State, Social Groups, And Transformation In The Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire

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-When I read a book by one of my anthropological colleagues, I am, I must confess, frequently bored by the facts... I read... not from an interest in the facts but so as to learn something about the principles behind the facts.

Edmund Leach

Introduction

A proper analysis of the Ottoman socio-political transformation in the nineteenth century demands a broad analytical framework. Most works on the modernization of the Ottoman Empire take into consideration only the external stimuli, that is, the European impact, while the indigenous forces at work within the society receive little attention. However, before the European influence accelerated during the nineteenth century and eventually caused the disintegration of the Empire, the socio-economic and political structures of Ottoman society had already become exposed to serious social dislocations. Turkish authors like Koçi Bey, in his Risale (pamphlet), tried to comprehend the problems faced by the Empire well before the capitalist penetration.

During the last fifty years of the eighteenth century, the reproduction of the Ottoman order had become increasingly hard. The source of the difficulty in the articulation of the system was the "emergence of a new kind of economic order that was coordinated into a European-wide, interdependent division of labour through an inter-state market system in which economic exchange and the production for it by different regions were oriented to maximum profits" (Sunar, 1987: 63 f.).

The development and diffusion of market economics, operating on a European-wide basis, led to the shifting of trade routes, thereby relegating the Ottoman territories to the status of only secondary importance. Coupled with this, the circumscription of the Empire by such strong states as Austria and Russia, made it extremely arduous for the Ottomans to adapt themselves to the global sweep of history.

It is, therefore, our contention that the transformation of the Ottoman order can be accounted for by a combination of internal and external dynamics. This account can helpfully develop two kinds of analysis utilized by Barrington Moore (1967) and Theda Skocpol (1979). In this paper, I look how the nature of the rural structure of the Ottoman Empire can be seen to have affected the political and economic development of modern Turkey. In ad-

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dition, the location of the Ottoman state in the context of the European states can be shown to contribute to this process. Furthermore, an analysis of the Ottoman Turkish case is helpful in illustrating the troublesome questions of the relationship betweeen structure and agency and the role of values and ideas. Given the vast size of the Ottoman Empire in the period under study and the regional variation of change, we will limit our analysis to Anatolia proper.

Internal Dynamics: Idiosyncrasies of the Ottoman Order and Their Issolution

Studies on the Ottoman Empire usually agree on the fact that during the first two centuries of their rule the Ottomans created a coherent and viable socio-economic structure. To ensure the smooth functioning of the system, a powerful central authority and territorial expansion were crucial. The latter was especially of paramount importance for the sovereign owing to the fact that the government could only fulfill its obligations so long as a sufficient amount of revenue flowed into the Treasury. The oriental maxim that a ruler can have no power without soldiers, no soldiers without money, no money without the well-being of his subjects, and no popular well-being without justice' (İnalcık, 1964: 43) seems to be the most succinct summation of the logic behind the system.

The central tenet of this system derived its rationale of coherence from the way in which the mode of production was organized. One of the most salient features of this mode of production (or, more appropriately, the Ottoman form of social organization), was that it was based on a close combination of state ownership of land, land possession rights, military organization, and forms and mechanisms of taxation. According to İslamoğlu-İnan & Keyder (1987: 47), the reproduction of the system was contingent upon the control that the central authority exercised over the production process and the appropriation of the surplus.

The organization of production, that is the `traditional economic unit' (Eisenstadt, 1963: 32), was known as the timar system in the nomenclature of the Ottoman Empire (Braudel, 1973: 720 f.; Anderson, 1989: 368 f.). This system of land tenure went back to the beginning of Ottoman rule in the fourteenth century. Exhibiting some patrimonial attributes, owing to the fact that the Ottoman lands as a whole were looked upon as a huge sultanic manor (Weber, 1968: 103), this new fief system necessitated the return of all agricultural land to state ownership. Feudal rights over land were terminated, thereby opening the way for much greater control by the central authority. Furthermore, the state confiscated the great bulk of the land held in vakifs (religious foundations) and passed these lands to sipahis (cavalrymen) who, in addition to other duties, were required to collect taxes on behalf of the state (İnalcık, 1976: 34 f.).

What was distinctive in the Ottoman fief system was that the granting of benefices to the sipahis, or the timariots, in return for service did not entail political-territorial rights. The sipahis' responsibility was twofold. Their first task was to ensure the uninterrupted cultivation of the land by the peasants, over whom they had only supervisory powers. Paying the taxes constituted the second task of the timariots. They were additionally held responsible for maintaining and, when called on, mobilizing what was later to become a large-scale cavalry force.

The organization of production around the timar system grew out of some concerns of the central authority. These concerns also reveal the functions of the fief system. Firstly, the interests of the central state coincided with the way that agricultural production was co-ordinated. The state always wanted to minimize any challenge from the units of potential provincial and local power. It also ensured that the local agricultural surplus was used to promote its own objectives. To facilitate the realization of these ends, the state carefully regulated the timariots and the direct producers. Thus, the peasants were equal with the fief-holders before the law, which was enforced by the kadis (district judges) appointed by the central authority. The latter strictly limited the control which the sipahis could exercise over the peasants. There was, therefore, always a way open for the peasants to bring complaints about any unjust treatment they received at the hands of the sipahis (Szyliewicz, 1977: 108).

It could be argued that the principle of the sipahis exercising no feudal leadership or seignioral jurisdiction over the peasants who worked on their timariots (Anderson, 1989) was in fact the key to state rule from the centre, at least in the heyday of the Empire. Various mechanisms adopted by the state over the production process prevented centrifugal forces, such as the sipahis, from creating alternative centres in the periphery and challenging the authority of the state. Upon the accession of every Sultan, the sipahi fief-holders were systematically reshuffled to deny them any opportunity to establish long-term and durable bases of local power. Employing Mardin's `centre-periphery' paradigm (Mardin, 1973: 170-2), it is possible to argue that the centre, i.e. the Sultan and his close functionaries, were always suspicious of the periphery, i.e. those who were not in the ruling class.

The calculated safeguarding of the peasants against their `lords' and the perpetual checking of the actions of the latter had repercussions on the political modernization of Ottoman Turkey. Moore (1967) regarded the destruction of the peasantry and the emergence of a commercialized middle class as prerequisites for the emergence of a democratic political system. In the light of this, the firm presence of a `conservative' peasantry in the countryside and the absence of private property in land can be seen to have blocked the emergence of a free landowning class, among whom the progressive outlook of the modern world might have been expected to take root. The absence of an independent landowning class with economic power to challenge the arbitrary rule of the central authority (Moore, 1967; Aricanli & Thomas, 1994) could be held responsible for democracy's late and problematic appearance in Turkey. It also helps to explain why the ethos of `military-bureaucracy' has been perpetuated and granted such high esteem in Turkish society. The reason why Ottoman Turkey lacked a powerful landowning class is elucidated by Keyder, who, in reviewing a long historical perspective, points out that in the Byzantine Empire the trend was towards feudalization since rich magnates, small landlords, monasteries and towns had increasingly escaped the control and legislation of the centre... It was the centralization of power by the Ottoman dynasty which brought this development to an end and concomitantly arrested the evolution of an aristocracy in the western sense (Keyder, 1987: 10 f.).

In fact, the possibility of acquiring influence within the central state via the timariots became more bleak on account of the remarkable mechanism of recruitment into the executive and administrative branches of the Ottoman state, the devşirme. The devşirme was based on an annual levy of male children of the Christian subjects. These children were trained as slaves of the Sultan for military and administrative posts (Anderson, 1989: 366 f.; Patterson, 1979: 41-45). The chief purpose of this recruitment was to make sure that "the military and administrative orders of the central government should possess no roots in the society and should bear allegiance to the ruler" (Berkes, 1964: 12, 14). In other words, the reason behind the creation of the slave-like administrative apparatus was the same concern over the timariots: to deny the functionaries an autonomous status and guarantee the unchallenged authority of the centre. The revenue source of the administrative officials and the fact that claims on revenue were not hereditary reduced even further the possibility of the timariots' achieving an autonomous status.

The centralized nature of the Ottoman system placed significant financial costraints upon it. For example, it was responsible for the costs of all state salaries and, as we will see in due course, it often faced grave difficulties in paying its officials' salaries (i.e. the salaries of the janissaries) and this became a real source of instability. The janissaries resorted to taking up occupations in urban centres with the hope of remedying their material loss. The deterioration of the position of the janissaries and their organic link also led to the breakdown of the devşirme system, with the consequence that Muslim subjects were now accepted into the rank and file of civilian and military occupations. In short, some of the janissaries gained a social base and social roots within the urban setting - an outcome which was viewed with anathema by the Ottoman system. Engaging in artisan trades to supplement their diminishing real incomes had the effect of consolidating an ill-disciplined and extensive military presence in the capital, which played a major role in palace intrigues but was of little military use on the battlefield (Anderson, 1989: 381 f.).

So much for the basic contours of the Ottoman social formation. Before we move on to examine the causes which led to the disarticulation and eventual demise of the structural components of the system, it should be remarked that changes in political as well as cultural spheres are considered to be the tangible results of economic transformation (Karpat, 1973: 1-92). Karpat expressed appreciation of the analysis suggested in Moore's Social Origins. However, in the light of the Turkish case, he felt that the priority given to peasants and landlords `as key factors in the transformation of certain agrarian societies' was somewhat exaggerated. However, he conceded that the `development of a group in society with an independent economic base' was the key feature of both the American and French Revolutions, and saw its parallels in Turkey.

In an agriculturally based economy, like that of the Ottoman Empire, without any significant technological innovation, the amount of revenue always lags behind the actual needs of the government. The gap between what was needed and what was actually available grew even wider in the Ottoman state, which, for the various reasons given earlier, held a suspicious view not only of agriculture, but also of trade and manufacture. Coupled with this, the end of Ottoman military conquest, which was one of the major sources of revenue, made it extremely difficult for the system to reproduce itself. The state also faced what Küçükömer (1989: 40 f.) termed a "hegemony-paradox", i.e. difficulty in finding an optimum level of territorial expansion without at the same time increasing administrative costs.

Stagnation in manufacture and agriculture was exacerbated by the government's reluctance to revitalize the economy, which was losing against the European capitalist system that was then experiencing the transition from feudalism (Brenner, 1976). While the sixteenth century was a turning-point for the capitalist economy, it was also a watershed in Ottoman history, for it marked the beginning of the peripheralization of the Empire (Islamoğlu & Keyder, 1987) vis-a-vis the newly emerging nation states of Europe. The overall consequence of losing against the incipient economic system was the beginning of societal structures on which the Empire was constructed. The Ottomans, who had conquered Istanbul because of its economically strategic position, failed to make the structurally necessary adjustments necessary to meet the challenge of a more vigorous empire.

The growing disorganization of the fief system initiated important changes in the organization of agricultural production. The first dislocations in the fief system, in fact, go back to the early seventeenth century, when timars were increasingly being converted into tax farms and leased to the highest bidder. This system, known as mukataa or iltizam (Mouzelis, 1978), aimed to supply the state with the additional liquid funds needed to finance the growing salaried standing army.

Initially, tax-farms were granted for short periods of one or two years. What this meant was the extreme exploitation of the peasantry, owing to the fact that most of the tax-farmers strove to make their fortunes in a short period of time. When the tax-farming system became permanent in the form of life-farms, or malikâne, the exploitation of the peasantry did not appear to grow any less. The abuse of the peasantry through very high tax levies continued. Despite the fact that the peasantry endured so much material hardship, the general docility of the Turkish peasants, who preferred peaceful to violent means of ameliorating their position, could well have been the result of the land tenure system. The division of labour in the countryside created a mechanism whereby peasants survived. In other words, the peasants' conventional duties tied them to a sort of survival existence (Stirling, 1965: 35 f.). The peasantry was not required to have direct contacts with the central authority; the only communication channel was the sipahis. With the latter, the peasantry was in disunity or in conflict because there was not an interdependence or colloboration between the two, which in turn derived from the fact that unlike the French nobility, who owned the land and offered the peasants `protection, organisation and arms' (Barkey, 1991: 702), the landholding cavalry of the Ottoman Empire did not own the land and therefore had no long-term tie to the peasants. In spite of their extensive exploitation (Gursel, 1983), the lack of action by the peasantry might be said to have been caused by the structural location of the peasants and the sipahis in the rural structure.

The most important consequence of the transformation to tax-farming was, however, the creation of the `centrifugal forces' with relative independence from the state. These `centrifugal forces', i.e. the ayans or local notables, came into existence as a result of this development.

The Ottoman local notables were, nevertheless, different from their European counterparts in that the juridical right to the land still belonged to the state. Moreover, unlike the European aristocracy, they exercised no political influence over the affairs of the state. They were not, in fact, interested in becoming a counter-political force opposed to the centre by building up autonomous power centres and by becoming agricultural entrepreneurs. They accepted their designated position as intermediaries and spent no effort to initiate opposition movements against the centre, which the European aristocracy resorted to in their struggles with the government (Eisenstadt, 1963: 180 f.).

The rise of the ayans was obviously an important phenomenon in Turkish history and it has been the subject of many arguments among scholars as to whether feudalism eventually came to the Empire. To give a positive answer to this question, one must examine the status of sovereignty and ask the question, was there any `parcellization of sovereignty' (to use Anderson's terminology)? Sunar (1987: 72) argues for a different type of parcellization:

What we witness... is the parcellization of sovereignty - not, however, as a consequence of vertical allocations of sovereignty, which characterized western feudalism, but as a consequence of vertical disassociation that was a function of the horizontal integration of the estate system with the world market.

The parcellization occurred to a certain extent at the economic level without any change in the political-ideological nexus of the state.

It has been pointed out above and must be emphasized once more in this place that the estate holders never reached the kind of political, social, and juridical autonomy that feudal lords enjoyed in Western Europe, nor were they ever able to appropriate the state apparatus for their own use. The state continued to hold power over the estates, minimally by its juridical monopoly over land and labour, and maximally through political and military intervention (ibid.: 73).

It has been demonstrated above that the disintegration of the Ottoman system of land tenure created a power vacuum during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The ayans, or local notables, took advantage of weak authority at the centre and tried to substitute for the state in their own relations with the masses. In 1808, they even compelled the central authority to recognize their power (Karpat, 1972: 251 f.). Consequently, the Sened-i İttifak (Deed of Alliance) of 1808 marks the point in Ottoman history when the customary preoccupation of the state with immediate financial concerns caught up with it politically: the cumulative effects of revenue concerns gave rise to a constellation of social groups which in time came to challenge the patrimonial power of the state (Sunar, 1987: 72).

Despite its being regarded as a watershed in Turkish history, it is difficult to think of the Sened-i İttifak as the Turkish Magna Carta, for as soon as Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, who was one of the key persons in bringing about the agreement in acting on behalf of the ayans, lost his power, the document was declared invalid. Perhaps a more authentic reason might have been the structural position of the ayans within society, since they were never interested in developing a strong Weltanschauung from which they could oppose not only the central government but also the patrimonial ethos of the Sultan. Their only concern was to make easy profits. The failure of the local notables was the result of their lacking a united, strong front against the state (Shaw, 1971: 397). In fact, Mustafa Pasha drew the attention of the delegates to the need of saving the state (İnalcık, 1964: 612). The covenant stipulated that the local notables would help the state in conscripting men for the army and in collecting taxes. In return, the centre promised not to harm them, so long as the state's interests were not violated.

What is so far more evident is the fact that the state maintained an overwhelming presence in the Ottoman social formation, thus leaving very little space for the social forces to emerge as autonomous power centres. During the period of dissolution of the Ottoman social formation, a considerable number of openings appeared into which `commercially-minded landlords' could have intervened and developed their economic interests. While this did not in fact occur, if it had done, the political modernization of Turkey could have been different. In one sense, this can be interpreted as `failure of will' on the part of this group. This voluntarist explanation, however, fails to recognize the need to situate groups within the historical reality of the late Ottoman period. Paradoxically, it was the historical domination of the state which constrained action even after its demise.

External dynamics: The Reform Movement

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman social structure was disintegrating. It is important to locate this disintegrating social formation within the context of competition between the industrial capitalist states of Western Europe. Each of these states, especially Britain and France, had clearly established themselves as modern capitalist states with a key awareness of international state relations and the significance of these for their own interests. It is through an understanding of the ways in which these external dynamics impinged upon the changing internal order that we can understand the reform movement of the 1850s and its subsequent implications for the Turkish Revolution.

The Tanzimat period was set in motion by the financial weakening of the centre and the emergence of rival local power centres. However, they cannot be adequately explained without locating the Ottoman Empire in the the international state system, nor may we simply bypass the significance of the ideas, especially nationalist ideology, pouring into the country. For example, one of the main aims of the Tanzimat decree of 1839 was to neutralize the growth of national agitation among the Christian subjects of the Empire, from which Greece had already seceded in 1824. There were also revolts in the Balkan Peninsula and neither should the challenge of Mehmet Ali, governor of Egypt, be forgotten. Equally, the causes of ethnic rebellions might be attributable to the policies of the great powers of the era - Great Britain, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and France - which were competing for sway over the Ottoman Empire, as well as to the ideals of the French Revolution of 1789. To illustrate the point, the Russians forced the weakening Ottomans to recognize them as the only legitimate protectors of the Orthodox Christians of the Empire. Similarly, but in a different manner, the Ottomans received an offer of help from the French just after the Russian victory over the Ottomans in the wars of 1768-1774 and 1787-1792, as the French wished to halt the Russian expansion towards the south. What is more, faced with the incompetence of the Ottoman State against the rebellious governor of Egypt (Shaw & Shaw, 1977: 9-12, 49 f.), Great Britain mediated between the Sultan and the Egyptian administrator. The Anglo-Turkish Convention, signed in 1838, could be regarded as an act of recompense to the British Government for its role in rescuing the Sultan from utter humiliation. The price which the Ottoman Government paid was, in fact, quite heavy: the loss of sovereignty over Egypt to Britain. The agreement specified that the "Turkish government also agrees not to object to other foreign powers settling their trade upon the basis of the present convention" (Issawi, 1966: 40). It is, therefore, possible to argue that, after every crisis, financial or otherwise, the door was left open to increased foreign pressure.

The Edict of 1839 introduced, for the first time in Turkish history, the recognized equality of Christians and Muslims before the law. The commercial laws were codified and the first commercial courts were set up in 1845. The system of capitulations, which had long been an economic burden on the state, was further consolidated and, in fact, extended. For a declining empire, these were obviously transformed into economic privileges for the West (İnalcık, 1978: 55-57). One of the articles of the capitulations was that the state could not make any alterations in tariffs regulating external trade without obtaining the consent of the trading powers.

According to Sunar (1987: 81), the expansion of international trade after the signing of the Anglo-Ottoman Treaty of 1838 served the Ottoman State by increasing import duty to 5 per cent and export duty to 12 per cent, thereby achieving its principal objectives: increased revenues and undermining of the governor of Egypt. In due course, however, we will see that the adoption of this policy provoked unintended consequences in that the possibility of creating a Turkish bourgeois class became bleak.

Another important step in the reformation process, and therefore in centralization, was the declaration of the Rescript of 1856 (Islahat Fermanı). In the preparation of this reform packet, the influence of external powers on Ottoman domestic policy became even more conspicuous. This was because the `Hatt-i Humayûn of 1856, which was in many ways the magnum opus of Lord Stratford, was prepared in collaboration with the French Ambassador and Austrian internuncio to the Porte and was accepted as a whole by the Ottoman government' (Karpat, 1972: 259).

By this reform programme, which was similar to previous ones, the Government was endeavouring to bring the subjects of the state onto an equal footing before the law. It was therefore creating the ideal of equal citizenship, known generally as Ottomanism, so that ethnic and religious loyalties of various groups could be directed toward the Government and, as a result, a strong central authority could become possible. Nevertheless, the idea not only failed to bring about the desired aim of the Government, but it further accelerated the dissolution of the Empire in that the non-Turkish subjects of the state used the economic power accumulated through the liberal economic policy of the era to achieve their national cause, that is, the separation from the Empire.

As pointed out earlier, a liberal economic policy prevailed during the Tanzimat period. The state deliberately chose to rely on the merchant class, while most of the time this merchant class belonged to the minority subjects of the Empire. According the Sunar (1987: 80 f.), there were a number of reasons for the state's sympathy towards the minority class of merchants. Among these were the following:

> (1) a stimulated trade with Western Europe in general and the British in particular would subject the peasantry to increasing commercialization and thereby generate money rent for the state; (2) it would afford the state increasing revenue through taxation of increasing volume of trade... the policy of increasing commercialization would satisfy both British and minority interests, winning their support for the state.

What are important for our purpose are the repercussions, that came from the liberal economic policy, on the social division of the Empire. The economic policy of the Tanzimat era accelerated the integration of the Ottoman Empire and therefore its peripheralization to the European state system and capitalist economy. It is for this reason that the Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1838 should be evaluated as one of the first tangible steps in institutionalizing the Empire's integration within the logic of capitalist economy (Keyder, 1987: 29). The Land Code 1858 embodied certain articles similar to those contained in the agreement of 1808. The Land Code of 1858 expanded inheritance rights and thus moved closer to acceptance of private land-ownership. Karpat (1972: 258) argued that the Land Code grew out of the state's urgent need of revenue and that it therefore contributed to the centralization efforts of the state. The Code nevertheless opened the door even wider to the "ideas of Western economic liberalism" with which the Empire had become acquainted much earlier. The agreement of 1858 was certainly of great significance, since for the first time the use of land as security for loans was made possible. It also paved the way for the right granted in 1867 for foreigners to own land. As Barkan (1940) pointed out, the reality of unconditional private property became more tangible after these changes. Nevertheless, an absolute right to private land-ownership, in the Western sense, did not come to Turkey until around 1926 (İnalcık, 1955: 226 f.).

These changes did not, however, extend and strenghten private land-ownership, and did not lead to the expropriation of small producers and the emergence of a rural proletariat. There were a number of factors stemming from the nature of the Land Code of 1858 which contributed to producing this result. The Land Code was designed in such a way as to prevent land-holders from exploiting the peasants. The cultivators were protected against the tax-farmers, who could not own, collectively or individually, all the land of a village or town (Issawi, 1966: 73 f.) The sale of grazing lands for common use was also prohibited (Barkan, 1940: 376). The interesting point was that the state was trying meanwhile to meet its revenue needs through devising ways of taxing the land and, on the other hand, was careful to sustain the conventional rural structure by placing great emphasis on small-scale peasant production as the financial foundation of the state.

The Process of Peripheralization

The extent to which the Ottoman Empire was peripheralized to the requirements of the capitalist system could be judged by taking into consideration the form that trade took between the Empire and Europe. While the great bulk of imports consisted mainly of manufactured consumer goods, usually for the needs of the Porte, the exports consisted of various raw materials and foodstuffs (Pamuk, 1987).

The diversion of raw materials to the external market and the increase in imports of finished goods undermined domestic manufacturing production and led to unemployment in urban areas, as well as in rural regions where there was craft production. For the rural producers, the shift of their products to external markets meant an increase in their net income. Be that as it may, the destruction of local industry blocked the potential evolution of an indigenous bourgeois class. It might be erroneous to attribute the failure in creating a bourgeoisie class to external forces alone. We have already seen how the emergence of a landowning class had been made impossible by the state's organization of production in the countryside. Here, with its economic policy, the state not only left the local manufacturers to their fate, but also contributed to their destruction. The unemployment of tens of thousands of craftsmen effectively blocked the potential for independent manufacture. This was not a problem for the state. Agrarian empires, like the Ottoman Empire, counted on the bureaucratic Èlite's concern to preserve the administrative domain for itself despite the increasing foreign pressure (Trimberger, 1978).

The dissolution of the national industry accompanied the emergence of new social groups. These new groups within the Empire were the non-Turkish minorities such as the Armenians and the Greeks, who, by using the protection and immunity afforded them by foreign powers, prospered in port cities of the Ottoman Empire such as Salonika, İzmir, Trabzon, and İstanbul. These cities, in fact, provided the linkage between this newly emerging bourgeoisie and the European powers.

Port cities, like those mentioned above, are usually one of the peculiar characteristics of states which are in the process of peripheralization. The agents of the capitalist core, such as banks, are established in these cities and communication networks spread to them from the interior. Whereas the traditional centres of manufacturing are usually in the interior, the capitalist logic of the core selects coastal cities for economic activity. Therefore, coastal towns are a concomitant result of the restructuring that goes with the new geographical division of labour. According to the modernization paradigm, coastal cities also become transmission stations for the diffusion of new values, consumption patterns, and norms of culture.

Despite being regarded as the door to a new way of thinking, the `Oriental' city is still regarded as the centre of stagnation. Bureaucratic control over the city is still extreme and this in turn means the absence of urban autonomy and, therefore, a low level of social differentiation (Turner, 1978). Economic life in the western city, on the other hand, is based on the `economic nationality' (Weber, 1958). The economic class of the city, i.e. the bourgeoisie, identifies itself with the existence of the city and, as a result, tries to counterbalance the power of the ruler. In the twentieth century, dependency theorists have developed the idea of the colonial city which serves as the channel between its hinterland and the imperialist core. The (minority) inhabitants of the city constitute a "comprador class", who become aliens to the land and its true natives.

Being primarily an alien force, the comprador class could not bring in a positive dialectic through which a stagnant environment could be transformed. As is well known, the bourgeoisie emerged after the dissolution of feudalism (Holton, 1985; Brenner, 1977). The existence of the working class was also closely associated with the coming of the bourgeoisie (cf. Thompson, 1967; Macfarlane, 1978 & 1987). In a social formation, like that of the Ottoman Empire, contrary to their European partners, the (comprador) bourgeoisie was born in coastal cities under the impetus of the capitalist penetration. Arguably, the first signs of a modern working class could be found in those areas as well (Quataert, 1983).

According to the bourgeois model of revolution, as soon as the bourgeoisie felt strong enough to challenge the political authority, it engaged in the task of changing the state to the requirements of capital's needs. Is it possible to indulge in such a discourse with regard to the Ottoman Empire? This very much desired outcome did not, regrettably, materialize because the (comprador) bourgeoisie became politicized along ethnic lines, thus ruining the possibility of gaining consciousness through conflict and struggle with the political authority (Przeworski, 1977; cf. Thompson, 1978; Anderson, 1980).

To turn to the situation of the non-Turkish bourgeoisie of the Empire, these groups established themselves and reinforced their position at the expense, and in fact almost total exclusion, of the Turks from commercial activity. What made these groups the ideal middlemen for Western commerce was their familiarity with European languages and culture and their knowledge of the Empire's customs and language. Being acquainted with European languages provided state jobs as translators for these minorities, especially the Greeks, in the newly created foreign offices. Their position was also greatly facilitated by the existence of a Greek and Armenian diaspora settled in major European centres. Most of the ships sailing under the Ottoman flag were actually owned and manned by the Greeks, who had always been extremely successful in sea transportation.

Within the context of the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the European state system, the mid-nineteenth century heralded an important change. The state had until then relied on local bankers in Istanbul to meet its cash needs, which most often arose on account of temporary shortages of revenue and deficits in the state's budget. Nevertheless, the gap between rising expenditures caused by the urgent necessity of financing the administrative and military reform programmes and providing money for military engagements on the one hand, and insufficient revenue on the other, forced the Palace to borrow cash from abroad.

Obtaining money from European lenders served two main functions (Keyder, 1987: 35-45). Firstly, being able to borrow legitimated the functionaries of the Empire before the European diplomacy; and secondly, loans further weakened the Ottoman State. "Debt imperialism" paved the way for the lenders to intervene in internal affairs of the state. This intervention eventually came to a head in 1875 when, after nearly twenty-one years had elapsed over the first loan, which had been received in 1854 during the Crimean War, the Ottoman Government declared its inability to make the interest repayments. That the Government continued obtaining loans throughout the 1860s and 1870s, despite having repayment problems, could be attributable to the strategic position of the Empire within the international state system. Indeed, European politicians were competing among themselves to increase their sway over the Empire (Blaisdall, 1966).

With the failure of the Ottoman Government to repay its loans, the Public Debt Administration (PDA) was established in 1881 with the intention of safeguarding the rights of European leaders. The PDA, which came close to almost virtual relinquishment of part of the state's fiscal sovereignty, authorized the lenders to administer some of the state's revenues, such as the salt tax, the silk tithe, and the tobacco tax. Soon after it had been formed, the PDA rapidly expanded and reached nearly the size of the Finance Ministry of the Empire. One third of the state's revenue was transferred to the PDA. Furthermore, the PDA dealt directly with peasant producers and functioned as an agent for foreign merchants. This was, of course, unacceptable to the bureaucrats, whose livelihood was based on the prevalence of the peasantry.

The idea of borrowing during the Crimean War had in fact been given a hostile reception by some sections of the bureaucracy owing mainly to the fear that the traditional order might have been negatively affected. This suspicious outlook towards the possible impact of `debt imperialism' on the future of the Empire had also been shared by the reformist sections of the bureaucracy. The PDA's active intervention in the financial affairs of the state made it difficult for the reformist bureaucracy to obtain necessary resources to implement the transformation programme. The pure economic rationality of the PDA compelled the bureaucracy to defend the normative social order of the Empire.

Before we move on to examine the challenge posed by a group called the Young Turks to the consequences of the PDA imperialism, we should note that, despite all the limitations imposed by the economic demands of the European states, the bureaucracy retained ample space to manoeuvre. What made it possible for the bureaucracy to act in relative independence was its special location within the Ottoman social system. It should be pointed out here that the Ottoman Empire, like China and Japan, had never been colonized. The rivalry between imperialist powers for greater influence over the Ottoman State motivated the state officials to oppose the colonization type of transformation of the Empire. The extent to which the bureaucracy acted freely was also assisted by its strategic location within society. In other words, the bureaucrats were free of internal class pressures. The relative autonomy of the bureaucracy (Trimberger, 1978) derived from the fact that it was not `merely an instrument of a dominant economic class. Historically the status groups... became urbanized and separated from control over the means of production in the countryside.'

Conclusion: Towards the Young Turk Revolution

It is quite safe to argue that any serious work on the modernization of Turkey should take into consideration the role played by the Young Turks at the end of nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. The rise of this group was in fact one of the major developments related to the transformation of the Ottoman State.

It wil be useful to shed some light on what body of people were called the Young Turks before we actually proceed in our investigation. The Young Turks were those intellectuals and bureaucrats who, between 1889 and 1908, constituted an opposition against the government of Abdûlhamid, who shelved the first Turkish constitution in 1877 during the international crisis occasioned by the war with Russia.

The intellectual foundation of the Young Turk Movement dates back to the Young Ottomans of the 1860s. The Young Ottomans Organization was founded in 1865 by Namik Kemal with friends from the Translation Bureau and from journalism during a picnic in an Istanbul forest (Davison, 1963: 187; Mardin, 1962). The declared purpose of this group was to arrest the process of the Empire's decline by means of constitutonal reform of the state. Despite this novel mode of thinking, Kemal never "in practice advocated or made a revolutionary break with the sultan caliph" (Trimberger, 1978: 77). He firmly believed that the consultation mechanism of early Islam could be revived and adapted to the Empire. Unfortunately, Kemal's life came to an end while he was in exile imposed by the Sultan (Mardin, 1962: ch. 10).

Contrary to the origins of the Young Ottomans, who were recruited mainly from the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, the Young Turks came primarily from the local notables, and disconnected craftsmen and artisans, who had been squeezed into a corner under the impact of Ottoman integration into the world economy. One of the most interesting features of the Young Turks was that they came chiefly from provinces outside Istanbul. It is equally significant that all five founders of the first Young Turk Organization in 1889 had provincial origins (Mardin, 1969: 277). They were, in fact, the first products of the civilian and military schools opened by Sultan Abdûlhamid II, who reigned from 1876 to 1909 keeping a firm grip over society and remaining suspicious of the Western intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman State. Although there were representatives of the landlords and merchants among the ranks of the Young Turks, the interests of civil and military bureaucrats always dominated the first group.

The members of the Young Turks movement spent some time in certain Western European countries, notably in France, at some stage in their lives. This environment had some influence on their ideological outlook, as they reflected the philosophy of positivism, particularly the French school of Auguste Comte (Mardin, 1964; Ramsaur, 1957). In addition, their world view was formed by their understanding of the industrialized bourgeois state. The Young Turks shared the same concerns as their predecessors. They, like the Young Ottomans, aimed to prevent the destruction of the state. What was distinctive about them was the radicalism of their objectives. As we noted above, the Young Ottomans' activities were brought to a halt by Sultan Abdûlhamid in the late 1870s. Abdûlhamid's reign lasted for about thirty-six years, during which time his policy of suspicion and suppression continued. This policy in turn led the Young Turks to develop an anti-Hamidian posture. Right from the beginning, their undeclared goal was to change the political system and to base a new political system on a firm economic footing by creating a bourgeoisie of Turkish origin. Their transformation towards radicalism was caused by a number of factors. Their opposition to, and alienation from, the central government was further reinforced by their place of origin: they were mainly drawn from the provinces, the values of which were different from the Palace's (Mardin, 1989: 58). The idea of nationalism also contributed to their estrangement. At the beginnng of their movement, the Young Turks could not advocate, at least explicitly, a nationalist stance owing mainly to the fact that the Empire still then had Armenian, Arab, and Greek Orthodox nationals (Smith, 1993: 143). "Only in the last years of the Hamidian reaction was the concept of "Turk"... re-invested with positive ethnic potential and harmonized with a very Western concept of territorial nation" (ibid.: 143). However, it was the economic hardship of the country under the tutelage of the PDA more than anything else that was instrumental in producing the Young Turks' radicalism.

It was basically these reasons which motivated the Young Turks to obtain power and transform society or, rather more appropriately, the economic sphere of the country. They realized the first objective in 1909 when they deposed Sultan Abdûlhamid. As for the second objective, they had by then already become aware that the backbone of national states in Europe was the bourgeois class. The Listian economic doctrine in Germany was also peculiar to them. They calculated that by creating a national economy from above, an indigenous bourgeois class could emerge and function like its European counterparts. However, the Young Turks lacked an important factor which the advocates of the Listian doctrine in Germany had: a manufacturing bourgeoisie (Keyder,1987:54). A bourgeois class created from above through bureaucratic reforms could only have been a "surrogate bourgeoisie". Behind the Young Turks' efforts to establish a national economy was the worry of losing their strategic position within society. An indigenous `surrogate bourgeoisie' could serve their bureaucratic masters better than the comprador bourgeoisie. In fact, neither the Greeks nor the Armenians, who constituted the bulk of the bourgeoisie, regarded the state as the representative of their interests. There was no reason why they should have felt otherwise! The Unionists, that is the government of the Committee of Union and Progress, however, received support from the Ottoman Jews. Ahmad (1980: 331) attributed this difference of attitude to the fact that "they, i.e. the Ottoman Jews, derived no benefit from the domination of the Ottoman economy by Europe and suffered the consequences of the Empire being converted into a semi-colony." At the international level, their relations also became transformed. Before their rise to power in 1909, the Young Turks were highly respected among the British and the French as they appeared to represent `the promise of freedom from a despotic sultan.' However, this pro-British and pro-French posture of the Young Turks changed when the French and the British stayed neutral during a crisis with Bulgaria and Greece. The Young Turks, therefore, tried to end their isolation by seeking an alliance with Germany, whose influence became firmly established until 1918 when the Young Turks had to give up power after their defeat in the First Great War.

The Young Turks' story was what might be called (to use Gramsci's phrase) the story of a "subordinated class", who started as a political organization in the 1880s with an articulate ideology which demanded the creation of an indigenous bourgeois class, a constitutional state, and relatively more freedom (Ahmad, 1969). However, when they took power, their action was severely constrained by the realities of the late Ottoman State and its position in relation to other states. Their immediate problem related to the Ten Year War and the situation in the Balkans. This, together with economic crises, led them (just as Skocpol theorized) to increasingly centralize the state. Rather than acting as a liberal regime, the state under the Young Turks retained a familiarly autocratic form.

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