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# THE NIZAM-I CEDID ARMY UNDER SULTAN SELIM III 1789-1807

by

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The term *Nizâm-i-Cedîd*, or “New Order”, is generally applied to the entire spectrum of administrative, financial, and military reforms introduced into the Ottoman Empire in the almost two decades of rule of Sultan Selim III <sup>1</sup>. The term is sometimes used synonymously with the reign itself. Yet in fact, it was applied by the Sultan and his contemporaries only to one part of his reforms, the new army created entirely outside of and independent from the older corps, and it was only because of the spectacular nature of this particular reform that its name later was applied also to the efforts which this Sultan made to reform the older institutions as well. But it is in the limited, contemporary, sense of the term that it is used here.

The *Nizam-i Cedid* army was, as we will see, largely a failure in its own time. Yet it represented an important step forward in the evolution of Ottoman reform. Until it was created, even the most “modern” and “liberal” of Ottoman statesmen conceived of reform as no more than an effort to restore the purity of old institutions and practices, and to make them operate in the manner which had brought greatness to the Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even the most perceptive of eighteenth century Ottoman “reformers” did not really understand how much Europe had changed since the time of Suleiman the Magnificent and that no matter how great the Ottoman ways had been two centuries before, even at their best, they could be no match for the modern institutions of state and war which had been evolved in the West. But with the *Nizam-i Cedid* there came the first Ottoman awakening to the realities of the modern world, a new concept of reform, the creation of new institutions and practices directly modelled on those developed in the West, and their introduction in place of those which had been inherited from the past. This was the idea of reform which characterized the nineteenth-

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<sup>1</sup> B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London 1961) p. 56-58; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*. V. Cilt. *Nizam-i Cedid ve Tanzimat devirleri (1789-1856)* (Ankara 1947) p. 63-64.

century *Tanzimat* movement which was to bring the Ottoman Empire into the modern world on a large scale for the first time.

The nucleus of the new army actually came into being on a small scale some time before the Sultan knew about it or made a definite decision to organize such a new force independent of the older corps. In late 1791, while the Grand Vezir Yūsuf Paşa was still in the field against the Russians, he assembled in his camp a small number of renegades captured in the course of the campaign, including at least one Turk who had been captured by the Russians years before and had served for some time in the Russian army. These renegades, in cooperation with a few members of the Grand Vezir's personal guard, began to train with captured Russian weapons, using European-style exercises and maneuvers, and they performed periodically in front of their master's tent as a kind of entertainment in order to divert the army's leaders from their increasingly difficult military problems. At this stage, this new group was no more than a toy, a personal caprice of the Grand Vezir. No effort was made to force the other corps to accept or even observe the infidel practices of war, since such a revolutionary step had not yet been authorized by the Sultan, and the older corps in the past had demonstrated violent reactions to any attempts to introduce new ways which might undermine the position they had secured in Ottoman society by virtue of their monopoly of the military techniques and weapons of the past. New ways would undermine their position in Ottoman society, so they were vigorously opposed, and such a reaction could not be risked so long as the enemy was ready to take advantage of any internal disorder in the Ottoman army, however ineffective that army might be <sup>1</sup>. However, Yūsuf Paşa did report to the Sultan on the activities of this small group, and through these reports, the Sultan finally was influenced to develop such a guard on a larger scale once peace was restored <sup>2</sup>.

When the Treaty of Jassy finally brought peace in 1792, the Imperial army returned to Istanbul, and with it came Yūsuf Paşa and his new corps. However, he left it outside the city so he could discover the Sultan's views on the subject before exposing himself to the wrath of the supporters of the old corps. It turned out that Selim's reaction was extremely favorable. The weakness shown against the enemy by the older corps had

<sup>1</sup> *Top Kapı Saray archives* (hereafter referred to as *TKS*), Yeni Gelenler 1376, fol. 40a-50a; W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London 1799, 2nd ed.) p. 98-99; Public Record Office, London, *Foreign Office archives* (hereafter referred to as *FO*), 78/20, no. 7 (1 March 1792).

<sup>2</sup> *FO* 78/13, no. 8 (10 April 1792); *FO* 78/15, no. 31 (25 December 1794); Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Quai d'Orsay, *Correspondance politique: Turquie*, hereafter referred to as *AE*, 184, fol. 284 (26 March 1793).

convinced the Sultan that they could not be reformed, and that only an entirely new army, created especially to use the new weapons and tactics, and unhindered by the ways of the past, could successfully defend the Empire against its enemies. So when he learned of the presence of the new corps, he went to see it perform, and was extremely impressed. In fact, he was so struck with the superiority of the massed firepower which it was able to assemble, that he decided to create such a new army and to use this group as its nucleus.

In late March, 1792, the British ambassador to Istanbul provided a few new muskets and bayonets for the Grand Vezir on an informal basis, while inquiring of his government as to the reply he should give to the Sultan's requests for large scale assistance of this kind<sup>1</sup>. In the meantime, the Grand Vezir enrolled approximately one hundred Turks from the streets of Istanbul to man the new corps, and the German and Russian renegades brought back from the war became its officers and drill masters<sup>2</sup>. In April, the district of Levend Çiftlik, an isolated spot ten miles north of the capital on the plateau overlooking Beşiktaş on the Bosphorus, formerly used by the rapid-fire cannon force trained on a small scale by Baron de Tott two decades before, was chosen as the drill grounds of the new corps so that it would be far enough away from the people of Istanbul and from the older corps that it would excite neither their disapproval nor their anxiety until it was ready to meet any opposition with force<sup>3</sup>. In addition, much to the chagrin of the British ambassador, four French infantry officers were appointed to advise on its operations and assist in the drills, Lieutenant-General Menant, and Lieutenants Luzin, Ranchoup, and Pierce Laroque-Monteil<sup>4</sup>.

But up to this point, all of this activity had been undertaken secretly by the Sultan and the Grand Vezir, without obtaining any formal approval from the Imperial Council or publicizing it in any way. It was

<sup>1</sup> FO 78/20, 1 March 1792; FO 78/13, no. 8 (10 April 1792); AE 184, fol. 284 (26 March 1793). Ahmed Vâsîf, *Maḥāsin al-Âşār ve Haqāyiq al-Aḥbār*, vol. IV (MS TY 5979, Istanbul University Library, Istanbul), fol. 129a-130a.

<sup>2</sup> Eton, *Türk. Empire*, p. 99; FO 78/14, no. 14 (25 May 1793); Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Türkei II correspondence, hereafter referred to as HHS, Türkei II, vol. 100, no. 33 (10 October 1792).

<sup>3</sup> Levend Çiftlik originally was given by Sultan ‘Abd ul-Ḥamîd I to Ġāzî Ḥasan Paşa as an estate in reward for his long and meritorious service. Ġāzî Ḥasan, since he was Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet, used sailors (called *levends*) from the fleet to farm and maintain this estate, and so it came to be called *Levend Çiftlik*. Construction of the *Nizam-i Cedîd* barracks began here in August of 1792. HHS, Türkei II — 100, no 33 (10 October 1792); FO 78/14, no. 14 (25 May 1793).

<sup>4</sup> *Baş Vekalet Arşivi* (Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul, hereafter referred to as BVA), *Hatt-ı Humayun* 12193; AE 184, fol. 285-288 (26 March 1793).

only in late April and early May that this was undertaken, in a series of meetings held on the subject in the rooms of the Imperial Council<sup>1</sup>. Since the Sultan's views were made clear right from the start, there was little open opposition to the new army as such. The proponents of the new force were led by the *Şeyh ul-Islām*, Mehmed 'Ārif Efendī, the influential Molla Tatarcik 'Abdullāh Efendī, and the Sultan's former slave and close friend and advisor, Muşţafā Reşid Efendī, who later became the director of the *Nizam-i Cedid* and its chief proponent in the councils of state. Differences between these men and the other members of the Council arose mainly on the question of how the new army would be organized and financed. Would it be part of the old corps or would it be independent? Would the old Imperial Treasury (*Hazine-i 'Āmire*) have to pay for it, or would new sources of revenue be found to support it? Yūsuf Paşa argued that an entirely new corps completely outside the established military hierarchy would needlessly excite the Janissaries and the vested interests associated with them and incite them to revolt before the new army was strong enough to defend itself by force. He felt that if the new corps was in some way made part of the old system at least in form, the opposition would be deluded or appeased until it was too late. But Tatarcik 'Abdullāh Efendī replied by pointing out the burden that such an army would place on the Imperial Treasury and the older corps if it were attached to them. New barracks, weapons, uniforms, and schools would be expensive to provide. New men and officers would have to be paid. The needed foreign technicians and advisors would be especially expensive to employ. The Treasury and its established revenues were already being tapped to the limit. Each item of revenue was already assigned to a specific purpose. The older corps would vigorously protest if any of their revenues were diverted for such purposes. The only solution was to create new taxes, to find new sources of revenue previously untapped, or to turn over neglected older sources to an energetic new Treasury organization much better able to administer them than the established Treasury. He wanted the new army corps and its financial organization entirely separated from the old in the fear that the latter would hinder their efforts at every turn. These were the two principal arguments. Muşţafā Reşid led those who supported 'Abdullāh Efendī's position and wanted an entirely independent new corps, while the

<sup>1</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'un Hatt-ı Hümayunları — Nizam-i Cedid — 1789-1807* (Ankara 1946), p. 49. The debates at these meetings are summarized in Vāsif IV, fol. 140a-150a; Ḥalil Nūrī, *Nūrī Tā'rihi* (Aşir Efendi collection, Süleymaniye library, Istanbul, MS 239), fol. 151b-154b; also HHS — Türkiye II — 102, no. 6 (11 March 1793).

Treasurer (*Defterdār*) Şerif Paşa led those who supported the Grand Vezir, stating that the old Treasury should expand its revenues to meet the new expenses, and that the creation of another Treasury and military corps would cause even further inefficiency and duplication of effort, an argument not entirely without merit (Nūrî, fol. 154b-155a). Finally, on May 14, 1792, a compromise was reached. A new army was to be created under the name *Nizam-i Cedid*. To provide for its expenses a new treasury would be organized to administer whatever revenues were assigned to it. But to appease the vested interests, both the new army and its treasury were clothed in the garb of established institutions in the Ottoman system.

Because the creation of an entirely new force required prior provision of funds for its operation, legislation for the latter came first. On March 1, 1793, an entirely independent treasury was established for the new army, and it was given the name *İrād-i Cedid*, the "New Revenue"<sup>1</sup>. Direction of the entire *Nizam-i Cedid* organization was given to Muştafâ Reşid Paşa as Supervisor, with the formal titles of *İrād-i Cedid Defterdârî* (Treasurer of the New Revenue) for his financial duties as head of the new treasury, and of *Ta'limlî 'Askerî Nâzîrî* (Supervisor of the Trained Soldiers) for his military duties, with an annual salary of 50,000 piasters plus rations. To provide him with rank and prestige in the regular Ottoman hierarchy, the now honorific post of *Şıqq-i Şânî Defterdârî* (Second Treasurer of the Imperial Treasury) was set aside for him and for his successors as Director of the *Nizam-i Cedid*, thus making him an equal with the other officers of state in the Imperial Council.

The *Şıqq-i Şânî Defterdârlik* was created after the conquest of the Arab provinces in the early 16th century to deal with their financial affairs and also those of Anatolia. In the middle of the same century, these two areas were divided, with the second Defterdar thereafter dealing primarily with the financial problems of Anatolia. However, by the time of Selim III, this post no longer had any formal duties, and was no more than an honorific position given to provide its holders with rank and revenues. See B. Lewis, *Daftardâr*, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Ed.) II, 83; Mehmed Zekî, *Teşkilât-i 'Atıqada Defterdâr*, in: *Türk Tarih Encumeni Mecmu'ası* VIII (1926) no. 14/91, p. 96-102, no. 16/93, p. 234-244;

<sup>1</sup> The regulations establishing and organizing the new *İrād-i Cedid* treasury are given in full in *Qavānîn-i Sultân Selîm*, MS Y-534 in the library of the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu) in Ankara, fol. 42a-45b; Vâsıf IV, 72b-80b; Ahmed Cevâd, *Târîh-i 'Askerî 'Osmanî*, vol. II (TY 3208, MS in Istanbul University library, Istanbul), p. 14-19. They are summarized and discussed in Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı* (Ankara 1948) p. 368-9; Mahmud Rayf, *Tableau des nouveaux réglemens de l'empire Ottoman* (Istanbul 1213/1798) p. 9-14; Nūrî, fol. 155a-164a; Karal, *Nizam-i Cedid*, p. 49-59, 81-93; Ahmed Cevdet, *Târîh-i Cevdet* (12 vols., Istanbul 1301-1309) VI, 47-52; FO 78/14, no. 6 (11 March 1793); HHS — Turkei II — 102, no. 6 (11 March 1793).



Mehmed Zekî Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (3 vols., Istanbul 1946-1955) I, 411-418.

During the next few months, Muştafâ Reşid and other high officials of the Imperial Treasury examined all of its revenues to see which could best be given up to the new Treasury. Specifically, they were looking for potentially profitable tax sources which had not been fully exploited in the past, so that their loss would not harm the old Treasury too much, while they would at the same time provide the new Treasury with a good tax base. Finally they decided to give the *Îrād-i Cedid* as its main source of revenue all the tax farms (*Muqāṭa'a*, *İltizām*)<sup>1</sup> of the Treasury, together with those belonging to the Holy Cities foundations, which produced annual profits of more than ten purses each to the tax farmers to whom they were assigned. To lighten the effect of the loss of these revenues on the Imperial Treasury and its tax farmers, the Sultan also decreed that this transfer should take place only when the holdings in question were vacated by their current farmers, and that after the *Îrād-i Cedid* treasury took them over, it should pay the Imperial Treasury the regular purchase prices previously paid for these farms by the private tax farmers, equal to five years' profits of the tax farmers, and that in addition it should pay the regular annual taxes which the tax farmers previously had delivered to the Imperial Treasury for these farms. In essence, thus, the *Îrād-i Cedid* treasury itself became the tax farmer of these holdings for the Imperial Treasury, administering them and collecting their taxes by sub-farming them to its own tax farmers.

In addition, all fiefs (*Timār*) previously set aside for members of the *Humbaracî* (Mortar) corps and the navy, and all military fiefs worth more than fifteen thousand piasters per year whose holders were found to be absent from their lands or failing in their duties in any way were to be seized for the new treasury and administered by it. Finally, various old and newly-created taxes were assigned to it for direct collection by its agents: the very profitable *Zecriyye* tax of two *paras* per *okke* of wine, three *paras* per *okke* of *raki*, and four per *okke* of spirits (*BVA*, Cevdet Maliye, 2800 and 30980; Pakalın III, 649); the *Resm-i Penbe* tax of one *para* per *okke* previously collected by the Imperial Mint (*Ḍarbḥāne*) from sellers of cotton cloth and of two *paras* per *okke* of cotton thread, previously levied

<sup>1</sup> Imperial possessions were alienated from the possession of the Imperial Treasury as *Muqāṭa'as*, and these *Muqāṭa'as* were assigned to agents as tax farms (*İltizāms*) or to salaried employees (*Emîns*) as agencies (*Emānets*) for collection. See Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, p. 383-384; Pakalın II, 578-579; Süleymân Şüdi, *Defter-i Muqteşid* (3 vols., Istanbul 1890) II, 47; H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (1 vol., 2 pts., London 1950-57) 1/2, p. 211; S. J. Shaw, *The Ottoman Archives as a Source for Egyptian History*, in: *JAOS*, vol. 83 (1963), 447-452.

for the benefit of the Arsenal (*Tersâne*) of Istanbul; the *Duhhân Gümriük* customs tax of six per cent on all imports and exports of tobacco; the *Resm-i Palamūd* charge of one *para* per *okke* of walnuts sold in the public markets; the *Resm-i Tiftik* tax of three *paras* per *okke* on all sales of Angora wool in the public markets; the *Resm-i Bunn* tax of eight *paras* per *okke* of coffee sold in the markets of Istanbul; the *Resm-i Istifil* of two *paras* per *okke* of Morea grapes; the *Resm-i Boya-i Kûk* of two *aqces* per *okke* of dyes (*BVA*, Cevdet Maliye, 30826; HHS, Turkei II-101, no. 39 [10 December 1792]); the *Resm-i Yapâğî* of one *para* per *okke* of wool and woolens; and the *Âdet-i Ağnām* tax of one *para* per head of sheep bought and sold in the markets all over the Empire (*BVA*, Cevdet Maliye 2881 and 2815). It was hoped that these sources would provide the new treasury with a steady annual revenue of about one million piasters, aside from the *Zecriyye* tax, which was to be used exclusively to pay off the new treasury's debts to the Imperial Treasury.

To further compensate the latter for the loss of these revenues, a number of its expenditure obligations associated with the established military corps were also transferred to the new *İrād-i Cedīd* treasury. From the start of the financial year 1793, it was required to pay not only the salaries and expenses of the *Nizam-i Cedīd* army, its basic *raison d'être*, but also the cost of the new equipment, barracks and salaries of the *Humbaracî* (Mortar), *Lağımçî* (Mining and Sapping) and *Tôpçî* (Artillery) corps, the salaries and expenses of the men and officers of the fleet and dockyard, and all expenses above those normally provided by the Imperial Treasury for the established infantry corps in the course of expeditions against the enemy. Thus the Imperial Treasury was required to pay only those expenditures incumbent on it in peace time before the *Nizam-i Cedīd* and other new reforms were inaugurated. All surpluses left in the new treasury at the end of each year had to be sent to a separate place in the Mint and there saved for special wartime expenditures, something like a "war chest" to be used only in emergencies, thus to spare the new and old treasuries alike from the heavy burden of war.

The *İrād-i Cedīd* treasury was given a separate building for its operations in the *Orta Kapısı* quarter of the Top Kapı Saray palace. To register its daily revenues and expenditures, a special scribe was assigned to it by the *Rûznâme* department of the Imperial Treasury along with a *Veznedār* (Weigher) to measure payments made to it in cash and kind. While the *İrād-i Cedīd Defterdārî* was made the director of the new treasury, the *Defterdār* of the Imperial Treasury was required to supervise his activities and to examine all his accounts at least once a month. Thus were the financial foundations of the "new order" laid.



Muṣṭafâ Reşid Efendî immediately set about to organize his Treasury and arrange to collect its revenues. By the end of August, 1792, he had already seized fifty-one fiefs in Karaman province alone <sup>1</sup>. By the end of the same year, he had assembled over four hundred fiefs bringing revenues of seven thousand piasters per month, and he was collecting about 435,000 piasters monthly from all the revenues assigned to his treasury, out of which only 124,000 piasters were paid to the Imperial Treasury and to the collecting agents (*BVA*, Ali Emiri—III Selim 17665).

Steps also were taken to expand the military corps. The French Lieutenant-General Menant and Lieutenants Ranchoup and Luzin came from France along with six sergeants sent by the French Ministry of War to train the new corps, and new-style rifles were imported in increasing quantities from France, England and Sweden (*BVA*, HH 12193). At first, the size of the corps was deliberately kept small, with no more than two hundred men and officers enrolled and training at the end of May, 1793. Most of the *Îrâd-i Cedîd* revenues in 1793 and 1794 were used principally to provide barracks and drill grounds at Levend Çiftlik, to import officers and equipment from Europe, to make new uniforms for the men, and to provide bonuses and salaries for those who were enrolled. Between April, 1793 and March, 1795, Muṣṭafâ Reşid managed to collect a total of 1,356,541 piasters for the corps, of which three-quarters was spent at the time with the balance put aside for the war chest <sup>2</sup>.

While the nucleus of the corps trained at Levend Çiftlik and preparations were made for subsequent expansion, efforts also were made to popularize the new ways among the people and the men of the older corps, or at least to break the news gradually, so that when the establishment of the new corps itself was publicly proclaimed, they would not be taken by surprise and goaded into any sudden, violent action. The Sultan and his ministers regularly went to Levend Çiftlik to inspect the drills and, by their presence, to publicize the existence of the corps and lend official sanction to its activities <sup>3</sup>.

It was only in the late summer of 1794 that the Sultan was satisfied that public opinion was prepared for the public announcement of the

<sup>1</sup> *BVA*, Cevdet Maliye 3106; Cevdet Dahiliye 8750; *TKS*, E 2053. Complete list of fiefs seized for the *Îrâd-i Cedîd* treasury between 1793 and 1800 are found in the following *BVA* registers: Tapu 941; Kepeci 615; Cevdet Maliye 4567; Cevdet Maliye 3106; Cevdet Maliye 7082; Muhasebe 6094.

<sup>2</sup> *BVA*, Ali Emiri — III Selim — 16264 and 16551; *TKS*, E 343; Chénîé, *Apperçu de la situation militaire des Turcs*, *AE* 191, p. 355.

<sup>3</sup> *AE* 184, fol. 284 (26 March 1793); *AE* 189, fol. 159 (5 Frimaire an III), fol. 71-73 (19 Vendémiaire an III); *HHS*, Turkei II-103, no. 18 (28 June 1793); *TKS* E 7016, E 3786, E 8421.

new corps, and that the corps itself was sufficiently developed so that it could resist any opposition which its open proclamation might stir. So the official regulations establishing its military organization finally were proclaimed on September 18 of that year, almost two years after it actually began its work<sup>1</sup>. In order to fit the *Nizam-i Cedid* army into the established Ottoman military hierarchy and attract as little attention as possible, it was officially attached to the old-established *Bostāniyān-i Hāşşa* corps<sup>2</sup> as its infantry-rifle branch, the *Bostānī Tüfenkcisi* (*Bostānī* riflemen) corps. To assist Muştafā Reşid in its military operations, Veli Āgā<sup>3</sup> was appointed as its first Colonel (*Āğā*). While the regulation declared the hope and intention that the full corps would eventually have twelve thousand men and officers, for the moment a single regiment (*Orta*) of 1,602 officers and men was organized at Levend Çiftlik as a model for later groups to be organized as money and men became available. Actual military direction of the regiment was given to a *Bīnbāşī* („head of one thousand”) and two majors, the *Āğā-yı Yemīn* (Major of the Right) and *Āğā-yı Yesār* (Major of the Left), each of whom was put in charge of a division (*tabūr*) of eight hundred men of officers. The two divisions were further divided into a total of twelve smaller companies (*bölük*), each composed of ninety men and ten officers and led by a company commander (*Bölük Bāşī*) later called *Yüzbaşī* („chief of one hundred”), and these were divided into platoons of nine men each commanded by an *Önbāşī* („chief of ten”). Each company also was given one cannon (*Tōp*), eight cannon men (*Tōpçī*) and one Cannon Master (*Tōp Ustāsī*), five cannonwagon men (*‘Arabacī*), six orderlies (*Qöllüqcü*) and various other minor officials (see Table I).

Common soldiers in the corps were provided with complete uniforms when they enlisted and once every year thereafter, with the full cost paid by the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury, Officers were expected to meet the

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the regulations establishing and organizing the *Nizam-i Cedid* corps, dated 21 Şafar 1208/17 September 1794, are found in *Qavānīn-i Sultān Selīm*, fol. 52b-56b; Anon. and untitled MS in Istanbul University Library, TY 3208, fol. 33b-37a; Ahmed Cevād, *Tārīḥ-i ‘Asker-i ‘Osmānī* II, 23-31. It is summarized in Cevdet VI, 58-61, 304-305; Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi* V, 67-68.

<sup>2</sup> The *Bostāniyān* (Gardeners), also called *Bostāncī*, corps, led by the *Bostāncī Bāşī* (Chief Gardener) were watchmen and guards for the pavilions in the Top Kapı Saray palace grounds, and also at many gates and walls of the palace. They also provided personal guardians for the Sultan himself. Gibb and Bowen I<sup>1</sup>, 84; Pakalın I, 239-240; Uzunçarşılı, *Bostāndjī*, EI (new ed.) I 1277-1278, and *Bostāndjī-Başı*, EI (new ed.) I 1278-1279. The *Bostānī Tüfenkcisi* corps, which was the name given to the *Nizam-i Cedid* by Selim, did not exist before, but was created especially for this purpose.

<sup>3</sup> See Ismail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (4 vols., Istanbul 1947-1955) IV, 72.

TABLE I  
ORGANIZATION OF THE *NIZAM-I CEDID* REGIMENT  
AT LEVEND ÇİFTLİK

	Number of Men	Annual Salary Each (piasters)	Daily Bread Each ( <i>okkes</i> )	Annual Total Salary (piasters)	Daily Total Bread ( <i>okkes</i> )
I. CHIEF OFFICERS					
1. <i>Âğâ</i>	1	12,000	10	12,000	10
2. <i>Kâtib</i> (Scribe)	1	4,000	3 1/2	4,000	3 1/2
3. <i>Muderris</i> (Chief Instructor)	1	—	25	—	25
4. <i>Kâtib Yamâğî</i> (Assistant Scribe)	2	1,000	1	2,000	2
5. <i>Nefer Kâtibi</i> (Salary Scribe)	2	500	1	1,000	2
6. <i>Bînbaşî</i> (Major)	1	4,000	5	4,000	5
7. <i>Kethodâ</i> (Lieutenant)	1	1,250	2 1/2	1,250	2 1/2
8. <i>Topçı Bâşî</i> (Chief Cannoneer)	1	1,000	2	1,000	2
9. <i>‘Arabacıbaşî</i> (Cannon-Wagon Chief)	1	800	2	800	2
10. <i>Cebecibâşî</i> (Chief of Ammunition Stores)	1	500	1 1/2	500	1 1/2
11. <i>Cebeci Çavûşu</i> (Ammunition stores Assistant)	1	300	1	300	1
12. <i>Mehterbâşî</i> (Band Chief)	1	600	1 1/2	600	1 1/2
13. <i>Âğâ-yı Yemîn</i> (Chief of the Right Division)	1	1,000	2	1,000	2
14. <i>Âğâ-yı Yesâr</i> (Chief of the Left Division)	1	1,000	2	1,000	2
15. <i>Mulâzim Âğâ</i> (Chief of Apprentices)	2	750	1 1/2	1,500	3
II. OFFICERS AND MEN OF EACH COMPANY ( <i>Bölük</i> )					
1. <i>Bölük Bâşî</i>	12	500	1 1/2	6,000	18
2. <i>Mulâzim</i>	24	400	1	9,600	24
3. <i>‘Alemdâr</i> (Standard-Bearer)	12	350	1	4,200	12
4. <i>Çavûş</i> (Sergeant)	12	300	1	3,600	12
III. OFFICERS AND MEN IN THE REGIMENT					
	Men per Company	Total in Regiment	Daily Salary plus Money for food ( <i>aqçes</i> )	Total Daily Salary plus Money for Food ( <i>aqçes</i> )	
1. <i>Önbâşî</i> (Corporal)	10	120	70 (40+30)	8,400	
2. <i>Neferât</i> (Riflemen)	90	1,080	50 (20+30)	5,400	
3. <i>Töp Ustâsî</i> (Cannon Master)	1	12	78 (48+30)	926	
4. <i>Töp Halîfesî</i> (Cannon Assistant)	1	12	66 (36+30)	792	

5. <i>Tōpçî</i> (Cannoneers)	8	96	58 (28 + 30)	5,568
6. 'Arabacî <i>Halîfesî</i> (Cannon Wagon Assistant)	1	12	66 (36 + 30)	792
7. 'Arabacî <i>Neferâtî</i> (Cannon Wagon Men)	5	60	50 (20 + 30)	3,000
8. <i>Sornazen</i> (Trumpeteers)	1	12	66 (36 + 30)	792
9. <i>Tablzen</i> (Drummers)	1	12	66 (36 + 30)	792
10. <i>Saqqâ</i> (Water-bearers)	2	24	50 (20 + 30)	1,200
11. <i>Qara qulluqçû</i> (Apprentices)	6	72	50 (20 + 30)	3,600

cost of their uniforms and other personal expenses from their regular salaries. A regular hierarchy of promotion was established within the corps, with vacancies filled by the persons occupying the posts immediately beneath them and everyone else moving up one notch. However, provision was made for the advancement of unusually qualified men out of order in special cases, especially if they showed their ability in battle. Among persons of equal ability, however, preference had to be given to age and seniority. The men were required to remain in their barracks night and day, to forgo all outside employment and residence, and to practice constantly. However, arrangements were made for one out of every five men to return to his family for periods up to six months during the winter. Heavy punishments were established for those who returned late from such leave and for all members of such groups of five of whom more than one man was absent at a given time. In the summer months, all the men had to be at their posts except those excused because of illness. Men had to remain in the corps at least three years so that the state would benefit from the training given them. After that time they could leave and return to their former occupations if they wished, but only if they agreed to pay back all the salaries they received since entering the corps! Those who retired because of illness or old age were given pensions equal to one-half their active salaries at the time of retirement. If they retired as the result of battle wounds incurred in the course of active duty, they were given pensions equal to their full salaries, and even more in certain cases.

At the time the regulation was issued, there were only 468 men and 20 officers in training at Levend Çiftlik, and they were living in flimsy wooden shacks and tents because the regular barracks under construction had not yet been completed (*BVA*, HH 9759). But during the next year recruits came rapidly, mainly from among unemployed youths found roaming the streets of Istanbul and from the private armies of the leading notables of Anatolia <sup>1</sup> and the regiment soon reached its full strength. In some cases, the notables contributed men to the new army for specific

<sup>1</sup> *HHS* — Türkiye II — 103, no. 14 (10 May 1793), no. 20 (25 July 1793).

periods of two or three years, so they would get training and weapons from the central government, and could then return home to bolster the provincial forces (*BVA*, HH 12087). Most of the permanent buildings were completed by the end of 1796, including three barracks, a rifle factory, two mosques and a school (*BVA*, HH 7137). Members of the corps were dressed in the French manner, with blue berets, red breeches and red jackets. The main difference between the uniforms of the men and the officers were the swords and the buttons sewn above the pockets of the latter (Cevād, *Tārīḥ-i 'Asker-i 'Osmānī*, II, 31). Training went ahead rapidly under the direction of Ranchoup, Luzin and Menant, and the drills were frequently visited by the Sultan and his chief officials.

The revenues of the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury expanded rapidly as more and more vacated tax farms and fiefs were turned over to it, reaching 3,033,894 piasters in the financial year 1795 (*BVA*, Cevdet Maliye 19808) and 6,500,000 piasters in 1798 (*BVA*, Kepeci 2381). Of this sum, about one million piasters were paid annually to the Imperial Treasury as compensation for its lost revenues, and a similar sum went to pay the salaries and expenses of the men and officers training at Levend Çiftlik, while the balance went to the “war chest” to pay for the expenses of the campaigns currently in progress against mountain rebels both in Europe and Anatolia (*BVA*, Kepeci 2381).

With this very favorable financial situation, and under the stimulus of the French invasion of Egypt, the Sultan finally felt that the new corps could be safely expanded, and an entirely new regiment was created on the model of that at Levend Çiftlik on November 23, 1799. There were differences between the regiments, however. The older Levend Çiftlik force was composed entirely of infantry men, whereas the new regiment was to have cavalry as well as infantry. Men for the new regiment were to be provided entirely by the various provincial governors, who were ordered to recruit men locally and train them in the *Nizam-i Cedid* way under the direction of officers sent from Levend Çiftlik. The salaries of trainees and officers alike were provided by the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury. While these men were to continue to serve with the governors, almost as provincial militias, in order to maintain local order, a central barracks was established for them at Üsküdar (Scutari), across the Bosphorus from Istanbul, to control their training and direct their operations. Barracks and training grounds for the new regiment were set aside for it at Qāḍiköy, including the famous Selimiyye barracks, which survived into modern times<sup>1</sup>. The internal organization of the new regiment was

<sup>1</sup> Mehmed Râ'îf, *Mir'at-i İstānbül* (Istanbul 1314) I, 80-84; *TKS*, E 113; E 3752; *BVA*, HH 3732.

exactly the same as that of Levend Çiftlik, with the exception that its total number was without limit. To coordinate the activities of the two *Nizam-i Cedid* regiments, a new post was created, *Ocāq Kethodāsī* (Lieutenant of the Corps), and it was usually given to the ablest of the *Bīn-bāşīs* of the two regiments. Overall direction of both remained in the hands of the holder of the combined posts of *İrād-i Cedid Defterdārī* and *Ta'limlī 'Askerī Nāzirī*. Finally, the new regiment was given the color light blue for its jackets and breeches, to distinguish its men and officers from those of Levend Çiftlik<sup>1</sup>.

In May, 1797, the *Nizam-i Cedid* army, with a single regiment, had 2,536 men and 27 officers officially enrolled and paid (*BVA*, HH 7137, 9559), but with the addition of the new regiment and continued increasing revenues, this number rose rapidly. In September, 1799 there were 4,317 men and 30 officers, in April, 1800 there were 6,029 men and 27 officers, and in July, 1801, there were 9,263 men and 27 officers (*BVA*, HH 6768). In the summer of 1800, the wealthy feudal districts (*sancāq*) of Bōlū, Hūdāvendigār (Bursa), and Karamān were seized for the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury, and those of the entire province of Anaḍolu underwent a similar transformation one year later. In the end, not all the provincial governors recruited and trained *Nizam-i Cedid* men, but nine of them did, including 'Abdurrahmān Paşa, Governor of Karamān, who in reward for his services was appointed Colonel of the entire Üsküdar regiment in 1801 (*TKS*, E III3).

Starting in 1802, he developed a system of military conscription throughout Anatolia to provide regular contingents of men for the *Nizam-i Cedid*. Each provincial and district official and notable was required to send a certain number of men to Üsküdar for training in the new army for periods of between six months and one year. About half these contingents were trained as infantry for service in the regular Levend Çiftlik and Üsküdar regiments. The other half was trained as cavalry so they could return to form the local militias of the provincial governors and district notables. In return for this service, the recruits and their families were exempted from all local taxes, and they were paid the regular *Nizam-i Cedid* salaries even while they still were only in training.

In addition to this, after 1804 an effort was made to gradually transform the old *Timār* feudal system into the new financial base for this *Nizam-i Cedid* militia. Fiefs were seized from their holders on the flimsiest of pretexts and administered by the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury as tax farms to provide revenue to support the recruitment and training of the same

<sup>1</sup> *BVA*, Cevdet Maliye 4327; Cevdet Askeri 34197; *Qavānīn-i Sultān Selīm*, fol. 57b.



number of men for the *Nizam-i Cedid* militia as were formerly supported on a feudal basis. The fiction of feudal organization was preserved by the application of the name *Sancâq Bey* to their officers, but these were in fact salaried officers sent to the provinces by the Levend Çiftlik and Üsküdar corps. Regular barracks were built for the new provincial militia at the expense of the *İrād-i Cedid* treasury, at Ankara, Bolu, Kastamonu, Kütahya, Kayseri, Niğde, Kirşehir, Çorum, Menteşe, and Izmir, while elsewhere they were housed in buildings previously used by the local security forces. Between 1802 and 1806, these provincial *Nizam-i Cedid* men came to Üsküdar for six month training periods in numbers approaching five thousand a year. By the end of 1806, as the result of these efforts, there were a total of 22,685 men and 1,590 officers enrolled in the *Nizam-i Cedid* army, of whom approximately half were stationed in Anatolia and the balance in Istanbul and the Balkans<sup>1</sup>. The relative success of this Anatolian venture caused the Sultan to attempt a similar corps in Europe, with its central base at Edirne (Adrianople), but the European portions of the Empire by this time were entirely too far removed from the effective control of the central government for this sort of levy to be effective, and as before, the Ottoman army in Europe under Selim continued to depend for men primarily on the contributions of the independent local notables.

The rapid increase in the number of men enrolled in the *Nizam-i Cedid* created new problems, in particular the same sort of disorderly, undisciplined behavior which had brought the older corps into disrepute. In the early days of the *Nizam-i Cedid*, the nucleus of its force consisted of renegades who had fallen into Ottoman hands during the Austrian and Russian campaigns. The bulk of the enlisted men enrolled in the first few years were Turks coming mainly from Istanbul, from the large group of unemployed, who joined as the only alternative to starvation. Both of these groups consisted of persons who were accustomed to the discipline, restraint, and sanitary methods required by the residence in close proximity of large numbers of persons in cities and camps. However, most of the new men enrolled after 1796 came from the villages and tribal areas of Anatolia. By 1800, ninety per cent of the enlisted men in the army were Turkish peasants and tribesmen from Anatolia (*BVA*, HH 9125). Many of these joined for the weapons and plunder they could gain more than anything else. Resistent to discipline, unaccustomed to the kind of life required by the corps, they became increasingly turbulent and disorderly, often coming down from Levend Çiftlik to ravage the

<sup>1</sup> *BVA*, Cevdet Maliye 28741; *TKS*, E 3404; *BVA*, HH 10731, 9125; *HHS*, Türkiye II-104, no 24 (24 August 1793), 106, no. 16 (16 May 1794).

villages along the Bosphorus, with Tarabya, Yeni Köy and Beşiktaş suffering most in this way (*TKS*, E 3752). The officers of the corps found it increasingly difficult to train such men in European tactics and organization. Many of the men fled from the camps shortly after they received their uniforms and weapons, complaining that the work was too hard, the discipline too severe, and the pay too low (*TKS*, E 3404). Forming themselves into powerful new robber bands, they began to plague notables and governors alike in western Anatolia and the Balkans, with the superior weapons provided them by the Sultan giving them a great advantage over their opponents (*BVA*, Cevdet Askeri, 3876).

To combat these difficulties, various changes were made in the corps. Additional officers were appointed. Punishments for infractions of the rules were made more severe. Efforts were made to supervise the men when they were not actually in the field or training at the practice grounds. The rapid increase in the number of men in the corps had far outstripped the drill facilities at Levend Çiftlik and Üsküdar, so that it was impossible for all the men to practice and drill daily, as was originally envisaged in their regulations. Those unable to practice were left with nothing to do for much of the time, since such a contingency had not been provided for in the regulations. The resulting idleness and lack of supervision was a major cause for the difficulties which the army was now experiencing. So as part of the solution, new revised training regulations were introduced and decreed on April 6, 1801<sup>1</sup>. A regular system of training rotation was set up for the use of the drill fields. Six companies were ordered to train each day, with each company of two regiments at Levend Çiftlik thus being able to train every fourth day, while Fridays and Tuesdays were kept aside as vacation days as before. When the men were not scheduled on the drill fields, they were required to practice without powder near or in their barracks and to clean and repair their weapons. As an additional measure to relieve the pressure caused by idleness, those members of the corps wishing to engage in outside trades when they were not required at the practice field were allowed to do so if they had performed their other duties satisfactorily and in full, if their work was considered to be “a trade in keeping with the honor of the Corps”, and if they worked near enough to their barracks so they could return at night and also could be called for instant duty when they were needed. Officers were now allowed to marry for the first time, but the men were supposed to remain single so they could be

<sup>1</sup> The supplementary regulations of the *Nizam-i Cedid* corps, dated 21 Qāda 1215/6 April 1801, are given in *Qavānīn-i Sultān Selīm*, fol. 71b; and Anon. MS in Istanbul University Library, TY 3208.

subjected to the severe discipline of the corps. However, those men already in the corps who had married were not required to divorce their wives. On the contrary, as before those whose families needed them were allowed to form themselves into groups of five men of whom one could return home during the winter.

In addition, to secure more sufficient command of the corps, the financial and military duties originally united in the person of the Supervisor were separated in late 1801, with the post of *Ta'limlî 'Askerî Nâzirî* (Supervisor of Training) being transferred to the man who was the Supervisor of the *Tôpci* (Cannon) and *'Arabacî* (Cannon-Wagon) corps, while the *Nizam-i Cedîd* Supervisor was left only with his financial and administrative duties, as *Îrâd-i Cedîd Defterdârî*, with the rank of *Şiqq-i Şânî Defterdârî*<sup>1</sup>.

These reforms had some effect during 1801 and 1802, but periodic cases of indiscipline on the part of members of the Üsküdar corps in particular continued to be reported, manifesting an increasing decline in the discipline and efficiency of the corps, and also inflicting a final, crushing blow against the government effort to popularize the *Nizam-i Cedîd* among the people (*BVA*, HH 10731).

This, then, was the new army. By the end of Selim's reign it numbered almost ten thousand men, who were armed with modern weapons, trained by European officers, and praised for their efficiency and good bearing by almost all the Europeans who observed them<sup>2</sup>. Together with the reformed artillery corps, it should have provided the Sultan with an effective military force capable not only of meeting the enemy on equal terms, but also for protecting the Sultan and itself against the attacks of enemies. On the occasions in which it was employed, the *Nizam-i Cedîd* army effectively demonstrated its superiority over the Janissaries and the other elements of the old army. In 1799, approximately seven hundred of its men were sent by sea to Gaza, where they performed important services in assisting its governor, Ahmed Cezzâr Paşa, in his stalwart defense of that fortress against the advancing French army led by Napoleon Bonaparte<sup>3</sup>. In 1800, when the British fleet blockaded the French in Alexandria, two thousand *Nizam-i Cedîd* soldiers were landed along with 6,000 regular Ottoman troops, and they managed to maintain a successful blockade against the French at Rosetta, event-

<sup>1</sup> *Qavânîn-i Sulţân Selîm*, fol. 46a; Cevâd, *Târîh-i 'Asker-i 'Osmanî* II, 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> Chénîé, *Apperçu*, p. 362-363; *HHS*, *Türkei* II-107, no. 29 (10 September 1794), 108, no. 32 (25 October 1794); Olivier I, 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> Cevdet VII, 58; Cevâd, *Târîh* II, 43; *TKS*, E 3404, E 7014; *BVA*, HH 13828; *HHS*, *Türkei*-120, no. 13 (25 February 1799), no. 14 (2 March 1799), no. 33 (18 May 1799), no. 37 (3 June 1799).

ually forcing them to surrender in April, 1801<sup>1</sup>. During the next six years, soldiers of the new army performed important, although somewhat limited service against mountain bandit forces in the Balkan and Rhodope mountains<sup>2</sup>.

But in the end, the *Nizam-i Cedid* did not achieve its objectives. It still remained a small force in comparison with the 100,000 men from the old regiments who composed the bulk of the Ottoman army. And the old corps absolutely refused to accept the new training and weapons, despite their evident superiority. The Janissaries refused to serve with the new troops, so in the most important campaigns during the last decade of Selim's rule, the *Nizam-i Cedid* troops performed only token services, and the main Ottoman army continued to be composed primarily of the unruly and ineffective Janissaries, with disastrous results<sup>3</sup>. In 1807, when the opposition of the Janissaries, the Ulema, and others with vested interests in the preservation of the old institutions led to open revolt against Selim, the new army was simply overwhelmed by its opponents, and only a few of its members were able to escape. The *Nizam-i Cedid*, however, did have an important influence on Ottoman reform later in the 19th century. For one thing, its fate showed clearly the necessity of destroying the military arm of reaction, the Janissaries, before really fundamental reforms were attempted, and the impact of this lesson on Maḥmud II is evident. Moreover, many officers and men trained in the *Nizam-i Cedid* survived the suppression which followed its destruction, and once the Janissaries were destroyed in 1826, they provided the nucleus for the new army created by Maḥmud II on the model of the *Nizam-i Cedid*. Selim's new army thus provided the example, the lesson, the model and the nucleus for the reforms which were to follow.

<sup>1</sup> TKS, E 2320, 4241; BVA, Kepeci 3247; HHS, Türkiye II-122, no. 11 (26 March 1800).

<sup>2</sup> TKS, E 3752; HHS, Türkiye II-113, no. 31 (31 October 1796), 122, no. 11 (29 March 1800).

<sup>3</sup> FO 78/25 (25 May 1799); FO 78/28 (29 January 1800); on Selim's reforms in the older military corps, see S. J. Shaw, *The Traditional Ottoman military corps under Sultan Selim III*, in: *Der Islam*, vol. 40 (1964).