

FACTIONAL STRUGGLES AND
THE FIRST PHASE OF
TURKISH CONSTITUTIONALISM
(1867-1877)

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the process that led the Ottoman State to a constitutional regime. Although the constitutional regime was socially the demand of the social forces that suffered from the domination of high bureaucracy on the country, the phenomenon that marked the process that led the Ottoman State to constitutional order was factional struggles among high bureaucracy. These factional struggles determined natures of resultant constitution and "constitutional" regime. This so-called constitutional regime, which was experienced for the first time in the Ottoman State, had a content that was not, even superficially, pertinent to the principle of separation of powers, in which the parliament had no budgeting right and no legislative power and thus there was not any actual restrictions on the executive power. This situation is the product of Tanzimat pashas' determining of conditions under which the constitution was born. They monopolized the Ottoman politics and prevented participation of the factors to the politics other than themselves. While Tanzimat pashas came to such an end, they engaged in conflicts and factional struggles among themselves for the leadership of bureaucracy as well. Opposition movements that emerged against the Porte's power also took shape under the influence of the atmosphere created by these factional struggles. The Young Ottomans appeared on the political stage as a part of these factional struggles. However, as seen in the example of Cemiyet-i Ahrar, which would later be separated from the Young Ottomans, the independent opposition forces that went beyond the course of factional

struggles also emerged. This thesis tries to explain the political struggles that took place between 1867 and 1877 and tendencies and phenomena in the politics of the period by examining them on the basis of socio-economic contradictions.

Keywords: First Constitutional Period, Young Ottomans, Cemiyet-i Ahrar, Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, Sağır Ahmet Paşazade Mehmet Bey

ÖZ

HİZİP KAVGALARI VE TÜRK ANAYASACI HAREKETİNİN İLK SAFHASI (1867-1877)

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Bu tez Osmanlı Devleti’ni meşruti rejime götüren süreci irdelemektedir. Toplumsal açıdan, anayasal rejim yüksek bürokrasinin ülke üzerinde kurduğu tahakkümün yükünü omuzlayan sosyal güçlerin istemi olsa da, Osmanlı Devleti’ni meşruti düzene götüren sürece damgasını vuran olgu yüksek bürokrasi arasındaki hizip kavgaları olmuştur. Bu hizip kavgaları ortaya çıkan anayasanın ve “anayasal” rejimin mahiyetini tayin etmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti’nde ilk kez tecrübe edilen bu sözde anayasal rejim, güçler ayrılığı ilkesine yüzeysel olarak bile bağlanmayan, meclisin bütçe hakkının ve yasama yetkisinin olmadığı, dolayısıyla yürütme üzerinde hiçbir fiili sınırlamanın söz konusu olmadığı bir içeriğe sahipti. Bu durum, Osmanlı siyasetini tekeli altına alan ve kendileri dışındaki unsurların siyasete katılımını engelleyen Tanzimat paşalarının anayasanın içinde doğduğu koşulları tayin etmesinin sonucu olmuştur. Tanzimat paşaları böyle bir sonuca varırken kendi aralarında kavga etmişler, bürokrasinin liderliğini elde etmek uğruna hizip çekişmelerine girişmişlerdir. Babıali iktidarına karşı ortaya çıkan muhalefet hareketleri de hizip kavgalarının yarattığı atmosferin etkisi altında şekillenmiştir. Yeni Osmanlılar bu hizip kavgalarının bir parçası olarak politika sahnesine çıkarlar. Ancak daha sonra Yeni Osmanlılar’dan ayrılacak Cemiyet-i Ahrar örneğinde görüldüğü üzere hizip kavgalarının seyri dışına çıkan bağımsız muhalif güçler de temayüz etmiştir. Bu tez, 1867 ile 1877

arasında cereyan eden siyasal m¼cadeleleri ve d¼nemin siyasetinde ortaya ¼ıkan eęilim ve olguları, sosyo-ekonomik ¼eliřkiler temelinde inceleyerek a¼ıklamaya ¼alıřmaktadırdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Birinci Meřrutiyet, Yeni Osmanlılar, Cemiyet-i Ahrar, S¼leyman H¼sn¼ Pařa, Saęır Ahmet Pařazade Mehmet Bey

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the conditions that led the Ottoman State to a constitutional regime.

This is not an examination of the constitution in the strict sense, yet. Subjects we focus on here are the process leading to promulgation of the constitution and the political struggles qualifying that process. These political struggles, no doubt, determined the content of Ottomans' first constitution. In this sense, problems related to the constitution will be scrutinized in order to analyze political processes and to offer insights to the content of constitution from this analysis.

In the literature which deals with the process that led the Ottoman State to a constitutional regime, it is seen that the Young Ottomans and the *coup d'etat* of May 1876 are given prominence. However, differences in terms of both political views and organizations among the Young Ottomans emerged in 1867 and the pashas¹ who removed the grand vizier and sultan in 1876 are not addressed satisfactorily. Indeed pro-constitutional propaganda activities of the Young Ottomans, which began in 1867 in Turkey and ended in 1870 in Europe, was quite efficient for the concept of constitution to gain recognition in the public opinion in the Ottoman State. But few old members of the Young Ottomans were among the actors that occupied the political stage in 1876; in this case yet, there was no such thing like unity between them; rather they played their role individually. From the change of power in May 1876 to the promulgation of constitution on December 23, 1876, the political role of the Young Ottomans was restricted to the extent of their individual efforts.

¹ This group was called "Erkan-ı Erbaa" (Four Foremost), including Mithat, Hüseyin Avni, Rüşdi Pashas and sheik al-Islam Hayrullah.

It is assumed that there was a kind of continuation between political efforts of the Young Ottomans and sequence of events that led the Ottoman State to have a constitution in 1876.² But the relations between the Young Ottoman intellectuals and the pashas who removed the grand vizier and sultan with a *coup d'état* in 1876 were not as stated above and the differences between them were not emphasized. But the pashas who sought power in the climax of Ottoman politics were, let alone being friendly, uninterested and even hostile against both old Young Ottoman writers and young intellectuals from new generations, apart from their desire to exploit them for their political goals.

Old Young Ottoman members who were still active in politics in 1876 were seen behind others in the chaotic political stage of that year; indeed, it would be seen in the course of events that pashas who had already took action in order not to lose front row of politics wanted them to stay behind. As a result we see them within the scope of their individual efforts that mostly aimed to win a space for themselves in the politics and effectiveness for their own words at this stage.

The course of events that led the Ottoman State to a constitutional regime seems a consequence of an opposition which developed against the high bureaucracy that monopolized political power at its own hands and the sultan integrated with this bureaucracy. Indeed, removal of Mahmud Nedim and dethronement of Abdülaziz in May 1876 fit to this sight. However, the cadres who overthrew Nedim and Abdülaziz were themselves high bureaucrats. So there was not a win of opposition which was seeking to break the high bureaucracy's monopoly of power; the thing that happened in May 1876 was rather settling a power struggle within the bureaucracy.

This phenomenon, valid in 1876, is also valid in 1867. The Young Ottomans did not emerge as an independent political movement existing by their own means. They appeared on the political stage under the patronage of Mustafa Fazıl who was removed from Istanbul as a result of his conflict with his brother, İsmail, on the right of succession of Egypt's khedivate. In accordance with this beginning, relations between the Young Ottomans and Fazıl as well would take shape according to the course of relations between Fazıl and the Sublime Porte. Under this circumstance, the Young Ottomans' opposition which was seen harsh and impregnable would fluctuate according to the changes in Fazıl's position; and

² Davison, for example, says that thought of the Young Ottomans was among the factors that shaped coup d'état of 1876. see Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Gordian Press, 1973), p. 219

this case would cause their disintegration at the end. The Young Ottomans took to the stage in line with conflict of interest among pashas, namely clique fights, and due to the similar reason they were divided and changed sides. At the end, never being able to get rid of the balance in which they could not ensure their political permanency based on their own resources, the “opposition” that had been making by Fazıl’s millions died away as easily as it emerged.

The Young Ottomans themselves were also from bureaucratic hierarchy, albeit being different in degree, just as their adversaries in power. So, opponents that countered the Sublime Porte’s pashas who occupied the state wheel’s climax emerged from lower strata of the same wheel. At this point, consistency problem of opposition comes into question. It can be questioned that whether an opposition originated in bureaucracy, even it comes from lower strata, can take action to demolish the bureaucratic oligarchy and its privileges. An opposition movement seeking to demolish privileges of bureaucracy can only come from the social forces which are in conflict of interest with this bureaucracy. These forces are social categories that are put into trouble by the bureaucracy’s social and economic policy. Therefore, the consistency problem of opposition against the bureaucratic oligarchy appears as the problem of this opposition’s relations with social forces. A lower-middle class bureaucratic opposition which does not seek to win support of social forces whose interest are already in conflict with the supremacy of bureaucracy is bound to remain within the limits of power struggle within the bureaucracy itself.

Examination of the Young Ottomans’ attempts from this perspective will be instructive for our subject. They raised concepts of “*usul-i meşveret*” (method of mutual deliberation/consultancy) and “*millet meclisi*” (national assembly) in their writings and discourse; they also expressed demand of putting executive bureaucrats under people’s supervision (“*umumi nezaret*”). Looking at these attitudes, they can be considered as spokesmen of desires of Turkish-Muslim middle-classes, including ordinary officials, artisans, craftsmen and small tradesmen, etc., to have a say on the issues of taxes and expenses as well as the administration of the country in general. On the other hand, they entered to the political stage as a consequence of Fazıl’s fight with khediv İsmail on the succession right and his conflict with the Sublime Porte emerged due to this reason; they acted under the pressure that arose from demands and strains of their “protector” according to the course of this power conflict. From this point, they can be seen as a part of clique fights among bureaucrats; thus they seem to be “men of the pen” in a conflict of interest suit.

Relations of Mustafa Fazıl³, who were removed from Istanbul in April 1866 and went to Paris because of his conflict with the Porte, which took right of succession from him and gave it to İsmail's family, started to "recover" after Abdülaziz's European journey⁴. As soon as the Porte's attempts to make use of him as a trump card against İsmail, he shifted his behaviors toward the Young Ottomans. So much so that, soon after the Young Ottomans' most famous newspaper, *Hürriyet*'s first issue was published, we found Fazıl trying to pressure on Namık Kemal and his friends. Strains from Fazıl who wanted the Young Ottomans not to criticize the Porte with which he tried to compromise at the same time, caused Namık Kemal to be in a tense situation between his friends and his "benefactor". Preferring Fazıl, he left *Hürriyet* eventually. Ziya Pasha who did not follow Kemal and lost Fazıl's financial support hence, this time began to publish *Hürriyet* with the khediv's support.⁵

This means that, the opposition that appeared in defense of the constitutional regime against the Porte in 1867 was shaped under influence of power struggle among the pashas from the beginning of its development. This can be interpreted a "you get up and I sit down" fight as Mordtmann do.⁶ In intrigues of clique fights, sudden slips, changing sides, zigzags happened. These slips were not mentioned openly and happened in a "by the book" manner that fit with intriguing politics.

Despite these facts, it is seen that the Young Ottomans' activities were effective in shaping a kind of democratic public opinion in the Ottoman State. It cannot be claimed that they were ignorant of the role that was casted them in controversies among *sınıf-ı vükela* (class of ministers); in fact, it can be said that they felt uneasy because of this situation. Even the Young Ottomans' opposition appeared as an element of controversies between political elite, they, being most educated and enlightened among their contemporaries, did not fail to say their own opinions by using means at their disposal. Thus we frequently come across "out of alignment" sayings of the Young Ottomans. No doubt there was a limit for free discourses of the enlightened cadres as their journalism's funding was depended to parties of the clique conflicts. Still, from time to time, we find expressions in their writings that utter troubles and demands of various social strata such as Turkish-Muslim crafts, artisans,

³ Kaya Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa Üzerinde Bir Araştırma*, (Ankara: Atatürk Üniversitesi, 1979), p. 85

⁴ It took place between June 21 and August 7, 1867.

⁵ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 134. Ali Suavi also followed same way.

⁶ Andreas Mordtmann, *İstanbul ve Yeni Osmanlılar*, (İstanbul: Pera, 1999), p. 50

merchants, etc. who had been left without voice and organization and pushed out of political stage by the bureaucracy.

These expressions can be claimed depreciated as they were utilized in the factional fights. But, it is necessary to point to this paradox. It is clear that the Young Ottomans' ambivalent (or unstable) position between posing an autonomous manner and depending on a clique in the bureaucracy created an antinomy. When this ambivalence becomes unsustainable, it is clear that a choice would have to be made. As it is, some of the Young Ottomans made their choices according to the wishes of their "protector".

Nevertheless, the fact is that a coherent political tendency, which separated itself from the factional politics and ran counter to the bureaucracy as a whole and the sultan, emerged among the opponents abroad; and this political tendency literally approached the petit-bourgeois revolutionism as it took an uncompromising attitude against the ruling class and pursued a policy targeting the republican regime. The group under Sağır Ahmet Paşazade Mehmet Bey's leadership that left the Young Ottomans and called themselves *Cemiyet-i Ahrar* (Union of Independents), although its short life span, emerged as a political initiative that was in the forefront of the movement aiming to overthrow dominant powers, the Porte's high bureaucrats and sultan together and establish *hakimiyet-i umumi* (sovereignty of people) by means of a national assembly. Thus they symbolized the most radical fraction of the opposition. It is pretty interesting in this regard that the longest article which was written by Mehmet Bey⁷ and published in Cemiyet's organ, *İnkılab*, was a response to an article written by Ziya Pasha in which he condemn one segment of the ruling class, favoring other one at the same time. Mehmet Bey refused and condemned Ziya Pasha's approach and uttered a whole stand up against the ruling class. In his article, Mehmet Bey damned the Young Ottomans' policy characterized by leaning upon a faction. He put forth his Cemiyet's policy with these words: "it is not to patronize intrigues in order to overthrow a few lazy. (...) And our power is solely us."⁸ These discourses are a clear depiction of the separation between politics of the Young Ottomans and *Cemiyet-i Ahrar*. These also point to paradoxes of the Young Ottomans.

In 1876 Mithat, Mütercim Rüşdü and Hüseyin Avni pashas, who were close colleagues or *müntesibs* (follower) of Ali and Fuad pashas and upheld the conventional politics of the

⁷ *İnkılab*, nr 3 and nr 4, "Hürriyet Gazetesine Cevab"

⁸ Kaya Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, (Ankara: Atatürk Üniversitesi, 1976), p. 245

Porte, together with the sheikh-al Islam went into action against the sultan Abdülaziz and his favorite grand vizier Mahmud Nedim, who had gained much more influence in high politics and governing country. The discourse of the constitution kept the political stage busy in 1876 too and this time the role of spokesman belonged to Mithat Pasha. However constitution issue was no longer a propaganda subject as in 1867; it gradually became a phenomenon that determined whole political agenda by way of forcing diplomatic conditions as well.

Clique conflicts continued to shape the political process during campaigns on the constitution and in this sense, predestination of “constitutionalism” does not seem to be changed. This time, but, aforementioned campaigns were made in a changed balance and for differentiated objectives. Comparison of “constitutionalisms” in 1867 and 1876 by this way, will offer us a chance to interpret events from a different perspective.

Mithat Pasha did not restrict his political efforts to gain support of the Porte’s bureaucracy and lower-middle strata officials whose unrest against the ruling class increased in the 1870’s crisis-filled conditions. He also tried to direct the ulema’s upper categories to infuse “constitutional” regime idea into different elements of society. Softas/madrasah students who were brought up at ulema’s hands was one of these elements and might be the most important one. But Mithat’s and his followers’ “constitutionalism” was not a “constitutionalism” like that of the Young Ottomans which had been propagandized by putting forward its different demands such as people’s supervision, national assembly and targeted, at least seemingly, bureaucratic elite. As a matter of fact, the main theme of the Memorandum of Muslim Patriots⁹, which was distributed two months before overthrowing of Abdülaziz and Nedim and assaulted them, was to gain support of Ottoman dominant classes and Europe, not to check the bureaucratic oligarchy. The content of Mithat’s “constitutionalism” will be seen more openly in his constitution drafts and his political actions especially after May 1876, which will be revealed while this topic is being addressed later.

In the second chapter historical frame of this study will be presented. As the constitution issue is related to the fact of the high bureaucracy’s domination over the country, this domination is scrutinized from various aspects. Monopolization of the political power at the hands of the high bureaucracy in the Tanzimat period and the socio-economic

⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 320-1

contradictions between people and the ruling class that accompanied this domination of the high bureaucracy is attempted to be showed in general lines in this chapter. By this way not only the ever-lasting administrative crisis of the Porte but also the social ground that shaped the political superstructure of the period is referred to.

After describing of the oppressive regime established by the bureaucracy, the Young Ottomans opposition which was emerged against this regime will be dealt with in the third chapter. In this chapter the relationship of the political activities of the Young Ottomans from their emergence to their disintegration with the factional struggles among the ruling classes will tried to be shown. Then, from this point forth, the schisms emerged in the opponents abroad and the dilemmas in the writings of the Young Ottomans will be examined in this respect.

In the next phase, in the fourth chapter, accounting political history of the decade after 1867 will bring us to 1876 crisis and struggles around the issue of constitution at that year. At this phase, deepening economic and political crises that the Ottoman ruling class encountered in 1870s involves in our analysis alongside with new factional struggles among the high bureaucracy. The factional struggles that took place in the chaotic atmosphere of 1876 are essential for revealing the conditions of transition to constitutional order. The political debates emerged around the issue of Kanun-i Esasi and the drafting of this constitution are examined in this chapter. The elimination of independent constitutionalist intellectuals and some mass organizations in the course of events and the Istanbul Conference, which is the vital point of the developments that put an end factional struggles of that time in the Ottoman politics, will also be discussed here.

It is up to the conclusion chapter to exhibit the facts resulting from all these analyses.

This study takes Mithat's exile as a boundary. It may be asked why this is the boundary. This choice is neither because Mithat was the most consistent defender of the constitution nor he was -as claimed¹⁰- a so-called "revolutionary" will. Rather, he laid the ground for his own easily exile as he instrumentalized the constitution and constitutionalism for his factional purposes, at the same time rendering them meaningless by this way. But the real important aspect of his exile was that it symbolized closing of a period in the factional

¹⁰ See *Bilim ve Ütopya*, nr 214, April 2012

struggles in the Ottoman politics. This exile can be taken as the beginning of long-lasting Abdülhamid regime.

In this study it is tried to use the sources that present the general panorama of the period under discussion. It is tried to include the works that cover various aspects of the period in order to provide a comprehensive perspective as much as possible. The newspapers published in the period such as *Hürriyet* and *İnkılab*, the memories and writings of the witnesses and prominent politicians of the period, the biographies that deal with the life stories of the leading figures of the period and the works that examine the conditions of the period politically, economically, etc. are the main sources used throughout the study.

At this juncture, it should be noted that all the terminological elements used throughout this study, from those that directly indicate to various social forces such as “lower strata of the bureaucracy”, “Turkish-Muslim artisans, tradesmen and merchants”, “non-Muslim bourgeoisie” and “landowners” to the idiom of “middle-class” that generally indicates to urban petty bourgeoisie and to the phrases of “ruling elite”, “bureaucratic oligarchy”, “class of pashas”, etc. which refer to those who hold the political power at the peak of the government in contradiction with the popular classes, take their places in terms of the historical materialist method/perspective.

In brief, this study tries to account for the political struggles from 1867 to 1877. This problem requires uncovering the social forces on which political factors were depended and the stages through which the “solution” came in these struggles. By this way it will be tried to show that the decisive factor of the Ottoman politics in this era is the factional struggles among the ruling class. The main purpose of this study is to uncover this fact.

CHAPTER II

REGIME OF THE TANZIMAT PASHAS

“Babiali eski Yunan putperestlerinin tahayyül ettikleri Olimpos dağına benzer. Onda birkaç ilah-ı müşahhas vardır. Onların emrî fermanları ta’riz ve sualden masun ve münezzehdir.”¹¹

(Hürriyet, September 29, 1868)

II. I. Economic Deadlock of Government and Contradictions Between People and Bureaucracy

It is not our matter here to examine governing style of the Tanzimat bureaucracy entirely. But discussing the bureaucracy’s tyranny over the society in general is necessary as the demand for the constitution emerged against this bureaucracy’s arbitrary and oppressive regime.

The constitutions emerged as the products of bourgeoisie’s fights against feudal regime in the west. The bourgeoisie fought first against arbitrarily tax raisings and then wanted to limit uncontrolled spending of these funds taken from them; at the end, in his long fight against absolutist powers, the bourgeoisie got his demands through. These attempts can be accepted as expression of domination of legislative supervision on executive power. Developed on financial issues, this struggle includes the issue of establishment of the

¹¹ “Sublime Porte resembles the Mount Olympus old Greek pagans fancied. Over there are a few concrete gods. Their orders and decrees are guarded and exempted from criticism and question.”

bourgeoisie democracy. But this evolution in the west appears as a consequence of struggles of a class whose material powers and wealth had been increased.

In Turkey too, those who were first to raise the concept of constitution, demanded a constitutional regime by objecting arbitrarily tax raisings, bureaucracy's measureless and a-day-long borrowing policy, spending nation's funds without consulting anyone, especially taxpayers, etc. If any issue of any newspaper of the Young Ottomans is looked at, the most common theme that will be confronted are these. Yet emergence of the demand for a constitutional regime in the Ottoman State differs greatly from that of the west. Demands related to the supervision on financial issues and the constitutional regime were not demands of a bourgeoisie whose wealth and funds increased as in Europe. On the contrary, these demands appeared as an expression of aspiration of a middle-strata whose economic conditions worsened. Moreover, the form by which these aspirations were revealed bear mark of the atmosphere in which clique fights among ruling class happened.

In the first quarter of the 19th century, during the "Greek Revolution", the sultan and the high bureaucracy had to comply demands of lower-middle strata Janissary corps to have a say in state administration.¹² With this development, a great step was taken in terms of Turkish-Muslim middle-classes' gaining influence on governing country. In this sense, the Janissaries was a real middle-class movement that stemmed from grassroots against bureaucratic elite. But the ruling elite of the Ottoman State did not willingly give these concessions to the Janissary cadres who integrated with middle-classes and they would have done whatever they could do in order to maintain their monopoly of power. With the massacre of the Janissaries in 1826 and the following terror regime, starting from Istanbul, whole organized middle-strata across the country were terrorized.

High bureaucracy's privileged position which was consolidated during the reign of Mahmud II, went towards institutionalization with the promulgation of Hatt-ı Şerif of

¹² Mehmet Mert Sunar, *Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of the Janissary Corps*, p. 185-6 (New York: 2006). After 1807-08 incidents in which they discharged Alemdar and were able to maintain its positions in capital, Janissaries began to put strain on sultan and high bureaucracy to institutionally have a say in governing country.

In their fighting against bureaucracy, Janissaries mobilized not only crafts and artisans, but also working classes of capital. On the relations between Janissaries and working classes see Donald Quataert, "Janissaries, Artisans and the Question of Ottoman Decline, 1730-1826" (İstanbul: ISIS, 1993) and Fatih Yeşil, *İhtilaller Çağında Osmanlı Ordusu*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2016), p. 219-ff.

Gülhane/Tanzimat in 1839.¹³ The middle-strata silenced by political pressures encountered much more destructive economic pressure from abroad after the 1838 Baltalimanı free trade treaty, which was signed by the high bureaucracy of Tanzimat. The Muslim craft and artisan categories whose means of production did not even approach to manufactory stage, regressed rapidly in the competition with goods of industrialized west and dragged on economic ruin, reaching deadlock as they pulled out of the markets.

These Turkish-Muslim middle classes were the social forces who suffered from bureaucracy's policies and took a stand against bureaucracy. Social base of constitutionalist opposition in Turkey consisted of these classes, including wide categories from lower strata of bureaucracy, various crafts and artisans to even gentry. But, this middle class, like landowners, was not seen directly in politics. After 1826 these elements did not appear on the stage at the heart of politics, Istanbul. The regime after 1826 was based on silencing them. Following the massacre of the Janissaries, "whole people of belief, thus, are allied and combined; and no one dare to comment defiantly and act contrarily at all; if someone does so, his blood is on his own head, he will immediately be dealt with by sword of sharia."¹⁴ The regime after 1826 was established in order to exclude all the rest but bureaucratic aristocracy and was maintained accordingly.¹⁵

It is seen that constitution issue is intimately connected to the fact of the high bureaucracy's domination over the country.

The high bureaucracy's conflict with *ayans* (big landowners) and the Janissaries goes well before the 19th century. Historical development of this conflict is not included in the scope

¹³ Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1980), p. 342. Quataert signifies massacre of Janissaries in 1826 as "economic starting date of Tanzimat" and says that "1838 English-Ottoman treaty and 1839 and 1856 imperial edicts followed the path drew in 1826." see Donald Quataert, *Tanzimat Döneminde Ekonominin Temel Problemleri*, (Ankara: İş Kültür, 2015), p. 731-6

¹⁴ Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v1 p.671, quoted by Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), p. 44-5: "Kaffe-i ehli iman böylece müttelik ve müttelik olup zinhar ve zinhar hiçbir ferd hilaf-ı harekete ve muhalif söz söylemeğe cüret etmeyecek ve ideni olur ise vebali boynuna derhal seyfi-i şeriatle hakkından gelinecek."

¹⁵ However, suppressing expression of economic contradictions on the political stage -which was the case in the Janissaries' age- did not mean to make away with these contradictions. They would, sooner or later, have found ways to present themselves. For example, the press which was initially established under the control of the high bureaucracy would be one of these way when contradictions came to a point of explosion. Thus, a permanent theme, mentioning of misery of crafts, artisans, small tradesmen and peasants in the Young Ottomans' articles was not a coincidence; this was, albeit indirectly, surfacing of social contradictions on political stage.

of this study; but the problem of the base of bureaucracy's political power should be dealt with at this point.

The Porte who made enemy of both ayans, landowners in the countryside, and middle-classes in cities found support from European capitalism. European capitalism's pursuit for new markets and conflict for influence in the East among the great powers appeared as lifesaver for bureaucracy.¹⁶ Britain's care for holding power balance in the East against Russia in accordance with its interests functioned as an important buttress from abroad for the bureaucracy's efforts for consolidation its power. The Crimean War and the Paris Treaty signed following it, almost institutionalized the foreign intervention and in this atmosphere the pashas' intertwining with foreign missions in capital hit the fan. Indeed, the bureaucracy's alliance with imperialism and his efforts to extend his domestical maneuvering area by virtue of this alliance were openly expressed not only by their enemies but also those who personally came from it.¹⁷

With the abolishment of the Janissary guilds, there stayed no element who could oppose bureaucracy in Istanbul.¹⁸ Ayans' political influence across the countryside was also terminated. Thus, apparently, only element who had a voice in the politics was the high bureaucracy of Istanbul.

The bureaucracy found an important support abroad for its power as the external conjuncture put the Ottoman high bureaucrats in foreground because of European imperialism's attitude on the eastern question. This political support was solidified by the

¹⁶ "After the end of Napoleon wars, European industry rushed for new markets. This industry was ready to all kinds of help for bureaucracy in order to remove any kind of obstacles in front of them. Mahmud II's reign from 1808 to 1839 would be enough to disappearing of Janissaries, breaking strength of ayans, exactly sinking of local small trade and crafts with all kind of hope for industrializing. All of these would be crowned with 1838 trade treaties that opened doors fully to economic imperialism and meant the first steps of a ruling class which were in the service of foreign capital." Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 288

¹⁷ For example, Cevdet Pasha wrote this: "Not only the Empire's old endurance withered away but also her high officials' old glories perished. In order to find a shelter for themselves, each one entered under the patronage of one of embassies... Therefore, interventions of foreigners began to took place in public. The Ottoman Empire became wretched." Cevdet Paşa, *Tezakir*, v.2, (Ankara: TTK, 1991), p.15

¹⁸ "Abolishment of Janissary guilds caused bureaucrats to capture whole power. Janissaries, at least on important matters, was a force that could block oppressions of officials. Bureaucrats, who feared of Janissaries' calling them to account for corruptions by uprisings and even requesting their executions, had nothing to fear anymore". see Mordtmann, *Istanbul ve Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 97

Baltalimanı treaty which opened doors of domestic markets to English industry completely.

As the bureaucracy eliminated the conventional order's socio-economic forces which constituted a barrier in front of it, this made it more reckless in its decisions that would affect the fate of the country. The 1838 Baltalimanı treaty which was full of concessions and surprised even western politicians and diplomats¹⁹ was signed at Mustafa Reşid Pasha's mansion under these conditions.

One year after that treaty, which was praised by calling "Copa d'Opera"²⁰, the bureaucracy promulgated the Tanzimat. Even the authors whose attitude toward the Tanzimat is positive describe the Tanzimat as an effort by which bureaucracy seek to monopolize executive power at its own hand: "Reşid Pasha, in reality, wants to transfer the padishah's authority and the power of decision to bureaucracy. Drafting laws and supervising reforms, Meclis-i Vala was composed of old and new high bureaucrats. It was wanted to leave the sultan only the duty of approval."²¹ Thus the Tanzimat regime appeared as a continuation of the trends lasting from 1826 and adaptation of these trends under new conditions in accordance with the policies required by the external conjuncture such as ensuring support of the west due to the Egyptian crisis, etc.²²

Bureaucracy, in this way, embarked on consolidating its power by silencing the forces who had a say in politics formerly and disrupting "ancient regime" for her own benefit. Imperialism, as well, found the way to benefit from this relation for taking fate of the East in its hands by free trade treaties and continuous interventions. "Bureaucracy, which could be more easily controlled compared to a lot of large and small feudalists by European diplomacy, became the objective ally of capitalism. Capitalism was a savior for this

¹⁹ For French ambassador and Metternich's amazements when treaty was signed see Y. Kemal Tengirşenk, "*Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Devletinin Harici Ticaret Siyaseti*", (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940), p. 310-ff. Even if this deal was harmful to the Empire, the Porte took this step by calculating that this would also be harmful to Egypt's Mehmet Ali. Bulwer, English negotiator then, said "The basis of our proposals sent to Mahmut; clever, resolute, old padishah saw that abolishment of *yedi vahit (monopoly) method* (...) would create conflict between his rebellious governor and Europe. He ordered to finish the job and sign the check without spending an hour." see Ibid, p.309

²⁰ Ibid, p. 305

²¹ Halil İnalçık, "*Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu*", (Belleten vol. XXVIII, 112, 1964), p. 614-5

²² Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, p. 478; see also: Cevdet Küçük, "*Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda 'Millet Sistemi' ve Tanzimat*", (Ankara: İş Kültür, 2015), p. 554

bureaucracy, and opening domestic markets toward it, bureaucracy was a key for imperialism.”²³ The Sublime Porte’s pragmatic bureaucrats would not refrain from helping imperialism to find its way and being ideologist of this relationship.²⁴ Stiffening relations between imperialism and the bureaucracy gave acceleration to western interventionism.

After the 1848 revolutions a fast phase in the development of European capitalism started.²⁵ France under the reign of Napoleon III, who ascended throne by demolishing the republic, sought to gain new spheres of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans with the aid from rapid economic growth as well. The Crimean War would emerge on the axes of western powers’ concerns for holding European power balance by blocking Russia’s way outs to Mediterranean and especially of Britain’s interests on her trade with Iran and Central Asia by the way of the Black Sea. The noise in front of scene was France’s controversy with Russia over the “holy places”, which was complex, meaningless as well as ridiculous.²⁶

Although the Ottoman State was the victor on the table with heavy prices she paid at battlefields, she was forced to give certain concessions, which were causes of Crimean War as she did not give them to Russia, to her allies. The western powers sought to take the non-Muslim bourgeoisie, who had become gradually prominent due to increasing economic relations with the west, under their patronage and to bring these forces into power as the real ruling class of the country. Thus, the “reform” program masterminded at the tables of imperialist diplomacy was placed before the bureaucracy.²⁷

However, different interests of Britain and France would cause a fragmentation in the bureaucracy according to “partisanship” of these countries. Ali and Fuad Pashas who had previously been trained by pro-British Reşid Pasha, started a factional fight against him with the support of France. The Anglo-French influence struggle for the dominance on the Porte was on the agenda even during the Crimean War when they were in “alliance”.²⁸

²³ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 323

²⁴ For Reşid’s “counselling” to Palmerston during their meeting in Britain see Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 339

²⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, (London: Abacus, 1997), p. 43

²⁶ For “holy places” issue which was emerged as a justification for Crimean War see Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 372-ff.

²⁷ Kuntay Gücüm, *İmparatorluğun “Liberal” Yılları*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2015), p. 76

²⁸ France would appoint Thouvenel to Istanbul to counter the influence of British ambassador Canning there. “The first alliance of the group led by Ali and Fuad Pashas with Thouvenel was founded as soon

Anglo-French struggle to establish dominance in Istanbul through their bureaucrat proxies “reflected (...) the direct pressure of foreign embassies that characterized Ottoman life of these years.”²⁹

Mostly, this struggle for influence was not carried out in accordance with the rules of diplomatic courtesy. Palmerston, British minister of foreign affairs then, referring to pro-British and pro-French "parties" in Istanbul, would be able to tell the Ottoman ambassador in London, Musurus that "the existence of these two parties is based on a desire to pursue interests by leaning on one of the two great powers".³⁰ In addition to the arrogance of great power diplomacy, Palmerston's words can be regarded as an indication of how they viewed the Ottoman State and her rulers. Indeed, this shows bureaucracy's mission was at what cost, which its alliance with great powers imposed on it.

Thus, the post-Crimean War process emerged as the history of ceaseless demands of the western powers under the "reform" pretext and the pressures that they imposed to get their words through. Tanzimat pashas did not respond to these constant political pressures and demands for concessions but to take measures to soften reactions of public and gain time. If they were unable to make necessary concessions immediately, they want “understanding” from their western colleagues and “advised” them to wait for the days in which wanted concessions would be able to be granted. When British ambassador did not get what he wanted in the negotiations with western mission chiefs before the Reform Edict of 1856, he would write: “The ministers assured me that they were sincerely willing to meet our expectations with all their strengths, but for the moment they asked for understanding...”³¹ This “style” of the ministers towards the westerners would never change. 11 years later, Fuad Pasha was like a student who promises to do his homework while western powers were pushing for reforms: “Our goal is not to show that we have done everything enough, but on the contrary, if we have been able to complete some part of our mission, we want to prove that we are able to conclude the rest.”³² Likewise, while

as Thouvenel set foot in Istanbul. Thouvenel arrived in Istanbul on July 17, 1855. Canning would write at the beginning of 1856: ‘I see him (Ali Pasha) as the main element of the unilateral influence of M. Thouvenel, and he is also the chief instrument in the exclusion of Reşid Pasha from government.’” see Ibid, p. 35-6.

²⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 81

³⁰ Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p.33

³¹ Ibid, p. 47

³² Ibid, p. 75

complaining about the “troubles” Ali Pasha defined themselves “those who are assigned to run this country” (!) and stated that there were a lot of problems they faced with such as the intrigues, civil war, etc. But, according to him, more troublesome than these was “the moral values of society and national superstitions.”³³ Thus the Ottoman high bureaucracy was trapped between reactions from the society and pressures from the west to which ropes of their power were tied; and constantly writhed with intention of evidencing his maturity to the west.³⁴

In this way, the imperialist diplomacy pressed the bureaucracy into service of “reform” movements to mold country according to its wishes. It appeared as a “reform era” after 1856. The content of the Reform Edict of 1856 also points to the quality of this era of “reform”: it devoted exclusively to non-Muslims, not mentioning the Turkish-Muslim element at all.³⁵ A writer who examined the edict by comparing it with the Edict of Gülhane says: “Although the 1839 edict did not give a constitution to the Muslim people, the 1856 edict was the beginning of the constitutional developments of non-Muslim ‘nations’ and a manifestation of their wishes for national independence generally.”³⁶

Although the Turkish-Muslim public could not actually prevent the bureaucracy from imposing the “reform”³⁷ that took care of non-Muslims and raised them to the peak of socio-economic power, they were not pleased at all. “The result of all these incidents was the increasing of opposition in Turkish public opinion against these movements, as the reform movements turned into a tool in the hands of the great states.”³⁸ This reaction and

³³ Ibid, p. 73

³⁴ Ayetullah Bey once said these words to Ali Pasha: “You weren’t Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire. You were always ambassador of the most prominent state in Europe.” see İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Sadriazamlar* v1, (İstanbul: İş Kültür, 2013), p. 34

³⁵ “We can say without exaggeration that two-thirds of this edict, which is much longer than the 1839 edict, was reserved for the rights of minorities and the rest was reserved for the privileges of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire. (..) In this image, which remained valid in Europe until the end of the Ottoman Empire, it is in vain to search for a place for the Turkish-Muslim element that constituted a large part of the ruling power in the country and whose proportion increased in the population composition as the imperial lands shrink. (..) There was no attempt to find a balance between the various classes in the country while responding to interests of Europe.” Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 373

³⁶ Küçük, ‘*Millet Sistemi*’, p. 550

³⁷ One of the witnesses of the time commented that these reforms had no other meaning than to be a “shield” to non-Muslim bourgeoisie. see, Stanislas Saint Clair, *Twelve Years’ Study of the Eastern Question*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1877), p. 199

³⁸ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 369

opposition from below to the ruling class would gradually gain momentum with the evolution of the economic situation.

The economic conditions of the Ottoman State in the Tanzimat period needs extensive investigation. Here, as required by this study's theme, we examine these conditions in the context of relations between the ruling class and the society.

It is seen that borrowing is the most prominent phenomenon in literature for the economy of the Tanzimat period. Here, not borrowing process itself, but the context in which these borrowings took place concerns us.

When extraordinary increases in the spending were no longer affordable through the budget and the internal sources, two borrowings were made during the Crimean war. After these initial borrowings, it became chronic to maintain budget balance by using external sources. This trend coincided with the tendencies of European capitalism. For rapidly expanding European markets after 1848 and the European capital which was looking for places to flow, Ottoman treasury was a fertile mine to be excavated.³⁹ Thus, Ottoman borrowing emerged as another element that reinforced the relations between imperialism and the bureaucracy. However, beside borrowing the Ottoman ruling class employed other instruments such as increasing taxes, deductions in the salaries and delayed payments to provide budget balance.

The relationship between the political elite, which steered bureaucratic apparatus at the center, and the productive agricultural base from which most of the tax was collected, was largely mediated through the tax farmers *-mültezims-*⁴⁰ and the tax was almost limited to tithe. Thus the bureaucracy did not have a full authority over the agricultural economic surplus. On the other hand, tax sources in cities were destroyed due to decline of the producers in the face of foreign competition. The political silencing of the craftsmen and the artisans in Istanbul and other cities and making them unable to defend their economic

³⁹ Issue of *Times* dated September 25, 1858, pointing to the abundance period of the "capital age", says: "Now we have a situation in which there is excess capital and citizens who suffer from this can find salvation by filling empty vessels of Turkey." See. Emine Kiray, *Osmanlı'da Ekonomik Yapı ve Dış Borçlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010), p. 97-8

⁴⁰ For the Porte's attempts, shortly after the proclamation of Tanzimat but unorganized and random, to eliminate these intermediaries and collect taxes directly and failure of them see Coşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Maliyesi*, (İstanbul: Küre, 2012), p. 40-ff

interests, left them desperate in the face of the destructive competition⁴¹ brought by free trade treaties and caused them to go to desolation rapidly. Ensuing picture is depicted as: “Most of the manufacturing branches exist only by name and their followers are generally in great misery. Totomjanz says ‘Turkey's capital and its appendages is full of with the people who live on hand labour; weavers, tinsmith, coppersmith, etc. The small industrial connoisseurs reside exclusively in the certain districts of Istanbul. This great army of artisans (...) lives half-starved, or begging for years’.”⁴² Extreme liberal foreign trade regime of the bureaucracy extensively abolished self-sustaining local crafts and gave way to importation of even the most ordinary products. In the meantime, it should be remembered that the bureaucracy, which made every effort to pick up the resources of country at its hand, incurred another destructive effect on crafts by increasing the internal customs.⁴³

Thus, while the Ottoman ruling class was not an economic power which had the means of production and made investments; with the collapse of middle classes, the country’s taxable resources narrowed and the central administration’s lack of solution deepened. At this point, we see a concrete contradiction between the dominant political power at the peak of politics and the socio-economic forces at base.

This contradiction would play a decisive role in the financial instability of central administration throughout the Tanzimat period. The bureaucracy of Istanbul could not establish domination over the agricultural surplus economically, as it had been for a long time. Although the ayans were silenced politically since the beginning of the 19th century, the old method of tax farming via local powers continued. Thus, the central bureaucracy was forced to share surplus value from agriculture with *eşraf*, local gentry. The financial problems which became more urgent after the Crimean War could not be solved by taxing countryside. Indeed, we do not see a comprehensive preparation initiated for this purpose.

Under these circumstances, the bureaucracy would turn to creation of indirect taxes on consumption, which was the easiest and quickest method for the government. Although writers who favored the Tanzimat say “reform in finance was the basis of the Tanzimat

⁴¹ For initial resistance from Istanbul artisans under the leadership of Janissaries against this competition see Haydar Kazgan, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Şirketleşme*, (İstanbul: Vakıfbank 1999), p. 28-29

⁴² Ö. Celal Sarç, “*Tanzimat ve Sanayiimiz*”, (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940), p. 430

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 433-4

and reform in the administrative field seems to have been used rather as a tool to implement the system of financial centralism”⁴⁴, it is evident that the central bureaucracy had failed to implement “financial revolution”, namely the centralization of tax collection and elimination of intermediaries, which the west had been able to do centuries ago. Moreover, it is clear that the bureaucracy did not follow a systematic program in this direction. Of course, coercing methods, attempts to confiscate the country's resources in a rashly and daily manner cannot be seen as systematic effort.⁴⁵ The bureaucracy, as Kıray said, did not show any “success” other than centralizing the expenditures, not the revenues.⁴⁶

Thus, we see the bureaucracy’s imposing value-added taxes in order to increase its revenues. While doing so, the bureaucracy would not tease, in particular, to the surplus that non-Muslim bourgeoisie, which became increasingly rich as intermediary in economic relations with the west, derived from the trade. While taxes were increased on goods such as salt, tobacco, etc. which were subjected to mass consumption, the trade, favorite sector of the era owing to free trade agreements, was passed by. Kıray explains this by these words: “the capitulation agreements signed with Europeans (..) gave way to the concentration of revenues in the hands of foreigners and made the state unable to tax these revenues.”⁴⁷ However, between 1857 and 1873, the average annual growth rate of exports and imports, at fixed prices, were 6.2% and 5.2% respectively.⁴⁸

It is seen that the Porte’s dominance over the country was not based on a strong economic-financial roots; rather, it was extremely unstable under the limitations imposed by imperialism. Therefore, the bureaucracy’s contradiction with the society would gradually become sharper.

Failure in achieving the budget balance caused depressions that eventually paralyzed daily life by affecting remaining sectors of economy. For example shortly after the Mires loan

⁴⁴ Halil İnalçık, “*Tanzimat’ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri*”, (Ankara: İş Kültür 2015), p. 175

⁴⁵ Efforts to collect all sources of income in the hands of the bureaucracy caused various segments of society to beg to bureaucracy, especially the people of Istanbul. Ali Suavi criticizes this situation with these words: “Now the morality of Istanbul has fallen to a degree that there is no thought other than approaching dignitaries. Because they can get by this way.” see Ali Suavi, *Ulum*, nr 12, quoted by Hüseyin Çelik, *Ali Suavi ve Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1994), p. 671

⁴⁶ Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p. 26

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 182

⁴⁸ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı Ekonomisinde Bağımlılık ve Büyüme*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2005), p. 29

in 1860, arrest of Mires in France deprived Ottomans from majority of funds to be obtained by this loan.⁴⁹ This meant that Galata bankers, who lent short-term loans to the government, could not collect their dues and this would soon create a panic, leading to an astronomical rise in exchange rates. This crisis, which was also reflected on already high prices⁵⁰, made the market inoperable.

On November 13, 1861 one pound's exchange rate exponentially rose to 350 kurus from old levels of some 100 kurus. "That day tradesmen and traders, being totally worried, closed the shops and stores."⁵¹ Threat posed by this situation for the Tanzimat pashas was possibility that the course of events might come out of control and their power might be injured accordingly. Davison accepts the financial crisis of 1861 as a more serious problem than the non-Muslim uprisings; "On December 11, there seemed to be danger of revolution in the capital."⁵² That day, kaime lost another 100% value over its previous losses; and tradesmen did not accept depreciating money. Crowds were formed and the bakeries were looted. As in the 1859 conspiracy, the rebellion could have jumped to the provinces where the salaries of the soldiers' salaries were delayed.⁵³ This possibility of rebellion, which Davison pointed out, was like the sword of Damocles, constantly swinging over the head of the ruling bureaucracy. Probability of economic situation's turning into chaos could lead to factional coups or popular uprisings, opening road to the power change. This example reveals the weak basis of the bureaucracy's power, despite the Tanzimat pashas' seemingly confidential attitudes in politics. Therefore, they would constantly resort to repressive measures and attempt to silence any discrete voice that could ignite an opposition within the society against them.

The 1861 crisis was overcame by new sources obtained by borrowing. In order to obtain new loans, the wishes of westerner lenders would be fulfilled. Fuad Pasha, who took the financial affairs at his hand at that time, did not refrain from "taking into account"⁵⁴ the

⁴⁹ For Mires loan's story see Du Velay, *Türkiye Maliye Tarihi*, (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı, 1978), p. 92-8

⁵⁰ At the end of 1856, because of the war, in some regions prices tripled compared to two years ago. see Davison, *Reform*, p. 80

⁵¹ Şükrü Baban, "*Tanzimat ve Para*", (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940), p. 254; see also Cevdet, *Tezakir-II*, p.226-7

⁵² Davison, *Reform*, p. 110-1

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 111

⁵⁴ For Hobart-Foster report see Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p. 105-ff

proposals of experts sent by western states. These proposals necessitated the creation of new tax sources, which would constitute assurance for the loans.⁵⁵ These new taxes would be the most easily collected indirect taxes.

“Tax on tobacco was increased in 1862 in accordance with the recommendations in the report. According to the quality of leaves, delegation proposed to increase the rates between 1.5 and 6 cents per okka to between 2 and 25 per okka. This was precisely applied.”⁵⁶ In addition, taxes were imposed on salt consumption and sericulture.⁵⁷

The imbalance caused by the financial crisis in exchange rates could create further unforeseen crises in domestic market. The financial problems had impacts on the value of money; then, it fed the financial problems in the opposite direction. Thus, the Porte felt need of “kaime’s totally withdrawing from circulation, which violated and complicated of both people and treasury’s transactions”⁵⁸ and bringing stability to the money issue. Debts of 1862 and 1863, taken after the crisis of 1861, were spent on the withdrawal of kaime in the market. “At the end of these transactions, the money supply decreased and the Empire returned to the metallic standard, which was the most important monetary measure of the orthodox classical economic thought. In addition, the Empire’s continuing to play the game according to international rules was ensured by the establishment of French-British owned *Bank-ı Osmani-i Şahane* which had a monopoly on the rights of printing money. Moreover, the documents show that this bank did not exercise right to mint convertible

⁵⁵ With the 1858 borrowing, westerners demanded that the taxes which would serve as a guarantee to repayments should be collected by a commission which was supervised by them. *Daily News* of 2 September 1858 pointed to particularly liquid nature of the sources of income that was allocated for repayments and “applauded the established surveillance commission as an important innovation in terms of finance as well as politically”. As a matter of fact, westerners were not willing to lend unless they were given this kind of supervision. For example, in August 1858, the sultan issued a decree on the austerity measures, but the European press did not take it seriously, they said: “It would be foolish not to see the relationship between suddenly paying attention to the economy and demanding a new debt.” see *Ibid*, p. 97-8

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 133

⁵⁷ However, these taxes did not fall short of showing negative effects on expenditures of people and activities of producers, both were with a very limited income and consumption level. The tax imposed on sericulture impaired activities of silk-processing craftsmen; salt tax led to a reduction in consumption of this good, which was especially necessary for animal husbandry, causing animal waste. This would affect linked sectors such as oil and wool growing, and as a result, both the income of *ağnam* tax and indirect taxes would be reduced as sectors which used wool, etc. as input were affected. Again, the tobacco tax would make many producers give up tobacco bread. Thus, the Porte was striking its own limits in every step it took in taxing, and sometimes had to back down; for example, the negative effects arising from the salt tax would, after some time, led to the loosening of this tax. see. Mordtmann, *İstanbul*, p. 293

⁵⁸ Baban, “*Tanzimat ve Para*”, p.256

paper money.”⁵⁹ In this way, the state left its own right of seigniorage and possibility of using monetary policy, which is one of the basic instruments of the economic policy, to European capital in order to overcome a short-term exchange rate crisis.

Other inventions of the Porte were cuts in salaries and delays in payments, especially for the lower level civil officials. Cuts in salaries, which were “too much to die but not enough to live”⁶⁰ in Mordtmann's words, would be a way to reduce expenditures in the budget. In the first half of the 1870s, relations between the State and the European financial markets were interrupted. This caused the bureaucracy to scabble the official's salaries much more. Depictions of hungrily civil servants who were not paid their salaries for months are often mentioned in the literature. In addressing the 1872 budget, Mordtmann mentioned cuts of up to 50% in salaries; this “excitement and palpitation”⁶¹ which small officers were subjected would be topic of satires of poets.

As can be seen, the Porte's main policy was to take measures to save the day. The state, which could not tax expanding trade and prosperous merchants⁶² and imposed tax burden on peasants⁶³ and middle classes in cities, could not get means to save itself from the vicious circle even if it forced last possibilities of exploiting people. The vicious cycle of borrowing would go on; so, the Porte “borrowed to finance the conflict over the division of the economic surplus rather than financing the production of this surplus.”⁶⁴

The administration of the Porte went beyond being indifferent to the development of productive base in the country and led to this base's constant destruction. This showed its effects directly on population. In this respect, the compulsory military service burden on Turkish-Muslim people should be briefly emphasized, which absorbed productive labor in the agriculture and animal husbandry and directly led to diminution of the Turkish-

⁵⁹ Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p.131

⁶⁰ Mordtmann, *İstanbul*, p. 71

⁶¹ Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 426

⁶² “All in all, while penetrating Ottoman economy European trade capital, which included both Ottoman traders and mültezims as its intermediaries and supplier of goods into its own network, headed as well to replace the state's tax collection network as the main supervisor of the economic surplus.” Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p.80

⁶³ “87 % of average tax was charged to the villagers and the rest to the dweller of cities.” see Vedat Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İktisadi Şartları hakkında bir tetkik*, (Ankara: TTK, 1994), p. 171-2

⁶⁴ Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p. 83-4

Muslim population. This issue also reveals a fact that has not been brought to forefront frequently until now, that is non-Muslims' exemption from the military service was almost free of charge. This resource, which was not really taxed, was also an important factor for the financial crisis of the state and moreover, for infliction of this crisis' burden on Turkish-Muslim masses.

One of the witnesses of the period, St. Clair draws our attention to this issue. The paid military service was theoretically a right granted to everyone. However, while Turks were entitled to exemption for 10.000 kuruş which was requested to be paid at once, military tax paid by *reaya* (non-Muslims) was 25 kuruş per year.⁶⁵ Daily wages were between 2-5 kuruş then in the Ottoman State.⁶⁶ When this fact is taken into account, it is seen that paid military service was actually closed to ordinary Turks. Financial sharing of this burden was extremely in favor of non-Muslims, let alone absorbing Turkish-Muslim labor in its most productive age from the economic activity.⁶⁷ Drawing attention to this striking distinction, Clair discourses that if 1 in 5 out of 12 million Christian subjects were considered to be fit for military service and a reasonable tax instead of 25 kuruş were received from this population of about 2.5 million, this would create a great difference.⁶⁸ It is clear that this problem, which was as serious as non-taxation of Christian and Levantine merchants, should be considered in the context of financial crisis of the state and the costs that this crisis charged to Turkish-Muslim masses. It is understood that the political and economic policies imposed by imperialism on the Porte removed almost all socio-economic burden from non-Muslims and put them on the back of Muslims. This would be an effective factor in sharpening of contradictions between Turkish-Muslim people and the high bureaucracy.

Thus, even though the bureaucracy appeared to be groundless in terms of relations of production, it emerged, by the agency of imperialism, as a political instrument to guarantee

⁶⁵ St. Clair, *Eastern Question*, p. 130

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 132, see also Tefik Çavdar, *Osmanlıların Yarı-Sömürge Oluşu*, (İstanbul: Ant, 1970), p. 42

⁶⁷ On this issue, Ziya Pasha said this: "If one of Muslim people has two sons at the age of military service, he is obliged to give six thousand and eight and ten thousand kuruş for their discharge. If not, he is obliged to be deprived of the peace and assistance of his children. But Christian who has two sons, benefit from help of these two by paying at the utmost forty and fifty kuruş a year. Let alone the difficulty and losses of military service and enjoying staying at home. Is this equality?" see *Hürriyet*, nr 15, p. 4 (October 5, 1868). It is interesting that these lines resembles Clair's findings.

⁶⁸ Clair, *Eastern Question*, p. 133. Moreover, the state did not have any share in the tax of 3.5 million kuruş paid by *reaya* to the church. see Ibid, p.83

the exploitation of non-Muslim bourgeoisie domestically. “Turkish-Muslim central bureaucracy, which became stereotyped within its own principles and thus hypothecated the possibility of Turkish element’s evolution, was a mere spectator of this continuous dispersion of the empire; and the bleeding of resources was never-ending.”⁶⁹

Facilitating monopolization of the trade in the hands of non-Muslims, the socio-economic policies implemented by the bureaucracy eliminated the crafts and imposed the taxes on the back of people. All these resulted in a chronic state of financial and economic insolvencies. This structure would not be able to withstand impact of the crisis that broke in the European markets in 1873 and eventually the bankruptcy, which actually caused central authority to become paralyzed, would come.

II. II. Tanzimat Pashas’ Monopoly of Power

What has been described so far is to show the conditions under which ruling class governed the country, in what kind of “style” it could -or could not- rule and reveal the contradictions between the ruling class and the society to some extent. Such an approach was necessary to understand the conditions in which the opposition to administration was shaped.

From the beginning of this chapter, it has been shown that capitalism, which entered a period of rapid development in Europe after the suppression of the 1848 revolutions, and the intensifying imperialist interventionism provided the bureaucracy with external support. But, on the other hand, these relations sharpened the contradictions that could not be easily solved and put them before the bureaucracy. The country steadily declined under a financial bottleneck and poverty. Intrusion into the internal and external issues of the state by foreigners turned out to be a daily activity. This situation caused escalation of reactions, starting from the most conscious elements of people.

From the 1850s to the end of the 1870s, in less than 30 years, Ottoman country went through many historical events and processes all of which had long-term effects: the Crimean War, galloping borrowings, “reforms”, nationalist uprisings of the non-Muslim elements, the growing unrest among the Turkish-Muslim people against the bureaucracy, chronic financial and economic dilemmas, the world financial crisis of 1873, the political crisis of 1876 and the “93 Harbi”... It was impossible for the Porte to overcome all these

⁶⁹ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p.308

problems by silencing the people who carried greatest burden of these problems. Throughout the Tanzimat period, the Porte sought constantly remedies to silence dynamics which could stand against his will domestically, initiate an awakening across people and constitute an alternative to his power within Turkish-Muslim element. The Porte, who wanted to keep his power by silencing people and keeping it out of politics, nevertheless did not have the organizational power and staff to bring conclusive solutions to the problems it faced. With the political and economic crises intertwined in the 1870s, it was seen that the regime of the Tanzimat pashas was completely paralyzed after exhausting all the conjunctural amenities.

Thus, the Porte or Ali and Fuad Pashas, who controlled that post during most of the period we are dealing with, did not want to share their control over political and financial resources of the country; they were always vigilant against any possible attempt which could harm their dictatorship. “No one could ask why every move was a single step, because it required two people to ask: the author, the deputy. The viziers did not want these two people.”⁷⁰ Yes, the author and the deputy would be auditors of the politics and the finance. Author would control the policies of government; deputies would do same thing on the issues of taxation and expenditures by the way of supervision of parliament. These were “ideal” functions of the author and the deputy. However, the Tanzimat pashas tried every way to avoid this ideal.

The Tanzimat pashas, cruel to his own citizens, were always “beseeching” and kind to outside. In words of Mordtmann, Ali Pasha was “very afraid of someone pouting him, on banks of the Seine.”⁷¹ The Tanzimat pashas sent their opponents into exile and had them arrested; but if there were westerners involved, these were ignored.⁷²

When the western countries pushed the Porte for “reforms” from the beginning of 1867, Ali Pasha would inform them that “priority” was given to fulfill two goals: “to ensure equality with Muslims by giving non-Muslims a career in the civil service; to facilitate the using of European capital in the country to improve financial system and raise the level of

⁷⁰ Mithat Cemal Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v1, (İstanbul: İş Kültür, 2010), p. 134

⁷¹ Mordtmann, *İstanbul*, p. 53

⁷² “Grand Vizier Ali Pasha could not bear that a Turkish correspondent frequently wrote the name of the “National Assembly” in the newspaper. Only the French newspapers in Beyoğlu could write the “National Assembly”. Because there were foreign ambassadors behind those newspapers.” Kuntay, Sarıklı İhtilalci Ali Suavi, p.36 quoted by Süleyman Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz ve 1. Meşrutiyet*, (İstanbul: Vatan, 2001) p. 75; also see Şemsettin Şeker, *Menapirzade Nuri*, (İstanbul: Dergah, 2012), p. 33-4

education.”⁷³ In addition, expanding the provincial system (*vilayet sistemi*), “further involving of non-Muslims in the provincial councils”⁷⁴ would be ensured. The pashas promised openly in correspondences to bring freedom to westerners, non-Muslims and the capital. But they wanted to silence young intellectuals who wanted to publicize their policy of “satisfying Christian subjects and pleasing Europe”⁷⁵ to the nation.

The Tanzimat pashas proved to the west that they “listen to advice”. When a “reform” campaign led by France was opened and squeezed the Porte at the beginning of 1867, the proposals of French ambassador Bourre to “his friend Ali Pasha” were taken into consideration; *Şuray-ı Devlet* and *Divan-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye* were established. In fact, it is argued that Bouree intervened in election of persons in councils as well.⁷⁶ While those who voiced the “law” and the “constitutionalism” were exiled and silenced, this was how the “law and reform” theater was staged by the Porte with its French friends.

It was immediately forbidden to speak if the people’s hearing of a matter would put the government in a difficult position.⁷⁷ The Press law of 1865 forbade “to intervene in any movement that could disrupt internal order (...) as much as writings against the sultan or the ministers.”⁷⁸

The Porte wanted to do what it wanted but not to be criticized, not to be questioned, not to be opposed. The Porte used every means at hand to make things impossible what it did not want to be done. That is why Ziya Pasha would say “all things go on a whimsically

⁷³ Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 175-6

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 175-6

⁷⁵ *Hürriyet*, nr 14, p.4 (September 29, 1868)

⁷⁶ Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 214

⁷⁷ For example “In August 1860, there was a real fear in the capital, and the Porte forbade inhabitants to speak of Syria on the streets.” Davison, *Reform*, p. 108

⁷⁸ The pashas of Tanzimat were not only despotic indoors, but also outdoors. They asked European states to silence the Young Ottomans. The Porte warned British government that the Young Ottomans were “in pursuit of a revolution in the east” and if they succeeded, “advancements which were product of all these years of persistent labor would be jeopardized”. see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p.115; p. 138.

Mehmet Cemil Pasha, son of Reşid Pasha, ambassador in Paris, would say for the activities of the Young Ottomans: “I did not hesitate to make use of all my means to correct the false comments that these conspiring refugees wanted to disseminate in Paris through the press and I will continue to break their frauds with all means..” see Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 146.

and there is no man act properly and have confidence.”⁷⁹ In his words, *modus operandi* of the Tanzimat regime is revealed.

Thus, the Tanzimat pashas behave at their pleasure. They were indebted this nerviness to their relations with imperialism and domestic dominant classes, as well as their careful control over every aspect of the state wheel. The bureaucracy took state power into their hands from top, not from grassroots. They put the teams connected to them on the top of institutions where power was institutionalized in the state wheel. The pashas systematically attempted to push the elements they did not consider from their own factions out of the high institutions. At this point, it is necessary to point to the fact of army’s passing under control of the Porte. This secured them both against factional competition from other bureaucrats and opposition from the society as a whole.

“Ali and Fuad seem to have used the Kuleli affair (1859) as an opportunity of not simply suppress the conspiracy and imprison the culprits, but in addition to bring about the dismissal from government service of those politicians they did not trust, such as Mahmud Nedim Pasha and others, apparently with the full backing of sultan Abdülmecid. Comparing the list of government members in 1859, 1860 and 1861 one notices the changes that took place among the leading personalities at the ministerial level.”⁸⁰ Thus, Ali and Fuad pashas, who imposed leadership of their own factions by eliminating rival elements in the bureaucracy, would narrow the palace’s maneuver field to their favor. Ali Pasha “insisted that no one should be employed in the post of chief secretary or chief chamberlain whom he did not approve of. Moreover Ali required his subordinates to have their administrative relations with the palace channeled through him, thus minimising the possibility of intrigue.”⁸¹

On the issue of ensuring control over the army; we see that although Fuad Pasha did not have any military background, he was appointed as the grand vizier on June 1, 1863 along with responsibility of seraskier as well. He would carry out these two duties together for 3 years; and he would appoint Hüseyin Avni as his deputy.

⁷⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 187

⁸⁰ Butrus Abu Manneh, “*The Roots of the Ascendancy of Ali and Fuat Paşas at the Porte 1855-1871*”, (İstanbul: ISIS, 2001), p. 120-1

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 121

At this point, being cleared of other elements from bureaucracy, the army was passed under control of Ali and Fuad Pashas and his associates, which we can call as “traditional faction” of the Tanzimat pashas. “The fact that the office of serasker passed from the hands of men close to the palace into their hands, as was the case during most of the 1860s meant the end of the possibility of promoting a power centre to rival the Porte and the bureaucracy. In other words, the fact that a new generation of army officers identified themselves, and co-operated with the Tanzimat statesmen, should be seen as an extremely important development in the 1860s in Istanbul.”⁸²

Centralizing power in their hands in this way, pashas were ready and prepared to impose their policies on the society and the rest of bureaucracy. The pashas coterie, whose privileges against society were blessed and formalized by established order⁸³, were able to eliminate accidental sounds that could come out of the bureaucracy itself with increasing monopolization of the power at their hands.

Nevertheless, despite all this power, the pashas could not find a totally silent society as they wished. There were always people who raised their voice. Now it is time to make an account of the Young Ottomans opposition.

⁸² Ibid, p. 124

⁸³ See Olivier Bouquet, *Sultanın Paşaları*, (İstanbul: İş Kültür, 2016), p. 209; p. 215

CHAPTER III

THE YOUNG OTTOMANS OPPOSITION

“Bundan yirmi sene akdem Macaristan’da efkar-ı hürriyetle devlet-i metbuaları aleyhine silah kaldıranları saye-i himayetine alan Devlet-i Aliyye bu gün kendi tebaasından o efkarda bulunanların hanümanlarını harap etmeye say ediyor, diyar-ı ecnebiyede mültecileri bulunuyor.”⁸⁴

(Hürriyet, August 24, 1868)

III. I. Factional Struggles and The Emergence of The Young Ottomans in 1867

The financier of the Young Ottomans’ activity in Europe was Mustafa Fazıl who went to Europe a year before them. The Porte had given khedive Ismail what he wanted in exchange for increasing Egyptian tax. Inheritance system in Egypt was changed and the right to succession was taken from Ismail’s brother Fazıl, who was expected to ascend the throne after Ismail, and given to Ismail's son; so the Egyptian dynasty passed to Ismail's family. Therefore Mustafa Fazıl was at odds with the pashas of the Porte. In April 1866 he was expelled from Istanbul and went to Paris. However, this departure was not for free. Fazıl was given 4 million pounds in exchange for the pretext of acquisition of his sugar factories by his brother Ismail, and this was also apparently as a kind of “hush money” for

⁸⁴ “The Ottoman Empire, that twenty years ago embraced those who took up arms against the state which they were subject to with the idea of freedom in Hungary, today is trying to ruin the house of those who are going with the same idea and has refugees in foreign countries.”

him not to make much noise upon the change of inheritance.⁸⁵ This amount was more than a quarter of Ottoman budgets of those years.⁸⁶ This was the money that would bring the Young Ottomans to Europe later.

There is no indication that Fazıl was politically active in Europe during the early months of his departure. However, when conditions became favorable, it was obvious that he would try to regain the right of succession or move to an effective position in Istanbul by sliding feet of those who had deprived him of this “right”.

Favorable conditions expected by Fazıl came before one year. With the beginning of 1867 while Napoleon III's France, along with the other European states⁸⁷, increased the “reform” pressure on the Ottoman government, Mustafa Fazıl's name began to appear in European press.

A letter of denial from Fazıl was published at *Le Nord* on February 7. In appearance, it was written to reject speculations about Fazıl's business relations issued in same newspaper two days ago. However, although it had almost nothing to do with such a letter of denial, in this letter Mustafa Fazıl used the phrase “Jeune Turquie party” and said he was “pride of representing”⁸⁸ this “party”. It meant that Fazıl suddenly appeared as a political figure relating himself with the “Jeune Turquie”.

Fazıl's letter would be quoted by *Courrier d'Orient* newspaper of J. Pietri⁸⁹, which was being published in French in Beyoğlu.⁹⁰ Later, the letter was published in the *Muhbir*⁹¹. Finally, Kemal's *Tasvir-i Efkar* published this letter's translation along with his comment.⁹² This suggests that there was a coordination between Fazıl and those who were in Istanbul. It is also understood that the force that provided this coordination was most

⁸⁵ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 86

⁸⁶ Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p. 85; see also, Güran, *19. yüzyılda Osmanlı ekonomisi*, p. 322-3

⁸⁷ Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 130-ff

⁸⁸ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 91-2

⁸⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 205-6, annotation 113

⁹⁰ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 94

⁹¹ *Muhbir*, nr 20 (February 21, 1867)

⁹² Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 95

probably France. Indeed, Davison draws our attention to the relationship between Fazıl and J. Pietri.⁹³

Shortly after this bizarre campaign originated from a letter of denial about a business speculation, Fazıl appeared to the public (especially for the high bureaucracy of Istanbul) again with a letter that would make resound further. This letter was, in the literature for the Young Ottomans, the “famous” letter he wrote to the sultan. According to Bilgegil’s findings, it was first printed and distributed in Turkish on March 9, 1867.⁹⁴ Printing and distribution were carried out by J. Pietri. Davison states that Levant Herald published a summary of this letter, but other newspapers did not dare to reprint it.⁹⁵

Using the phrase “those around the sultan” in the letter, Fazıl accuses the Porte, who deprived him of the Egyptian inheritance, of misleading the sultan. Ali and Fuad pashas, “who take taste of the government in their hands and live in its center”, are depicted as despots. Fazıl declares himself a “proponent of freedom”, and states that “the traitor and ignorant undersecretaries surrounding the sultan” would try to deceive the sultan by saying that the “order of freedom” would take power and will from the hands of the sultan himself. Fazıl sees the solution of problems related to the administration of the country, which he tries to explain in empty words and with no in-depth explanation as to what they are, in the sultan’s replacement of clique around him with the sultan’s own “private attempt” and appointing someone supporting “order of freedom” instead of them; no doubt, this was no one other than himself or a pasha which he could point to.⁹⁶ In spite of its content of ingratiating Fazıl with sultan and camouflaging the factional struggle with bombastic words, the letter would cause a turmoil among the high bureaucracy. It seems that, aware of this, Fazıl supporters in the Istanbul press also increased their offense.

Coincidence of Fazıl’s political campaign by “denials and letters” with France’s increasing diplomatic pressures, and Fazıl’s relations with Pietri, who was an influential agent of

⁹³ “Quite possibly Mustafa Fazıl had contact with the New Ottomans through French journalists in Paris and İstanbul, who play a shadowy role on the edges of the burgeoning movement.” Davison, *Reform*, p. 201

⁹⁴ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 88

⁹⁵ Davison, *Reform*, p. 208

⁹⁶ For letter’s full text in French see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 14-30; for full text in modern Turkish adaptation see Selim Teber, *Mehmet, Reşat ve Nuri Beyler*, (İstanbul: De Yayınevi, 1986), p. 34-57

The letter was printed in French and distributed to high European political circles as well. see Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 12

French imperialism in Istanbul, may cause one to think that this campaign was put forward as “an integral part” of France’s ongoing diplomatic campaign at that time. Indeed, Fazıl’s embarking on a political campaign using an irrelevant issue such as a denial of a speculation about business life should not be a coincidence, especially considering he had no special feature in politics, had been in Paris since April 1866 and had not been in any political activity until then. Moreover, in his famous letter, we do not hear anything about the Porte’s decision of leaving of Belgrade castle to Serbia, which had been determining internal politics for a long time then. This shows a difference between him and the intellectual cadres in Istanbul who raised their voices against the abandonment of castle. This again draws our attention to his relations with France. For it was France, which had been applying pressure on Ottomans to leave Belgrade's fortress.⁹⁷

After Fazıl’s letters, the team which echoed his voice to newspapers in Istanbul, intensified its activities. The Porte's submission to repression for the abandonment of Belgrade fortress to Serbs caused tension and unrest against the government. Meanwhile, Ali Suavi published an article on lobbying activities of khedive İsmail through his agent Nubar Pasha in Istanbul⁹⁸; besides, another article on the abandonment of Belgrade fortress was published by him, stating that those who took fortress of Belgrade would be commemorated by prayer and those who left it by “curse”.⁹⁹

Thereupon, the Porte counterattacked and *Muhbir* was closed down for a month beginning from its 32nd issue, on March 9, 1867.¹⁰⁰ The next day, protest by owner of *Muhbir*, Filip against this closing was published by Kemal in his *Tasvir-i Efkar*. In the same issue, Kemal's first article on “Mesele-i Şarkıyye” which dealt with the Cretan troubles, published as well.¹⁰¹ After that, Ali Pasha would issue a decree called “Kanunname-i Ali” and launch an all-out attack on the press.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Since 1862, France had been pushing for abandonment of Belgrade fortress to Serbs. see Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 417-8

⁹⁸ *Muhbir*, nr 26, (25 Şevval 1283/March 2, 1867)

⁹⁹ *Muhbir*, nr 31, (2 Zilkade 1283/March 8, 1867)

¹⁰⁰ Davison, *Reform*, p. 208; Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 95

¹⁰¹ Second article was published on March 13. Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 95

¹⁰² According to Bilgegil date of decree was March 12, 1867. see *Ibid*, p. 95; according to Çelik it was March 14, see Çelik, *Ali Suavi ve Dönemi*, p. 86

Saying “newspapers have gone too far for a while and they have been bragging about the bases of the state and publishing a number of pests and lies, being an instrument of malice of the enemies”¹⁰³, the Porte stressed that those who act outside the decree would be prosecuted. This situation shows that the Tanzimat pashas felt themselves weak before the public opinion. Thus, getting flurried, they tried to suppress voices of public opinion, which pashas regarded hostile, as soon as possible before it got stronger.

Indeed, concerns of the Tanzimat pashas were not groundless. In Kemal's articles on the eastern question, Crete was addressed and besides intervention of external powers it was criticized that bureaucracy did not display an effective counter-stance. However, for Ali Pasha, the issue of Crete was terrible enough to cause a revolution in Turkey. He told British ambassador in Istanbul that “abandonment of Crete without great military pressure would result in a revolution and the sultan would lose his throne”¹⁰⁴. Of course, it can be assumed that what Ali Pasha understood from the “sultan's throne” was rather his own “throne” in the Porte. This concern of the pashas provides an explanation for their anxiety from popular opposition, which had gained momentum by trouble of Crete, on behalf of future of their power. This also accounts for the oppressive measures they took to suppress this opposition.

The Porte decided to silence newspapers and journalists running the opposition press. *Tasvir-i Efkar* would be closed on March 24. In its last issue it was published that Kemal was assigned to Erzurum. On May 8, Ziya Pasha was appointed to Cyprus as governor. Meanwhile, Ali Suavi was already exiled to Kastamonu.¹⁰⁵

As mentioned above, the time when newspapers were silenced corresponded to a conjuncture conducive to political explosions. Three days after the closure of *Tasvir-i Efkar*, depending on British embassy reports Davison says that there were “rumors of a conspiracy of Muslims against the Sublime Porte and Christians alike began to circulate...”¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the first Turkish soldiers began to leave Belgrade and political excitement and tension was elevated in Istanbul.

¹⁰³ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 95-6

¹⁰⁴ Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 158

¹⁰⁵ Ali Suavi gave the information that his exile was actualized in third week of March. Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 83

¹⁰⁶ Davison, *Reform*, p. 209, annotation 126

On April 1, Fazıl's clerk Sakakini met with Kemal and Ziya at J. Pietri's *Courrier d'Orient* office and gave them Fazıl's letter that invited them to Paris and travel allowances.¹⁰⁷ It was decided in this meeting as well that Agah and Suavi would be invited to Paris.

It seems that the opponents, seeing that they could not change political conditions in the capital in the direction they wanted, preferred to make their voices abroad rather than go to provinces, a covered exile.¹⁰⁸

Finally, on the night of May 16, Kemal and Ziya moved abroad. Suavi and Agah would arrive soon and they met at Mesina. This first group of the Young Ottomans arrived in Paris on May 30 and went directly to Fazıl's house there.¹⁰⁹ As they completed their journey, Ali and Fuad launched their latest attack against the remaining opponents in capital. With the operation known as “*Meslek* arrests”, elements suspected by the Porte were arrested and sent to exile.¹¹⁰ However, Mehmet, Reşad and Nuri beys would be able to escape from these arrests and leave for Paris. Apart from these three, the Young Ottomans’ 1867 cadres were completed with participation of Kanipaşazade Rifat, an embassy employee in Paris.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 97-8.

Kuntay quotes an anecdote on Kemal's relationship with Pietri: “I had a talk with Giampietri the other day about constitutionalism. The guy told me two hours. Finally, he convinced me that constitutionalism could also work here.” see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v1, p. 360

¹⁰⁸ In his report of April 10, 1867, British ambassador Lyons stated that he had contacted Young Turks, but they were few in number and insignificant. see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 91.

However, in the same report, it is stated that “so-called Young Turks could feed on a very great discontent of the Muslim population in the capital, exacerbated by the distress of those government employees whose salaries were in arrears.” see Davison, *Reform*, p. 210

¹⁰⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 100

¹¹⁰ For “*Meslek*” arrests see Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 309-ff.

Nords’ issue of June 25 wrote that it was planned to kill the ministers with gun and to impose constitutional order on sultan and that the police had been following these conspirators for a long time. Nord said that “Istanbul is experiencing the days when it contains many dissatisfied people because of the financial crisis. The leaders of the organization knew how to benefit from this. First, after winning the general public, they started to develop their plans. ... With the crisis of money, organization’s devises on the fraternity, love and aid words were greeted with a warm interest. In contrast to the previous Kuleli case, the movement would have a nature to be adopted by the people of Istanbul”. These lines indicate that political unrest against the government was reinforced by economic factors. It is also said in Nord that Fazıl was involved in this work through his former housekeeper. It is also claimed by Nord that if the plot was successful, Fazıl would come from Pest within 48 hours in order to be grand vizier. see *Ibid*, p. 323-6

¹¹¹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 10.

Davison comments on young intellectuals' going abroad as such: "Young Ottomans in the capital lost the leadership. It was now regenerated in Paris with help of Mustafa Fazıl."¹¹² Indeed, these words point to an important truth.

It can be alleged by one that the Porte pulled these young intellectuals to the ground of inter-pashas factional struggle by forcing them to go abroad and pushing them into the arms of Fazıl, while these young intellectuals' power, which theoretically could have gone ahead basing on their own means, in Istanbul was very weak. There are signs, however, that Fazıl and the Young Ottomans had already established a relationship via J. Pietri; but their fleeing to Paris put them in a position in which they were dependent on Fazıl absolutely in many respects, especially financially. In this way, balance between the Young Ottoman group and Fazıl was very much distorted in favor of Fazıl. Davison's interpretation that the Young Ottomans in the capital lost the initiative seems to be true, but just in this respect.

Moreover, it is notable that the Young Ottomans attacked first pro-French Ali and Fuad pashas as they decided to leave Belgrade to Serbia under pressures from France, but then, they found the solution to flee to the capital of French imperialism next to Fazıl, who was understood to have relations with France. This too demonstrates how the Young Ottomans were trapped to the political framework drawn by dominant powers.¹¹³

Nevertheless, "defective" voices always appeared; as we shall see later, the most consistent of these enlightened cadres established *Cemiyet-i Ahrar* and took front against all the pashas.

Looking at the arrests and escapes happened in 1867 from today, they seem like consequences of the Porte's attempt in advance to clear up elements which could drag a potential political reaction against itself.

¹¹² Davison, *Reform*, p. 212

¹¹³ "Why did Napoleon let Kemal and his friends escape to Paris? And why did Napoleon's ambassador in Istanbul, Bouree help them? And why did the three French newspapers applaud the arrival of the Turkish revolutionaries in Paris? And why did a journalist, a man of Napoleon III in Paris, write that "France opens her arms to Young Turks"? The answer to these questions is one: in order Napoleon, who wanted to be Europa's referee, to dominate East as well...And official France hold Turkish revolutionaries who fled their homeland, as well as the Jesuit priests who were introduced into the Orient, to gain influence on the Near East." Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v1, p.524

III. II. Opposition and Factionalism Abroad

The accounting of the Young Ottomans' activities in Europe should first be considered in terms of their involvement in Mustafa Fazıl's conflict of interest with the Porte. Hereby, we will look at their publishing and exile life that lasted for three years and the conditions that constitute a background to their politics and ideas they put forward.

The Young Ottomans could not immediately start publishing a newspaper as soon as they arrived in Europe, because Abdülaziz would come to Paris exhibition in June 1867, and it was arranged that they did not show up around when Abdülaziz was in Paris.¹¹⁴ However, Fazıl attended the sultan's convoy. In fact during this time, Fazıl's wandering European cities by hanging on the tail of the sultan aroused some concern among them.¹¹⁵ But Fazıl, not going to Istanbul with sultan, came back from Rusçuk and made meetings with the Young Ottomans on policies that they would do and drafting a statute.¹¹⁶ After these meetings, Suavi's *Muhbir* would be released first, and on September 20 Fazıl left for Istanbul.¹¹⁷

The Young Ottomans seemed to put on airs during these "sweet months"¹¹⁸ and *Muhbir* began to be published on August 31, 1867, carrying the Young Ottomans stamp¹¹⁹ prepared by Ziya from the 7th issue. At that time exiled intellectuals, especially Kemal,

¹¹⁴ Cemil Pasha, Ottoman ambassador at Paris, reported to the French government that the Young Ottomans were partners of a Polish who would assassinate the Russian tsar. On June 30, Ziya, Kemal, Agah and Suavi would go to London, Mehmet, Reşad, Nuri to Jersey, Rifat to Brussels. see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 102

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 111

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 111-2.

The meetings took place in Paris on August 11 and in Baden-Baden on August 17. During these meetings, a commitment was obtained from Fazıl. Kemal, in a letter on the news that Fazıl would cut the allocations to *Hürriyet*, wrote his father with referring this commitment: "There are hard bonds in hand, otherwise he will be disgraceful to everyone." see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 565

¹¹⁷ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 113

¹¹⁸ There was apparently no problem, except for the uneasiness caused by Ziya's giving a petition to Abdülaziz without informing his friends while sultan was in Europe, and intolerance between Suavi and the rest of the team. see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 436

¹¹⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 113-4

regarded themselves as a *cemiyet* (organization); in the letters Kemal wrote to his father, his father was asked to send papers to the address of “organization” in London.¹²⁰

However, in a short time, problems aroused. Upon Mustafa Fazıl's return to Istanbul, a number of concerns and hopes, by which accounts of factional struggles are clearly visible, would emerge. On the one hand, Kemal said to his father, referring to Fazıl, “we have brought the case to a degree that he can be the grand vizier up to a month”¹²¹ and on the other hand, to Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem “no matter what is offered to you by either ours (Crown Prince Murad) or Mustafa Pasha or from others, never accept. Because everyone is looking for a man to sacrifice for their own purpose. What is the point of getting in trouble in vain?”¹²² So, it is seen that on one hand, there was an expectation that Fazıl would become grand vizier, and by this way they would get better; but on the other hand, the possibility of Fazıl's reconciliation with Istanbul constituted a source of insecurity and anxiety. It was not a surprise that the atmosphere of Byzantinesque intrigues and factional struggles of Istanbul elites created such feelings of insecurity in Kemal and his friends.

The establishment of *Şuray-ı Devlet* also created a similar false expectation at first. *Şuray-ı Devlet*¹²³, which came up as an imported and deformed form of Napoleon III regime's “state council”, was a need of the Tanzimat pashas to pose for “lawful” and “reformist”. Establishment of *Şuray-ı Devlet*, initially made Kemal happy and even made him say such big words: “We won, the nation won, state kept the principles of administration. (..) Where are those who said ‘it is not possible to defeat the ministers’? How did Mustafa Pasha, who had failed to enter Istanbul by spending seventy-eight thousand sacs, enter to Istanbul by a few refuser and seditious’ coming to Europe?”¹²⁴ As can be seen, Kemal attributed this “success” to their fleeing to Europe. Moreover, when the word “hürriyet” was used in

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 103. Beginning from 12th issue, *Muhbir* was prohibited in Turkey (4 Recep 1284, 1 Aralık 1867).

¹²¹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 548-9

¹²² Ibid, p. 549

¹²³ On French Ambassador Bourree's playing a decisive role in establishment of *Şuray-ı Devlet* and *Divan-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye* and even his interfering with the election of these councils' members, see Gücüm, “*Liberal*” *Yıllar*, p. 214

¹²⁴ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 550-1

the opening speech of Şuray-ı Devlet by the sultan, Kemal would be able to call this a victory of the Young Ottoman ideas.¹²⁵

However, it was soon understood that Şuray-ı Devlet whose members were selected by the Porte, had no serious function, such as acquiring legislative power from the executive power/ bureaucracy or at least sharing this right with it. Thus it was also understood that establishment of this “institution” was just a claptrap and the Young Ottomans unrolled this game by saying “unfortunately they built a council just to cheat, like some tombstones erected on the streets of Istanbul.”¹²⁶

On the other hand, the Young Ottomans began to split into factions. Although there had been intolerance between Ali Suavi and the rest of the Young Ottomans from beginning, their relations broke up after a while, not immediately. Ali Suavi, who was publishing *Muhbir*, was excluded from team, and in April or May 1868, Kemal, Ziya and his friends sent him a letter, “warning and requesting” for the removal of the Young Ottomans stamp from *Muhbir*.¹²⁷ The Young Ottomans started to publish their own newspaper, *Hürriyet*, but only after Ziya's “*Two Successions*” (İki Veraset) letter had been distributed. Fazıl appreciated this letter and gave approval for publishing *Hürriyet*.¹²⁸ The content of the letter was based on counter-reasons for the changing of succession method, and Fazıl found it useful for his personal struggle. However, this “approval” would be such an “approval” that showed Fazıl's capricious and arrogant domination over the Young Ottomans. On June 29, 1868, the first issue of *Hürriyet* was published. Kemal would write his father that *Hürriyet* was published “on the orders taken.”¹²⁹ In this newspaper, being published “on the order”, Kemal flattered Fazıl. Kuntay, interpreting this flattery as

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 303

¹²⁶ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal, v2- II*, p. 619

¹²⁷ F. Tansel claims that the reason for this incident was Suavi's use of his pen against Fazıl and others worried of this because they thought that would bring trouble on them and their salaries would be cut. see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 117.

For tensions between Suavi and rest of the Young Ottomans, from publishing of *Muhbir* to that of *Hürriyet*. see, Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 147-ff.

¹²⁸ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v1, p. 437-ff

¹²⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 117

“unsympathetic”, comments that “Hürriyet's thorough compliments about Fazıl wretched the identity of the newspaper.”¹³⁰

However, this most famous newspaper of the Young Ottomans publishing, attracted Fazıl's lightning as soon as the first issue was published. The newspaper was asked to silence. Because Fazıl was then able to start bettering his relations with the Porte; apparently, he was striving to be a minister¹³¹, therefore, Hürriyet's attacking on the Porte did not serve his purpose. Upon Hürriyet's starting to publish with an anti-Porte line, Fazıl sent a message to the Young Ottomans not to criticize government, otherwise he would cut their money. “He did not want the Young Ottomans to attack the Porte anymore. As soon as the first issue of Hürriyet appeared he sent an order that ‘they shut up or I will cut off their allocations’”.¹³² It was clear that this meant a test for the Young Ottomans. Either they would continue their way against the Porte, as they set out at the beginning, and keeping their consistency, or they would submit to Fazıl's wants in accordance with his personal interests. Kemal would make his preference for Fazıl. In the 64th issue of Hürriyet, September 13, 1869, Kemal withdrew his signature from his newspaper.

Why did Fazıl lull with the Porte, which had taken his right on succession a few years ago? Because “Mustafa Fazıl was now being used by Ali as a weapon against Ismail, just as earlier Mustafa Fazıl himself had used the New Ottomans against Ali.”¹³³ Thus, the Young Ottomans' honeymoon with prince Fazıl would end. They, which Fazıl kept as a trump against the Porte, were dispersed in different directions as Fazıl himself became a trump against the khedive. It is seen that as Fazıl ascended to posts in Istanbul or ways of

¹³⁰ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 328

¹³¹ “Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, who returned to Istanbul in the middle of September 1867, was mentioned as a member of Meclis-i Vala in July 1869, and of Minister of Finance in April 1870, but this is not true. On this date, he was appointed to the Ministry of Justice (BA, İrade-Dahiliye, nr. 42527). On August 9, 1870, he was appointed to the Ministry of Finance in place of Mehmed Sadık Pasha.” see Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, “*Mustafa Fazıl Paşa*”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV, 2006)

¹³² Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 119

In a letter to his father, Kemal interprets this situation with these words: “I think his brother-in-law Yusuf Kamil Pasha probably reconcile Ali Pasha and prince Mustafa Fazıl much...” see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p 440.

Kemal interprets the underlying reason for this threat as Fazıl's resort to look “cute” to Ali Pasha. see *Ibid*, p. 493-5.

¹³³ Davison, *Reform*, p. 218

ascending opened up in front of him, his dispute with the Porte turned into a harmony, thus *raison d'être* of the Young Ottomans were disappeared.

It is seen that these tensions and zigzags persisted from the first issue of *Hürriyet* to that of 64th. As a matter of fact, in this environment, where Kemal was stuck between Fazıl's pressures and his friends who were determined to disagree with the Porte, his distress on finding a middle way on this issue was reflected in his letters. Kemal, once tied the tension to Ziya's stance against Fazıl and referring Fazıl's being "hurt" by Ziya, complained of him in his letter to his father.¹³⁴ On the other hand, the tensions caused by pressures of Fazıl on the Young Ottomans' attitude towards the Porte were tried to be closed by Kemal, who stood close to Fazıl, taking the responsibility of the newspaper as of the 5th issue. Moreover, in the same direction for making a compromise with Istanbul, a bargaining table was seated with the Porte for a 2-3 thousand newspaper subscriptions, but this intention was not realized.¹³⁵

Finally, with directive of Fazıl, Kemal left *Hürriyet* from the 64th issue and the administration of newspaper passed to Ziya. "While *Hürriyet* was being published under responsibility of Kemal, Mustafa Fazıl Pasha's orders not to attack dignitaries were followed. After being published by Arif's signature, the attacks on Ali Pasha became violent. Fazıl Pasha's desire to use them as a means met with Ziya's great reaction: Fazıl took his place as Ali Pasha's companion in drinking in *Zafername*."¹³⁶

Thus, the Young Ottomans who appeared on scene with an impregnable stance against the Porte, took shelter under shadows of the pashas in the course of factional struggles. After his leaving from *Hürriyet*, Kemal sent an announcement to this newspaper, stating "he is no longer related with newspaper", but Ziya did not publish this announcement, which could have stained Kemal's fame if it were to appear in *Hürriyet* archives. This time, Kemal sent the same announcement to *Terakki*, which was published in Istanbul, and

¹³⁴ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 119.

¹³⁵ "But oddly, the Porte wanted to make peace with the newspaper, rather than fearing Mustafa Fazıl. The newspaper was a two-headed monster, and with the two heads of the monster, Kemal and Ziya, Ali Pasha was preparing for a reconciliation. (...) And the government agreed with them, since the government would subscribe to the newspaper two or three thousand in order to make peace, an article, which appreciated sultan very much and Porte a bit, was published. This article, which Ziya wrote with his own signature and might be corrected by Kemal, appeared in *Hürriyet*; even the name of the article was a compliment: 'Long live Sultan Aziz Han, well done Porte'". Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 441. This article was published in 26th issue of *Hürriyet*.

¹³⁶ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 126

printed it there. This meant a message to the Porte as well. Bilgegil states that “this document made Kemal forgiven and enabled him to return the country”.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, Kemal’s leaving meant nothing more than a reflection of tendency of fragmentation, that had begun and continued long ago among the Young Ottomans, to the public sources. Kemal was no longer writing in *Hürriyet* in September 1869. Fights between the rest of team and final falling apart process of the Young Ottomans developed as follows: Reşad published his “Reddiye”¹³⁸ which he wrote against Suavi, on August 16, 1869. Suavi answered Reşad at his newspaper, *Ulum* on December 19, 1869. Suavi’s article which gave approval to Ali Pasha’s murder was published on December 20, 1869, in Ziya’s *Hürriyet*. Taking advantage on this, on January 1, 1870, Kanipaşazade Rifat published “Hakikat-ı Hal Der Def-i İhtiyal” against Ziya and Ali Suavi.¹³⁹ On January 7, Kemal announced in a letter mentioned above, that he had no ties to *Hürriyet* anymore. On January 8, Reşad published his second pamphlet against Suavi: “Suavi’ye Taziye”. On January 15, Suavi published his response to Kanipaşazade. On February 7, Kanipaşazade’s second letter to Suavi was published. On February 16, Suavi announced that he would write a play called “Yayalar” (Pedestrians) on the history of the Young Ottomans and deceiving of them by Fazıl.¹⁴⁰ On March 1, 1870, Suavi declared in the 14th issue of *Ulum* that Fazıl was dismissed from the leadership by the Young Ottomans. In the same issue, “Fazıl Pasha’s Salaries” disclosure article was published.¹⁴¹ *Hürriyet*, after the 100th issue on May 29, ended its publication. *Cemiyet-i Ahrar’s İnkılab* newspaper, which we will discuss later, stopped its publication on July 18, 1870. Reşad, Mehmed and Nuri beys volunteered for French army on October, 1870 in the Franco-Prussian War. On October 21, 1870, Suavi accused Namık Kemal of making up to government. Suavi published articles against him in his *Muvakkaten Ulum*. Kemal returned to Istanbul on November 25, 1870. Suavi’s *Muvakkaten* also ended its publication in December 1870. Thus, the Young Ottomans’ publishing activities in Europe came to an end.

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 120

¹³⁸ Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 217

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 218

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 229

¹⁴¹ In this article, Suavi attacked Fazıl, who lullied with the Porte, and Kemal and others who followed him. After this article Khedive’s “Egypt began pay to Suavi from April 1870.” see Ibid, p. 261

Ali Pasha died on September 6, 1871. Agah was first to return after the amnesty declared after the death of Ali. Reşad, Nuri and Ziya also returned together shortly after Ali's death.¹⁴²

The conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion so far is clear: the Young Ottomans appeared on scene on the occasion of factional struggles among the pashas; their fates were shaped according to the course of these struggles, and ultimately they disappeared as their function came to an end in these struggles. However, we are not talking about a drift which caught intellectual cadres and they were not aware of.

In various places, enlightened cadres expressed their uneasiness on their being made an instrument to the factional struggles and their being dispersed without following an independent line. They did not want to see themselves as anyone's follower. When Kemal evaluated the events that caused him to leave *Hürriyet*, he would write as follows: "Ali Pasha deceived Mustafa Pasha (Fazıl), brought him to Istanbul, and even included him in the class of ministers. After that, Ziya Pasha began to stand against Mustafa Pasha. Khedive gave money to Ziya Pasha. (...) Hidiv tussled with Ali Pasha. Ziya Pasha thought that if khedive was caught in hand, Ali Pasha would be more easily defeated. I was against this idea. Then we were separated from each other. *Hürriyet*'s copies are apparent. I wrote articles against the khedive without protecting Ali Pasha. Ziya Pasha wrote articles against Ali Pasha without upholding khedive."¹⁴³ The unrest disclosing in these lines is remarkable. Kemal wants to show that the Young Ottomans went on their way, not any others'. In these lines, Kemal also clearly shows contradictions and weaknesses of the Young Ottomans.¹⁴⁴

These words from one of the Young Ottomans, aiming to present themselves no one's follower, should be seen as an expression of their inward reaction to the fact that they could not make their policies based on their own means and that they were directed

¹⁴² Although Suavi applied to return in December 1871, he was rejected. see Ibid, p. 266

¹⁴³ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 441-3.

Ali Suavi, as well, said that: "We did not come out to be sold to Fazıl's achieving khedivate of Egypt. In accordance with the documents signed by Fazıl Pasha, we have pledged to accompany him as long as he moves and continues in his thoughts and does not turn; otherwise we are not his captive or servant." see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 127

¹⁴⁴ Kemal would not consider himself as follower of crown prince Murad as well. see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v2, I, p. 173, annotation 13.

according to pressures of the cliques to which they were bounded financially, if not intellectually.

The most advanced expression of this reaction is found in Ziya Pasha when the Young Ottomans' publishing was about to end. It seems that, suffocated by disintegration of his group, financial bottlenecks, and being trapped politically, Ziya demonstrated this reaction in an advanced form which manifested itself as a challenge to entire politics of the era, praising republican regime.¹⁴⁵ In one of his last articles in *Hürriyet*, Ziya attacked arbitrary, oppressive regimes and interest groups that controlled these regimes he called "personal government"; he confronted these groups' desire to use everyone for their own purposes. He showed the republican regime as an ideal remedy to the "intrigues" of these groups. Considering that Ziya was dependent to khedive Ismail financially in publishing *Hürriyet* after Kemal's leaving, it is very meaningful that his praising republican regime came out in second to last issue. One can assume that tormented and dispersed for a long time, Ziya, who was a clever, proud and enlightened person, intended to demonstrate his spontaneous rebellion against factional fights and intriguing politics of the pashas in which he was squeezed, by using his latest means to make his word heard.

III. III. Against Factionalism: Mehmet Bey and *Cemiyet-i Ahrar*

As a result, the Young Ottomans were instrumentalized in the factional politics, no matter how much unrest was felt by them for being included in this politics and a search for apology was subsequently made. However, there was also a tendency among them which wanted to develop itself by standing on its own feet and to seek an independent stance without being tool for inter-pashas conflicts of interest. *Cemiyet-i Ahrar*, Mehmed Bey's organization, would emerge as an embodiment of this tendency. *İnkılab* newspaper, led by him, would be a publication in which this independent political line was expressed. The

¹⁴⁵ *Hürriyet*, nr 99, "İdare-i Cumhuriye ile Hükümet-i Şahsiyenin Farkı", p. 1-3 (14 Rebiyülevvel 1287/June 17, 1870). In this article, Ziya Pasha says: "personal governments employ millions of people, rob them, take what they have and spend for their own debauchery as if the country was a farm, legacy of their ancestors, and people were stock on this farm."

According to Ziya, the remedy is the transition from the personal government to the republican regime: "Millions of people in republican administration are not enslaved to the enjoyment of a few beneficiaries, and all rich and poor are free to protect their law and freedom." After he adds this: "for this reason, the intrigue of the ministers in the republic administration can never be done." In these lines, we see that opposition to the Tanzimat regime is attaining a consistent essence. However, Ziya's republicanism would not go beyond this article.

fact that *İnkılab* began its publication on May 1, 1870 at a time when Young Ottomans were disintegrated and dispersed was also very meaningful in this regard.¹⁴⁶

Kuntay expresses a distinction between Mehmet Bey and his team and rest of the Young Ottomans with these words: “According to Kemal ‘Union’ side of the Young Ottomans were dominant, but to Mehmet Bey that of ‘Committee’. Kemal wanted the constitutional regime with pen, but Mehmet Bey with pistol.”¹⁴⁷ While Kemal, in accordance with Fazıl’s demand left *Hürriyet* and announced it by Istanbul newspapers, in front of the Porte, Mehmet Bey declared that “I will not come to Istanbul unless constitutional regime is established”.¹⁴⁸ He published *İnkılab* not by taking money from Fazıl, Khedive or anyone else. In Kuntay’s words, “In Geneva, he was publishing *İnkılab* on an empty stomach.”¹⁴⁹

It was stated in *İnkılab* by Mehmet Bey that Cemiyet-i Ahrar was established by separating itself from the Young Ottomans.¹⁵⁰ The aim of Cemiyet-i Ahrar was to “abolish all privileges and ensure national sovereignty.”¹⁵¹ The distinctive lines of *İnkılab* and Cemiyet-i Ahrar can be found in the article titled “Answer to *Hürriyet*” written by Mehmet

¹⁴⁶ For *İttihad* newspaper, which was published firstly on May 1, 1869, under direction of Mehmet Bey before the establishment of Cemiyet-i Ahrar see Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 106-ff.

In addition to the freedom of the press, I think that this newspaper was first to mention “freedom of assembly” in Ottoman politics. see *Ibid*, p. 130

¹⁴⁷ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 359-60. For Mehmet Bey Kuntay says: “he was the only revolutionary who was sentenced to death in Europe”. *Ibid*, p. 414

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 415. For a biography of Mehmet Bey’s short life which ended in 1874, see Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, (İstanbul: MEB, 1969), p. 942-953

¹⁴⁹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 416. These independent stances of Mehmet Bey and his friends were same at first: “Two of the three revolutionaries who did not want to take travel allowance sent by prince Mustafa Fazıl from Egypt after their arriving in Paris were Nuri and Mehmet and the third was Reşat. . (...) These young people could not combine “revolutionism” with “money”. They were so rebellious that they criticized themselves what others would do to induce themselves the “money” that makes man “officer” and “servitor”..” *Ibid*, p. 381

¹⁵⁰ see Mehmet Bey’s articles: *İnkılab*, nr 1: “Keşfi Zamir”, nr 2: “Keşfi Zamir’in Mabadi” and nr 5: “Keşfi Zamir’in Hatimesi”

In these articles, Mehmed Bey reveals Fazıl’s letter asking the Young Ottomans to be silent. This is obviously a reaction to intriguing politics. Mehmed Bey stated that he remained in the Young Ottomans for 2 years, as long as Fazıl remained committed to the cause (“maksad baki”). He announces that he has left this path since “nothing has been seen other than silence and calm” in 2 two years, and now the time of silence has passed. The place where the Young Ottomans came under patronage of Fazıl was “the dissolution of the members of the society one by one and the merger of Fazıl with ministers”. Mehmed Bey would not go this way and announces his leaving from the Young Ottomans. This leaving was a separation from faction politics. It was not a search for other patrons like Suavi and Ziya did, but a search based on their own means. see Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p.200; p. 212-4; p. 258-60

¹⁵¹ Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 195

Bey, which was an answer to Ziya Pasha's cliquish thoughts.¹⁵² This was an article that covered İnkılab's one issue completely and another extensively.

In his article in Hürriyet to congratulate publishing of İnkılab, Ziya claimed that corrupt regime was originated "from viziers, not from sultan"; so, according to him, sultan was innocent, the guilty were the Porte.¹⁵³ This attitude of Ziya was a resemblance of his commitment to dominant powers' politics. Mehmet Bey, while criticizing this article, condemned cliquish politics in the entire history of the Young Ottomans as well as policy of approaching and appealing to this or that dominant group. He emphasized the need to defend interests of people with an independent force.

Mehmet Bey says "the work to be done was not restricted to changing ministers like offer of Hürriyet" and adds "the desired revolution is not one of things that can be made by appointments. While ruining country by mischief of administration and insanity of Abdülaziz is in the middle, empty jobs will not be dealt by confining the aim to the removal of two or three people."¹⁵⁴ If the guilty was not the sultan but only Ali Pasha and those around him, by changing a few pashas the work would be completed, according to logic of factionalism. Thus aim of the factional politics was not to overthrow established order, but to the group that occupied peak of this order. However, Mehmet Bey objected this policy: "the administration of the state was so polluted and it destroyed country such that it could not be put in order unless it was rootedly destroyed."¹⁵⁵ In these lines, it is argued with a revolutionary stance against factionalism that the regime should be changed radically. Thus, we see that the idea of a regime change that put the whole ruling class on its target broke a new ground for itself.

Mehmet Bey reacted to the intriguing politics shaped under the oppression and gloom of the Tanzimat pashas' dictatorship, which degenerated the people and eradicated the political dynamism and tradition of opposition among them. He declares that a loud and clear path of opposition would be followed from now on. Henceforth "*efkar-ı umumiye*"

¹⁵² "*Hürriyet Gazetesine Cevab*", *İnkılab* nr 3 and nr 4. Third issue of İnkılab was completely reserved for this article. Most of fourth issue was also reserved for this article.

¹⁵³ *Hürriyet* nr 94, p. 1-4. Let us remind that this article of Ziya appeared before his article praising the Republic.

¹⁵⁴ Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 156

¹⁵⁵ Referring Ali Pasha and Sultan Abdülaziz, Mehmet says that "We have no business with their personalities, God damn them both!" see *Ibid*, p. 225

(public opinion) would have everyone to count itself and would make itself accepted by force.¹⁵⁶ “This is the revolution that we desire and support with the pen as well. Otherwise, it is not condescending to intrigues to overthrow one or two lazy. (...) And our power is made up of ourselves.”¹⁵⁷

Referring to Cemiyet’s assertion not to rely on anyone else but itself, these words of Mehmet Bey, in a vivid way, expresses the main aspect of Cemiyet-i Ahrar's difference from the Young Ottomans. In these lines we find a coherent expression of a truly opposition movement against the ruling class. This consistency was embodied by the radicalism of Cemiyet-i Ahrar.¹⁵⁸ As a matter of fact, in the French bulletin of İnkılab we come across the emphasis on the republic and democracy: “Our institutions are totally suitable for the republic”; “we are in such an hour that Islam's democratic tendencies are awakening again”¹⁵⁹. Although these thoughts were expressed at level of ideals, the Cemiyet-i Ahrar's line against the ruling class points to the fact that the Young Ottomans’ backward factionalism was broken and opposition was brought to its natural channel in which it should flow. Indeed, Bilgegil determines that “the revolution envisioned by Cemiyet-i Ahrar would offer a similar scope to the French revolution”.¹⁶⁰

However, fate of this remarkable attempt by Mehmet Bey and his friends, who could not find place they deserve in the literature, was to dissolve like the Young Ottomans. İnkılab newspaper ended its publication in July 1870.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ “Until now, as men suffered from oppression, anger was relieved with mixed words and revenge was taken by mocking the oppressors. Henceforth, every stubborn movement is banned and expelled by the agitation power of public opinion. Since this can be achieved by the public opinion’s gaining a force that can make itself accepted, the aim of gaining this force is to seek and return the lost law.” Ibid, p. 244

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 245

¹⁵⁸ For Kemal’s own statements on Cemiyet-i Ahrar’s difference from the Young Ottomans in regard of their radicalism and their independent politics from cliques in high bureaucracy, by comparing this group radicalism with "moderation" of the Young Ottomans see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 419

¹⁵⁹ Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 273

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 279

¹⁶¹ As mentioned before, with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, Mehmet, Nuri and Reşad volunteered for the French army. see Bilgegil, ibid, p. 129. On the claim that these “Three Turks” joined also the Paris Commune see Teber, *Mehmet, Nuri ve Reşat Beyler*, p. 79-80

III. IV. Ideational Dilemma in the Young Ottomans' Thought

After revealing the political fates of the Young Ottomans and Cemiyet-i Ahrar, we now need to point out some phenomena that emerged in the intellectual plane.

From the beginning of the study we have emphasized the Young Ottomans' dilemma of between being a tool for factional politics and being spokesperson for public interest in discourse.

Discussing the opposition against the top of the bureaucracy from lower-level officials, Yerasimos explains that: "Students raised in new high schools move to a more conscious opposition as they can grasp the western realities, whether indirectly or directly because of their reading opportunities in Europe. After studying and educating, these young people take office that connect them with the forms of imperialism's infiltration to the country before they have the opportunity to make great fortunes. This relationship with the facts creates a reaction in the minds of these intellectuals against the bureaucracy that manages the country in cooperation with the embassies of great states and makes use of financial tricks which multiply day by day, as well as against Europe."¹⁶² We do not claim that these statements suit to the Young Ottomans as a whole or to each of the opposing intellectuals as a singular. However, as this passage suggests, there was indeed a striking difference between the Young Ottomans and their adversaries in terms of their vocational past, even though they were all bureaucrats in origin. The overwhelming majority of the Tanzimat pashas were grew from the ministry of foreign affairs; their professional background was almost restricted to the international diplomatic missions and central bureaucratic posts; that is to say, the high bureaucrats were always the ones who took charge in the peaks. However, most figures of the Young Ottomans either served in the provinces or were brought up in the country, not in capital; among them, those from Istanbul were the ones who took office in the lower levels of bureaucracy.¹⁶³ Moreover, although high bureaucrats of Tanzimat "who put themselves up with their arrogance and bluster"¹⁶⁴ were old people who had been at work for many years, all of the intellectuals were quite young. Therefore,

¹⁶² Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p.445

¹⁶³ Ziya Pasha served as governor in different provinces in countryside; Ali Suavi and Namık Kemal came from the countryside; Mehmet, Reşad and Nuri were from lower-middle level civil servants; Hüseyin Vasfi, last to join the Young Ottomans, was an middle-level officer.

¹⁶⁴ This term is used by Ziya Pasha. see *Hürriyet*, nr 55, p. 2 (July 12, 1869)

they were more intimate with the people and popular classes and as they observed people's problems directly, they also did not much hesitate to express these facts.

For example, Ziya Pasha, pointed to deeply indebtedness and misery of low-level civil servants, who could get their salaries delayed as financial situation worsened under Ali and Fuad pashas' administration. Referring the Porte's pashas, he said: "Is it not that these people who loot state revenues and debt they made on behalf of the state and do not give allowances of the officers and soldiers on time. Thus, many good and honorable men, like beggars, were compelled to kiss hands of the *sarrafs* (moneylenders) and sell their little ones inherited from their fathers and mothers for living on. And those who were not able to do so were compelled to commit fraud by transporting debit accounts from a grocery to another, from a baker to another."¹⁶⁵

90% of burden of tax was on peasants and the Young Ottomans brought forward that this burden should be substituted by other sources, such as taxation of real estate and trade, and this would be a useful way both to the people and the treasure. If the state cuts tithe tax and "imposes a proper and proportionate tax on portable and immovable goods and trade and craft instead, it in fact would both revives the population and fills its treasury."¹⁶⁶ Importance of this demand is understood from explanations we have given before. While government did not touch the trade and other sources of taxation, it only levied taxes on the poor, creating a vicious circle. This situation devastated agriculture, which was the only productive economic base since no industry developed in the country, deepening the financial dilemma in the end.¹⁶⁷ This demand also indicates a distinction of these intellectuals from high bureaucracy, which economically dependent on exploitation of masses. Thus, by this demand, the alliance of interests between the Ottoman political elite

¹⁶⁵ *Hürriyet*, nr 35, p. 2 (February 22, 1869). Kemal, as well, says that the shopkeepers were damaged due to the stagnation of shopping because of late payment of salaries. see İhsan Sungu, "*Tanzimat ve Yeni Osmanlılar*", (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940), p. 827

¹⁶⁶ *Hürriyet*, nr 63, p. 2 (September 6, 1869). In *Hadika* newspaper, Kemal speaks of the fact that while the tax burden was on back of peasantry, privileges of Istanbul caused him to be corrupted: "We think the state treasury is a general livelihood. The main reason for this is that the capital is exempted from the life and property tax, which is a debt to homeland, and generally accepts the lowness of servitude as a requirement of honor. (...) We are the people of Istanbul; as long as we continue this laziness, this indulgence of servitude, we will remain as a wolf consisting of pus in the heart of our homeland. (...) At least we should be ashamed of the peasants by which we have a thousand blessings thanks to the tax that they pay digging up the land with their nails!" see Sungu, "*Yeni Osmanlılar*", p. 800

¹⁶⁷ St. Clair also emphasized problem of taxation of trade. see Clair, *Eastern Question*, p. 155

and the non-Muslim bourgeoisie within the framework of the established order was somehow revealed.

In the 56th issue of *Hürriyet*, vital point of financial stalemate is discussed. Mentioning financial situation's deteriorating and its only possible resolution by increasing the income, it is requested to impose taxes on real estate and trade of foreigners. "It is obvious that (...) there is much to be gained from imposing taxes on properties of foreigners and trade."¹⁶⁸ The Young Ottomans also stated that the tax that was not collected from foreigners due to capitulations was imposed on the people; and domestic and foreign non-Muslims who did not pay taxes due to the capitulations monopolized country's trade in their hands.¹⁶⁹ Thus, the essence of problem is mentioned.

Again, in the context of capitulations, the Young Ottomans objected to the granting right of having real estate to foreigners. They saw this granting as an attempt by dictator pashas to make up to the external forces. Given low wealth level in the country, at the end of this policy, there would be a threat of foreigners' seizing the country's property. "This would be the outcome of untimely permission to foreigners to own property by current ministers, who took the state in the palm of their hands saying that there is no one who can manage it better than us and who can not become satisfied neither by money of treasury nor by sultan's bestowals, for purely selling themselves to Europe. But [for Tanzimat pashas] what loss does it bring to find Monsieur Laurant and Monsieur Merton sit down in Istanbul instead of Hacı Ahmed Efendi and Hasan Ağa?"¹⁷⁰ It would be underestimating of the subject if this reaction is seen as simply a rhetoric of anti-Porte propaganda. At the basis of this reaction is a challenge to policies of the bureaucratic aristocracy that have brought the national existence and the national wealth to the brink of serious destruction; a bureaucracy that was devoid of national consciousness in the age of nationalism and nationalities. The bureaucracy single-handedly takes these decisions, which concern the whole nation, and leaves society confronted with a *fait accompli*. These protests against the Ottoman high bureaucracy which came to the power by oppressing popular classes, which was the social base of nationalization and secularization, mean a patriotic resistance

¹⁶⁸ *Hürriyet*, nr 56, p. 4 (July 19, 1869)

¹⁶⁹ "The heavy burden" left by those who got patents and passports from foreign consulates and by this way did not pay tax, "was imposed on the rest of the people and in many places people could not bear the tax. (...) Strangely enough, these consulates and their deputies and officers are in most places traded in the monopoly of locals, property owners and merchants. " see *Hürriyet*, nr 48, p. 8 (May 24, 1869)

¹⁷⁰ *Hürriyet*, nr 21, p. 6 (November 26, 1868)

under the conditions that national wealth resources were consumed by these bureaucrats and country opened up his hands to foreigners under a continuous financial bottleneck.

Destruction of the industry and the monopoly of foreigners and the non-Muslims on the trade were also among criticisms of the Young Ottomans. In an article he did not neglect to praise liberalism, Kemal nevertheless blames the commercial regime bureaucracy brought to the country through free trade agreements with devastation. “We had workshops which could meet almost our every need. In twenty-thirty years, almost all of them were destroyed. The reason for this is undoubtedly the right to free trade granted to Europeans by notorious treaties.”¹⁷¹

In the same place, it is also stated that trade was taken away from the Turkish-Muslim element and the non-Muslims were brought to an unrivalled position due to the privileges granted to them: “Aside from the fact that we cannot benefit from the foreign trade, we have lost all of our foreign trade to foreigners for twenty years. The cause is notorious treaty. Everybody knows that, as long as there is a privileged segment in a country, non-privileged segments cannot compete with it.”¹⁷²

In previous chapter, we have seen that the new tax releases stemmed from the concern of creating resources as guarantee to the new loans. Kemal expresses in a clear language that this policy of the Tanzimat pashas actually resulted in a vicious circle of debt, “teselsül-i fasid”, by destroying the potential of tax revenue: “New debts have been received always by finding the new incomes and showing them as provision to Europe. (...) As the debt increased, it was tried to increase revenues to find a provision. As income was sought, people were crushed because of persecution arising from this seeking. Income was down. It also gave rise to need to increase the debt one more time. As a result, this vicious circle joined the known wastage and the treasury reached bankruptcy.”¹⁷³ The bankruptcy Kemal referred to came true after seven years he had wrote these lines. He explains this vicious circle, namely the fact that exploitation of economic base to be taxed till the last would narrow this base, in another place with these words: “Now situation has come to a degree

¹⁷¹ *Hürriyet*, nr 7, p. 2 (August 10, 1868)

Ziya Pasha also points out that domestic products were withdrawn from market by the monopolization of trade in the hands of foreigners and non-Muslims. see *Hürriyet*, nr 45, p. 8 (May 3, 1869)

¹⁷² *Hürriyet*, nr 7, p. 2 (August 10, 1868)

¹⁷³ *Hürriyet*, nr 47, p. 2 (May 17, 1869)

that, they transmit a snake in the stories. Supposedly it feeds by eating his own organs. If it eats its organs in a few days, it would die, if it does not, it would die as well. The government looks just like it. If it collects taxes it imposed completely, people would be forced to sell all that they have, maybe their children, and sources of income would be completely closed in a year or two. If it does not collect, state would sink because current method is not possible to make out.”¹⁷⁴

In the face of the conditions in which people was silenced and corrupted by the bureaucracy's repressive policies, the Young Ottomans reminded the resistance of Turkish-Muslim middle classes with their organized power against the bureaucracy in the ages of Janissaries. “Where craftsmen and valiant heads rebelled against the persecution, or rather united to protect the law and acquired rights of crafts from injustices.”¹⁷⁵ In *İnkılab*, mentioning that the cruel sultans were dethroned and those of bureaucrats were punished in *Etmeydanı*¹⁷⁶ in the past, it is stated that “thank God, we are sons of those fathers.”¹⁷⁷ Likewise, Kemal, in one of his writings, remarks that until the Janissaries were eliminated “the Ottoman State had been administered by the will of ummah and thus through the method of consultation” and “people personally exercised the right which it would give to deputies. Each barracks was almost an armed assembly of the council of ummah.”¹⁷⁸ These references to resistance of the Janissaries as an organized political public voice of Turkish-Muslim middle classes against arbitrary administration of the bureaucracy are also significant as they point to the historical basis of the contradiction between people and high bureaucracy.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *Hürriyet*, nr 7, p. 1 (August 10, 1868)

¹⁷⁵ *Ulum*, nr 12, quoted by Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 671.

¹⁷⁶ The square where Janissary riots began.

¹⁷⁷ *İnkılab*, nr 4, quoted by Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 250.

¹⁷⁸ *Hürriyet*, nr 12, p. 6 (September 14, 1868)

¹⁷⁹ However, it cannot be claimed that the Young Ottomans were in full consistency on this subject. In the abovementioned article, Kemal accuses the janissaries of exceeding “limit” and uses similar negative terms. Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, who would be incurred the wrath of the bureaucrats in the future, praised Mahmud II who played a critical role in the establishment of the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. see Erol Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa ve Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İz, 2006), p. 401-2.

Likewise, Suavi's approach was not consistent; in his an other writing, he attacked Janissaries. see, Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 555.

H. Vasfi, who referred to the centuries of janissary in *İnkılab* newspaper positively, in another place, praised the leader of the team who slaughtered Janissaries, namely Mahmud II. see. Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 192.

These discourses of the Young Ottomans were a political protest against deterioration of situation of large masses and devastating course of the country. This protest was directed to the Tanzimat regime and its prominent figures then, Ali and Fuad Pashas.

Kemal, in one of his articles, finds that the Tanzimat pashas were actually heirs to each other, but he places Reşid in a positive position compared to Ali and Fuad. “Ali and Fuad Pashas, who were raised in the school of Reşid Pasha, were undoubtedly heirs to legacy of the ideas of aforesaid. However, it is regrettable that their share of this legacy’s parts related to the fortitude and the dexterity in the affairs of the state was somewhat lacking. And their share in terms of using the foreigners to save their future with sacrifices of all sizes was many times higher than their teacher.”¹⁸⁰ In these lines, Kemal states that, in essence, prominent Tanzimat pashas were all followers of same “party”/politics; moreover, he points that their common characteristics were their pursuit of personal and denominational prosperity. However, in his analysis compared to Ali and Fuad, Reşid appears as *ehven-i şer*, lesser evil.

According to Ziya Pasha, the way Reşid took in the implementation of Tanzimat, namely ensuring “self interest”, shook foundation of the state. He adds also that use of the state power to afford personal and group advantages caused foreigners to think that the order in the Muslim society prevents justice and progress. Reşid's successors also ran after their

For the Porte's pashas accusing those who they disliked of being janissaries “opposing advances (!)” see Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 69; p. 131.

The bureaucrats' arrogance of ruling class and their fear of public participation in politics can be seen, for example, in the joy of Cevdet Pasha on suppression of the 1848 revolutions and the collapse of the Republic in France. see Mithat Cemal Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v2- II, (İstanbul: İş Kültür, 2010), p. 83.

For Fuad Pasha's dastardly hatred for “innovation” of sovereignty of people and national consciousness (“efkar-ı milliye”) see Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 167.

Likewise, for Kazgan’s allegation that Reşid, Ali and Fuad pashas objected to establishing factories in the Ottoman Empire, because of their concern on the possibility of workers’ being like janissaries by saying “we've just got rid of Gedik organization, what will we do if we face a worker problem?” see Kazgan, *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Şirketleşme*, p. 29.

However, Ali Pasha's enmity against working classes was recorded. For Ali Pasha's proposal, as if it were his duty, for intergovernmental “cooperation” against International for suppression of Paris Commune. see Gücüm, *“Liberal” Yıllar*, p. 287.

In contrast to this, the Young Ottomans advocated trade unionism and the Paris Commune in their publications, following a line contrary to despot pashas. For the views of Menapirzade Nuri in İbret advocating the International and trade union organization see İbret, nr 8 quoted by Şeker, *Menapirzade Nuri*, p. 123

¹⁸⁰ Namık Kemal, *Bütün Makaleleri*, (İstanbul: Dergah, 2005, ed by N. Y. Aydoğdu, İ. Kara), p. 151-2

personal interests because “they were raised in his school”; moreover, instead of trying to correct this misconception of Europe, showing this situation as a reason, they tried to persuade Europeans that they should stay in their office.¹⁸¹ This interpretation of Ziya is clear in terms of its manner in which the pashas relationships with imperialism is trotted out.

The Porte’s dictatorship despised identity of the society and accepted it as a barrier to the “progress”.¹⁸² The Young Ottomans objected to this attitude and argued that the bureaucrats who run after their interests, not the society, prevented the progress. By doing so, they also backed the idea that Muslim society could develop with its own dynamics.

The Young Ottomans also exposed docility of the bureaucrats, who acted dictatory against the Ottoman citizens, to foreigners and especially foreign ambassadors. They also showed that there was a unity of interest in the background of this docility. “Pizanis, Scheffers, Outreys, Delaportes, Mayers each dominated ministers of foreign affairs in a manner of chosen ambassador. Against faces of grand viziers they spoke such words that if being told to an ordinary man it would be felt ashamed. (...) The Porte assisted their influence in every way and the parties set up today's wardrobe of depravement, responding each other well to benefit of other.”¹⁸³ Ziya Pasha, author of these lines, in another article states that, Reşid Pasha used British support¹⁸⁴ as a lever against his rivals in the politics because he had no strength to depend domestically on and referring Reşid again, adds: “He thought it was peculiar to look good to European states for favourites (“terviç-i mültemesat”) of embassies in Istanbul, and the doors of intervention, which had been opened by this improper kindness, could not be closed again.”¹⁸⁵ Again Ziya Pasha, mentioning that the

¹⁸¹ *Hürriyet*, nr 41 (April 5, 1869) quoted by Sungu, “*Yeni Osmanlılar*”, p. 800-1

¹⁸² Above, we have shown that Ali Pasha regarded “superstitions of society” as the greatest challenge to the Tanzimat pashas. For Fuad’s drawing a parallel between Islam and “a clock which is behind the time and must be set” see Davison, *Reform*, p. 90

¹⁸³ Sungu, “*Yeni Osmanlılar*”, p. 789

¹⁸⁴ Kemal attributed the reason for the inclusion of Reform Edict of 1856, which was made a fait accompli by pro-French pashas, into the Paris Treaty to Ali and Fuad pashas’ desire to hold on power in order to prevail pro-British Reşid by making concessions to westerners. “If this was the case, Reşid Pasha saw the punishment for his work because he was wounded with a gun he invented.” (*İbret* nr 28) In other words, Reşid was the victim of the politics he invented of which essence was to compromise western powers in order to attain power in domestic politics. Ali and Fuad Pashas took power completely under their hegemony after Reşid had died. Thus, they would go to have profession of leaning upon France in their every act. see Namık Kemal, *Bütün Makaleleri*, p. 152

¹⁸⁵ *Hürriyet*, nr 48, p. 7 (May 24, 1869). However, in the same article, Ziya would also apologize to the bureaucracy's policy of “winning” the west.

ambassadors could not much intervene in the internal affairs before Tanzimat, says: “When the late Reşid Pasha went on path of making influence of the ambassadors for basis for his prosperity (“peştiban-ı ikbal”); embassies began to sell their patronage expensive as well.”¹⁸⁶ Likewise, in contrast to strict and stubborn attitudes of the bureaucrats in administration of the country, it was subject of satire of the Young Ottomans that these bureaucrats were soft and beseeching even in most ordinary issues against Europeans.¹⁸⁷

However, the Young Ottomans, who made such protests against the Tanzimat regime, which was “imposed by the military force”¹⁸⁸ as they stated, could not maintain their criticisms against the ruling elite in the political plane with a complete consistency. While the Young Ottomans criticized the Tanzimat pashas harshly, they also showed attitudes which can be interpreted as a kind of apology for the high bureaucracy’s policies. In fact, this apology was sometimes intertwined with criticism. Now, let us consider this phenomenon, which is undoubtedly related to the factional politics in which the Young Ottomans were included. Examining of this phenomenon will lead us to the fact that the Young Ottomans, on the one hand, opposed the policies of the Tanzimat pashas, and on the other hand, fall into dilemma of legitimating their politics.

Kemal, while comparing Reşid and his successors, says “Indeed, Reşid Pasha based on England in almost his every act. But the policy of England are not valid with the individuals in power, which is the case in French and Austrian administrations; since it is a certain way that has been settled and held by every party for a few centuries, according to aforesaid (Reşid) it was possible to adapt measures by realizing content and tendencies of the force he is relying on.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, Kemal sees a “precaution” in the policy of relying on “institutional” imperialist England compared to capricious imperialist France. As a matter of fact, this logic creates a basis for apologizing Ali and Fuad's Napoleonism, and Kemal right away gives reason to Ali and Fuad's pro-French policy with following words: “It should be admitted that if Ali and Fuad Pashas did not use Napoleon as a means of preserving their own future, there would be many difficulties in ensuring smoothing of all these things in a manner fast and equitably suitable to state's wishes, while there was such

¹⁸⁶ Sungu, “*Yeni Osmanlılar*”, p. 788

¹⁸⁷ For one of the examples in which Ziya criticized submissive policy of the Porte with stylistic manner see *Ibid*, p. 794-5

¹⁸⁸ *Hürriyet*, nr 62, p. 2 (August 30, 1869)

¹⁸⁹ Namık Kemal, *Bütün Makaleleri*, p. 152

a haunting ruler in France.”¹⁹⁰ Therefore, in the logic of Kemal, the easiest way to deal with “troubles” created by an imperialist power such as Napoleon III’s France which was meddling and seeking to create troubles, is to rely on it!¹⁹¹

Aim in this quotation is to show how Kemal's logic became inconsistent even when he harshly criticized Tanzimatists. All this rhetoric, expressed in a tone that legalized the bureaucracy’s policy of relying on foreign powers and even exhibited with a concern of finding a “logic” for this policy, goes as far as justifying cooperation of prominent members of the Tanzimat regime with imperialists.

Attention has been drawn to sensitivity of the bureaucracy to the course of international balances for the sake of its power. We also see the Young Ottomans in tackling of “ideologizing” of the policy of “winning” the west, which was already vigilant against Russia's aim of gaining influence in the east, by appealing to it. According to Ziya Pasha, it cannot be denied that “it is necessary to inform Europe about breaches that would haunt the Europe's peace balance and public order when Russia seizes a place like Istanbul, and to attract the trade and interests of Europe to our country in order to keep forces of the western states behind and help us because of clear mutual interest in getting over damages of this general plague, as Russia is not just enemy of the Ottoman State.”¹⁹² As can be seen, he justifies the policy of satisfying the west, whose harmful consequences even he points to immediately after above mentioned lines.¹⁹³ While it is clear that “Austria and Russia took the advantage of the weakness in the structure of this country, which was caused by western Europe, in order to break up the Ottoman Empire”¹⁹⁴; what is seen in this apology is the fact that the Young Ottoman intellectuals were as well bureaucrats from ruling class acting with a shallow pragmatism. The fact that they pursue a factional politics in inter-pasha conflicts also stems from this reality.

Kemal would go so far to say that the western powers proposed Ottomans “reforming the tyrannous administration” in 1856 Paris Conference and Turkey's survival was possible

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 153

¹⁹¹ Kemal depicts Napoleon as a man who wants to be “herzevekil-i kainat” (busybody of universe) by intervening in every issue of the world. see Ibid, p. 152

¹⁹² *Hürriyet*, nr 42, p. 8 (April 12, 1869)

¹⁹³ *Hürriyet*, nr 42, p. 8 (April 12, 1869)

¹⁹⁴ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 299

by being a constitutional state under foreign “sponson” and only by this way foreign interventions would be blocked (!). “When Russia sent Menchikov to Istanbul to protect her sect-fellows, the western states wasted lives and assets with us to stand up against her intervention. But at the end they offered us reforming of our tyrannous administration. The main thing for the Porte at that time was to fix government and enter under general sponson of Europe in the form of a constitutional state; and with this measure, it was necessary to both completely preclude foreign interventions and ensure our survival; but they satisfied Europe only by granting some permissions to Christians. And by introducing these permissions to the Treaty of Paris, they promised reforming status of Christian subjects on behalf of the sultan, and gave the guarantor states a right of audit in this respect.”¹⁹⁵ It is seen that Kemal, even when criticizing concessive policy in the process of proclamation of Reform Edict of 1856, considered the west somehow above blame. In these words, we do not witness a Young Ottoman intellectual who show a patriotic stance against foreign yoke and interventionism, but a cheap pragmatism of the Tanzimat bureaucrat who seeks his basis of power in “general sponson” of others, not in his country. In Kemal's lines there is nothing more than a mere language that makes apology to traditional politics of the Porte's tyrants.

It can be assumed that the examples given so far are sufficient to concretize a fundamental contradiction among constitutionalist Ottoman intellectuals; their dilemma between factionalism and following an independent politics, between being intriguer and democrat. This dilemma could not last forever, and it bifurcated between a tendency towards Cemiyet-i Ahrar and another tendency to be driven away by winds of the factional politics.

This dilemma not only occurred in terms of political consistency as can be seen between Cemiyet-i Ahrar and the Young Ottomans. We can see it also in intellectuals' thoughts and rhetoric. At the background of this dilemma, there seems to be a tension between these facts: the Young Ottomans, on the one hand, were bureaucrats belonging to the ruling class and on the other hand, they were excluded from this class. Thus, they followed established order's “protocol” and refrained from talking about “regime change” and did not forget to bless the symbols of the system, while mercilessly attacking those who held the system in governmental level. That is, they did not oppose the political regime as a whole, they opposed it with the intention of seizing the peak in terms of factional conflicts, and in doing so they were attached to patronage of cliques among elites. But on the other hand,

¹⁹⁵ *Hürriyet*, nr 4, p. 2 (July 20, 1868)

in these conflicts, they were in a balance that they were excluded from bureaucratic apparatus and were not sure of their future in exile abroad, which sometimes led them to be harsh in their discourse.

How the Young Ottomans withdrew from the scene was explained above. With the death of Ali Pasha in 1871, one page in the factional struggles in Ottoman politics was closed, but another page was immediately opened.

In the next chapter we will discuss the process and chaotic conditions that preceded proclamation of the constitution on December 23, 1876. We will try to trace events and examine reasons until the exile of Mithat Pasha, who was in pursuit of realizing a constitutional regime just like Kemal's above-mentioned constitutional regime “under general sponson of foreigners.”

CHAPTER IV

CONDITIONS PRECEDED PROMULGATION OF KANUN-İ ESASİ

*“Bünyan-ı mülke verdi hakkiyle indirası
Abdülhamit Han’ın kanun-i bi esası”*
Namık Kemal

IV. I. Crisis and Conflicts in Ruling Class Before 1876 May Coup

The first job of Mahmut Nedim¹⁹⁶, who became grand vizier after the death of Ali Pasha in September 1871, was to remove ministers and dignitaries chosen by Ali Pasha from Istanbul. Hüseyin Avni was dismissed from seraskerat and Şirvanizade from ministry of justice, those alleged to be close to the crown prince Murad also got their share from these removals.¹⁹⁷

However, this attack against Ali Pasha's successors was not continuous. During the five years between 1871 and the fall of Abdülaziz; Mithat, Mütercim Rüşdi, Şirvanizade and Hüseyin Avni, who were from the traditional group of Tanzimat pashas¹⁹⁸, came to the

¹⁹⁶ For Nedim's *“Ayine-i Devlet”* pamphlet and the views attributed to him see Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy*, (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 43; see also Butrus Abu Manneh, *“Anti-Tanzimat Concepts of Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha”* (İstanbul: ISIS, 2001)

¹⁹⁷ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 44; Mithat Paşa, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, (İstanbul: Temel, 1997 ed. by O. Selim Kocahanoğlu), p. 272. Questions such as why Nedim attempted to liquidate the remnants of the Ali-Fuad duo, whether this was a systematic liquidation or something else, and the concrete role of Abdülaziz in these works, does not seem to have been seriously answered in literature on this subject to date.

¹⁹⁸ Mithat’s closeness to traditional Tanzimat pashas Ali and Fuad can be seen in his words in which he blames Mahmud Nedim as a member of “underground” assassination organization against Ali and Fuad

post of grand vizierat four times. In this continuous circulation, Nedim, who was most associated with sultan Abdülaziz, came to this post once at the beginning and once at the end. Therefore, it is seen that he was kept away from power for a long time.

After Nedim's first grand viziership, Mithat was seen to replace him by coming from Baghdad. Although Mithat was said to have left governorship of Baghdad for he was demanded allegedly much money from Istanbul, the fact that he was appointed to the post of grand vizierat shortly after his arriving in Istanbul makes one to think that there was a preparatory work for his grand viziership.¹⁹⁹ Elliot, the British ambassador of the time and supporter of Mithat, refers to activities of a team supporting Mithat and laying the ground to overthrow Nedim, by saying “when Mithat Pasha arrived in Istanbul, supporters of freedom and reform who were gradually formed elected him as their president.”²⁰⁰ As a matter of fact, Mordtmann, one of the witnesses of the time, gives information that before Mithat’s arriving in Istanbul, Nedim intended to exile “30 noble and reputable” pashas and that these were anxious.²⁰¹ This reinforces the opinion that there was a power struggle before Mithat's arrival and he did not resign from governorship of Baghdad in vain. In his memoirs, Mithat does not address this issue except saying that he got news when he was in Aleppo that he was exiled to Sivas, but according to him as this decision was contrary to “principles of Tanzimat” he continued his way to Istanbul.²⁰² But after he became grand vizier, his calling up pashas such as Hüseyin Avni, Şirvanizade, etc. who had been exiled by Nedim and his decision of giving them back their duties point to which interest group lobbied for his grand viziership.²⁰³

Mithat was removed from the grand vizierat as a result of another factional struggle. Halil Şerif, Mithat’s minister of foreign affairs, was a relative of Fazıl who was in conflict with khedive Ismail.²⁰⁴ Thus, Ismail's lobbying activity in Istanbul would remove Mithat from

Pashas. Needless to say, this “assasination” organization most probably implies that of opponents of 1867. see Mithat Paşa, *Mirat-ı Hayret*, (İstanbul: Temel, 1997 ed. by O. Selim Kocahanoğlu), p. 37-8

¹⁹⁹ Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 324-5

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 325

²⁰¹ Mordtmann, *İstanbul*, p. 85

²⁰² Mithat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 150-1

²⁰³ Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 327. Later, Halil Şerif, Fazıl's brother-in-law would be preferred as minister of foreign affairs.

²⁰⁴ “In addition to Ignatyev, Ismail Paşa of Egypt also obtained greater influence in Istanbul during Mahmud Nedim’s grand vizirate. (...) Ismail maintained in Istanbul, in addition to his regular *kapı kahyası*, or representative, a special agent, one Abraham Bey. Abraham was an astute Armenian,

his post in before three months. As a matter of fact, in his memoirs, Mithat attributed his removal to the influence of the khedive.²⁰⁵

His substitutive was Mütercim Rüşdi, another ally of Ali and Fuad Pashas.²⁰⁶ Thus, there is a trade-off between the team that maintained traditional line of the Tanzimat pashas. After five months in the post Rüşdi as well was replaced by Ahmed Esad Pasha, who was portrayed obedient to the sultan in sources. He stayed in this post for over a year. After him, again Şirvanizade and Hüseyin Avni from the traditional faction would be in office for two years. In this case, it is seen that, in about half of five years between 1871-76, the cadre that would overthrow Nedim and Abdülaziz held the possession of grand vizierat in their hands.²⁰⁷ So it can be concluded that Abdülaziz and Nedim, no matter how much they desired, could not completely monopolize power during this period.

In the 1870s, remnants of the Young Ottomans appeared on the political scene as well. In this period, *İbret* newspaper was the most prominent among their publications in country.²⁰⁸ While publishing *İbret*, Kemal was with his former teammates Reşad and Nuri. This newspaper was closed three times; the final closure followed premiere of the famous theatre *Vatan yahut Silistre*.²⁰⁹ Newspaper was said to be popular especially among

brother-in-law of the Armenian Nubar Paşa, Ismail's leading statesman. (...) In the judgment of Ismail Kemal, Midhat's devoted supporter, Abraham was the 'most influential man at the palace.'" Davison, *Reform*, p. 284

²⁰⁵ Mithat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 171-ff.

²⁰⁶ Mahmud Celalettin, *Mirat-ı Hakikat*, (İstanbul: Berekat, 1983 ed. by İ. Miroğlu), p. 96

²⁰⁷ Grand Viziers between Ali Pasha's death and overthrow of Nedim in May 1876:

Mahmud Nedim Pasha (7 September 1871-31 July 1872),

Mithat Pasha (31 July 1872 - 19 October 1872),

Mütercim Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha (19 October 1872 - 15 March 1873),

Ahmed Esad Pasha (15 March 1873 - 15 April 1873),

Şirvanizade Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha (15 April 1873 - 14 February 1874),

Hüseyin Avni Pasha (14 February 1874 - 25 April 1875),

Ahmed Esad Pasha (26 April 1875 - 26 August 1875),

Mahmud Nedim Pasha (26 August 1875 - 12 May 1876)

²⁰⁸ For a general introduction to *İbret* see M. Nihat Özön, *Namık Kemal ve İbret Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: Remzi, 1938), p. 15-23

²⁰⁹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v2- I, 114, annotation 12

madrasah students.²¹⁰ In this period, the old Young Ottomans seem to have had opportunity to stand on their feet with their own income, a possibility that they did not have a decade ago. According to various estimates, circulation of *İbret* varied between three and ten thousand.²¹¹ These figures reflect public interest and popularity of the opposite ideas, even if there is no certainty in these estimates. Thus, it could be thought that they could continue their political activities by basing on their own resources and journalistic income. However, since the newspaper was closed “because it requires discipline and nurture as it involved some harmful publications”²¹², in April 1873 on the occasion of aforementioned theater, Kemal and his friends were sent into exile.²¹³ They would not be able to return to Istanbul until June 1876.

When they returned, we would find Kemal next to Mithat. Indeed, in 1876, Mithat Pasha would be prominent figure who instrumentalized “constitutionalism” and “consultancy” (“meşveret”) discourses in the political scene.

1870s, with the coincidence of deterioration of the international economic conjuncture and the drought in 1873-74 in the country, give an economically troubled appearance for the Ottoman State; in political plan, these years, when various Muslim states in Asia were subjected to imperialist invasions and nationalist uprisings in the Balkans intensified, became years of a political awakening among people against imperialist aggression and the massacre of Muslims.²¹⁴

In the 1870s, difficulties of the Ottoman finance reached an extreme level because of failure of external debt-service due to the Franco-Prussian War at first and 1873 Vienna stock exchange crisis later. Moreover, the drought of 1873-74 would further limit domestic revenues of treasury. It was in these years that the Ottoman bankruptcy was started to be talked in the western press.²¹⁵ In this environment where international interest rates were raised as a precaution against the 1873 crisis, it was difficult to find loan, which was the

²¹⁰ Davison, *Reform*, p. 296

²¹¹ See Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2- I*, p. 104; Şeker, *Menapirzade Nuri*, p. 64

²¹² Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 283

²¹³ Kemal was exiled to Magosa; Hakkı and Nuri to Akka; Ebüzziya and Ahmed Midhat to Rhodes.

²¹⁴ “In general, Ottoman public opinion in the 1870s, seems to have grown more self-conscious and hostile to European influence in the Islamic world. Ideas already voiced by the Young Ottomans found a wider audience and were reiterated in the press.” Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 46-7

²¹⁵ Kıray, *Ekonomik Yapı*, p. 150-1

old easiness for the bureaucracy, and the foreigners as well were not willing to lend to Ottomans whose finance was sank in difficulties. The London Times, October 9, 1873, wrote so: at the moment the only service that can be done to Turkey is to refuse to give even one shilling no matter what reason for, until the order of income and expense is left in hands of principled statesmen, who are well aware of real rules and protected by restrictions and limitations regulated so as not to allow even the sultan's intervention.²¹⁶ At the time in which these words were published, during Şirvanizade's grandviziership, the pashas who were connected to traditional faction of Tanzimat, sought a solution to problems. At that time, total amount of domestic and foreign debts of state increased astronomically compared to 15 years ago.²¹⁷ In his memoirs, Mithat mentions that, while he was minister of justice in Şirvanizade's government, "drafts" to build a "parliament" ("Meclis-i Mebusan") which would oversee expenditures was put on the agenda among the pashas.²¹⁸ In Şirvanizade's residence, ministers convened on this issue and they charged Mithat to prepare a report. However, with Şirvanizade's blurting these "drafts" out to Abdülaziz, Mithat was dismissed from ministry²¹⁹, and before long, Şirvanizade was dismissed too and exiled to Aleppo. He was replaced by Hüseyin Avni.

The content of the "draft" of pashas is very interesting. Their "solution" was such in which decision-making power completely belongs to the Porte and that of approval to the palace; even a single penny would not be spent in spite of the Porte: "since it is the Porte in which all matters and state affairs have been operated for a long time, nothing should be done about civil service and the finance of the state unless it is decided there, presented to sultan and imperial decree is given by sultan. And no kuruş should be spent without the approval of the Porte, alongside with rightly restoration of the financial affairs which is the soul of state administration."²²⁰ In these lines, the intention of the high bureaucracy, whose

²¹⁶ Ibid, p. 150

²¹⁷ For foreign debt statistics see Refii Şükrü Suvla, "*Tanzimat Devrinde İstikrazlar*", (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940), p. 272-5

²¹⁸ Mithat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 172-ff

²¹⁹ After Mithat stayed in the governorship of Selanik for three months, he was dismissed and returned to Istanbul but this time he was unemployed (January-February 1874). He would buy a land near Yenikapı Mevlevihane and build a pavilion and live there until August 1875, when he was assigned to ministry Nedim's government again.

²²⁰ Mithat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 287

resources were rapidly diminishing in the crisis conditions, to expand its power over the sources of country to the last limits is clear.

Mithat, in his memoirs, wants this to be known that what happened to the country stemmed from “more or less” a single “source”. This source is found in the conditions after 1871, when the influence of the traditional faction of the Tanzimat pashas decreased with the death of Ali Pasha.²²¹ He sees the remedy in restoration of the absolute dominance of the Porte, similar to ages of Reşid, Ali and Fuad pashas, as expressed in above scheme.

This remedy of the bureaucracy, whose relations with the west were rooted in a long history, who knew “the real rules well” and sought “ways out that will not allow the sultan's intervention” seems to match up with abovementioned expectations of the London Times. In this case, for Mithat and those pashas who thought like him, the culprit was Abdülaziz-Nedim duple, who were tussling with the traditional faction of the Porte, and the problem was that this duple gained influence in the country's administration at the expense of the traditional Tanzimatist pashas. Schism within the bureaucratic aristocracy would continue on this axis. Ottoman property owners also assumed a pro-western pose, along with the traditional faction of the Tanzimat pashas, in this conflict. In 1874, when Hüseyin Avni government was in search of a foreign loan, in exchange for a new debt European financiers proposed to increase powers of the Ottoman Bank, whose capital was in their hands and Ottoman property owners took a stand in favor of acceptance of this demand.²²²

In background of conflicts among factions at the peaks of Ottoman politics, there was an accumulation created by increasing unrest and economic problems on socio-economic basis. Agricultural crisis of 1873-74 led to an increase in the prices of basic consumer goods. “The capital and other usual markets for this grain suffered from growing scarcity and rising prices.”²²³ With salary cuts’ accruing them, this situation increased the number

²²¹ Ibid, p. 335

²²² For support of the publication “Revue de Constantinople”, which was issued by a French named Victor de Alfred de Gaston every fifteen days and said to follow a policy that reconciled interests of both bankers, government and palace, to western demands in February 1875 for establishment of a bank that would carry out tight control over Ottoman finances or giving this role to Ottoman Bank, see Haydar Kazgan, *Galata Bankerleri*, (Ankara: Orion, 2005), p. 146

²²³ Davison, *Reform*, p. 301-2

of people that could be politically active, which would be a determinant factor in the mass reaction peaked in 1876.

In 1874, agricultural crisis reached a severe degree. Anatolia was suffering heavily.²²⁴ “Food in the capital became sufficiently dear so that the poorer there also suffered. (...) The government, in straitened financial circumstances, now tried to collect heavier taxes from the impoverished country, but many tax farmers were unwilling to try.”²²⁵ Under these circumstances, insolubleness of the Porte hardened and it became all the more difficult to silence hungry and restless people. Indeed, in these years, as a result of increased sentiment against western imperialism besides abovementioned social factors, the press could not be prevented from expressing these reactions from grassroots. “In the 1870s a critical press had become a normal feature of political life in the capital and the authorities had their difficulties in keeping it under control.”²²⁶ This relative atmosphere of freedom in the press of the 1870s was in contrast with the silence created by the dictatorship of Ali and Fuad Pashas in the 1867 process and this should not be ignored.²²⁷

The atmosphere created by non-Muslim uprisings that began and spread in Bosnia and later appeared in Bulgaria would suffice for the explosion of accumulation among Turkish-Muslim people, which were constantly being incited by political and economic reasons. In July 1875, an uprising began in Bosnia.²²⁸ The government did not intervene in a timely manner, by this way development of the events reached an uncontrollable level. “Hampered by lack of rail transport and lack of funds, with military pay in arrears, the Porte moved too slowly to quell the revolt, which, as it spread, put an added burden on the treasury.”²²⁹ In September 1875, there was an uprising attempt in Bulgaria, but it was suppressed and prevented from spreading, as was not the case in Bosnia. However, the

²²⁴ For statistics documenting the destruction caused by the great famine in 1873-74 in Ankara and its surrounding villages, see *Türk Ziraat Tarihine Bir Bakış*, (İstanbul: Köy ve Ziraat Kongresi, 1938), p. 211-ff

²²⁵ Davison, *Reform*, p. 303

²²⁶ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 46

²²⁷ Apparently, the government could not intervene in the press' attacks on external forces and internal troublemakers. Therefore, the dominant forces were helpless in the face of the pressure coming from the society that opened this course.

²²⁸ Halil Sedes, *Bosna Hersek ve Bulgaristan İhtilalleri*, (İstanbul, 1946), p. 78-ff

²²⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 307

unrest in the Balkans became permanent. Grand vizier Nedim's co-operation with Ignatyev, the Russian ambassador, was decisive in formation of this situation.²³⁰

When “Nedimof”²³¹ entered under Ignatyev's command, the Balkan issues became inextricable. This created a political opportunity for the traditional faction of the Tanzimat. A favorable environment as well was taking shape for the unification of the forces against Nedim and Abdülaziz.

Mithat and Avni were also included in Nedim’s government, which was appointed in August 1875. However, with aggravation of the problems of the country, struggle of the traditional faction against Nedim and Abdülaziz became increasingly apparent. One of areas where this struggle took place was the problem of response to Balkan rebels. Ignatyev found Mithat and Hüseyin Avni “the two members of the ministry who wanted to put down the insurrection by force and parley afterward”²³² against his power. Referring to the correspondence of the British ambassador Elliot, Davison notes that Avni was suspended from his post on October 2 because of his stance in favor of the harsh treatment of Balkan rebels.²³³ On October 6, moratorium of the Ottoman finance was announced. In November, Mithat would resign as well. Mithat wrote the reasons for his resignation to the palace with a declaration and copies of this paper were distributed in Istanbul.²³⁴ At the same time with this resignation, Mithat had an opportunity to free himself from hatred against the government among public, which was exacerbated by pressures from the

²³⁰ On October 14, 1875, Ignatyev wrote to the tsar that “owing to” Mahmut Nedim he might have some measures implemented in favor of the insurgents. In November, he reported that he had pressured the grand vizier to dismiss state officials, including Midhat Pasha's son-in-law, who had taken legitimate measures against the panslavist insurgents and they were replaced, including Russian pro-Russian Aziz Pasha, with others. For documents on Nedim’s collaboration with Ignatyev, see Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri*, v2, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1970), p. LXXXIII-ff.

²³¹ A popular epithet using by people for Mahmud Nedim because of his close relations with the Russian ambassador.

²³² Davison, *Reform*, p. 308

“Hüseyin Avni's motives seem to have been, aside from particular enmities, a personal drive for power and a patriotic determination to crush the Balkan rebellion and thwart the increasing Russian influence.”
Ibid, p. 318

For Ignatyev's conviction that Avni would receive support from within the army in a possible anti-government movement, see same place, annotation 33

²³³ Ibid, p. 317

²³⁴ Ibid, p. 318

economic difficulties and Nedim's policies under the guidance of Russian ambassador. Thus, one can say that Mithat saved his political prestige from being wasted.

In December, Mithat would present his drafts on taking the power and making a new regulation in state structure to the British ambassador. Mithat conveyed his draft for a "constitutional" system, including an "assembly" that would bring the padishah under its control and most of this assembly's members would be elected by the Porte, which Elliot passed to London on December 14, 1875.²³⁵

At the beginning of 1876, Andrassian note given by Russia and Austria on the Balkan events was accepted by the "Nedimof" government under the influence of Ignatyev.²³⁶ However, acceptance of this note did not help settle the events. "Mahmud Nedim's government was thus, in the eyes of its public, saddled with a double failure: it had given in to outside Christian interference, and no beneficial results in Bosnia-Herzegovina had come from this weakness. The Porte was worried about public reaction, did not release the text of the Note to the press, and imposed prepublication censorship on all news stories concerning it."²³⁷ Therefore, the government's apprehension from the public opinion is clearly revealed; they wanted to prevent spread of news that would ignite feelings against the government.

Failure to suppress rebellions, submission to external interventions and the factional struggles within dominant class under the conditions of ongoing economic crisis finally imposed a "solution". In January 1876, news that there were plans to overthrow Nedim,

²³⁵ It is clear that this conception, which excludes the public from the political participation, is not different from Ali and Fuad's attempt of Şuray-ı Devlet in 1867.

Mithat saw that Russia's activities were the product of the balance change in Europe: "Russia succeeded in terminating the conditions of the Treaty of Paris on the Black Sea by taking advantage of France's defeat in the Prussian battle." According to Mithat, what was to be done against this situation was to continue the promised "reforms" to Europe on the one hand and to maintain the alliance of the European states on the other hand, but it was the "emerging opposition" that prevented this. see Mithat, *Tabşıra-i İbret*, p. 39-40

What Mithat meant by "opposition" was the pair of sultan and Nedim, who tried to take power in their hands to the detriment of the traditional faction of the Tanzimat. Mithat complains that government power escapes from the traditional faction. According to him, in the end, the favor and approach of the western countries towards the Ottoman Empire changed. see Mithat, *Tabşıra-i İbret*, p. 45

As a matter of fact, Mithat would take action to regain the "favor" of the west on behalf of his class.

²³⁶ Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz ve I. Meşrutiyet*, p. 61

²³⁷ Davison, *Reform*, p. 312

reflected in the correspondences of ambassadors in Istanbul.²³⁸ There were delays in salaries of civil servants, including members of the army; and wastage and arrogance of palace, turning into a hate figure, began to offend eyes of the people at that time.

In this environment, the traditional faction of the Tanzimat pashas took their political activities to an advanced stage; they seemed to have felt the need to announce themselves to the outside and internal public. The “Memorandum of Muslim Patriots”²³⁹, which was published in March 1876 and heard in the high political circles, was an expression of this need. “The main aim of the memorandum was to influence international public opinion in favor of Mithat’s faction and to ask for support from the European ambassadors for his political programme. Quite frankly the author of the document played with the possibility of deposing Abdülaziz, who was called a ‘miserable fool’. A deposition was not only wished for by the general public, but would also be legitimate, because the sultan was not in possession of his full mental capacities any more and violated the sharia that gave him the duty to work for the public good. According to the document Abdülaziz’s officials plundered the country and were responsible for its catastrophic financial situation.”²⁴⁰ As can be seen in Riedler’s these lines, the factional struggle that took place at the peaks of politics was shaped according to Europe and great importance was given to win ambassadors and great states through them.²⁴¹

In the capital it was endeavored to channel increasing reactions of people. Mithat, who opened himself a maneuvering field with the support of British ambassador against Ignatyev, “would attract those affected by New Ottoman sentiment, those affected by salary arrears and economic distress, and those opposed to Mahmud Nedim and his catering to Abdülaziz’s whims. Mithat also seems to have spent considerable effort to win support among the ulema for his views on the need for a constitutional check on the sultan arguing that the constitutional method (usul-ü meşveret, “the method of consultation”) did

²³⁸ Davison points out that there were attempts to overthrow Nedim, referring to ABCFM and Elliot. see Ibid, p. 313

²³⁹ The paper was probably written by Mithat, but precisely by his circle. see Ibid, p. 320.

It was written in French. Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 49

²⁴⁰ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 49

²⁴¹ For Mithat's son, Ali Haydar's words on his father's policy of depending on British support see Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz*, p. 152

not contravene religious law, but rather was in accord with it.”²⁴² In order to preserve its monopoly of power, the bureaucracy could also incorporate concept of “meşveret” (“consultancy”), which was discoursed by the Young Ottomans frequently, in its political dictionary. We have seen above in Mithat’s conversation with Elliot in December 1875 that the purpose of this “constitutionalism” was to convene an assembly whose members would be appointed by the Porte. On the other hand, dissatisfaction of Ottoman property owners, who had suffered from announcement of moratorium²⁴³, against Abdülaziz-Nedim faction was increasing.²⁴⁴ “Most important thing that prepared the success of Hüseyin Avni, Mithat, Rüşdi Pashas who decided to overthrow Sultan Abdülaziz and crown prince Murat who was known to be their supporter in their desires and intentions was relation of Abdülaziz and Mahmut Nedim Pasha with bankers. If the bankers continued to support the sultan and grand vizier, neither Mahmut Nedim Pasha nor Abdülaziz could be dismissed.”²⁴⁵ Kazgan’s these statements can be taken as an expression of the isolation of Abdülaziz-Nedim faction within the dominant class.

At the end of April 1876, Bosnian uprising, which had been continued since last July, reached a stage in which Montenegro was openly supporting rebels; at that time, the public opinion in capital was further fueled by publication of the documents showing that Russians had been provoking the Balkan Slavs since 1870. Bulgarian uprising also began before the end of April.²⁴⁶ Influenced by excitement of this event, Turkish-Muslim people killed two consuls of imperialist states upon incidents happened due to detention of a Bulgarian girl, who had become a Muslim, in Selanik by foreign consuls.²⁴⁷ This was an explosion of the reaction that had accumulated for many years against foreign intervention and non-Muslim uprisings. In the words of Süleyman Pasha, it was shown that with this explosion “there was no patience and toleration to all kinds of movements against religion and nation, yet there was religious and national vim in the Islamic nation.”²⁴⁸

²⁴² Davison, *Reform*, p. 310

²⁴³ For the interest of Ottoman saving holders on Ottoman valuable papers, see. Kazgan, *Galata Bankerleri*, p. 100-ff

²⁴⁴ Ibid, p.106; Davison, *Reform*, p. 322

²⁴⁵ Kazgan, *Galata Bankerleri*, p. 109

²⁴⁶ Sedes, *Bosna Hersek ve Bulgaristan İhtialleri*, p. 202-ff

²⁴⁷ This revolt took place on May 6, 1876. see Ibid, p. 184-ff

²⁴⁸ Süleyman Paşa, *İnkılap Hissi*, p. 8 (İstanbul, 1953 ed. by M. Gezgin)

Less than a week after the political explosion in Selanik reactions accumulated against the government, which turned into a tool at the hand of Russian ambassador and could not provide a solution to the Balkan problem, would be transformed into an uprising in capital. Events in Rumelia became the catalyst of this reaction. “The government, fearing outbreaks and inflammatory moves, had already suspended all private telegraphic communication with the outside world. On May 8 it forbade news vendors to call out the headlines, and the next day announced preliminary censorship of all papers...”²⁴⁹ After this censorship mass uprising exploded in Istanbul under leadership of students.

It is evident that the process that developed after the Balkan rebellions of 1875 was highly influential in shaping the Turkish public opinion and mobilization of people. What emerged in Selanik and Istanbul revolts was that the transformation of unrest, that matured among people against the government or ruling class for a long time, turned into a indignance. Besides chronic economic sufferings, the political panorama that created by imperialist interventionism that peaked and publicly exhibited in last one year, the massacres of Muslims by non-Muslim rebels recently and Nedimof government’s content with just watching them, was no longer bearable. It was this mass wave that the traditional faction of the bureaucracy, which took action in May 1876 to take its opponents away from power, instrumentalized for its own purposes.

On May 8-9, students left courses in different madrasas one after the other, while some hodjas supported them.²⁵⁰ Students acted saying “for religion and patriotism, it is not appropriate to deal with lessons at a time when the law and the independence of the state was underfoot. Muslims everywhere are helpless against defamation and persecution in the hands of Christians. According to the sharia, it is our duty to eliminate the statesmen

Elliot, the British ambassador of the time, stated that on the Selanik incident that Muslims would react in the case of a condescending behavior to their religion and touching their women and added that “in the case of Salonica both these causes of provocation had been given in the most offensive form”. see Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences*, (London: John Murray 1922), p.219

²⁴⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 324

²⁵⁰ “This student movement (“talebe-i ulum”) was led by the high educated youth of the era and the madrasah teachers. Although the rebellion movements in Rumelia and the atrocities against the Turkish people caused an excitement at that time, the main purpose of demonstrations was political in our opinion. Because, as both ulema class dissatisfied with sheikhulislam Hasan Efendi's disposals and class of ministers did so with the actions of the grand vizier, they entered a power struggle. According to this, this student demonstration dated May 10, 1876 should be considered as a planned movement used to overthrow government by making use of people’s excitement due to the events of Rumelia” says Kocahanoğlu on this subject, which seems rational. see Mithat, *Tabsira-i Ibret*, p. 184, annotation 81

that caused this situation.”²⁵¹ “The softas organized large meetings at the mosques and heard inflammatory speeches about the weakness of the government in the face of rebellion and Russian influence. A committee was put together. After a mass meeting at the Fatih Mehmed mosque on Wednesday evening, May 10, a petition was drawn up asking Abdülaziz for stronger measures to save the empire and for the dismissal of Mahmud Nedim and the şeyhülislam, Hasan Fehmi.”²⁵² The palace, which had to submit to uprising, dismissed Nedim on May 11 and Mehmed Rüşdi was appointed grand vizier on May 12. Hüseyin Nazım Pasha, in his letter to Kemal regarding this incidents, states that Mithat was expected to be appointed as grand vizier, but it was also accepted “temporarily”, even if not welcomed, that this post was given to Rüşdi.²⁵³

That is to say, the mass protests had dominated streets until they forced Abdülaziz to step backward; however, it is understood that Mithat was thrown a curve at the first moment by appointment of Mütercim Rüşdi to grand viziership. Appointment of Mütercim instead of Mithat, who had a high popularity and was known to be in contact with the ulama who were influential on students, shows that the distinctions between “erkan-ı erbaa”, which led to the overthrow of the government, immediately became apparent after coup. Another week had passed until Mithat Pasha was appointed a high dignity²⁵⁴, this as well points out the tension between him and others.

After Nedim Pasha was taken care of, it was time for the sultan. "Abdülaziz evidently wanted to reappoint Mahmud Nedim as soon as possible"²⁵⁵ Davison claims. Aside from whether this intention was real or not; it was unlikely that Nedim, who had been overthrown by an uprising, would soon return to that office. And now that he was isolated and unnecessary, elimination of Abdülaziz easily took place. Hüseyin Avni Pasha appears forefront in the organization of dethronement of Abdülaziz. Hüseyin Avni would lead the

²⁵¹ Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 294-5

²⁵² Davison, *Reform*, p. 326

²⁵³ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal*, v2- I, p. 616

²⁵⁴ “On May 19, Mithat Pasha entered the government under pressure from the people and perhaps England.” Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 462.

For the allegation that sultan exiled Mithat to Bursa while he recalled H. Avni, but could not send him from Istanbul when students stood upon, see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 206

²⁵⁵ Davison, *Reform*, p. 327

involvement of high-ranking officers in the army, whom he saw close to himself, in this event.²⁵⁶

However, even if the pashas were certain to dethrone Abdülaziz, they seemed afraid to attempt it on their own. They sought support from bottom of the army. Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, who was popular among cadets and going to participate in dethronement by stating that the next sultan should give signature that he would accept constitutional way²⁵⁷, would be involved in this attempt. Saying “apart from the sultan’s ministers and the medrese students these officers around Süleyman Pasha formed the third group that was necessary for the successful realization of the coup against Abdülaziz”²⁵⁸ Riedler points to distinction between the high-level bureaucrats and Süleyman Pasha and the lower-level officers supporting him. Kemal’s schoolmate and an organizer figure, Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, who was disliked by high-bureaucracy as he could not be made an instrument in the factional struggles and who would be exiled by the Porte from Istanbul after the dethronement, assumed the most critical phase in this event, receiving Abdülaziz and removal of Murad from the palace. On the morning of May 30, sultan Abdülaziz was deposed.

Pashas took Murad V to the throne the same day.²⁵⁹ These events undoubtedly meant a decline for the Russian influence using Nedim. “When Murat V came; Britain, with Mithat Pasha and Namık Kemal, was standing against Russia, with Mahmud Nedim and Hasan Fehmi Efendi.”²⁶⁰

Thus, a factional struggle within the ruling class reached an end, but by launching another one again.

²⁵⁶ H. Avni's close friends in the organization of dethronement of Abdülaziz were: Abdi, Redif, Kayserili Ahmet Pashas. see Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 508. In particular, this Redif Pasha, would stand out at the forefront of anti-constitutionalists, on the foothills of Abdülhamid.

²⁵⁷ Süleyman Paşa, *İnkılap Hissi*, p. 14

²⁵⁸ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 50

²⁵⁹ “When Murat V. first appeared in public, “God save the queen” was performed along with the Ottoman empery anthem. The people applauded the lady Elliot. Since the British navy came to the Dardanelles, regenerating [old] coalition about Crime was being talked about.” Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 462

²⁶⁰ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 770.

Kemal, in an article he wrote later, is not of the opinion that it was the power struggle of dominant powers that ended the Abdülaziz-Nedim era. According to him, as a result of 12-13 years of activity of press, benefit of the method of consultancy (“usul-i meşveret”) became known to the whole nation and demand of everyone as well. “As a result of this proximity of opinions and heart brotherhood formed in the public, Abdülaziz's era of persecution ended.”²⁶¹ It is interesting that Kemal attributes overthrow of the grand vizier and the sultan to public and the struggle for ideas through the press in which he was involved. But what really happened?

After the success in overthrowing of Abdülaziz and Nedim by mobilization of students and ordinary people, there was yet no injury to the power of bureaucracy. At that time in the minds of the traditional faction, which came to power, was to fortify their control over the country rather than to meet aspirations and demands of the masses, which would emerge from the course of events. The aim of the fortification of the bureaucracy's power as a whole, with the end of Abdülaziz-Nedim's period on May 30, would be tried to be achieved on the basis of another factional fight.

IV. II. After The Coup: New Phase in Factional Struggles

The day that Murad V ascended the throne and the next night, Mithat, Rüşdi and Avni stayed in the palace. It is said that there was a conflict among them on the content of the edict of accession (“hatt-ı cülus”). Avni and Rüşdi opposed Mithat's desire to mention the constitution in the edict.²⁶² In the press and among public, there was an expectation that a step would be taken for constitutional regime.²⁶³

Thus, the team, which was called “Erkan-ı Erbaa” that overthrew Abdülaziz-Nedim was divided on the axis of leadership intentions. As a result Mithat and Avni-Rüşdi factions emerged.

As events would show, when Mithat was confronted by Avni and Rüşdi Pashas, he would resort to use pro-constitutional public opinion against this faction. So, Mithat seemed to want to play the role Fazıl had done ten years ago, but under different circumstances. Apart from the content of Mithat's “constitutionalism” it is evident that he needed a balancing

²⁶¹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 113; p. 127

²⁶² Davison, *Reform*, p. 340

²⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 338

force against Avni and Rüşdi's team; it was a pragmatic choice to appeal to the aspirations of the people and active students at a time when effects of mass movements that took place in overthrowing of Nedimof were hot. We will see results of Mithat's this choice later.

Mithat, unable to get the constitution mentioned in the edict of accession, made a counter-attack on June 2; the "Memorandum of Muslim Patriots" mentioned above was published and distributed. It is clear that this was a move to arouse an influence in public opinion. A council of ministers meeting was held at the palace on June 3, where Mithat brought up his constitution draft²⁶⁴ which Avni and Rüşdi did not support. On June 4, while hotness of the events was continuing, Abdülaziz died. Murad would go into mental crisis thoroughly on this event and because of this situation the sword-wearing ceremony would have to be postponed continuously. Murad's this ceremony never took place. On June 5, Mithat would be appointed as the chairman of Şuray-ı Devlet.

It is seen that this balance in the question of constitutional regime continued between Mithat and his rivals before reaching a definite decision for some time. But this is a contrast that never turned into an irreconcilable contradiction. At the core of the question was who would lead the bureaucracy in the process of fortifying its power, on which both sides agreed. As a matter of fact we will see later that Mütercim-Mithat couple ruled the country in reconciliation for a period of three months, taking a common attitude on the basis of their common interests. Moreover, for the problem of some "annoying" constitutionalists, they took a strict joint stance as well. In a very meaningful way, the first example of this stance happened as soon as Murad ascended the throne.

Ziya was appointed as the chief clerk of *mabeyn* after Murad ascended the throne. His first job was to ask Murad for an amnesty edict in order to bring back Kemal and other friends, who had been sent into exile after İbret was closed, to Istanbul. However, Ziya's this self-ordained behavior irritated the pashas who have yet seized power and he was dismissed immediately.²⁶⁵ Kuntay makes such a comment on this situation: "As soon as becoming

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 341

²⁶⁵ For Mithat Pasha's acting with H. Avni in dismissal of Ziya from the chief clerkship see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v2- I, p. 719

"Sadullah Bey, in fact, passed to the post of chief clerk of Sultan Murad as he was a man of H. Avni Pasha." Ibid, p. 721

the chief clerk, Ziya Bey, by telling the sultan to forgive Kemal, had intruded Rüşdi's grand viziership and Hüseyin Avni's seraskerat."²⁶⁶

On June 8, a meeting on the constitution issue was held in Bab-ı Fatwa. Prominent bureaucrats, military dignitaries and ulema held a discussion. The distinctions between Avni-Rüşdi faction, who seemingly favored usual administration style of the high bureaucracy, and Mithat as well as between those who sought the constitutional regime outside the authority of class of ministers ("sınıf-ı vükela") and Mithat became concrete in this meeting. While Mithat made a speech in favor of parliament on the one hand, he did not prefer to engage in an argument with anti-parliamentary team.²⁶⁷ Süleyman Pasha, who we know for his independent standing, made a defense of the constitution against the pashas who refused constitutional regime and participation of people in politics.

During the meeting, as spokesman of anti-constitutional front "with the determination not to harm the pleasure of despotism he has been accustomed to for many years"²⁶⁸, Mütercim came to the forefront. Hüseyin Avni Pasha, "who was not lagged behind him in pleasure of despotism"²⁶⁹ preferred to be silent with a two-faced attitude according to Süleyman. Against arrogance of Rüşdi, who accused the people of "incapable" to a constitutional regime and said that "there are various harms of freedom of people"²⁷⁰ in meeting, Süleyman Pasha responded with these words: "In my opinion, the immoral of our country is only among those who belong to the class of ministers."²⁷¹ One reason raised against the constitutional regime during the meeting was that the concessions given to Cretans had led them to want more concessions. Süleyman Pasha responded this reason too: "It seems to me that they do not want the privileges from the state, but from the individual. Body of National Assembly does not leave place and authority to such aptitudes."²⁷² It is seen here, apart from how the Tanzimatist ruling class conceived of the constitution as a "concession", why the Tanzimat regime was opposed and challenged via Süleyman

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 709.

²⁶⁷ Davison, *Reform*, p. 344

²⁶⁸ Süleyman Paşa, *İnkılap Hissi*, p. 48

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 48

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 48

²⁷¹ Ibid, p. 45-6

²⁷² Ibid, p. 49-50

Pasha's words. The bureaucracy, which was not controlled by any mechanism and did not want to account to anyone, could make concessions, with the name of "privilege", under the influence of external pressures as it was only power that had a say on the destiny of the country. As a matter of fact, this happened in the case of Crete. So, for consistent constitutionalists like Süleyman, the way to get rid of the troubles that these concessive policies bring on was the constitutional regime and the parliamentary control over the government. It is also remarkable that Süleyman Hüsnü, himself was a "pasha", showed such a spurt in front of the dignitaries. However the meeting did not yield any results.²⁷³ Meanwhile, we do not see as well an active pressure coming from the street as in the May revolt against Nedim's government. Thus, the fate of constitution would be shaped according to power struggles among the pashas who occupied higher echelon of the politics.

This situation shows us that, without relying on the inter-bureaucracy conflicts, a movement that consistently defended the constitution and had power and means to impose its demands accordingly, was not yet in the stage. It can be clearly said that this phenomenon determined the content of the whole process preceded promulgation of *Kanun-i Esasi* as well as its content. Constitutionalist aspirations were defended by a number of keen, "avant-garde" elements, who did not have solid organizational ties among themselves but still seem to be committed to this case. These elements could not come together during the whole period in which politics evolved within the context of debates on the issue of constitution.

Thus, the discourse of "constitutionalism" and its political returns were easily instrumentalized by Mithat in his struggle with his former partners. Indeed, as we shall see later, Mithat, even when he became grand vizier, would not fail to have independent intellectuals, whom he could not instrumentalize for his own purposes, exiled in collaboration with his rivals. This shows that even though there were factional rivalry among the dominant powers, they acted jointly against the elements who were trying to pursue an independent policy.

Pashas, who tried to keep everything under their control as soon as they came to power, did not want to be objected to as they arrange affairs according to their will. For this reason,

²⁷³ "Anyway, negotiations in the meeting, that was not convened with the belief of taking a solid decision and convened by grand vizier with an intent to detain public opinion, were not recorded." As a matter of fact, the continuation of the meeting would not come, see Ibid, p. 48

Süleyman Pasha, who took objection to their will at the *Bab-ı Fetva* meeting was expelled from Istanbul in June. This constitutionalist officer, who did not hesitate to challenge Mütercim-Avni duo and whom Mithat considered a danger for himself, would be appointed in Balkans which continued to boil at that time.²⁷⁴

On June 15, Hüseyin Avni was assassinated. After Avni's death, the scene was left to Mithat and Rüşdi. Cevdet, an enemy of the constitution, writes that Rüşdi ruled almost as padishah after Avni was shot, but also could not ignore Mithat as he was favored by the British embassy and found it “necessary to get on well with him”.²⁷⁵

In June, the Porte silenced five newspapers.²⁷⁶ At the end of June, Serbia and Montenegro declared war against Ottomans. Thus, the public interest was directed towards war. The agitation of madrasah students for people seemed “less and less directed toward constitutional reform, more and more toward propagating the doctrine of holy war.”²⁷⁷

On June 29, Russian ambassador described Elliot as the instigator of Mithat's plans.²⁷⁸ British ambassador, on the other hand, said that Mithat had told him that he was not aiming for the impossible and would compromise to get cabinet's support if necessary.²⁷⁹ This means that while Mithat was making plans for “constitutionalism” with foreign ambassadors, on the other hand, he was also engaged in exiling of those like Süleyman Hüsnü who defended constitutionalism against high-handed pashas. As we have already mentioned, constitutional movements appear in history as movements based on the grassroots against the political elite, reflecting large masses' aspirations and interests; yet, as can be seen in this case, “constitutionalism” of the pashas came to the fore depending

²⁷⁴ Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 62. It is unclear exactly when Süleyman left Istanbul, whether it was after or before assassination of Avni or after or before the outbreak of the Serbian war. According to Özbilgen, this date should not be in June.

“Süleyman Nazif writes that Hüseyin Avni Pasha and Rüşdi Pasha removed Süleyman Pasha, who opposed them, by appointing him to Hersek. He also points out that Mithat Pasha was deprived of a loyal ally in Istanbul when he did not react against this [removal]”. This interpretation by Süleyman Nazif is wrong. Because Mithat also wanted to get rid of Süleyman. see S. Nazif, *Two Friends*, p. 52 quoted by Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 206.

²⁷⁵ quoted by Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 342

²⁷⁶ Davison, *Reform*, p. 347. With regard to the closure of newspapers, Davison speaks of the government's concern to control the growing excitement among the people due to the war.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 347

²⁷⁸ B. Humprey Sumner, *Russia and Balkans*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 169-170

²⁷⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 348

on support of British embassy and exiling independent constitutionalists. In other words, on the one hand they appeared to favor “constitutionalism”, and on the other hand they sought to suppress the potential of a constitutionalist movement independent of their will. So, no matter how much the pashas struggled among themselves, they were vigilant and allied against the forces that want to take part in politics independently, namely out of the influence of the dignitaries. Thus, they wanted that defending, arguing and deciding whether or not to bring the “constitution” into the country should be exclusive for their decisions. In fact, the measures taken by the pashas in July would show this.

On July 4, Sabah newspaper published that formation of a “Şuray-ı Ümmet” (Assembly of Ummah) was decided for sure at Mecalis-i Has (Assembly of Ministers); on July 8, it was reported that “the matter mentioned” had been postponed.²⁸⁰ On July 15, when Meclis-i Umumi (General Assembly) was convened in the Porte in order to discuss the difficulties on fronts of war, caused by Austria's closure of the port of Klik, a transport route to Serbia-Montenegro, to the Ottoman State, Mithat again revealed his constitution draft he was working on. But there was no result from this meeting too.

The pashas who were discussing the “constitution” among themselves would forbid public and the press to discuss this matter one week after this last meeting.²⁸¹ On July 21, it was announced that those who dare to speak about the state affairs would be punished “as traitor”. On July 30, it was decided by the Porte that new newspaper licenses would not be issued anymore. On August 3, the pashas also issued an order “forbidding public discussion of a constitution.”²⁸² We do not know what kind of negotiations had taken place among the pashas before announcements of these decisions. However, it is clear that they did not want other elements, except their own circles, to create an agenda on the constitution and they also did not want press to come up as a factor of pressure to gain public for this purpose. Indeed, this example seems to be an attempt that reflects the high bureaucracy's intention to determine the fate of constitution on the peaks of politics they

²⁸⁰ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2 -I*, p. 746-7

²⁸¹ *Sabah*, July 21, 1876, “Official Announcement: “by appointing detectives in various places, henceforth, special orders were given to the high Ministry of Zaptiah that those who dare to [speak] at meetings and conversations about the state administration and differences of opinion shall be sentenced in open and secret investigation and punished by law as a traitor, and to the Press Administration to prevent the newspapers from writing articles on these issues. To everyone's knowledge...” see. *Ibid*, p. 746-7

²⁸² Davison, *Reform*, p. 349

occupied, in bargaining among themselves, as they made this method a practice in all matters.²⁸³

Another development was the increase in rumors that Murad's mental health had not improved and he could no longer continue on the throne.²⁸⁴ Murad could not accept ambassadors and engage in the affairs of government and the war. Thus, as possibility of a reign change appeared on the horizon, a team began to gather around the crown prince Abdülhamid. This phenomenon would give a new direction to the course of factional struggles.

“The most exertive person in favor of the crown prince Abdülhamid was his brother-in-law and trade minister Damat Mahmut Pasha from viziers; he was making propaganda of Murad V's disease to everywhere and entering an action to gain ministers, army and ulema for Abdülhamid's accession. He was getting propaganda done among students for Abdülhamid and getting rumors spread among people that Abdülhamid would proclaim constitution.”²⁸⁵ Cevdet was another member of this team.²⁸⁶ Aforesaid Redif, putschist man of Hüseyin Avni, was one of the prominent of the faction that positioned around Abdülhamid.

It is understood that after May coup, the war with Serbia and Montenegro, the continuation of financial difficulties and the deadlock in conflict over the constitutional regime fed the feel of distrust within the ruling class and brought about a search for alternative ways out. The fact that Murad was not able to continue reign led to emergence of a new faction on the political scene that aimed to gain support of dominant interests as other factions had done before. Neither Mütercim nor Mithat-led factions could not lead to a conclusion in the struggle which went on the axis of “constitutionalism”, and neither group was able to gather the ruling class as a whole behind them. Under these conditions, when another group which was thought to be able to respond to the anxieties of the ruling class/high bureaucracy for maintaining its power, emerged, the attention would inevitably turn to this. It is natural that the governing crisis creates tendencies of fragmentation and

²⁸³ These measures taken to silence the press bring Ali and Fuad's proscriptive orders in 1867 and that of Nedim in 1876 to mind. It is not entirely clear after what kind of negotiation process these announcements were published, so there is a limit to the precise speech in this subject.

²⁸⁴ For Murad's mental health problems, see Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz*, p. 226

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 228

²⁸⁶ Davison, *Reform*, p. 352

factionalism within the ruling class, and in the opposite direction, these tendencies of fragmentation also feed counter-tendencies to come together for immediate taking things in hands and safeguarding “the great interests”. Thus, when it became clear that Murad could not remain on the throne, the team gathered around Abdülhamid tried again to put Abdülhamid to the throne and polish off above mentioned two factions, which had not yet made the bureaucracy accept their leadership.

Abdülhamid-supporters took initiative to win the support of Britain, the number one imperialist then and one of the major creditors of the bankrupt Ottoman finance. “Circumspectly, Abdülhamid sought to advance his chances through contacts with influential men. He even sent an Englishman he knew to tell Elliot that he was determined on economy, would stop abuses, and, moreover, had studied the British blue books and parliamentary debates on Turkey and agreed with much that was said here. Abdülhamit was, in fact, willing to make extensive promises to get the throne.”²⁸⁷

Finally, when it became clear for the whole Ottoman ruling class that Murad would no longer be able to continue, on August 25 grand vizier Mütercim went to British ambassador and talked about Murad's situation.²⁸⁸ Murad, the man of Britain, was dethroned after such a kind of permission-taking visit.

On August 31, Abdülhamid ascended the throne.

When ascended the throne, the first thing he did was to bring the team, who were working for his reign, to critical positions: Redif became seraskier, Damat Mahmut became the indicator of mabeyn supervisor. Ahmet Cevdet was brought to ministry of justice; Behram Ağa became eunuch. On recommendation of Damat Mahmut, Sait was assigned the chief clerk of mabeyn²⁸⁹. The first response of grand vizier Mütercim on these appointments

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 353

²⁸⁸ Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz*, p. 220.

Mithat states that Abdülhamid supporters threatened that they would stage a coup if their wants were not fulfilled. Damat Mahmut and Redif pashas threatened Mithat and Rüşdi saying “You have taught us the easiness of dethroning. All the ambassadors know today that sultan is insane. It is not lawful for a madman to remain on the throne according both sharia and reason. If you do not undertake this work, we will try to take Abdülhamid to the throne with the help of ambassadors.” see Mithat, *Layiha ve İstirdat*, p.23, quoted by Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz*, p. 229

²⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 239

that were made without his knowledge and consent, was to resign, but it was not accepted.²⁹⁰

Murad's *hatt-ı cülus* (the edict of accession) was released two days after his ascent to the throne, but Abdülhamid's *hat* was released on September 10, more delayed.²⁹¹ At this point, we see Mithat was once again trying to get the “constitution” term into the *hat*. Mithat Pasha prepared the first draft of this *hat*. In the first draft, there were issues such as adoption of the constitutional rule, transforming the grand vizier’s title to the prime minister, and control over the palace’s expenditures. However, this draft was rejected. In the *hat* issued by Abdülhamid’s palace, Yıldız, there was, in vague terms, a general assembly that could mean “anything or nothing”. As Davison says, “this was a far cry from what Midhat wanted.”²⁹²

Thus, it is seen that politics of the faction represented by grand vizier after death of Avni, namely the policy of rejecting a “constitutional” solution, is now taken over by Abdülhamid and the faction around him.²⁹³ Abdülhamid and the pashas gathered around him would play to the leadership of common interests of the bureaucracy and as events would show, the rest of the bureaucracy would be gathered at the foothills of Yıldız as time went on. Witnesses of that time made a similar diagnosis. Mordtmann sees Abdülhamit and the faction around him (“Yıldız camarilla” or “Palace camarilla”) as the alliance of the Istanbul bureaucracy and the palace and both were seeking a solution in order not to lose their privileges. “There is a palace camarilla that surrounds the sultan and tries to direct him to the path of his father and uncle. On the other hand, there is an Istanbul bureaucracy that tries to protect the privileges it has obtained by resisting any serious reform with an internal reaction.”²⁹⁴

According to Ahmet Midhat, after publication of the *hatt-ı cülus*, a political polarization began between pro-constitutionalists and their opponents.²⁹⁵ In this polarization, the press

²⁹⁰ Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 117

²⁹¹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 356

²⁹² *Ibid*, p. 356

²⁹³ The presence of Redif Pasha, Avni's partner during May coup against Abdülaziz, at the forefront of the Abdülhamidist faction, is an indicator of continuity in ruling class politics.

²⁹⁴ Mordtmann, *İstanbul*, p. 212

²⁹⁵ Ahmed Midhat, *Üss-i İnkılap*, (İstanbul: Dergah, 2013 ed. by İ. Nebi Uysal), p. 379-80

was inclined to the constitution; the palace was completely against; the position of ministers and civil servants mixed; the ulema generally against. In the public opinion, there was a strong excitement and expectation towards the constitution.²⁹⁶ It is seen that aforesaid prohibitions in July had no real effect. The press emerged again as a basis and a party for discussions on the constitution.²⁹⁷

Meanwhile, Serbs were defeated on the battle front, but under the pressure of great powers, a ceasefire was declared on August 24. Although Serbs broke ceasefire on September 25, Ottomans gained victory again on October 1; after that, a 10-day-cease-fire was declared. At the end of October, final victory was achieved and Serbian armies were disintegrated *de facto*. On October 31, 1876, Russians, bosses of Serbs, would issue a 24-hour ultimatum to provide a two-month unconditional ceasefire. Ottomans accepted this ultimatum. On the other hand, on November 4, Britain proposed to hold a conference in accordance with Russian demands; which the Porte would accept after Russia's declaring mobilization.²⁹⁸

Once again, factional conflicts on the axis of "constitution" remained within an intense political agenda. Mithat's efforts for proclamation of the constitution took shape in this atmosphere of diplomatic tension. "The European diplomatic intervention generally worked against the issuance of a constitution; Sir Henry Elliot alone among the diplomats took it seriously. But there were also advantages in the situation. Midhat could portray himself and the constitutionalists to all Ottoman subjects as spokesmen for an Ottoman pride that rejected foreign interference and that insisted on a home-grown constitution as an act of national independence."²⁹⁹ Another advantage of Mithat was that, thanks to his relationship with the British ambassador, he was transformed into a bite that could not be easily swallowed by his opponents in the newly emerging political atmosphere.

After Abdülhamid's ascent to the throne, one month passed without a concrete step in the agenda of constitution. "But the diplomatic situation led to the calling of several grand councils [Meclis-i Umumi] to discuss reform proposals by the great powers and terms for

²⁹⁶ Ahmet Saib, Abdülhamid'in Evaili Saltanatı, p. 42. quoted by Kocabaş, *Sultan Aziz*, p. 242.

²⁹⁷ Davison, *Reform*, p. 366

²⁹⁸ After Tsar ordered the mobilization of 6 armies on October 13 and six great states agreed on the proposals of Britain, the Porte accepted conference request. Sumner, *Russia*, p. 196-7

²⁹⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 360; see also B. Sıtkı Baykal, "93 Meşrutiyeti Üzerine Belgeler", p. 57 (Belleten vol. VI, 21-22, 1942)

Serbia. One met on September 12, another just two weeks later, another on October 2. These meetings of *meclis-i umumi* gave Midhat a chance to propose again his constitutional plan, as a means of avoiding outside intervention in matters of reform. At the meeting of September 26, about seventy notables agreed that a constitution establishing an inter-sectarian parliament should be drafted. (...) The sultan's reply, in an *irade* of September 30, ordered the establishment of a commission of ulema and civil officials to draft a constitution to be submitted to the ministers and the sultan.”³⁰⁰ So, a concrete stage was reached as late as at the end of September.

At the grand council's meeting on October 2, the decision for declaration a constitution was approved. Shortly thereafter, constitutional commission entered into service. The commission under Mithat's lead met for the first time on October 6/7.³⁰¹ During time in which this commission was active in drafting a constitution, we find a ground in which the political polarization and different aims of different political powers in this polarization would come up in concrete forms. On October 12, Safvet Pasha, minister of foreign affairs, informed all the Ottoman representatives abroad that an assigned senate with an elected parliament was adopted in principle and that the commission gathered under presidency of Mithat was working on the details.

Now it is necessary to focus on the process of constitution commission, by which we can apprehend the Ottoman politics at that time more deeply.

IV. III. Drafting of “the Constitution” by Bureaucrats

After the decree of 30 September, the first commission convened, but even though it discussed both Mithat and Said Pashas' drafts, it was dissolved before reaching a conclusion. On October 8, a new commission was decided to be convened in the council of ministers.³⁰² It would be interesting to know what kind of process was followed in the selection of the commission members that would prepare the constitution draft, and what kind of negotiation took place on this subject. It would also be interesting to know in consequence of what kind of balance, followers of both the palace and Mithat took part in

³⁰⁰ Davison, *Reform*, p. 368

³⁰¹ It should be noted that commission went into action 3 weeks before the ceasefire on November 1, which indicates that internal factors were also influential to a certain extent in addition to urgent external pressures.

³⁰² Selda Kaya Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, (Ankara: Berikan, 2010), p. 42

the commission. However, there is no clue relating to these points in the sources we know. The first meeting of the commission³⁰³ was held on October 15. A consensus was reached in the establishment of a parliament, 80 of whom Muslim and 50 Christian, to be elected first by the provincial councils.³⁰⁴ This decision was presented to the palace on October 17 and accepted on October 29.³⁰⁵ The composition of the parliament³⁰⁶ and organization of Basra and Istanbul elections were also decided by the commission. Proposals approved on October 29 were published and came into force on November 7.

Three sub-commissions were established for Kanun-i Esasi; Cevdet³⁰⁷ assumed the presidency of sub-commission of internal affairs; Server that of press; Ziya that of constitution and electoral law.³⁰⁸

It is understood that Mithat's draft was firstly discussed in Kanun-i Esasi commission. The draft reveals Mithat's Tanzimatist conception of "constitutionalism".³⁰⁹

³⁰³ For commission members see Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963), p. 259.

There are questions that should be asked about the fact that Ziya and Kemal from the Young Ottomans were in this commission. What was the power or balance that would make Ziya and Kemal members of the commission? For what reasons did the ruling forces not hinder their membership? It is probable that Ziya and Kemal were involved in commission owing to Mithat. Unlike Kemal, however, Ziya's relationship with Mithat would prove to be poor. We need satisfying answer for these questions to say something exactly.

³⁰⁴ For the course of commission's work see Ibid, p. 46-59.

There are differences about members of the commission in different sources. see Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 44-46. Later, on November 4, 1876, Kemal, Yanko and Sahib were appointed to the commission. However, it is understood that the meetings were not held with the participation of all members.

³⁰⁵ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 52

³⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 125

It has been decided that some of the members of the General Assembly, comprised of Mebusan and Ayan assemblies, will be elected by election and some by appointment. Ziya and Kemal approved this decision. However, the election of all members was a requirement of principle "umumi nezaret" (public supervision) which the Young Ottomans focused on so much. see. Baykal, "93 Meşrutiyeti", p. 63

³⁰⁷ "Cevdet Pasha, in commission convened to write Kanun-i Esasi, was the head of those who wanted the constitution not to be written or to be written with a bad delicacy that would diminish its existence." Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 82

³⁰⁸ It is not clear whether the records of the meetings were kept; they has not yet appeared.

³⁰⁹ For undocumented claims that Mithat's draft has two separate texts and that there are differences between the draft in Üss-i İnkılap and the other, see Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 26.

Üss-i İnkılap was written in 1878 at a time when Mithat had not yet gone into exile. (see TDV, article of "Ahmed Midhat Efendi") Mithat's memoirs came later. Mithat does not deny draft in Üss-i İnkılap in

In Mithat's draft, parliament³¹⁰, which should have legislative power out of any intervention from that of executive, is bound to the executive power in law-making process. "Parliament's task of legislation" is limited to "discussion" of draft laws coming from Şuray-ı Devlet, whose members are appointed³¹¹ by the executive power! In part of "executive power" ("*Kuvve-i İcraiye*") of the draft it is stated that "every regulation and law is given to the approval of the parliament after being accepted in Şuray-ı Devlet by negotiation."³¹² This is obviously emasculating of the legislative power. Those who will come to this parliament by election would not exceed 2/3 of total; 1/3 of members would be appointed by the "government" (not sultan). In the "Meclis-i Mebusan" (Parliament) section of the draft, the parliament, which seemingly has the authority to make the budget, can discuss financial issues such as external borrowing but "on the demand of government."³¹³ It should not be forgotten that even though the right of budget-making seems to belong to the parliament, since budget is also an annual law, it can only come before parliament after it is regulated by Şuray-ı Devlet. Clearly, in the Mithat's constitution draft, there is no statement about the right of parliament to reject the budget and what would happen in such a case; in this sense, the draft is incomplete, but this incompleteness is not in vain. There is also no statement on the same right of parliament except for these open-ended statements: "determination of general expenditures in alliance with government."³¹⁴ In this case, judgments in the draft about parliamentary supervision on taxation and government expenditures remain in air, not on ground. Thus, it is seen that there is no intent to impose a "limitation" on the arbitrary power of bureaucracy/executive power on control of material resources, which is the essence of both legislative auditing and check and balance between legislation and executive power. The draft also makes ministers a partner in the veto power of the sultan.

his memoirs or in another source as far as we know. On the other hand, there is a general harmony in regard of political logic between Mithat's above mentioned plans in 1873 and in December 1875 and the draft examined here.

³¹⁰ There is only one assembly in Mithat's draft. The final draft of the commission would be bicameral.

³¹¹ "Kanun-i Cedit Serlevhasıyla Midhat Paşa tarafından tanzim olunan müsvedde" see Ahmet Midhat, *Üss-i İnkılap*, p. 468

³¹² Ibid, p. 473

³¹³ Ibid, p. 470

³¹⁴ Ibid, p. 470

The draft regulates that the executive power is performed by ministers on behalf of the sultan, and the orders, in accordance with the law, of this executive power, namely of ministers, are sacred and those who oppose will be punished.³¹⁵ This seems like renaissance of times of Reşid, Ali and Fuad. Although the freedom of press and speech are included in the draft, freedom of association and assembly are not.

Although this draft was not accepted, it is seen that it was nothing else but introducing the arbitrary regime of Tanzimat pashas to market under a parliamentary image. Thus, while the Tanzimatist regime, namely absolute power of the bureaucracy was sought to be maintained with a make-up in this draft, Şuray-ı Devlet is used as a tool to this purpose. In this regard, Mithat persisted in his parliament project, in which members are “appointed” by the bureaucracy, he said to Elliot in December 1875. In this way the bureaucracy could maintain its absolute power. In his draft, “Midhat would give more power to the council of ministers, which in his draft became the competent authority to deal with all important internal and external affairs, its decisions to be sanctioned by imperial irade.”³¹⁶

Then, another essential draft would be brought on the agenda of commission. After revisioning of this first anonymous draft several times, its final form would be presented to the palace.

Kemal, who was later included in the commission, gave an image close to Mithat in the process of drafting the constitution.³¹⁷ Davison points out that Kemal had defended the draft proposed by Mithat in a series of articles he published in October before his appointment to the commission.³¹⁸ Given Kemal's past full of factional politics and his

³¹⁵ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 28-29

³¹⁶ Davison, *Reform*, p. 372

³¹⁷ “Kemal always liked Mithat Pasha. For Ziya Pasha, who made her decisions for people according to the events, there are no infinitives for liking or disliking Mithat Pasha. He sometimes accepted Mithat Pasha, sometimes not: by looking at what he did. For example, Ziya satirized Mithat Pasha, who could not prevent Abdülhamid from placing 113th article in Kanun-i Esasi of 1877, with a verse. And Ziya called Mithat Pasha a coward.” Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 616

“According to Kemal, Mithat Pasha is great in administration, not in politics. His compliments about him was not a recklessly scream.” Ibid, p. 625

“Namık Kemal is replying to Abdülhak Hamid's strictures on Midhat as average in political knowledge and untrustworthy.” Davison, *Reform*, p. 361, annotation 12

³¹⁸ Davison, *Reform*, p. 372

long-standing relationship with overthrown Murad and British embassy³¹⁹, it is natural for him to get together with Mithat, who found himself a maneuvering field with the support of British ambassador.

Now let us handle this first basic draft, which would later be transformed into Kanun-i Esasi with changes to be made along with criticisms Kemal made to it.³²⁰

Kemal did not accept referring to the Porte in the introduction of this draft. “The greatest drawback of introduction is that constitution (“Nizam-ı Esasi”) is presented in a way that as if it was given by the Porte. Reforms which will be put by the Porte on its thousands of lies”³²¹ would not be believed neither by Europe nor Ottoman people. According to Kemal, reform had been expected from the sultan.³²²

Article 21 states that the sultan appoints grand vizier and shaykh al-Islam as well as other ministers. Kemal objected to this article. However, his objection is not against the fact that parliament cannot elect ministers. He criticizes just that grand viziership is not needed for the state administration.³²³

Article 23 states that ministers shall submit what they deem necessary to ask for permission to chairman of council of ministers. Kemal objected to this by claiming that they should be presented to the sultan. His reason is that: “submission to chairman of council of ministers clearly means an attack on the law of sultan.”³²⁴

The right to submit a proposal for adoption of a new law or replacement of an existing one belongs to the council of ministers in Article 47. *Ayan* and *Mebusan* assemblies may also propose laws, but approval of the sultan must first be taken via grand vizier, and then work of drafting text is endorsed to Şuray-ı Devlet.³²⁵ As seen, logic that puts the executive

³¹⁹ see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v2-I, p. 120; p.760-ff

³²⁰ Kemal's criticism of draft was presented to the sultan as a petition and passed to the archive: BOA, Yıldız Tasnifi, Kısım No: 232, Zarf No: 11, Karton no:71, see Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 55 annotation 89

³²¹ *Ibid*, p. 59

³²² *Ibid*, p. 59

³²³ *Ibid*, p. 61

³²⁴ Kemal shows consistent sensitivity in opposing the powers of ministers, see *Ibid*, p. 63; p. 65; p. 147

³²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 147-8

power to an absolute dominant position against parliament is still in front of us, which effectively abolishes the legislative power of parliament.

Kemal, who had advocated parliamentary administration against the bureaucracy so many years and emphasized the need for separation of legislative and executive powers by saying “method of consultancy is (...) to take the legislative power away from government. The state is a spiritual entity. The legislating has characteristics of its will, the executing has characteristics of its works. As long as two of these are in one hand, the government's movement cannot escape from absolute choosing. Here comes the need of Council of Ummah”³²⁶ ten years ago, would object to this article too. However, it is not against the logic that traps legislative power of parliament between two lips of the executive power. It is a problem of style that offends his eyes, and that pertains to ministers. “Kemal remarks that it is an insult to deputies that prior approval of the sultan is not required for draft laws to be proposed by ministers but for those of deputies and that such a statement is not necessary as the sultan’s approval is necessary for any law to be valid.”³²⁷ Indeed, Kemal was probably right in his objection to this privilege of ministers. But it is also so meaningful that he does not comment on the issue of putting legislative power of parliament under the command of the bureaucracy and demolishing the “privilege” of the representatives to propose law.³²⁸

In Article 58 it is stated that Assembly of Ayan discusses drafts came from Assembly of Mebusan and either return it for revision or reject it. Kemal, at that point, opposes Ayan's presenting laws it adopted to grand vizier.³²⁹ Up to this point, it is seen that although Kemal is sensitive against favoritism for ministers, these problems remain on surface. There seems no objection coming from him on the issue of the control of people’s representatives on the administration, the essence of principle of “people’s supervision”.

Article 71 states that the parliament selects 3 candidates for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd chiefs and present them to the sultan and he chooses one of them. Kemal objects to this; he is for

³²⁶ *Hürriyet*, nr 4, p. 1 (July 20, 1868)

³²⁷ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 148

³²⁸ In Article 48, it is stated that the law drafts prepared from Şuray-ı Devlet shall first be approved by the Mebusan and then by the Ayan assemblies and finally will be submitted to the approval of the sultan. Thus, it is seen that the legislative authority was given to parliament not actually, just superficially. Kemal does not say anything about this point. see, *Ibid*, p. 66

³²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 150

parliament's determining its own president; but his form of objection is pro-sultan; once the sultan has appointed chief, he says, "what is the need to keep busy the sultan."³³⁰

Article 92 states that budget law shall be discussed and adopted in parliament. It is said that extrabudgetary expenditures cannot be made unless determined by a special law in Article 94. These statements constitute only part conforming to logic of a constitution, in the draft.³³¹

Kemal, after singly criticism of articles, maintains his attitude in his interpretation on general.³³² He complains about gaps that he thinks will lead to transfer of the sultan's power regarding the administration of country to ministers. Here again, his sensitivity against the Porte's pashas appears to be in forefront. Kemal's aggression on this subject may seem consistent if it is taken in terms of his hostility to the Porte; however, as mentioned above, the high bureaucracy was in alliance of interest with sultan and had already begun to gather around him. Kemal, however, states his objections to unquestionable exile authority given to the sultan, which would later become the famous Article 113.³³³ Thus, it is understood that during early commission negotiations, Abdülhamit and the pashas around him revealed their intentions of article 113.

Kemal's pro-sultan appearance in his objections would then be used as a political trump against him.³³⁴ Kılıç states that in Kemal's objections "the ideas that serve the purpose of the sultan were adopted"³³⁵ and his thoughts on the exile authority were thrown away. As a matter of fact, these would be seen in the second draft. It would be expected that an author who had a reputation for defending parliamentary order in public opinion would be in a position to defend the power and the rights of parliament against privileges of the

³³⁰ Ibid, p. 69

³³¹ Ibid, p. 71-2

³³² Ibid, p. 164-5

³³³ "When it comes to intended article to be added on the removal of those who are suspected, distorting security and publishing harmful ideas from the Empire without any question and answer; firstly, such words completely abolish the Kanun-i Esasi. Secondly, it proves that we have even abolished the Tanzimat against Europe, in the course of the current troubles, the abolition serves rather for our ruins. Thirdly, even if it does not have these drawbacks, it would give the officials a bad authority to instrumentalize sultan as a punishment tool as to every man they suspected." Ibid, p. 75

³³⁴ Ahmed Midhat accuses Kemal of "sultanism" because of this petition, see Ahmed Midhat, *Üssi İnkılap*, p. 391-ff

³³⁵ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 77

sultan and the pashas, namely the high bureaucracy. However, instead of defending parliament, Kemal appears as a defender of “sultan's law” against ministers, and this becomes the point where Kemal's factional politics was torn to pieces. In this regard, there stands no meaning in opposing arbitrary exile authority of the sultan.³³⁶

It is obvious that the bureaucracy as a whole with its sultan and pashas opposed a parliamentary solution in principle, and events showed exactly this. Indeed, while Kemal expressed a so-called “sensitivity” against authorities of ministers, as we shall see later, Abdülhamit would make ministers prune more the draft which do not bring any institutional arrangements regarding the separation of powers.

The date on which first draft was completed and presented to the sultan is not clear.³³⁷ At the end, this draft would not be accepted and a second draft would be created with modifications to the body of first one. Now let us look at this second draft and the changes made on it compared to the first.

The second draft consists of 130 articles. While the rights and power of the sultan, the “law” of sultan, are not gathered under a separate chapter in the first draft, in the second they are mentioned in articles 4-6. Here the sultan is able to dissolve parliament if he deems necessary. Kılıç says that “as it is seen, the sultan is equipped with broad powers in line with the objections made to first draft, and these powers are shown together collectively.”³³⁸

Article 27 states that ministers are elected by the grand vizier and the sultan approves. This article seems to have obtained an authority from the sultan compared to the old draft, in which ministers are chosen by the sultan.³³⁹ However, this article would not be included in Kanun-i Esasi as it is.

Article 33 states that if the vote of confidence is not obtained from the parliament in a dispute between parliament and ministers, ministers shall resign, but authority to accept

³³⁶ Kuntay makes an apology to Kemal's this attitude as follows: “Why Kemal wrote the Sultan ‘your law is touched in Kanun-i Esasi in progress’? As other things apart from law of sultan also were touched, he wrote so in order to write those other things.” Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v2-II, p. 98

³³⁷ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 75

³³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 80

³³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 81

resignation or dissolution of parliament is left to the sultan. In this case, the vote of confidence has no actual meaning.³⁴⁰

In Article 84, it is stated that chief of parliament is elected by itself, not by the sultan; at this point, Kemal's objection to old draft seems to have been taken into consideration.³⁴¹

Article 88 states that each deputy has the right to question ministers; and these questions required to be answered.³⁴² However, this article would also be abolished in Kanun-i Esasi.

Old draft's article 94, in which it is mentioned that "extrabudgetary expenditure cannot be made unless determined by a special law", is abolished in second draft.³⁴³ Such a situation is *de facto* abolition of the parliament's budgeting right. As a matter of fact the provision in Article 96 in the old draft, which states that if parliament is terminated without discussing the budget, the budget of previous year shall be applied by the government decree and approval of the sultan until the parliament convenes³⁴⁴, is abolished in the second draft as well.

The old Article 107 is transformed into new Article 125, by adding "it is only the sultan's authority to expel and discipline persons from the country who is certain to breach the security of the government upon documented investigation by police."³⁴⁵ The article that later would turn into the famous Article 113 appears such in the second draft.

Second draft "was presented to the council of ministers by Mithat Pasha on December 1, 1876."³⁴⁶ However, this draft, which does not bring any concrete arrangement about the separation of powers, would not be accepted too; Yıldız camarilla continued to made things difficult; the draft was requested to be changed by sending it back to ministers. In one of his official writing, on the constitution draft sultan states that he see "method and things that improper to country" and new regulations need to "be harmonized with the rights of government", so he want draft to be negotiated and changed by ministers

³⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 82

³⁴¹ Ibid, p. 84

³⁴² Ibid, p. 84

³⁴³ Ibid, p. 85

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 85

³⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 86

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 79

considering these points.³⁴⁷ He also demands that this matter remain secret between grand vizier and ministers. Therefore, Kanun-i Esasi would take its final form with changes decided by ministers. Before moving on to this subject, let us compare the last draft with Kanun-i Esasi.

Kanun-i Esasi went down to 119 articles. While Article 9 of the second draft is passed as Article 10 on Kanun-i Esasi, statements on the citizens that they “cannot be arrested and imprisoned under any pretext unless legally required, nor can they be punished in exile and other forms”³⁴⁸ are removed. Thus, the ruling class once again shows that it would not give up its despotic and arbitrary policies.³⁴⁹

Article 24’s provision in the draft which states that “a penalty cannot be imposed that is not set forth by the law” is not taken to Kanun-i Esasi.³⁵⁰ Article 27 of the draft and Article 27 of Kanun-i Esasi deal with the same issue, but inscriptions stating that ministers “are elected by grand vizier (“reis-ül vükela”)” are removed. In other words, the method of sultan’s choosing ministers came back.³⁵¹

The right of the parliament to elect its own chief is also abolished; the parliament selects three first, second and third chief candidates and send them to the sultan, and he elects the chiefs among them. This is a going back to the first draft.³⁵²

Article 88 of the second draft, which states “each deputy has the right to question ministers in general assembly and demand for an explanation”³⁵³, is not included in Kanun-i Esasi.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 77. Kılıç guesses that the sultan wrote this paper on the first draft. However, first draft was amended by again commission. But sultan wishes it now from ministers. We know that second draft was amended by ministers. So, this paper probably was written for second draft. In addition, for Sungu’s passage on Abdülhamid’s hope for ministers to change draft, see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v2- II, p. 96-7

³⁴⁸ Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 87

³⁴⁹ In addition, “Article 11 of second draft bans to open letters, but this is abolished in Kanun-i Esasi” and Article 22 of draft, which states that “honor and dignity are under the commitment of the government and the law” is not included in Kanuni Esasi, see Ibid, p. 88.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 88

³⁵¹ Ibid, p. 88

For leaving the right to elect ministers to the sultan as a result of the violent opposition and insistence of the pashas in commission, especially the grand vizier of the Grand Vizier against providing grand vizier to elect ministers, see Mahmud Celaleddin, *Mirat-ı Hakikat*, p. 202-ff.

³⁵² Kılıç, *İlk Anayasanın Hazırlanması*, p. 91

³⁵³ Ibid, p 91

In other words, a right to ask for an account from the executive power related to the principle of “people’s supervision” was abolished.

Article 99 of the second draft, which states “each court is responsible for the execution of final judgment it gives. The manner and means by which courts shall execute their judgments and decisions shall be determined by a special law”, is not included in Kanun-i Esasi.³⁵⁴ Likewise, Article 93 of the second draft, which includes provision of “each court must declare reasons for decisions and judgments it make”³⁵⁵, is also not included in Kanun-i Esasi. Dominant powers, who never wanted to put separation between the legislative and the executive powers, thus show that in the subject of judiciary, even superficial form of separation of powers would not be followed.

In Article 102, the authority to make extra spending is given to ministers by reason of “some extraordinary situations.”³⁵⁶ Moreover, Article 112 of draft, which brings principle of legitimism of taxation and states that “any concessions and increase (“istinat”) or decrease in taxes need to be determined by a law”³⁵⁷, is not included in Kanun-i Esasi. This is a clear indication that the system of seizing resources of the country and maintaining the spending out of any kind of control, which is the essence of tyranny of the Tanzimat pashas, was wanted to be kept up.

Adding a passage on the sultan’s right to exile those who are certain to violate security of the government “upon documented investigation of police” to martial law provision in Article 125 of the draft, it is converted into Article 113 of Kanun-i Esasi.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 92

³⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 92

³⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 93

³⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 93. Another provision on governmental decrees, that they would be annulled if they are not accepted and approved when parliament convened, is abolished. see Ibid, p. 97

³⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 94

While Article 128 of draft states that constitution can be amended, this issue is also abolished in Article 116 of Kanun-i Esasi.³⁵⁹ After all, such a “constitution” had no part to be amended...³⁶⁰

Lawyer Okandan concludes for Kanun-i Esasi that: “system what we call constitutionalism is in fact the confirmation and re-acceptance of principles of absolutism.”³⁶¹ There is no doubt for these statements’ accuracy. Likewise, Berkes says, “In fact, what demolished Kanun-i Esasi was the whole compounding of the constitution itself, not Article 113.”³⁶²

“Regrettably, Kanun-i Esasi, is not as much firm as supposed”³⁶³ says Abdülhak Hamid, one of the witnesses of the era and friend of Kemal, as well. We believe that his words reflect the general opinion of pro-constitutional intellectuals of the era on Kanun-i Esasi.

In negotiation process among the ministers, where amendments would be made for the final draft of the commission, highly probably there were conflicts between Mithat faction and palace faction, but we do not have chance to have full knowledge of the content of this conflict.³⁶⁴ However, when we look at nature of both the final draft and the declared constitution, we see that the principle of separation of powers is not even recognized in appearance in both. Budgeting right and the legislative power of parliament are de facto caducous. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that there is a qualitative difference between the

³⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 95

³⁶⁰ Aside from “free press in the circle of law”, there are no provisions in Kanun-i Esasi on the right to form associations, freedom of communication and freedom of assembly. see Ibid, p. 118-9

Indeed, it would be interesting to learn what Ziya and Kemal said about the freedom of assembly and association, if it came up in the debates of the commission. It seems that we will not have such a chance until the records - if any - are published. On the other hand, I have not received any information relating to this topic from other sources such as personal letters, etc. so far.

³⁶¹ Okandan, *Umumi Amme hukukumuzun Ana Hatları*, v1, p. 144-174, quoted by Davison, *Reform*, p. 389

³⁶² Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2016), p. 333

³⁶³ His letter to Pirizade İbrahim Bey, on 24 Kanunuevvel 1294 see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2- II*, p. 55.

“Suphi Pasha also did not believe this game. Saying the sultan gave freedom to the nation, Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, the son of vizier Sami Pasha, went to the mansion of his older brother Suphi Pasha at Horhor, and he was excited. Suphi Pasha, who was 31 years older than Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, did not share this excitement, “Hasan” said he “freedom cannot be a beneficence by the sultan!” see Ibid, p.66

“Kemal prepared the mistake of taking constitution from crown, the day he translated the letter in French sent by Fazıl to Aziz.” Ibid, p. 61

³⁶⁴ For Davison’s statements on this subject see Davison, *Reform*, p. 377-9

commission's last draft and Kanun-i Esasi. Thus, if there was a conflict between Mithat and palace factions until the proclamation of Kanun-i Esasi, it should be related to political conditions rather than to the constitution's content. In this case, it is necessary to look at political environment for reasons why the palace procrastinated the proclamation of constitution.

Petrosyan draws our attention to an important point in this regard. Although arrangements on the draft, which was sent by sultan to ministers on December 1, ended on December 6, the declaration of the constitution would reach December 23.³⁶⁵ Meanwhile, preliminary negotiations between western states that would take part in the conference on the Balkan issue, which Britain pioneered, reached a certain stage on December 11, and it became clear that imperialist states would present proposals for de facto independence for Rumelia. "When demands of the foreign states were fully clarified, feudal-religious bigot forces had to compromise with constitutionalists. The sultan and those around him began to seek a way and method that would minimize the importance of the constitution and provide them with a decisive blow to supporters of the constitution at the first opportunity. They acquired this opportunity by their adjunct to Article 113 of draft."³⁶⁶ Petrosyan makes such a comment because, it seems that, he does not know that the provision, which would turn into Article 113, was already included in the drafts addressed in the commission, and therefore it was not a last-minute goal. However, the necessity of "compromise" he points to should be paid attention. Indeed, the constitution would be announced as a result of a compulsory but bizarre "compromise" of factions under pressure of European imperialism's demands.

However, this "compromise" would not be accepted by independent constitutionalist intellectuals. The declaration of the constitution as amended by ministers, caused tension between Mithat and constitutionalist intellectuals. Mithat tried to show the proclamation

³⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the expectation for the proclamation of the constitution was raised twice. First: "Toward the end of November, the commission had completed a constitutional draft of one hundred and forty articles, which included Midhat's desideratum of a prime ministry instead of a grand vizierate. The draft was submitted unofficially to Abdülhamit by Midhat. It was expected that the constitution would be proclaimed within a few days." Ibid, p. 375. For this information, Davison uses diplomatic correspondence from Elliot to Derby, on November 22, 1876 as source.

Second: "The Council of ministers (...) approved their revised constitutional draft at a special meeting on December 6. The next day, the document was submitted, this time officially to Abdülhamid. Its promulgation was expected before the week was out." Ibid, p. 378. For this information, Davison uses L. Herald's issue on December 7, 1876.

³⁶⁶ Yuriy Aşatoviç Petrosyan, *Sosyalist Açidan Jöntürk Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Yordam, 2015), p. 103

of the constitution as lesser of two evils. But Ziya Pasha, expressed against the face of Mithat that he, as well, desires to use Article 113.³⁶⁷

Just before proclamation of Kanun-i Esasi, Mithat was appointed grand vizier. Policies required by aforementioned “compromise” manifested themselves in Mithat’s appointment: the fact that Mithat was a British-supported politician, his appointment can be taken as a policy of Abdülhamid to gain support of Britain in conference.³⁶⁸

On the second day of Istanbul Conference (“Tersane Konferansı” in Turkish literature), December 23, delegates gathered were shaken by cannon sounds. They were shots that heralded the proclamation of Kanun-i Esasi.

Main focus of the ruling class before and after proclamation of Kanun-i Esasi was this conference. Although the conference disintegrated without any conclusions on paper, it created an effect of closing the final curtain of factional conflicts among the Ottoman high bureaucracy. We will see how this happens later. But the only thing that high politics was interested in was not the conference. From Mithat to Ziya, from Süleyman Hüsnü to Kemal, *Hediye-i Askeriye Cemiyeti* (Society of Military Donation) and *Asakir-i Milliye Taburları* (Battalions of National Soldiers), which were located at the point of intersection of different figures, took as well their places among other political preoccupations of the high politics of Ottoman dominant powers. It seems that these organizations were based on grassroots, enrolling members and going out to demonstrations. It also seems that from the streets, a voice was raised for the freedom of association which was not included in the constitution. Now, before moving on to subject of the conference, this issue should be dealt with, which is very relevant to the perspective of this study.

IV. IV. Elimination of Mass Organizations and Independent Constitutionals

Ziya Pasha was the chairman of both Hediye-i Askeriye and Asakir-i Milliye which was established in relation to the former.³⁶⁹ The Society was established to assist soldiers who

³⁶⁷ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 244

³⁶⁸ Bilal Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa’nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 33 (*Bilim ve Ütopya*, 214, 2012)

³⁶⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 235-6

For these organizations acceptance of both Muslim and non-Muslim patriots, which can be interpreted as a secular attitude, see *Ibid*, p.236-7, annotation 530

For list of administrators, see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 207, annotation 7

were fighting on fronts of Serbia and Montenegro. However, political aspect of the society came to the fore much. Kuntay interprets this situation as follows: “This society of military donation was sending laundry, coarse woolen cloth, boot and grains to soldiers, who were fighting in Serbia and Montenegro; but the words of the Nation and the Motherland which sultan began to be annoyed was smuggled to the cloths and the boots; that is, letters were wrapped around wares. Then this community gathered ‘Battalions of National Soldiers’, and among the young people who came here were children of the statesmen, but at the head of gatherers and gathered were Kemal and Ziya, two great poets who broke loose from the hands of the government and sat in the hearts.”³⁷⁰ In the same way, these organizations referred “not the sultan, but the nation”³⁷¹ to soldiers as the protector of the military. Existence of these organizations would thus tend to be an expression of the effort to politicize masses and build a grassroots power. “With organizing national soldiers, Ziya and Kemal beys were trying to create a spiritual force by attracting and calling the public opinion.”³⁷² No doubt, this infuriated the ruling class: “All of these were an apocalyptic noise in Abdülhamid's brain.”³⁷³

According to Bilgegil, Mithat Pasha should be “the real leader” of these organizations.³⁷⁴ However, the likelihood that Ziya and the independent cadres like him did not exist in these organizations as an instrument of Mithat, rather, in order to open a channel to their own political voices, is yet as valid as Bilgegil’s claim. The tension between Mithat and Ziya, and the exile of Ziya by Mithat in agreement with palace afterwards, gives this suggestion validity.

As activities of Battalions of National Soldiers ensured politicization of the youth with strong themes of “the homeland”, “the nation” but not the sultan³⁷⁵, and as organization started to resemble a mass movement in the form of “battalions” from district to district³⁷⁶

³⁷⁰ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 204

³⁷¹ Ibid, p. 206

³⁷² Mahmud Celaleddin, *Mirat-ı Hakikat*, quoted by Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 239

³⁷³ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 60; p. 204

³⁷⁴ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 237

³⁷⁵ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 209. Although these organizations were intersections of different figures of constitutionalism as mentioned above, determining whether or not there was a roof organization for these requires further research.

³⁷⁶ For Asakir-i Milliye's trainings on sundays and fridays see Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 73

in Istanbul, the discomfort of the palace faction increased. So they took action to disorganize the organizations. Not only those who gathered around the palace, but also obsolescent Tanzimatists like Mütercim, were extremely annoyed by the image of this mass movement. So much so that, in a note written by Mütercim to Abdülhamid, *Asakir-i Milliye* was called “a kind of commune.”³⁷⁷ Abdülhamid himself was of the same opinion.³⁷⁸

The activity and development of these organizations started and faded within a very intense political and military agenda. We do not have detailed and precise information about histories and evolutions of these organizations. But, on the one hand, expansion of the battalions and the atmosphere of intense political excitement seem to have increased Mithat's opportunities to utilize these communities existence as political levers against his rivalries.³⁷⁹ On the other hand, the possibility that these grassroots organizations could emerge as a political force against the power of Abdülhamid and the pashas was not overlooked by the palace. Upon Abdülhamit's decree on "definitively rejecting and eliminating" the battalions, grand vizier dispersed these battalions.³⁸⁰ Although there was a protest demonstration against this step in front of the mansion of Mithat Pasha, it is understood that there would be no incident beyond that.

Because it is not entirely clear to us that how leadership and policies of these organizations were shaped, we have limited opportunities to comment. However, it should be kept in the mind that this liquidation process, which is understood to have passed without much noise, was concurrent with plans of exiling Ziya, the chairman of both organization. Moreover, Mithat Pasha acted jointly with the palace on expulsion of Ziya.

³⁷⁷ “Under the presidency of Kemal bey and (...) some other, they are enlisting and constituting militia, namely a kind of commune...” Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 120.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 355

³⁷⁹ Davison, *Reform*, p. 396

For Süleyman Pasha's words on these organizations that they provided satiation to Mithat Pasha's flatulency and arrogance due to the proclamation of Kanun-i Esasi, see Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 74

³⁸⁰ *Asakir-i Milliye* battalions were banned on December 29, 1876, see Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 239.

Hediye-i Askeriye would be liquidated by firstly appointing Ahmet Vefik Pasha as chairman to it, see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 211

It was not only these organizations that were to be liquidated, but also those who had the potential to turn these organizations into dangerous political powers in the face of ruling class.

At this point, expulsion of Süleyman Hüsnü and Ziya Pasha from capital in January 1877 will be discussed.³⁸¹ What these two figures have in common seems to be their taking a stand against both Mithat's factional “constitutionalism” and the politics of the palace faction. In this case, it should not be a coincidence that rival factions agreed on their removal.

As mentioned above, after abolition of *Asakir-i Milliye*, young people registered to the battalions came to the mansion of Mithat and organized a protest. It was rumored that in the meantime Kemal was there and said, implying Abdülhamid's dethronement, the verse “*eşşeyi layüsema illa ve kad yüselles.*”³⁸² This rumor emerged from the palace, which wanted to remove him from Istanbul. Although Kemal denied this claim³⁸³, this excuse led “Mithat to be condemned and reprimanded, and Ziya and Kemal to be removed with an officialdom immediately.”³⁸⁴ Süleyman Pasha, on the other hand, was a radical personality who had previously been removed from Istanbul by incurring the wrath of the bureaucracy, and it may be thought that the elites would not tolerate his presence in capital under sensitive conditions. Aside from his role in the dethronement of Abdülaziz³⁸⁵, it is said that his relevance to *Asakir-i Milliye* engaged attention of the palace³⁸⁶ and before the proclamation of constitution, it is also said that he had appeared before the sultan and put

³⁸¹ Süleyman Pasha returned to Istanbul on 8 Teşrinisani 1292/November 20, 1876. Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 64, annotation 166.

Within 10 days after his arrival, for an attempt to remove Süleyman from Istanbul by grand vizier, which was unsuccessful, see Ibid, p.75.

³⁸² These verses mean that if something happened twice, the third as well will happen. What happened twice is dethronement of Abdülaziz and Murad. see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 205.

³⁸³ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 241, annotation 536

³⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 241, annotation 537

³⁸⁵ “Since he was one of the main performers of the dethronement, appointing Süleyman Pasha as such an important commander at such an important time in order to move him away from the capital is an unpleasant choice arising from the fear and anxiety of sultan Abdülhamid. It is the possibility that sultan cared that if Süleyman Pasha stayed on capital in such a complicated time and as minister of military schools, he could attempt to do what he did to his uncle.” Mahmut Kemal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 1836-7, quoted by Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 76

³⁸⁶ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 238

pressure on the proclamation and even threatened him.³⁸⁷ So he was added on the list of to be removed.

We have seen that a tension emerged between Mithat and the intellectual cadres on the declaration of Kanun-i Esasi. Ziya seems to have tried to create an agenda on subject of Kanun-i Esasi through the press.³⁸⁸ He also put himself forward for oncoming Istanbul elections. Against Ziya's political attempts, Mithat and Abdülhamid once again “compromised” and Ziya was exiled. “It is difficult for Mithat Pasha, a person that was sure of his ability and haughty, to have digested Ziya Bey’s condemnatory words to him due to the adoption of Article 113. When the sultan asked him to remove Ziya and Kemal from Istanbul, he did not have any difficulty in finding our poet an officialdom outside of Istanbul... Mithat Pasha also wanted to keep the power in his hands as well as the sultan.”³⁸⁹

The standoff between Süleyman Pasha and Mithat was already evident when Süleyman was removed from Istanbul by the government in June. Süleyman, pointing to the “contrast” between him and Mithat, also states that Mithat was in fact a person who conceals his desire for oppression with the mask of freedom.³⁹⁰ Thus, although Mithat seemingly shuffled in Kemal’s expulsion³⁹¹, who remained close to him during the

³⁸⁷ Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 68. Süleyman was not liked by ruling class and was not a member of a faction among them, and it can be thought that high bureaucrats’ refraining from him was influenced by support for him among the sub-level officers and cadets.

However, there is no answer to the question of why Süleyman Pasha would threaten the sultan in order to have him grant a constitution which gave sultan arbitrary exile authority. This makes us think that there is his son’s, who published after Süleyman Paşa’s death *Süleyman Paşa Muhakemesi*, which was source of this claim, clumsy interventions in that book.

³⁸⁸ Davison, *Reform*, p. 396

³⁸⁹ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 244-5

³⁹⁰ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-I*, p. 713.

As a written evidence that shows that Mithat also did not like Süleyman, for Mithat's letter to J. Butler, in which he portrayed Süleyman as a man of greed and nerviness, see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2- II*, p. 593-ff.

Again, Kuntay quotes an anecdote as follows: “Some statesmen who made Murad ruler to be the sultan of the constitutional monarchy did not believe in each other. Mithat Pasha, a very constitutionalist, was not so mistrustful to very constitutionalist Süleyman Pasha who came to his mansion that he put his huge revolver on the table for quick use. Süleyman Pasha as well took out his pocket pistol, saying ‘Pardon, what's up with this huge revolver? Little ones like this also perform a work.’ There was a dispute between Mithat Pasha and Süleyman Pasha.” Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1- I*, p. 712

³⁹¹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v2-II*, p. 169

drafting commission, he acted in alliance with the palace on expulsions of Ziya and Süleyman. “Unfortunately, Mithat Pasha was also in agreement and collateral with intrigant sultan in this regard”³⁹² Süleyman Nazif says.

In the process of deciding expulsions of “unwanted men”, the palace would caress oppressive tendencies of Mithat pointed out by Süleyman Hüsnü. For example, when Ziya Pasha was first thought to be appointed ambassador in Berlin, in a note which was sent from *mabeyn* clerk Said to Mithat on 12 Zilhicce 93/December 29, 1876, following words were used: “It is possible for grand vizier to manage the affairs without obstacles in these troubled times by removing such men from here. Do not exaggerate evaluations on Ziya, his importance is limited, but, as people tend to show favor to opponents and pay attention to objections, his initiatives and publications can be effective in this respect.”³⁹³ However, Ziya Pasha would not be sent to Berlin as ambassador; on January 4, he was appointed governor of Syria. Bilgegil states that Ziya’s governorship of Syria was demanded by Mithat himself: “While giving this officialdom to Ziya Bey, the sultan aimed to please his grand vizier. In this case, governorship of Syria was thought of by Mithat Pasha, who would later serve in the same post.”³⁹⁴

Süleyman Pasha as well would be “got rid of” by charging him to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Ahmed Muhtar left after had resigned.³⁹⁵

Ziya did not want to leave Istanbul on the eve of opening of the parliament. As can be understood from Kemal’s article in *Sadakat* newspaper dated 29 Kanunuevvel (December), a campaign was initiated for Ziya’s candidateship for *Meclis-i Mebusan* earlier than his removing from Istanbul.³⁹⁶ On the other hand, in newspaper *İstikbal*, a news about a petition, said signed by 15 thousand people and demand Ziya to stay in

³⁹² quoted by Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p.245

³⁹³ Ibid, p. 246

³⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 248

³⁹⁵ Özbilgen, *Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa*, p. 76-ff

On 27 December 1876, he was notified of this assignment, and the date of decree was December 31. “A spontaneous sullenness appeared on my face” says Süleyman Pasha on assignment. He would also say that he liked neither the rank of marshall nor the task he assigned. On January 4, firman of promotion and appointment was read in Harbiye in a manner not consistent with tradition. Süleyman Pasha would find it meaningful to see that most of the ministers, including Mithat, did not attend this ceremony and Abdülhamid just sent an ordinary aide. see, Ibid, p. 78

³⁹⁶ Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 295 annotation 631

capital, that it would be submitted to the sultan was published. Along with publishing this news, İstikbal also made a supportive comment on Ziya's initiative.³⁹⁷ This suggests that constitutionalists who were not engaged in the factional politics had some power to create an agenda and supporters in Istanbul; they tried to use the press as a weapon against Abdülhamid and Mithat who want to keep them out of the political center. But the dominant powers continued to oppressive policies. It is stated in a note to Mithat that Ziya Pasha's candidacy for deputy would not be accepted by palace because he was “stained” (!) for being against the “legitimate sovereign”³⁹⁸ (“metbu-ı meşru”). Thus, Abdülhamid's Kanun-i Esasi, which did not give any worthwhile right to the elected ones, was “reinforced” by hampering the right to be elected. This exile of Ziya reflects intolerable, dictatory repression policy of the bureaucratic regime which were shaking in the face of serious crises.³⁹⁹

Thus the constitutionalist intellectual cadres were removed from the political stage which was dominated by intrigues of the ruling class, as they could not depend on a real organizational base to defend themselves. Accordingly, in the chaotic and tense atmosphere of 1876, the liberty of speech of those who deserved the title of “the constitutionalist” and were outside the factional struggles, was taken away from them by intrigues and oppressions of those who occupied the high echelons of politics.

However, eliminations were not exclusive to these intellectuals. Istanbul Conference would be the place where the final reckoning, arising from the conflict between Mithat Pasha and Abdülhamid, was concluded.

IV. V. Turning Point in Factional Struggles: The Istanbul Conference

Mithat's grand viziership ended immediately after the Istanbul Conference. This conference convened to find a so-called diplomatic solution to situation in the Balkans; in fact, it served to impose unacceptable demands of Russia and provide an excuse for the war she was preparing.⁴⁰⁰ The most important result of the conference regarding Ottoman

³⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 250. Date of the issue is 24 Zilhicce/January 10, 1877.

³⁹⁸ “Ziya Pasha’s deputyship cannot be accepted. Because he is especially stained with the sin of being against the legitimate sovereign and this is fixed with concrete evidence. And Kanun-i Esasi cannot allow those who are stained to accept deputyship.” see, Ibid, p. 250

³⁹⁹ “Mithat Pasha considers this ridicule and accusation of the sultan by silence and ignorance” states S. Nazif. see, Ibid, p. 253.

⁴⁰⁰ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 465

domestic policy was that it untied the ongoing struggle within the bureaucracy which took place on the axis of getting leadership of one of struggling factions through rest of the ruling class. It has been mentioned that the conference was suggested by Britain. Salisbury, who came for the chief delegate for Britain, appeared as an absolute pro-Russian figure during the conference.⁴⁰¹ He established a close relationship with Ignatyev in Istanbul, where he arrived before the conference, and worked in “harmony” with him.⁴⁰²

The proposals made by western states at the conference were an expression of their intention to disintegrate the Ottoman State with the hands of Ottomans. Lands were demanded for Serbia which was crushed and defeated in the war he waged against the Ottomans by Russian patronage, as well as Montenegro; also an autonomy draft was designed for de facto independence to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria, which would consist of two provinces. Moreover, with the approval of “guarantor” states, Christian governors would be appointed to these provinces. For jurisdictions of these autonomous states, great powers would have the right of appointments. Ottoman army would not be able to get out of the fortress and big cities, 30% of income of these provinces would be transferred to the Ottoman debts and the rest would remain in the provinces. An international commission with the executive, legislative and judicial powers would be appointed to implement all these “reforms”. As Şimşir said, “first rehearsal of the Sevres Treaty, which would be dictated to Bab-ı Ali after forty years, was held.”⁴⁰³

“Although the project seems to be joint work of six great states, it was in fact the project of Tsarist Russia, and Russia was determined to impose it on the Porte. On December 20, 1876, when the project was presented exclusively to the sultan, Ignatyev visited Salisbury and read a telegram from his government to him. In Russian telegram it was said that 'unless the project is actually implemented, the emperor Alexander does not intend to pull his hand out of the handle of his sword'. ”⁴⁰⁴ At first, Elliot hoped that it would be possible to make Mithat Pasha “listen to advice” for the demands; “because he is a man who listens

⁴⁰¹ “Salisbury was one of the leaders of the “Bulgarian Horror” campaigns against the Turks in England. For this reason, the appointment of Salisbury for the conference was welcomed by adversaries of Turk, especially liberals.” see Mithat Aydın, *Elliot'un Büyükelçiliği*, p. 45 (Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi, vol 18, 18, 2015)

⁴⁰² The ambassador Elliot, who supported Mithat, found “negotiated Ignatyev proposals against Britain's guarantee of independence to the Porte, and thought that Salisbury, as an insufficient person to understand and solve the problem, was an instrument of Russian ambitions.” Ibid, p. 45

⁴⁰³ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 33-35

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 35

to argument.”⁴⁰⁵ Thus, in the game of diplomacy, Britain first played on Mithat to get their demands accepted.

On December 21, Salisbury and the French delegate, Count de Chandory, visited Mithat: “The meeting was stormy, and the language of the Turkish Ministers was unsatisfactory. They protested strongly against the appointment of an International Commission, and, indeed, objected to any form of guarantee except the promise of the Sultan.”⁴⁰⁶ After five days Salisbury went to the palace: in his correspondence to Derby he says that during the meeting the sultan kept whining and said that his life was under threat. The sultan also said that his subjects would not comply with his making concessions and abstained from debate. Salisbury thereupon wrote so: “He (the sultan) is a poor weak creature and counts for nothing in solution of problem.”⁴⁰⁷ According to Şimşir, this attitude of Abdülhamid may be a policy for throwing the oppression off.⁴⁰⁸

The fourth session of the conference was held on January 1. Turkish delegates declared that they were not even authorized to negotiate as they found eight points in the project of great states to be contrary to the Ottoman sovereignty and independence, and submitted a counter proposal. After the session, Salisbury went to Mithat: "He said that (...) no Turk would yield one of the above points."⁴⁰⁹ The next day Mithat Pasha, specifying that he always advocated the pro-western policy, said to British chief translator M. Sanderson: "Turkey, which had hitherto placed strict reliance on maintenance of Treaty of Paris, be now opened her eyes to fact that it no longer exists."⁴¹⁰ Sanderson noted that he observed a hope in Mithat that there might be a change in the British public opinion which had been turned against Turks.

On January 8, Elliot met with Mithat, he felt that Mithat would hardly object to a few small concessions to Montenegro alone. He observed no attitude change in the remaining issues.

⁴⁰⁵ Bilal Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa'nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 267 (Ankara: TTK, 1986)

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 268

⁴⁰⁷ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 35

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 36

⁴⁰⁹ Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa'nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 270

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, p. 272

On the same day Salisbury wrote to London that the grand vizier had told one of his men that he trusts Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield no matter what Salisbury says.⁴¹¹

On January 9, British embassy's chief translator met with Mithat and the grand vizier said that the pill that was asked to be swallowed was so large to be swallowed that it did not pass through his throat, let alone his mouth.⁴¹² Aside from these words, as it can be seen, Mithat did not accept the demands of western states until this point. On January 10, through his man Odyan Efendi, he made an attempt before British foreign minister in London. Odyan Efendi made a suggestion to Derby to take the constitution under the guarantee of great states. Thus, it was expected that the demands of the conference would be no longer necessary. The other expectation was that the palace, Mithat's rival, could no longer touch the constitution with the western guarantee. However, a foreign guarantee on the main law of the state would mean nothing but transformation of the Ottoman State into a protectorate.

Mithat's this attempt, which can be seen as a vulgar example of classical policies of the Tanzimat pashas, who had no national consciousness in the era of nations and nationalism, would be subject to diplomatic correspondence for a while. British minister of foreign affairs addressed this proposal, which meant a regime of open tutorship over the entire Ottoman State through the constitution. In practice, if implemented, it was clear from the outset that it would cause too many problems among the great powers, yet Derby let Salisbury and his Austrian colleague know this proposal.⁴¹³ But in the end they rejected it. "Maybe that's why Mithat Pasha contented himself with putting out feelers and did not formally present the proposal to the conference"⁴¹⁴ writes Şimşir. In fact, this, beyond concessive, submissive attitude was expected to make British who were pushing for Russian demands even more arrogant. At this point, the poorness of so-called maneuvers of the Tanzimat pasha is came to light. In searching for a support against Russia, a proposal meant to give the country's tutorship was made to Britain, which during the conference

⁴¹¹ Şimşir, "*Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*", p. 38

⁴¹² Ibid, p. 38

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 39-40

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, p. 40

stuck to Russian demands.⁴¹⁵ The same Britain would abandon Mithat because of his attitude at the conference and would not say a single word to his exile.

On January 11, British now decided to play to the sultan. Elliot went to Abdülhamid and the sultan said him that if only British and French members were in the commission, there would be no problem and the ambassador left the palace “with the hope” thereupon.⁴¹⁶ If there was an Ottoman commissioner in the international commission, the sultan seemed to accept it. Elliot wrote that the sultan had wished to listen to “the advice of her majesty's government” but also reminded that he (the sultan) had not yet established his authority over his ministers.⁴¹⁷ Thus, British, who had been focusing on Mithat since beginning of the conference, began to think that they could reach a solution with the sultan.

On January 14, Salisbury appeared again before the sultan. In the interview, Salisbury advised the sultan not to fall under the influence of ministers and “pressed him to exert his own authority in favour of the proposals.”⁴¹⁸ “His Majesty spoke throughout with moderation, and the impression left upon my mind was that he would be disposed to yield,

⁴¹⁵ Mithat's westernism is reflected also in brochure “Turkey's Past and Future” he wrote after Russo-Turkish War in exile. In this brochure, he expects a backing from West “on performing an active supervision for implementation of Kanun-i Esasi”, which is depicted to “does not and cannot have the degree of maturity and influence at the level of those of European old order” by Mithat, in order to save the Kanun-i Esasi from this lack of influence. This “help” would also benefit the West! “This joint supervision also leads to the isolation of Russia's influence in the east, which has so far been exercised solely to the benefit of Russia and to the detriment of European interest.” Here is a par excellence example of the politics of the Tanzimat pasha, but too little too late! Maybe that could be effective twenty or ten years ago, but after Franco-Prussian and Russo-Turkish wars, “European Concert” by which power of Tanzimat pashas received support, was just an imagination. So there was no maneuver field for politics of Crimean War era.

Nevertheless, Mithat holds to propose a kind of protectorate to Europe; this joint European supervision that would protect the “Porte's constitution” would also expel Russia from the region. Thus, while the Porte would keep the country under his hypothec with a “constitutional” dictatorship, the west would keep the Porte under its hypothec, thus both parties would win! However, Russia, had now became a power that France and Britain was in need of against newborn great power Germany. So Tanzimatist stood aghast with his poor begging. But this document tells a lot. see, Mithat Pasha, “Türkiye'nin Mazisi ve İstikbali” in Mithat, *Tabıra-i İbret*, p. 327-42

⁴¹⁶ Şimşir, “Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere”, p. 40

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p. 40

⁴¹⁸ Şimşir, “Midhat Paşa'nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri”, p. 295. Later, in an article in which he applauds the exile of Mithat, Suavi declares that Lord Salisbury “does not want guarantee from the viziers but from the sultan”. This phenomenon make ones think that something related to Salisbury's advices was whispered in Suavi's ears, who was in the service of Abdülhamid at the time of conference. It is understood that this time he used his old “talents” coming from factionalism, at the foothills of the Yıldız. see, Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 303

if not overborne by the influence of his advisers.”⁴¹⁹ Therefore, Abdülhamit and the palace faction saw that Mithat, whom they had not given a hard time because the British support behind him, was left alone. There was no longer a Britain supporting Mithat, and it can be assumed that Abdülhamid began to think that he could get rid of him.

On January 15, Abdülhamid got on the stage with his own scenario. He sent a message to Salisbury through Hobart Pasha and Salisbury reported this message to London as follows: “he [the sultan] himself saw no fatal objection to our terms, but that he could not manage his ministers, and was afraid of being dethroned...”⁴²⁰ Thus, giving an impression that he could satisfy westerners’ desires if supported, Abdülhamid resorted to imperialism as a support in internal political struggle, just like Mithat’s Odyan Efendi attempt, and followed the same path with him. “Thereupon, Salisbury came to a certain conclusion”⁴²¹ and he wrote this to London: “it is now with the Sultan: Grand Vizier is as stiff as ever”⁴²². In relation to this, Şimşir says: “Mithat Pasha fell from Britain’s grace, Abdülhamid got in Britain’s good books. While Mithat Pasha was struggling to soften European project aimed at the demolition of the Empire, Abdülhamid was trying to demolish Mithat Pasha quietly and he was successful in this way.”⁴²³

In spite of this move by the sultan to reach an agreement with the great powers⁴²⁴, the conference would come to a close without any conclusion. On January 18, a general assembly of the Ottoman dignitaries convened in order to discuss the requests presented at the conference. In meeting held under the leadership of Mithat Pasha, proposals of the great powers were rejected firmly. The conference held its last session on January 20 and then disintegrated. Salisbury then advised London to leave Istanbul on the 21st; according to him, the general assembly was composed of the people who would accept Mithat’s decision of rejection: “Although Mithat alluded with regret to the dangers of a war, he did so evidently merely in deference to the pacific feelings of the Sultan. It is plain that he wishes, in his own interest, that these complications should continue, in order that he may

⁴¹⁹ Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa’nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 295

⁴²⁰ Ibid, p. 296

⁴²¹ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa’nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 42

⁴²² Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa’nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 296

⁴²³ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa’nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 42

⁴²⁴ “According to Salisbury, the only person who resisted the project of great states was Mithat Pasha. Otherwise, the sultan and the government members would accept the project.” Ibid, p. 42

gratify his wish of remaining in power as long as possible.”⁴²⁵ In fact, the evident thing in these lines is that Britain was burning her bridges with Mithat. As a matter of fact, Salisbury would write later that if the sultan had enough authority, the outcome of the conference would be more satisfactory.⁴²⁶ Thus, while Ottomans were gradually dragging into war with Russia, this still did not cause a postponement in the factional struggles. Mithat would not last even two weeks, after the conference.

On the night of February 4, British charge d'affaires wrote to London: “Position of Midhat Pasha is apparently becoming insecure.”⁴²⁷ The news also reached Austrian minister of foreign affairs. The next day Mithat was dismissed. There was no incident in Istanbul. As might be expected, “the overthrow of Mithat Pasha was silently welcomed by British government.”⁴²⁸ Turn of the exile now came to Mithat, who exiled independent constitutionalist intellectuals in agreement with the palace.

The only real -and unwritten- “decision” of the conference, in this case, can be said to elimination of the grand vizier who was “necessary and requisite” (“hasbezzaman ve bizzarure”)⁴²⁹ for that time. Abdülhamid and the pashas gathered around him, when they saw that there was no one left among the great powers to support Mithat, decided that it was time to get rid of him and ended this balance game. Mithat adopted dictatory attitudes of the Tanzimat pashas against the enlightened cadres, who had not only taken part in struggle for the constitution via press but also in political organizations like *Hediye-i Askeriye*. These organizations could have become the backbone of an independent constitutionalist political organization and have a potential to strengthen this line further in politics. But Mithat exiled independent constitutionalists as they did not serve his purpose or at least shut his eyes to their exiles; and at this point he appeared in alliance with the palace. One of the factors that prepared his easy end is his such attitudes.

The struggle between Mithat and Abdülhamit factions does not appear as a strike of opposing programs and uncompromising political understandings. The sides of this political struggle differed, not in content but in form. At the core of their struggle was the

⁴²⁵ Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa'nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 308-9

⁴²⁶ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 44

⁴²⁷ Şimşir, “*Midhat Paşa'nın Son Sadrazamlığıyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri*”, p. 320

⁴²⁸ Şimşir, “*Mithat Paşa'nın İkinci Sadrazamlığı ve İngiltere*”, p. 46

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 32

search for imposing their leadership on the rest of the bureaucracy by eliminating the opponent faction, in the process of fortifying convulsed domination of the bureaucracy over the country. With the combination of different factors, Mithat lost this struggle, the Yıldız camarilla won.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

“Eyvah bu bâzîçede bizler yine yandık

Zîra ki ziyan ortada bilmem ne kazandık”

Ziya Paşa

The Young Ottomans emerged as relentless critics of the Porte which was under the command of Ali and Fuad Pashas. They, from place to place, expressed problems of the classes of Turkish-Muslim artisans and craftsmen, the small merchants and the rural people, who were put into troubles economically by the policies of the bureaucracy. They also expressed a number of demands that can be regarded as the longings of these social forces. The solution they put forward to the problems was consultancy (*“usul-ü meşveret”*). They refused the bureaucracy to spend money of the nation unsupervised and arbitrarily and to go to borrowings that would eventually be paid by the nation. They propagated the need to control the bureaucracy, both in terms of taxation and expenditure. In this respect, they can be seen as a group that tackled to be spokesman of democratic demands of the middle class against the bureaucratic oligarchy.⁴³⁰

However, the factor that limited their opposition to the Porte was their conducting of opposition under the shadow of factional struggles. The Young Ottomans were able to express their political discourses with Fazıl's money. They did not have a reader circle to sell the newspapers they published in Europe, where they were in exile. They could not

⁴³⁰ As mentioned before, the Young Ottomans' tackling to be voice of people's interests in their various writings, can be seen as an indicator of their ambivalent position in which they trapped, between rising in bureaucratic hierarchy or being totally excluded from it.

finance themselves independently, for example with their journalistic income or the money they would receive from their families. The rhetoric in their newspapers had seemingly uncompromising and plaintiff style; however, their material dependence on Fazıl ultimately determined their politics. Thus, after Fazıl began to “compromise” with the Porte, they immediately received warnings from him to array their writings. Fazıl threatened them to cut their allowances if the warnings were not taken into consideration. Their only leverage against this demand was a signature of a commitment from Fazıl when they first fled to Europe.⁴³¹ However, this signature had no validity in the Ottoman politics, which was shaped by the factional struggles and intrigues.

Thus, they were trapped between their material dependence on Fazıl and the animosity between them and the Porte. Making a choice became inevitable. Kemal chose Fazıl's side. Kemal, who said in one of his letters⁴³² that Hürriyet had been issued on Fazıl's “order”, again with the order of Fazıl, withdrew his signature from Hürriyet. This time, thinking that they were betrayed by Fazıl, Ziya and Suavi faced to khedive Ismail, who was then in conflict with the Porte and Fazıl. But the policy of entering in service of the pashas did nothing but helplessly seeking to save the day. Therefore, it had no chance of providing continuity. The press activity of the Young Ottomans, who had been disintegrated within themselves, came to a complete halt in 1870. Thus they withdrew from the political scene, on which they got in reference to the course of events in the factional struggles, when they did not have a mission in accordance with the course of these struggles.

However, apart from this general tendency in political careers of the Young Ottomans, we also encounter a consistent and radical political tendency. Among the enlightened cadres in exile, there was a political line from the beginning that showed a tendency to go beyond the axis of conflict of interest between the pashas and this line was finally separated from the Young Ottomans in 1870 and became concrete with short-lived *Cemiyet-i Ahrar*. Their stance was the most radical in the period. Aside from standing close to one or another part of the bureaucracy, they showed a total opposition against the ruling class; they declared that they want to change the regime. In their newspaper, they claim that the republic is the most appropriate form of government for Muslim society and that they would bring democracy to the country.⁴³³ They condemn the factional politics, in which the Young

⁴³¹ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v1, p. 565

⁴³² Bilgegil, *Ziya Paşa*, p. 117

⁴³³ Bilgegil, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, p. 272-ff

Ottomans were involved, and the policy of replacing this or that minister with another one.⁴³⁴ In Kuntay's words, they were “comitadjis”.⁴³⁵ Although it was a short-lived initiative, we can take them as the voice of a consistent constitutionalism that expressed democratic aspirations of the oppressed popular classes.

Enlightened cadres were never able to establish strong and widespread ties with the social segments that had conflicts of interest with the bureaucracy. As such, cadres that tended to maintain an independent political line could be eliminated by the high bureaucracy.

With the death of Ali Pasha in 1871, the course of factional conflicts flowed to another channel. As soon as Mahmut Nedim came to grand viziership, he engaged in a cleaning operation against Ali Pasha's associates, which in this work referred to as traditional faction of the Tanzimat, and drove them from Istanbul.⁴³⁶ However, within a year, we see that a counterattack came and Mithat, a colleague of Ali and Fuad, was appointed grand vizier as a result of a preliminary preparation. Until Nedim was taken down from his chair in May 1876 with a rebellion, the struggle between the traditional faction of the Tanzimat pashas and their opponents, Nedim-Abdülaziz couple persisted. The same years were also the years when the Ottoman State's borrowing opportunities from abroad were cut and economic crises of the old world -1873-74 famine- were intertwined with those of modern world -1873 depression-, bringing the financial depression of the state to the peak. With the advent of 1870s, blockage of borrowing channels abroad and forcing the internal resources to the last meant that the bureaucracy was up against the wall in repaying the debts and closing the budget deficits. In this whole process, the bureaucracy acted with the motive of defending its dictatorship over the country which had been going on since 1826 and gained an institutional appearance since Tanzimat, 1839.

The Porte's bureaucracy saw that its control over the material resources was slipping under his hand. The traditional faction invoiced Abdülaziz and Nedim; in 1876, the pashas came into play “to defend the system”⁴³⁷ which they claimed to be perverted. The dissatisfaction of people with the system became a facilitating factor in the liquidation of Nedim and the

⁴³⁴ Ibid, p. 156

⁴³⁵ Kuntay, *Namık Kemal v1*, p. 359

⁴³⁶ Abu Manneh, “*Anti-Tanzimat Concepts of Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Paşa*”, p. 175

⁴³⁷ Abu Manneh, “*The Roots of Ascendancy of Ali and Fuad Paşas at the Porte*”, p. 124

sultan. In particular, we see that Mithat at that time tried to direct the aspirations of people by taking care not to leave the role of advocate of the “constitution” to anyone.⁴³⁸

No matter how much they tried to give impression that they cared about the aspirations of the people; the effort of the bureaucracy as a whole was to fortify their power which paralyzed under the influence of internal and external crises. At the same time, they engaged in a struggle among themselves to decide which faction would lead this task.

Relying on the support of British embassy in this struggle, Mithat had the opportunity to put himself in the forefront against other elements of the bureaucracy which could not ignore this support due to the international conjuncture of the era. He planned to overcome the governing crisis of the bureaucracy with the establishment of a parliament⁴³⁹, which only had “the authority to negotiate the law drafts” sent by Şuray-ı Devlet and a good part of which were to be appointed by the Porte.

The opposing faction, who saw that Mithat would strengthen his position and gain a strong ground against them, was first represented by Ali and Fuad's other close associates, Mütercim Rüşdi and Hüseyin Avni pashas. Even before the dethronement of Abdülaziz, during the overthrow of Nedim these two engaged in a power struggle with Mithat. They opposed Mithat's plans, aiming to maintain the power of bureaucracy under their own leadership.

In the first phase, Avni-Mütercim faction could prevent Mithat from implementing his plans. After Abdülhamid's ascent to the throne and subsequent to defeating of Serbia, Russia's declaration of mobilization brought British-backed Mithat once again into the forefront among the high bureaucracy which was seeking a balance against Russia. In this atmosphere Mithat, having British ambassador behind him, played his cards in domestic politics. After a commission phase of no more than two months, a constitution draft, which did not actually give the parliament any serious powers including those of legislative and budgeting, was submitted to the sultan. The constitution draft, not imposing any serious restrictions on the dominance of bureaucracy over the country and not transferring the powers of the bureaucracy even partially to the elected representatives of people, was promulgated on December 23.

⁴³⁸ Davison, *Reform*, p. 325-6

⁴³⁹ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 49

By bringing forward this constitution, demands of western countries at Istanbul Conference would be opposed by the government. But westerners insisted on the demands imposed by Russia in fact. Mithat Pasha would not make concessions to these demands at the conference and a general Ottoman assembly would convene later and reject these requests determinately. Thus, the conference apparently disintegrated without any decision. But in fact, the fate of Mithat was decided by this conference. Observing that British delegates and diplomats were withdrawing their support to Mithat, Abdülhamid and his team saw that Mithat was left alone and they exiled him two weeks after the conference.

With the elimination of Mithat Pasha, a period was closed in the Ottoman politics. The winner of the factional struggles for the leadership of bureaucracy in its general and mutual endeavour to maintain its domination over the country was now decided.

It should have been understood from the explanations so far that the removal of Mithat cannot be seen as an intention to prepare ground for shelving the declared constitution. Because not only this “constitution” did not set the principle of separation of powers, but also it held the parliament just as an ornament; therefore, talking about an attempt of such thing, which would mean the pruning of some acquired rights, is senseless.⁴⁴⁰

Generally speaking, in the factional struggles that took place in the peaks of the Ottoman politics, the main problem for the factions appeared on the stage is to be infusing their leadership to the rest of the bureaucracy. Among the different elements of the bureaucracy there were schisms, but on the condition that not to harm the domination of the bureaucracy as a whole. We see Mithat Pasha at the head of the party which wanted to maintain the power of the bureaucracy under a “constitutional” image. In previous section, we looked at the content of the “constitutional” regime he designed. In essence, Kanun-i Esasi, declared by Abdülhamit, was no different from Mithat’s draft: the parliament had neither a supervisory nor a legislative nor a budgeting authority fully, which would be in line with the principle of the “people’s supervision” (“*umumi nezaret*”). As a result, it can be said that the high bureaucracy could go to “flexible” solutions in form provided that they maintain their financial and political monopolies; but they are brutal and aggressive

⁴⁴⁰ This assembly would still emerge as the focus of opposition to dominant powers and would be silenced at the end of Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. see Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 478-9

in defending their interests when the problem really comes to the transference of the authority. So much so that they put aside conflicts between themselves and came together to take care of silencing the elements who were opposing their policies or have potential to create “troubles” for them. This phenomenon was embodied in exiles of Ziya and Süleyman Pasha.

Indeed, in a situation where the control of the bureaucracy over the resources of country was greatly eroded and objective conditions isolated the ruling class, we find the bureaucracy worried against political challenges from other dynamics, such as students and lower-level officers, apart from the traditional factional fights.⁴⁴¹ For this reason, they were combative and aggressive in the question of preventing the development of these dynamics. The atmosphere of insanity brought about by the unstable situation of the bureaucratic oligarchy would be reflected in the personality and attitudes of Abdülhamit, to whom the bureaucracy clung as a last resort.

No matter how much Abdülhamid gave an image of maintaining a personal regime of oppression, this image remained in the place to the extent that he harmonized his power with the dominant interests of the bureaucracy and the Ottoman dominant classes as a whole. It can be alleged that Abdülhamid paved his way by appealing to various elements in the bureaucracy during his political rise and used them in this sense. But the opposite is more prevailing; the pashas also instrumentalized Abdülhamid to protect their domination. And, imperialism, once again came to fore as a supporting factor in the cleanup of the parliamentary solution to the governing crisis of the Ottoman country and in the continuity of the Tanzimatist regime. "*De facto* patronage system established by the Treaty of Berlin needed a hierarchical centralism where only those at peak would submit to the warnings of ambassadors, and in terms of its quality, the constitutional regime was detrimental to this kind of running."⁴⁴²

“The example of the coup against Abdülaziz and the deposition of Murad shows that in the political culture of the elite the individual sultan was dispensable.”⁴⁴³ It seems that Abdülhamit was aware of this situation. He appeared on the stage as a practical bargainer,

⁴⁴¹ For example in a letter to his father, Kemal points to as reason for his arrest after exile of Mithat Pasha: “they feared that we might be an instrument stir up a trouble in Istanbul.” see Kuntay, *Namık Kemal* v2-II, p. 197

⁴⁴² Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 479

⁴⁴³ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 56

involving in the intrigues between the pashas, trying to gain the support of embassies; even in an interview during the Istanbul Conference, he clearly told British delegate that he was afraid of being dethroned. Thus, the position of the sultan in the politics was a gall that could be thrown out when the dominant interests required. So, in these political struggles, the sultan did not appear as an “almighty”, irreplaceable power beyond and superior to the pashas. Rather, he was *primus inter pares* among the pashas or the ruling elite.⁴⁴⁴ Abdülhamid would find the “solution” to this problem by assuming taking care of the dominant interests as a whole and maintaining the Tanzimat regime in the garb of a personal regime. For the Tanzimat bureaucrats, in Riedler's words, “a sultan under their tutelage was just what they wanted.”⁴⁴⁵ However, the reality of life showed that the bureaucrat-sultan dilemma Riedler points to was unrealistic; it was rather the bureaucrat-sultan intertwinement.

Abdülhamid and the faction around him appears as follower of the fight that was initiated by Mütercim and Avni against Mithat. This faction, which would gradually gather the bureaucracy around itself, eliminated Mithat when he became unnecessary. From this point on, this faction would not allow a rival faction to emerge within the bureaucracy. “In a final effort the bureaucracy which was deprived of a large part of material resources at their hand with their being put down by the foreigners and seized by other groups and under attacks from lower ranks in its hierarchy, clustered around the palace and sought to ways of defending itself behind the shield of Abdülhamid's personal power.”⁴⁴⁶

It is understood that Mithat thought the constitutionalist intellectuals who would act outside his own factional politics as a threat to his power and he exiled these from the center of the politics, capital, in concert with Abdülhamid. Mithat's attempt to monopolize

⁴⁴⁴ After the 1877-78 War, Abdülhamid's anxiety of being liquidated by pashas reached the level of madness during Ali Suavi's Çırağan Palace raid. This would lead sultan to beg British ambassador for taking refuge in British ships “in case his life was aimed at.” In the hope of finding support, Abdülhamid ordered “prime minister Sadık Pasha to act entirely in accordance with the advice of the British ambassador”. Sultan believed that he was held responsible for the deaths of thousands of Muslims killed by Russians, and that he would be asked for the account of terror and disasters that country underwent. Abdülhamid would tell the British ambassador Layard that he did not trust any pasha, he was not sure of his life. He asked the British ambassador if he could help him escape country. Abdülhamid's fear of liquidation is based on the idea that high bureaucrats had to do with Çırağan incident, which we understand from his interview with the British ambassador on June 8. Therefore, Abdülhamid was aware of his helplessness against the interest of bureaucracy as a whole and “instability” in his position. see, Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 408-419

⁴⁴⁵ Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 85

⁴⁴⁶ Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 487-8

“constitutionalism” in his hands in this way in fact prevented emergence of an independent constitutionalist political organization, giving advantage to the palace faction. Thus, bureaucracy's conflicting parties settled their accounts on their own at the peak of the politics in an atmosphere that they did not confront an effective power from below. Preventing emergence of a political power from lower layers of the bureaucracy, which could act jointly with middle classes⁴⁴⁷, formed a basis for the long lasting silence of the constitutionalist movement after 1877.

Petrosyan states that “there were many reasons for the defeat of the constitutionalist movement, but one of the most important was that social base of the movement was weak and narrow. (...) In their struggle with the feudal-clerical reactionism, they did not seek the support of masses in cities or in countryside because they preferred not to depend on masses of people, but to organize conspiracies against the sultan and the government.”⁴⁴⁸ It is clear that this kind of “constitutionalism”, which was used as a tool for factional conflicts, was predestined to fail because it did not have opportunity to create its own power. Nevertheless, such an independent tendency, which sought a mainstay in the people, tried to raise its head and appear on the stage in the uproar of events. Although Cemiyet-i Ahrar was a short-lived and inconclusive example of this, it is interesting to see that such a trend opened a way for itself. Pro-constitutional intellectuals, silenced by the ruling class, can also be taken as carriers of this independent tendency.

Likelihood that the opponents of 1860-70s, most of them came from bureaucracy as well, could establish political relations with the working classes like Janissaries, is only a theoretical possibility.⁴⁴⁹ However, as Petrosyan points out, the opponents could not also

⁴⁴⁷ “Secret societies opened a way to politics in a system that excluded many on account of their low rank or their group’s standing in the political system.

Most active in the conspiracies were the low-ranking officials, officers from the military and, to a lesser degree, religious officials.” Riedler, *Opposition*, p. 84

⁴⁴⁸ Petrosyan, *Sosyalist Açıdan Jöntürk Hareketi*, p. 115

A factor that saved ruling classes from being overthrown, even though they were politically isolated during crisis-years of 1876-77 and after the war was lost, was comprador Istanbul, which was separated from the rest of the country by tax privileges and benefits and lived under the skirts of the ruling class politically, culturally and economically. It is not a coincidence that the Young Ottomans made references to the immorality of Istanbul so many times in their publications.

⁴⁴⁹ The possibilities of a prevalent political opposition to the ruling classes from people cannot be seen as merely a theoretical possibility. Indeed, witnesses of the time pointed to the political action of the Turkish-Muslim masses as an alternative to high bureaucracy’s leading country to destruction. St. Clair says that there was a “genius” in the Turks that would save the country from destruction and chaos. However, this genius existed “collectively”. see, St. Clair, *Eastern Question*, p. 263.

manage to meet the social classes that close to them, that suffered from the power of bureaucracy and that they could depend on. These classes were the proprietor social forces that carried the demand for a constitution in a democratic sense; in other words, they were middle classes of cities and the provinces which were mentioned by the Young Ottomans in their publications so many times. These were Muslim tradesmen and artisans in the cities and gentry in the country.⁴⁵⁰ Since the union of these social forces with those who could express their voice in the politics could not be ensured, the struggle against the tyranny of the bureaucracy and the sultan could not have a long-term character and it took 30 years for it to raise his head again.

Finally, it can be said that this study, while approaching the political struggles occurred from 1867 to 1877, presents some distinctions and tries to account for them. The primary problem of this thesis is to analyze evolution of the political struggles around the issue of constitution from 1867 to 1877. By this way, throughout the study, it is tried to show that the determinant factor of the Ottoman politics between 1867 and 1877 is the power struggle among the ruling class, namely the factional struggles. This fact determined not only politics of the period that is focused on in this study, but also the nature of the first Ottoman constitution.

The main factor limiting the scope and results of this study comes from the nature of resources used. Monopolization of the political and economic decision-making processes by the bureaucracy led to monopolization of the world of literature and culture in the same way, which ultimately shaped the resources at our hand. Indeed, the large masses of people, artisans and craftsmen, provincial dignitaries and so on and the places of all these social groups in the political and economic developments and their reactions to these developments are reflected on the sources of the period through lens of dominant powers

For St. Clair's findings in which he points to the high morality of the provincial population against the corruption of cities. see, Ibid, p. 188.

For similar findings, see, Mordtmann, *Istanbul*, p. 103

⁴⁵⁰ Because the alliance of bureaucracy and usurer sarrafs “regularly scratches all sources of income in the provinces.” Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik*, p. 449

This situation, although it had character of a ruling class, pushed gentry (“eşraf”) to oppose the central bureaucracy. For Meclis-i Mebusan’s, most of its members came from the provinces, independent stance against dominant powers in 1877-78 see, Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, p. 148-ff

which monopolized the written resources of the era, official documents, newspapers, etc. The sources focus on Istanbul and “the famous”⁴⁵¹, whether in power or opposition. The archives were held by them and bear the stamp of their convictions. The newspapers concentrate on the issues among “the famous”. Thus, real place and weight of the social forces which were true carriers of the demand for a constitutional regime against the bureaucracy, remain under a smoke screen. In the social events such as uprisings, we can find some things that directly reflect their voice; but in most cases we can see their voices and aspirations as reflected by lens of the ruling class.

In this respect, this study is a re-examining the conditions which led the Ottoman State to a “constitutional regime” through available sources but from a different point of view. The ten-year cast of the political struggles from 1867 to 1877 provided us with an opportunity to interpret the phenomena that emerged during this time on the axis of distinctions put forward throughout this study. The result of this study is that the phenomenon which determined the process which led the Ottoman State to a new order and the character of the first Ottoman “constitutionalism” is the power struggle between the dominant powers. Within these struggles, formations and tendencies that tried to oppose the ruling class in total attract our attention, but they could not gain a permanent place in the political stage.

Through the study, approaching the political struggles from this perspective, we tried to clarify the distinctions that came before us and to question the issues which deem important. Such a method seemed necessary to penetrate the nature of these political struggles and to provide a basis for further studies in this field. More important than that lies in the eliminating the deficiency mentioned above. Inclusion of the social forces, who were in material contradictions with the bureaucracy, into the evolution of the political and economic developments with concrete data, with their aspirations and with their perspectives will render possible to look at the politics of the period and the course of socio-economic conflicts on the part of the masses. The breaking of ideological-conceptual framework drawn by the Istanbulite dominants and the possibilities of reaching a further horizon in this field are knotted at this point. This remains to be done.

⁴⁵¹ Davison points to this subject as follows: “To the intellectual history of the period Berkes, Lewis, Mardin, Tanpınar, Tansel, and other have made important contributions. Their primary concern, naturally, has been with prominent individuals, the literate minority. When one asks about the climate of opinion among the mass of unlettered Ottoman subjects the finding of answers becomes difficult”. Davison, *Reform*, vii

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

19. yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti'nde ortaya çıkan muhalefet hareketlerinin uzun bir geçmişi vardır. Yüksek bürokrasiye karşı çoğu durumda emekçi sınıfların da desteğini arkasına alarak ve onları mobilize ederek harekete geçen Yeniçeri muhalefetinin tarihi bu yüzyıldan da eskilere uzanır. Ancak bu çabalar, ilk defa 1820'lerde Yunan İsyanı sırasında, alt ve orta düzey Yeniçeri subaylarının devlet yönetiminde söz sahibi olması talebine padişahın ve bürokrasinin boyun eğmesiyle somut bir ürün verirler; böylece orta-sınıfların devlet idaresinde nüfuz kazanması bakımından büyük bir adım atılır. Ancak, bürokratik aristokrasiye karşı gerçek anlamda "demokratik" bir içeriğe sahip olan bu adım kalıcı bir sonuç üretmeden, 1826 yılında Yeniçerelere karşı tertiplenen katliamla bürokrasinin karşı saldırısıyla geriletilmiştir. Bundan sonra ülke sathında zanaatkarların, esnafın ve küçük tüccarın sözcüsü durumundaki Yeniçerilerin tasfiyesiyle orta-sınıflar üzerinde baskı ve tedhiş kampanyası başlatılacak ve bürokrasinin diktatörlüğü kurumsallaşacaktır. Nitekim az çok sözü geçerliği olan büyük çaplı ayanlar da 1826 öncesinde geniş ölçüde susturulurlar. Böylece ülke içinde politik güç bürokrasinin elinde tekelleşecektir.

Ancak siyasal çelişkilerin zor yoluyla ve bürokrasi lehine bir çözüme kavuşturulması ekonomik çelişkilerin çözüldüğü anlamına gelmiyordu. Bürokrasinin toplumla zıtlaşması, yürüttüğü ekonomik ve siyasi politikalarla pekişecek ve 1860'lı ve 1870'li yıllardaki siyasal patlamaların kaynağı olacaktır. Fakat yönetici elitlerin siyaset üzerinde kurduğu tekel, tabandan gelen tepkilere uzun bir süre direnecek ve halkın siyasete katılımına karşı gösterilen bu reaksiyon emperyalizmden bulduğu destekle de amacına ulaşacaktır. Dahası, siyasal gündem halk ile egemen elitler arasındaki çelişkilerden çok, bürokrasinin alt tabakalarından gelen aydın unsurlarla devletin doruklarını işgal eden müstebit paşalar arasındaki çatışmaların ivmesine göre şekillenmiştir. Böylelikle 1860'ların ortasından Abdülhamit rejiminin kuruluşuna kadar geçen evrede karşı karşıya kaldığımız mücadeleler, daha çok egemen güçlerin kendi içindeki çatışmaların karakterini taşırlar.

Yönetici bürokrasiye karşı gelişen muhalefet hareketleri, yer yer tabandan gelen özlemleri dile getirmişse de, son tahlilde, hakim güçlerin yahut "ekabir"ın kendi arasındaki hizip

kavgalarının damgasını taşımıştır ve kaderleri de bu hizip çekişmelerine göre biçimlenmiştir. Gerek Yeni Osmanlılar muhalefesinde, gerekse de 1876 Mayıs'ında yapılan hükümet darbesinde bu olgu karşımıza çıkar. Bu tezde 1867'den 1877'ye kadar geçen süreçte meydana gelen siyasal çatışmalar, eldeki mevcut kaynaklar üzerinden ancak sergilenen geleneksel yaklaşımların dışında bir bakış açısıyla incelenmektedir. Bir yandan dönemin siyasetini şekillendiren hizip kavgaları vurgulanırken diğer yandan bu siyasal süreci koşullayan sosyo-ekonomik olgulara dikkat çekilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Giriş bölümünde en geniş çizgileri içinde tez konusunun iç bağlantıları ve problemleri ele alış tarzı işlenmektedir. Bazı kanıların aksine, 1876'da 1. Meşrutiyet'in ilanına giden süreçle, Yeni Osmanlılar'ın bundan on yıl önce sergilediği muhalefet arasında kolayca bir bağlantı ve devamlılık ilişkisi kurulmayacağına işaret edilmektedir. Her iki dönemde de hizip kavgalarının siyasal süreci tayin etmesinin dışında; 1867'deki muhalefetin ortaya çıkış şartları ve gerekçeleriyle, 1876'da ülkeyi "anayasal" bir rejime sürükleyen siyasal mücadelelerin arkaplanı değişken nitelikler arzeder. Keza 1867'de Yeni Osmanlılar saflarında bir araya gelen kimi aydınların 1876'daki siyasi rolleri de eskisinden çok değişik şartlar altında biçim almıştır.

Öte yandan anayasaların batıda ortaya çıkış sürecine genel olarak gönderme yapılmakta ve Osmanlı'da ortaya çıkan anayasa talebi bu açıdan konu edilmektedir. Batıdaki gelişmelere benzer biçimde, anayasacı Osmanlı aydınları da siyasal seçkinlerin keyfi idaresine karşı mali kaynakların toplanması ve harcanması sürecinde söz sahibi olacak bir yasama organının yürütme erkini -yani yüksek bürokrasiyi- dengelemek üzere kurulması, keyfi borçlanmalara son verilmesi, vb. taleplerle ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak Osmanlı'daki anayasal rejim talebinin sosyal temelinde batıda olduğu gibi durumu iyileşen, maddi güçleri artan bir burjuvazi değil, bürokrasinin sosyo-ekonomik siyaseti yüzünden durumu bozulan çeşitli kentsel ve kırsal kategorileri içine alan bir orta-sınıf bulunur. Üstelik bu sınıfların özlem ve talepleri, doğrudan doğruya kendileri tarafından siyaset sahnesine taşınmamıştır. Türk-Müslüman orta-sınıfların geçmiş asırlardan beri sözcülüğünü yapan örgütlü unsurun, eski rejimin meşru silahlı gücü Yeniçerilerin amansız bir tedhiş politikasıyla tasfiye edilerek susturulduğu ve bürokrasinin kendisi dışındaki bütün unsurları meşru siyaset alanının dışına ittiği 1826 sonrası şartlarda, bu orta sınıfların özlem ve talepleri daha çok bürokrasi içi kavga ve çelişkilerin gürültüsü içinde işitilir. Yeni Osmanlılar, kendileri egemen elitler arasındaki çatışmanın bir ürünü olarak sahneye çıktıkları gibi, bu çatışmalar içinde yer yer bu özlem ve taleplerin sözcülüğüne soyunurlar. Bürokrasinin tahakkümünün Tanzimat'la birlikte kurumlaşmaya yöneldiği 1839

sonrasında egemen elit içindeki çekişme ve hizip kavgaları, bir bütün olarak toplumla yönetici sınıf arasındaki çelişkilerin ekonomik bakımdan keskinleştiği koşullarda temayüz eder.

Birinci bölümde bu ve benzeri önemli ayrımlara değinilerek çalışmanın ileriki bölümleri için bir zemin oluşturulmaktadır. Giriş bölümü çalışmanın iç bağlantılarına işaret ederek, genel bütünlüğü sağlamak üzere bir işlev yüklenmektedir.

İkinci bölüm, “Tanzimat paşalarının rejimi”ni ele almaktadır. Burada, gerçekte, bürokrasinin hiç bitmeyen yönetme krizine ve toplumla çelişmesinin nedenlerine eğilinmektedir.

Bürokrasinin keyfi ve baskıcı idaresi, emperyalizme bütün kapıları açan serbest bir dış ticaret rejimi ve aynı zamanda batılı güçlerin siyasi müdahalelerinin giderek ivme kazandığı bir atmosferle birleşince, toplumla egemen güçlerin zıtlaşması yeğlenmiştir. 1838 Baltalimanı Anlaşması’yla kurumsallaşan serbest dış ticaret rejimi, ileri batı sanayisi ürünlerinin ülkeye girişi önündeki son engelleri kaldırarak içerde az çok ayakta kalabilmiş esnaf-zanaatkar ve küçük ticaret erbabının geçinme koşullarını kökünden sarsar. Genişleyen Avrupa sanayisinin pazar arayışına bu sayede bir yardımcı olarak koşulan bürokrasi, emperyalizmin gözde müttefiği olarak onun desteğini arkasına alır. Ancak bu “destek”, diğer toplumsal güçlerin politikaya katılımının önüne setler çekmek ve karar alma süreçlerini tekelleştirmek dışında nesnel bakımdan bürokrasinin önüne çözümü imkansız sorunları da yığacaktır.

Gayrimüslim burjuvazi dışında Osmanlı toplumundaki sosyal güçleri karşısına alan bürokratik elit böylece siyaseten toplumun ezici çoğunluğunu kendisine düşman ederken, ipini çok daha fazla emperyalizmin eline kaptırır. Bu batılı güçlerin müdahalecilikte pervasızlaşmasının bir başka nedeni olarak da görünmektedir. Nitekim, büyük oranda batılı güçlerin Avrupa dengesi hesaplarının, İngiltere’nin Orta-asya ve İran ticaretine ait çıkarlarının, vb. bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan Kırım Harbi’nde, sahadan zaferle ayrılrsa da, Rusya’ya vermediği için savaşa girmesine neden olan tavizler bu sefer Osmanlı’dan, masa başında “müttefikleri” tarafından istenecektir. Böylece emperyalist diplomasiinin “mutfağında pişirilen” reform/“ıslahat” dayatması bürokrasinin önüne konur. Bu emperyalist diplomasiinin amacı, batı kapitalizminin aracısı gayrimüslim burjuvaziyi, gerçek yönetici güç olarak sosyo-ekonomik piramidin zirvesine oturtmak ve onu siyaseten de nüfuz sahibi kılmaktır. Bürokrasi bu zeminde, ülke ekonomisinin en zengin sektörlerini elinde tutan gayrimüslim ticaret burjuvazisi ve sarraflardan oluşan oligarşinin siyasi plandaki vurucu gücü olarak konumlanır. Böylece bürokrasi emperyalizmin rehberliğinde

“reformlara” girişir; emperyalizmin işbirlikçisi sınıfların konumunu pekiştirmeye yönelik bu “reformlar” ile örneğin, devletin başkentinde açılan üst düzey yargı organı Şuray-ı Devlet’in yargılama yetkisine dayanarak verdiği kararlar sadrazam ve padişahın onayından geçmek zorundayken; Tanzimat paşalarının taşra “reformları”ndan olan vilayet nizamnamesi gereğince vilayetlerde kurulan idare meclisleri, başta gayrimüslim taşra burjuvazisi olmak üzere taşra egemen sınıflarına karşılarına çıkan davalara doğrudan bakma ve üst makamdan onay beklemeksizin karar verme hakkını tanıyordu. Bu siyaset, aynı zamanda geçmişten beri kurumsallaşan kapitülasyonlar paravanası altında gayrimüslim aracılardan zenginliklerine “dokunulmasının” önüne de engeller çıkarır. Böylece 19. yüzyıl zarfında en çok zenginleşen ve gelişme gösteren sektör ticaret olmasına karşın, bürokrasi hem kendisini hem gayrimüslim burjuvaziyi “himaye eden” emperyalizmin karşısında, bu burjuvaziyi vergilendirmekten aciz kalır. Bürokrasi, bunun yerine, geniş halk kitlelerinin tüketimi üzerinde, dolaylı vergilendirmeye gidecektir.

Tuz, tütün vb. kitle tüketim mallarına ek vergiler getirilmesiyle bir yandan sabit gelirliler halkın yaşama koşullarında ilave güçlükler oluşurken, diğer yandan bir türlü dengesi sağlanamayan bütçe açıklarının yol açtığı borçlanma, kambiyo kuru ve paranın alım gücü üzerinden etkiler yaratarak da toplumun geçinme şartları üzerinde etkilerini duyurur. Sözde “merkezileştirici” bir güç olarak anılan Osmanlı bürokrasisi, tarımın vergilendirilmesinde merkezin yararına bir “çözüm”e gidemez ve sayelerinde vergiyi elde ettiği mültezimlerle tarımsal artığın paylaşılmasına razı olmak zorunda kalır. Böylece iç ve dış borçlanma devasa mali sorunlar karşısındaki bürokrasinin geçici çaresi olarak ortaya çıkar. Ancak bu borçlanma, süreğen mali bunalım şartlarında meydana geldiği için geri ödeme süreçleri sürekli aksamalarla maluldür ve aynı nedenden ötürü, örneğin iç borçlar dış borç bulunamadığı için çevrilemediğinde Osmanlı lirasının kambiyo kuru astronomik kayıplar yaşar. Örneğin 1861 krizinde yaşanan buydu. Böylece yukarıda anılan ek vergilere ayriyeten alt düzey memur maaşlarının gecikmeli olarak ödenmesi bürokrasinin bir diğer “çare”si olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu tedbirler toplumla yönetici sınıf arasındaki çelişmeleri daha da pekiştirecektir.

Kendisi üretim araçlarına sahip, yatırım yapan bir sınıf değilken, dış rekabete açtığı Osmanlı iç pazarında yaşanan yıkım nedeniyle çeşitli sektörlerin çökmesiyle, gerçekte iç pazardaki vergilendirilebilir tabanı daraltan bürokrasi, böylelikle emperyalizmin yönlendirmesi altında gayrimüslim burjuvazinin ülke üzerindeki sömürsünü garanti altına alan bir politik araç olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Ancak böyle yaparken bürokrasi, iktidarının istikrarsız temellerini durmadan tahrip etmekten başka bir yere de varmamıştır.

Böylece ikinci bölüm, en genel anlamda, bürokrasinin taşradaki küçük eşraf dahil Türk-Müslüman orta sınıflar ve toplumun geniş kesimleriyle zıtlaşmasına ve bu zıtlaşma içinde şekillenen yönetme krizine odaklanmaktadır. Bu şekilde, tezin konusu olan dönemde meydana gelen siyasal mücadelelerin sosyo-ekonomik temellerine işaret edilmektedir.

Üçüncü bölüm, döneme damgasını vuran hizip kavgalarının özgün bir örneği olarak “Yeni Osmanlılar muhalefeti”ne odaklanıyor.

1867 yılı başından itibaren III. Napolyon Fransa’sı Osmanlı üzerindeki diplomatik baskılarını artırır; eş zamanlı olarak o zaman Paris’te bulunan ve Fransız emperyalizminin nüfuzlu kişileriyle ilişkileri olduğu anlaşılan sürgün prens Mustafa Fazıl’ın politika sahnesine çıktığını görürüz. Fazıl, olayların hay huyu içinde birden bire kendisini Jeune Turquie partisinin temsilcisi olarak sahne önüne atar. Mısır veraset sisteminin değiştirilerek abisi İsmail’in yerine tahta geçme hakkının elinden alınması yüzünden -ki bunun nedeni de son tahlilde Babıali’nin mali kriziydi, çünkü Mısır veraset sisteminin değiştirilmesi Mısır vergisinin artırılması karşılığında olmuştu- Babıali paşalarıyla kavgalı olan bu eski nazır, İstanbul’daki Fransız etki ajanı J. Pietri’nin de desteğiyle İstanbul “yüksek” kamuoyu nezdinde kendini, yazdığı bir mektupla duyurur. Bu mektubu Avrupa devlet adamlarına da gönderen Fazıl, mektubunda padişaha iktidardaki Ali ve Fuad hizbinin tasfiye edilmesini önerir. Yayvan, temellendirilmemiş kavramlarla sözde bir serbestiyetten yana olduğunu açıklayan Fazıl’ın somut olan tek amacı, rakiplerinin uzaklaştırılarak kendisi ve kendisine yakın bir grubun yüksek makamlara getirilmesidir.

O sırada Fransızların baskısıyla Belgrad kalesinin Sırlara terk edilecek olması yüzünden Osmanlı kamuoyu da huzursuzdur ve başkentteki genç aydınlar ve gazeteciler duruma tepkilidir. Bazılarının Fazıl’la ilişkisi olduğu anlaşılan bu genç aydınlar, bürokrasinin tavizkar politikalarına karşı hiddetlidirler ve aynı zamanda ortaya çıkan Girit meselesi, başkent kamuoyundaki tepkilerin patlama noktasına gelmesi için elverişli bir zemin yaratmaktadır. Ali Paşa, Girit meselesinin “bir ihtilale” yol açacak kadar önemli olduğundan söz eder. İşte bu ortam, Fazıl’ın hizip hesaplarını işlerliğe sokması için elverişli bir zemin sunar ve ilişkide olduğu başkentteki gazeteci gençler onun sesini duyurmak üzere harekete geçerler. Fakat, Babıali erken davranacak ve daha olgunlaşmadan başkentteki muhalefetin unsurlarını baskı tedbirleriyle sürmeye veya tutuklamaya kalkışacaktır. Bunun üzerine genç aydınlar Paris’e Fazıl’ın yanına kaçarlar. Böylece Yeni Osmanlıların yurtdışında, “sürgün”deki “muhalefeti” başlar.

Yeni Osmanlılar’ın Paris’e varışının hemen ertesinde padişah da Paris’teki sergiyi görmek üzere kendi Avrupa seyahatine çıkar. Bu gezi Fazıl’a padişaha hoş görünmek için bir fırsat

yaratır. Böylece Fazıl bir yandan Yeni Osmanlıları fonlarken, diğer yandan bu gezi sırasında padişahın peşinden ayrılmayarak bir biçimde onun “teveccühünü” kazanmaya çalışır. Rusçuk’a kadar padişahla birlikte Osmanlı sınırına gelen Fazıl, oradan dönüp Fransa ve İsviçre’de Yeni Osmanlılarla nasıl “muhalafet” edecekleri üzerine toplantılar yapar. Ancak Fazıl’ın padişahın “teveccühü”ne mazhar olmasından daha ziyade önemli olan, Babıali’nin İsmail’le arasının bozulması ve bu durumun Fazıl’ın İsmail’e karşı kullanılmasını gündeme getirmesidir. Böylece, Fazıl İstanbul’a döndüğünde, nazırlarla uyuşmak için şartları kollamaya başlar. Bu dengeler içinde Yeni Osmanlı “muhalafeti”nin kaderi de belirlenir.

Sözgelimi, Fazıl Hürriyet gazetesinin çıkışına kendi kişisel hesapları için olumlu saydığı Ziya’nın “İki Veraset” mektubunun yayınlanmasının akabinde olur vermesine karşın, daha gazetenin ilk sayısı çıkar çıkmaz Babıali’yle uzlaşma sürecine hanel gelmesin diye “ya susarlar, ya ödeneklerini kısarım” diyerek Yeni Osmanlıları tehdit eder. Sultan Abdülaziz’in Avrupa seyahati sonrasında, Ali Paşa’nın gerçekte Fransa’nın büyükelçisi Bouree’nin “tavsiyesiyle” ihdas ettiği, içi boş Şuray-ı Devlet ve Divan-ı Ahkam-ı Adliye kurumlarını, Kemal ilk başta kendilerinin “zaferi” sayarak sevinir. Fakat bu kurumların bürokrasinin yetkilerini devretmek anlamında hiçbir işlevi olmadığı anlaşılınca yine Yeni Osmanlılar bu kurumların sahteliğini gazetelerinden duyururlar. Namık Kemal’in mektuplarında, Fazıl’ın İstanbul’a dönüşü üzerine sadrazam olması ihtimalinden söz edildiğini de görürüz, aynı zamanda İstanbul’daki Rezaizade Mahmud Ekrem’e siyasal elit içindeki hiç kimseye güvenmemesi gerektiğini, herkesin harcayacak adam aradığı ikazında bulunduğunu da şahit oluruz. Hizip kavgalarında araçsallaştırılan aydınlar, böylece paşalar arasındaki entrikacı siyasetin kendilerinde yarattığı güvensizliği bu ikircikli tavırlarıyla dışa vururlar.

Ne zaman ki Fazıl’la Babıali’nin uyuşması somutluk kazanmaya başlar ve onun nazır olma ihtimali belirir, Yeni Osmanlılar’ın “esbabı mucibesi” de ortadan kalkar ve hızla dağılma sürecine girerler. Kemal, Fazıl’ın baskısıyla Hürriyet’in 64’ncü sayısında imzasını gazeteden çeker. Kemal, “hamisi” Fazıl’la birlikte davranıp Babıali’ye karşı sesini kısar. Böylece, Ziya, bu sefer gazeteyi çıkarmak için hidiv İsmail’e yönelir. Böylece Yeni Osmanlıların yurtdışı faaliyetlerinin siyasi tarihi paşalar arasındaki kavgaların gidişatına göre şekillenip bu gidişata göre sona ermiştir.

Yine de Yeni Osmanlılar, yazı ve söylemleriyle orta sınıfların kimi sorun ve taleplerini, yer yer dile getirmekten geri kalmamıştır. Bu işi ne ölçüde tutarlı yaptıkları ve bu söylemler hizip kavgaları içinde meze edildiğinden bu söylemlerin değeri tartışma konusu

edilebilir. Ancak, bir yandan hizip kavgaları içine dahil olunurken diğer yandan ortasınıfların sorun ve taleplerinin dile getirilmesi ve Osmanlı kamuoyuna “usul-i meşveret”, “umumi nezaret” vb. kavramların kazandırılması, konumuz bakımından bu aydınların bir iç çelişmesine işaret eder: onlar bir yandan yönetici sınıfa mensup bürokratlardır ve bu anlamda bu bürokrasi içerisindeki hizip kavgalarında yerlerini alırlar, ama diğer yandan egemen hizip tarafından bürokrasiden dışlanmış, yurtdışında ve “hami”lerinin kaprisli istekleri karşısında geleceklerinden pek emin olamadıkları koşullar içerisinde dirler ve bu durum onları söylemlerinde sertliğe götürür. Dolayısıyla içinde buldukları bu koşulların bir sonucu olarak, onların yazılarında Tanzimat paşalarının geleneksel siyasetine özürçülük yapıldığını da görürüz, aynı zamanda sert eleştirilerle bu paşaların mahkum edildiğini de.

Bununla birlikte, paşaların hizip çekişmelerinin eksenini dışına çıkan ve yönetici sınıfı, yüksek bürokrasisi ve onunla bütünleşen padişahıyla bir bütün olarak hedef alan radikal bir siyasi eğilim, genç Osmanlı aydınları arasında mevcuttu ve bu eğilimin cisimleşmiş hali Cemiyet-i Ahrar olarak karşımıza çıkacaktır. Kısa ömürlü ve kalıcı olmayan bir girişim olsa da Sağır Ahmet Paşazade Mehmet Bey’in önderliğindeki bu örgüt, “devleti temellerinden yıkarak tanzim etmek” gereğini açıkça ifade etmiş; Müslüman toplumun kurumlarının Cumhuriyet rejimine uygun olduğunu söylemiş ve Yeni Osmanlıların o güne kadar içinde debelendiği hizipçi politikaları mahkum etmiştir. Denebilir ki, 1867-77 arasındaki siyasal atmosferde, küçük burjuva devrimcisi sıfatına uygun, en radikal unsuru bu cemiyet teşkil eder. Mehmet Bey, yazılarında, Yeni Osmanlılar’ın Fazıl’ın eteğinde sürdürdüğü hizipçi politikaları teşhir ederek bu gruptan ayrıldığını belirtir; şu paşayı indirip yerine başka paşayı getirmek ve bu arada da padişaha toz kondurmamak, onu “masum” sayıp suçu sırf paşalara atmak biçimindeki Yeni Osmanlı söylemlerini de kesinkes mahkum eder.

Bu bölümde, önemli ancak literatürde hakettiği ilgiyi görmeyen Cemiyet-i Ahrar girişimi ve Mehmet Bey’in yazıları incelendikten sonra, bu çalışma bir düşünce tarihi araştırması olmamasına karşın, konumuzla ilgisi bakımından Yeni Osmanlıların bir yandan halk tabakalarının sorunlarının sözcülüğüne soyunurken diğer yandan hakim güçlerin siyasetine meşruluk kazandıran söylemlerindeki çelişkilere değinilmekte ve bölüm sonlandırılmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölüm, meşrutî düzene geçişin şartlarını ya da “Kanun-i Esasi’nin ilanına ön gelen koşulları” irdeliyor. Ali Paşa’nın 1871’de ölümüyle birlikte bürokrasi içindeki hizip kavgalarında yeni bir perde açılır. Sultan Abdülaziz ve gözde adamı Mahmud Nedim,

Ali'nin ölümünden sonra Tanzimat'ın geleneksel çizgisini sürdüren ekibe karşı devletin üst kademelerinde bir temizliğe girişir. Ancak bu sonuna kadar giden ve kesin bir sonuç veren bir girişim olmaz. Ali ve Fuad'ın iş ortağı veya müntesipleri olan Mithat, Hüseyin Avni, Mütercim Rüşdi Paşalar ve onların etrafında toplananların oluşturduğu fraksiyon, devlet yönetiminde nüfuz sahibi olan Abdülaziz-Mahmud Nedim kliğine karşı bir güç mücadelesine girişirler. 1871'den 1876'da Mahmud Nedim ve Abdülaziz'in nihai tasfiyesine kadar sürüp gelen bir güç mücadelesi ortaya çıkar.

Bu yıllar aynı zamanda iç ve dış ekonomik ve siyasi krizlerin içiçe geçtiği, bürokrasinin yönetme krizinin şiddetinin doruğa çıktığı yıllardır. Böyle bir zeminde cereyan eden mücadelede, Babialı bürokratları bir yandan ülke üzerinde kurdukları baskıcı rejimi tahkim etme kaygısıyla hareket ederken, diğer yandan bürokrasi içi mücadelede kendi hiziplerinin liderliğini kabul ettirme uğraşısına girerler. Batıcı bürokratların geleneksel hizbi çeşitli siyasal ve ekonomik krizlerin girdabına sürüklenen ülkenin içinde bulunduğu sorunların faturasını Abdülaziz-Nedim ikilisine keser. Bir yandan Fransa-Prusya savaşı ile Alman birliğinin doğuşu ve bunun etkisiyle Avrupa'da değişen güç dengeleri Rusya için elverişli şartlar yaratırken değişen dış siyasal konjonktür, öte yandan modern dünyanın iktisadi krizleriyle -1873'te Viyana borsasında patlak veren finansal kriz- eski dünyanın iktisadi krizlerinin -1873-74'te Anadolu'yu kasıp kavuran kıtlık ve kuraklık- içiçe geçmesi Osmanlı yönetici sınıfını içerde ve dışarda çözümü geleneksel olarak uyguladıkları politikalarla imkansız olan problemlerle karşı karşıya bırakır. Dışardan borçlanma olanaklarının tükenmesiyle, içerde bürokrasinin ülkenin kaynaklarını artırma ve vergilendirme konusunda hiçbir zaman içinden çıkamadığı çıkmaz birleşerek ülkeyi 1875'te iflasa götürür.

Mithat, Avni ve Mütercim Rüşdi paşaların başını çektiği, batıyla ilişkileri iyi geleneksel hizip siyasal krize çareyi sultan Abdülaziz ve Nedim paşanın tasfiye edilerek siyasal gücün kendi tekelleri altında toplanmasında, ekonomi krize çareyi ise "Babialı'nın rey ve tasdiki alınmadıkça hiçbir mahalle bir akçe sarfedilmemesi"nde görürler. Böylece Kırım Savaşı sonrasında beri kullanageldiği bütün konjonktürel kolaylıkları tüketen egemen bürokrasi, dış ve iç problemler bir kez başgösterdiğinde kendi gerçekliğiyle baş başa kalır; hiçbir zaman üstesinden gelemediği yönetme krizi 1870'li yılların ikinci yarısından itibaren felce dönüşür. Bürokrasi işte bu krizi aşmak üzere, batının da desteğini alarak ülke üzerinden kurduğu tahakkümü sağlamlaştırma çarelerini arayacaktır.

Sultan Abdülaziz ve Nedim paşanın 1876 Mayıs darbesiyle tasfiye edilmesi, halkta egemen sınıflara karşı biriken tepkinin manipüle edilmesiyle de görece kolayca

gerçekleşir. Bu kolaylıkta Abdülaziz-Nedim ikilisinin Osmanlı egemen sınıfları arasında gözden düşmesinin payı da kuşkusuzdur. Ancak, bu hesaplaşmanın bitmesinin ardından, bu sefer Mithat ile eski ekip arkadaşları arasında bir güç kavgası başladığı gibi, bastırılamaz raddeye gelen halk tepkileri ve kimisi devlet cihazı içinde önemli mevkilerde bulunan bağımsız anayasacı aydınların siyaset sahnesinde seslerini işittirmeye çalıştığını görürüz. Böylece bürokrasi, bir yandan kendi içinde liderlik kavgasını sürdürürken öte yandan, toplumdaki farklı unsurlardan gelecek dinamiklerin kendi siyaset tekeline halel getirmemesi konusunda teyakkuzda kalacaktır.

Olayların gösterdiği üzere Mithat Paşa, Avni ve Rüşdi ikilisiyle giriştiği güç mücadelesinde, bürokrasinin iktidarını “anayasal” bir rejim görüntüsü altında sürdürme ve tahkim etme “çözüm”ünü kollamaktadır. Bu amaç uğrunda desteği İngiliz elçisi Elliot’da bulur. Karşısındaki ekip ise, bürokrasinin liderliğini ona bırakmak istemeyecek ve ipleri kendi hizipleri elinde toplamaya gayret edecektir. Ancak bu iç mücadele kesin bir sonuç vermeden bir süre devam eder durur.

İngiliz yanlısı V. Murad’ın akli dengesinin düzelmeyeceğinin anlaşılacak tahtta kalamayacağı belli olması, Mithat ile karşıtları arasındaki mücadelenin sonuçsuzca uzayıp durması ve öte yandan çözülmeden sürüp giden dış ve iç sorunların bürokrasinin genelinde kendi zümrevi çıkarları adına endişeler uyandırması egemen siyasetin doruklarında yeni fraksiyonların türemesine elverişli bir atmosfer yaratmıştır. V. Murad’ın halefi Abdülhamid’in tahta çıkacağı anlaşılınca, işte bu ortamda, yüksek bürokrasi içindeki çeşitli kadroların etrafında toplaşmasıyla Abdülhamid çevresinde yeni bir hizip şekillenir. Bu ekip tıpkı diğerleri gibi batılı devletler elçilerinin desteğini kazanmak için faaliyete girişmekten geri kalmaz ve Abdülhamid tahta çıkar çıkmaz, padişahlığı için uğraşan ekibi çeşitli önemli pozisyonlara getirir.

Abdülhamid ve ekibi de, tıpkı H. Avni-Mütercim Rüşdi ekibi gibi Mithat’ın siyasal bir koz olarak gündeme getirip durduğu meşrutiyet sorununu bir süre için ertelerler. Ancak Sırp savaşının kazanılmasının ve Rusya’nın seferberliğe girişmesinin hemen öncesinde bir anayasa komisyonu kurulması için padişah iradesi çıkarılır. Böylece bir kısmı Mithat yanlılarından, bir kısmı saray yanlılarından müteşekkil bir komisyon 1876 Ekim itibariyle faaliyete geçer. Komisyon çeşitli tasarıları görüşür ve nihayetinde Aralık ayı başında nihai bir taslak hazırlanır ve son bir kez nazırlar arasında toplanılıp değişiklik yapıldıktan sonra, 23 Aralık’ta Kanun-i Esasi olarak ilan edilir.

Dördüncü bölümde Mithat’ın anayasa taslağı ile komisyondan geçerek Kanun-i Esasi’ye esas teşkil edecek 2 taslak incelenmiştir. Özünde bütün bu tasarılar ne yürütme üzerinde

gerçek bir denetim kuran bir parlamento getirmekte, ne yasama yetkisini tümüyle kurulacak bu parlamentoya devretmekte ve ne de bütçe yapma hakkını fiilen halkın temsilcilerine devretmektedir. Böylece gerçek anlamda güçler ayrılığı ilkesi konmadığı gibi, bürokrasinin ülkenin ekonomik kaynakları üzerindeki kontrolünün temel bir aracı olan bütçe üzerinde de yasama organına anayasanın ruhuna uyan yetkiler verilmektedir. Mithat Paşa, kendi tasarısında, ancak Şuray-ı Devlet'in önlerine koyacağı yasa tasarılarını -bu arada bütçeyi de- görüşecek, dış borçlanma gibi konularda "taraf-ı hükümetten vaki olacak talep üzerine" söz söyleyebilecek ve 3'te 1'inin Babıali'nin "atayacağı" bir meclis önerisi getirir. Abdülhamid'in ilan edeceği Kanun-i Esasi de, özünde Mithat'inkinden farksızdır: yasama organını ancak bir süs olarak tutar, ona gerçek anlamda yürütme üzerinde bir denetim yetkisi vermediği gibi, gerçek anlamda bütçeyi yapma hakkını da sunmaz. Bütün bu olgular ve bu arada Namık Kemal'in bu komisyon sürecinde takındığı tavır ve anayasa maddelerine itirazları bu bölümde irdelenmektedir. Bu şekilde, bürokrasinin mutlakiyetçi rejiminin tasdikinden ve kötü bir makyajla devam ettirilmesinden başka bir şey olmayan birinci meşrutiyetin arka planına işaret edilmektedir.

Böylece bir yandan bürokrasi içi kayıkcı kavgasının niteliği ortaya çıkmakta ve bu kavganın tarafları arasında bürokrasinin -ve onunla bütünleşmiş padişahın- iktidarını tahkim etme konusunda bir ayrılığın söz konusu olmadığı görülmektedir. Sorun, bu tahkim sürecine kimin liderlik edeceği ve bu liderliği bürokrasinin geri kalan unsurlarına onaylattırması sorunudur.

Mithat Paşa işte bu ortamda, büyük devletlerden gelen diplomatik baskıların zirveye çıktığı ve Tersane Konferansı'nda bir çeşit "ön Sevr" in Osmanlı'ya dayatıldığı şartlarda, İngiltere'nin desteğini elde etme umuduyla sadrazamlık makamına getirilir ve o da kendi kozlarını sahneye sürer. Bu konferans kağıt üzerinde hiçbir sonuç almadan dağılmışsa da, gerçekte Osmanlı siyasetinde hizip kavgalarının bir dönemini kapadığı için konu edilmektedir. Bu konferansla birlikte Mithat'ın arkasındaki İngiliz desteğinin çekildiğini gören saray ve etrafındaki ekip, "Yıldız kamarillası", onun tasfiye edilmesi için elverişli şartların oluştuğunu görerek bu konuda duraksama göstermez ve konferansın dağılıştan 2 hafta geçmeden Mithat sürgüne gönderilir. İşte bu nokta bu çalışmanın sınırı olarak alınmıştır. Bu tasfiyeden sonra Abdülhamid bir bütün olarak bürokrasinin çıkarlarını savunmayı kendi liderliği altında üstlenerek 30 yıl sürecek, bir bütün olarak Tanzimatçı bürokrasinin ülke üzerindeki geleneksel tahakkümünün sürdürüldüğü görünüşte "kişisel rejim" i başlatacaktır. Böylece Abdülhamid ve etrafındaki fraksiyon, bürokrasinin

diktatörlüğünü “kurtarma” ve tahkim etme sürecinde liderliği ellerine alır; kuşkusuz bu noktada, ülke üzerindeki egemenliği parlamenter bir çözümle bağdaşmayan ve ancak en tepedekileri nüfuz altına alarak yönlendirdiği Tanzimat’tan beri alışagelen “çözüm”ü yeğleyen emperyalizmin desteğini de yanlarına alırlar.

Böylece bürokrasi içerisindeki hizip kavgaları bir sonuca ulaşırken, bu arada bir bütün olarak bürokrasinin amaçları için “arıza” yaratan aydın kadrolar ve Hediye-i Askeri cemiyeti gibi taban örgütlenmeleri de, aralarındaki rekabete rağmen bürokrasinin farklı hizipleri tarafından ortak hareket edilerek tasfiye edilir. Mithat Paşa’nın kendi müstebit eğilimlerine alet edemediği Ziya Paşa ve Süleyman Paşa’yı, Abdülhamid’le anlaşma içinde İstanbul’dan uzaklaştırılması ve yine çeşitli anayasacı unsurların içinde bulunduğu taban örgütlenmeleri olan ve padişah ve paşalar tarafından “bir nevi komün” olarak adlandırılan Hediye-i Askeriye cemiyeti ve ona bağlı Asakir-i Milliye taburlarının sarayın emriyle dağıtılması süreçleri bu bağlamda yine bu bölümde ele alınmaktadır.

Sonuç bölümü bütün çalışma boyunca ortaya konulan analizden ortaya çıkan olguların özetlendiği yer olmaktadır. Bu çalışma 1867’den 1877’ye kadar ele alınan dönemde Osmanlı siyasal yaşamında cereyan eden mücadelelerin muhtevasını bürokratik oligarşi ile halk arasındaki çelişmeler ekseninde, sosyal sınıflar temelinden bakarak açıklamaya girişmektedir. Sonuçta denebilir ki, gerek 1867’deki Yeni Osmanlı muhalefetine ortaya çıkışında, gerek 1876 yılının kaotik atmosferinde gündeme gelen iktidar değişimlerinde ve nihayet Kanun-i Esasi’nin ilanında damgasını vuran olgu bürokrasi içi hizip kavgaları olmuştur. Ele alınan 10 yıllık siyasal süreçte başat olan bu olgu, Kanun-i Esasi’nin ve 1. Meşrutiyet döneminin niteliğini de belirlemiştir.

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