

How a Diplomat Becomes a Statesman and Changes the Empire?

Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha and His Contributions to Ottoman Reform Era

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ABSTRACT

Ali Pasha is one of the leading actors in the political developments of the Ottoman reform era (Tanzimat Period). As a career diplomat, he served fourteen years as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and eight years as Grand Vizier and played an important role in making Sublime Porte an administrative center. He educated himself on western values and culture during his service in European capitals. He gained foreign minister Reshid Pasha's appreciation and patronage which was the most important factor in his rapid rise. He successfully used his diplomatic ability in several critical issues which the Empire faced during the problematic years of the nineteenth century. He was well respected by the western statesmen. He managed to get the support of Britain and France to balance the Russian aggressiveness towards the Empire. He transformed not only the foreign ministry but also the entire state system including the judiciary, education, military, and finance. During his service, he supported the idea of Ottomanism and he tried to include the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire in the state's bureaucratic apparatus. During his time, effective central control over the empire was established. With his death in 1871, the Ottoman reform era came to end, and the Empire was faced with rebellions and wars that lasted for decades. Unfortunately, official history education in Turkey mostly ignored his value and contributions to Ottoman modernization.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ottoman reformist movements started with Sultan Selim III (r. 1789 -1808) and continued with successive sultans Mahmud II (r.1808 to 1839), Abdülmecit (r.1839 to 1861), and Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76). It would not be an overestimation to establish a cause-and-result relationship between sending permanent ambassadors to Europe and the Ottoman reform movement. The reformist Ottoman ministers and prime ministers during the reform era also had diplomatic service backgrounds in one European capital, especially in Paris, London, and Vienna. The first level witnessing of the European way of life, politics, diplomacy, business, justice system, and liberal values enlarged their vision. When these diplomats took over critical assignments at home, their widened perspective in European capitals led them to execute Ottoman versions of what they basically experienced in their previous posts.

This diplomat-reformist minister-prime minister chain starts with Mustafa Reşid Paşa, also spelled Mustafa Reshid Pasha (1800-1858). He became an ambassador in Paris in 1834 when Sultan Mahmud II reactivated permanent ambassadors again that year. He studied western civilization, improved his French Language skills, and developed friendly relations with French and British statesmen. He supported the westernizing reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, who appointed him foreign minister in 1836.¹

Mahmud's successor, Sultan Abdülmecid I, was determined to continue his father's programs, and with the recommendation of Mustafa Reshid Pasha, he declared the first Ottoman Reorganization act (Tanzimat), elaborated in the form of a rescript, on November 3, 1839. This program guaranteed Ottoman subjects' equality and security of life and property, without distinction of race and religion. Although not all these provisions were realized, Reshid became the symbol of westernizing reforms. Between 1839 and 1858, he was twice appointed minister of foreign affairs and served six times as grand vizier.²

Reshid Pasha became a supporter and mentor of two younger diplomats, especially Mehmed Emin Ali (1815-1871) and Mehmed Fuad (1814-1869). With his assistance and guidance, later both became Pasha, foreign minister, and prime minister. Three of them together were appointed 13 times as foreign ministers and they held the post during almost the entire reform period (1839-1876).³ They became greatly influential and during their time,

¹ Ahmet Gündüz, '19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devlet Hayatında Rol Oynayan Üç Büyük Devlet Adamı: Mustafa Reşit, Ali ve Fuat Paşalar- Three Great Statemen During the 19th Century Ottoman Empire ', *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları-Turkish World Research*, no. 185 (April 2010), p.75.

² <https://www.britannica.com>, access date November 10, 2022.

³ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, 2007), p. 60.

diplomatic skills became a decisive factor in the solution of at least some of the major problems. The Ottoman reforms in diplomacy gave the Empire the chance of playing off one great power against another. Able diplomats Reshid, Ali, and Fuad Pashas certainly postponed the inevitable demise of the Empire. It was quite natural, in the mid-nineteenth century, these foreign ministers became prime ministers and vice versa.⁴

This study tries to explore the life and diplomatic success of one of the three prominent Ottoman statesmen, Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha. It aims to clarify how an Ottoman diplomat who served in the Ottoman embassies in three capitals, Vienna, Paris, and London, used his diplomatic knowledge and intellectual capacity to solve the eminent political problems of the Empire during the 19th century, which is also categorized as the “longest century of the Empire”⁵. The next section explains the start of the Ottoman reform era and the rise of the diplomatic corps. The third section will discuss Ali Pasha’s life and his assignments in the bureaucracy in general and then his contributions to Ottoman diplomacy and the state system in detail.

II. TRANSFORMATION IN THE EMPIRE

1. The Beginning of the Ottoman Reform (Tanzimat) Era:

The Ottoman reform area can be divided into three periods: the reigns of Sultan Selim III and Mahmud II (1789-1839), the era of the Tanzimat (reordering) reforms (1839-1876), and the Hamidian period (1876-1909). The Tanzimat era had a deep impact on non-Muslim groups in the empire, especially through the two royal decrees of Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane (The Noble Edict of the Rose Garden) or *Tanzimat Fermanı* in 1839 and Hatt-ı Hümayun or *Islahat Fermanı* in 1856. The first edict assured to extend reforms to all Ottoman subjects, regardless of the creed of religious affiliation, while the second edict promised equality among the empire’s subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Noble Edict of the Rose Garden also gave rise to the concept of being an Ottoman subject. Both decrees were intended to secure the loyalty of the empire’s Christian subjects at a time when nationalist tensions were rising in its European part. Consequently, they tried to merge the notion of Ottomanism by breaking down the religious and cultural autonomy of the millets (religious communities).⁶

⁴ Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, ‘The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy’ in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?* ed. Nuri Yurdusev, (New York, 2004), p. 137.

⁵ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı - The Longest Century of the Empire*, (Ankara 1987).

⁶ Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford University 2014), p.8.

The Noble Edict of the Rose Garden was promulgated in the name of the sultan to an assembly of Ottoman notables and foreign diplomats. It was assuring to reform in four basic areas: a) The establishment of guarantees for life, honour, and property of the sultan's subjects; b) An orderly system of taxation to replace the system of tax farming; c) A system of conscription for the army; d) Equality before the law of all subjects, whatever their religion.⁷

One of the crucial obstacles to the Ottoman reform movement at the time of Sultan Mahmud II's reign was the lack of capable men to assist him in his effort to regenerate the weak state. This was also highlighted in various embassy reports. As an example, an Austrian representative in Istanbul, Franz Baron Ottenfels, mentioned, in 1832, Sultan Mahmud II was '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'.⁸ That is why knowing that Ottoman Empire was lacking competent, educated, and incorruptible personalities at the top of the social hierarchy, Austrian Chancellor Metternich has a close connection with Western-oriented Reshid Pasha. According to his envoy in Istanbul, Reshid was 'the only living Turk who can passably set the machine in motion under the given conditions' There was also correspondence between Reshid and Metternich. During the period when the Noble Edict of the Rose Garden (November 1839) was promulgated, Reshid Pasha asked Metternich for advice on the re-organization of the Ottoman administration.⁹

Metternich no longer considered the Ottoman Empire a threatening enemy as the two sieges of Vienna were a distant memory by the early 19th century. He believed that the existence of the Ottoman Empire was crucial against a possible Russian expansion along the western coast of the Black Sea and its administration in the Balkans also constituted a barrier. Austria's expansion to the Balkans during the period 1815-1848 was economically impractical. Metternich believed that the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire would lead to the Great Powers quarreling over its vast territorial heritage. As a firm supporter of the absolute monarchy, Metternich welcomed the content of the Noble Edict of the Rose Garden. He believed that rather than a constitution, it was a Magna Carta of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰

In his communication with Europeans, Reshid Pasha believed in the necessity of two issues and aimed to provide their help and support in this regard. First, the territorial integrity

⁷ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 53.

⁸ Miroslav Sedivy, 'Metternich and Mustafa Reshid Pasha's Fall in 1841', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 39:2 (2012), p. 262.

⁹ Miroslav Sedivy, 'p. 275.

¹⁰ Miroslav Sedivy, 'Metternich and Mustafa Reshid' p. 272.

of the Ottoman Empire is essential for the future of European peace. In addition, for the protection of British and French interests, the integrity and future of the empire must be defended against Russia and the separatist movement. The second is to obtain European approval and assistance, strengthening the Ottoman Empire by modernizing it through reforms. He firmly believed that Ottoman Empire's internal and external problems could be only solved by Westernizing the Empire.¹¹

It was a continuing discussion in Turkish Historiography about the main drivers of the Ottoman reform. One opinion suggests that the Great Powers forced the Ottoman administration with the threat of division to carry out the changes needed to improve the living conditions of its subjects. Another opinion emphasizes that the reforms were started by the Ottoman Sultans and reformist bureaucrats. The impact of the pressure or the recommendations from the West could not be put aside, however without the determination and insistence of the western-oriented cadre those reforms would not have been implemented.

2. Translation Office and the Rise of Capable Diplomats:

Knowledge of European languages especially French became a key qualification for advancement in Ottoman state service and the best place to learn was in the translation department.¹² There was a desperate need for Ottomans with knowledge of Europe, of European science and technology, and thus of a European language. Because of the language problem, diplomatic transactions and negotiations had traditionally been conducted by translators. From the 18th century, translation tasks had been held by members of the Phanarite Greek families of Istanbul. The Greek uprising meant that they were no longer considered loyal and reliable by the Porte, and they were dismissed in 1821. This left the Ottoman government with a serious communication problem at a time when diplomatic contacts were becoming more and more important to the survival of the empire. In 1833 the Translation Office was officially established. In a short time, it emerged as an important training institution where the young bureaucrats were taught to read, write and speak French- the diplomatic language of the day.¹³

In 1834, when Sultan Mahmud II re-established the Ottoman embassies in the major European capitals. The new Ambassadors took with them younger Ottoman scribes from Translation Office. Service in the Translation Office and in one of the embassies are two

¹¹ Gündüz, '19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti' p.75.

¹² Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge 2000), p.80.

¹³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 47.

elements of the reformist Ottoman bureaucrats of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ As a minor office, the translation department quickly became the main site of political prestige and mobility within the Ottoman bureaucracy. Personnel of the translation department rose to be among the most important bureaucrats of the 19th-century Ottoman empire.¹⁵ The architects of the reforms of the Ottoman Empire that began in 1839 — Reshid Pasha, Fuad Pasha, and Ali Pasha — were all graduates of the Translation Bureau.¹⁶

III. ALI PASHA AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

1. A Self-made Diplomat:

Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha, seven times Minister of Foreign Affairs and five times the Grand Vizier throughout his life, is a very important character for the fate of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. Besides protecting the Empire from Great Powers' interference, he also kept Russia away from the straits and tried to adapt his country to the modern age.

Ali Pasha was born in 1815 in Istanbul as Mehmed Emin, son of a lowly gatekeeper. His formal education did not go beyond the first three years of primary school. Thereafter on his own, he educated himself.¹⁷ After the loss of his father in 1830, he started to work as a lowly clerk in the Imperial Council (*Divan-ı Humayun*). A year later he was transferred to Records Department of the Imperial Council (*Mühimme Kalemî*).¹⁸ He learned official writing procedures and accounting. He was also talented in languages, he already knew Arabic and Farsi, and he studied French during his first years in government service. He was given the *nom de plume* of Ali, meaning great or high. His given name Mehmed Emin was soon forgotten; he first was known as Ali Efendi, later as Ali Pasha, a high civilian rank.¹⁹

In 1836, Ali Efendi was assigned as a lower-level official at the Ottoman Embassy of Vienna. One year later, at the age of 22, he was appointed the second secretary of the Embassy for his intelligence, studiousness, steadfastness, and dedication as well as his rapid progress in French. Later, he became the counselor to Reshid Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador to the Court of St. James (London) in 1838. The appointment was to be a turning point in his life because

¹⁴ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 45.

¹⁵ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, p.80.

¹⁶ Fuat Andic and Suphan Andic, *Reforming Ottoman Governance: Success, Failure and the Path to Decline*, (New Jersey 2014), p. 122.

¹⁷ Fuat Andic, *The Political Testaments of Richelieu and Ali Pasha*, (2009), p.5 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1416210, accessed 3 November 2022.

¹⁸ Rasim Marz, *Ali Pascha – Europas vergessener Staatsmann*, (Berlin 2016), p.262.

¹⁹ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.6.

Reshid Pasha was to play a pivotal role in the history of the Ottoman Empire and Ali Efendi became a protégé of Reshid Pasha.²⁰

After the death of Sultan Mahmud II in 1839, Sultan Abdülmecid acceded to the throne. The new Sultan, who was only 18 years old, called Reshid Pasha to Istanbul and appointed him as foreign secretary and shortly thereafter as grand vizier. He left Ali Effendi in London as *chargé d'affaires*, because he was the only person who could explain to the British politicians the necessity for the British Empire to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.²¹

Ali Effendi returned to Istanbul in the same year and was assigned to the Translation Department which was working as the secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the conflict with the Egypt governor, he realized the power of diplomacy when he witnessed the Ottoman request for assistance from Russia due to the military defeat of the Empire against its own governor. As a successful student of Reshid Pasha, Ali Efendi observed Reshid's efforts in constituting a coalition with Britain to get its support for the question of Egypt's governor Mehmet Ali Pasha. He also realized how Reshid Pasha became the architect of the Anglo-Turkish alliance by offering a trade agreement to Britain, which lowered the Ottoman customs for British goods.²²

He witnessed the preparation of the first Ottoman reform document (Reform Edict-Tanzimat Fermanı). At the age of 25, he became the undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry. He got acquainted with European Diplomacy and its actors during the Foreign Ministry of Resit Pasha. He designed the agreement which solved the Egypt problem, dated May 22, 1841, with new Foreign Minister Sadık Pasha. In July 1841, European states signed the convention which includes the arrangements of the Turkish Straits.²³

Ali Efendi was assigned to London as an Ambassador at the age of 27, in 1842. He worked in harmony with the diplomatic circles and developed close relations with other ambassadors, especially Russian Ambassador Philipp Graf Brunnow.²⁴ In 1844 he was called back to Istanbul and was appointed as a member of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Valâ-i Ahkâm-ı Adliye*). Several high-level assignments followed one another. In 1845, as undersecretary of foreign affairs, he was tasked as a member of the ad-hoc committee to examine the delivery of more modern education in grammar and religious schools. In 1846,

²⁰ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.7.

²¹ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.6.

²² Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.6.

²³ Marz, *Ali Pascha*, p.64.

²⁴ Marz, *Ali Pascha*, p.74

he became the youngest Minister of Foreign Affairs at the age of 31. The next year he was granted the rank of “Vizier” and “Pasha.”²⁵ He became the youngest Ottoman Grand Vizier in August 1852, however his first term in this post was short and he was assigned as Governor of Izmir in October 1852. After six months in this post, he retired into private life.

In 1854 during the Crimean War, he was recalled as the minister of foreign affairs for a second time under Reshid Pasha. In 1855 he again became Grand Vizier for one year. In that role, he represented the Sublime Porte at the Congress of Paris in 1856 and signed the peace treaty which ended the Crimean War. He continued government service for most of the rest of his life, being Foreign Minister in 1857-8, July 1861, and November 1861 to 1867, and Grand Vizier in 1858-9, 1861, and 1867-71. He combined the posts of Foreign Minister and Grand Vizier After the demise of Fuad Pasha in 1869.²⁶ He served fourteen years as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and eight years as Grand Vizier. He died in Istanbul in September 1871 when he was Grand Vizier.

Ali Pasha was short in stature, meticulous, cautious, and quiet; he emphasized protocol and seniority. He tended to delay decisions as long as possible before acting so as to consider all options and consequences. He was alert, self-controlled, and a strong believer in following the proper lines of personal and administrative etiquette. He was the true politician, playing off the foreign ambassadors, the palace, and the ulema (clerics) to maintain the power of the Porte.²⁷

2. Ali Pasha’s Contributions to Ottoman Diplomacy and Governance:

a. 1848 Refugee Crisis

As a pupil of Resit Pasha, Ali Pasha became foreign minister during Reshid’s next two terms as grand vizier (1846-1848, 1848-1852). They both won fame in Europe for their role in receiving refugees from the 1848 revolutions in Austria and Russia and resisting the demands of these powers for their imprisonment and return.²⁸ The Revolutions of 1848 in Europe seriously affected the Habsburg Empire, which had a heterogeneous population. Hungarians and Poles living in the empire were the most active elements in the revolutions. After the suppression of the revolutions with the support of Russia, a significant number of Hungarian

²⁵ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.6.

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com>, accessed 10 November 2022.

²⁷ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey V.II*, (New York 1977), p.68.

²⁸ Shaw S. and Shaw E., *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 63.

and Polish revolutionaries took refuge in the Ottoman Empire. This event became a serious problem between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, and despite all the pressures of both Austria and Russia, the Ottomans did not surrender the refugees, showing a great example of diplomatic success.²⁹

Another young bureaucrat Fuad, first Ali's friend and then protege of Reshid, rose to fame, especially because of his brilliant negotiations with the Russians in Bucharest and then St. Petersburg regarding the hosted refugees from the 1848 revolutions.³⁰ The Ottoman Empire made the headlines in Europe when it gave asylum to Italian, Hungarian, and Polish political refugees. Even the leader of Young Hungary, Lajos Kossuth, sought refuge in 1849. Empire was changing its relationship with the West. Istanbul was trying hard to be included in the Concert of Europe. This was a deliberate strategy to build up alliances against the approaching threat of Russia. It was not a coincidence that only a few years later Empire would be universally supported against Russia in Crimea.³¹

b. *Crimean War and Paris Conference*

According to Russian Tsar the Ottoman Empire, 'the sick man of Europe', was about to die and it was an obstacle to Russian expansion. On the other hand, for Britain, the Eastern Mediterranean was a strategic territory as it included the shortest route to India, and Russian ambition to dominate Istanbul and the Straits connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean was to be prevented by maintaining the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity. In addition, the Ottoman Empire was an export market for British manufactured products. For France, it was a religious reason to prevent Russian ambitions. Napoleon III believed that he was the protector of all Catholic Christians, so he could not accept Russian competition in Jerusalem, where the Catholic Church dominated Christian affairs.³²

That is why they fought to defend the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean war. Since this paper does not concentrate on military history it is sufficient to say that Britain lost 20,000 soldiers while France lost 80,000 soldiers and they both reached their aims to limit Russian

²⁹ Hayrettin Pınar, 'Kapitülasyonlar ve XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Yönetim Gerçeğine Bir Örnek: Âlî Paşa'nın İzmir Valiliği- İzmir Governorship of Ali Pasha, *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 9(2), p. 143.

³⁰ Shaw S. and Shaw E., *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 63.

³¹ Murat R. Şiviloğlu, 'The Ottoman Empire and the emergence of its 'Irish Question'', *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2022), pp. 6-10.

³² Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p. 107.

aggression.³³ Tsar Nicolas I had died and was succeeded by his son Alexander, who wanted to end the war and decided to pursue an armistice with the allies.³⁴ With success in the Crimean War, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was saved, and it would be another twenty years before its existence was threatened again.³⁵

The allies met in Vienna in February 1856 for a peace treaty. Ali Pasha, who was then minister of foreign affairs, represented the Ottoman Empire as chief delegate. Then, he participated in Paris Conference as the Grand Vizier. During Conference Ali Pasha accomplished the acceptance of the Ottoman Empire to the Concert of Europe and guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Empire in terms of international law.³⁶

The Paris Conference ended on March 30, 1856. With its 34 articles, the treaty brought a new order to Europe in which the Ottoman Empire became an equal partner. This had been the main objective of Ali Pasha. He succeeded in including a guarantee of the Empire's borders in the treaty. Article 7 of the treaty was written as follows: 'His Majesty the Emperor of France, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, His Majesty the King of Prussia, His Majesty the Emperor of all Russians, His Majesty the King of Prussia and His Majesty the King of Sardinia declare that the Sublime Porte accepts to participate in the advantages of the public law and the concert of Europe. Their Majesties, on their part, commit themselves to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and guarantee together the strict maintenance of this commitment. Should the guarantee be infringed upon by one, it will be considered an infringement by all signatories.'³⁷

Although Ali Pasha wanted the abolition of the capitulations based on the seventh article of the Paris Treaty, that is, on the principle of equality, this was rejected by the European powers.³⁸ In the Conference, he shone among his equals. Count Cavour, the Prime Minister of Sardinia, praised him by saying that 'there was no diplomat greater than Ali Pasha in the Conference'.³⁹

³³ Demiray, S. 2021. 'Kırım Savaşı ve Sonrası Osmanlı-Rusya İlişkileri- Ottoman-Russian Relations after Crimean War'. *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi- Journal of Turkish Researches Institute*. 71, (Mayıs-May 2021).p.628.

³⁴ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p. 108.

³⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.57.

³⁶ Rasim Marz, *Ali Pascha: Europas vergessener Staatsmann*, (Berlin 2016), p. 222.

³⁷ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p. 111.

³⁸ Demiray, 'Ottoman-Russian Relations', p.628.

³⁹ Fuat Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.7.

With the Paris Treaty in 1856, Ottoman Empire did not feel the pressure of Russia, which was weakened politically and militarily, until the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War.⁴⁰ Europe and the Ottoman Empire had entered a new international governance paradigm. It was clear that the Empire was finally free from foreign intervention, at least for a certain time. Ali Pasha and his friends were now ready to commit themselves to continue domestic reforms in the Empire.⁴¹

c. The Second Reform Edict- Islahat Fermanı

A new reform decree (Islahat Fermanı) was drafted by Ali Pasha and announced by the Sultan in February 1856, a few days before the commencement of deliberations in Paris. In principle, it was a repetition of the Noble Edict of Rose Garden.⁴² It was again a commitment to Christian-Muslim equality and it was regarded as the price the Sublime Porte had to pay for its rescue during the Crimean War and its inclusion in the European club envisioned after the Paris Treaty.⁴³ The main clauses of the Edict are summarized as follows: ‘Ottoman subjects would become equal before the law. Every person’s right to life, property, and honour would be considered inalienable. Religious leaders would swear an oath of loyalty to the Sultan and the Ottoman State, and they would receive appropriate salaries from the state and collect no compensation from their communities. Each non-Moslem community would have a consultative council. All Ottoman citizens would have the right to be employed by the state and they would also have the right to attend any school without discrimination. Any dispute of criminal or commercial nature would be judged by mixed courts in open sessions. To serve in the military would become obligatory to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Tax farming would be abolished. Non-Ottoman subjects could own property and European capital could be invested to develop agriculture and trade.’⁴⁴

The Islahat Reform Edict was well received by the Paris Conference participants. However, there was a negative reaction at home. Especially Reshid Pasha, the mentor of Ali Pasha, heavily criticized the outcome of the Paris conference and the Reform Edict. Accusations were mainly argued that the state could not adequately defend its interests at the Paris conference. Due to the criticism, Ali Pasha was replaced by Reshid Pasha. Ali declined

⁴⁰ Demiray, ‘Ottoman-Russian Relations’, p.629

⁴¹ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.115.

⁴² Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.110.

⁴³ Denis Vovchenko, ‘Caring for the sick man? Russian and Greek reactions to the Ottoman reforms (1856–1908)’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2021), p.7.

⁴⁴ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.110.

the proposed Foreign Ministry position, but he accepted this post when Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha was taken from his position in August 1857; thus, he openly showed his resentment toward Reshid Pasha.⁴⁵

d. *State reforms*

In the Reform era, the Ottoman center of power in the government shifted from the palace to Porte. Within the whole administrative structure of the Porte, the role and importance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are striking.⁴⁶ The adjustment of Ottoman diplomacy to European norms could only be achieved after the 1850s. With the increased number of permanent diplomatic missions and educated staff, Ottoman diplomatic corps became the most developed bureaucratic structure of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷ Especially after the Crimean War, the structure and staff of the Ottoman foreign representations were expanded and restructured according to the examples in Europe, new professional cadres were created within the framework of rank and degree definitions in accordance with the modern bureaucratic structure, or they were established compatible with their competitors. Ali Pasha developed an improved and standard payment system for diplomats and embassy workers.⁴⁸

A well-to-do urban background, talent, a solid command of Ottoman Turkish as well as the classical regional languages of Arabic and Persian, and proficiency in French usually opened the doors of preferment. Many educated men such as journalists, writers, and poets, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century worked several years as junior or even senior civil servants within the Ottoman bureaucracy, especially in the positions and chambers that dealt with foreign relations and translation.⁴⁹

Ali Pasha believed that by ensuring equality between Christians and Muslims the oppression of the great powers could be prevented, and thus the integrity of the Ottoman Empire could be preserved.⁵⁰ When he was in Crete, he wrote a letter to Sultan about his view on the integration of non-Muslims into the Ottoman State system. He stated that “...in Europe

⁴⁵ Kemal Beydili, ‘Ali Pasha, Mehmed Emin (1814-1871)’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ali-pasa-mehmed-emin>, accessed 1 November 2022.

⁴⁶ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.60.

⁴⁷ Özhan Kapıcı, ‘Tanzimât Döneminde Osmanlı Hariciyesinde Ataşelik Memuriyetinin Teşekkülü- The Organization of the Attaché Office in the Ottoman Empire’s Foreign Ministry During the Tanzimat era, *Türkiyat Mecmuası- Journal of Turkishness*, 32, 1 (2022), p.355.

⁴⁸ Kapıcı, ‘The Organization of the Attaché Office’, p. 361.

⁴⁹ Syed Tanvir Wasti, ‘A Distinguished and Loyal Ottoman Civil Servant: Hüseyin Nâzım Pasha’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49:3, (2013), p. 365.

⁵⁰ Asuman Tezcan, ‘Ali Kararname ve Basın- Ali’s Verdict and Media’, *Selçuk University Journal of Communication*, (3,4,2011), p.167.

today, no one is categorized as Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Atheist, whereas with us, non-Muslim subjects send their children off to be educated, yet we abstain from employing them... They repeat time and again, ‘ we are also subjects of this country, but since we are not Muslims, we are burdened with duties, obligations, and taxes and treated as second class citizens.’ Our government should take the initiative to eliminate such grievances and free them from the harmful propaganda of foreign states. Non-Muslim subjects should not feel they are under the yoke of a Muslim state; rather they should feel they are subjects of a state that protects them equally.’⁵¹

During the Tanzimat period, Ottoman citizenship, honor and merit were determined as employment criteria in Ottoman foreign affairs. Once, Ali Pasha clearly expressed these criteria to the British ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer. Ali Pasha emphasized that those who had these three qualifications were generally sufficient for employment in the Sublime Porte.⁵² Especially non-Muslim or convert diplomats were appointed to the most critical foreign missions. By 1860, most of the staff in the Ottoman embassies were Greek and Armenian.⁵³ Diplomats such as Kostaki Musurus, Yanko Fotiyadi, Aristarki, Karatodori, Konemenos, served as ambassadors alternately for many years in major capitals such as London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Florence. In fact, the continuity of the Musurus family in the London embassy was not even discussed for many years.⁵⁴ Ottoman Greeks and Armenians constituted a significant minority, some 29 percent, of all Foreign Ministry officials, a participation rate that is somewhat larger than the non-Muslims’ share of the total Ottoman population at the time.⁵⁵

Ali Pasha not only contributed to and shaped the foreign policy of the empire but also influenced the overall state structures and policies, including the judiciary, education, and military.⁵⁶ He was a strong believer in the separation of powers, therefore played a major role in separating the judicial power from the executive power by establishing the Council of State (Şura-i Devlet) and the High Court of Justice (Divan-ı Ahkâmı Adliye).⁵⁷

Secularization was also the most important trend in education in the Tanzimat era.⁵⁸ Ali Pasha was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Public Administration or the Civil

⁵¹ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.124.

⁵² Kapıcı, *The Organization of the Attaché Office*, p.359

⁵³ Vovchenko, ‘Caring for the sick man’, p.13.

⁵⁴ Kapıcı, *The Organization of the Attaché Office*, p. 358-359.

⁵⁵ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, p.80.

⁵⁶ Marz, *Ali Pascha*, p.11.

⁵⁷ Fuat Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.8.

⁵⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.65.

Service School (Mekteb-i Mülkiye), to educate the future civil servants and the Academy (Encümen-i Daniş). Prestigious Galatasaray High School was opened in 1868. This was the first school in the French curriculum founded by the state, and it allowed Muslims and non-Muslims were trained together. This school became the main training institution of many Ottoman intellectuals and statesmen.⁵⁹

Ali Pasha accomplished many liberal reforms in the state governance system. He was very much in favour of privatization because he had observed the inefficiency and corruption inherent in state enterprises and emphasized how such firms would be more efficient and more conducive to development in private hands.⁶⁰

The changes in his term included the adaptation of Western theatre plays, music,⁶¹ and architecture. Because of their close interest in European culture and architecture both Ali and Fuad Pashas contributed significantly to the shaping of the city architecture with the Western style kârgir (built of stone or brick) and massive buildings they built in the Historic Peninsula. Therefore, the enlarging bureaucratic structure of the period and the shifting of the administrative center to Sublime Porte were reflected in the city architecture as well.⁶² Ali Pasha's mansion was also constructed in a Western neo-classical architectural design. A Turkish architectural historian, Serap Suna, who examined the construction and evolution of Ali Pasha's mansion, argues that a palace-like mansion of Ali Pasha was not only a building but also both a part and a representative of the change and transformation in the political, financial, sociocultural, and architectural fields in the Ottoman State in the 19th and 20th centuries.⁶³

e. *The Cretan Uprising 1866-1869*

Some of the Ottoman Greeks rose against the Empire between 1866–1869 on the Ottoman Island of Crete. Hundreds of volunteers from the small kingdom of Greece joined the rebellion to unite the island with Greece. Ali Pasha himself went to the island and worked to end the rebellion. Ali Pasha, the Archbishop of Crete Dionysios, and three Ottoman Greek officials – Adasidi Efendi, Karatheodori Efendi, and Savas Efendi worked out a plan that

⁵⁹ Gündüz, '19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti', p.83.

⁶⁰ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.131.

⁶¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert and Şevket Pamuk, *An Economical and Social History of The Ottoman Empire V.II*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.765.

⁶² Serap Suna, 'Bir Sadrazam Konağının Değişimi ve Dönüşümü: Mercan'da Alî Paşa Konağı- The Change and Transformation of Ali Pasha's Mension at Mercan', *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi – Journal of History Research*, XXXV / 1, (2020), p. 265.

⁶³ Suna, 'Bir Sadrazam Konağının Değişimi', p.296.

included an offer of amnesty to the repentant insurgents and a new administrative structure for Crete.⁶⁴ His policy included suppressing the insurgency and restoring order, keeping foreign intervention at a safe distance, and rehabilitating the many Christian refugees to their Cretan homeland.⁶⁵ He followed a concessive policy and he accepted to give wide privileges to the Greek population to end the support and intervention of foreign powers.⁶⁶

The Sublime Porte effectively used its permanent embassies in European capitals to counter the pro-Cretan position in Europe in 1866–1869.⁶⁷ Greek origin Ottoman diplomat Yanko Photiades Bey, head of the Ottoman mission in Athens, retained his credibility with both states throughout his long tenure in office and was therefore a solid source of information during the Cretan uprising. The Grand Vizier Ali Pasha and the Foreign Minister Fuad Pasha, by exploiting differences between the great powers, became successful in restoring Sultan's authority on Crete with an international treaty. They also convinced Sultan Abdulaziz to travel to European Capitals, for the first time in Ottoman history. Subsequent developments proved his tour effective.⁶⁸ Ali Pasha effectively used coercive diplomacy against Greece including the threat of the use of force, by cutting all diplomatic relations with Greece and giving the signal to European capitals that the Empire is ready for war if Greece continues to support the insurgency in Crete. An international conference gathered in Paris in 1869 and the Ottoman diplomacy succeeded in gaining the support of Britain, Austria, and Prussia. The issue was solved according to the Ottoman plan.⁶⁹

f. Critics of Ali Pasha and Ottoman Reforms

The new institutions and new government approaches created during the Ottoman reform era brought a cultural division in Ottoman society. This situation caused the reaction of the public and intellectuals. Those reforms were regarded as the outcome of the political pressures of the great states. Therefore, Ali and Fuad Pashas were regarded as "envoys of the embassies".⁷⁰ The reform policies were never the result of popular pressure and lacked a

⁶⁴ Vovchenko, 'Caring for the sick man', p.44.

⁶⁵ Thanos Veremis, 'Ottoman diplomatic documents on the 'Eastern Question': the Cretan uprising 1866–1869, Part 1, May 1866 to September 1867, Part 2, September 1867 to June 1869', Book Review, ed. Sinan Kunalalp (2011) p. 95.

⁶⁶ Beydili, *Ali Pasha*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ali-pasa-mehmed-emin>, accessed November 1st, 2022

⁶⁷ Vovchenko, 'Caring for the sick man', p. 44.

⁶⁸ Veremis, 'Ottoman diplomatic documents', p.95.

⁶⁹ Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar - The Last Grand Viziers in the Ottoman Period, Vol.1*, (Istanbul 1964), p. 23.

⁷⁰ Tezcan, 'Ali Kararname ve Basın, p. 167.

secure basis in Ottoman society and these reform movements made reformist Pashas extremely unpopular in traditional Muslim circles.⁷¹

Some bureaucrats, who were also trainees of Reshid Pasha, could not find a place in the government because of the dominance of Ali and Fuad Pashas. They developed journalism to declare their opposition to the policies of the government, specifically toward Ali Pasha. The privately owned newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkâr* (Illustration of Opinion) became a vehicle for moderate criticism of the government, attacking its authoritarian tendencies and its subservience to the European powers. This group of intellectuals calling themselves ‘Young Ottomans’ saw the regime of the Tanzimat as a one-sided bureaucratic despotism. They decried the politics of Ali and Fuad Pashas as superficial imitations of Europe without regard for traditional Ottoman and Islamic values, and obedient to European interests. They were convinced that Tanzimat’s policies would lead to the destruction of the state.⁷²

In addition to advocating for a genuine new identity of Ottomanism, they demanded the adaptation of such liberal concepts as citizenship and some individual rights. The Ottoman society they envisioned would be a synthesis of Western modes of governance and Islamic Ottoman traditions.⁷³ These intellectuals propagated the belief that was there to be a constitutional system in place, the Empire would free itself from its perennial problems and difficulties.⁷⁴ The Young Ottomans, notably Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, directed their poisonous criticism against Ali Pasha as he was not in favour of a constitutional monarchy.⁷⁵ They vilified him, attacked his personality, and wrote satires ridiculing him.⁷⁶

Both Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha intensified their personal insults of Ali Pasha by calling him a ‘syphilitic pimp’. In a satiric poem, Ziya Pasha wrote that ‘when Ali Pasha dies his corpse should not be buried but thrown into the gutter’.⁷⁷ Later, most of the young Ottomans became self-exile living in London and Paris. The common denominator of these Young Ottomans is their opposition to Ali Pasha.⁷⁸ Davison argues that the portrait of the Young Ottomans drew on Ali Pasha and their harsh criticisms of him were not fair. He states that,

⁷¹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 48.

⁷² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.71

⁷³ Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, p.9.

⁷⁴ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.119.

⁷⁵ İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar*, pp. 4 – 58.

⁷⁶ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.136.

⁷⁸ Tezcan, ‘Ali Kararname ve Basın’, p.167.

without ignoring diplomatic pressures, Ottoman reforms were announced not to deceive Europe, but to revive the empire with internal reorganization measures.⁷⁹

The Young Ottomans also claimed that Ali Pasha's mismanagement was effective in the deterioration of the Ottoman economy, and he acquired a large fortune. M. Kemal İnal, on the other hand, states that Ali Pasha left a large debt instead of wealth to his family, based on the letter Rukiye Suad Hanım, the daughter of Ali Pasha wrote to Sultan Hamid.⁸⁰

Ali Pasha refers to New Ottomans as 'utopists'. He argues that they want to establish a European-type government immediately without any preparation and that it would not be wise to bring constitutionalism without creating an Ottoman identity and consciousness. Ali Pasha states that the development of the emerging nationalist movements cannot be prevented; that is why the destiny of the Empire was geographically tied to Europe and the economic development of the Ottoman Empire depends on good relations with Western states. The only way to loosen the capitulations, which is one of the biggest problems of the state, is to make agreements with the European states.⁸¹

g. Richelieu's Influence on Ali Pasha and His Testimony

Ali Pasha's fluency in French allowed him to read many thinkers and writers such as Machiavelli, Rousseau, Voltaire, Helvetius, and Kant, and he gained a visionary approach to world-level policies.⁸² Fuat Andic, a former diplomat and diplomatic historian, compares the similarities between Ali Pasha and Richelieu and he finds parallels between the two politicians. According to Andic, Ali Pasha had a limitless appetite for reading and he had been to Paris on several occasions. He could have examined Richelieu's life and his contribution to France's state system. Ali Pasha could have read Richelieu's testament which was first published in Amsterdam in 1688, and an edition was brought out in France in 1764 and he could have been influenced by it.⁸³

Two statesmen occupied the highest positions in their respective countries, France and Ottoman Empire. Both lived about the same number of years. Richelieu became the Secretary of State at the age of thirty-one; Ali Pasha was appointed as Foreign Minister at the same age. Richelieu grew to the highest rank of cardinal at the age of thirty-seven; Ali Pasha became

⁷⁹ R. H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton 1963), p. 129.

⁸⁰ İnal, 'Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar', p. 35.

⁸¹ Tezcan, 'Ali Kararname ve Basın', p. 171

⁸² Marz, 'Ali Pascha', p. 21.

⁸³ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, pp.1-17.

Grand Vizier at the same age.⁸⁴ Both advised their respective rulers who were either under-aged or too young to be well-versed in the art of ruling and statesmanship. Louis XIII was a child whose mother, Marie de Medici acted as regent until he became king; Sultan Abdülmecid, to whom Ali Pasha served in various capacities, was only 18 years old when he ascended to the throne. Both were self-made men. It was only through their own hard work and dedication that they rose to the high positions they occupied. Both were keen readers and had immense respect for arts and sciences. Richelieu established the French Academy (Académie Française) and Ali Pasha the Academy (Encümen-i Daniş).⁸⁵

They both played a crucial role in directing their state's policies and imposed specific instructions to their rulers as to the policies they must follow for the welfare of their countries. Richelieu was concerned with making France a great and powerful country in the continent while Ali Pasha focused on preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. They both wrote testaments before they passed away. They felt that they should give an account of what they have done for the benefit of their countries, and how the affairs of the state should be run.⁸⁶ It was highly likely that Ali Pasha wrote his testimony under the influence of Richelieu's testimony because their testaments are extremely similar, both in writing style and in the way of their advice, considering the perspective of their times and of their respective states. They are both strong believers in the art of negotiation. Richelieu writes 'States receive so much benefit from uninterrupted foreign negotiations...Negotiations are innocuous remedies which never do harm'. In explaining his peaceful actions Ali Pasha says 'Did we wage war? No. We only fought with diplomatic memoranda.'⁸⁷ Ali Pasha defends that the main purpose of diplomacy is to try to save the possible, not the impossible.⁸⁸ There is no evidence to verify that the Sultan read the testimony.⁸⁹

Ali pasha's testament remained almost a mystery until 1910, 39 years after his death when it was first published in France in *Revue de Paris*. Much later historians debated its accuracy.⁹⁰ According to Davison, it is likely that it was authored by Ali Pasha⁹¹, and according to the Turkish essayist Cemil Meriç, the originality could not be questioned.⁹² The full text of

⁸⁴ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.1

⁸⁵ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.2

⁸⁶ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.2

⁸⁷ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ Tezcan, 'Ali Kararname ve Basın', p. 171.

⁸⁹ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p. 9.

⁹¹ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 415 – 418.

⁹² Cemil Meriç, *Ümrandan Uygarlığa- From Prosperity to Civilization*, (Istanbul 1974), pp. 28 – 38.

the testament was first published in English in Istanbul in 1996 and then in Turkish in 2000.⁹³ The Political Testament was addressed directly to Sultan Abdülaziz in which Ali Pasha “first summarized the political development of Europe, its relationship to the Ottoman Empire, and the achievements of the reforms executed in the Empire since 1839. The purpose of this Testament was, as Ali Pasha stated, ‘... To submit to Your Majesty the program I deemed to follow.’ He described this program as follows: ‘ To lay the foundation of the program Your Majesty ’s Government will have to implement, we will trace the general features that are of interest to us ... But let us be aware: all good features can vanish if measures to raise general prosperity are not implemented with care. Corrupt and self-interested people must no longer secure for their interests policies from Your Majesty’s Government that are detrimental to the country.’⁹⁴

h. After Ali Pasha

Ali Pasha died on September 7, 1871 and was buried in the graveyard of Süleymaniye Mosque.⁹⁵ Ali Pasha was a firm believer in absolute monarchy, but he also strove to control the autocratic administration of Sultan Abdülaziz, forcing him to act within the limits of the law. Those who took the helm after Ali Pasha became “yes men” instead of leading the Sultan in the direction of reform. The era of Tanzimat, therefore, approached its end.⁹⁶

After Ali Pasha, the Palace began to accumulate power from the Porte and Sultan Abdulaziz started to exercise power himself and this led to major changes in Ottoman foreign policy. The new Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim backed by Sultan Abdulaziz, pursued building a new regime of friendship with Russia. Count Nicholas Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador to Porte from 1864 to 1877, became the agent of the Russian-oriented policy of the empire. His influence on Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim led the way for him to be called Nedimov in the streets of Istanbul.⁹⁷ According to Zürcher, Mahmud Nedim was openly in the pay of the Russian embassy.⁹⁸ He had no experience of Europe, nor did he know a European language, and was incapable to lead the empire in times of crisis. This opened the way for the Empire to distance itself from the concert of Europe.⁹⁹

⁹³ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.131.

⁹⁴ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.124-125.

⁹⁵ Beydili, *Ali Pasha*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ali-pasa-mehmed-emin>, accessed 1 November 2022.

⁹⁶ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.118-119.

⁹⁷ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey V.II*, (New York 1977), p. 156.

⁹⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 75.

⁹⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 76.

A number of international developments contributed to this change as well. Britain, upon which the Ottomans had based their 'policy of balance' since the late eighteenth century, began to change its attitude towards the Sublime Porte.¹⁰⁰ The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made Egypt the new focus of attention for Britain and France, rather than the Ottoman Empire. The unexpected defeat of France by Prussia in the war of 1870 meant a change in the balance of power in Europe¹⁰¹ and Russia abolished the articles of the Paris Agreement regarding the Black Sea.¹⁰² France was the power most closely associated with the Ottoman reformers especially since the Crimean War and its defeat strengthened the hand of the partisans of the authoritarian and conservative powers, (most of all Russia) in Istanbul.¹⁰³

In such an atmosphere, the new Ottoman Sultan, Abdülhamid II, introduced a constitution in 1876. The introduction of constitutional rule (*Meşrutiyet*) was a result of many domestic factors. In 1871, with the death of Ali Pasha, the new Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha issued a general amnesty, allowing the Young Ottomans to return to Turkey.¹⁰⁴ The Young Ottomans returned to Istanbul motivated by an astonishingly naive belief that with the deaths of Fuat Pasa and Ali Pasha, the obstacles to democratic reform would disappear.¹⁰⁵ The idea of introducing constitutional law into the Ottoman system was regarded as a potential cure for the Empire.¹⁰⁶

The new Sultan Abdülhamid II's (r.1876-1909) rule began with the deep crisis of 1876-1878, a time of financial disaster and the catastrophic Russo-Turkish War.¹⁰⁷ When able diplomats were no longer in government service, the Empire found itself at war with Russia in 1877. Britain and France did not side with the Ottoman Empire this time. Diplomacy was not in action. Thus, the Ottomans were defeated. They could not display any diplomatic skill in peace conferences in San Stefano and Berlin to counterbalance their military weakness. To avoid a new surprise victory of Russia over the Ottomans, Britain entered Cyprus in 1878 and Egypt in 1882.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰ Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, 'The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy', in *Ottoman Diplomacy Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York 2004), p.146.

¹⁰¹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.75.

¹⁰² Beydili, *Ali Pasha*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ali-pasa-mehmed-emin>, accessed 1 November 2022.

¹⁰³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.75.

¹⁰⁴ Wasti, 'A Distinguished and Loyal Ottoman Civil Servant', p. 304.

¹⁰⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.75.

¹⁰⁶ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.118-119.

¹⁰⁷ Faroqhi, *et al.*, *An Economical and Social History*, p.766.

¹⁰⁸ Kürkçüoğlu, 'The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy', p.146.

The first Constitutional Period (1876-1878) ended in two years when Abdülhamid II abolished the parliament, suspended the constitution, and established a despotic rule that lasted three decades.¹⁰⁹ Abdülhamid II emphasized the caliphate and concentrated on the religion of Islam starting from 1878.¹¹⁰ Considering the emerging Muslim reaction to Tanzimat, he prioritized Islamic values to reverse cultural Westernization while continuing the technological reforms of his predecessors.¹¹¹

During Abdülhamid II's absolute rule, in 1897, the Empire had to fight with Greece. The Ottoman Empire was, nevertheless, successful in defeating the Greeks in the military field. However, the Ottomans were isolated internationally, and the Greeks managed to get away with a moderate peace treaty with the Ottomans.¹¹²

The Young Ottoman's legacy was carried on by another influential group called the Young Turk movement which would play a dominant political role at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Their main political party, the Community and Union Party (CUP), became the dominant force within the movement. The Young Turks were influenced by the political currents in Europe at this time such as positivism and scientific materialism. This group initiated the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, reinstating the Ottoman constitution and opening the Parliament.¹¹³ Westernization, secularism, and centralization were preserved during their time. And, at the very end of the Young Turk era, nationalism joined their ranks. After Ottomanist and Pan-Islamist appeals had failed to unify the empire, the Young Turks adopted nationalism, 'thus raising it from an ideology of the subject peoples to that of the imperial elite'.¹¹⁴

The Ottoman Empire suffered further losses in the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis of 1908, in the Tripoli War of 1911, and in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.¹¹⁵ CUP members directly sieged the power in 1913 and they built their own way of authoritarianism.¹¹⁶ Finally, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany on 2 August 1914 and after only three months entered the First World War which heralded the demise of the Empire.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 83.

¹¹¹ Faroqi, *et al.*, *An Economical and Social History*, p.766.

¹¹² Kürkçüoğlu, 'The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy', p.146.

¹¹³ Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, p. 9.

¹¹⁴ Faroqi *et al.*, *An Economical and Social History*, p.766.

¹¹⁵ Kürkçüoğlu, 'The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy', p.147

¹¹⁶ Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, p. 9.

¹¹⁷ Kürkçüoğlu, 'The Adoption and Use of Permanent Diplomacy', p.147.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha is a very important character in the fate of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. He kept Russia away from the straits and adapted his country to the modern age.¹¹⁸ He exercised all his power to establish firmly the rule of law, execute the internal reform of the Empire in line with the principles of the 1839 and 1856 decrees, and improve education and the administration of justice.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, his endeavours never received adequate recognition and respect; and his contribution to Turkish modernization is rarely understood by Turkish society.

Although totally loyal to his Sultan and dedicated to the offices he held, he never shied from limiting the unrestrained powers of the sultans he served, wherever and whenever it was necessary.¹²⁰ He did not refrain from criticizing the waste and excessive expenses of the palace. After being appointed grand vizier for the third time (January 11, 1858), Ali Pasha objected to Sultan Abdülmecid's borrowing from abroad not for productive investments in trade and agriculture, but to finance the luxury of his court.¹²¹ He was dismissed in one year's time (January 11, 1858).

There was criticism about his tendency toward French interests and he was known as the man of France in the Porte. However, historical evidence shows that Ali Pasha was a match for the diplomats of European powers, against whom he successfully defended the interests of his country.¹²² According to İlber Ortaylı, Ali Pasha and the other two "men of Tanzimat" (Reshid and Fuad Pashas) magnificently used their diplomatic talents to obtain French and Britain's support to equilibrate Russia.¹²³ Most of the time Ali Pasha resisted great powers' intervening in the domestic policies of the Empire.¹²⁴ It was known that he was very critical of the French policies towards Egypt, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Once, he said to the French Ambassador in the Porte that "At least, I would not be the one who yields France."¹²⁵

During his last term as both Grand Vizier and Minister of Foreign Affairs after Fuat Pasha, he took the whole control of the Empire's domestic and international issues, and with

¹¹⁸ Christiane Czygan, 'Reflections on Justice: A Young Ottoman View of the Tanzimat', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46:6, (2010), p. 943-956.

¹¹⁹ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.8.

¹²⁰ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.9.

¹²¹ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.118.

¹²² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/> accessed 10 November 2022.

¹²³ Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 23.

¹²⁴ Marz, *Ali Pascha*, p. 11.

¹²⁵ Hayrettin Pınar, *Tanzimat Döneminde İktidarın Sınırları: BabıAli ve Hıdiv İsmail – The Limits of Power during Ottoman Reform Era: Sublime Porte and Egypt*, (İstanbul 2012), p. 104-105.

his vast experience, he became an irreplaceable statesman. Once, when Sultan Abdülaziz, wished to be an absolute monarch in many senses, complained about Ali Pasha's interference in his decisions to his chamberlain, who proposed that he dismiss the Grand Vizier. The Sultan answered briefly 'I know that much. But who do I replace him with?'¹²⁶

Liberals criticized him for his authoritarian administration, while conservatives declared him not religious because of his western reforms and closeness to European powers, subjecting him to aggressive hatred of the Muslim population.¹²⁷ Among the three Pashas of Tanzimat era, Ali was perhaps the most intelligent and the most diligent.¹²⁸ He was regarded as a respected man by diplomats and statesmen during the 19th century such as Metternich, Disraeli, Palmerston, and Bismarck. Günter Lerch points out that some think that Ali Pasha is the Bismarck of the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁹ Napoleon III remarked that he would have considered himself lucky if he had a foreign minister like Ali Pasha.¹³⁰ The notes he wrote were examples of diplomacy. They were taught to students as an example in the 'Sciences Politiques', the faculty of political sciences in Paris.¹³¹

When Ali Pasha died the first German emperor, Wilhelm I, paid 300 gold coins for his writing set to be put in his museum. The Russian ambassador to Istanbul was very pleased with the death of Ali Pasha, whom he considered a great obstacle to the idea of Slavic unity. The governor of Egypt, Ismail Pasha, who was known for his aspiration for independence gave 1000 gold coins as a tip to his clerk, who informed him that Ali Pasha had died because Ismail Pasha considered Ali Pasha as the biggest obstacle in Istanbul for his aims.¹³²

Ali Pasha anticipated that the heavy defeat of France in 1870 would disrupt the balance of power prevailing in Europe and would have important consequences for the Ottoman Empire. He believed that a conciliatory path should be taken in foreign policy.¹³³ It is highly likely that he wrote his testimony to warn and support the administrations coming after him. However, after his death in 1871, with the mistake of depending too much upon military power, and too little upon diplomacy the Ottoman Empire was faced with rebellions and wars that lasted for decades.¹³⁴ Could Ali Pasha prevent the disasters that the state would face in the

¹²⁶ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.8.

¹²⁷ Marz, *Ali Pascha*, p. 12.

¹²⁸ Andic F. and Andic S., *Reforming Ottoman Governance*, p.106.

¹²⁹ Wolfgang Günter Lerch, 'Der Bismarck der Osmanen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 2016.

¹³⁰ Andic, *The Political Testaments*, p.9.

¹³¹ Gündüz, '19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti', p. 84.

¹³² Gündüz, '19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti', p. 84.

¹³³ Beydili, *Ali Pasha*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ali-pasa-mehmed-emin>, accessed 1 November 2022.

¹³⁴ Czygan, 'Reflections on Justice', p.352.

future if he had lived longer? Thinking about the changes in the approach of great powers to the Ottoman Empire, international developments, and economic, social, and ethnic problems, it would not be logical to expect a miracle from diplomatic talent.



Portrait of Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha, Source: <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/108M9V>



Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha (on the far right) at the Congress of Paris (1856)

Source: Edouard Louis Dubufe

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