponsonby, early in 1841, warned his superior to send no more missions to Turkey without the Porte's consent. "It appears to me," he wrote,

"that things can be done, little by little, and will not be done by other means. The wedge has already entered, thanks to circumstances, and it may be driven home by well regulated strokes. We have Jochmus virtually at the head of the army with the honest consent of the Turks. Walker is at the head of the fleet. These are great advantages, which must work well, if not disturbed by precipitation and the display of our influence."

The British Ambassador also wrote that he would rejoice to know that Palmerston thought proper to concert with the Ottoman Government respecting the employment of British officers before they were sent to Constantinople, for such a policy would prevent much difficulty and avoid many failures.²

Palmerston did not object to this advice of the Queen's Ambassador at Constantinople. In fact he stated in

¹ Palmerston to Bridgeman, No. 1, 4 Mch. 1841, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/453; Rose to Palmerston, No. 26, 21 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/455. In response to a request from the Porte, Lord Aberdeen, early in his second term at the Foreign Office, withdrew the British detachment from Syria. Cf. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 276, 2 Sept. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/437; Aberdeen to Canning, No. 5, 2 Nov. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/439.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 70, 21 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/431.

reply that if, as he hoped, the Turks decided to employ the Hanoverian General Jochmus to organise their army they perhaps should engage German officers instead of British to act under him. Germans could probably be obtained cheaper, their employment would excite less attention in Europe, and it would cause less jealousy on the part of other Powers. There were obvious reasons why the Porte should employ British officers to organise the Turkish fleet, but those reasons did not apply equally to the Turkish army.¹ On another occasion in 1841 Palmerston suggested that Great Britain should confine her efforts for military reform in Turkey to the support of a plan drawn up by Colonel Rose, Commander of the British detachment in Syria. By this plan it was proposed that a commission of officers under Jochmus should outline a programme of military reorganisation which the Turks themselves could carry into effect. "There is indeed," Palmerston admitted, "so much to be done in order to put the various departments of the Turkish army on a good footing that the magnitude of the task might at first inspire despair; but by patience and perseverance, and by being contented with effecting a little at a time much may at length be accomplished." One of the first things to be done was to create an establishment for the instruction of officers, and Palmerston agreed with Rose that elementary studies—reading, writing, arithmetic, and "a little geometry"—in addition to military drill would constitute an ample *curriculum* for such an establishment. What was essentially wanted in the Ottoman army, it was emphasised, was—the immediate reward of merit by promotion or distinction, and the punishment of demerit by removal or the withholding of advancement. Palmerston was ready to allow any of the British officers in Syria, or others who might desire to go to Turkey and whose services the Porte might be willing to accept, to assist Jochmus in his endeavours to improve the Turkish service; but the

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 27, 10 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/427.

English Minister declared he was quite aware that any ostentatious display of British influence in this matter, or any attempts to introduce too many British officers into the Sultan's employ, would only defeat the purpose he had in view.¹ Finally in August 1841, on the eve of the resignation of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet, Palmerston approved a step which Ponsonby had taken in July of the same year favouring the Porte's employment of no foreign military advisers except Jochmus.²

Thus at the close of Palmerston's term at the Foreign Office in 1841 the idea that foreign missions could bring about military and naval reform in Turkey was being discredited generally; nevertheless, Great Britain, influenced by the course which the Foreign Secretary had taken, continued to regard the strengthening of Turkey's means of defence as of paramount importance. One of the last acts of Ponsonby before he left Constantinople in 1841 was to induce the Porte to purchase iron steamers to strengthen its fleet, and Aberdeen in his general instructions to Ponsonby's successor, Stratford Canning, declared:

"In a country without a regular police, and in which the civil power possesses little force, order must be preserved, and security afforded, by the presence of the military. . . . An improved organisation, therefore, of the army, by which discipline and regularity may be established, seems to be an object of the first necessity. It is understood that this reformation is now in progress [in the Ottoman Empire]. . . . You will endeavour to promote the success of these salutary measures, and to obviate the effects of an interested or prejudiced opposition which may be raised against them."³

During the crisis which followed the outbreak of the

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 52, 23 Mch. 1841, Public Record Office MSS.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 190, 3 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/429; Ponsonby to Palmerston, Nos. 222 and 258, 2 and 31 July 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/436.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby No. 94, 21 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428; Ponsonby to Aberdeen, "Separate and confidential," 8 Oct. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/437; Aberdeen to Canning, No. 2, 30 Oct. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/439.

second Syrian war between Mahmoud and Mehemet Ali Palmerston's interest in the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire led him to champion fundamental reforms in the Turkish administrative system as well as in the reorganisation of the Sultan's army and navy. On 25 August 1839 he maintained in a private letter to Lord Beauvale, the British Ambassador to Austria, that if the friends of Turkey could only induce the Porte to adopt, in addition to reforms for its armed forces, a rational system of administration and finance; to pay the Pashas, preventing the purchase and sale of all employments and making the revenue come into the public treasury; to establish laws giving security for life and property; and to prevent men being arbitrarily despoiled of all their goods or put to death, they would "in a very few years get Turkey into a condition of progressive improvement and there would be an end of all the nonsense which people talked about Turkey being in decay and falling to pieces"—nonsense which sprang "from mistaking a metaphor for an argument, and from fancying that because you compare a community to a man's body and to an old tree and building that therefore all the attributes and moralities of the one are *ipso facto* transferred to the other." In Palmerston's opinion,

"People forget that a community never can grow old and die of decay, because all its parts are constantly renovated, and it is as youthful and lively at the end of a century as it was at the beginning. A community is not like a man or a tree or a building whose parts are not renovated but remain the same, and are worn out and decay by age and use. All that is requisite to keep an Empire vigorous for an indefinite period of time is that its institutions and laws should adapt themselves to the changes which take place in the habits of the people and in the relative position of the community as compared with other countries."¹

For several months, both before and after the outbreak

¹ Palmerston to Beauvale [Private], 25 Aug. 1839, Austrian *Staatsarchiv*, England (*Varia*), 1833-1839, F. 29. On 1 Sept. 1839, Palmerston expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Bulwer. Cf. Bulwer, *Life of Viscount Palmerston*, II (London, 1871), pp. 298-299.

of the second Turco-Egyptian conflict, Reshid Pasha, the well-known reform minister of the Porte, was in London on a special mission. The conversations which he held with Palmerston while the Turkish mission sojourned in the English capital are not recorded in the archives of the British Foreign Office; yet it may be ventured, almost with certainty, that the two ministers discussed in detail the programme of the famous *Hatti Scherif of Gulhané* which was to be promulgated at Constantinople, largely through Reshid's influence, soon after his return from England to his native country. On 12 August 1839, just before the Turkish representative left London, he presented to Palmerston an elaborate memorandum covering virtually every phase of the question of reform in Turkey.¹ Less than two weeks later the British Foreign Secretary outlined in his private correspondence with Beauvale every fundamental idea of Turkish reform which Reshid was about to incorporate in his famous Tanzimat.² Furthermore, when Reshid arrived at Constantinople he informed Ponsonby about the Ottoman programme for reform. According to one of Ponsonby's reports, Reshid stated that he favoured the adoption of measures giving security to life and property in his country, and that he wished to consult with the British Ambassador on the execution of such a programme.³

In response to Reshid's advance, Ponsonby recommended that "caution should be united with energy" in the pursuit of the Porte's "inestimable ends." Truly, on the eve of the promulgation of the Tanzimat he thought "it prudent not to enquire much into the matter" lest he should "incur responsibility."⁴ However, promptly after

¹ Memorandum of Reshid, "Confidential," 12 Aug. 1839, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/383.

² Cf. Palmerston to Beauvale [Private], 25 Aug. 1839 as cited on p. 171, footnote No. 1.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston "Separate and secret" 30 Sept. 1839, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/359.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, 22 Oct. 1839, *ibid.*

the Sultan had proclaimed the Hatti Scherif at Gulhané the British Ambassador wrote unreservedly :

“ What has been done is excellent in conception and execution. It is in perfect unison with the religion and interests 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.”¹

Palmerston likewise approved of the Tanzimat in no uncertain terms when he learned that it had been proclaimed. On 2 December 1839, he informed Ponsonby that the Cabinet had received the document “ with much satisfaction ” and directed that the cordial congratulations of the British Government be conveyed to the Porte on the adoption of a measure which was “ fraught with incalculable advantage to the Ottoman Empire ” and which redounded highly to the honour of the statesmen by whom it had been framed. At the same time the Queen’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs instructed the British representative at Constantinople to assure the Turkish Ministers that Great Britain would afford to them “ all such support and countenance ” as a foreign government could properly give “ towards the carrying out of the excellent principles ” which were set forth in the Hatti Scherif. Her Majesty’s Government “ most sincerely ” wished Reshid Pasha all the success which he so well deserved “ in his praiseworthy endeavours to improve the institutions, and thus to promote the happiness, the prosperity, the power and the independence of his country.”² Palmerston must not have forgotten soon the promise which he made thus in the name of Great Britain for, before he withdrew from office in 1841, he repeatedly encouraged the Porte not to falter in the execution of the Tanzimat.

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 301, 5 Nov. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/360.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 181, 2 Dec. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/353.

Immediately after the Tanzimat was proclaimed prospects for its execution appeared very promising. On the last day of 1839 Ponsonby quoted Reshid as saying that a measure had been carried in the Turkish Council which would prove to the world that the Hatti Scherif of Gulhané was a reality. By this measure it was provided that after March 1 1840, all "governors of provinces, cities, and burghs" should be paid fixed salaries. Also promotions were to be by merit only, governors were to exact nothing except the established imposts of the Porte, and tax farming was to be "forever abolished."¹

When Palmerston received this promising report he promptly replied, "with great satisfaction," instructing Ponsonby "to congratulate Reshid Pasha in the name of Her Majesty's Government" upon the perseverance he had shown "in his systematic endeavours to reorganise his country, and to improve its institutions, and upon the success with which those endeavours" had already been attended. Furthermore the English Foreign Minister suggested that the Queen's Ambassador might "make known to the Sultan the high sense entertained by the British Government of the wise and enlightened measures" with which he had "so auspiciously commenced his reign."² In a dispatch accompanying this reply Palmerston directed Ponsonby to inform Reshid that the British Government was delighted to find he was working "in so wise and judicious a manner; and that instead of endeavouring to set up prematurely new institutions, which would be repugnant to the habits and prejudices of the Turkish nation" he was "progressively improving and developing the old institutions of his country, and in truth bringing them back to their ancient purity and vigour." Reshid, according to Palmerston's opinion, seemed "to understand the force of the well-known maxim" that those "who

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 346, 31 Dec. 1839, Public Record Office MSS. F.O. 78/360; Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 15, 16 Jan. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/392.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 17, 4 Feb. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/389.

wish to improve things should preserve ancient names, and by that means avoid rousing needless jealousies, and exciting unnecessary distrust." ¹

Several months later, after Ponsonby had noted that "strong symptoms of popular distaste for the Franks" were appearing at Constantinople, Palmerston was aroused lest reactionary elements might succeed in intrigues for the removal of Reshid from the Turkish Foreign Office.² In order to defeat such intrigues the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs instructed Ponsonby to coöperate with the Austrian Internuncio in support of Reshid and to express to the Sultan in the strongest manner the conviction of Her Majesty's Government that all its efforts to aid him in his contest with the Pasha of Egypt would be marred if Reshid was to be removed from his post or was to be deprived in any way of the power "to second" the exertions of Great Britain in behalf of Turkey.³

In 1841, after British arms had played a major rôle in the restoration of the Sultan's authority in Syria, Palmerston again directed that the attention of the Turkish Government should be called to the question of administrative reform. The British Cabinet, he wrote to Ponsonby in March 1841, hoped to see the recent success of the Turks against Mehemet Ali followed by a rapid increase in the prosperity of the Sultan's domains and by a diffusion of contentment and happiness among all classes of the Sultan's subjects in every part of his extensive empire. The Sultan had already adopted a measure which would live for ever in the grateful recollection of his subjects. That measure—the Hatti Scherif of Gulhané—"was an act of the greatest wisdom, as well as of the most enlightened justice and benevolence." Nothing remained for the Sultan to do except to cause the Hatti Scherif to be strictly and faithfully executed in every part of his domains, and

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 18, 4 Feb. 1840, *ibid.*

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 156, 1 Aug. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/395.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 228, 9 Nov. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/391.

to follow it up by such other practical measures of reform as might be necessary to carry out the principles upon which it was founded. All the Sultan's subjects, "be their rank and station high or low, be they rich or poor, be they born in one part of his dominions or in another, and from whatever race descended, be they Mahometan or Christian or Jew or of any other religion," should enjoy equal rights and privileges and should live equally secure and free from oppression either in their persons or in their property. In other words, all should be protected equally from fraud, injustice, and violence by the paternal authority of the Sultan. Palmerston believed the Sultan would see that no state was secure—even when it was supported by large and powerful armies—unless it had the good will and attachment of its people, and that this could be obtained in no other way than through the exercise of justice and kindness. The English Minister further explained that a good army and an efficient fleet were needed for protection in a nation, but good armies and fleets could not be maintained without a good revenue, and to secure a good revenue without imposing too heavy a burden on the people it was necessary to have a good financial administration. The Sultan would no doubt feel the necessity of attending to these things, and by so doing would again raise the Turkish Empire to a high pitch of power and glory among the first rate states of the world.¹

In a dispatch dated 1 April 1841, the Foreign Secretary repeated his instructions to Ponsonby about the support of Reshid against reactionary intrigues at Constantinople. The removal of Reshid at that time, Palmerston thought, would be an event very much to be regretted. The Reis Effendi was "understood" to have been the principal author of the Hatti Scherif of Gulhané and seemed to be the person most likely to have the will and means for its faithful execution throughout the Ottoman Empire—a

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, "Separate and secret," 24 Mch. 1841, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/427.

task which the British Government well knew was one of more difficulty and would require more time than many people might be disposed to think.¹ Again on 21 April Ponsonby was instructed earnestly to exhort the Turkish Government to cause the new laws for the improvement of various branches in the Turkish administration to be rigidly and impartially executed in every province of the Empire.² Also in May he was directed to warn the Porte in the strongest manner that in order to keep the Sultan's provinces together the Turkish Government must render all its subject races and religious groups contented, and that this could not be done unless all obtained protection for their persons and property against every vexation and oppression on the part of the Government authorities or of any portion of the Ottoman population.³ Finally in June 1841, after reports had reached London revealing that the Turkish Pashas had not abstained from their former exactions and that the subjects of the Porte were no better off than they had been before the promulgation of the Tanzimat, Palmerston instructed Ponsonby to urge again upon the Turkish ministers the necessity of reform. If the abuses of the Sultan's administration were allowed to continue, the English Foreign Secretary declared, Turkey would lose the sympathies of Europe and this must end in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.⁴ All these appeals in support of Reshid and favouring the faithful execution of his administrative reforms seemed to produce little or no effect at Constantinople; but in July 1841 Palmerston at least had the satisfaction of learning that Mustapha Pasha of Nissa, one of the most unenlightened and tyrannical governors in the Sultan's employ, had been dismissed in deference to British opinion.⁵

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 64, 1 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 92, 21 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 116, 11 May 1841, *ibid.*

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 131, 2 June 1841, *ibid.*

⁵ Palmerston to Chekib, 15, 20 July 1841, Chekib to Palmerston, 15 July 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/463.

In addition to measures for the improvement of the general military and administrative efficiency of Turkey, Palmerston, during the crisis of 1839–1841, championed special concessions of reform to limited areas and to particular racial groups within the Sultan's domains. Holding that the honour of the British crown as well as the interests of the Sultan were at stake, late in 1840 he urged the recall of Izzet Pasha whom the Porte had selected for a post in Syria.¹ The Turkish Government promptly recalled Izzet and then Palmerston explained that as the Syrians had been urged by British authorities to take up arms for the Sultan against Mehemet Ali it was "peculiarly incumbent" on the British Cabinet to favour such arrangements for the Government of Syria as might secure its people from oppression and render them contented and prosperous. Her Majesty's Government was not sufficiently conversant with the internal affairs of Turkey to be able to say what specific measures should be adopted. It had been suggested that the important seaports of the Lebanon district—Beyrout and Latakia—should be added to the territory of the Druses, but there might be doubts whether such an arrangement would be politic or whether it would not be better for the Sultan to retain these seaport towns more directly under his own control.²

In the summer of 1841 reports of unrest in Syria revealed clearly that the local Turkish administration which the Porte had organised in its customary manner in that country after the expulsion of the Egyptians had failed to win the approval of the Syrians. At Damascus, Nezib Pasha was said to have ordered that no Christian should be permitted to enter the city on horseback or to wear within its limits clothing of a light or gay colour. Ponsonby believed that even the Reis Effendi was partly responsible for this state of affairs, and in a private letter which he

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 227, 9 Nov. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/391.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 266, 12 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*

wrote to Palmerston after Reshid had resigned from office at Constantinople he declared: "I *am furious* against Reshid Pasha who seems on all occasions to have selected the greatest scoundrels in the Empire for employment in the offices of trust and power. He is a fool."¹

Aroused by such reports as these Palmerston repeatedly urged through Ponsonby and through the Turkish Ambassador in London that the Porte should remove Nezib from his position as Pasha at Damascus, and satisfy the demands of the Maronites for reform in taxation, while in general it should take "effectual measures" to protect the Christians of Syria against the "tyrannical proceedings" of their Moslem rulers.² Furthermore, he frankly informed Chekib Pasha on one occasion that the British Cabinet could not doubt but the enlightened sense of justice which directed the councils of the Sultan would lead him "without a moment's delay to take the necessary measures for preventing the Muftis in Syria from acting upon the obsolete and antiquated doctrine" laid down by one of their number who refused to admit the evidence of Christians against Moslems in his court.³

While posing as a friend of the Christian population of Syria the British Government endeavoured to avoid offending the Druses. Ponsonby suggested in March 1840, that it might be "useful and easy" to obtain from the Porte the acknowledgment of certain rights which the Druses enjoyed *de facto* if not *de jure*.⁴ Palmerston soon replied, instructing the Ambassador to urge the Porte

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston [Private], 23 May 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/434.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 139 and 145, 8 and 11 June, 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428; Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 175 and 181, 15 and 20 July 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/429; Palmerston to Chekib, 15 June, 2, 10 July, 9 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/463. Early in June, 1841, Ponsonby and the Austrian and Russian representatives at Constantinople agreed to a plan collectively to urge the Porte to reform its administration in Syria. Cf. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 191, 8 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/434.

³ Palmerston to Chekib, 9 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/463.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 47, "Secret," 3 Mch. 1840, *ibid.* F.O. 78/392.

“at the proper time” to give to the Druses such privileges and exemptions as might satisfy their “reasonable desires,” and in 1841, on the eve of his retirement from public office, he refused to appoint Richard Wood Consul-General of Syria because Wood was a Roman Catholic and would be regarded by the Druses as a partisan favouring their enemies the Maronites. The Maronites, Palmerston thought, would always through their priests “lean upon France rather than upon England.” But there might be established among the Druses “an influence useful to England and serviceable to the Porte.”¹ Moreover, Palmerston gave a friendly reply to advances which the Druse chiefs had made through the English Colonel Rose for some connection with Great Britain. The Foreign Secretary stated in that reply that the British Government’s object and intention would be to exert its “good offices” and its “just influence” to prevent differences between the Druses and the Sultan which might loosen the bonds that “ought to exist between a sovereign and his subjects.” He stated also that the British Government, with due appreciation of the many fine qualities of the Druse nation, approved their wish to establish some good system of education for their children.² Finally, late in July 1841, Palmerston announced that an English clergyman would be sent to the Druse country to seek employment as a teacher, and he suggested that others might be selected to follow this pioneer if the Druses chose to employ them.³

A second limited area within the Ottoman Empire for which Palmerston championed special concessions of reform during the crisis of 1839–1841 was the Island of Crete. Then in fact a favourite plan of his was to obtain for the Candiotés privileges and institutions of self-government similar to those which had been conferred at an earlier

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 61, 21 Apr. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/389; Memorandum by Palmerston, “Confidential,” 16 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/429.

² Palmerston to Rose, No. 8, 15 July 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/454.

³ Palmerston to Rose, No. 11, 26 July 1841, *ibid.*

date by Sultan Mahmoud upon the inhabitants of the Island of Samos.¹ During the first part of the crisis he did not strongly urge the adoption of this plan, for he knew that Ponsonby as well as Reshid regarded it as impracticable.² But in April 1841, after the direct authority of the Sultan under the Treaty of July 1840 had replaced the rule of Mehemet Ali in Crete and reports indicated that an insurrection had broken out among the natives of the island, the British Ambassador advised the Porte to remove the Pasha of Candia, who was evidently not trustworthy; to cause the Hatti Scherif of Gulhané to be immediately proclaimed in Crete; "and then to grant to the inhabitants some form of local government similar in principle to that established in Samos, in which . . . Greeks and Turks should be equally eligible as members of the local councils."³ About the same time the British Consul in Crete exerted his influence to persuade the Cretans to remain loyal to their sovereign, trusting that the Porte upon the recommendation of its allies would take measures to safeguard the people of the island against the oppression of Turkish officials.⁴

During the brief period of this insurrection among the Candiotes Palmerston became so much concerned about the Cretan question that he made it the subject of repeated dispatches to both Ponsonby and Ongley.⁵ In July 1841, after Ponsonby had offered excuses for not obeying some of his instructions in regard to Crete, Palmerston restated his position on the question in emphatic terms. The events which had occurred in Crete since he had forwarded instructions, he wrote to the Ambassador, did not lead

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 152, 21 Oct. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/353.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 323, 30 Nov. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/360; Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 151, 31 Aug. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/390.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 80, 16 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/427; Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 88, 19 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428.

⁴ Palmerston to Ongley, 17 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/450.

⁵ Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 134 and 162, 4 and 26 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428; Palmerston to Ongley, Nos. 2 and 3, 18 May, 25 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/450.

him to retract his advice for the Sultan. Instead those developments led him to think that the advice was more expedient and necessary than it had been when it was first suggested. He admitted that Ponsonby and the Porte must be in a better position than he could be in to chalk out the details of the arrangement which should be made for Crete. He even conceded that institutions like those in Samos might not be entirely suitable for the larger island. What he considered as absolutely necessary in order to induce the Candiotés to be obedient to their sovereign was that the Sultan should guarantee to them full security for their persons and property. This could be done not by taking privileges from the Turkish population in Crete, which the British Foreign Office had never recommended, but by the effectual abolition of political distinction between the Turks and the Greeks and by admitting Greeks as well as Turks—in fair proportion according to their wealth and numbers—to the local councils which were to be established on the island for the management of local affairs. Palmerston believed that if the Porte managed by an arrangement to take away all excuse for disobedience on the part of its discontented subjects it might expect to see Crete pacified, but if it imagined force alone would attain that object it would be disappointed.¹

Late in August 1841, after the termination of the Cretan revolt had been announced, Palmerston rejoiced to learn that the Ottoman Government was disposed to give to the Candiotés “protection and security” for the future. On the same occasion he directed that the Porte should be urged to establish equality of taxation between the Moslems and the Christians of Crete, and he declared that such a measure was “indispensably necessary, not only in Candia, but in every other part of the Ottoman Empire”; without

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 185, 23 July 1841, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/429; Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 179, 26 May 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/434; Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 217, 23 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/435.

it the Porte could "never expect to see permanent tranquillity established in the Sultan's dominions."¹

The Jews of Palestine constituted another element in the Ottoman Empire whose special interests in reform were championed by the British Foreign Secretary between 1839 and 1841. At the opening of the period arrangements were being made to send an Englishman named Young as vice-consul to Jerusalem, and it was stated in his instructions that one of his duties would be to afford protection to the Hebrews of the Holy Land. Also he was instructed to report to Palmerston at an early date on the state of the Jewish population within the territory of his consular jurisdiction.² Consequently in May 1839, Young forwarded to the Foreign Office a report indicating that the Hebrews of Palestine numbered about 9,690; that they were very poor and dependent to an extent upon contributions from Europe; and that they were oppressed as an inferior race.³ Before the close of the year 1839 the English vice-consul at Jerusalem was assured of the support of his Government, although Campbell, the British Consul-General in Egypt, had complained that Young was "granting protection in an indiscriminate and inconsiderate manner to all Jews."⁴ Furthermore in May 1840, Palmerston protested vigorously to the Porte and to Mehemet Ali against the persecution of Jews at Damascus and on the Island of Rhodes, and he granted the special protection of the British Government to a Jewish delegation which Hebrews in London dispatched to the East to investigate the circumstances that had led to the persecution of their fellow Israelites.⁵ Indeed, in an important dispatch

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 222, 26 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/429.

² Bidwell to Young, No. 2, 31 Jan. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/368.

³ Young to Palmerston, No. 13, 25 May 1839, *ibid.*

⁴ Young to Palmerston, No. 25, 13 Aug. 1839, Backhouse to Young, No. 8, 23 Nov. 1839, *ibid.*

⁵ Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 62, 80 and "Separate," 5, 30 May, 27 June 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/389; Palmerston to Wilkinson, 23 May, 29 Aug. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/413; Palmerston to Consuls in Levant, 27 June 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/416. The Archbishop of Canterbury and

of 11 August 1840, a plan was communicated for the Porte's consideration to settle Jews in Palestine which foreshadowed very directly the Zionist movement of later times.

Palmerston followed up this important dispatch to Ponsonby with another suggesting that Jews should be permitted to transmit through British consular authorities and the British embassy at Constantinople any complaints which they might wish to make to the Porte against Turkish officials in Palestine.¹ Indeed, the British Foreign Minister proposed such extensive concessions to the Hebrews of the Holy Land that the Porte refused to grant them, and Ponsonby upheld the Porte in its refusal. The Ottoman ministers and the British representative at Constantinople agreed that the Sultan should not grant more than the right of all his subjects to secure redress through direct appeal to the Porte.²

Regardless of the opposition of Ponsonby and the Turks, Palmerston continued for a time to advocate special reforms for the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine. He explained early in 1841 that if the Porte persisted in its refusal to adopt his suggestions Ponsonby might propose a limited concession of the right of the Hebrews to transmit complaints through British officials for a period of twenty years.³ To this Ponsonby replied in March 1841, stating he was unable to see what additional security could be given to the Jews, or what other inducements the Sultan could offer to them for settlement in Palestine than security for persons and property, and the enjoyment of equal rights with every other class of inhabitants in the Ottoman Empire. It might in fact be inconvenient to the

the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland urged the British Government on this occasion to defend the persecuted Hebrews in Damascus and Rhodes. Cf. Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 248, 251 and 278, 24, 25 Nov., 22 Dec. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/391.

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 248, 24 Nov. 1840, *ibid.*

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, Nos. 19 and 29, 21 Jan., 1 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/430.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 33, 17 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/427.

Porte and not advantageous to the Jews to give them special immunities. Such immunities would probably be abused, and would certainly excite demands that could not be granted to others.¹ After Palmerston received this reply he made no further moves to obtain special concessions for the Hebrews of the Holy Land, but he did not modify his instructions to the vice-consul at Jerusalem, and just before he resigned from the British Foreign Office in 1841 he announced that a bishop of the Church of England would be sent to the ancient capital of Judæa to look after British ecclesiastical interests there.²

While Palmerston favoured the granting of special guarantees of justice and of good government to the inhabitants of Syria, Crete, and Palestine in 1839-1841 he continuously emphasised that the power of the Sultan should not be compromised in any part of his extensive empire. Care should be taken, he wrote to Ponsonby in December 1840, to make such arrangements as would protect the people of Egypt from a continuance of the tyrannical oppression by which they had been crushed, and as should secure the Sultan against a renewed attack by Mehemet Ali. According to the British Foreign Secretary's opinion, the basis for such arrangements was to be found in the stipulations of the Treaty of 15 July 1840. Under those stipulations the Sultan would "be able, by an exercise of his legislative authority, to establish unity of flag and of military and naval uniform throughout all his provinces; to limit the number of troops which each province should, according to its population, maintain; to regulate the mode of enforcing the conscription so as to protect the people from undue burdens and oppressive levies; to fix the number and class of ships of war" which should belong to the several naval ports of his dominions; to fix the manner in which military and naval commissions

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 113, 27 Mch. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/432.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 187, 210, and 227 "Confidential," 26 July, 16, 27 Aug. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/429.

should be granted in his name and by his authority; and to determine that a single monetary system should prevail throughout all his territories. The Treaty of July specified that none but the legal imposts of the Sultan should be levied in Egypt. This should secure the people under Mehemet Ali from undue exactions; and the execution of the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention of 1838, by which all monopolies were to be abolished in the Ottoman Empire, would at once free the industry of Egypt from those oppressive restrictions which had hitherto kept the great mass of the Egyptian population in the most abject poverty.¹ At a later date Palmerston approved the Sultan's firman of 13 February 1841, which would have imposed important limitations upon the power of the Pasha of Egypt if it had been executed, and he expressed regrets to Commodore Napier because that officer had not advised Mehemet Ali to acquiesce in the proposed arrangement.² Also in June 1841, after the English Foreign Secretary had been informed about attempts to excite disturbances in the neighbourhood of Salonica, he notified the Admiralty that some British ships of war should be dispatched to the Ægean with a view to support the authority of the Sultan and to put a stop to any piratical proceedings in that quarter.³

Eager though Palmerston was to defend the power of the Sultan and to further the rejuvenation of Turkey he refused to grant such practical assistance as the Porte wished to obtain on at least two occasions during the crisis of 1839-1841. In May 1841, the Reis Effendi Rifaat Pasha privately informed Ponsonby that he wished a clause guaranteeing the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire would be added to the Straits Convention which had been initialed in March 1841, but still

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 270, 17 Dec. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/391.

² Palmerston to Napier, 11 Mch. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/461.

³ Palmerston to Admiralty, 26 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/467.

remained formally unsigned.¹ According to Palmerston's opinion such a clause could not be adopted because it had been clearly understood that there would be no change in the terms of the convention for the closure of the Straits without the consent of all parties that were directly involved in it, and some were sure to object to the Reis Effendi's proposal. Moreover, the proposed clause—provided it was adopted—would probably not have the effect which Rifaat expected. If either France or Russia wished to interfere in Ottoman affairs, and if Turkey was weak, they would be able to find some pretext for doing so regardless of stipulations for the defence of the Sultan's dominions.²

Similarly during the crisis of 1839-1841 Palmerston refused to grant a type of practical assistance which a group of English bankers sought in the negotiation of a loan to the Porte. In December 1839, Ponsonby informed his superior that the Ottoman Government wished to borrow £2,000,000 and hoped "to find facilities for it" through the friendly aid of Great Britain. Certain bankers, it was believed on that occasion, would advance the sum which the Porte desired on the security of Ottoman copper mines provided the British Government would guarantee the investment. According to Ponsonby's opinion the loan was necessary for the execution of the Hatti Scherif of Gulhané and the abolition of monopolies.³ It would be "highly useful," he thought, "and not subject to much abuse."⁴ Apparently the only alternative which the Porte had considered seriously was a project for the issuance of paper money. Believing that that project "would produce such confusion and such robbery and such distress amongst the people as would bring about a revolution" Ponsonby eagerly favoured the negotiation of the loan. "There is at present," he wrote in April 1840, "a great

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, "Separate and confidential," 20 May 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/433.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 147, 15 June 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/428.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 336, 18 Dec. 1839, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/360.

⁴ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 45, 27 Feb. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/392.

want of money in consequence of the alterations that have been made for the benefit of the people, and it would be fortunate if a loan could be made. I doubt if any Government can give better security to lenders.”¹ Finally in September 1840, the British Ambassador at Constantinople reported that he had assisted a Mr. Bourjot, the representative of certain bankers in London, to arrange details for a loan to the Porte.²

This loan, as explained to Palmerston by Timothy Curtis, one of the bankers, was to be for £3,000,000 and was to be secured by a mortgage on the customs of Constantinople, Salonica, and Smyrna. In case of default the Porte was to allow the contractors of the loan to appoint persons who would receive the customs and apply the proceeds to the payment of “dividends” and to the establishment of a “sinking fund of one per cent.” Curtis further explained that he had found there was “not that confidence in the Turkish Government that would induce capitalists to lend their money without some guarantee as to the payment of dividends.” He was aware that the British Government would not guarantee the financial obligations of foreign Governments; but as the power to enforce the payment of dividends from the revenue of customs would be altogether a nullity in the hands of an individual, it had occurred to him that the British Government might through a special treaty with the Porte gain the power to interfere in Turkey if called upon by the contractors in a case of default. Upon this part of the subject the Rothschilds whom Curtis had consulted were “quite decided,” and as he considered that they were “the only persons who could efficiently and successfully carry such a loan through,” he trusted Palmerston would “not see any great difficulty in making such an arrangement.”

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 76, 14 Apr. 1840, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/393.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, Nos. 214, 219 and [Private], 20, 26 and 27 Sept. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/397.

The Foreign Secretary approved of Ponsonby's opposition to paper money in Turkey.¹ He even approved of the assistance which the Ambassador gave to Bourjot in the arrangement of details for a loan to the Porte.² However, he definitely refused to promise that Her Majesty's Government would guarantee a Turkish loan. On 30 December 1840, he wrote confidentially to Ponsonby at length on this subject.³ In truth, Palmerston not only refused to involve the British Government in a guarantee of a Turkish loan, but even insisted that the Porte should pay for the arms and ammunition which British agents distributed among the Syrian insurgents during the war with Mehemet Ali in 1840.⁴ The British Foreign Secretary must have foreseen that the Sultan and his ministers might squander moneys which could be obtained easily from abroad, that international complications would arise if Her Majesty's Government attempted to intervene in the affairs of the Levant to safeguard the interests of British

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 46, 31 Mch. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/389.

² Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 189, 10 Oct. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/390.

³ Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 279, "Confidential," 30 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/391. Also in the period between 1839 and 1841, British capitalists headed by the House of Reed, Irving and Company were interested in the reform of Turkey's monetary system and in the establishment of an Ottoman National Bank. Their projects were supported by Ponsonby and by Sandison, a British consular agent in the Levant, both of whom acted without specific instructions on this matter from Palmerston. The Porte, besieged similarly by a group of French capitalists under the leadership of M. Coste, managed to avoid committing itself definitely upon the projects of either party. Cf. Ponsonby to Palmerston, "Confidential," "Separate and confidential," and [Private], 22, 30 July 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/395; Coste to Ahmed Fethi, 18 Sept. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/397; Irving's Memorandum, 26 Sept. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/422; Ponsonby to Palmerston Nos. 125 and 166, 6 Apr., 17 May 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/33; Irving's Memorandum, 6 Mch. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/465.

⁴ Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 225 and 281, 5 Nov., 30 Dec. 1840, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/391; Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos. 19 and 35, 29 Jan., 18 Feb., 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/427. The Porte agreed to pay for these military supplies, and beginning late in the year 1841, made advances in small instalments upon them. Cf. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 91, 9 Mch. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/432; Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 143, 27 Apr. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/433; Bankhead to Aberdeen, Nos. 40, 56 and 67, 10 Nov., 1 and 24 Dec. 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/438; F.O. to Treasury, 25 Oct., 9 and 21 Nov. 1842, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/512.

investors, and that such developments as these would not promote Ottoman rejuvenation. Palmerston's policy for the rejuvenation of Turkey was comprehensive—it was designed to encourage all types of reform which might contribute directly to the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire as an independent State and as an essential element in the European balance of power—but it did not involve the financing of Turkish reorganisation entirely at British expense.

Perhaps the attempts which Palmerston made to further Turkish reform before he withdrew from office in 1841 have received scant attention in historical study heretofore chiefly because of a factor which must now be taken into account. Despite his efforts to encourage Turkish reform, the Ottoman State remained essentially as unprogressive when Palmerston was replaced by Aberdeen in the British Foreign Office as it had been in 1839. In fact by 1841 a reaction against innovations and western ideas had gained the centre of the stage throughout the Sultan's dominions.¹ Again in May 1841 Ponsonby declared that fiscal oppressions throughout the Ottoman Empire had been grievously aggravated by new regulations and were the real cause of the discontent and outbreaks in Turkey against the authority of the Sultan.²

After Stratford Canning succeeded Ponsonby as British Ambassador at Constantinople he also drew a discouraging picture of the prospect for reform in the Ottoman Empire. In March 1842 he called attention to evidences of an anti-Christian policy, of misgovernment, of a jealous impatience of foreign instruction and of an attachment to old abuses. He believed Reshid's reform had been "too rapid and inconsiderate" and he was convinced that unless "the means of giving another direction" were speedily found and effectively applied, "the most serious, and perhaps

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 103, 17 Mch. 1841, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/432.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 159, 11 May, 1841, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/433.

irremediable mischief" would ensue.¹ This view was elaborated in a memorandum enclosed with the dispatch in which these ideas were set forth, while Stratford Canning's view of the Turkish question in December 1843 was even more discouraging.

Although abundant evidence reveals clearly that Palmerston's programme for the rejuvenation of Turkey produced no great and permanent changes in the Ottoman system either before or immediately after its author withdrew from office in 1841, it must be conceded that that programme served as a fundamental element in Great Britain's policy for the preservation of the Ottoman Empire—a policy which Her Majesty's Government pursued quite consistently at least until the time of the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878. Canning, it is true, urged the adoption of a "decided line of policy" by Great Britain in defence of Turkey so early as 1832.² However, it was Palmerston, and not Canning, who first elaborated a definite programme for the establishment of that policy and who proceeded to carry it into effect. Furthermore, the period of the development of Palmerston's programme for Turkey was no other than the one between 1833 and 1841. It was then that the British Government for the first time in its history sent official missions to Turkey to promote directly the reorganisation of the Sultan's military and naval forces, that it encouraged the promulgation and faithful execution throughout the Ottoman dominions of a great charter of liberties in which all of the Sultan's subjects were recognised as equals before the law, and that it sponsored various lesser reforms which were designed to round out a programme for the rejuvenation of the extensive Turkish State. Indeed the instructions which Aberdeen prepared for Stratford Canning when the "Great Ambassador" returned to Turkey in 1841 contained little more than a recapitulation and endorsement of the many details of British policy in

¹ Canning to Aberdeen, No. 67, 27 Mch. 1842, *ibid.*, F.O. 78/476.

² Lane-Poole, *Life of Stratford Canning*, II, pp. 76-78 (London, 1888).

the Levant developed by Palmerston during the previous eight years.¹ In so far as the British Government was responsible for the reaction against reform which triumphed in Turkey in 1841 it was responsible because it had encouraged the Porte to go too far rather than not far enough on the road to reform and reorganisation. Also it should be remembered that the period of reaction in the Ottoman Empire did not end with Stratford Canning's arrival at the Turkish capital near the close of 1841, but continued during the early years of his administration and reached its most alarming proportions perhaps, as his dispatches seem eloquently to indicate, about the close of 1843. Consequently Lane-Poole's statement about British policy in the Levant during the period 1833-1841 should be received with caution, and Palmerston should be given credit for the elaboration of the details of the first definite programme which served as a fundamental element in Great Britain's policy for the preservation of Turkey in the nineteenth century. This means that Palmerston should be given this credit provided it is due to the author of a policy for the rejuvenation of an empire whose population included numerous incongruous elements and whose doom might seem to have been sealed by the rising tide of nationalism.

¹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Aberdeen to Canning, No. 2, 30 Oct. 1841, Public Record Office MSS., F.O. 78/439.

NOTE.—The material for this essay was gathered while the writer was serving as Fellow of the Social Science Research Council of the U.S.A.