

and preferred to demonstrate the new efficiency of French royal army in Spain. The French interest in Saint Domingue died away.¹⁹³

The population of the independent island in 1824 divided into three political entities (the Kingdom of Henry Christophe I., the Southern Republic under Alexandre Pétion, and the Old Spanish District) was estimated to be around 935,000 individuals.¹⁹⁴ This mass was composed of blacks (819,000), mulattoes (105,000), Indians (1,500) and whites (500).¹⁹⁵ The strikingly small number of whites was a result of the enforcement of the law of the new independent Haiti which declared that “*no white man, whatever be his nationality, shall be permitted to land on the Haitian territory, with the title of master or proprietor; nor shall he be able, in future, to acquire there, either real estate or the rights of a Haitian*”.¹⁹⁶

The end of French hegemony at Saint Domingue and the emergence of independent black state were enabled by deficiencies of administration of the colony afflicted by traditionally rivalry between the *noblesse d'épée* and the *noblesse de robe*. In 1789, the representatives of Saint Domingue were trying to be integrated into National Assembly, without realizing that the declaration of human rights and civic emancipation would be aimed at the very foundation of the island economic and social system. The resilience against the revolutionary impulses emanating from the continental France and an attempt to cope with the inner political conflicts and mulatto and slave uprising led to a tentative to create a new independent national and political entity – *nation haïtienne*. However, this collective identity lacked a sufficient social background. If *petits blacks* succeeded in this project, the result could have been a political system of racial apartheid not dissimilar to the experiment in South Africa. Paradoxically, the dream of *petits blancs* on the independent *nation haïtienne* was realized later by the different people detested and hated by whites – liberated black slaves led by Toussaint Louverture and Jacques Dessalines.

193) Christopher L. MILLER, *Forget Haiti: Baron Roger and the New Africa*. In: *Yale French Studies*, 107, 2005, p. 39–69.

194) John Rely Beard thought that this census was highly exaggerated or falsified. He was convinced that “*at no time since its independence has Hayti proper – the French part – had more than from 500,000 to 600,000 inhabitants*” – see BEARD, p. 20.

195) *Ibid.*, p. 20.

196) *Ibid.*, p. 20–21.

Sultan Mahmud II's Reforms in the Light of Central European Documents

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In their research on Ottoman history in the first half of the 19th century, historians and orientalists exploited **the archives in London and Paris or, particularly the Russians and Soviets**, those in Russia not only relating to the diplomatic relations between the Sublime Porte and European countries but also for the mostly internal affairs of the sultan's empire. Surprisingly, only very few of them visited the Central European archives for the same purpose despite the fact that a considerable number of reports of Austrian and Prussian diplomats residing within the Ottoman territory are particularly housed in *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* in **Vienna** and *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz* in Berlin-Dahlem.¹

This approach seems to be logical at first sight: Great Britain, France and Russia pursued an active policy in the Near East and their interests were much more excessive than those of Prussia. With a closer look, however, one realises that this dismissive approach is entirely unfounded in the case of Austria, which was connected with the Ottoman Empire by the longest frontier of all European countries as well as extensive political and economic interests; after the Napoleonic wars, **the Habsburg Empire had the greatest share in its southeastern neighbour's foreign trade until the 1840s**. As to the second German Power, **Prussian interests in the area were insignificant**, but owing to its important role on the chessboard of European diplomacy it could not ignore the events in the Levant and was also represented in Constantinople and some other places in the Near East.

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Consequently, it is possible to find in Berlin as well as in Vienna perfectly ordered documents from various Ottoman regions: the reports of the representatives and their subalterns in Constantinople and likewise those of the employees of the consulates in Ottoman provinces. There are naturally also housed various private and official letters written by citizens of other states residing in the Levant, which were obtained in “different ways” by both Central European Powers. Moreover, in contrast to a similar collection in *Archives du Ministère belge des Affaires étrangères – Archives diplomatiques* in Brussels where, at least until 1841, only a fragment of the original reports from the Ottoman Empire has been preserved, in the above mentioned archives in Vienna and Berlin the number of missing documents is relatively small.

The significance of the Austrian and Prussian Oriental correspondence did not only lie in the fact that it served as a basis for the decision making of the cabinets in Vienna and Berlin in their Near Eastern policy. Information was also transmitted to German newspapers and simultaneously other German courts if it was required. The most interested was the one in Munich because the Wittelsbach family had its prince in Athens and hoped to increase the Bavarian economy through commercial expansion on the Eastern markets via the Danube. Before the foundation of the Bavarian agency in Constantinople, the most important source of information were the Bavarian envoys in Vienna who, with Chancellor Metternich's approval, transmitted news contained in the Austrian diplomatic correspondence and the views of Austrian diplomats and orientalists with whom they talked of the political, economic, military, religious and social matters concerning the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, owing to their inferiority in the diplomatic corps and little participation in the discussions over great diplomatic affairs, the Bavarian diplomats in Vienna had enough time to write about the matters of less importance that were usually omitted in the reports of French or British ambassadors: for example the character of the Ottoman embassy in Vienna and its employees. The relevant documents housed in *Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Munich have also remained unresearched.

It is definitely true that the Austrian and Prussian reports from Constantinople are a secondary source of information, at least in comparison with the content of Turkish and Egyptian archives. Nevertheless, in the case of the correspondence housed in the Austrian capital, one must refer to the fact that their authors were often not people entirely lost in a culturally different milieu. The internunciature and consulates of the Habsburg Empire were mostly occupied by the graduates from the well-known Oriental Acade-

my in Vienna founded by Maria Therese in the mid-18th century. Though men educated in Oriental languages and customs also worked in the agencies of other countries, the difference lay in the fact that in the period under research the internunciature was also led by diplomats who studied at the Oriental Academy and served in Constantinople in their youth. One example is Bartolomäus Baron von Stürmer, the son of another Internuncio Ignaz Lorenz von Stürmer, who was even born in the Ottoman capital and spent his childhood there. Afterwards, he moved to Vienna to study at the Academy and returned for some time to Constantinople to practice. Consequently, when Stürmer junior, and other Austrian diplomats as well, took charge of their duties in the Levant, they not only had the relevant education but also the experience with a region that was not for them as alien and incomprehensible as it could be for career diplomats of other countries sent to the Levant without the knowledge of local languages and customs. Consequently, Stürmer was in a position to be a better observer of events than, for example, French Ambassador Albin-Rein Baron Roussin or his British colleague John Lord Ponsonby. I do not want to claim at all that Stürmer's reports were necessarily more accurate than those written by other members of the diplomatic corps. Nevertheless, one can presume that owing to his childhood and youth spent in Constantinople, Stürmer could better understand the local specifics and was less likely to assess the developments in the Levant according to the stereotypes of European civilization. The content of his dispatches acknowledges the correctness of this supposition to a certain degree.

As for the area covered by the Austrian and Prussian reports, their authors did not limit themselves to the diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europe but also described the internal conditions of the former; however, it is true that sometimes the line between internal and external affairs was not very clear because many of what began as purely internal matters soon became a part of international relations owing to the interference of foreign states. From the themes described by Austrian and Prussian diplomats these can be named as an example: the printing of Ottoman newspapers or paper money, the sending of Ottoman students to Europe, the foundation of military schools, the relations among the Ottoman dignitaries, or the coexistence among religious groups. The internuncios, during the period under research Franz Freiherr von Ottenfels before 1833 and the already named Bartolomäus Baron Stürmer afterwards, generally paid more attention to Oriental events than the Prussian envoys, Alexander Freiherr von Miltitz before 1828, Karl Wilhelm Freiherr von Canitz und Dallwitz from 1828 to 1829, Camille Royer de Luynes between 1829 and 1830, Friedrich Freiherr von Mar-

tens from 1831 to 1835, and finally Hans Graf von Königsmarck after 1835, which surely resulted from greater Austrian involvement and Metternich's extraordinary interest in the Near Eastern affairs.

The Austrian, Prussian and eventually Bavarian diplomats' reports have an interesting common trait: **the positive attitude towards the Ottoman Empire caused by their personal conservative thinking as well as their governments' opinion of the necessity to preserve the sultan's state for the maintenance of the European balance of power.** This attitude was also shared by Austrian prominent orientalists, for example Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall or Anton Prokesch von Osten, and the members of the House of Habsburg like Archduke Johann, **who personally visited the Ottoman Empire in 1837.** Regardless of how much their sentiment towards the Levant was influenced by their own civilizing dogmas, **they almost never attacked the Islamic faith and did not demand the spread of Christianity in the Near East** as did for example Alphonse de Lamartine, and they had a certain admiration for Ottoman society and its customs. These facts are evidenced in **their assessments of Sultan Mahmud II's reformatory attempts** that started after the dissolution of the Janissaries in June 1826 and lasted until this monarch's death 13 years later. The opinions of Austrian, Prussian and Bavarian diplomats were surprisingly concordant in this respect, as it will be generally manifested below. However, the purpose of this paper is not to give full evidence of the attitude of the Central Europe towards the Ottoman reform movement in the 1820s and 1830s but only through a brief analysis of this phenomenon to draw attention to a surprising omission of information resources housed in some Central European archives and simultaneously to the little research that has been done on the relations between the Central European region and the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the 19th century. Since the relevant documents are usually entirely unknown, I find it necessary to quote sometimes longer extracts to give evidence for their authors' judgement.

Mahmud II started his reforms immediately after the elimination of the conservative military force whose weakness became evident in its battles with the Greek rebels. The sultan wanted to create a new regular army and follow the example of his powerful Egyptian Governor Mohammed Ali whose forces showed great combat efficiency in the Peloponnese. This Egyptian influence on the Ottoman court was clearly evident through the fact that Mahmud II watched the first parade of his new troops at the end

of June 1826 in an Egyptian style suit.² **The Austrian and Prussian representatives in Constantinople knew well about the monarch's wish to create a regular army** already before this "*beneficial event*,"³ but the radical measure which opened the way towards this goal was entirely unexpected for them. However, they immediately understood the significance of this important step announcing "*a new era in the annals of the Ottoman Empire*,"⁴ which could and was to be filled with the changes necessary for the modernization of the country. They did not doubt its "*enormous beneficial effect*"⁵ because they were persuaded that the corps of **Janissaries caused "the misfortune of this Empire and retarded its civilization during the centuries."**⁶

The Ottoman ruler hoped to achieve Mohammed Ali's attainments in the land on the Nile or those of **Peter I the Great**, whom he much admired,⁷ in Russia a century earlier. He had in common with them the necessity to overcome the opposition of military elites and, like the former after the destruction of the Mamluks and the latter after the suppression of the Streltsy, Mahmud II, after discharging his own "praetorian guard", turned his attention to Europe, **where he wanted to gain inspiration for the reconstruction of his weak Empire.** Nevertheless, he fell behind both the men he admired in the results. He certainly had a sincere aspiration to renew **the bygone splendour of the Ottoman Empire** and he was an intelligent man with an interest in the **technological progress of the West**, which was manifested, for example, by his greater pleasure at presents like globes, the models of fortresses, leather teams for the battery horses or military musical instruments rather than gifts usually sent like luxurious fabrics or porcelain,⁸ but he lacked a better knowledge of the situation in Europe, which **he had never visited** in

2) Miltitz to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 25. 6. 1826, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (henceforth: GStA PK), HA III, Ministerium des Auswärtigen I (henceforth: MdA I), 7262.

3) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 6. 1826, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien (henceforth: HHStA), Staatenabteilungen (henceforth: StA), Türkei VI, 25.

4) Miltitz to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 23. 6. 1826, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7262.

5) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 22. 6. 1826, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 25.

6) **Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 26. 6. 1826, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 25.**

7) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 26. 8. 1835, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7276.

8) Martens to Frederick William III, Constantinople, 31. 12. 1832, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7272.

contrast to Peter the Great. This probably explains why he did not understand the real reasons for the technological and economic superiority of the West over the Levant and, according to German speaking diplomats, he presumed that it would be sufficient to adopt some of the achievements of the European countries without regard for the different conditions of Ottoman society in order to overcome the enormous differences between the two worlds.⁹ As the Austrian and Prussian diplomats concluded, this led to a headlong westernization often manifesting itself through the adoption of **entirely unnecessary and pointless measures** like the orders concerning the implementation of European-style clothing or the shortening of traditional long male beards, **which were regarded by the sultan as old fashioned**, and therefore could not reach more than two inches below the chin, or that a moustache could not be wider than the eyebrows.¹⁰ When Mahmud II fell ill in June 1839, the Austrians and Prussians did not leave unnoticed the fact that his serious condition was considerably deteriorated by a vice taken from the West: inebriety.¹¹

The blind implementation of Western patterns by Mahmud II, as the Prussians and Austrians generally regarded his reformatory attempts, was in fact an attempt **to build on sand a house** whose foundations were further weakened with the sultan's impatience, in other words his wish to see the results of his reformatory effort during his life. This eagerness can be understood to a certain extent to be owing to his desire to promptly halt the blows that the Empire had suffered in the recent years. On the one hand, it had positive effects when a considerable number of beneficial changes occurred in a short time after 1826.¹² On the other hand, it led to measures that were not only pointless as noted above but also counterproductive, as for example in the army where the attempts to come closer to the West brought changes that did not meet with the approval of European experts like French

General Lieutenant Count Osery, brother-in-law of Marshal Jean Victor Marie Moreau and a hero of the Napoleonic wars in which he lost an arm,¹³ and who stayed in Constantinople in the late 1820s and discussed the conditions of the Ottoman armed forces with Ottenfels. He was very critical and, for example, he could not understand why by that time the good Ottoman cavalry had been changed according to the European model and had thus lost many of its characteristics that had made this component of the sultan's army earlier a respected enemy even among the Cossacks: **"The Turkish cavalry was one of the best units of the Ottoman Empire; it always was superior to the Russian cavalry; what it lacked was good direction and to be employed in an appropriate way. Instead of leaving it as it was and adding brave and intelligent officers who would know how to lead it into combat where it could offer useful and decisive service, attempts have been made to transform it into a European cavalry and to replace their [the Ottomans'] saddles in the Turkish or Cossack style to which they have been accustomed since their childhood with saddles of European style with stirrups in which they do not know how to remain seated."**¹⁴ Osery saw the main problem not in the sultan's lack of will but his ignorance: *"Sultan Mahmud possesses character, capacity and he would like to institute reforms and do good, but neither he himself nor his retinue can discover where they are needed. This ignorance causes one to attach too much importance to the secondary objects and neglect the essential. One believes much has been accomplished through the creation of regiments, guards, columns, and giving them uniforms and brass bands and having them march in the training camps. But one forgets that the enemy advances with forces and it is crucial to halt and defeat it."*¹⁵

Osery's words about Mahmud II's **liking for the form but little understanding of the content** are often repeated in the reports written by the Prussian and Austrian representatives who generally criticised the sultan for a certain level of superficiality in his reform of the state apparatus and the army. Stürmer was convinced that **"all innovations are superficial and in no way affect the disorder at its root, and being more child's play than real progress according to European civilization, they will necessarily have**

9) Anton von PROKESCH-OSTEN, *Über die dermaligen Reformen im türkischen Reiche*, 1832, in *Kleine Schriften*, Band V, Stuttgart 1844, p. 401.

10) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 5. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7278; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 4. and 11. 1. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7279; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 18. 1. 1837, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 66.

11) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 18., 20., 24. and 26. 6. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69; Bockelberg to Frederick William III, Vienna, 30. 6. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7346.

12) Stjepovich [?] to Royer, Pera, 22. 6. 1829, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7267.

13) Metternich to Ottenfels, Vienna, 3. 4. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 39.

14) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 14. 5. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37.

15) Ibid.

to collapse sooner or later.”¹⁶ Königsmarck entirely shared this opinion, which is among other ways evidenced by his ironical appraisal of the reforms made in 1836: “Everything that has been done during the last year [for the Ottoman Empire] to come closer to Europe and civilize itself is limited more or less to the change of the titles Reis Efendi and Kiaya Bey to those of the ministers of foreign affairs and interior, with the elevation of their holders to the rank of pasha; placement of the sultan’s portrait in the barracks and the palaces of the admiralty, the Serasker and the Porte; the nominal division of the Empire into six Mouchiriats (military commands) with the aim to create a militia; the construction of a bridge between Constantinople and Galata that had to be designated under the denomination ‘benefaction of Sultan Mahmud’ in order [for those responsible] not to be penalized; the permission given to the pashas and the prominent dignitaries to travel in a coach with four horses, and the ministers of the second and third class and Ulemas to travel in a coach with two horses; finally, the mintage of coins with the sultan’s portrait but which no one has yet dared to put into circulation and of which several pieces should be distributed among the companions of His Highness to judge through their reaction the effect which would be produced in the public by this innovation contradictory to the religious dogmas that would be pointlessly violated again.”¹⁷

As to the changes carried out in the Ottoman armed forces, Mahmud II only vaguely understood the art of warfare because he never led his soldiers in battle, for which he compensated with a taste for manoeuvres and parades. One cannot wonder that he was interested more in uniforms than in the practical skills of his soldiers and, consequently, the military band seemed to be the best trained part of the army, at least in 1829, but this troop never decides battles.¹⁸ This preference for the form sometimes reached absurd proportions. Königsmarck also negatively assessed the sultan’s actions doing in this regard: “The personal vanity of the sultan, his weak character and his superficial knowledge attach more to the form than to the substance of

things [and] manifest themselves at every step; they are revealed in the huge wooden edifices that he [Mahmud II] orders to be constructed and that when finished fall into ruin, in the fleet anchored along the Bosphorus where it rots but responds to salutes when shown in public, an ostentation that Admiral Roussin indicated to me last year [1836] as a luxury that France or England would not be rich enough to afford. It is necessary to say how little Sultan Mahmud comes close to Peter the Great with whom he likes to be compared when one sees that during the repairs to the fortification on the Bosphorus he had the walls whitened and crowned with wooden towers on which an immense flag with the imperial insignia was raised, that the parades of his troops about which the official newspaper informs from time to time consist of him eating and drinking in the barracks with his favourites, expecting that the soldiers under the windows will fire a quantity of powder to make the maximum noise, and that the visits to the sites have no other purpose than for him to enjoy the spectacle which is offered by a ship that is launched for the first time at sea.”¹⁹

The impact of Mahmud II’s personal deficiencies probably would not have been so serious if he had been surrounded by capable advisors who would have undertaken the obligations for pursuing reforms. However, this was not the case. As Ottenfels wrote in July 1832: “This is not at all the time when Sultan Mahmud can hope to realise the project [of reforms]. His intentions are certainly laudable and one cannot praise enough the determination and perseverance with which he follows his goal. But this sovereign himself is largely inerudite and surrounded by advisors who are too ignorant and too interested in flattering him and hiding the truth to know which proper means he ought to choose for implementing his ideas.”²⁰

The most significant personality among the Ottoman dignitaries in the period under research certainly was Husrev Pasha, who perfectly personified the negative factors hampering the reformatory process.²¹ The Austrian and Prussian diplomats did not deny his intelligence, finesse and re-

16) Stürmer declared this statement in his discussion with his Prussian colleague, see Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 25. 11. 1835, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7276. The Prussian envoy entirely agreed as evidence in Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 5. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7278.

17) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 4. 1. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7279.

18) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 14. 5. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37.

19) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 4. 1. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7279.

20) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 7. 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 54; Two months later he expressed this opinion again: “Mahmud wants to do good, but he lacks capable subjects who could realize his plans.” Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 9. 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 54.

21) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 26. 6. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7281.

markable vigour with regard to his advanced years, but they also jointly and not unjustly accredited **mendacity, cowardice and villainy** to him;²² Miltitz even considered him to be “*the most two-faced, the most contemptible and the greatest traitor of his nation.*”²³ **It is no surprise that Husrev enjoyed no confidence among the German-speaking diplomats** and not only did none of them regret his downfall and banishment in Rodosto in the summer of 1840, almost a year after Mahmud II's death, but the definitive removal of this man from the state affairs was also regarded as a very fortunate event.²⁴

The reason for this attitude did not only lie in the revulsion towards Husrev's character but also in his negative impact on the reformatory effort of his master. **The main interest of this “Ottoman Talleyrand” was to stay in his monarch's favour at any price,**²⁵ and he was really rather successful in this effort. In 1836, he had been a pasha with three tails for 35 years, which was an incredible performance in such an unstable social milieu. However, this success was not particularly achieved by meritorious work to the benefit of the Empire but through intrigues against his opponents, which was anybody who could limit his own power,²⁶ and through an unceasing desire to attract the attention of all sultans he served, often not with important but petty matters making his masters happy. In other words, not the welfare of the Empire but his personal profit was the principal object of his deeds.²⁷

22) Miltitz to Frederick William III, Pera, 10. 2. 1827, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7264; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1830, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 50.

23) Miltitz to Frederick William III, Pera, 10. 5. 1823, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7257; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 30. 3. 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57.

24) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 10. 6. and 16. 7. 1840, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7282; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 6. and 10. 6., 16. 7. 1840, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 74; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 6. 8. 1840, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 75.

25) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1830, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 50; Stieповich [?] to Royer, Pera, 22. 6. 1829, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7267; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 26. 6. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7281.

26) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 14. 5. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 19. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7278.

27) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 19. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7278; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 14. 5. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1830, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 50.

Husrev Pasha was no adherent of radical changes in Ottoman society but he did not oppose the reforms in the army of which he was in charge from 1827 to 1837 as its commander-in-chief (Serasker), and he could also affect its form since March 1838 when he became president of the supreme counsel.²⁸ His rather dubious help in the improvement in the Ottoman armed forces was described by Osery in 1829: “*Serasker Husrev Pasha, who is after the sultan the soul of the military reforms, is the greatest comedian and charlatan of the Empire. He is not lacking in intelligence but it is not that of a statesman or a general of armies; it is the slyness of a false-hearted courtesan that is almost exclusively employed for the flattering of the sultan's affection to conserve the influence that he has gained at the court. It is he who continually suggests new projects to his sovereign, but since he has neither the relevant education nor the range of vision to be able to distinguish what is really great, useful and urgent from what is illusory, secondary and futile, he very often leads the sultan from the right path and encourages his whims. Instead of inducing him to create and improve what could be really useful in the war, he persuades him to spend enormous sums on fantastical clothes of his guards, on the musical instruments and on other objects good in time of peace and in the place for parade.*”²⁹

This view was supported by the statements of the Central European diplomats, among them also by Baron Königsmarck who wrote 7 years later: “*In all seasons and in all weather he [Husrev Pasha] is seen browsing around Constantinople, the Bosphorus and its environs, in a boat, on a horse, in a coach, on foot; he is everywhere and he meddles with everything. But with all this activity he only dabbles in the matters without investigating any; he starts everything but he finishes nothing. A skilful courtier, he would always like to have something new and pleasant to tell his master, to propound several new inventions to him, to propose ameliorations in the military organisation or the civil administration, but he immediately abandons his projects, some of them even sage and beneficial, as soon as he notices that they no more amuse the fickle humour of His Highness. The Serasker seriously cares only for topics that flatter the vanity of the sultan.*”³⁰

28) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 5. 9. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 28. 3. 1838, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7279.

29) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 14. 5. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37.

30) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 19. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7278.

Husrev's most dangerous rival was Pertev Pasha, a high Ottoman functionary with extraordinary intelligence, education and ability to control the affairs of state little seen in the Levant,³¹ according to Ottenfels even "undoubtedly the most learned and capable man among the Turks to direct a ministry."³² On the other hand, the Austrian and Prussian diplomats could not deny his vanity, religious sentiment bordering on fanaticism and his aversion to Europeans³³ which led to his opposition against the reforms in European style. That Stürmer praised Pertev for this fact is evident from his retroactive assessment: "He [Pertev] was not at all the enemy of reform as it is commonly thought but he wanted to get to the heart of the matter and not just its surface."³⁴ The long-term struggle for power with Husrev Pasha ended with Pertev's fall and forced exile in Adrianople in September 1837 and death in November of the same year. This outcome was generally regretted, which is, however, somehow surprising in the case of the Austrians who had some disputes with him.³⁵ Nevertheless, Stürmer reacted to the news of his death with this statement: "As long as Pertev lived, the evil was reparable; today it is without remedy."³⁶

The loss of competent men was a luxury that Mahmud II definitely could not afford. He suffered from a critical lack of intelligent and educated advisors who would support his unsteady throne and his reformatory effort. The sultan was generally surrounded by minions with whom he could hardly proceed; he declared his wishes to improve the situation of the Empire several times during his reign and gathered men to prepare new law-books, but those who were charged with the realisation of his wishes failed because

of their reluctance or incapacity.³⁷ The rise of talented men was aggravated by corruption and the struggle for power, and when someone competent was finally found despite these obstructions, he inevitably became a part of a contest for power which was in progress between different interest groups, and he sooner or later fell into disfavour with his monarch, who was thus cutting a tree on which he tried to climb.³⁸ This situation was accurately described by Königsmarck in the spring of 1838: "They [reforms] do not pursue a fixed and determined aim but change direction in every moment according to personal ideas and views of the individual advisors. And exactly at the moment when a minister seizes with a certain force the reins of the government, a hundred people try to discredit him in the eyes of the sovereign whose suspicion can be raised very easily if one of his servants gains any influence. The sultan's favour substitutes for merit and with this favour his subject obtains or loses a position, fortune or consideration. Therefore, there are intrigues to obtain and conserve the favour and that is why mistrust and jealousy dominate between the employees; a smile of the master suffices for making an adversary of a so-called friend."³⁹

The hope for the improvement in this respect arose at the end of Mahmud II's reign in the personality of Pertev's protégé, Mustafa Reshid Pasha, who was nominated the minister of foreign affairs in June 1837. Despite his obvious affection for the liberal Powers, Stürmer and Königsmarck judged him positively and appreciated his extraordinary intelligence, outlook and sincere wish to regenerate the Ottoman Empire. Their confidence in this man proved to be well-founded after Mahmud II's death.⁴⁰

When Mahmud II overcame the ineffectiveness of his administration, his reforms were often met with incomprehension on the part of the Ottoman society that was not excited by the considerable number of changes established in a short time. And though the conservative forces had lost with the Janissaries the power to resist the sultan's reformatory zeal, scant

31) Brassier to Frederick William III, Pera, 26. 3. 1831, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7270.

32) Lerchenfeld to Ludwig I von Bayern, Vienna, 10. 10. and 12. 12. 1837, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich (henceforth: BHStA), Ministerium des Äußern (henceforth: MA), Wien 2407.

33) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 19. 10. 1836, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7278; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 13. 9. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7279; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 8. 4. 1835, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 63.

34) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 15. 11. 1837, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 66.

35) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 13. and 20. 9., 15. 11. 1837, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 66; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 15. 11. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7279

36) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 15. 11. 1837, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 66.

37) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 6. 11. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7281.

38) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 8. 8. 1838, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7280.

39) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 4. 4. 1838, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7280.

40) Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 14. 4. 1837, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 66; Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 9. 5. and 8. 8. 1838, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7280.

willingness of the inhabitants to accept the new order was often sufficient to hamper the reforms prepared by only a few members of the ruling elite. The opposition to the innovations is also evidenced by the reluctance received by Mahmud II's decision to have two of his children vaccinated by a French doctor, which, according to some Moslems, contradicted the doctrine of predestination.⁴¹

The question of the impact of the changes on the society probably was the most discussed topic in the letters of Austrian and Prussian citizens remaining within the Ottoman Empire. In compliance with their generally conservative thinking, they claimed that the reforms were to be implemented with the respect for traditions and customs of the Ottomans, and particularly with Islam that was for the majority a crucial bond with their ruler, whose authority sprang from his religious as well as his secular power. The Austrians and Prussians presumed that if the Islamic faith remained intact, there was still hope for salvation.⁴² However, the series of headlong changes were too revolutionary for the citizens, were not specified in the reports whether for all or only the Moslems, and what was even worse, they were mostly incomprehensible. Moreover, for the adherents of the Prophet the behaviour of some prominent Ottoman dignitaries had to be at least strange, like that of those who disdained Moslem habits with their improper behaviour in several ways, for example by drinking too much champagne at the evening party held on the British warship *Blonde* on November 4, 1829.⁴³ Royer sighed that with such people close to the sultan at the head of state affairs "there is no prospect for the salvation of the country."⁴⁴

All of the Central European diplomats and orientalist enumerators in the introduction to this paper saw the main problem of the Ottoman Empire not in the technological backwardness behind the West because this evil was repairable if the Ottomans were inclined to progress, but in the scant resolve of a society that was affected with a serious crisis. They shared the opinion that the poorly considered changes contributed to the violation of the links with the past and thus contributed to the Ottomans' scant identification with their own state, that was "proved" by the negligible eagerness

of the inhabitants to take part in the reformatory process they usually did not understand and their lack of will to face hard knocks, as was proved at times of jeopardy. The Ottomans showed almost no willingness to defend the capital when the Russians or Egyptians were practically knocking at its gates, the former in 1829, the latter twice in the 1830s. In these difficult situations, general apathy prevailed among them, between commoners as well as the elite, and the sultan could not count upon their patriotism that would support his unsteady throne.⁴⁵

In late August 1829, a total dissolution reigned in the Ottoman army; neither the rest of regular forces nor the hastily gathered militia were willing to fight. Most of 20 000 defenders of Adrianople threw down their arms and called for peace, and their commander had no other choice than to surrender the city, once the residence of the Ottoman sultans, without giving battle to the Russians.⁴⁶ Several years later, during the war with Mohammed Ali, the situation in Constantinople was no better and a general apathy prevailed among its inhabitants; almost no one was prepared to risk his life for his monarch.⁴⁷ The Prussian envoy sent a rather pessimistic report on the said situation of the Ottoman Empire to Berlin in late March 1833: "The sultan, the Seraglio, the Divan, the Ministry, the Ulemas, the people - Turkish, Greek and Armenian, nothing hangs together, no one even gives a hand to help each other and understands one another; nobody agrees with anything and a remarkable dissolution exists in all areas, in all elements of the state. One would be inclined to say we are stagnating here in a state of barely organised chaos; nowhere is there any energy, any measures, unity, judgment, resolution. This is an ancient ruined edifice that hardly stands on its unsteady columns and seems to have lost its base... finally, the Ulemas start to say openly that it would be better to see and have Ibrahim [Mohammed Ali's son] here than the sultan."⁴⁸ And he continued in this scepticism a few days later: "When one considers the general situation of the Porte, it is as deplorable as it could be. Humiliation is everywhere, patriotism nowhere; there are no

41) Miltitz to Frederick William III, Pera, 25. 5. 1827, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7264.

42) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 25. 2. 1830, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 50.

43) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 11. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37; Royer to Frederick William III, Pera, 5. 11. 1829, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7268.

44) Royer to Frederick William III, Pera, 5. 11. 1829, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7268.

45) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 29. 8. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37; Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 12. 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 55; Martens to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 25. and 30. 3. April 23, 1833, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7272; Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 10. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69.

46) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 29. 8. 1829, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 37.

47) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 10. 12. 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 55.

48) Martens to Frederick William III, Pera, 25. 3. 1833, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 7272.

*supporters of the government; public opinion is always pronouncing against the Russians; there are insufficient preparations in everything and everywhere; there is a total lack of energy in this free-minded and degenerate nation; there are soldiers without experience and leaders without real courage; there is an enemy who seems to gain all hearts; there is disregard for the sovereign; there is a prime minister, a first favourite (the Serasker), who, as well as the rest of the prominent employees, wants above all to retain his position, his richness, his influence. Which state with such elements could save itself?*⁴⁹

The Austrian internuncio's analysis written at the same moment carried itself in the same spirit,⁵⁰ and the same despair can also be found in his reports sent to Vienna in 1839, when the Porte gradually lost its army, monarch and fleet in the fight with Mohammed Ali. In Constantinople a universal desire for peace prevailed though it had to be expected that it would be redeemed by extensive concessions; the lower classes wanted it for fear of their existence, the members of the elite in the hope of preserving their offices.⁵¹ In short *"never were the Turks more depressed. They are beaten, consternated, humiliated, and they even seem to abandon hope in the salvation of the Ottoman Empire."*⁵² According to Stürmer and other German speaking diplomats, this little faith in the long duration of the Empire was a symptom of the deep crisis of the state system and society and was also wide-spread among its members in peacetime when, for example, it used to happen that some old Ottomans stopped the Europeans in the streets and asked them how many years they gave to its existence, whether six, five or even less.⁵³

The sad situation of the Ottoman Empire is underlined by the fact that the government did not try very hard to change this fatalism for fear that with an attempt to raise the national enthusiasm it would lose the control over the course of events.⁵⁴ The apprehension of its own people's disloyalty was not baseless because in difficult times, complaints about the point of any change at the top of the state apparatus including the ruler appeared

in the society, even among the conservative bodies. In the spring of 1833 Stürmer wrote: *"When one warns the Turks of a revolution that could break out in consequence of the events of the day, they tell us: so much the better; we are going so wrong that we cannot but profit from every kind of change."*⁵⁵ One cannot wonder that even the Ottoman forces enjoyed little confidence of their monarch, and sometimes they were not even sent against the enemy for fear of their desertion. This anxiety proved to be entirely justifiable in the summer of 1839 when a considerable part of the army did desert and almost the entire fleet defected.⁵⁶

In general, though **the German-speaking diplomats sincerely desired to see the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire, they never believed it very much**, at times of war as well as peace. They also were not very certain of its long duration and although they did not believe in its imminent downfall, they considered its disorganization to be too general for the Empire to be saved from its definite doom in the future.⁵⁷ However, at least Stürmer and Königsmarck maintained in the mid-1830s that the Porte possessed the means for the retardation of this progress. The latter after a discussion with the former wrote: *"It is true that there are absolutely no material forces disposable at this moment, but I see considerable resources in the richness of the soil, abundance of the mines not yet exploited, and the great morality of the Moslem inhabitants. A nation whose morals and customs are so little corrupted, in which so great religiosity and probity exist, is capable of great things if it once awakes from its lethargy, particularly as the Koran gives latitude to the sovereign, who, if he had the force of character and attainments of Mohammed Ali, could through this backing, as Mr Stürmer observes, indeed become a regenerator of the Ottoman Empire. But as things are placed at present, the zeal of the nation could probably be invoked more by the remembrance of the past and ancient institutions than by continuing with the innovations. The more I observe the Turks, the more I uncover their resemblance to the Spanish people from the interior of the [Spanish] kingdom, not to those from the towns on the sea coast who are poorly behaved and enti-*

49) Martens to Frederick William III, Pera, 30. 3. 1833, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7272.

50) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 27. 3. 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57.

51) Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 10. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69; Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 28. 8. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 70.

52) Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 22. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69.

53) Bockelberg to Frederick William III, Vienna, 15. 1. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 6032; Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 22. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69.

54) Ottenfels to Metternich, Constantinople, 31. 12. 1832, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 55.

55) Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 27. 3. 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57.

56) Martens to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 25. 3. 1833, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7272; Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 27. 3. 1833, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 57; Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 8. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69.

57) Martens to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 23. 4. 1833, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7272

rely corrupted through their contact with foreigners, and who in this comparison seem to be the Greeks of Spain.”⁵⁸

According to the Austrians and Prussians, Mahmud II's changes in the administration and army usually met with little success. With the reforms that were labelled not only by Archduke Johann as “antinational”,⁵⁹ the old offices were abolished and new institutions founded, but their efficiency remained basically unchanged. As to the creation of the new army, in Königsmarck's opinion “all reforms consist in disorganization and destruction, not in creation.”⁶⁰ Upon discussions with leading officials and the members of the sultan's family, Stürmer concluded at the end of Mahmud II's reign that all the parts of the governmental machinery had been debased by the Ottoman sovereign and “since no great man is available, who would grip the government of the state with a firm hand and manage to reorganise all branches of the administration and inspire new zeal in the depressed spirits of the Mussulmans, nothing will be seen other than the decadence and finally the total ruin of the Ottoman Porte.”⁶¹

However, both representatives wished Mahmud II's effort to improve the internal situation of his country well, and they did not assess his personality entirely negatively; more likely they regarded him as an unfortunate man who had become a puppet in the hands of fate. When the old sultan died at the turn of June and July 1839 and left his Empire on the verge of collapse in consequence of the instant and unsuccessful war with Mohammed Ali, Stürmer's evaluation of Mahmud II's personality and actions was quite forbearing, as is evident from the internuncio's hindsight which has the character of a fitting epitaph: “All his life from the cradle was lined with misfortunes. His youth was a long prison, and acceding to the throne wholly imbrued with blood, he seemed to be seated so high only to be able to see better the ruin and dismemberment of the vast Empire governed by his ancestors. All his wars were in vain and all his appeals to the European sovereigns were refused or futile; revolt raised its hideous head everywhere and, not being strong enough to suppress it, he had to withdraw everywhere; his be-

loved son is feeble, his other much-loved children are dead; and since no great minister came to second him and help to carry the load of his burdensome crown, he had to die before accomplishing the vast designs he planned to execute. Such was the career that he had to live through. History will not call him a great man but it will take into consideration what he did and what he wanted to do, and on that account it will assign him a fitting and noble place among the Mussulman princes.”⁶²

58) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 25. 11. 1835, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7276.

59) Lerchenfeld to Ludwig I von Bayern, Vienna, 31. 12. 1837, BHStA, MA, Wien 2407.

60) Königsmarck to Frederick William III, Büyükdere, 4. 1. 1837, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 7279.

61) Bockelberg to Frederick William III, Vienna, 15. 1. 1839, GStA PK, HA III, Mda I, 6032.

62) Stürmer to Metternich, Büyükdere, 1. 7. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 69.