The Tangled Ends of an Empire: Ottoman Encounters with the West and Problems of Westernization—an Overview

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*P*ort cities were the main beneficiaries of the rapid growth of maritime trade between Ottoman lands and the industrializing countries of Europe during the nineteenth century. By the turn of the twentieth century, the principal ports of foreign trade had become bustling economic, cultural, and political centers with larger and more cosmopolitan populations than ever. Istanbul led the way, as it had done for so long in the past, as a city conveniently located at the juncture of major sea and land routes in the eastern Mediterranean region and as the seat of an imperial government that ruled over far-flung territories.

Istanbul's population increased from about 375,000 in the 1830s and 1840s to 1.125 million in 1912. Its composition, including a significant number of foreigners, reflected the rich ethnic and religious tapestry of the empire's population.[1] More monumental buildings were built in Istanbul for private, public, business, and religious uses in the nineteenth century than in any other comparable stretch of time in the city's past.[2] Its urban infrastructure saw significant improvements. New means of transportation and communications connected Istanbul to the provinces and also to other countries more effectively. These developments made Istanbul a better place to live as well as an economically and culturally livelier city.[3]

But the empire of which it was the capital disintegrated in the same period. At the end of World War I, in November 1918, the victorious European powers occupied Istanbul and contemplated transforming it into an international city. Instead, in October 1923, the Turkish nationalist forces liberated the city, if only to subordinate it to Ankara, the capital of a new state established in the heart of provincial Anatolia. Between the hammer of international designs and the anvil of a successful nationalist movement, Istanbul's sixteen-hundred-year-old history as an imperial city came to an end.

1. Donald Quataert, "The Age of Reforms, 1812–1914," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 781. Compare with Stanford Shaw, "The Population of Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 265–77. Also see Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 86–105.

2. See Pars Tuğlacı, *The Role of the Balian Family in Ottoman Architecture* (Istanbul: Yeni Çığır, 1990).

3. See Ilhan Tekeli, "Kentsel Dönüşüm" ("Urban Transformation"), in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (*Encyclopedia of Turkey from the Reform Era to the Republic*) (Istanbul: İletişim, 1985), 4:878–90; and Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), among numerous other sources.

The nationalist movement was a reaction not only to Western European designs on Anatolia but also, quite explicitly, to the hegemony of Istanbul and other port cities. I argue that in the late 1830s, the Ottoman leadership had opened the ports to Western European technologies, knowledge, and ideas, convinced of their promise for a brighter and mutually beneficial future. Further development of Western European countries deepened and expanded the appreciation for their achievements, but there also began to emerge a feeling that the progress of certain countries happened at the expense of others. The unabashedly self-serving policies of the so-called Great Powers, especially in the last quarter of the century, fanned the feeling. The increasingly arrogant, self-righteous, and racist attitudes toward other cultures and peoples that became fashionable even in scholarly circles in Western Europe during the same period enhanced the frustration.

Istanbul and other Ottoman port cities were sites where the growing differences between natives and foreigners were most visible. Unlike the outright colonial cities of North Africa and India, the European and the native could not be tot ally segregated in Ottoman ports, and the local populations could not be totally marginalized. Instead, a semi-colonial situation emerged, which arguably allowed a broader space for mixing and interaction.[4] All the same, the original hopes for a shared sense of humanity, which the opening and expansion of port cities had kindled, gradually dimmed and seemingly evaporated in the flames of World War I. The Anatolian hinterland took over its ports. The following pages describe the broader context of this development, with an emphasis on the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909)

and his personal impressions of the developments taking place around him until his death in 1918.

Growing Up in a New Era (1842–1872)

Abdülhamid w a s t h e second son of Sultan Abdülmecid,[5] whose reign (1839–61) witnessed the initiation of the series of reforms known as the Tanzimat, intended to reorganize the Ottoman government, law, and society along lines inspired by Western European experiences. Closer economic and diplomatic ties with major European powers accompanied the reforms. The lifestyles of the elite also began to change under the influence of French and British ideas, tastes, fashions, and commodities. For about two decades, a generally optimistic outlook on life and the future of the empire prevailed in Istanbul and other major urban centers and to a certain extent found its way even into the countryside. There was ground for hope. The exhausting civil war between Istanbul and Cairo and the long autocratic rule of Mahmud II (1808–39) were over; the empire's resources appeared abundant, and the new economic opportunities looked promising.[6]

Great Britain, unquestionably the leader of Europe and the world since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, maintained a friendly policy toward t he Ottoman state. Other European powers acted in concert with Great Britain. Indeed, this was a generally peaceful and hopeful period for Europe, at least for its middle and upper classes. Liberal ideas and confidence in modern scientific and technological achievements inspired a sense of common destiny for humankind and t he possibility of building heaven on earth. Borrowing and learning from one another, but especially from the most suc-

4. Özdemir Kaptan (Arkan), *Beyoğlu* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 1988); and Zeynep Rona, ed., *Osman Hamdi Bey ve Dönemi* (*Osman Hamdi and His Era*) (Istanbul: Yurt, 1993). Compare with Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Urban Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

5 . Based on the following works by Engin Deniz Akarlı: "The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics under Abdülhamid II (1876–1909): Origins and Solutions" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1976), 10–23, 77–94 ; *Belgelerle Tanzimat* (*Documents on the Reform Era*) (Istanbul: Bosphorus University, 1978); "The Ottoman Government and Semi-Nomadic Tribes in Northern Jordan, 1846–1851" (in Arabic), in *Ottoman Documents on Jordan* (Amman: University of Jordan Press, 1989); "Provincial Power Magnates in Ottoman Bilad al-Sham and Egypt, 1740–1840," in *La vie sociale dans les provinces arabes à l'époque ottomane*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi, vol. 3 (Zaghouan, Tunisia: Comité In-

ternational d'Etudes Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes, 1988), 3:41–56; and *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 22–45.

6. This optimistic mood is evident not only in many contemporary accounts such as J. H. Abdolonyme Ubicini's *Lettres sur la Turquie* (Paris: Chez Guillaumin, 1851) and David Urquhart's *Turkey and Its Resources* (London: Sunders and Otley, 1833) but also in Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's critical recollec tions in his *Tezakir* (*Recollections*) and *Ma'ruzat* (*Reports*). See, for instance, the modern Turkish edition of the latter by Yusuf Halaçoğlu (Istanbul: Çağrı, 1980), 8–9.

cessful of all, namely, the British, appeared a normal course of action to follow in order to secure a place in the new order.[7]

Abdülhamid was born into this hopeful world.[8] His mother, Tîr-i Müjgân, died after a long illness when he was eleven. One of his step-mothers, Parastû, who did not have children of her own, took Abdülhamid under her wing. She influenced him to acquire gentlemanly manners and to be careful with his money and words. Seeing little of his father, Abdülhamid grew up a lonely person in an exuberant palace. Like other princes, he was tutored in French as well as more traditional subjects. He also learned to play the piano and became a lifelong fan of Italian-style comic operas, but he found classical Ottoman music "gloomy." He shunned the lively literature that developed during the Tanzimat period under European influence. He had a particular dislike for romantic novels, for he believed they inspired dreamy ideas that led to alienation and distress. Instead, he developed an interest in detective stories, travel and explo-ration accounts, and history. He also followed the major European newspapers carefully and became an eager student of European money markets and modern farming techniques. While still a prince, he developed a piece of land that his father had given him into a modern and profitable agricultural farm. He multiplied his profits by investment in European stocks. His banker friends were his teachers not only in monetary matters but also in the peculiarities and vicissitudes of European politics. He gained firsthand experience of the latter when he ac-companied his uncle Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–76) on a royal tour of several European capitals and cities in 1867.

Abdülhamid in his youth shared the hope as well as the advantages and opportunities offered by his era. Despite his attraction to European music and journalistic literature, European fashions and cosmopolitan life of Istanbul's high society were of little interest to Abdülhamid. After a brief flighty period, he lived a conservative and self-consciously modest existence. He took long excursions in the vicin-ity of Istanbul and met people from different walks of life, but he preferred the company of his own family. He was fond of his daughters and devoted no less attention to their well-being and education than to that of his sons. Wood carving and inlaying were his favorite pastimes, and eventually he developed his skills in these crafts to a near professional level. He was also pious, with a keen interest in popular Sufism. His piety seems to have helped him build an inner strength guided by a folk wisdom of sorts. But his piety had political advantages, too, for during his sultanate, his contacts with Sufi or-ders served Abdülhamid as an effective means of communication with influential local leaders around the empire.

Abdülhamid, then, blended in his own way "the East" and "the West" to which he was exposed. He tried to do this without compro-mising his sense of princely dignity and per-sonal integrity. Indeed, the leading Ottoman statesmen and European diplomats were favor-ably impressed with his personality when he as-cended the throne in 1876 at the mature age of thirty-four.

7. This is the period discussed as the "Liberal Age" in Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1957). Also see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* (New York: Mentor, 1962); and Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (New York: Scribner, 1975).

8. The following brief account of Abdülhamid II's days as a prince is based on what common infor-mation one can obtain from two different kinds of sources, namely, recollections of the sultan himself and of people close to him and publications hostile to him. Abdülhamid's recollections while he was under house arrest in Salonika and Beylerbeyi are related by his Unionist physician Atıf Hüseyin in twelve note-books that are preserved in the Türk Tarih Kurumu Library, Ankara, ms. Y-255, and recently published as *Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Sürgün Günleri (1909–1918):* *Hususi Doktoru Atıf Hüseyin Bey'in Hatıratı* (*Abdülha-mid II's Days in Exile: Memoirs of his Private Physician Atıf Hüseyin*), ed. Metin Hülagü (Istanbul: Pan, 2003). Memoirs of Abdülhamid's daughters also provide use-ful information: Şadiye Osmanoğlu, *Hayatımın Acı ve Tatlı Günleri* (*The Bitter and Sweet Days of My Life*) (Is-tanbul: Bedir, 1966), and Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Ab-dülhamid* (*My Father Abdülhamid*) (Istanbul: Güven, 1960). *Abdülhamid'in Hatıra Defteri* (*Abdülhamid's Diary*) (Istanbul: Selek, 1960) includes information that seems to be authentic. Among other useful sources are the memoirs of Tahsin Pasha, Abdülha-mid II's chief secretary (*Abdülhamid: Yıldız Hatıraları* [*Memoirs of the Yıldız Palace*] [Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit, 1931]), and the anecdotes related by Joan Haslip in reference to such contemporary British diplomats and scholars as Henry Layard, who knew Abdülhamid in his youth. Accounts hostile to Abdül-hamid are numerous. Georges Dorys, *The Private Life of the Sultan of Turkey*, trans. Arthur Hornblow (New York: D. Appleton, 1901), seems to have served as a key source for many others. Osman Nuri's *Abdülha-mid-i Sani ve Devr-i Saltanatı* (*Abdülhamid II and His Reign*), 3 vols. (Istanbul, Hilmi, 1327), is a somewhat more balanced and useful account; it is obviously based on Paul Fesch, *Constantinople aux derniers jours d'Abdul-Hamid* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1907).

The Crisis of the Tanzimat

The optimism that the Tanzimat policies had at first generated was gradually replaced by confusion, suspicion, and finally despair, as these policies led to unexpected developments and eventually to a profound economic and political crisis.[9] Commercial and legal privileges granted to the European powers, the open-door policy pursued in the Tanzimat era, and other changes ruptured the Ottoman social fabric. Trade and budget deficits soared. Heavy government borrowing at high interest rates abroad and at home delayed the inevitable financial crisis until 1875, when the treasury was forced to declare insolvency. Havoc erupted among European creditors, and the Russians seized the opportunity to advance their influence in the Balkans, threatening the Ottomans with war. Unrest mounted everywhere, fanning nationalist revolts among Christians in the Balkans and anti-Tanzimat movements among Muslims.

The government in Istanbul lost control of events. The Tanzimat leaders had streamlined the government but had failed to create an institutionalized structure of authority and policy making. Since the death in 1871 of the last powerful Tanzimat minister, Âli, senior statesmen had been engaged in a struggle to control the government. In May 1876, a group of ministers led by Midhat Pasha cooperated with the army to force the abdication of the reigning sultan Abdülaziz. His successor Murad V suffered a mental collapse and was deposed three months later. On 31 August, Abdülhamid II succeeded him on the throne.

Meanwhile, nationalist uprisings in the Balkans turned into bloody ethnic and religious confrontations. The European powers joined forces to bring pressure on the Ottoman government to grant autonomy to the Christian population in those areas where they lived in large numbers. On 23 December 1876, Midhat responded by promulgating a constitution that assured basic civil liberties (including the equality of all subjects before the law) and provided for a bicameral parliament with an elected assembly and an appointed senate.

Insofar as it had been designed to forestall foreign intervention in internal affairs the constitution was a failure. A disastrous war with Russia nearly brought the Ottoman state to an end in 1877–78. Large tracts of territory were ceded not only to Russia and the Balkan States but also to Great Britain and Austria-Hungary. The Ottoman government agreed to pay a huge war indemnity to Russia and to allow the formation of an international agency to service the payment of the Ottoman public debt.

More directly, the constitution was intended as a solution to the authority crisis afflicting the Ottoman state. As such, it was the product of intensive discussions and reflected a consensus reached among the political elite (i.e., the senior bureaucrats and bureaucrat-intellectuals). The constitution set certain limits on executive authority, but it left the sultan with great powers vis-à-vis both the cabinet and the parliament. It was on the basis of these constitutional prerogatives that the sultan suspended the assembly a year later. Few influential figures objected to the sultan's decision. They had viewed the activities of the assembly with concern, partly because of the divisive nationalistic feelings aired at some of its meetings, but especially because of its members' enthusiastic (and often well-justified) criticism of the ministers and provincial administrators.[10] This first experience with a parliament clearly contradicted Ottoman traditions of statecraft, which considered government the prerogative of a properly trained elite. Abdülhamid, who shared this perspective, appeared to the Ottoman statesmen in general to be a sensible sovereign who could provide the leadership necessary to deal with the grave problems facing the government. In this he did not disappoint his colleagues. In the early 1880s, the Ottoman government finally managed to bring its long crisis under reasonable control, gaining a new lease on life, with Abdülhamid in charge.

9. Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 270–408; and Akarlı, "Problems," 23–40, 94–104.

10. Hakkı Tarık Us, ed., *Meclis-i Meb'usan, 1293:1877, Zabıt Ceridesi* (*The Minutes of the Representative Assembly, 1877*), 2 vols. (Istanbul: Vakit, 1940 and 1954); Ilber Ortaylı, *Imparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (*The Longest Century of the Empire*) (Istanbul: Hil, 1983), 116–17, 192–93; and Ortaylı, "Ilk Osmanlı Parlamentosu" ("The First Ottoman Parliament"), in *Armağan: Kanun-u Esasi'nin 100. Yılı* (*A Commemorative Volume: The 100th Anniversary of the Constitution*) (Ankara: Sevinç, 1978), 169–82.

It needs to be stressed that at this juncture, the majority of the Ottoman political leadership supported Abdülhamid on the basis of a consensus that was reached through several years of quite broadly based intellectual and political debates,[11] power struggles, and experiments with new models of government. Issues in dispute involved short-term crises awaiting immediate attention as well as structural problems that called for a long-term plan of action for the survival of the Ottoman state in the modern world—the ultimate concern of the Ottoman political elite and intellectuals in general. The government's vulnerability to external pressure, the erosion of its internal authority and respectability, and the deterioration of its finances loomed as the key structural issues. Abdülhamid commanded respect because he managed not only to pro - duce practical solutions to immediate problems but also to put together a generally acceptable long-term agenda out of the ideas that circulated among political and intellectual circles and based on advice he received from a broad variety of people.[12]

Eventually, however, confidence in Ab - dülhamid's leadership began to erode, partly because he was unable to fulfill some of his plans and partly because those that he did fulfill created new dynamics and problems that undermined his style of government. This development can be observed by casting a glance at three major problem areas that preoccupied the Ottoman government, namely, its efforts to restore financial solvency, to enhance its prestige and authority among the populace, and to build an effective system of governance.

Fiscal and Economic Problems

Under Abdülhamid's leadership, the Ottomans sought to increase economic productivity and with it the government's tax base.[13] They be-

lieved they could achieve this if the government paid due attention first to the construction of modern transportation and communications networks and to other economic infrastructure investments, and second to the maintenance of law, order, and security in the land. Abdülhamid himself was convinced that people normally preferred to spend their lives trying to improve their livelihoods and enjoying the fruits of their labor and enterprise peacefully in the company of their families and friends. They would be loyal to their government and shun political activism if the government provided the conditions necessary for a productive, secure, and peaceful life.

Whatever the plausibility of the sultan's views about the loyalty of his subjects, the Ottoman government was not in a strong position to implement the remarkably detailed economic development plans and projects prepared during this period.[14] The state of Ottoman finances was a major problem. Around 30 percent of the entire government revenue went directly into the coffers of the European-controlled Public Debt Administration. An additional 40 percent was devoured by military expenditures deemed indispensable in an increasingly dangerous and belligerent world. A depression in world agricultural prices further strained Ottoman finances. In the face of a dearth of funds, the government was forced to contract out many important mines and other projects to European concerns as monopolistic concessions. To a certain extent, the Ottoman government was able to use European vested interests to perpetuate its own policies, but the capitulator y commercial and legal privileges enjoyed by European powers, backed by threats of force, left the Ottoman government with little room to maneuver.

Despite these handicaps, considerable economic development was achieved during Ab-

11. Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962); and Mümtaz`er Türköne, *Siyasi Ideoloji Olarak Islamcılığın Doğuşu* (*The Rise of Islamism as a Political Ideology*) (Istanbul: Iletişim, 1991).

12. Soon af ter he became sultan, Abdülhamid issued a circular inviting suggestions from the leading statesmen on what should be done to improve the situation. Some of the responses to this circular are preserved among the *Yıldız Esas Evrakı* (the *Yıldız* Palace documents, the main collection; henceforth,

YEE) in the Başbakanlık (Prime Ministry) archives in Istanbul. I refer to them in Akarlı, "Problems." In addition to these written reports, Abdülhamid sought the advice of others in individual or group meetings organized at the palace. Also see Stanford Shaw, "A Promise of Reform," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 359–65.

13. See Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Economic Policy and Budgets in Ottoman Turkey, 1876–1909," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28 (1992): 4 43–76; the relevant sections of Şvket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Quataert, "The Age of Reforms," 759–943.

14. For the plans prepared early under Abdülhamid II's reign, see *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi* 4, nos. 19–22 (1969): 3–13, 11–18, 29–35, 53–54, respectively; and *Belgeler* 5–8 (1968–71): 153–233.

dülhamid II's reign, particularly after the 1890s. This development, combined with other factors, led to an outcome quite different from that desired by the sultan. Rising economic prospects in certain parts of the empire fanned the desire for autonomy from a government incapable of protecting local economic interests against foreign ones.[15] Everywhere, the desire to have a larger or fairer share of the resources led to the formation of new political alliances in opposition to the existing regime. Organized labor movements emerged in virtually all the major urban centers. In short, far from soothing political ambitions, economic development and new opportunities accelerated the politicization of the population.

Problems of Internal Integration and Islam

Another serious problem that the Ottoman government faced at the beginning of Abdülhamid II's reign was the alarming erosion of its authority.[16] Tanzimat reforms had aimed at creating an effective and efficient central government that also commanded the respect of the population through their equitable treatment before the law and incorporation into the administrative cadres. By the 1870s, however, the Ottoman state appeared to friend and foe alike closer to disintegration than ever. Turning the tide, restoring the prestige of the government, and then enhancing it to avoid a similar abyss became a major concern of Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals. They looked to distant days when Ottoman prestige had been at its height, studied successful governments of their times, and took stock of the Tanzimat policies in search of the most effective ways of dealing with the problem. The challenge they faced was to strengthen the social base of the government by rallying as much of the Ottoman population as possible around a common cause. Clearly,

this task involved the generation of a modern body politic that was bound together not only by the coercive powers of the central government but also by a network of social alliances and a shared sense of identity.

Heterogeneity of the Ottoman population, the poor state of the economy and government finances, and vulnerability to external pressure rendered the political integration of the Ottoman empire a gigantic task, if not an impossible one. The Ottoman leadership recognized these problems. Although the Ottoman state in the end proved unsalvageable, the solutions it sought have had important repercussions for the people living in Ottoman lands.

After extensive debates and some failed experiments, and by force of circumstances, a strategy took shape. Basically, it involved an appeal to Islam in order to win the united support of the Muslim population while upholding the principle of legal equality in order to safeguard the loyalty of non-Muslims. Economic development, improvement of public services, and curtailment of foreign intervention in internal affairs were seen as equally essential for rallying the population around the Ottoman cause. Winning the support of Muslims without further alienating other subjects, however, was a goal that deserves independent treatment, because it was mostly around this point that Abdülhamid earned his image as a "reactionary" ruler.

The idea of appealing to Islam as a force for sociopolitical solidarity was by no means restricted to religiously or politically conservative elements. It seems to have developed first among the so-called Young Ottomans who led the constitutionalist opposition against the Tanzimat ministers in the late 1860s and early 1870s.[17] Similarly, the constitutionalist Midhat clearly enjoyed the support of the seminary students when he vied for power in the mid-1870s.[18]

15. See, for instance, the case of Mount Lebanon discussed in Akarlı, *The Long Peace*.

16. This section is based on my work. See Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Abdülhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed. David Kushner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 740–89; "Abdülhamid II's Islamic Policy," in *Türk-Arab İlişkileri* (*Arab-Turkish Relations*), proceedings of the conference "Arab-Turkish Relations" held at Hacettepe University, Ankara, 18–22 June 1979 (Ankara: Hacettepe University, 1979), 44–60; "The Defense of the Libyan Provinces, 1882–1980," *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History* 5 (1991): 75–85;

Ottoman Documents on Jordan (Amman: University of Jordan, 1989); and *The Long Peace*. Also see Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (*Abdülhamid and Pan-Islam*) (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992), and other works mentioned in the following notes.

17. See Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*; and Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji*.

18. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 325–30.

Politicization of Islam as a means of salvaging the Ottoman state was on the rise. Ottoman isolation against Russia, the war and the consequent territorial losses to European powers, and the immigration of a large number of destitute Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds fleeing persecution in the Balkans and Russia all heightened religious sentiments and generalized the feeling that Tanzimat policies had failed the Muslim population while only fan- ning separatist tendencies among Christians.

Abdülhamid disliked the involvement of the seminary students in active politics and believed it was not so much the Tanzimat objectives as it was their careless implementation that facilitated foreign intervention in Ottoman affairs and eroded the respect for the sultanate. According to the sult an, had it not been for foreign intervention and the Ottoman indiscretion that facilitated it, "the hearts of all subjects might have been filled with love and loyalty toward their sublime sovereign through the diligent implementation of the laws and regulations that [were] enacted after the promulgation of the Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber [in 1839]."[19] Yet as things stood, "not only [did] the existing regulations concerning all branches of the government fall short of sustaining the interests and territorial integrity of the state, but they also fail[ed] to assure the true interests of the loyal subjects, and above all, of the distinguished religion of Islam which is the reason for the strength and endurance of the state."[20]

Abdülhamid believed in the need to uphold the principle of the legal equality of all subjects that was established during the Tanzimat era, not only because he feared foreign intervention, but because he sincerely considered an equitable system of justice essential for the respectability of government authority. He did not think, however, that this principle should prevent t he Ottoman gover nment from emphasizing Islam as a basis of social and political solidarity or from paying close attention to the moral and material needs of the empire's Muslim population. He believed the Muslims would

"always be moved with [a feeling of] loyalty and reverence toward the office of the sultanate and the caliphate under the influence of their upbringing at home." They would desire the continuation of Ottoman rule and faithfully serve its causes, whereas the Christians would remain vulnerable to foreign manipulations and instigations.[21]

If Abdülhamid's views of his Christian subjects make his belief in an equitable system of justice sound hypocritical, he certainly did not think that the Western governments had a more objective attitude toward justice:

> The pr ior it y of the subject s who const itute a majority over the rest is an unavoidable necessity in any state. The Catholics, for example, are preponderant over the Protestants in countries where the former are in majority. . . . Likewise, the religion of the Sublime State of the Otto - mans is the religion of Islam, and the Muslims are in majorit y among its subject s. Nevertheless, all subjects are treated most equally by the Sultanate. While this is a matter of fact . . . the Christian subjects are distinguished by the protection of foreign powers. . . . For example, if a Christian attacks a Muslim and wounds and even attempts to kill him, the foreign consuls inter fere and want to prevent the trial of the Christian even if his aggression and cruelty are well-known facts. . . . The consuls pressure the central government for the immediate removal of the governors and other administrators who oppose their action. [22]

Abdülhamid had a point. The times in which he reigned have to be taken into consideration. This was a period when the notion of justice even in its most secular or liberal forms was harnessed for militantly sectarian interest. Thus new laws were imposed on natives at gunpoint not only in Islamic countries such as Egypt and Tunisia that had recently fallen under colonial rule but around the world, from Latin America to China—all in the name of progressive justice. But the colonizer and the colonized— or, for that matter, the "white" and the "colored"—were hardly equal before the law.[23] Nor was sensitivity

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19. *YEE*, 9/2006/72/4 (April 1894). Also see *YEE*, 9/2638/72/4 (ca. 1880), and *YEE* I/156–XXV/156/3 (April 1895).

20. *YEE*, I/156–XXVl/156/3 (n.d.).

21. *YEE*, 9/2006/72/4 (ca. April 1894). Also see *YEE*, 8/1842/77/3 (June 1895), and *YEE*, 9/2610/72/4 (ca. 1904).

22. *YEE*, 11/1325/20/5 (October 1896).

23. Peter Fitzpatrick, "Law, Plurality and Underdevelopment," in *Legality, Ideology, and the State*, ed. David Sugarman (London: Academic, 1983), 159–81; Martha Mundy, "The Family, Inheritance, and Islam," in *Islamic Law: Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. Aziz al-Azmeh (London: Routledge, 1988), 1–123; and Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (New York: Norton, 1993), 68–95, esp. 84–95.

to the role of religious feelings in political activity peculiar to Islam or the Ottoman Empire. It was on the upsurge everywhere.

In contrast to the basically liberal mood that had prevailed earlier in the century, religious fervor was becoming an increasingly conspicuous aspect of internal and international politics in the age of high imperialism with rapid industrialization and its concomitant social problems. It is not a coincidence that the Dreyfus affair, the Zionist movement, and the Irish question emerged in this period, just as the laicist French government made peace with the church and worked hand in glove with militant missionaries around the world. It is not a coincidence that a profoundly devout person like William Gladstone rose to prominence in British politics. The arrogantly intolerant, even hatemongering, views of Gladstone and others about "the Turks," which effectively meant "Muslims" in the Ottoman context at this point, left little room for dialogue.[24] It is in this broader historical context that one must understand the rather defensive Islamism of Abdülhamid II's generation.

From about the early 1880s, the Ottoman government began to pursue a threefold integration policy that emphasized Islam and was coordinated directly by the palace. First, it aimed at generating a consensus about the interpretation of Islamic political traditions in a way that was favorable to Ottoman interests. Toward this end, religious dignitaries from around the empire were invited to meetings in Istanbul and encouraged to prepare pamphlets for public

use. Religious advisers close to the sultan were sent to the provinces regularly, partly as trouble-shooters and partly as propagandists. Efforts were also made to bring the major Sufi orders closer together under the sultan's sponsorship and, hence, indirect control. Religious education in the rapidly expanding public school system was standardized, and many of the old-style primary religious schools were absorbed into the public school system under the control of the Ministry of Education.[25]

At another level, a deliberate effort was made to win the cooperation of the provincial Muslim notables.[26] According to Abdülhamid, the attempts to break the local influence of notables earlier in the century, in an effort to strengthen the central government's authority, had backfired. He considered the cooperation of the notables essential to restore the respectability of the Ottoman rule in the eyes of the common folk, to strengthen the latter's attachment to the government, and to keep them from "inexpedient behavior."[27] During his reign, influential notables from distant provinces were regular guests at the palace and maintained correspondence with the sultan. Every where, provincial notables became directly involved in the government, in local administration, as tax farmers and collectors and as provisioners to government offices. Moreover, their children were provided attractive opportunities to enter the central government service. Finally, during Abdülhamid II's reign, special attention was paid to the predominantly Muslim provinces, which had been relatively neglected in the past.

24. See Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), esp. 229–66. For Gladstone and the Irish question, see Ann P. Saab, *Reluctant Icon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); and Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 204–26. For the historical background of the Zionist movement, see Mitchell Cohen, *Zion and State: Nation, Class, and the Shaping of Modern Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). For changing relations between the French government and Catholic missions, see John P. Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1914* (London: Ithaca, 1977), 233–34; and Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 147–62.

25. In addition to the works mentioned in n. 16 above, see Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15 (1979): 131–53; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi (The Educational System of Abdülhamid II's Reign)* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1980); Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans, and Britain (1877–1924)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); and Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

26. On notables, see, in addition to the works mentioned in n. 16 above, Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and the Sharifs of Mecca (1800–1900)," *Asian and African Studies* 9 (1979): 1–21; David D. Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), esp. 104–15; Michel F. Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouins and Notables: Ottoman Administration in Tripoli and Benghazi, 1881–1902" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1986); S. Tufan Buzpınar, "Abdülhamid II, Islam, and Arabs: The Cases of Syria and the Hijaz, 1878–1882" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1991); Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1994).

27. See *YEE*, I/165–XXXVIII/156/3 (November 1902), and *YEE*, 9/2610/72/4 (ca. 1904).

Government investments concentrated in these areas. The administrative and judicial branches of the government, as well as its law enforcement agencies, also expanded.

As already indicated, Abdülhamid and his advisers retained the principle of legal equality they had inherited from the Tanzimat period. They considered its effective implementation essential to maintain the loyalty of the non-Muslim population (which at that time, constituted 55 percent of the population of Rumelia, 45 percent of the population in Istanbul, and 15 percent of the population of Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent). Indeed, the streamlining of the secular judicial system, the enhancement of its autonomy, its expansion deep into the provinces, and its equipment with a properly trained professional cadre are among the significant achievements of Abdülhamid II's reign.[28] Furthermore, non-Muslim communities continued to enjoy autonomy in their religious, cultural, and educational activities as well as in their internal legal affairs. In those places where non-Muslims constituted only a small percentage of the population, and when non-Muslims belonged to small communities scattered around the empire, the guarantees offered by the government appear to have balanced the emphasis that it was putting on Islam and Muslims.[29] In places where Christians of the same ethnic background constituted a majority, or a significantly large segment of the population, however, serious problems emerged. In these areas, particularly in eastern Anatolia, where a militant Armenian nationalist movement developed, and in hopelessly mixed Macedonia, Abdülhamid's provincial policy aggravated conflicts.

Abdülhamid II reigned in an age when ethnic and religious differences were commonly used for purposes of political mobilization. But if this mood of the age explains the Ottoman emphasis on Islam and Muslims, it also points to the problems that such an emphasis would entail in an ethnically heterogeneous environment. However sincerely the Ottoman government might have tried to balance its pro-Islamic policies by other means, those policies involved the choice of a political identity on grounds that excluded parts of the population by definition and hence added yet another dimension to their grievances.

Abdülhamid II's policies ran into problems among the Muslims as well. These problems point to yet other complications that efforts to harness a religious tradition for specific political purposes may entail. At first, Abdülhamid's efforts to strengthen the social base of the government by paying closer attention to Muslims and to generate a sense of shared identity by emphasizing Islam enjoyed support, for he was responding to broadly shared concerns among the Muslim population. One can even conclude that his efforts bore some fruit. During his reign, the central government's respectability as well as visibility increased in many of the Asian provinces. Abdülhamid's policies also helped generate many new opportunities for the population. These and other developments, however, led to new social dynamics and power configurations. The sultan's reliance on notables, as well as other aspects of his policies, began to come under attack.

Politics is politics. It involves conflicting material and moral interests. Abdülhamid saw Islam as a resource of social solidarity that could be tapped to reconcile and control con-

28. This is the impression one gets from the scattered and often indirect information on the actual functioning of the legal system. Otherwise, the subject still awaits its historian. For brief reviews of legal developments, see Ülkü Azrak, "Tanzimattan sonra Resepsiyon" ("Adoption [of European Laws] in the Reform Era"), in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (*The Encyclopedia of Turkey from the Reform Era to the Republic*), 3:602–6; Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976–1977), 2:246–49 ; Ekrem Buğra Ekinci, *Osmanlı Mahkemeleri (Tanzimat ve Sonrası)* (*Ottoman Courts [in the Reform Era and After]*) (Istanbul: Arı Sanat, 2004); Halil Cin, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Hukuku ve Yargılama Usulleri" ("Ottoman Law and the Judicial System in the Reform Era"), in *150. Yılında Tanzimat* (*The 150th Anniversary of the Reform Era*), ed. Hakkı D. Yıldız (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 11–32; and Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 132–46.

29. For brief assessments of the position of different ethnic and religious groups, see Ilber Ortaylı, Stanford Shaw, Cevdet Küçük, and Taha Toros, "'Milletler ve Azınlıklar" ("Religious Communities and Minorities"), in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, 4:994–1036; and Roderic Davison, "Nationalism as an Ottoman Response," in *Nationalism in a Non-National State*, ed. William Haddad and William Ochsenwald (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977), 25–55.

flicting interests. But he could not monopolize Islam, try though he did. Others could resort to the same resource to contest the interpretations and methods adopted by the palace. A vehement and formidable Islamist opposition to Abdülhamid II's regime did exactly that, although for different reasons and without unanimity. Conflicting interpretations of Islam became a regular feature of the ongoing political struggles and debates in an increasingly politicized environment.[30] The Ottoman system of governance did not (and arguably could not) accommodate the growing political consciousness and the new social tensions emerging among the inhabitants of the Ottoman lands.

Friction and Discord within the Government

Abdülhamid II oversaw an unprecedented expansion of government services and bureaucracy.[31] The government became involved in building and operating public land and waterways, railroads, the telegraph, and other public works. General public education and public health services, credit institutions, and offices that supplied technical assistance to producers became widespread. All regular branches of the government, including the judiciary and the public security forces, also expanded. Many new professional schools were established and the old ones improved with the specific purpose of training a corps of technical government personnel (such as doctors, engineers, veterinarians, agricultural experts, teachers, officers, and the like) as well as better public administrators and jurists. In addition, official statistics and filing systems were improved, while elaborate regulations governing the recruitment, promotion, retirement, and dismissal of government personnel were enacted and applied. Except in the highest echelons, the administrative machinery became highly structured, marking a fundamental change over the situation at the beginning of Abdülhamid II's reign.

This new elaboration of bureaucratic structure penetrated deep into society and enhanced the visibility, control, and to a certain extent also the respectability of the government. Equally important, it served as a mechanism to create a growing cadre of officials committed to the Ottoman cause. These positive developments were undermined, however, by important shortcomings. There were significant differences among the salaries of the highest-ranking, intermediate, and lower bureaucrats, leading to considerable friction within the bureaucracy. Given the financial strain, payments remained in arrears quite frequently. This situation encouraged—even justified—bribery, especially among the petty officials whose salaries hardly sufficed to support a lifestyle in keeping with their social status. Bribery became a serious problem that impaired the government's image, as its frequency and variety intensified through the years.

Intermediate bureaucrats were relatively better off, although they, too, suffered from payment delays. The graduates of the newly established technical schools (including the young drill and staff officers) belonged to this group. It was among these technocrats that the most formidable internal opposition to Abdülhamid's regime took root. They were the ones who felt most bitterly the contradictions of the times.

At the technical schools Western sciences and languages were being taught alongside the values of Ottoman culture. Most of these schools were located in Istanbul or other major urban centers, the cosmopolitanism of which contrasted sharply with the provincial background of the majority of the students. With only a fragmented exposure to Westernized cultural tastes, lifestyles, and social expectations, most of the graduates were dispatched to serve in remote places, once more to confront the harsh realities of the empire. Each bureaucrat responded differently to these divergent influences, torn between feelings of rootlessness and reverence

30. See Ismail Kara, *Islamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri* (*Political Views of Islamists*) (Istanbul: Iz, 1994); Kara, ed., *Türkiye'de Islamcılık Düşüncesi: Metinler/Kişiler* (*Islamist Thought in Turkey: Texts/Individuals*), vol. 1 (Istanbul: Pınar, 1986); Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 49–144; and Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 124–46.

31. Based on Akarlı, "Friction and Discord within the Ottoman Government under Abdulhamid II," *Boğaziçi University Journal—Humanities* 7 (1979): 3–26, and numerous memoirs of the young Ottoman bureaucrats of this period.

toward the past and ambivalent and romantic idealism toward the future. To whatever degree their attitudes converged, they reflected a general contempt for their contemporary conditions and the necessity for establishing a new sense of identity.

Other contradictions that embittered these young bureaucrats were related to the politicized nature of the upper reaches of the Ottoman officialdom. Each pasha was at once an administrative expert and a political figure, susceptible to the influence of different interest groups. Petitioning, persuasion, shared profits, and bribery were among the means available to influence a pasha's decision; the nature of the business at hand as well as the personality and current power of the pasha in question determined the means chosen. The intensity of contradictory foreign demands caused further frictions. Those officials who articulated the interests and views of different European powers found themselves pitted against one another as well as against those who articulated local interests. But the emphasis here should be not so much on corruption as on the general sense of confusion about political objectives and procedures.

Senior officials from all branches of the government traditionally had constituted the Ottoman political elite. They made their decisions according to recognized procedures and traditions of advocacy that worked reasonably well for the much smaller cadres and the highly decentralized conditions of governance in the past. The attempts made since the beginning of the nineteenth century to adapt the political process to the rapidly changing circumstances had failed to produce effective results. Despite the availability of many conscientious and capable pashas, the Ottomans found it difficult to act in concert unless under a shrewd arbitrator. Abdülhamid served as that arbitrator. He did not intend to alter the existing order of things radically. For one thing, he was openly afraid of the pashas' proven ability to seat and unseat sultans; for another, he believed that it was "the royal fountain of favor" that produced "the best harvest on the field of sovereignty."[32]

By distributing and withholding his favor and the more powerful positions in the government, he played the pashas off one another, thereby keeping their conflicting interests and views in check. He also subjected the resolutions of the cabinet submitted by the grand vizier to a thorough examination, particularly when they involved foreign interests. In this way, he sought to gain a comprehensive picture as well as the certainty of being in a position to counteract, or at least delay, the demands that he deemed contrary to the interests of the state.

Abdülhamid's necessarily cumbersome maneuvers —and his concern for thoroughness—inevitably caused delays in the preparation of administrative decisions at a time when the increasing technical demands of the administration necessitated quick and unambiguous responses. Furthermore, Abdülhamid's favoritism in his relations with senior officials contrasted sharply with the objectified norms of administrative rationality emphasized for rank-and-file bureaucrats. The differences in criteria represented an effort to distinguish the political from the administrative. It ran counter, however, to the Ottoman tradition that viewed the incumbents of all governmental positions as politically privileged equals ruling over society. Accepted norms of differentiation were established along the lines of one's quality of education and seniority of service rather than family background. During Abdülhamid II's reign, however, sons of pashas were automatically accepted into the best schools and received leisurely commissions in the better parts of the empire (regardless of their real success at school); they were promoted faster than the more humble graduates of the same schools. The new bureaucrats (technocrats) considered themselves deprived of advancement opportunities.

This grievance and the cumbersome procedures at the helm of government reinforced the general sense of alienation among the young bureaucrats. They began to organize in opposition groups that seriously challenged the integrity and effectiveness of the entire administration and the armed forces.

32. Arminius Vambéry, "Personal Recollections of Abdul Hamid II and His Court," *The Nineteenth Century and After* 66 (1909): 71. Also see Tahsin Pasha, *Abdülhamid*, 42–44.

The Finale

Many young Ottoman bureaucrats, officers, and intellectuals, bitter over the sultan's personal control of key government positions and decisions, and demanding a better institutionalized and participatory political regime, joined the opposition led by the Union and Progress Committee. In 1908, sporadic mutinies among the army corps in Rumelia and Macedonia rapidly spread into a popular movement, as a medley of people with divergent political aspirations and interests made common cause with the Unionists. Muslim fundamentalists, Islamist reformists, and ardent nationalists from various ethnic groups, as well as the nascent modern labor organizations, conservative artisans, and shopkeepers, joined in cheering for "liberty, fraternity, and equality." Abdülhamid realized the depth of the opposition and yielded to their demands. On 23 July 1908, he called for elections and agreed to limitations on his authority. Supporters of Union and Progress won the majority of seats in the parliament, but as the parliament and the cabinet became bogged down in a struggle over their respective rights, and as separatist movements in the Balkans intensified, the political situation remained tense. On 13 April 1909, a popular revolt broke out in Istanbul, led by certain religious groups and army units that had supported the 1908 revolution but now felt alienated from the Union and Progress. An army of loyal units and volunteers rushed from Salonika to crush this rebellion. Abdülhamid tried to persuade the mutineers to abandon their recalcitrance. All the same, he was accused of having instigated the rebellion and was dethroned on 27 April 1909.[33]

Abdülhamid spent the rest of his life under house arrest, first in Salonika until its fall to Greece in November 1912, and then in Beylerbeyi, Istanbul, until his death. He had much time to watch the ships go in and out of the Salonika bay or through the Bosphorus and to reminisce and reflect on the news

that reached him. The ex-sultan worried, as early as 1911, lest the Ottoman state would be dragged into an imminent war between the British and German blocks. When war did in fact break out, he predicted its long duration, its victors, and its disastrous consequences for the Ottoman state and Muslims in general. But his sorrow was not confined to the Ottomans or the Muslims alone. From the beginning of the war, he mourned for the suffering that it would inflict on all human beings caught up in its destruction. In October 1916, he expressed full agreement with the socialists' call for immediate peace to bring an end to the human suffering caused by the war. When the news of the March 1917 revolution in Russia reached him, he was pleased, although not because it would help the Ottoman cause. He believed Russian withdrawal would lengthen the war but not prevent the ultimate victory of the British and their allies, because so long as the British ruled the oceans, they would continue to fight. Abdülhamid was pleased because at least the peoples of Russian lands would now be saved from the disasters of conflict, if only they could avoid a very likely civil war. Abdülhamid believed that since the late 1870s, the British had become increasingly determined to partition the Ottoman state and would do everything in their power to further weaken Islam. Nevertheless, when he learned about the indiscriminate German aerial bombardments of London, he deemed them "a dreadful act" and asked in bewilderment, "What is the crime of innocent civilians? What can be obtained from killing them? What kind of humanity is this? What kind of a civilization?" But his increasingly single-minded worry was the consequence of the war for Muslims. He wished his predictions about the effects of the war on Ottomans and Muslims were wrong and prayed for world peace. He died on 10 February 1918.[34] A huge crowd congregated at his funeral procession, weeping after the last great sultan of Istanbul.

33. For these developments, see, for instance, Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 167–99; Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); and Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı* (Istanbul: Sinan, 1972).

34. Based on Atıf Hüseyin's recollections in the library of the Turkish Historical Association in Ankara, ms. Y-255, notebooks 11 and 12. The quotations are from notebook 12, 38–39; or see Hülagü, *Sürgün Günleri*, 213–346; quotations from 316.

Epilogue

Shortly after Abdülhamid's death, the victorious powers began to occupy Istanbul and other major Ottoman ports. Their apparent determination to confine "the Terrible Turk" to a virtually narrow landlocked space in the Anatolian peninsula ignited a patriotic resistance movement. From its spontaneous and scattered beginnings, it grew into a well-coordinated democratic movement run by a national assembly of regional representatives that met in inland Ankara. An alliance of provincial notables and Ottoman civilian and military bureaucrats led the resistance, and the Muslim population of Anatolia at large, not only its Turkish-speaking component, provided the rank and file. A sense of urgency had grasped these people. They feared, not unlike Abdülhamid II while under house arrest, that Christian Europe would continue to purge Muslims merely because they were Muslims. Muslims in other parts of the world as well saw in the Anatolian resistance movement a last-ditch effort to defend a part of Islam against European imperialism and provided moral and material support. In other words, a defensive sense of Islamic solidarity, rather than an articulate notion of Turkish nationalism, spurred the movement. All the same, the majority of the delegates in the national assembly maintained their patriotic focus. They aimed at the liberation and full independence of their collective constituency, which roughly corresponded to Turkey today. They nourished little sympathy for the Ottoman government in Istanbul.[35] Indeed, the national assembly adopted "Turkey" as the name of the lands over which it claimed sovereignty; it was a name given the Ottoman state by Europeans but hardly ever used by Ottomans themselves.

After four years of effective organization, a series of successful military campaigns, and careful diplomacy, the government in Ankara managed to win international recognition as the sole and fully sovereign representative of the people of Turkey. The Ottoman rule became extinct, along with its widely despised capitulatory treaties. As foreign troops evacuated Istanbul, the triumphant government of Ankara took charge of the city. Ankara's victory, however, came at a price.

This was still an age dominated by the masters of the oceans. No government could remain in continuous conflict with them, as Abdülhamid II had bitterly observed on several occasions. Ankara faced the same challenge, but a group of bureaucrats and officers who conducted Ankara's diplomatic relations were willing to make compromises on the basis of quite different priorities than those of Abdülhamid II's generation. Above all, they were ready to distance Turkey from Islam and other Muslim countries in return for British and French recognition of Ankara's bid for unfettered sovereignty over Turkey. They recognized that the British and French governments faced serious problems in maintaining the loyalty of the large number of Muslims under their rule. Many Muslims struggling against European rule looked up to the Anatolian movement, seeing in it an effort to salvage the Ottoman caliphate, which had come to acquire a peculiar symbolic significance in Islamic countries. It was this Islamic connection that some leaders in Ankara were ready to exchange for international recognition. They prevailed, arguably because otherwise a prolonged confrontation and even war with Britain and France would have been unavoidable.

Peace negotiations strengthened their position and helped them seize the nearly exclusive leadership of the new regime. Shortly after the successful conclusion of the peace talks, the new leadership began to adopt a series of militantly secularist cultural reforms that aimed at turning all citizens of the republic into Europeanized "Turks," whether by persuasion or

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35. See, for instance, Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e Hatıralarım* (*My Memoirs from the Constitutional Monarchy to the Republic*), ed. İsmail Kara (Istanbul: İletişim, 1991). Melih Karakullukçu's senior thesis, "Arnold Toynbee and the British Diplomatic Intelligence during the Great War: Expert and Ideology" (Brown University, Department of History, 1997), casts a fresh light on dominant outlooks in Western Europe at this juncture.

coercion, deliberately trying to cut them from their cultural roots. In the process, provincial notables found themselves relegated to a secondary position. Others who saw no reason to compromise their Islamic sentiments were likewise pushed aside, or they themselves stepped aside for patriotic concerns, in order to avoid internal strife. Distancing Turkey from Islam and other Muslim countries involved distancing it from the democratic origins of its political regime as well.[36] In these two respects, the Anatolian movement turned against itself. Perhaps it could not be otherwise, given the hegemonic worldview and the limitations of the age in which Ankara's victory occurred.

Pragmatic considerations were not the only motives of the cultural reformists. They were in general positivist bureaucrats and intellectuals who shared contemporary Western views of Islam as a religion frozen in time and hence a detriment to rational progress. They sincerely believed that unless the Turks distanced themselves from their Islamic past, they were certain to fall back into the dark pit in which they had found themselves at the end of the Ottoman empire or fall under the rule of their betters like most of the other Muslims in the world. Only a cultural transformation would ensure them of an honorable place among the civilized nations of the world. The reformers singled out Abdülhamid II as a signifier of the dark past and everything that a Turk should not be, just as he had been the epitome of the Terrible Turk whom Europeans wanted to throw bag and baggage back to the depths of Asia.

These views mirrored the dominant discourses of contemporary Europe, which actually helped justify colonial hegemony over others as much as they did the growing power of the central governments and bureaucratic elites in an intensely nationalist age. The reformist leaders of Turkey were only nationalists, not colonialists. A colonial regime could not have pursued a similarly radical cultural policy, even if it wanted to. Rather, the colonial administrators of the high imperialist era of 1875–1945 condemned the natives for not being like Europeans and also for trying to be like them. The new leaders of Turkey, however, were absolutely serious about Europeanization, whether it involved building the country or rebuilding its people. They were determined to succeed where Abdülhamid II and his successors had failed. They wanted to halt the retreat of Ottoman Muslims into an ever-narrower space, even if they had to compromise Islamic sentiments and reinvent a people according to the hegemonic norms that defined humanity at that juncture. It was a crippled sense of humanity, the humanity of those times, in a world deeply divided against itself, and the traumatic repercussions of an authoritarian cultural transformation were a heavy price to pay. But who can put a price on survival? ᔓ

36. Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet: Ikinci Gurup* (*Opposition in the First National Assembly: The Second Group*) (Istanbul: İletişim, 1994). Also see Seyyid Bey, *Hilafetin Mahiyyet-i Şeriyyesi* (*The Islamic Legal Meaning of Caliphate*) (Istanbul: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Matbaası, 1924); the memoirs of Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e*; the memoirs of Rauf Orbay in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete Yüzyılımızda bir insanımız: Hüseyin Rauf Orbay (1881–1964)* (*From the Ottoman Period to the Republic: Hüseyin Rauf Orbay [1881–1964]*), vols. 3–5, ed. Cemal Kutay (Istanbul: Kazancı Kitap, [1992]); Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım* (*My Life and Memoirs*), 4 vols. (Istanbul: Altındağ Yayınevi, [1967–68]); Halide Edip Adıvar, *The Turkish Ordeal* (Westport, CT: Hyperion, 1981); and other alienated members of the first representative national assembly.