

CIVIL OFFICIALDOM AND THE
PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY IN THE
OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1876–1922)

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In the bureaucratic structure of the Ottoman fin de siècle, modernizing accountability and arbitrary behavior existed side by side, as parallel mechanisms. In this era the Ottoman political system was extremely productive, and interfered even more effectively not only in domestic but also in foreign affairs using modern techniques. However, when we focus on the everyday lives of individual officials, it becomes clear that this development failed to forestall their complaints; on the contrary, certain developments such as bureaucratic expansion made their lives even more difficult. Consequently, at the end of the Empire we find a bureaucratic mechanism based on a belief in the magical power of detailed legal regulations, a mechanism that was very sophisticated and meticulous, but which at the same time was continuously and harshly criticized by its own agents.

The degree to which this arbitrariness was an obstacle to the development of the bureaucratic structure in the political, administrative, legal, and economic spheres will not be examined here. Rather, I will focus on the problem of legitimacy it created for various strata, such as the sultan and the political parties, in the eyes of civil officials. Four categories of legitimacy deficits in the eyes of civil officials will be considered: economic-fiscal, political-ideological, legal-judicial, and administrative.

The era under discussion is distinguished from preceding ones in several ways. Initially, the number of officials, the magnitude of bureaucratic dealings, and the financial crises lingering from the previous era loomed larger than ever before. These factors combined to make lives of officials worse and they did not remain silent about it. In other words, the larger the number of officials, the more vocal their complaints; the larger the volume of work, the more numerous

the grievances.¹ Secondly, the emergence of new modes of communication such as theater, newspapers and journals, as well as new forms of political behavior such as protests, which were even (as in the case of the New Ottomans) exported abroad, made it easier for officials hurt by these patrimonial practices to speak out and to attract advocates. This in turn raised public awareness of the problems of legitimacy. But, in the absence of “modern media,” attempts were made to solve problems quietly and individually, and for this, it was generally preferred to “bypass” the problem by either shrugging it off, arranging a transfer to another office, or having recourse to intermediaries rather than engaging in open conflict with the patrimonial superior.

In sum, what will be discussed here are the nature, causes and consequences of the problems of legitimacy experienced in Ottoman civil officialdom. Those who suffered a loss of respect in the eyes of lower and intermediate officials included the sultan, the Sublime Porte, Parliament and senior officials. Just as problems of legitimacy could occur singly, so they were also observed in various combinations. Additionally, there were periods in which the political system was struck by a legitimacy crisis. The final years of the sultanate of ‘Abdülhamid II may be cited as an example of this. Speaking in general terms, the political system, including the administrative subsystem, was conservative in the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottoman political system regarded civil officials not as free agents with limited obligations but rather as servants of the ruler.

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¹ The number of clerks employed in the Istanbul central organization, which was around 2000 in the 1790, swelled to 50,000–100,000 under ‘Abdülhamid II. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter BOA), Buyruldu Defterleri, 3 Meclis-i Vala Tahrirat Odası, 21 Zilhicce 1265/7 November 1849 in C.V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton, 1980) 234, 384; by 1900 there were half a million civil service jobs, in old and new areas of activity, that had not existed in 1800. E. Engelhardt, *La Turquie et la Tanzimat: ou histoire des réformes dans l’Empire ottoman depuis 1826 jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris, 1882), vol. 1: 89; vol. 2: 281–282.

Economic-fiscal Causes

These derived generally from inadequate salaries, often not paid on time, from inconsistencies between the various bureaucratic cadres and regions, from the sultan's use of patronage to gain supporters, and from the profligacy and insatiable venality of both the palace and senior officials.

Although the acceptance of gifts by officials and the collection of fees for services performed were declared illegal by 'Abdülmeçid, during 'Abdülhamid II's reign a blind eye was turned when such irregularities were committed by low-salaried officials.² Indeed, those who were willing to accept lower salaries, or fees instead of a salary, were even favored in appointments to official posts.³ In addition to unemployment stipends, which mostly high-ranking officials could claim,⁴ a delay-fraught system of travel allowances was implemented (not applicable to recall to a former position and/or reinstatement in case of dismissal or resignation)⁵ and a system of *per diem* allowances was then adopted. A monthly pension system was also introduced, but again payments were irregular—so much so that considerable numbers of officials and retirees were unable to collect either salary or pension for months on end, often for an entire year: Many chose not to retire for that reason, through the second decade of the twentieth century.⁶

² E.g. Mehmet Tevfik, *Bir Devlet Adamının Mehmet Tevfik Bey'in (Biren) II. Abdülhamid, Meşrutiyet ve Mütareke devri hatıraları*, ed. F.R. Hürmen, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1993), 262.

³ F.O., 78/2191, Damascus, Jago to Elliot, 39, 6 December 1871; Laborator, "Reformen in der Türkei," *Preußische Jahrbücher* 112 (1903), 53.

⁴ *Taqvim-i Veqayî* 218 (4 Muharrem 1257/26 February 1841), 6; *Meclis-i Meb'usan-i 'Osmani* 48/1. devre 1324–1325 ictima'ı (Türk Tarih Kurumu, B/133); *Me'murin* 100 (1329/1911), 4; 102 (1330/1911–12), 2 (*Me'murin* was an independent newspaper where Ottoman officials from all over the Empire could publish their articles); Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 261–262; one of the reasons of this was that the weak treasury was faced with paying the stipends in enormous sums to great number of officials favored by it. *Dakhiliyye Nezareti muharreerat-ı 'umumiyye mecmu'ası* (1329), vol. 1 (Dersa'adet, 1329/1911), 88–91.

⁵ *Me'murin* 91 (1329/1911), 2; 'Abdülghani Seni, "Me'murin-i devlet ve evsafi," *Mülkiye* 21 (1326/1908–09), 29. For the earliest application in 'Abdülhamid II's period I encountered on payment of travel allowances for return to previous posts, see BOA, ZB, 107/45, 16 Safer 1325/31 March 1907.

⁶ BOA, ZB, 18/88, 17 Ramazan 1317/19 January 1900; DH.KMS., 49–1/95, 18 Cemaziyelevvel 1337/19 February 1919; Mehmed Sa'id Paşa, *Sa'id Paşa'nın khatıraları*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1328/1910–11), 31–32; *Me'murin* 55 (1328/1910–11), 2; 53 (1328/1910–11), 2; 91 (1329/1911) 2; Cemal Paşa, *Hatırat*, ed. M. Maru (Istanbul,

As suggested above, the new financial system did not function smoothly for a number of reasons. Among them were an unsuccessful attempt to combine fiscal centralization with free trade, the increase in foreign debt during the Crimean war, the further worsening of the economic situation during the Cretan (1866–69), Balkan (1875) and Armenian (1906–07) crises, famine in Anatolia (1870, 1873–75, 1895), administrative instability stemming from the completely arbitrary nature of appointments and dismissals under Mahmud Paşa (1871), the bankruptcy of the Treasury, the Russian demand for reparations following the 1877–78 Russo-Turkish War,⁷ the ceding of the wealthy Egypt province to Britain in 1882, sharp price rises in 1894, 1907–1909, payment to spies and to people of influence and their relatives by ‘Abdülhamid II to buy them off, which destroyed bureaucratic discipline and morale, and, finally, a disproportion in salaries that proved impossible to rectify even under the Constitution of 1908⁸ (‘Abdülhamid II exploited salary imbalances among the cadres of the bureaucracy to foster his personnel policy, forcing low-salaried young officials to seek the patronage of wealthy households headed by high-salaried grandees),⁹ the Young Turk coup d’état, burgeoning debt under Union and Progress, and, in the beginning, inadequate planning¹⁰ and the unprecedentedly high salaries, even

1996), 16; A. Mandelstam, *Le Sort de l’Empire Ottoman* (Lausanne – Paris, 1917), 154–155; N. Sakaoğlu, “Memurlar tarihi için belgeler,” *Toplumsal tarih*, 38 (1997), 10. For the share of the budget allocated to retirement pensions during this period see A. Heidborn, *Manuel de droit public et administratif de l’Empire Ottoman*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1912), 64, 67.

⁷ For a useful overview of the war’s effect on salaries see F.O., 78/2622, Damascus, Jago to Derby, 16, 17 December 1877; 78/2850, Jago to Derby, 5, 27 March 1878.

⁸ İbnülemin M.K. İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1982), 744; C.V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton, 1989), 296. For disproportionate salaries see *Me’murîn* 9 (1328/1910–11), 1–2; 16 (1328/1910–11), 4; 29 (1328/1910–11), 3; 32 (1328/1910–11), 3; 37 (1328/1910–11), 2; 59 (1328/1910–11), 3; 63 (1328/1910–11), 1; 76 (1329/1911), 2–3; 86 (1329/1911), 2; M.A. Aynî, *Canlı tarihler: Profesör Mehmet Ali Aynî hatıraları* (Istanbul, 1945), 10; A.F. Türkgeldi, *Görüp işittiklerim* (Ankara, 1987), 45–46; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma’rûzât*, ed. Y. Halaçoğlu (Istanbul, 1980), 77–78; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 375; vol. 2, 48.

⁹ ‘A. Seni, “Me’murin-i devlet,” 24–25; ‘Osman Nuri, *‘Abdülhamid-i sani ve devri saltanat: Hayat-ı khususîyesi ve siyasiyesi*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1327/1909–10), 594; de la Jonquière, *Histoire de l’Empire Ottoman depuis les origines jusqu’à nos jours*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1914), 557.

¹⁰ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Paris), Turquie 276, Roussin, 77, 16 July 1838 in Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 145.

regular payments in gold from the Privy Treasury,¹¹ inflation and collapse brought on by the 1897 Greco-Turkish, the 1911 Italo-Turkish, and Balkan and First World Wars.¹²

Since the Ottoman economy was predominantly agriculture-based, salaries were a chronic cause of complaint from March to September when tax-collecting activities slowed.¹³ A weeklong delay in the payment of Cabinet salaries in 1851 constitutes the first example of this phenomenon.¹⁴ Such delays continued, becoming longer and longer over time.¹⁵

Among provincial officials in particular, another grievance was the phenomenon of *ma'aş qırdırmaq*, stemming from a weakness in the central administration's payment policies (*havale*) and resulted in up to half the salary being forfeited to moneychangers.¹⁶ Another common practice was *ma'aş buyurtmaq*, a practice by which irregularly paid officials tried to collect their accumulated salaries by employing a go-between to force payment orders.¹⁷ A telegram that the Ottoman consul general of Toulon and Nice, who, like many other officials,

¹¹ Cevdet, "Tensiqat-Islihat," *Mülkiye* 4 (1325/1907-08), 13; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 2, 61; Lütü Bey, *Osmanlı sarayının son günleri*, ed. Ş. Kutlu (Istanbul, [197?]), 20, 28.

¹² BOA, DH.KMS, 31-1/1, 2 Rebiülahir 1333/17 February 1915; 45/38, 22 Zilqade 1335/9 September 1917; Owing to World War I, what remained of officials' salaries after deductions for monthly pensions, unemployment stipends and the war tax went to assistance for the Ottoman fleet. *Düstur* tertib 2 (hereafter *Düstur*²), vol. 6, art. 1, 901.

¹³ BOA, Y.PRK.MK, 9/44-45, 25 Receb 1317/29 November 1899; *Me'murîn* 36 (1328/1910-11), 2-3; 52 (1328/1910-11), 6; 54 (1328/1910-11), 2; 67 (1329/1911), 2; 74 (1329/1911), 2; 79 (1329/1911), 1; Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 299.

¹⁴ Fatma Aliye, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve zamanı* (Istanbul, 1995), 81-82.

¹⁵ BOA, Y.PRK.MK, 9/22, 16 Rebiülahir 1317/24 August 1899; 9/107, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1318/10 October 1900; 22/88, 21 Rebiülahir 1326/23 May 1908; DH.KMS, 52-1/79, 24 Şaban 1337/25 May 1919; 59-1/41, 16 Şevval 1338/3 July 1920; 60-1/79, 18 Receb 1339/28 March 1921; 62/36, 28 Zilhicce 1340/22 August 1922; DH.IUM, 3-3/1-38, 17 Şaban 1340/15 April 1922; F.O., 195/1943, Jidda, Alban to Herbert, 67, August 3, 1896; M.Ş. Güzel, "Prélude à la 'Révolution' Jeune-Turque: La Grogne des Casernes," *Varia Turcica XIII, Première rencontre internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie moderne*, ed. E. Eldem (Istanbul, 1991), 254; Ahmed Vefiq Paşa, Governor of Khüdavendigâr, was unable to pay justice ministry officials' salaries for six consecutive months in 1881. İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 687; Nuri, *Abdülhamid*, vol. 2, 426.

¹⁶ 'Abdülghani Seni, "İdare me'murlarının halat-ı ruhiyye-i ictima'iyeleri (devr-i sabıqda, devr-i hazırda)," *Mülkiye* 23 (1326/1908-09), 27-28; G. Charmes, "La Situation de la Turquie," *Revue des deux mondes*, 49 (1882), 856; Nuri, *Abdülhamid*, vol. 3, 1125; H. İnalçık, "Hawala," *EI*², vol. 3 (1986), 283-285.

¹⁷ S. Mümtaz, *Tarihimizde hayal olmuş hakikatler* (Istanbul, 1948), 38.

had not received his salary for a long time, sent to Wilhelm II imploring him to inform ‘Abdülhamid II of their tragic plight is a striking example of how far the legitimacy of the system had weakened in the eyes of officials.¹⁸

Unable to pay salaries, the various administrations thus damaged the prestige of officials in the eyes of the common people, and in turn, the legitimacy of the system in the eyes of officials, by resorting to bizarre methods such as distribution of shipwreck payrolls which personnel could convert into cash.¹⁹ Moreover, although the outlawing of allocations of meat, bread, and charcoal rations, kerosene etc. to officials under ‘Abdülhamid II (1880) unleashed a spate of rumors and complaints, this practice nevertheless proved impossible to eradicate and remains as a legacy to this day.²⁰

It was claimed that under ‘Abdülhamid II certain officials became accustomed to delays in salary payments.²¹ Furthermore, certain local exceptions and, following the Second Constitution, certain tax collection agencies, exploiting the weak central fiscal system, distributed the revenues they collected to their own officials first thus allowing them to forestall complaints temporarily.²² But none of these policies sufficed to prevent damage to the legitimacy of the sultan and to the system he had created.²³

¹⁸ Nuri, *‘Abdülhamid*, vol. 2, 545–546; vol. 3, 1125; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, ed. C. Baysun (Ankara, 1953), 21.

¹⁹ A. Kemal, “Maaş yerine gemi enkazı,” *Hayat tarih mecmuası* 3 (1966), 30–34.

²⁰ BOA, DH.MB.HPS.M., 32/75, 17 Cemaziyelevvel 1336/28 February 1918; DH.KMS., 49–1/97, 22 Cemaziyelevvel 1337/23 February 1919; Sakaoglu, *Memurlar*, 11; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 104.

²¹ BOA, Y.PRK.ML., 24/30, 27 Ramazan 1321/17 December 1903; Cevdet, *Ma’rûzât*, 10, 19; F. Demiroğlu, *‘Abdülhamid’e verilen jurnaller: 50 yıldır neşredilmeyen vesikalar* (Istanbul, 1955), 88; Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 304; For the relationship between the Yemen field marshal ‘Abdullah Paşa and the military and political officials as a good example of how accumulated salaries were used as an instrument of administration see Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 282–283.

²² E.g. in Syria (1871, 1881) and in Khüдавendigar officials were accustomed to being paid on time. F.O., 78/2259, Damascus, Jago to Elliot, 33, 28 September 1871; 195/1448, Damascus, Dickson to Wyndham, 9, 3 May 1883; *Me’murîn* 23 (1328/1910–11), 1; İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 690.

²³ *Me’murîn* 2 (1328/1910–11), 3; 100 (1329/1911), 1; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 179–183, 281; R. Apak, *Yetmişlik bir subayın hatıraları* (Ankara, 1988), 28; C.V. Findley, “The Legacy of Tradition to Reform: Origins of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1 (1970), 354–356; for a regulation issued regarding officials’ salaries, that was never realized, for Interior Ministry officials in 1915 see *Düstur*², vol. 8, 178–186; Türkgeldi, *Görüp işittiklerim*, 14; cf. Marshall’s

Political-ideological Causes

Despite steps towards legalization, the political authority under ‘Abdülhamid II and the Union and Progress regimes in particular often operated with impunity. Officials thus remained subject in matters of appointment, dismissal and promotion to the rules of traditional servitude in their relations with powerful authorities.²⁴ Conflicts between upper and lower officialdom were exacerbated by differences between the existing beliefs, *Weltanschauung* and political outlook, leanings and interests (Anglophilia, Germanophilia, etc.), of officials and of the sultan-cum-political establishment, stemming from education and training, from the community to which they belonged, and from journalism and the publishing industry, in short from socialization. This too often created problems of legitimacy.

Illegal practices were widespread, including dismissal, without inquiry or investigation, for misconduct or in circumstances either not necessitating dismissal or in which the sultan’s permission, although required, was not sought.²⁵ The most frequent among them up to the end of the first five years of ‘Abdülhamid II’s reign, and the first six years of the Second Constitution, were the direct dismissals or imprisonment of certain provincial officials by *vali* or *qa’im-maqam*, or of ministry officials by the grand vezir, illegally and often without even bothering to inform the relevant minister.²⁶

report containing favorable observations on the financial impact of the bureaucratic reorganizations and purges of 1909 in Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 333–334.

²⁴ A glaring victim of such dismissals was Şinasi, who was removed from his official post in Istanbul because he shaved off his beard in Paris. İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 1, 33.

²⁵ *Muharremat-ı ‘umumiyye mecmu’ası*, 104; İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 687–688, 743; *Me’murin* 3 (1328/1910–11), 2; 17 (1328/1910–11), 2–3; 24 (1328/1910–11), 1, cf. 31 (1328/1910–11), 1–2; 38 (1328/1910–11), 1–2, cf. 40 (1328/1910–11), 2; 42 (1328/1910–11), 1, cf. 43 (1328/1910–11), 2–3, and 45 (1328/1910–11), 2; 47 (1328/1910–11), 2; 53 (1328/1910–11), 2; 54 (1328/1910–11), 2; 57 (1328/1910–11), 2; 59 (1328/1910–11), 2; 66 (1329/1911), 3; 68 (1329/1911), 2; 70 (1329/1911), 2; 71 (1329/1911), 2; 88 (1329/1911), 1; 91 (1329/1911), 2; 105 (1330/1911–12), 3; ‘Abdülghani Seni, “Me’murin-i devletin huququ yahud mahakim-i hazıra-yı idare,” *Mülkiye* 26 (1327/1909–10), 67; Türkgeldi, *Görüp işittiklerim*, 4; E. Erişirgil, *İslâmcı bir şairin romanı. Mehmet Akif*, ed. A. Kazancıgil, C. Alpar (Ankara, 1986), 13–16; Sakaoğlu, *Memurlar*, 8.

²⁶ E.g. BOA, DH.MTV., 1/8, 4 Şevval 1328/9 October 1910; 22–1/8, 24 Zilqade 1328/27 November 1910.

In ‘Abdülhamid’s view, the “meritorious bureaucracy” meant the “bureaucracy loyal to him,” which meant in effect that all the officials were attached directly to the sultan.²⁷ Eventually this phenomenon reached such proportions that requests by those in charge of the ministries and government offices for assistance in the reorganizations (*tensiqat*) undertaken after 1908, soon made clear that, owing to ‘Abdülhamid’s method of governing, they knew very little about the units they administered. ‘Abdülhamid II tolerated no questioning of his authority by prominent citizens for any reason, especially if officials prompted it. Officials who clashed with the notables were therefore punished immediately and, if the affair was serious, were summarily dismissed.²⁸ An official could easily be fired, or at least demoted, for using “presumptuous language” (*hadd-na-şinasane*) in correspondence with the palace.²⁹

‘Abdülhamid II employed modern techniques of rationalization such as legalization and the dispensation of ranks and orders to consolidate his own absolute power and used political pressure, threats and exile to eliminate anyone who tried to obstruct that power.³⁰ (It should not be forgotten that three men who served ‘Abdülhamid as grand vezir were all forced at one point in their careers to seek asylum with European missions: Midhat Paşa in 1881, (Küçük) Sa‘id Paşa in 1895 and Kamil Paşa in 1907.) In addition, if this did not work, he attempted to buy them off by tactics such as bestowing rank and position, having them put on the payroll, or overlooking their financial abuses.³¹ So frequently did the palace confer honorary grades and degrees of rank that their value fell considerably in the estimation of officials. If a young man rose to a high position thanks to his good fortune and background, he was automatically branded a palace agent.³² During ‘Abdülhamid II’s reign alone, some 35,000

²⁷ E. Pears, *Life of Abdulhamid* (New York, 1917), 106; W.F. Weiker, “The Ottoman Bureaucracy: Modernization and Reform,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 13 (1968), 461.

²⁸ E.g. “Vazifelerimiz,” *Mülkiye* 4 (1325), 53–54; F.O., 78/3130, Damascus, Jago, to Goschen, Constantinople, 14, 16 August 1880; Beirut, Dickson to Goschen, 53, 13 August 1880.

²⁹ *Me‘murin* 14 (1328/1910–11), 1–2; 29 (1328/1910–11), 1–2; 33 (1328/1910–11), 1–2.

³⁰ *Düstur tertib 1* (hereafter *Düstur*¹), vol. 7, 453–454, 690.

³¹ E.D. Akarlı, “Economic Policy and Budgets in Ottoman Turkey, 1876–1909,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28/3 (1992), 459.

³² Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 28–29.

persons were registered as officials for controlling their political activities.³³ Although a number of people were appointed to two different offices at the same time, their unwillingness to make permanent careers there corroborates this interpretation. ‘Abdülhamid attempted to defend these techniques saying, “I treat evil people well so as to be spared the evil they may do.”³⁴

When political authority becomes all-powerful, the attitude of senior officials towards that authority and towards their own subordinates changes. Faced with an ever increasing authoritarian political regime, rather than resorting to a strategy we shall term “*intisab imparatorluğu*” (network of connections) by rising to powerful positions in the administration and then placing as many of their own men as possible in posts to secure themselves, senior Ottoman officials began to secure the trust and favor of the regime in any way they could. This soon led to a situation in which senior officials were simply monitoring lesser officials on behalf of the regime. To earn ‘Abdülhamid’s confidence and favor, for example, Mahmud Nedim Paşa reorganized certain key government agencies in order to dismantle the “bureaucratic system of the *Tanzimat* period” and sought to eliminate any residual power that might oppose the regime by keeping the turnover rate in official posts so high as to virtually paralyze the bureaucracy.³⁵

The excesses of the Hamidian regime stocked every office with lesser officials whose level of prosperity was raised and who achieved promotion by behaving obsequiously. This naturally undermined the legitimacy of the system in the eyes of other officials: Above all, those who were inclined to “fawning” but were unable to achieve their objectives for reasons such as the insignificance of their positions or the limited resources the political authority had at its disposal came to resent the system. “Honest” officials meanwhile, since they posed no threat to the regime, were not supported by the system and soon resigned themselves to their “lackluster” positions.

³³ Cevdet, “Tensiqat-Islihat,” 13–14; *Mizancı Murad Bey’in II. Meşrutiyet dönemi hatıraları*, ed. C.E. Argıt (Istanbul, 1977), 184.

³⁴ A. Rıza, *Meclis-i Mebusan ve Ayân Reisi Ahmed Rıza Bey’in anıları*, ed. B. Demirbaş (Istanbul, 1988), 18, 20; Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet’in büyük babası Nazım Paşa’nın anıları* (Istanbul, 1992), 44–46; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 365; Nuri, *‘Abdülhamid*, vol. 2, 607.

³⁵ Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 222.

Indeed during the period of ‘Abdülhamid II, those who wanted to enter, remain and rise in officialdom had no option but to become integrated within the system, or at least to avoid speaking out against injustices.³⁶ If officials objected, they exposed themselves to even greater injustices.³⁷ One injustice that was never entirely eradicated was the inequality observed in every area of the administration, salaries included, between non-Muslims and Muslims, whether they were “modernist” or “traditionalist.”³⁸ We know, for example, that officials who kept personnel records during the period of absolute rule usually did not record reasons for dismissal since dismissed officials could become powerful patrons; however, the maintenance of such records, particularly for non-Muslims, was mandatory following the Second Constitution.³⁹

When the new political system established after 1909 began to betray its essentially authoritarian structure, the legitimacy guaranteed it by the revolution was soon struck by another crisis. Accordingly, all authority in the empire was shifted step by step from the palace to the Committee of Union and Progress, rendering the administration susceptible to political maneuvering. Besides prescribing that officials comply with the rules of discipline, it was also demanded that their political orientation be in tune with the times.⁴⁰ Initially, the objective here was simply to reduce the number of officials; several experienced functionaries were dismissed under the guise of *ten-siqat*, “like swinging a club in a crowd in the dark”⁴¹ with utter disregard for whether they agreed with Hamidian policy or not.⁴²

³⁶ Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet*, 84; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 70–71, 141; ‘Abdülghani Seni, “Osmanlılarda devletçilik, me’muriyetçilik, teşebbüs-i zati, istîdad,” *Mülkiye* 21 (1326/1908–09), 59; ‘Abdülghani Seni, “Bir hükümet-i meşrutada ru’esa-yı idarenin da’ire-i salahiyetleri ne raddede olmalıdır?,” *Mülkiye* 10 (1325), 61; *Me’murin* 67 (1329/1911), 2; İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 824.

³⁷ *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, 773–789, 823–838; *zeyl* 3, art. 6–7, 63; vol. 5, *zeyl* 4, art. 6–7, 9.

³⁸ Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 205–209.

³⁹ BOA, DH.MB.HPS.M., 18/97, 25 Safer 1333/12 January 1915; Y.EE., 10/15, 21 Safer 1309/26 September 1891; 113/16, 12 Rebiülahir 1297/24 March 1880.

⁴⁰ See Mehmed Memduh, *Tanzimat’tan Meşrutiyet’e*, ed. A.N. Galitekin (Istanbul, 1995), 135–136; Türkgeldi, *Görüp işittiklerim*, 4, 24; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 450–451, 468–473, 480; Cemal Paşa, *Hatırat*, 355–356, 358; Said Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımız ve son eserleri*, ed. M.E. Düzdağ (Istanbul, 1991), 13.

⁴¹ Berkazal Topraklı, “Me’murin tensiqatı,” *İstîşare* 1 (1324/1906–07), 38.

⁴² *İstîşare*, 20 (1324/1906–07), art. 4, p. 942; *Me’murin* 2 (1328/1910–11), 2–3; 68 (1329/1911), 1; 102 (1330/1911–12), 1; *Mîzâncı Murad Bey*, 47; Türkgeldi, *Görüp işittiklerim*, 47–48; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 466; vol. 2, 87, 90–93, 95; Lütfi Bey, *Osmanlı sarayının*, 49; de la Jonquière, *l’Empire Ottoman*, vol. 2, 558.

Rapidly assuming a political character, the movement continued to expel officials who were discovered to have been spies in the period of ‘Abdülhamid II by labeling them *istihdamları münasib görülmeyen* (“unsuitable for employment”). For those who could not be proved to have been spies but whose dismissal was politically desirable, a formula allowing for subjective treatment was approved whereby *su’-i hali tebeyyün edecekler* (“those [officials] whose misconduct [would] become apparent”) following a general investigation to be conducted by a commission.⁴³ However, even these “purges” proved incapable of bringing order to the administration, and financial abuses among senior officials became more common.⁴⁴ Officials whose trust or interests had been damaged for any reason began to criticize their superiors and the administration harshly, even misleadingly, in the press.⁴⁵ Although punishment by dismissal was introduced to prevent precisely such behavior, and writing of political articles on sensitive issues (e.g. Yemen) were prohibited to avert criticism, these were mainly imposed on officials who had complained of their predicament to the opposition newspapers.⁴⁶

Another problem that remained unresolved despite all the legal rearrangements was that deputies, ministers, office heads and even palace functionaries, particularly court chamberlains, interceded on behalf of officials with whom they were intimate through blood ties or political affinity.⁴⁷ In 1910, for example, despite an Interior Ministry

⁴³ *Düstur*², vol. 1, art. 10, 331; vol. 2, 264–266; vol. 6, 107, 1052; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 2, 91, 95–96.

⁴⁴ E.D. Akarlı, *The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics Under Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909): Origins and Solution* (Princeton University, PhD thesis, 1976), 85–86, 93–94.

⁴⁵ BOA, DH.MTV, 17/18, 13 Rebiülahir 1330/1 April 1912; DH.HMŞ, 25/99, 3 Zilqade 1334/1 September 1916; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 2, 6.

⁴⁶ BOA, DH.MUI, 49–1/18, 16 Zilhicce 1327/29 December 1909; *Dakhiliyye Nezareti muharrerat-ı ‘umumiyye mecmu’ası* (1332), vol. 4 (Istanbul, 1333/1914–15), 436; *Me’murîn* 46 (1328/1910–11), 2, cf. 49 (1328/1910–11), 3, cf. 51 (1328/1910–11), 2; 42 (1328/1910–11), 2–3 and 47 (1328/1910–11), 2–3, cf. 50 (1328/1910–11), 2; 74 (1329/1911), 4; 93 (1329/1911), 3–4; 97 (1329/1911), 2; 98 (1329/1911), 2, cf. 100 (1329/1911), 1, 4.

⁴⁷ See BOA, DH.MTV, 22–2/28, 11 Şevval 1330/23 September 1912; DH.KMS, 63/66, 18 Şaban 1332/12 July 1914; Ahmed Rıza, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 44–45; Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet*, 86; Ahmed Hilmi [Şehbenderzade Filibeli], *Muhalefetin İflası: İtilaf ve Hüriyet Fırkası*, ed. A. Eryüksel (Istanbul, 1991), 65–68; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 15, 37, 71, 173, 420, 423, 430–431; Nuri, *‘Abdülhamid*, vol. 2, 607. For a parliamentary debate on 13 Kanun-ı evvel 1326/1908–09 between the Interior

announcement that high school graduates would be appointed district governors (*qa'im-maqam*) without examination only after serving as subdistrict directors (*müdir-i nahiye*) for eight years, the Selection of Officials Commission (*İntihab-i Me'murin Qomisyonu*) violated this rule and appointed one such graduate directly to the office of *qa'im-maqam*.⁴⁸ Similarly, despite a two-year time limit between promotions,⁴⁹ in Mytilene, council clerk 'Arif Efendi, the brother-in-law of Justice and Sects Minister Necmuddin Beg, was first appointed Darende *qa'im-maqam* of the 3rd rank and ten days later Zile *qa'im-maqam* of the 1st rank.⁵⁰ Although another law stipulated that anyone who had spent more than a year in prison could not take up an office, Mehmed Tal'at (Paşa), who had been imprisoned at Adrianople for 25 months, was pardoned in 1897 and appointed first as an itinerant official and later as a chief clerk.⁵¹

In conclusion, the Ottoman bureaucracy on the eve of the Republic, while occasionally approaching the legal-rational, presents a largely *patrimonial-rational* picture rather than the *legal-patrimonial* picture erroneously drawn by Heper.⁵² A certain rationality, albeit not always formal, characterizes the Ottoman bureaucracy such that Ottoman officials, confronted with the phenomenon of change over time in the requirements of rational administration as envisaged and expressed in the legal regulations, rather than adhering to the rules, were inclined to enhance their personal situations by keeping abreast of changing conditions.⁵³ One Ottoman official puts it like this: "Arbitrary administration means, to some extent, freedom of administration" and, thus, "perfection is observed in the wheels of government to

Minister and a deputy who saw nothing wrong in appealing to him for the dismissal of the governor of the sanjak of Biga and the appointment of his brother-in-law and his brother, neither of whom were members of the bureaucracy see *Me'murin* 55 (1328/1910–11), 2–3; more examples on this topic can be found in issues of the periodical *Me'murin*.

⁴⁸ *Taqim-i Veqayî*, 9 Cemaziyelahir 1328/18 June 1910 in *Me'murin* 13 (1328/1910–11), 2.

⁴⁹ Provincial governors, ambassadors and ministerial undersecretaries were an exception to this. *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, 773–789, 825; *zeyl* 3, art. 13, 64–65; *zeyl* 4, 11.

⁵⁰ *Me'murin* 68 (1329/1911), 2–3.

⁵¹ İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 4, 1934; *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, 773–789, 823; *zeyl* 3, art. 3, 62; *zeyl* 4, art. 3, 8.

⁵² Metin Heper, *Türk kamu bürokrasisinde gelenekçilik ve modernleşme: Siyaset sosyolojisi açısından bir inceleme* (Istanbul, 1977), 91.

⁵³ Peter Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy* (Chicago, 1955); Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 4.

the degree [that] the administrative machinery operates with mobility and speed."⁵⁴

Legal-judicial Causes

Problems of legitimacy overwhelmed the Empire because the regulations and administrative decrees issued contained articles that, firstly, were often detrimental to the traditional interests of officials, and secondly, were contradictory and ambiguous, giving superior officials the opportunity for arbitrariness and abuse.⁵⁵

Personnel policy was radically revised in 1877 with the introduction of personnel records (*sicill-i ahval*), which were to play a fundamental role in the selection of officials. Following that, in 1879 and 1887, civil officials were divided into two groups:⁵⁶ the *sahib-i re'ÿ*, consisting of officials such as ministers, council and court chiefs, and office heads, and a second group consisting of all the others. This distinction derived essentially from 'Abdülhamid II's desire to segregate those whose appointments he wished to monitor. But these were not the only measures taken by 'Abdülhamid to control the bureaucracy by law. Measures were also taken to regulate the appointment and promotion mechanism; decrees governing promotion and retirement of civil officials were introduced, beginning in the 1880s and revised several times. In 1896 the Civil Officials Commission (*Me'murin-i Mülkiyye Qomisyonu*) was formed as the centralized successor to the former Selection of Civil Officials Commission and Personnel Records Commission.⁵⁷ According to a commission regulation, any official whose dismissal or transfer was demanded for political reasons, or because it was regarded in public interest (*maslahat*) had no right of redress.⁵⁸ To further enhance his control, 'Abdülhamid II issued a series of regulations in 1882 and began making most of his appointments through the Office of the Imperial Council (*Divan-ı Hümayun*

⁵⁴ Bedî'i Nuri, "İdare ve salahiyet," *Mülkiye* 12 (1325/1907-08), 31-33.

⁵⁵ Several cases can be found in *Muharrerat* and *Tebliğat mecmu'aları* issued for different ministries. E.g. *Dakiliyye Nezareti muharrerat-ı 'umumiyye mecmu'ası* (1331), vol. 3 (Dersa'adet, 1332/1913-14), 201-207.

⁵⁶ *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, 64-67; vol. 5, 965-971, 1001; vol. 6, 3-8; *Düstur*², vol. 6, 820-850.

⁵⁷ BOA, Y.A.RES., 84/19, 1314.

⁵⁸ *Düstur*¹, vol. 7, art. 13, 134.

Qalemi) without consulting the grand vezir.⁵⁹ Following the Second Constitution, the Civil Officials Commission was reorganized in 1912 essentially to monitor bureaucrats as well.⁶⁰

Following the Second Constitution, as in the period of ‘Abdülhamid II, inequalities were observed between senior and lesser officials, between the School of Civil Administration (*Mekteb-i Mülkiyye*) graduates and the other “schooled men” (*mektebli*) on the one hand and “men risen from the ranks” (*alaylı*) on the other, among the *mektebli* between officials from Istanbul and from the provinces and between those from prominent and those from humble families, and, finally, between central and provincial officials.⁶¹ These differences stemmed mainly from the laws governing adjudication, treatment in general, recruitment, military service, holidays, salary payments, and punishment.⁶² The main source of the inequities were the regulations published by each ministry, and varying from ministry to ministry,⁶³ to supersede the general laws governing all officials up to 1914.⁶⁴

Another complaint among civil officials was that, governors of provinces excepted, all officials licensed to purchase and dispose of goods, such as *mutasarrıf*s, *qa'im-maqams*, finance directors, accountants etc, were compelled to stand surety (*kefalet*). An official had two options: either standing surety himself or finding a guarantor. Owing to their financial situations, officials were usually forced to find a guarantor and consequently turned to the handful of wealthy residents in the locality, who simultaneously stood surety for other officials as well. If one of these agreed to act as guarantor, all his relatives and friends would take advantage of the official. In the event that the guarantor's demands were not met, he might renege, and the official, if could not find another guarantor within two months, would

⁵⁹ Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 284–5.

⁶⁰ *Düstur*², vol. 1, 90–92; vol. 4, 636; vol. 5, 517.

⁶¹ *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, art. 10, 825; vol. 8, art. 9, 131; Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 115–116; E.D. Akarlı, “Friction and discord within the Ottoman government under Abdülhamid II (1876–1909),” *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi dergisi* 7 (1979), 21; *Me'mur* 16 (1328/1910–11), 2.

⁶² *Düstur*¹, vol. 8, 200–205; *Düstur*², vol. 6, art. 10, 210; *Me'mur* 21 (1328/1910–11), 1; 23 (1328/1910–11), 2; 50 (1328/1910–11), 2; 51 (1328/1910–11), 1; 52 (1328/1910–11), 6; 102 (1330/1911–12), 1; 104 (1330/1911–12), 2–3; 106 (1330/1911–12), 1–2; for Interior Ministry officials at least, this inequality was legally eliminated by the standard salary scale envisaged in a regulation issued in 1915. *Düstur*², vol. 8, 178–186.

⁶³ *Me'mur* 35 (1328/1910–11), 1–2; 77 (1329/1911), 1; 93 (1329/1911), 3.

⁶⁴ *Düstur*², vol. 6, 207–212.

be in serious difficulty and might even be dismissed.⁶⁵ Officials sent to the provinces were also obliged to secure certificates of guarantee known as *vecih* from the local tribal chieftains in order to perform their official duties. Since it was the law itself that reduced officials to this position, it was not unusual for problems of legitimacy to erupt in the system at any time.⁶⁶

In conclusion, the belief that they could obtain redress for grievances of any kind through the law was either extremely weak or completely non-existent among most officials right up to the end of the empire. Nor can officials be considered unjustified in this conviction since their court cases were never tried justly even in the final period. In ‘Abdülghani Seni’s words, “To bring disaster upon an official it is sufficient to desire that he come under suspicion and be taken to court.”⁶⁷

Administrative Causes

The system was plagued by inconsistency and chaos in administrative decisions, partisanship, factionalism, favoritism, and the fact that senior officials behaved despotically and arbitrarily, demanding their subordinates’ unquestioning obedience, sending them on private errands, and in general treating them dismissively. They were also susceptible to bribery and influence, and engaged in efforts to establish an “*intisab imparatorluğu*.”⁶⁸ These factors led directly to crises of legitimacy. Subordinates were continually accusing their “reformist”

⁶⁵ BOA, DH.MTV, 33-1/27, 26 Cemaziyelahir 1330/13 June 1912; 33-1/29, 7 Receb 1330/22 June 1912; *Düstur*¹, vol. 2, art. 6, 108; vol. 3, 23-24; vol. 4, 692, 735-736; *zeyl* 3, 119-120; vol. 6, art. 8, 323.

⁶⁶ *Me’murin* 34 (1328/1910-11), 1-2; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 168, 279.

⁶⁷ ‘A. Seni, “Me’murin-i devletin huququ,” 69. For ‘Abdülghani Seni’s life see K. Kreiser, “Abdulgani Seni (1871-1951) comme observateur de l’administration ottomane au Yemen,” *Revue d’Histoire Maghrébine*, 31-32 (1983), 315-319 and BOA, DH.MTV, 40-1/67, 19 Şevval 1328/24 October 1910; 60/63, 28 Ramazan 1331/31 August 1913.

⁶⁸ E.g. Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet*, 19-26; Şerif Paşa, *Bir muhalifin hatıraları: İttihat ve Terakkiye muhalefet* (Istanbul, 1990), 27; Cevdet, *Ma’rûzât*, 53, 212, 223, 227, 239-240; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 14, 141, 262; vol. 2, 98; Ali Said, *Saray hatıraları: Sultan Abdülhamid’in hayatı*, ed. A.N. Galitekin (Istanbul, 1994), 179; Nuri, *Abdülhamid*, vol. 2, 594.

superiors of abuses of all sorts⁶⁹ and were reluctant to take personal responsibility. Officials, by the same token, rather than “administering the country” (*idare-i memleket*), instead contented themselves with managing affairs with the means at hand (*idare-i maslahat*), pursuing paper work, requesting authorization from Istanbul (*istizan*) so as to avoid taking initiative, and wasting time on improvements that usually produced no practical results since all this involved less risk to themselves.⁷⁰ The Yemen deputies, for example, complained in Parliament of discrimination towards Arabs by Ottoman officials there. Unbeknownst to the deputies, the reason for such complaints was in fact structural degeneration in the administration, which was the same in Jerusalem, Rumelia and Anatolia. For in Yemen most civil officials, some *qa'im-maqams*, and almost all the *nahiye müdüris*, financial and other officials as well as office orderlies were locals.⁷¹ Within this structure, officials who did not succumb to abuse but rather ran the administration for the benefit of the people found themselves surrounded by enemies amongst the populace and their fellow officials, and if they persisted in their upright attitudes could face myriad difficulties for which they might pay even with their lives.⁷²

⁶⁹ According to several reports (1880–90), their superiors' venality was an important cause of corruption among lesser officials. E.g. BOA, Y.EE., 14/1299/126/10; Inspector's reports confirm that Provincial Governor Ahmed Vefiq Paşa ordered all the province's officials to stand for his arrival every morning. İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 687; *Me'murin* 93 (1329/1911), 2–3; 98 (1329/1911), 1; Erişirgil, *Mehmet Akif*, 52; Ş. Mardin, “Âli Paşa ve Hürriyet,” *Forum* 39 (1955), 10.

⁷⁰ ‘A. Seni, “Me'murin-i devletin huququ,” 25–26; Tefvik, *Mehmet Tefvik*, vol. 2, 47, 87; S. Halim, *Buhranlarımız*, 21–22, 91; B. Nuri, “Hükümet-i kırtasiyye,” *Mülkiye* 8 (1325/1907–08), 19; Es-Seyyid Mehmed Emin, “Hükümet-i kırtasiyye ve teşevvüş-i idare,” *Mülkiye* 11 (1325/1907–08), 51; B. Nuri, “İdare-i vilayet ve izah,” *Mülkiye* 9 (1325/1907–08), 42–43; ‘A. Seni, “Bir hükümet-i meşrutada,” 61–62; *Me'murin* 10 (1328/1910–11), 1; 97 (1329/1911), 2–3; 107 (1330/1911–12), 1–2; 107 (1330/1911–12), 1. It has been observed that officials were completely loyal when all irregularities were severely punished and a regular salary and retirement pension were guaranteed, as in the Public Debt Administration. *Me'murin* 3 (1328/1910–11), 1; Sir A. Block, *Special Report on the Public Debt Followed by the Translation of the Annual Report of the Council of Administration for the Twenty Fourth Financial Period* (Istanbul, 1906) in Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 301–302.

⁷¹ ‘Abdülghani Seni, “Yemen me'murları,” *Mülkiye* 6 (1325/1907–08), 8; Tefvik, *Mehmet Tefvik*, vol. 1, 102–104.

⁷² Tefvik, *Mehmet Tefvik*, vol. 1, 144–145. When the empire declared a general mobilization for World War I, a temporary law was issued for sentencing to life imprisonment, penal servitude or execution any officials who abused their office by placing their own interests above those of the state and the people. This law to some extent saved honest officials from their predicament. *Düstur*², vol. 7, art. 1, 492.

Administrative conflict caused by bureaucratic expansion, an inability to prevent qualitative degeneration in the administration due to an emphasis on quantity, and by a lack of permanence and credibility, a failure to institutionalize owing to frequent changes in organization and methods, weakened the legitimacy of the system, particularly in the eyes of veteran bureaucrats.⁷³ Order in the government was constantly being disrupted by the appointment of large numbers of new, inexperienced and incompetent officials. In our opinion, the line dividing quantity and quality coincides with the distinction between patrimonial methods on the one hand and legal arrangements on the other, insofar as the conflict engendered by emphasizing quantity over quality facilitates degeneration, and patrimonial methods are more effective in such a climate. Furthermore, officials' complaints about the structure of the administrative system intensified when they saw that their own colleagues, while defending reformism against the traditionalism when they were in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy, were able to protect their interests more easily in this way and, once they had risen in the ranks, therefore defended patrimonial and authoritarian traditions. All of this behavior derived ultimately from the structure of the administrative system.

Other issues giving rise to problems of legitimacy were the practices observed in the appointment of officials to posts, and in their advancement, responsibilities and punishment for offenses. In the Ottoman civil service, entry into an office was, on principle, never purely hereditary.⁷⁴ However, despite a binding provision in the Constitution of 1876 envisaging employment of officials within limits laid down by law (art. 39–40) and its attendant regulations, as well as a proviso introduced by the Second Constitution that an official was obliged to fulfill an order from his superior only on condition that it complied with the law, there nevertheless remained traditional limits on an official's responsibility, discipline and obedience.⁷⁵

⁷³ K. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *The American Political Science Review* 55/3 (1961), 495; Mümtaz, *Hayal olmuş hakikatler*, 28; Tefik, *Mehmet Tefik*, vol. 1, 13–14; vol. 2, 48.

⁷⁴ Findley, *The Legacy of Tradition*, 346; *Düstur*¹, vol. 2, 748–753, 23 Rebiülevvel 1284/25 July 1867.

⁷⁵ *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, 773–789; 823, 825; *zeyl* 3, 56–62, 65; *zeyl* 4, 8, 11, 321; vol. 6, 224–230, 570–571, 1275–1280; vol. 8, 128–132, 431–434; 'Abdülkhalîq Midhat [Kevakibzade], "Me'murin muhakemesi," *Mülkiye* 4 (1325/1907–08), 28.

While tradition and precedent might give more responsibility to one clerk while limiting that of another in the same office, any official who opposed an arbitrary decision by his chief could be punished. Ahmed Vefiq Paşa, for example, the stage-struck governor of Khüda-vendigar, required officials in Bursa to buy tickets to the theater he had founded there, and had no compunctions about punishing those who refused.⁷⁶ The dismissal of the second municipality's physician for failing to visit a patient is also a striking example of administrative arbitrariness regarding discipline.⁷⁷ But the most interesting case of the usual punishments is that of suspending an official temporarily without his being proved guilty of any crime. Since referring cases to the Council of State took time, the accused was regarded by the administration, as having been sufficiently punished during this period of custody and it was deemed unnecessary that the case be tried.⁷⁸ Similarly, an official twice dismissed from his consular duties for incompetent performance and over-spending, was re-appointed following a 16-month suspension when the administration decided he had been punished enough already.⁷⁹

Although it is known that under the Second Constitution an effort was made to introduce an examination system; that more attention was given to merit and seniority; that those who openly sought preferential treatment and who did not do this "in line with the rules" were punished;⁸⁰ and that, in particular, it was deemed desirable that every office have a separate and unique function, it remains undeniable that officials as a group were essentially treated as "artisans."⁸¹ Furthermore, the fact that unpaid clerical apprenticeship (*mülazımlıq*), another traditional practice, continued right up to the beginning of the twentieth century;⁸² that several unrelated administrations were attached to one ministry;⁸³ that one office performed a number of disparate tasks; that different ministries interfered in one and the same job;⁸⁴ and, finally, that a given official was frequently appointed

⁷⁶ İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 2, 687, 690.

⁷⁷ *Me'murın* 40 (1328/1910–11), 1.

⁷⁸ Mehmed 'Asım, "Me'murın muhakemesi," *Mülkiye* 3 (1325/1907–08), 45–50.

⁷⁹ BOA, Hariciye, Sicill-i Ahval Kayıtları, 178 in Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 309.

⁸⁰ *Me'murın* 100 (1329/1911), 1.

⁸¹ BOA, DH.MTV, 33–1/103, 30 Zilhicce 1330/10 December 1912; Ahmed Macið, "Kürdistan ahvali ve mes'ele-i islahat," *Mülkiye* 9 (1325/1907–08), 22.

⁸² İnal, *Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 1, 259.

⁸³ E.g. the Post and Telegraph Administration was attached to the Finance Ministry; cf. *Me'murın* 75 (1329/1911), 1.

⁸⁴ E.g. to print a license it was necessary to have both the Education Ministry

to different ministries⁸⁵ all damaged the legitimacy of the administrative system in the eyes of officials insofar as it weakened their attachment to, and fuelled disgust with, their work.

The Crisis of Legitimacy and Its Consequences

The weakening of legitimacy had a number of consequences. It could take such forms as an official's voicing his grievance directly to the administration and the population at large, or in disgruntlement with the system, alienation from the system, and, actively or passively, taking a position aimed at changing the system.⁸⁶

Loss of confidence in the Sublime Porte and senior officials led in turn to a decrease in honesty, which was always very important in the Ottoman administration, and to favoritism, politicization, recourse to intermediaries, and the spread of gift-giving, tips and bribery.⁸⁷ It also resulted in officials' taking a casual attitude to their job and towards the people they were supposed to serve, being late or failing to show up for work, retaining former income after being appointed to a new post or occupying more than one office simultaneously and, occasionally, even open revolt.⁸⁸ Crises of legitimacy

and the Interior Ministry undersecretary examine the text. Mehmed Memduh, *Tanzimat'tan Meşrutiyet'e*, 68; see also T. Erdoğan, "Maarif-i Umumiyye Nezareti teşkilatı," *Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi dergisi* 51/1-4 (1996), 183-247; 52/1-4 (1997), 247-285.

⁸⁵ *Me'murin* 70 (1329/1911), 1; 72 (1329/1911), 2; 96 (1329/1911), 1; 97 (1329/1911), 2-3; Macid, "Kürdistan," 28; Cevdet, *Ma'rûzât*, 194; Tefvik, *Mehmet Tefvik*, vol. 2, 46-47.

⁸⁶ E.g. after an illegal act of the vali of Salonika towards an official, all civil officials in the district Gevgili, abandoned their work altogether. BOA, DH.MTV, 18/27, 29 Ramazan 1329/23 September 1911; 6-2/59, 29 Zilqade 1329/21 November 1911.

⁸⁷ BOA, Y.EE., 14/389/126/9; 14/1299/126/10; 14/2287/126/11; D. Urquhart, *Turkey and Its Resources: Its Municipal Organization, Prospects of English Commerce in the East, and Free Trade* (London, 1833), 121-122; 'A. Seni, "Me'murin-i devletin huququ," 28, 31-32; Tefvik, *Mehmet Tefvik*, vol. 1, 142; vol. 2, 96; de la Jonquière, *l'Empire Ottoman*, vol. 2, 557; P. Challemel-Lacour, "Les Hommes d'État de la Turquie. Aali-Pacha et Fuad-Pacha," *Revue des deux mondes* 73 (1868), 896; thousands of consular reports from different districts also confirm this corruption. E.g. F.O., 424/82, Diarbekir, Trotter to Malet, Constantinople, 567, 22 March 1879; 78/2622, Damascus, Jago to Layard, Constantinople, 27, 12 November 1877; 195/1548, Damascus, Dickson to Thornton, 50, 1 October 1886; 195/2245.

⁸⁸ BOA, DH.MTV, 60/31, 13 B. 1331; 54/6, 20 B. 1331; *Düstur*², vol. 3, 753-754; vol. 5, 370; vol. 6, 157-158; vol. 7, 556-558, 623, 680; vol. 8, 182; Frhr. von der Goltz, "Vom Schreibtisch und aus dem Atelier. Türkische Bureaustunden," *Velhungen*

are what brought the Freedom and Accord (*Hürriyet ve İ'tilaf Fırqası*) and Union and Progress Parties to power on 9 July 1912 and 23 January 1913 respectively.⁸⁹ In our view, while the role of the military cannot be denied in the reformation and modification of the political system, as in the promulgation of the Second Constitution and later in the proclamation of the Republic,⁹⁰ both of which came about following a loss of, primarily, economic confidence in the system, the role of civil officials should certainly not be underestimated.

und Klasings Monatshefte 18/1 (1904), 181. Ahmed Lutfi, *Ta'rikh-i Lutfi*, vol. 5 (Istanbul, 1290–1328/1873–1910), 133; *Me'murîn* 8 (1328/1910–11), 2–3; 12 (1328/1910–11), 2; 37 (1328/1910–11), 3; 60 (1328/1910–11), 2; 63 (1328/1910–11), 2–3; 72 (1329/1911), 2; 90 (1329/1911), 1; 98 (1329/1911), 2; 100, (1329/1911), 4; 102 (1330/1911–12), 2; Mümtaz, *Hayal olmuş hakikatler*, 28, 38, 40–41, 50; Erişirgil, *Mehmet Akif*, 12, 19, 52, 128; Tevfik, *Mehmet Tevfik*, vol. 1, 13–14, 23, 139–140, 170–171, 376; vol. 2, 74, 96; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 235. For other examples of abuse see Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet*, 12–18, 84–85; Aynî, *Canlı tarihler*, 46–47; Sakaoğlu, *Memurlar*, 7–9; Ahmet İhsan, *Matbuat hatıralarım. 1888–1923. Meşrutîyet'in ilanından umumî muharebeye kadar. 1908–1914* (Istanbul, 1931), 149–150. Another reason for habitual failure to show up for work: In times when no distinction was made between home and office, senior officials preferred to work at home rather than at their offices (İsmet Bozdağ, *Sultan Abdülhamid'in hatıra defteri* (Istanbul, 1986), 211; Nazım Paşa, *Nazım Hikmet*, 83) and consequently, unless there was a complaint, could not check up on subordinates. Prohibitions were introduced to eliminate this situation. BOA, *Buyruldu Defterleri*, 5, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1279/8 December 1862 in Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 193; *Düstur*², vol. 8, 182. Dissatisfaction in Istanbul had reached such proportions in 1868 that the wives of officials employed in the provinces surrounded the Finance Ministry in noisy crowds to demand payment of their husbands' salaries. Afterwards public security, which was already practically non-existent in the city's outlying districts, began to break down in the city center as well. Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 326.

⁸⁹ Many an Ottoman subject who held debt bonds suffered losses in 1875 when the state decided to reduce foreign debt payments by half—so much so that certain sources report that the citizens' wrath was a factor in the deposition of Sultan 'Abdülaziz. Mehmed Memduh, *Tanzimat'tan Meşrutîyet'e: Mir'ât-ı şuinât*, ed. H. Develi (Istanbul, 1990), 65–66, 73; Ali, *Istanbul'da elli yıllık önemli olaylar* (Istanbul, 1976), 50, 65; Findley, *Civil Officialdom*, 303.

⁹⁰ Güzel, "Prélude à la 'Révolution,'" 247–285.