

III

FIRST VIEWS OF EUROPE

IN so vast and varied an empire, to hold the different communities together required a constant and skilful use of the sultan's regulative power. Even at the height of Ottoman strength, in the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, there were not wanting voices to remind sultan and ministers how fragile was the structure, and from the beginning of the seventeenth century a decline in strength was clearly noticeable.¹ It was in fact noticed by writers of the time and its causes understood. What was the precise relationship of those causes, and which of them were causes and which symptoms, are of course questions which cannot be answered. We can at least distinguish a number of 'sequences', each closely linked with the others. The machinery of government decayed; the sultan was the centre of the system, and it could only work well if his control was effective, but from the end of the sixteenth century the long line of intelligent and masterful sultans came to an end, and there began a period of rulers weak in character and intellect and ill trained for their work. The result was a struggle for influence between various factions: groups of officials and army leaders, allied with '*ulama*' and with women and slaves of the palace. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the Köprülü family of ministers checked the decay, by shifting the centre of power from the sultan to the grand vezir (*sadr-a'zam*); the vezir's house, the Sublime Porte, replaced as the centre of decision the domed chamber in the palace where the sultan's council had met, and the head of the vezir's chancery, the *reis-ül-küttab*, became virtual Foreign Minister. But the vezir's control was inherently weak: his appointment and dismissal depended on the sultan's will, and besides he no longer had an effective machine through which to work. During the century of confusion the administration had ceased to work properly; the system of tax-collection had lost its efficiency and

¹ For an analysis of the decline of the Ottoman Empire cf. B. Lewis, *Emergence*, ch. 3.

honesty; the old system of 'feudal' landownership had been allowed to decay; the army was losing its discipline. The process might have been reversed, had not the moral basis of the system also disappeared. The professional '*asabiyya*' of the slave-élite and the '*ulama*' had grown weaker. The rigid discipline and exclusive loyalties of the Janissaries had broken down: their children were allowed to become Janissaries, free-born Muslims were allowed to enter the corps, and membership of it could be bought, sold, and bequeathed. The highest posts in the sultan's service, as ministers, rulers of provinces or commanders of armies, were held more often by free-born Muslims. The fiction that they were slaves of the sultan was retained, but in fact they tended to be drawn more and more from the Muslim *ra'aya*, and to be Turks; for the common language of the rulers was Turkish, and if not Turk by origin they became so by adoption. In the same way, the upper ranks of the '*ulama*' tended to become an exclusive and privileged clique. Possessing from the start the solidarity of a common education, they sent their sons to the great schools of Constantinople from which almost all the highest posts were filled; they were guardians and beneficiaries of *awqaf*, they had social and political influence, and they had special opportunities for securing grants of tax-farms and becoming landowners; what they gained they could hold, for as a religious group they were comparatively free from the danger of confiscation and could hope to transmit their wealth to their children.

While this political change was taking place, the empire was passing through a long-drawn-out economic crisis. Aggravated no doubt by bad administration, its cause was to be found outside the empire, in the geographical expansion of Europe eastwards and westwards. The establishment of European trading posts in the Indian Ocean dislocated the pattern of trade between the empire and the outer world, both Asia and Europe; and the discovery of America had an even greater effect. It led to a flow of gold and silver into the Mediterranean countries and so to a rise of prices which dislocated the finances of the State and brought hardship to the productive classes. The result was an increase in taxation, the decline of agriculture and crafts, and the depopulation of the countryside.

As both these processes continued, the political and the

economic, the authority of the central government in the provinces weakened, and this gave greater freedom of action to local forces. In the provincial capitals the Janissary corps had been the mainstay of order; now they became a threat to order. The corps became in effect a political party, drawing support from a populace swollen by the displaced peasantry coming in from the countryside; it was able to resist authority, and in some places it split into discordant factions or clashed with other privileged groups and so maintained a permanent state of tension. In the countryside, the weakening of the garrisons and drift of peasants away from the villages made it possible for the nomads to move into the settled lands and subject the farmers or else drive them out. The seventeenth century was a time of movement in central Arabia. New tribes were coming into the Syrian and Iraqi deserts and challenging the supremacy of older tribes, like the Mawali, which had established a *modus vivendi* with the sultan's government; they cut the trade routes, on occasion plundered the Pilgrimage, and drove the less warlike tribes over the margin of the settled country. Faced with the challenge of Janissaries and beduin, the Ottoman provincial government changed its nature. In the European provinces the central power kept its control, but in Asia and Africa there grew up semi-autonomous ruling groups: in Asia Minor the 'Lords of the Valley', local officials who had been territorial notables and made their power permanent and hereditary; in Cairo, Baghdad, and Sidon groups of Mamlukes, Caucasian soldiers of fortune bought, trained, and freed by those already there; in Damascus and Mosul, local families accepted by the central government as its governors. Such groups were able to control the Janissaries and sometimes hold back the beduin, to give the settled population an effective administration, to collect taxes and defend the frontiers, and in varying degrees to keep their provinces ultimately loyal to the sultan. But they could do so only at a price. To maintain order they had to raise private armies, and this involved higher taxes. Moreover their rule gave greater power and scope to those local forces which, in the great days of the empire, had been held in a precarious balance by the sultan's regulative power. The notables and '*ulama*' had greater influence over a local than over the central government; and in the countryside the great families of the mountains were able to extend their hold over the surrounding

plains—Ma'n and Shihab, Abi Lam' and Jumblat in Lebanon, Zahir al-'Umar in Galilee, and Baban in Kurdistan.

All these were movements inside the empire, affecting its nature but not, except in the long run, its existence. But from other quarters the empire was faced, in the eighteenth century, with a challenge to its very being. On the desert frontier of the empire, in central Arabia, there arose a movement of reform drawing its inspiration from the Hanbali school of thought. Islam, proclaimed Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–87), is not a mere form of words, an imitation of what others have said: at the Day of Judgment, it will not be enough to plead, 'I heard people saying something, and I said it too'.² We must find out what true Islam is: it is above all a rejection of all gods except God, a refusal to allow others to share in that worship which is due to God alone (*shirk*). *Shirk* is evil, no matter what the object, whether it be 'king or prophet, or saint or tree or tomb';³ to worship pious men is as bad as to worship idols, and it is not simply words and thoughts which constitute *shirk*, but all those acts which imply it—'a man's will to do the acts of this world is a form of *shirk*'.⁴ The true Islam, stated Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, was that of the first generation, the pious forerunners (*al-salaf al-salih*), and in their name he protested against all those later innovations which had in fact brought other gods into Islam: against the later development of mystical thought, with its monist doctrines, its ascetic renunciation of the goods of the world, its organization into brotherhoods, its rituals other than those prescribed by the Quran; against the excessive cult of Muhammad as perfect man and intercessor with God (although great reverence was paid to him as Prophet); against the worship of saints and reverence for their shrines; and against the return into Islam of the customs and practices of the *jahiliyya*.

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's teaching was not, of course, new: through his own family, who were Hanbali scholars, and through his studies at Medina and elsewhere, he had felt the influence of Ibn 'Taymiyya,⁵ although he interpreted Islam with a firm exclusiveness which was alien to his master. But in the circumstances of his time, his preaching was not only a call to repent, it was a challenge to the dominant social forces: on the one side

² In *Majmu'at al-rasa'il*, i. 3.

⁴ In *Majmu'at al-tawhid*, p. 47.

³ Ibid. iv. 5.

⁵ Cf. *Majmu'at al-rasa'il*, iii. 378 ff.

to the revived strength of the Arab tribes, still living in ignorance of religion and *Shari'a*, and on the other to the Ottoman Empire, which stood for Islamic orthodoxy not as the *salaf* were supposed to have conceived it, but as it had developed over the centuries. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was really saying that the Islam the sultan protected was not the true Islam, and he was therefore implying that the sultan was not the true leader of the *umma*. Like other such movements in Islam, his embodied itself in a State, and the challenge of doctrine was also one of power. He joined forces with a small dynasty in central Arabia, that of Ibn Sa'ud, and together they founded a State where Muslims could live the good life in accordance with the *Shari'a* as they interpreted it. In this State the *Shari'a* was to be fulfilled in every detail, and no other laws or customs were valid. Authority lay in the hands of the imam, temporal leader and leader in prayer, but he exercised it with the advice of '*ulama*' and community. By geographical accident and by its emphasis on a return to the first days of Islam, the State was Arab in consciousness; writing of the imamate, a Wahhabi divine says with pride that, if it is to be conferred by choice at least 'the Arabs are worthier of it than the Turks'.⁶ Its appeal however was to Islamic not Arabic solidarity, and in essence it claimed to be *the* Islamic State to which all could adhere. There was implicit in this a challenge to the political authority of the Ottomans, and it was a serious challenge, for its policy in Arabia was to replace the customs of the *jahiliyya* by the *Shari'a*, and the '*asabiyya* of the tribes by the sense of Islamic solidarity, and thus to canalize the warlike energies of the beduin in a perpetual holy war. By the end of the eighteenth century the Wahhabis were in control of central Arabia and the Persian Gulf, and a little later they had sacked Karbala' on the fringes of Iraq, occupied the Hejaz, and were threatening Damascus.

At the same time, there was taking place beyond the frontiers of Islam a movement which was destined to be of even greater consequence for the empire: the scientific revolution in western Europe, and the growth of military and economic power which was a result of it. In the sixteenth century the Ottomans had seemed likely to make themselves masters of Europe; they were still strong enough, a century later, to capture Crete, threaten

⁶ *Majmu'at al-rasa'il*, ii, pt. 3, p. 169.

Vienna, and fight the European Powers on equal terms. But they proved unable to assimilate the new discoveries in the art of warfare as they had accepted those of an earlier age, and by the second half of the eighteenth century they could no longer fight the Powers on equal terms. The result was an increase in the diplomatic influence of the Powers at Constantinople. But since the Powers were at variance with each other and looked on their influence with the sultan as an instrument of rivalry, the growth of influence meant also an increase of conflict, and the Ottoman government was able to snatch from the rivalry a certain precarious independence of action. While the balance was being maintained at the centre, however, it was overturned at the edges. In the war of 1768–74 Russian ships landed troops in Greece and at Beirut, and Russian armies advanced through the Balkans and the Caucasus; at the war's end the sultan had to give up the Crimea, then a mainly Muslim region and the first such to be lost. The British and French navies also sailed freely through what had been once the Ottoman waters of the eastern Mediterranean, and before the end of the century had involved an Ottoman province in their conflict. It was in the course of their struggle with England that the French occupied Egypt in 1798, and it was only with British help that the Turks were able to drive them out.

Even in provinces where there was no military threat, the influence of the Powers was felt. Each European consulate was a centre of influence, around which there grew up a group of protected subjects, Ottoman Christians or Jews who were given some of the privileges of foreign status. European protection extended indeed beyond individuals to whole communities. Since the sixteenth century the Capitulations had given France the right to protect European Catholics, their chapels and chaplains, in Ottoman territory, and she had gradually extended this into a general protection of Ottoman Catholics and European missions working among them. The largest and most important Catholic community was that of the Maronites. Living mainly in Lebanon, they had accepted Papal supremacy during the Crusades and had had direct and continuous relations with the Vatican since the sixteenth century; from 1649 they had direct relations too with the King of France, and French influence was strong among them. As other Catholic communities grew up,

they too were under the protection of France, and of Austria to a lesser extent. The sultan had never accepted this formally but he acquiesced in it up to a point, the more so when he needed France's support against Russia. For their part the Orthodox Christians, and particularly the Greeks, had a connexion with Russia. From 1774 Russia claimed a legal basis for it in the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji, and the political implications of this were great, for the Orthodox were the largest and most powerful Christian body in the empire.

The Orthodox and other Christian communities indeed were growing in wealth, culture, and influence throughout the eighteenth century. Foreign protection gave them not only political advantages, but commercial and financial also, as middlemen in the trade with Europe. In particular the Greeks, Armenians, and Arabic-speaking Syrian Christians grew rich, and with wealth their standard of culture rose and their communal consciousness was sharpened. This was particularly so of the Greeks, with the still vivid memory of Byzantine greatness. Deprived of political power when Mehmed conquered Constantinople, they had won it back in another way. The Patriarch of Constantinople, always a Greek, was civil head of the whole Orthodox 'nation', and during the eighteenth century he succeeded in bringing it all under his control, either suppressing the other patriarchates or filling them with his nominees. In the same period, the great Greek families of the Phanar filled almost without interruption certain offices of influence in the State: those of Dragoman of the Porte, Dragoman of the Navy, governors of Wallachia and Moldavia. By the end of the century the Greeks had the confident spirit of a people ruling others and conscious of increasing strength, and they were becoming aware of a new world of ideas and riches in Europe and possible friends and allies there. The ideas of the French Enlightenment were brought back by students who had learnt them in the University of Padua, the first national schools were being opened and associations formed, and links with Russia were growing closer.

There had been a time when the Ottomans were quick to learn from Europe if it was in their interest to do so. In the great days of conquest they had made use of the skill and knowledge of

renegades from central Europe, and had adopted European improvements in the art of war. Their expansion into Egypt and Syria at the beginning of the sixteenth century had been made easier by their use of gunpowder and firearms, their navy had made full use of the new techniques of navigation and naval strategy, and the geographical discoveries of the Renaissance had soon been known in Constantinople. Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror had some more general interest in European civilization. He invited Italian painters and men of letters to his court and had the works of Ptolemy and Plutarch done into Turkish. Perhaps his interest sprang from military need, for Italian painters were also experts in fortification, and useful information could still be got from Ptolemy, but it seems to have stirred in him a genuine curiosity. Such curiosity, however, was rare in later times. After the first long age of greatness the empire lost its dynamism and much of its political skill, and could no longer adapt itself to change at a time when change was rapid and great. The scientific discoveries aroused no echo—there is no mention of Copernicus in Ottoman literature until the end of the seventeenth century, and then only a fleeting one⁷—and the army and navy did not adopt the new technical improvements. By the middle of the eighteenth century the evidence of decline was too strong to be ignored. The sense of decline indeed seems to have been present since the early seventeenth century. One sign of it was the sequence of works, from Kocu Bey onwards, which set forth with perfect clarity the causes of decline; another perhaps was the interest in Ibn Khaldun, whose *Muqaddima* was translated into Turkish in the eighteenth century and seems to have been widely known. But as the century went on the diagnosis and prescription changed. The earlier writers had exhorted the sultans to restore the institutions of the great past, but now the empire needed something more. To defend itself, it must find European allies against its European enemies, and open itself to the new military techniques of the modern world. It was these needs which were to create the first group of political westernizers in the Near East.

As early as 1720 a special ambassador had returned from France with an admiring report, and from the 1730's the Ottoman government made a number of attempts to create a new

⁷ Cf. Adnan, *Science*.

army on European lines. In that decade a French renegade, De Bonneval, was asked by the sultan to open a school of military engineering. It did not last long, because of opposition from the Janissaries, but a generation later, in the 1770's, a school of mathematics for naval officers was set up. Its first teacher was an Algerian who knew the languages of Europe and its textbooks were European works translated into Turkish.⁸ In 1789 there came to the throne a sultan with ideas of reform, Selim III. He started a far-reaching reform of the army. Training schools were opened, mainly with French instructors, except in the years after the invasion of Egypt, when Franco-Turkish friendship was broken for the moment. Italian and French were studied in these schools, and some had libraries of French books, mainly but not wholly technical. By this time, moreover, books on mathematics, navigation, geography, and history were being translated into Turkish and printed at the first Turkish press, established in the 1720's under the patronage of the government. There was thus a certain stirring of thought when the French Revolution came to strengthen it. It was the first event of European politics which the Turks observed closely and which had a profound impact on them, and it led, among other things, to French diplomats mixing more than before with Ottoman officials and statesmen.⁹

It was these first impulses and ideas which Selim III tried to canalize. In 1792 he asked the leading persons of the empire to write reports on what was needed. Most of them agreed that there must be military reform with the help of European officers and technicians, but it should be so carried out as to leave the *Shari'a* untouched and not arouse the hostility of conservatives.¹⁰ For the next twenty years Selim tried to carry out these ideas. But his attempt to create a new model army did in fact arouse hostility: that of the Janissaries who, seeing their position threatened, rose in revolt with the support of '*ulama*' and populace and deposed Selim. After a period of confusion there came to the throne Mahmud II, who had shared Selim III's imprisonment and thought as he did; but, learning the lesson of Selim's failure, he had to wait twenty years before there came into

⁸ Toderini (Fr. trs.), i. 162.

⁹ Cf. B. Lewis, 'The Impact of the French Revolution on Turkey', *J. World Hist.*, i (1953), 105-25.

¹⁰ Cf. N. Berkes, 'Historical Background of Turkish Secularism', in R. Frye, ed., *Islam and the West* (1957), p. 56.

existence two factors which enabled him to overcome the opposition of the Janissaries.

The first was the gradual formation of a group of reformers with a certain knowledge of the modern world and a conviction that the empire must belong to it or perish. Some were army officers trained in the new schools, conversant with European languages and acquainted with a modern technique. But there were others, trained in another way, and who in the event were to have greater influence: the young diplomats and diplomatic interpreters. In its early ages the empire had relied for foreign news and diplomatic skill on Jews and European renegades; as the supply of renegades ran out it began to look more to its Greek subjects, and specifically to a few great families of the Phanar, with their inherited political knowledge and skill and their grasp of European politics derived from wide contacts and study in Italy. But their loyalty was not always above suspicion, and relations between the Ottomans and Europe were becoming too close and delicate to be conducted through interested intermediaries. From the end of the eighteenth century the Porte began to open embassies in Europe and send young officials there to study the languages and politics of Europe, and later it opened a translation bureau at the Porte itself.

By the 1820's and 1830's therefore there existed Ottomans who, without being torn from their roots, had become members of the European community and were conversant with its ideas. Such a one was Ahmed Vefik Pasha, whose grandfather had been the first of the new Turkish interpreters, and whose father had worked in the embassy in Paris, where Ahmed Vefik himself was educated. A generation later he was to become grand vezir and as such to have close relations with the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Layard. Layard had known him when he was young, and has left us a portrait of him and of his father. The father was 'a perfect Turkish gentleman, of the most refined manners, and of very dignified appearance, with his snow-white beard and his turban and robes'. What a world of difference seems to separate him from his son:

His acquaintance with English and French authors would even have been remarkable in one who had received the best European education. . . . We read together the best English classics—amongst them the works of Gibbon, Robertson, and Hume—and studied political economy

in those of Adam Smith and Ricardo. . . . We also made him read . . . the plays of Shakespeare, which he understood and appreciated, and the novels of Dickens, into the spirit of which he thoroughly entered. . . . He took so much delight in 'Pickwick' and the other works of Dickens which had then appeared, and was so well acquainted with them, that he was constantly in the habit of quoting from them in afterdays . . .¹¹

Another such was Mustafa Reşid Pasha, who had his early training in the 1830's as a diplomat in Paris, and there 'acquired the French language, and through it had studied much of the political literature of Europe'.¹² It was from this study that he derived the convictions which were to direct the policy of the empire for half a century, through him and others like him. The empire must become a modern centralized State, and this involved several conditions: first of all, the creation of a modern army and therefore of an educated corps of officers; then the use of the army to re-establish the control of the central government over the semi-autonomous and virtually independent provinces, and by so doing to lessen the danger of revolt and foreign intervention; and the creation, throughout this reunited empire, of a new system of law and administration based on the principle of the equality of all citizens.

In 1821 there came to the surface of Ottoman life another force which was to play as large a part in the subsequent history of the empire as the idea of 'westernizing' reform, and which indeed was an expression of it. There broke out, in Rumania and Greece, a revolt of the Greeks. In one aspect it was an attempt to overturn the religious and therefore also the political balance in the eastern Mediterranean, and replace Turkish Muslim by Greek Orthodox supremacy; but it was also a national revolt, drawing its inspiration from the memory of ancient Greece rather than Byzantium, and aiming at the creation of a free State in the ancient homeland of the Hellenes. The Ottoman army showed itself unable to master the revolt, which ended—after European intervention—in the recognition of independent Greece. This was a decisive event in the history of the empire. From then on, the other Christian peoples began to think increasingly of national revolt and rallying the forces of liberal Europe in their favour. Among those who wished the empire to continue, the idea of reform gathered strength, for only through reform could the

¹¹ Layard, *Autobiography* (1903), ii. 47–50.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 87.

loyalty of the subject peoples be won and the support of western Europe assured. In 1826 Mahmud felt strong enough to take the first, indispensable step towards reform. He disbanded and destroyed the Janissaries, and not a finger was raised in their defence even among the religious conservatives; perhaps their failure to suppress the Greek revolt had broken their hold on the popular imagination. This event opens a half-century of reforms (known collectively as the *Tanzimat*). After that it was possible to create a new army with the help of French and Prussian instructors and use it to end the autonomous rule of 'lords of the valleys' in Anatolia, some of the princes of Kurdistan, and the Mamlukes of Baghdad. Other reforms too were carried out: schools were established to train officers, doctors, and civil servants, educational missions sent to Europe; an official newspaper was created; the last fiefs were abolished and the administration of *awqaf* reformed; the central government was re-organized, and—a symbolic act—modern dress adopted for official purposes.

All these, however, were piecemeal reforms, and did not touch the central problem, which was that of the moral and legal basis of the empire, and the place of the Christian subjects within it. It was not until 1839, shortly after the death of Mahmud, that his successor Abdülmecid, at the instigation of Reşid Pasha, issued the first general statement of the principles of reform, the Gülhane decree:¹³

All the world knows that in the first days of the Ottoman monarchy the glorious precepts of the Koran and the laws of the empire were always honored. The empire in consequence increased in strength and greatness, and all the subjects, without exception, had risen in the highest degree to ease and prosperity. In the last one hundred and fifty years a succession of accidents and divers causes have arisen, which have brought about a disregard for the sacred code of laws and the regulations flowing therefrom, and the former strength and prosperity have changed into weakness and poverty; an empire in fact loses all its stability so soon as it ceases to observe its laws. . . .

Full of confidence, therefore, in the help of the Most High, and certain of the support of our Prophet, we deem it right to seek by new institutions to give to the provinces composing the Ottoman Empire the benefit of a good administration.

¹³ Text in *Düstur*, i. 4 (Eng. trs. in Hurewitz, i. 113 ff. and Ubicini, *Letters*, i. 527).

The starting-point of this preamble is the traditional Islamic theory of the State. States are virtuous when they obey the *Shari'a*, and when they are virtuous they are also stable. But what is new is the deduction made from this premiss: when virtue and strength grow weak, there is a need not only for moral reform but for a change in institutions. The decree then goes on to ask what the new institutions should be. They

must be principally carried out under three heads, which are

1. The guarantees insuring to our subjects perfect security for life, honor, and fortune.
2. A regular system of assessing and levying taxes.
3. An equally regular system for the levying of troops and the duration of their service.

And, in fact, are not life and honor the most precious gifts to mankind? What man, however much his character may be against violence, can prevent himself from having recourse to it, and thereby injure the government and the country, if his life and honor are endangered? If, on the contrary, he enjoys in that respect perfect security, he will not depart from the ways of loyalty, and all his actions will contribute to the good of the government and of his brothers.

If there is an absence of security as to one's fortune, everyone remains insensible to the voice of the Prince and the country. . . . If, on the contrary, the citizen keeps possession in all confidence of his goods, then he feels daily growing and doubling in his heart . . . his devotion to his native land. These feelings become in him the source of the most praiseworthy actions.

A number of practical steps were then suggested: the abolition of tax-farming, fixed and limited expenditure on the army and navy, regular conscription, public and regular justice, guarantees for the rights of property and against arbitrary confiscation, regular payment of officials and strict laws against corruption. These measures would apply equally to all the sultan's subjects, of whatever religion or sect they might be. In the presence of the *'ulama'* and the great men of the empire, the sultan would swear to carry them out, and they too would swear to it. The decree would also be communicated to the ambassadors of friendly Powers, so that they might be witnesses of the grant of these institutions.

The general nature of the proclamation is clear from its own words. It was a unilateral declaration of the sultan's intentions as

absolute monarch, but given by him something of the nature of a contract with his subjects and with the Powers of Europe. It left the structure of Islamic law formally untouched but in fact aimed at changing the State from an Islamic sultanate to one in which adherents of all religions would equally be members of the political community, and in which all would share in the sentiment of patriotic loyalty. In the next twenty or thirty years its intentions were partly translated into law. Central and local government were reorganized further, conscription introduced, civil, criminal, and commercial courts set up, a new penal code and a new commercial code promulgated. In 1856, during the Crimean War, the sultan issued a further declaration of principles: the *Hatt-i Humayun*, which defined his aim as being the happiness of all his subjects alike, confirmed all the guarantees given in the previous decrees, and all spiritual privileges ever given to non-Muslim communities, and declared that there would henceforward be no inequality on grounds of religion, language, or race, in regard to the holding of government offices, entry into government schools, the payment of taxes or the rendering of military service.¹⁴ In the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war in the same year, the contracting Powers took note of this decree, communicated to them by the sultan and declared to have 'issued spontaneously from his sovereign will'; but they stated that this communication did not give them the right to intervene either collectively or separately in the relations of the sultan with his subjects or the administration of his empire.¹⁵

The careful phrases of the treaty showed the weakness inherent in the method of reform. All depended on the will of the sultan. In 1845, it is true, an assembly of provincial notables was summoned to discuss the affairs of the empire, but it had no effect; government remained in the hands of the sultan, and in fact his power was tending to increase, as old institutions which had exercised a check on it were replaced by new ones emanating from his will, and the new codes of law grew up alongside the *Shari'a* which had for so long been sovereign. Abdülmecid and his successor Abdülaziz were on the whole willing to work with the reforming statesmen, but they were weak, capricious, and at

¹⁴ Text in *Düstur*, i. 7 (Eng. trs. in Hurewitz, i. 149).

¹⁵ Fr. text in *State Papers*, xl. 8.

the mercy of their advisers. It was only intermittently, and with the aid of the British and French ambassadors, that Resid Pasha and his disciples Fuad and Ali (both of them former diplomats) were able to secure the ear of the sultan and carry out the reforms they believed to be necessary.

Against them they had the religious conservatives, who wished to preserve the traditional basis of the Ottoman State, either because their own interests were bound up with it or because they regarded it as being in conformity with the will of God, and the only guarantee of stability: for example, they successfully delayed the application of the new commercial code, claiming that it dealt with a sphere of life in regard to which the prescriptions of the *Shari'a* were detailed and precise. Opposition came also from those who did not object to the reforms in principle but believed they could not be applied in a State such as the Ottoman Empire. Declarations like those of 1839 and 1856 would in fact give the Powers a new opportunity to intervene, no matter what the treaty of Paris said. Not only that, they would give a new freedom to the subject peoples to strengthen themselves and revolt. The Christian peoples of the Balkans had their own national sentiments and desired independence; the sentiment of Ottoman patriotism existed scarcely at all. Thus the reforms, these critics suggested, rested on an untried principle which nobody really believed in, and would destroy those principles on which the strength and indeed the being of the empire depended: the authority of the Islamic law and the supremacy of the Turkish Muslim element. It would be better therefore to preserve the ancient system but purify it of corruption and inefficiency, while waiting for the slow change of sentiments which would make it possible to introduce new institutions safely. Such was the view of Ahmed Vefik, the lover of *Pickwick*:

An attempt to introduce, wholesale, European institutions into Turkey, and to engraft European civilisation upon the ancient traditional Turkish political system, before it was prepared for so great an innovation, could not possibly prove successful, and must inevitably so weaken the Ottoman Empire that it would lose the little strength and independence that it still possessed.¹⁶

(In his old age this same Ahmed Vefik was able to put his principles into practice. After the grant of the Ottoman constitution

¹⁶ Layard, *Autobiography*, ii. 89–90.

in 1876, he became president of the first elected chamber, and his firm control of the debates showed he had lost none of his suspicion of institutions he regarded as out of place and dangerous.)

This indeed was to remain the problem of the empire throughout the last century of its existence: how to introduce into the body politic those changes in institutions and political morality which, in the modern world, were the sources of strength? There were distant provinces of the empire, however, where government was autonomous and the population homogeneous, and where reform therefore posed no such problems and had more success. Such was Egypt, to which the ideas of the French Revolution came embodied in a European army. The last great historian of the ancient tradition, al-Jabarti (1756–1825), was living in Egypt when Bonaparte's army landed, and in his description of the coming of the French we can see implicit the whole ambivalent relationship of modern Egypt and modern Europe. He describes how one day English ships arrived off Alexandria. A small boat was lowered and ten Englishmen came ashore. They met the notables of the city and told them they were searching for the French fleet. 'You will not', they said, 'be able to drive them off. We shall stay here with our fleet to defend your port, and we want nothing of you except water and food.' But the notables replied: 'This is the sultan's country, neither the French nor any other people have any rights in it. Please go away.' Their defiant spirit was echoed by the Mamluke *amirs* when the news came to Cairo: they received it with indifference, saying 'Let all the Franks come, and we shall crush them beneath our horses' hooves.'¹⁷

On the morrow of his occupation of Alexandria, Bonaparte issued an Arabic proclamation. It began with the traditional Muslim invocation—'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate; there is no god but God, He has no offspring and no partner.' But the next phrase invoked a new principle: this proclamation, it declared, was issued by the French Government, which was 'built on the basis of freedom and equality'. It then proceeded to apply these principles to Egypt. In the eyes of God all men were equal, except in intelligence and virtue. The Mamlukes had neither intelligence nor virtue, and therefore had

¹⁷ Jabarti, iii. 2 ff.

no right to rule Egypt and control all that is good in it. They had ruined 'this best of countries', destroyed the great cities and canals for which it was once famous. Now their rule was over, and henceforth nobody among the people of Egypt would be excluded from high position. The men of virtue and learning among them would direct affairs and the state of the *umma* be improved. The proclamation ends with a rousing peroration: 'God curse the Mamlukes and improve the condition of the Egyptian *umma*'.¹⁸ (The same lesson was repeated in another proclamation, issued a little later when the great *diwan* was established: the Turks have ruined Egypt by their greed. Now the French nation (*ta'ifa*) have come forward to free Egypt from her present state and give her people rest from the oppression of this government.')¹⁹

The main appeal is then to national sentiment, but mixed with it is an appeal to religious sentiment:

It has been said to you that I have only come to this country in order to destroy your religion. This is a clear lie; do not believe it. Say to the slanderers that I have come to rescue you from the hands of the oppressors. I worship God (may He be exalted) far more than the Mamlukes do, and respect His Prophet and the glorious Quran . . . O shaykhs, judges and imams, officers and notables of the land, tell your people that the French also are sincere Muslims; the proof of it is that they have occupied great Rome and ruined the papal see which was always urging the Christians to attack Islam, and from there they have gone to the island of Malta and expelled from it the Knights of Malta who used to claim that God wanted them to fight the Muslims. At all times the French have been sincere friends of the Ottoman sultan and enemies of his enemies.²⁰

This was not simply what the modern world would call 'propaganda'. As a child of the French Enlightenment, Bonaparte may well have regarded Islam as being nearer to the religion of reason than was Christianity, and until the end of his life he kept his lively interest in it. Moreover in denouncing the Mamlukes and professing respect for the 'men of virtue and learning', he was sketching out the policy he proposed to follow: to transfer local power from the Mamluke *amirs* to the '*ulama*', the popular leaders of Egypt and the only alternative ruling class. Even had his stay in Egypt lasted longer, however, it

¹⁸ Jabarti, iii. 4-5.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 23.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 4.

is unlikely that he would have succeeded in ruling in partnership with them, for in the eyes of the *'ulama'* no benefits he could bring to Egypt would have outweighed his being a non-Muslim ruling a Muslim land in defiance of the sultan, and it is unlikely that any Muslim was taken in by his assurances. Jabarti was himself a shaykh of the Azhar, and he begins his account of the French occupation by saying that this was the beginning of a reversal of the natural order and the corruption or destruction of all things.²¹ He does not hesitate, it is true, to give credit to the French when he sees things of which he can approve—the Institute with its pictures, maps, and books, its scientific collections and experiments; the French *savants* with their enthusiasm for learning, and the warmth of their welcome to Muslim visitors who shared a genuine interest in science. But he was always conscious of the danger to religion and morality inherent in non-Muslim rule: the arming and training of Christian soldiers, the powers given to Coptic tax-collectors, the 'pernicious innovations' introduced into the legal system, and the corruption of women—for even the daughter of the greatest religious notable, the Shaykh al-Bakri, had mixed with the French and dressed like a French lady, and was executed for it when the Turks came back.²²

Possibly some memory of the proclamation and the Institute lingered on among the shaykhs of the Azhar, and perhaps too the methodical French administration, which Jabarti admired, left its mark on the mind of Muhammad 'Ali, who came to power in the confusion caused by the departure of the French. By 1805 he had established himself as ruler and been recognized by the people of Cairo and the sultan. He started to modernize Egypt on lines similar in some ways to those of Selim and Mahmud. By the massacre of the Mamlukes and the confiscation of their lands, he destroyed the main obstacle to his own power and to reform, and on the ruins of their army and government he built his own. He created a modern army and navy, trained by French officers, and a relatively efficient, centralized system of administration and taxation. His reforms were less doctrinaire than those of Selim and Mahmud, and carried out primarily to strengthen his own position *vis-à-vis* his sovereign, his subjects, and the Powers of Europe. Himself a man of no education, who

²¹ Ibid. p. 2.

²² Ibid. pp. 35–36, 171, 142, 20, 170, 202.

only learnt to read in his forties,²³ he was not so responsive to the political ideas of modern Europe as were the sultans of his time. He had, it is true, some interest in books, but only for what they could teach him in the art of government. Books about Napoleon were translated and read to him, and he had Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima* copied from North African manuscripts and translated into Turkish.²⁴ He listened with less admiration to a translation of Macchiavelli made at his command by his minister, Artin. Artin relates that he translated it for the pasha at the rate of ten pages a day:

But on the fourth [day] he stopped me. 'I have read', he said, 'all that you have given me of Macchiavelli. I did not find much that was new in your first ten pages, but I hoped that it might improve; but the next ten pages were not better, and the last are mere commonplace. I see clearly that I have nothing to learn from Macchiavelli. I know many more tricks than he knew. You need not translate any more of him.'²⁵

Muhammad 'Ali issued no proclamation of rights, and made no attempt to reform the political institutions of the country. Apart from one large advisory council called in 1829, he governed in the traditional way: decisions were made by him personally, after full and free discussion with his advisers. The '*ulama*' were not among his closest advisers; as spokesmen and leaders of the people of Cairo they had helped to put him in power, but that a ruler should destroy those by whom he has attained power was one of the lessons he knew without reading Macchiavelli. Whether he intended it or not, his destruction of the systems of tax-farms and interference with the *awqaf* struck at the root of their social position and of the system of Islamic schools. In their place and that of the Mamlukes he formed a ruling group which included Turkish, Kurdish, Albanian, and Circassian soldiers, and also Europeans, Armenians, and others conversant with the politics and finances of Europe. Popular interest in politics was discouraged: to a student who told him that he had studied civil administration in Paris, he replied sternly: 'It is I who govern. Go to Cairo and translate military works.'²⁶

But he had a certain vision of modern Europe, of a dynamic society rationally exploiting its resources and administering its

²³ Senior, *Conversations*, ii. 174.

²⁵ Senior, ii. 174.

²⁴ Rustum, iv, no. 6249.

²⁶ Heyworth-Dunne, p. 168.

affairs, with national strength as the criterion of law and policy. Although he sometimes acted as champion of Ottoman Islam, for example when he destroyed the Wahhabi power in Arabia at the request of the sultan, his policy on the whole was one of religious equality: Christians and Jews of all nations were welcome in Egypt, their rights were guaranteed and their commercial activities encouraged, and among his closest collaborators were Armenians. He was more fully aware than his Turkish contemporaries of the real basis of western strength, the scientific organization of production. He created the basis of Egypt's modern economy, the intensive cultivation of cotton on irrigated land, and he began also to create a modern system of transport and marketing. With less success he tried to create modern industries, for which there existed neither the skilled labour nor the internal market. In all this he may have been influenced by the followers of Saint-Simon who spent some years in Egypt in the 1830's, working as doctors, engineers, and teachers, and helping him to design and execute the first great modern work of irrigation in Egypt, the barrages on the Nile. Saint-Simon's vision of a model society directed by a priesthood of scientists, and with the system of scientific truth taking the place of the religious systems which had broken down, is not likely to have appealed to him, even had it been explained in familiar terms; but the exaltation of industrial development and the planned economy was in line with his own interests.

It was largely in the interest of his military policy that he opened professional schools, sent students to Europe, set them to translate technical works when they returned, established a press to print the translations, and an official newspaper to publish the texts of his decrees and decisions. He needed artillery officers, doctors, and engineers. It was not his intention that they should acquire more than a necessary skill: they were kept under strict control, and when a group of students asked his permission to make a tour of France and acquire a knowledge of French life at first hand he refused it.²⁷ But with new skills new ideas were bound to enter, and the schools and scholastic missions had an influence greater far than he could have intended. The first teachers in his schools were Italians, and Italian—then the *lingua franca* of the Levant—was the first European language

²⁷ Heyworth-Dunne, p. 166.

to be taught. But it was soon replaced by French, and with French there came in the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. As early as 1816 their works were in the library of one of the schools.²⁸ From 1826 onwards organized missions were sent to France: they read French books and saw French life at one of those moments of revolution when the conflict of general ideas is embodied in the clash of opposing forces. Most of the students of the first schools and missions were Turks or Levantine Christians, but later the Egyptian element grew larger, and it was this element which was to form the first intelligentsia of modern Egypt. Already in the 1830's it was beginning to play a part in affairs: its members were translating and publishing other than purely technical books; it worked closely with the Saint-Simonians to bring about a reorganization of the schools,²⁹ and from its ranks came the first considerable political thinker of modern Egypt, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi.

To the Arab Muslims of Syria the new knowledge and ideas came more slowly. The great families of the cities played their part in local politics but took almost no direct share in the government of the empire as a whole. It was not indeed until the end of the nineteenth century that they began to send their sons into the civil administration by way of the professional schools. At the beginning of the century their connexions were rather with the religious order, which was still untouched by ideas of reform when not hostile to them. Nor did they feel, as did the similar class in Egypt, the intellectual and social shock of European occupation. Bonaparte tried but failed to occupy Syria. Had he succeeded, it is not certain that he would have attempted to apply the same policy, of relying on the religious notables as the spokesmen of national opinion. In the proclamation which he addressed to the peoples of the country he made no appeal to 'Arab' or 'Syrian' feeling. Once more he declared it to be his intention to drive out the Mamlukes (by 'Mamlukes' here he meant the military group formed by the ruthless Jazzar, governor of Sidon), and promised to do no harm to the people or their religion. But he addressed himself not to a 'nation' like the 'Egyptian *umma*', but simply to 'the inhabitants of the districts of Gaza, Ramle, and Jaffa'.³⁰

²⁸ Heyworth-Dunne, p. 110. ²⁹ Ibid. pp. 181-204. ³⁰ Jabarti, iii. 49.

The Christian population of Syria, on the other hand, had already been touched by some aspects of European thought. It was in the sixteenth century that the Catholic Church began to establish its first regular contacts with the eastern Christian communities. Jesuit and other missionaries were sent to the Near East, not only to bring the dissident Churches into the Roman fold, but to reform the doctrine and discipline of the Maronites and such other elements as already accepted Rome's supremacy. The Maronites made a Concordat with Rome in 1736, and from that time had a regular relationship which guaranteed their hierarchy, liturgy, canon law, and customs, while safeguarding their doctrinal orthodoxy and acceptance of the Pope's supremacy. The work of the missions gradually created similar Uniate groups within the other eastern Churches—Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic, Syrian Orthodox, and Nestorian. After a struggle for power within the patriarchates and bishoprics in the early eighteenth century, these groups emerged as *de facto* separate Churches, each under its own patriarch, although they received no civil recognition from the Ottoman government until the nineteenth century. Thanks to the missions, and under the protection of France, there grew up a network of Catholic schools wherever there were Catholic, or potentially Catholic communities, but particularly in Lebanon and at Aleppo. At the heart of the Catholic Church, in Rome, there were created a number of colleges to form an educated and orthodox Catholic priesthood: the Maronite and Greek Colleges, and the College of the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*.

From the Christian communities created or strengthened by the missions, there sprang a group of educated men aware of the new world of Europe and indeed in some sense a part of it. By the end of the sixteenth century there was an educated priesthood, in particular among the Maronites and Greek Catholics, of exemplary life and discipline, and with a knowledge of Latin and Italian and the culture to which they were the key, as well as a deeper knowledge than before of their own oriental languages and antiquities and the history and customs of their communities. Some of them, like the famous scholars of the Assemani family in Rome, and the Maronite priests who taught Arabic at the Sorbonne, made great contributions to European knowledge of the Near East, and some of them widened the horizons of their

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own communities by translating or adapting works of western Catholic theology. The *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas was translated in full at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

It was under the impulse of the colleges and missions too that monasteries following the rules of western monasticism began to be created at the end of the seventeenth century, particularly in Lebanon, in the free and secluded mountain valleys and under the protection of the great families, the Jumblats who were Druzes as well as the Khazins who were themselves Maronites. These monasteries too became centres of learning and education, for local seminaries and village schools grew up under their shelter. Such schools taught laymen as well as clergy, and so in course of time there grew up a class of educated laymen, who found scope for their talents as clerks and confidential men of affairs for the local rulers. Already in the seventeenth century the prince of the mountain, Fakhr al-Din, had begun to use Maronite priests in his delicate exchanges with the courts of Europe, and later the Turkish rulers of the Syrian coast, the governors of Tripoli and Sidon, began to employ in their financial administration Christians of supple mind and with a good knowledge of Arabic. Before the end of the eighteenth century Syrian Christians had taken over the administration of the customs in Egypt, and when Muhammad 'Ali succeeded the Mamlukes he too made use of them in his financial control as well as his relations with the local rulers of Syria.

These educated laymen were scholars as well as officials. In the early eighteenth century a number of Christians in Aleppo set themselves to master the sciences of the Arabic language, acquiring them from the only group which possessed them at that time, the shaykhs of the Muslim religious hierarchy. Some of them wrote poetry and prose correctly and with love, and it was from them that the flame of Arabic literature was carried to Lebanon. Those who wished to be officials studied Arabic avidly as part of their professional training, and passed on what they had studied to their children. Whole families of men of letters grew up in this way, and it was from such families—Yaziji, Shidyaaq, Bustani—that there came, in the early nineteenth century, the founders of the literary renaissance of the Arabs.

In the eighteenth century trade between the Near East and

Europe was changing its character. The European merchant colonies in the Ottoman towns were dwindling, partly because of the difficulties of trade in insecure regions, and partly because they could find higher rates of profit elsewhere. Trade was passing therefore into the hands of oriental Christians and Jews, who had the advantage of consular protection and a knowledge of European languages and business methods. The Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews of Damascus, Aleppo, and the coastal towns, like the Greeks and Armenians, were able to build a trading network reaching from their own native towns to Alexandria, Livorno, Trieste, and Marseilles, and in this way there grew up yet another group with a direct knowledge of European life, the first Near Eastern group to have mastered the technique of modern trade and finance.

In so far as these groups, priests, clerks, and merchants, acquired a European culture, it was mainly a theological culture. The literature of Catholic theology and devotion they accepted and read, but neither the polite literature of Europe nor its political ideas seem to have impinged on them until well on into the nineteenth century. But the new interest in the Arabic language had of course a profound influence on their mental life. It led first of all to a new stirring of historical self-consciousness. Some of the educated clergy studied with eagerness the antiquities of the Arabs as well as the history of the eastern Churches, and among clergy and laity alike there grew up also an interest in secular history. In Lebanon there grew up a school of historians the centre of whose interest was the peculiar history of the mountain: the formation of its two religious communities, Maronites in the north and Druzes in the south, the growth of a princedom and a hierarchy of noble families which included them both, the establishment and maintenance of virtual independence as against the Mamluke and then the Turkish rulers of the surrounding country.

The first important historian was the Maronite Patriarch, Istifanus al-Duwayhi (1603–1704). Educated in the Maronite College at Rome, he knew Latin and Italian as well as Arabic and Syriac, and made use of William of Tyre as well as al-Mas'udi. In form, his main work—the *Ta'rikh al-azmina*—was a history of the Maronite Church and people, their patriarchs and secular chiefs, their struggles against the Jacobite heresy and

the intervention of Muslim rulers; but in its later part it became a history of the emergence of Lebanon as a territorial unit, of the establishment of its autonomy and unity. The writing of local history started by Duwayhi was carried farther by a sequence of historians, both clerical and lay, and culminated in two comprehensive works, summing up the political history of Lebanon and containing by implication a doctrine of what Lebanon was. The Amir Haydar Shihab (1761–1835) wrote a history of the country which was in effect the history of his own family. He had a number of collaborators, and one of them, Tannus al-Shidyaq (1794–1861), wrote a history of the noble families of Lebanon, Maronite, Druze, and Muslim; its concept of Lebanon is of a hierarchy of families, where family alliances and the common interest of preventing the encroachments of the Ottomans outweigh differences of religion.³¹

Haydar Shihab is not unaware of the history of Europe, and indeed he interrupts his local narrative to describe the French Revolution and Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt. For him, as for the Turkish historians of the time, the Revolution is primarily destructive, an upsurge against the established authority of the king. But some consciousness of the positive doctrines lying behind the Revolution seems to have come into Lebanon through Lebanese merchants who had contact with the French army in Egypt and some of whom acted as interpreters. In a writer of the next generation, we have a record of a self-taught mind awakening to the scientific ideas and speculations of the French Enlightenment. Mikha'il Mishaqa (1800–88), although of Greek origin, was born in a village of Lebanon and brought up in the little mountain-town of Dayr al-Qamar. His family was not devoid of culture and his father taught him the rudiments of learning; but he was largely self-educated, under the impulse of a curiosity which awoke at an early age and led his mind far beyond the confines of his village:

Mikha'il's thoughts turned to the knowledge of arithmetic, but at that time there was nobody in Dayr al-Qamar who knew more than addition, and if for example someone wanted to find out how much seven *rutls* would cost, when the price of a *rutl* was 17½, he had to write the price down seven times and then add it up. . . . He used to hear from the Jews about eclipses of the sun and moon before they

³¹ Cf. Salibi; Hourani, 'Historians of Lebanon', in Lewis and Holt.

happened. They claimed, as they still do, that their rabbis knew how to calculate the times of the eclipses, and did not admit that they received them in the yearly almanac from Europe; and I used to believe their lies. . . . I attached myself to one of them . . . who told me he was an expert in fixing the times of eclipses, and at the time I did not know what that meant in the way of precise calculations . . . so I asked him to teach me and paid him for his teaching. I continued to go to him for some months, and he made me promises but never admitted his ignorance, until I despaired of him and left him. . . . Then, in the year of 1814, there came to us from Damietta my maternal uncle Butrus 'Anhuri. . . . He got out his books and I looked at what was written on their spines: I found on the spine of one of them *The 'Science of Astronomy* by the Frenchman De Lalande', on a second 'De Lalande—*The Position of the Stars*', on a third 'The commentary of the Archimandrite Anthimus Ghazi on the book of the Englishman Benjamin about natural science' . . . with other books on other subjects. . . . I opened them and found them all written by hand in Arabic, for those which were originally in a foreign language had been translated by Basili Fakhr, French Consul in Damietta. And when I came upon them . . . I was exceedingly joyful, for I believed that once I should know them the secrets of the universe would be spread before me. . . . I asked my uncle, 'Do you know astronomy, and if so how did you learn it?' . . . and he said to me . . . 'When Bonaparte came to Egypt with the French army and occupied it in 1799 the English blockaded him from the sea and trade came to a standstill; I did not waste my time, but I worked hard learning the French language. There were many learned men among them, and from them I became aware of the new discoveries in astronomy and natural science and geography' . . . Then in the year 1817 my father sent me to Damietta to my paternal uncle. . . . [There and then] my thoughts about matters of religion were troubled . . . especially when I saw many of the people of Damietta, Muslims and Christians, more troubled than I was. And my disquiet was increased by reading the book of voyages of the Frenchman Volney, in which he talks about his journey in Lebanon and his visit to the ruins of Palmyra (for at that time M. Basili Fakhr was occupied with translating books into Arabic and translated this book, although there were then no presses to print them in the land of Egypt). . . . In this year also I worked hard at mastering the science of music and the art of playing musical instruments both string and wind.³²

Like all strong rulers of Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali wanted a friendly or subservient régime on his eastern frontier, and by the 1820's he was in a position to secure it: he had created an

³² Mishaqa, *al-Jawab*, pp. 61–65.

army strong enough to master any opposition from his suzerain the sultan, and established a position of influence with the local rulers of Syria. In 1831 he sent his army into Syria, and conquered the country with small difficulty. For almost a decade his son Ibrahim Pasha ruled it. Here as in Egypt the age of Muhammad 'Ali began a new phase in the knowledge of Europe. The country was opened more widely than before to European travellers and residents, to traders, missionaries, and curious observers. It was placed for ten years under an administration of a new type, and one based on the principles spread by the revolutionary government of France: centralization, a trained and disciplined army, the scientific exploitation of natural resources, equality as between adherents of all religions. The equality of Christians and Muslims seems indeed to have been emphasized by Muhammad 'Ali more in Syria than in Egypt. They sat side by side in the local councils which he established; Christian soldiers from Lebanon were used to put down Druze and Nusayri risings; and Ibrahim's chief advisers were the Christian financier Hanna Bahri and the prince of Lebanon, Bashir Shihab, whose own beliefs were obscure but who relied for support on the Maronites and himself died a Catholic.

By a paradox, however, it was the modern nature of Muhammad 'Ali's government which in the end aroused Syrian opposition, and the new sense of religious equality which he tried to create found expression in an alliance of religious communities against him. In the late 1830's Ibrahim tried to extend to Lebanon and other mountainous districts the modern principles of regular taxation, disarmament of the civil population, and universal conscription. The result was widespread discontent. At the same time, Ibrahim, having defeated the Ottoman army at Nezib, marched into Asia Minor, and this was taken by all the European Powers, except France, as a threat to the existence of the empire and therefore to their interests. A coalition was formed to compel Muhammad 'Ali to withdraw his armies not only from Asia Minor but from Syria, and one of the measures of compulsion was to give arms and other help to the discontented elements in Lebanon. There broke out a revolt against Ibrahim and against Bashir, who remained loyal to him; and in the documents of this revolt we can hear a new note—that of men of different religions co-operating in defence of interests derived

from living in a common home country. In May 1840 leaders of the different communities met together in the church of St Elias at Antilyas near Beirut, and swore to work together loyally in common resistance to the attempt of Bashir and the Egyptians to impose disarmament and conscription:

We, the undersigned, Druzes, Christians, Shi'is and Sunnis, living in Mount Lebanon and drawn from all its villages, have met at St Elias and sworn on the altar of the saint that we shall not betray nor harm each other. We shall speak with one voice and have one opinion.³³

Europeans played a large part in preparing and organizing the revolt. There were British agents in Lebanon, in particular Richard Wood, a young member of the staff of the British Embassy in Constantinople, a master of the languages and politics of the Near East, who had performed already a delicate function in Kurdistan and was sent to Lebanon to establish contact with the potential opponents of Egyptian rule. He lived there for two years under pretext of learning Arabic. There were also one or two Frenchmen in Lebanon at the time, who in spite of the general policy of their government, were opposed to Ibrahim and supported the movement against him. Perhaps one can see the influence of such men in the proclamation issued by the insurgents to their fellow countrymen, and which brings us at a jump into the modern world of mass movements and national spirit:

Patriots!

You all know of the injustices committed by the Egyptian government, the heavy taxes and extortions under which the whole of Syria is crushed, so that ruin has fallen on many families. In spite of their well-known spirit of independence the people of Lebanon have borne with patience the oppressions of tyrannical authority, out of respect for the Amir Bashir, and in the hope that at least this patience of theirs would secure their honour, freedom and existence.

If we have not taken up arms earlier to deliver ourselves from an oppressive power, it is because we have placed our hopes in the benevolent and patriotic intervention of our prince, which would have secured a respite from our sufferings. But alas, this iniquitous government has shown him no gratitude for the services he has given it. . . . Let us be sure in advance that late regrets will not save us if we are divided, or if we hesitate an instant to make a common effort for the recovery of our freedom.

³³ Khazin, i. 2.

So that we should act with dignity and force . . . there should be held a meeting of those among us who are best known for their high position and intelligence. This meeting should be composed of five leaders elected by a majority in each district, and all or some of them should form a council to meet in some convenient place in order to establish a perfect organization. . . . The members of this council should be constantly in touch with one another, so that we should be able to provide quickly for the defence of our threatened fellow countrymen, to save ourselves from slavery and injustice, and to confound all the tricks of a hated government which will never succeed in dividing us. Already the Greeks have given us an example, and secured their freedom with the help of God.³⁴

In spite of the mention of the Greeks, this is not an appeal to independence. The revolt was taking place with the help of the Powers, whose policy was to restore the authority of the sultan in Syria. The insurgents professed willing obedience and submission to the sultan.³⁵ But the idea of freedom is in the proclamation by implication, and those who issued it were quite clear where it came from; for at the same time they issued an appeal to the French Ambassador to abandon support of Muhammad 'Ali and help them to escape from oppression:

France, that great and magnanimous nation which has spread freedom in every place and has shed so much blood over the centuries to establish liberty in its government . . . now refuses us her powerful support so that we may enjoy this same blessing.³⁶

Ibrahim Pasha and his army withdrew to Egypt, Ottoman rule was restored, Bashir was deposed in favour of a weak member of his family. A little later the new prince was in his turn deposed by the Turks, and the principedom came to an end. Lebanon was divided into two districts, ruled by a Maronite and a Druze governor respectively. There followed twenty years of crisis, during which the growth of European influence and the spread of western ideas added a new dimension of danger to local conflicts. The removal of the framework of political unity, the intervention of Britain and France, the attempts of the Turkish government to impose direct rule on Lebanon, as well as the measures which Bashir had taken during his reign to weaken

³⁴ Khazin i. 3; cf. Testa, iii. 74.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 11; cf. Testa, iii. 81.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 13; cf. Testa, iii. 82.

the power of the Druze nobles: all these factors led to a tension between religious communities such as had not existed earlier. But the communal tension was something more as well; it contained in itself undertones of social and intellectual unrest. The social balance between Druzes and Maronites was shifting; but so also was the internal balance of the Maronites themselves. The landowning families in the mountain were losing their local authority in the face of two challenges: that of the religious hierarchy, growing in influence and sometimes using it to support the peasants in their conflicts with their lords; and that of the merchants of the ports, both Europeans and Levantines, who imported manufactured goods and exported silk, and were gradually taking over the economic functions of the landowners. The Christian educated class was also increasing rapidly. Under the Egyptians Catholic and Protestant missions were able to work more freely than before. They began to establish schools on a larger scale and a higher level, to write or translate textbooks and print them at their presses, and from the schools there was emerging a new class of educated men with a knowledge not only of Arabic but of one or more European languages, and some knowledge also—whether their teachers intended it or not—of the ideas of the nineteenth century.

The tension and the crisis to which it led, had therefore two aspects: it was a struggle of Druzes to maintain their traditional supremacy, but also a struggle of Maronite nobles against the forces of change. The religious conflict of 1860 was preceded by a social conflict: in 1858 the peasantry in the purely Maronite district of Kisrawan revolted against their lords of the Khazin family. Led by a village hero, Tanyus Shahin, they evicted the Khazins at the beginning of 1859 and set up a 'republican government' with a rough system of popular representation.³⁷ When war between Maronites and Druzes came in 1860, it led to a Druze victory and a massacre of Christians in Damascus. The Powers intervened, France with an army and the others diplomatically, and after discussion in Beirut and Constantinople an Organic Law was drawn up which settled alike the social and the religious conflict. Lebanon was to be ruled by a Christian governor appointed by the Sublime Porte, but he was to be assisted by central and local councils representing the different

³⁷ Yazbak, *Thawra*, p. 87 (Eng. trs. p. 53).

communities and chosen after consultation. The communities would be equally represented; all individuals would be equal before the law and all 'feudal' privileges were abolished.³⁸

Far to the west, the Regency of Tunis had been a dependency of the Ottoman sultan since the sixteenth century, but had soon become virtually independent, paying tribute but managing its own affairs and to a great extent its foreign relations. From the seventeenth century power had been in the hands of a local military group, and since the early eighteenth a family springing from that group, the Husaynis, had held the office of Bey. In the first half of the nineteenth century the Beys found themselves faced with a decline in internal order and security and the extension of the commercial influence of Europe. To restore their authority they began to build up a modern army and change the methods of administration; and to pay for the army and civil service and restore prosperity they began to encourage foreign merchants to settle. But this created new problems. The growing interests of the foreign merchants and money-lenders gave the Powers a chance to intervene, and the officers of the modern army became the carriers of new political ideas. To remove the legitimate grievances of the foreign communities, to rally the support of the men with new ideas, and to create among all parts of the people firmer roots for their rule, Muhammad Bey issued his own version of the Turkish reforms, the '*ahd al-aman*' of 1857.³⁹ In the preamble, reference is made to the public interest (*maslaha*) as the principle of interpretation of law: 'God . . . who has given justice as a guarantee of the preservation of order in this world, and has given the revelation of law in accordance with human interests'. The document then goes on to expound the principles on which public interest depends: first liberty, for man cannot attain prosperity unless his liberty is guaranteed, and he is certain of finding a shelter against oppression only behind the ramparts of justice; secondly, complete security; thirdly,—and this is implied in the second point—complete equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. They should be equal before the law, for this right belongs equally to all men; and foreigners too should have the same rights as

³⁸ Fr. text in *State Papers*, li. 288.

³⁹ Text in Bayram, ii. 11 (Fr. trs. in Fitoussi & Benazet, i, app., p. iii).

Tunisians, they should be able to exercise all trades freely and buy property. Three years later, in 1860, a sort of constitution was issued.⁴⁰ The first constitution to be issued in any Muslim country in modern times, it is not clear whose ideas were behind it. They may have been those of Richard Wood, the British Consul-General, whom we have already met in his early life in another country; but Tunis is not far from Italy, there were Italian political exiles at the Bey's court, there were Tunisian officials who knew French and had visited France, and it is not difficult to find several sources through which the idea of a constitution may have come. It is in any case a cautious document, admitting the principle of representation only within limits and leaving executive power in the hands of the ruler. The ruler must swear to do nothing contrary to the *'ahd al-aman*, and is responsible for his acts before the Supreme Council; but the Supreme Council itself is to include ministers and officials as to one-third of its members, while the other two-thirds are to be nominated by the ruler in the first instance, and then to co-opt new members at regular intervals.

The experiment in constitutional government did not last long, but broke down a few years later because of financial crisis, unrest among the tribes, the pressure and rivalry of England and France, and the desire of the Bey to keep his unrestrained power. But this period left its mark: it helped to form a new political consciousness in Tunis, and to bring to the front a group of reforming statesmen, officials, and writers who were to play a considerable part, in the face of difficulties, until they were scattered by the French occupation in 1881.⁴¹ This group had two origins: one of them was the Zaytuna mosque, the seat of the traditional Islamic learning, where the influence of a reforming teacher, Shaykh Muhammad Qabadu, was felt; the other was the new School of Military Sciences, established by Ahmad Bey, with an Italian administrator, British, French, and Italian teachers, and the same Shaykh Qabadu as teacher of Arabic and the religious sciences.⁴² The students of these two schools achieved position and exercised influence in the army, as ministers and as government teachers; their unquestioned

⁴⁰ Fr. text in Fitoussi & Benazet, i, app., p. x.

⁴¹ Cf. Ibn 'Ashur, *al-Haraka*, lecture I.

⁴² Monchicourt, p. 298.

leader was the first supervisor of the military school, Khayr al-Din, then a young Mamluke in the Bey's service, but later to become Prime Minister at a critical moment and the author of a book we shall consider.