

OTTOMAN MILITARY RECRUITMENT AND THE RECRUIT: 1826-1853

A Master's Thesis

by

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THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
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ANKARA

September 2005

*To My Parents*

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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
Bilkent University

by  
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

in  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

September 2005

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to offer an account of Ottoman military recruitment, and those who were recruited in the era between 1826 and 1853. The period in question marks an era of significant reforms, including the establishment of a European-style standing army, manned by conscripts. This study tries to reveal some aspects of Ottoman conscription, which was forcibly imposed to raise the new army, including its origins, recruiters and recruitment procedures. While illustrating this point, emphasis was not only given to laws and regulations, but also to their practice. The thesis argues that the weakest members of Ottoman society were destined to be forcibly recruited into the army, while stronger members were often able to avoid it, even after *Tanzimat* and military reforms of 1846. Finally, it tries to reflect the common subjects' and soldiers' responses to the military recruitment, which were often manifested as discontentment, resistance, evasion and desertion, especially in its initial stages.

**Key Words:** Ottoman Army, Conscription, Mahmud II, Tanzimat, Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire

## ÖZET

Bu tez, 1826–1853 yılları arasında Osmanlı ordusuna asker toplanmasını incelemektedir. Söz konusu dönemde önemli reformlar gerçekleşmiştir. Zorunlu askerliğin getirilmesiyle oluşturulmuş Avrupa tarzı bir ordunun kurulması bu reformların önemli bir kısmını oluşturmuştur. Çalışmanın amacı, Osmanlı'daki zorunlu askerlik hizmetini ve bunun kökenlerini, asker toplayıcılarını ve askere alma usullerini de kapsayacak şekilde açıklamaktır. Konu ele alınırken, çıkarılan kanunların yanı sıra, bunların uygulamaları üzerinde de durulmuştur. Bu tezde, Osmanlı toplumunun en zayıf üyeleri askere alınırken, güçlülerin Tanzimat ve 1846 askeri reformlarından sonra bile çoğunlukla askerlikten kaçabildikleri öne sürülmektedir. Çalışmada son olarak halkın ve askere alınanların, özellikle ilk dönemlerde, askerliğe karşı çoğunlukla memnuniyetsizlik ve itaatsizlik şeklinde ortaya çıkan tepkileri ele alınmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı Ordusu, Askere Alma, II. Mahmud, Tanzimat, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Askeri Reform

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my supervisor Stanford J. Shaw for his continuous support, encouragement and guidance during this project. His comments and remarks on the initial texts were crucial for structuring the final text. I am also deeply indebted to him for devoting his very precious time for editing the drafts. I am truly grateful to my professors Dr. Halil İncalçık, Dr. Oktay Özel, Dr. Nur Bilge Criss, Dr. Evgeni Radushev, Ali Yaycıođlu, Dr. Eugenia Kermeli, Dr. Paul Latimer, Dr. Ahmet Simin and Dr. Hakan Kırımılı, for their lectures greatly contributed to my academic development over the last three years.

I owe a lot to professors outside our department, whose names should be mentioned here: Dr. Hakan Erdem, Dr. Virginia Aksan, Dr. Cengiz Kırılı and Dr. Öcal Ođuz shared their ideas and gave valuable suggestions that aided me during my research. My special thanks are due to my friends Valeri Morkva and İlter Satırođlu for helping me in reading secondary sources which are not in English. I am also obliged to thank Jason Warehouse, Forrest Watson and Yalçın Murgul. They kindly bore the burden of the very painstaking job of editing and proofreading. I thank my wonderful friends Erinç Akdođan, M. İsmail Kaya, Nuray Ocaklı, Muhsin Soyudođan, Emrah Pelvanođlu, Emre Turgay and Duygu Aysal for their invaluable friendship during my stay at Bilkent.

My deepest gratitude goes to my parents, who supported me in my decisions since my childhood. I would also like to thank my dear friends Yasin Kokarca, Mahmut Kavak and Elif Bayraktar; for life would have been unbearable without their love and friendship.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to my former professors Dr. Christoph Neumann, Dr. Cüneyd Okay and Dr. İřtar Gözaydın, for they first introduced me to the fascinating world of the Ottomans and encouraged me to pursue my studies in Ottoman history instead of industrial automation systems, which was not a fascinating world at all.

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“Benî Adem kahrile  
zaptolur, hilmile olmaz”<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

It was my last summer holiday before going to the university when I met a Frenchman from Strasbourg, who told me the interesting story of his father and grandfather. As a resident of Strasbourg and a citizen of Imperial Germany in 1914, his grandfather was called up for the German Army during the war. His late father, who was conscripted by the French Republic-the new owner of Alsace-Lorraine after the Great War, would be killed in action in 1940. As a high school student, who did not know much about life and history, I was truly amazed by what I heard.

How come the father and son fight within opposing armies in of two bitter “enemy nations”? An answer should include the fact that it was the “states existed long before people thought on nationalist lines...; states have usually created nations, in other words, not (as is now claimed ought to be the case) the other way around.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the tools of mass education and compulsory military service become the two most powerful tools in the hands of the modern states “for turning the inhabitant of village into the (patriotic) citizen of a nation”.<sup>3</sup> If that does not work as wanted, the government instruments could tap the opposing elements (in this case, the national minorities) forcibly to the “greater cause”, or sometimes the minorities

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<sup>1</sup> “Human beings could only be controlled by subjugation, not by mildness.” Phrase belongs to Koçi Bey, who was one of the famous pamphleteers of the seventeenth century. Mehmet Doğan, “XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askeri İslahatları (1703-1789)” (MA diss, Ankara Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1999), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Roberts, *A Shorter History of the World* (Oxford: Helicon, 1996), p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 305. For the education programs in the European States before the WWI, see Marc Ferro, *The Great War 1914-18* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 10-12.

could simply follow their ruling states to “prove” themselves as worthy citizens.<sup>4</sup> The father and son then had few choices, except for being taken into the army in those two wars, which could be considered the zenith of the power of modern nation-states over the individual.<sup>5</sup>

A widespread romantic cliché exists, shared by many insiders as well as outsiders, about the Turkish people: Every Turk was a born soldier, with an appetite and ability to fight throughout the history. Furthermore, the common subjects in the past Turkish kingdoms united under their states’ military policies, leading them to the victories. True, the horse-breeding Turkic tribes of Central Asia, like most nomadic societies, must have possessed good warrior qualities. The subsequent states founded by Turkish dynasties had usually inherited certain practices from the previous military, cultural and political experiences. However, it seems that their inclination in the middle-ages was to depend on a warrior elite rather than an always fully mobilized “nation-in-arms”. Once the Seljukids and the Ottomans established themselves as strong kingdoms in the Middle East, they maintained a relatively well-defined warrior class supported by a much larger taxpaying population.<sup>6</sup> At its zenith, the Ottoman State prohibited the acceptance of the *reaya*<sup>7</sup> to its military class as a fundamental rule in order to maintain the class structure.<sup>8</sup> In the eighteenth century, even at a time when provincial militias or tribal mercenaries became

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<sup>4</sup> The latter was the case with the Slavic peoples who were conscripted to the Austro-Hungarian Army in the WWI. Except for the Serbs and some of the Czechs, they did not fight worse than their German and Hungarian counterparts, at least to the end of the war. Ferro, *The Great War 1914-18*, pp. 10-11, 15-18; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 126-27.

<sup>5</sup> Who knows, perhaps there was also a grandfather in the family, who was wounded in French army during the war of 1870-71.

<sup>6</sup> The population exempted from the taxes, which included the the military class, was estimated around six percent of the total population in the late fifteenth century Ottoman Empire. Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, 2 Vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> The word *reaya* literally means “flock”. It corresponds to the tax-paying population of Muslims and non-Muslims outside the *askeri* class, working in agriculture, commerce and various crafts.

<sup>8</sup> Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 1994), pp. 68-69.

indispensable for their roles in the military, they were still met with suspicion and arrogance, as the center's passion continued for the "Janissary style standing army".<sup>9</sup> In the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839), when large-scale military recruitment began, very few rushed into join the colors as volunteers.<sup>10</sup> Instead, many "born soldier" ordinary Turkish peasants, from whom the most recruits were drawn for the regular army, tried to escape conscription and deserted in large numbers whenever possible.<sup>11</sup>

It was in the year 1826 that Mahmud II abolished the Janissary Corps and established the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*<sup>12</sup> (Victorious Soldiers of Muhammed). The sultan obviously did not have the instruments of mass education and established system of obligatory military service described above<sup>13</sup> to create its "faithful citizens" to depend on for the defense of his realm. Firstly, the Ottoman Empire was then a different world compared to Western European States, containing many different ethnicities and languages. The Christians within the Empire had made considerable progress in the sense of forming a national consciousness with the guidance of their clergy and rising merchant class by the early nineteenth century. In contrast, the Muslims of the Empire would have their "national awakening" at a much later time, as the concepts of citizenship and nationalism were still unfamiliar to the Ottoman State and its Muslim subjects by the early nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Virginia Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* 3 (1999), p. 121.

<sup>10</sup> Though, it must be accepted that there was a particular military tradition and a significant number of "warriors", who had been functioning as irregulars, mercenaries and soldiers of the central army.

<sup>11</sup> In one report, it was stated that the population was still did not like the idea of conscription into the army, even after eleven years had passed HAT (Hatt-ı Hümayun Collection, hereafter HAT) 22433-B (19 Ca 1252 (Hegira Calendar)/ 1 September, 1836). Also see, Chapter III for further details.

<sup>12</sup> "The word *mansur* has a further religious connotation as it means "aided by the God", and therefore victorious." Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1968), p. 161 note 1.

<sup>13</sup> The military service based on nationalistic ideas was something known in the early nineteenth century Europe, however, an effective mass education for "patriotic" purposes would come into being at a much later time.

<sup>14</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), pp. 72-73.

Accordingly, no sense of nationalism in its modern understanding existed among the common Turks, on which his *Mansure* Army would depend for its recruits in the next decade and a half.<sup>15</sup> There was not a “patriotic” surge to fill the ranks of the new army, in the same sense that poor French farmers and artisans responded to the call of Revolutionary Government in 1792.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, this time the Sultan was determined to establish a new order and did not lack the spine, as his predecessor did, in carrying out his reforms. Accompanied by his bureaucrats, he was able to execute his centralizing policies to a certain extent. He also brought the powerful provincial notables to submission by trickery and force, who had been quite prominent just 20 years before. The authority he gained enabled him to impose his reforms and conscript a large number of troops for his new army. Consequently, a contemporary eyewitness might offer the following formulation –although a bit harshly- for the rule of Mahmud II:

The sovereign who before found his power (despotic in name) circumscribed, because with all the will, he had not the real art of oppressing, by the aid of science finds himself a giant-his mace exchanged for a sword. In scanning over the riches of civilization, spread out before him for acceptance, he contemptuously rejects those calculated to benefited his people, and chooses the modern scientific governing machine, result of ages of experiments, with its patent screws for extracting blood and treasure, -conscript and taxation. He hires foreign engineers to work it, and waits the promised result-absolute power. His subjects, who before had a thousand modes of avoiding his tyranny, have not now a loop-hole to escape...<sup>17</sup>

This study attempts to understand the military recruitment and those recruited in depth after the abolition of the Janissary Corps to the eve of the Crimean War.

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<sup>15</sup> Hakan Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," in *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions*, eds. Israel Gershoni, Hakan Erdem and Ursula Woköck, (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), p. 204.

<sup>16</sup> Isser Woloch, “Napoleonic Conscriptio: State Power and Civil Society,” *Past and Present* 111 (1986) [Online], p. 103. The Islamic religion, however, seems to provide some motivation for the Ottomans in these wars.

<sup>17</sup> Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, &c. and of a Cruise with the Capitan Pasha, in the years 1829, 1830, and 1831*, 2 Vols., (London: Saunders and Oetley, 1832), Vol. 1, pp. 271-72.

Within these years, the Ottoman central authority managed to create a military force in the Western fashion under its own control, which was in contrast with the Janissary Corps and provincial militias. The years between 1826 and 1839 are signified by the reforms of the Sultan Mahmud II and the wars fought against Russia (1828-29) and Egypt (1832-33, 1839-41). The central authority desperately needed and imposed levy after levy to enlarge the regular army as well as replenish the empty ranks. These recruits were coming from the provinces and the jetties of the capital, collected without any proper conscription system. The discontent and disruption of the countryside due to harsh recruitment policies would become so great that establishment of a just conscription system was among the main reforms manifested in *Tanzimat* Decree (1839). The reforms promulgated in 1839, turned into a conscription law in 1846, which would be in practice upto 1869 with minor changes.

The Ottoman chronicles, travel accounts and the modern studies touch the issue, but they generally tend to emphasize on the laws concerning the military recruitment. This work tries to broaden the subject and tries to answer questions such as, what the origins of the conscription were, who were the recruiters, which kind of methods were used, and whether some preferences existed in selection of the recruits. While doing this, it does not only deal with the official regulations and decisions made at the top, but also tries to focus on the common subjects' and soldiers' responses to military recruitment.

## Sources:

There is a lack of secondary sources not only on this issue, but also on the era of Mahmud II.<sup>18</sup> The unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of Avigdor Levy on the army of Mahmud II remains as a guideline for its establishment, organization and battle records. Although a bit dated, his work is indispensable for a study concerning the mentioned era. The Ottoman documents along with French and British archives were used extensively in his work.<sup>19</sup> The works done by İlber Ortaylı<sup>20</sup>, Niyazi Berkes<sup>21</sup> and Musa Çadırcı<sup>22</sup> are helpful to understand the nineteenth century landscape. The recent articles by Hakan Erdem<sup>23</sup> and Erik J. Zürcher<sup>24</sup> are perhaps the most directly related secondary sources for this study and they were written with good hindsight. Unfortunately, though, the rest of the secondary sources dealing with the era between 1826 and 1853 prove to be separate articles published in Turkish; most of them are descriptive in nature working with primary documents remains as the only way to handle this subject. Still, the stance or feelings of the populace as well as the recruits was not fully reflected in official documents. Especially, the soldiers can not speak for themselves: diaries or letters written by the lower ranks were largely non-existent,

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<sup>18</sup> Several Ph.D. dissertations were prepared on the Ottoman army of the nineteenth century. All of them were based on original material. But except for Ahmet Yaramış, they do not use sources other than in Turkish and all of them are very descriptive in nature. See Ayten Can Tunalı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma (1839-1876)" (Ph.D. diss., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2003); Ahmet Yaramış, "II. Mahmut Döneminde Asakir-i Mansure Muhammediye (1826-1839)" (Ph.D. diss., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2002); Cahide Bolat, "Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876)" (Ph.D. diss., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1968).

<sup>20</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları. İstanbul: 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828".

<sup>24</sup> Erik Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918," in *Arming the State Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775- 1925*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

due to widespread illiteracy.<sup>25</sup> The useful method remains to draw bits of information from official documents, by reading them closely and collecting the clues.

Therefore, as a masters' thesis, this work does not dare or claim to perfectly illustrate the aforementioned themes. Instead, it tries to explain some political and social aspects of the newly introduced Ottoman conscription during the early-mid nineteenth century. It seeks to introduce some interesting primary sources such as *Havadis Jurnalleri* (spy reports quoting the speeches of the common people in public places in İstanbul)<sup>26</sup> and *Asakir-i Mansure Defterleri*<sup>27</sup> to learn more about the Ottoman soldier and the response of the common people to the military effort. Other primary documents used were coming mainly from *Cevdet*, *Hatt-ı Hümayun* and *İrade* Collections. *Cevdet* collection is full of every kind of documents, such as confirmed drafts of levy orders, discharge papers, and even general reports on troop transportation, soldier's wages and allocations. *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (imperial rescript) collection includes the orders or notes from the sultans on particular issue and also reports submitted to the higher levels bureaucracy. *İrade* collections<sup>28</sup> contain documents which were produced by and circulated within the higher bureaucracy. A number of dissertations based on court records of the related era were scanned through for full transcriptions or sometimes an annotation of one or a group of court records form the main body of these works. Consequently, these dissertations were written in primary documents section. The importance of the court records is that

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<sup>25</sup> *Zarif Paşa Hatıratı* (the memoirs of Zarif Paşa), is an authentic source, putting some light on the lives of the Ottoman soldiers. Although Zarif Paşa would become a general later in his carrier, he was a young lieutenant of the guards in Albanian revolt of 1832 and participated in battle of Konya (1832). See, Enver Ziya Karal, "Zarif Paşa Hatıratı, 1816-1862," *Belleten* 4, no. 16 (1942), pp. 443-494.

<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to Cengiz Kırılı of Boğaziçi University, for his guidance in handling the latter group of documents. See his article, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire" in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, eds. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004) on for further information in handling these sources.

<sup>27</sup> Muster rolls of the *Mansure* army.

<sup>28</sup> The phrase literally means "will" of the sultan, but these documents were produced by the various councils formed after *Tanzimat* (1839).

they included the copies of the documents received from the center or sent from the provinces to the capital. Orders related to recruitment, desertion, evasion, as well as discharges, furloughs, pensions and battling with desertion could be found among those.

## CHAPTER I

### TRANSITION AND CHANGE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE OTTOMAN ARMY UNTIL THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Throughout the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, in order to meet the current needs of warfare, the Ottoman military institutions and their soldiers evolved gradually but irrevocably. The seasonally recruited quasi-feudal cavalry and permanent salaried regiments composed of the Sultan's household slaves, supervised and relatively well-controlled by the central authority, would leave their place to a provincially recruited militia, which was recruited, organized and commanded by relatively autonomous provincial notables, and also tribal forces used as auxiliaries by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> As for the Janissary Corps, it was then a rather heterogeneous, crowded, but militarily ineffective force, while only remnants of the *Timariot* cavalry survived to that time. Though this work does not intend to discuss the classical Ottoman military institutions or process of political decentralization, it describes the traditional system, with its political as well as military aspects, in order to understand the changes in course of time. These changes included a growing dependency of the sultan's army on the provincial militias and tribal forces in place of the relatively on a caste of professional warriors that had been developed in previous centuries. Respectively, the element of coercion in Ottoman military

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<sup>1</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires", pp. 104, 121. Aksan offers an analysis of these changes in this article, and also provides assessments for the Austrian and Russian sides.

recruitment increased substantially during this process.<sup>2</sup> The unemployed and landless Turkish peasants and renegades who came from the local population served in the provincial militias. Eventually, this meant that ordinary Muslim *reaya*, which had earlier been for the most part excluded from Ottoman military forces, was serving in the armies of the provincial notables and those of the central authority.

### **I.1 The Ottoman Army in the Classical Age**

In the classical age, a medieval cavalry arm, the *Timarlı Sipahis* (*timariot* cavalry) along with the permanent salaried troops, formed the backbone of the Ottoman field army. Various auxiliary detachments as well as the forces of vassal principalities could also be added to regular army. The *timariot* cavalry enjoyed the advantage of being a part of the privileged ruling class (*askeri*<sup>3</sup>) in the Ottoman society. They received a portion of income from their allocated *timars*<sup>4</sup> and were exempt from taxation. In exchange, they were required to train a certain number of cavalymen (*cebelüs*), the exact number depending on the income which they received. They were required to join campaigns with men, to collect taxes for the central treasury, and finally to maintain order in their home districts. In an imperial campaign, they were subordinated respectively to their sub-provincial commanders (*sancakbeys*), the provincial commanders (*beylerbeys*) while joining the combined imperial army. The ideal campaigning season for the *timariot* cavalry was from March to October, after which they returned back home. If a *timarlı sipahi* did not

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<sup>2</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," pp. 104-05. According to Aksan, the Ottoman army changed from the contingents supplied by entrepreneurs to conscript armies, a similar transition which was experienced by the contemporary European armies. Additionally, she argues that the recruitment became much coercive under the pressure of shrinking borders and providing the manpower needs from the Muslim and tribal population.

<sup>3</sup> *Askeri* class was made up of people serving in military, bureaucracy and *ulema*, the doctors of Muslim canon law, tradition and theology. İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, pp. 68-69, 226.

<sup>4</sup> *Timar* is "a fief with an annual value of less than twenty thousand *akçes* whose revenues were held in return for military service." İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, p. 226.

perform the assigned military tasks for seven years, his privileged *askeri* status would be revoked, and he could well become a member of the *reaya* subject class.<sup>5</sup> Although they had to carry out policing duties in their home areas, *timarli sipahis* did not have any judicial authority over the peasants from whom they collected taxes. More importantly, their control over the land and peasants was strictly limited to their own lives. Since the Sultan and the state was the ultimate owner of the land, a system inherited from the earlier Islamic and other Middle Eastern states, the *timariot* cavalryman, regardless of rank, could not leave his holding to heirs. The class structure, however, did persist, since the son of a *timariot* cavalryman could automatically be a member of the *askeri* class and start over with a smaller *timar* that would be allocated to him.<sup>6</sup> The Ottoman center thus sought to prevent the establishment of local roots in the provinces through the inheritance of large tracts of *timars* directly by the sons of the *timarli sipahis*.<sup>7</sup>

Another important component of the Ottoman army was the *kapikulus*, who were the salaried permanent troops stationed in the capital and provincial garrisons. This corps included the infantry regiments (the famous Janissaries), the elite cavalry of the Porte, cannoneers, grenadiers, sappers and various supporting units. The men in the *kapikulu* corps were not as numerous as the *timariot* provincial cavalry, but they had the best available military training and equipment and shared a definite *esprit de corps* in their regiments as well as in their entire military organization. The early sultans depended on them as shock troops in the critical battles and used them to man garrisons throughout the empire. Though not numerically great in size, they

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<sup>5</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, pp. 111-118.

<sup>6</sup> It should be added that people from different backgrounds such as Muslim Turks who voluntarily joined the fight in the marches and distinguished themselves in the marches via volunteerism, could receive a *timar* as well. Also, the former military class of the conquered lands might become a *sipahi* with conversion to Islam. However, most of the *timars* were given to the slaves of the sultan. İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 29; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 64.

were very much the trusted and promoted arm of the sultan and the central authority, thanks to their regular salaries and the *devşirme* system employed to recruit them, which created a group of soldiers without any roots who therefore became devoted servants (military or civil), being loyal only to their masters.<sup>8</sup>

## **I.2 The Crises and Decentralization**

During the wars of 1596-1606, the seasonally-recruited provincial cavalry performed badly against the Austrian infantry armed with firearms.<sup>9</sup> Reports from the front complained about the lack of soldiers who knew how to use firearms and pointed out the disadvantage of sending cavalry armed with bows and spears against the Austrian infantrymen using muskets and cannons. As a result, the Ottoman commanders continuously demanded that infantrymen using muskets be sent to the front to replace the cavalry.<sup>10</sup> The central government's response was to enroll Anatolian peasants trained to use muskets, as temporary salaried troops. These troops were named *levend* or *segban* when they served as infantrymen or *sarica* when they served as cavalrymen. They were recruited in the provinces by Janissary officers sent from the capital, and were organized in companies of fifty to one hundred men. These men were for all practical purposes mercenaries recruited from unemployed, landless peasant volunteers from the Muslim population of Anatolia, which had

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<sup>8</sup> Christian boys levied from the non-Muslim population of the empire, prisoners of war and purchased slaves were assimilated into the Turkish culture and adopted into Ottoman military class. The individuals raised through this process became soldiers in the salaried standing army of the center. Some were chosen for their wit, charm and intellectual ability and educated to be bureaucrats for the state. Similar methods of raising troops from the slaves or prisoners were common practice in the Middle East since from Achaemenids to Abbasids. (İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, pp. 76-88; Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, pp. 30-31) They were not supposed to maintain any connections with their families or past lives in order to ensure their loyalty, but in fact many of them did manage to maintain relations with their original families. See, Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise 1800-1908* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 1-11 for further details.

<sup>9</sup> İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), p. 290.

perhaps increased by half during the population boom of (the) sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Serious problems occurred, though, after the war was over. Thousands of these soldiers then began to roam and ravage the countryside since they could not find regular employment. The Ottoman authorities soon understood that no more than a thin line separated a discharged *levend* without income and a bandit armed with a musket.<sup>12</sup>

Ottoman central army fighting through these wars now had to stay at the front for years in the Balkans and the Central Europe as well as in the Eastern Anatolia. The *timariot* cavalry who in the past used to return home in winter in order to collect taxes and to maintain order and security, could not do so any more. The central government responded to the need for a larger permanent army to be kept in the field and to carry out siege operations by increasing the number of men in the *kapikulu* corps from 29,000 in 1574 to 76.000 in 1609.<sup>13</sup> This created a severe financial problem for the central treasury. Since these standing troops had to be paid in cash rather than by means of *timars* in which they could collect their own salaries in the form of taxes, as the *timariots* had done. The Ottoman treasury therefore was compelled to shift away from its dependency on the *timar* system, to one in which tax farmers (*mültezims*) collected money in cash, keeping part for themselves, and delivering the rest to the treasury in order to provide it with the money it needed to pay the growing number of permanent *kapikulu* troops.<sup>14</sup> The *devşirme* system no longer sufficed to produce professional rootless and devoted soldiers, as it was

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<sup>11</sup> See Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> İnalçık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 24; İnalçık, *Classical Age*, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> İnalçık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 643; Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline," *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review* 4 (1999), p. 53.

largely abandoned by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> The Ottoman state enrolled more of the “unqualified persons of wrong backgrounds” who were not raised through the *devşirme* system, since it desperately needed combatants for the ongoing wars.<sup>16</sup> Ironically though, these “unqualified” were mainly supplied by the overpopulated Muslim Turkish *reaya* which “preferred the sword to the plough”.<sup>17</sup> This era perhaps signifies the beginning of the large scale “intrusion” of the *reaya* into military affairs, which would increase gradually in the coming centuries.

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, the corps had lost its military value,<sup>18</sup> one of the primary reasons for its abolition. It was by then no more than a fictional force, since very few of the men whose names were on its muster rolls showed up in the battlefield. Their resistance to reform prevented restoration of their military effectiveness.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the *kapikulus* and *timariot* cavalry who were sent to provinces to suppress the celali rebellions, with the support of the local merchants and guild members, emerged as provincial war lords by acquiring control of state-owned lands and various tax-farms.<sup>20</sup>

The next serious crisis came a century later with the wars against the Holy Alliance that took place between 1583 and 1699. The Ottoman army could not withstand the forces of Austria, Venice, Poland and Russia. The defeats suffered by the Ottomans at Vienna (1683) and Zenta (1697) were further evidences of the

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<sup>15</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Kafadar argues that this kind of “corruptions” could be found in the as early as fifteenth century. He attributes the increase in number of these illegalities in the following centuries to the enlargement of the *Kapikulu* forces due to new requirements of warfare. Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> İnalcık, *Classical Age*, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> According to Niyazi Berkes the military matters was confined to a certain caste constituted by *timariot* cavalry and Janissary Corps upto eighteenth century, which was a professional and segregated force outside the society. He argues that the military force that substituted the former was then composed of “the peasants, unemployed, tradesmen and provincial irregulars”, which could not be a professional military force, but a political instrument. Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 190

<sup>19</sup> Aksan, “Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires,” pp. 116, 129.

<sup>20</sup> Aksan “Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires,” p. 116; İnalcık, *Classical Age*, p. 51.

breakdown of the traditional Ottoman military system.<sup>21</sup> Rhoads Murphey argues that the failure of the Ottoman army was not due to a colossal backwardness in regard to advance in military affairs or military technology,

but shifting diplomatic patterns that forced them to confront a better-organized and financed, as well as a more determined, adversary (or group of adversaries) than ever before...What had changed in Europe circa 1685 was that individual, entrepreneurial and private and semi-private initiative in the military sphere had begun to be replaced by collective action on a hitherto unprecedented scale.<sup>22</sup>

The outcome of these wars was the loss of Morea to Venice, Hungary to Austria, and Azov to Russia. The Ottomans consequently became more determined than ever to cling to the line of fortresses stretching from Belgrade to Azov, while destroying enemy fortifications along the same line.<sup>23</sup> In the war with Russia (1711-13) that followed, the Ottoman army managed to outmaneuver Peter the Great's force at Pruth (1711) and later to retake Morea from Venice in 1715. The Ottoman forces would even manage to retake Belgrade (1739), which had been lost to Austria after the war of 1715-1718. The war against the Habsburgs (1736-1739) did not begin well in the beginning since the Ottomans had to fight the Russians at the same time along distant fronts. The Ottomans were lucky, however, they were able to capture Belgrade due to the death of the great Austrian general prince Eugene, and also due to logistic problems for the Russian armies which were fighting far from their main bases.<sup>24</sup> By this time, however, the Ottoman military was largely ineffective, being weak in organization, quality of troops, and especially lacking cohesive and a unified command. It should be noted that the Ottoman Army had been soundly beaten by an equally-sized Austrian Army at Peterwaradin (1717) and later

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<sup>21</sup> Aksan "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>23</sup> Aksan "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 125; İnalçık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 643-44.

at Belgrade (1717), this time by an Austrian Army of one-third of that of the Ottomans'.<sup>25</sup> The victory at Pruth was won by an army larger than that of the Russians'.<sup>26</sup> By the mid-late eighteenth century, the Russian and Austrian military machines, which were the Ottomans' main opponents on land, had developed at a much higher speed, having a considerable tactical, organizational and technological edge over the Ottoman armies.<sup>27</sup>

The Ottoman soldiers in contrast, joined the fight as uncoordinated skirmishers.<sup>28</sup> One Russian general depicted the Ottoman soldiers on the battlefield as making "... use of [their rifles] slowly and are always impatient to charge the enemy with saber in hand."<sup>29</sup> In the late eighteenth century, even Ottoman pamphleteers were noting that some soldiers did not even know how to load and fire their muskets.<sup>30</sup> The army badly needed reform and modernization after the deceptive period of peace which followed the war of 1736-39 so that it could match the modernization of its neighbors. In the wars that followed, the Ottomans were not numerically inferior to the enemy armies, but they lacked the discipline, command, and tactics employed by the latter.<sup>31</sup>

Under these circumstances, the wars fought against Russia and Austria between 1768-74 and 1787-92 brought the most devastating results for the Ottoman

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<sup>25</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 125.

<sup>26</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 127.

<sup>27</sup> André Corvisier, *Armies and Societies in Europe*, trans. by Abigail T. Siddall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 113.

<sup>28</sup> Avigdor Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies* 94 (1982), p. 230.

<sup>29</sup> Virginia Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700-1783*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), p. 130 in Jonathan Grant "Rethinking the Ottoman "Decline": Military Technology diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of World History* Vol. 10, no. 1 (1999), p. 199.

<sup>30</sup> See for instance, Enver Ziya Karal, "Nizam-ı Cedid'e Dair Layihalar," *Tarih Vesikaları* 2 no. 11 (1943), p. 424.

<sup>31</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) Vol. 1, p. 260; Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," p. 131; Levy, "Military Reform in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 234-35.

Empire. By far, the Ottomans had been defeated repeatedly on land and sea,<sup>32</sup> and had reached the point of losing all its possessions in Europe, including even its capital Istanbul.<sup>33</sup> It was saved from such a fate due to the problems raised in Europe by the French Revolution, as well as internal difficulties in Austria. But Crimea and the lands between Dniester and Bug were lost to Russia, which also forced the Ottomans to pay a huge war indemnity. The Ottomans then tried to introduce serious military reforms, far beyond those attempted earlier in the century.

For military recruitment, organization and leadership starting in the seventeenth century, the Ottoman government relied on the provincial governors, notables and lower ranking officials, as they shifted away from the traditional system in which the Janissaries and the *timariot* cavalry constituted the prime components of the army. The *beylerbeyis* (provincial governors) or *sancakbeyis* (district governors within the provinces) now were authorized to recruit their own *segbans*, which would form their own household troops. In times of war, they were required to bring these contingents to join in the imperial campaigns.<sup>34</sup> They were also given the right to collect extraordinary taxes to meet their increasing expanses, named *imdad-ı seferiyye* (expedition contribution).<sup>35</sup> The governors recruited unemployed *segbans* within their retinues in order to build their own private armies, if they served in the same place for years, while also establishing connections and building up a local power base. If the provincial governors appointed by the sultans became strong

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<sup>32</sup> See Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807*, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 21-68 for a detailed account of the war and Ottomans' performances.

<sup>33</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, "The Origins of Ottoman Military Reform: The Nizam-ı Cedid Army of Sultan Selim III," *The Journal of Modern History*, 37 (1965), p. 291.

<sup>34</sup> Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," pp. 116-117; Halil İnalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (London: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> It began from early seventeenth century and became an established tax in the early eighteenth century. İnalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization," p. 29, end note 9.

enough as a result, they often revolted and challenged the central authority. To prevent this, in the eighteenth century governors frequently were moved from one place to another.<sup>36</sup>

Since the governors therefore were not allowed to remain long in the same place, or were compelled to serve the sultan on distant battlefronts far from their home provinces, the local notables (*ayans*), usually important local landholders,<sup>37</sup> became stronger, particularly because they were in charge of collecting the *imdad-i seferiye* tax, nominally at least on behalf of the governors. As a result, the local judges (*kadis*) turned more for assistance to the *ayans*, particularly because of the abuses inflicted by the governors.<sup>38</sup> Their wealth and power increased even more when they were appointed as *muhasşils* (semi-independent tax collectors), a position which often served as launching pad to governorship.<sup>39</sup> As the governors often were kept busy on distant fronts, the *ayans* often were put in charge of the administration of the *sancaks*. After 1700, the provincial notables managed to acquire lifetime tax farms (*malikanes*), grants developed by the central treasury in exchange for payments of lump sums in advance.<sup>40</sup> They also played increasingly important roles in military affairs, by joining the district officials (*mütesellims* and *mutasarrıfs*)

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<sup>36</sup> İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 644.

<sup>37</sup> The term is generally referred as the “provincial notables” or “local notables”. But it is quite difficult to fully determine what these people really were and to whom this term referred to. The *ayans* came from diverse backgrounds and had their own version of a “story of success”. Many were descendents from the Janissary and *Timariot* Cavalries who had established themselves in the century before. Some others were from appointed governors and some were descendents of local families. Still, the complex dynamics between the *ayans* and the center along with the question of decentralization not perfectly explained and deserve further research. See articles of Halil İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization” and “Military and Fiscal Transformation”; Yuzo Nagata, *Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa ve Ayanlık Müessesesi*, (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1982); Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ayanlık*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994); Mutafçieva, V. P. , “XVIII Yüzyılın Son On Yılında Ayanlık Müessesesi”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 31 (1977) for further details on these subject.

<sup>38</sup> İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” pp. 28-29.

<sup>39</sup> İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” p. 29. İnalcık gives Karaosmanoğlu Hacı Mehmed and Çapanoğlu Süleyman as two examples of this kind.

<sup>40</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 48.

acting as agents of the central government for commissioning and organizing the *levendat* (plural of *levend*) militia contingents for the imperial army.<sup>41</sup> “This pattern of negotiation, mutual recognition, and control [between the center and the local gentry] predominated between c. 1700 and 1768, but was shaken during the rest of the eighteenth century.”<sup>42</sup> During the turmoil of late eighteenth century, the state was dependent on the notables more than ever, leaving the latter with even more freedom of action than before.<sup>43</sup> Some managed to accumulate enormous powers, becoming virtually autonomous, with their own private mercenary armies, incomes and agendas.

During the late eighteenth century, the Ottoman army was a collection of state funded militia recruited by the *ayans* and *mütesellims* (who were local *ayans* in most cases by that time), those Janissaries who were willing to participate in battle, and the remnants of the *timariot* cavalry and other auxiliary units, which were mostly tribal.<sup>44</sup> The expenditures of the provincial militia were provided by the central treasury, while the Janissaries were paid out of direct tax collections.<sup>45</sup> The composition of the army was visibly different from that of the classical age, as most of the men were *levends*. Approximately 100,000 *levends* served in the war of 1768-74, under the command of some forty five individual leaders, each of whom brought between one thousand and two thousand troops, in addition to the soldiers in their own retinues.<sup>46</sup> Approximately from 30,000 to 60,000 Janissaries also joined the

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<sup>41</sup> İnalcık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” pp. 33-34; Aksan, “Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires,” p. 122. Both terms were used in the documents.

<sup>42</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 48-49.

<sup>43</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Aksan, “Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires,” pp. 129-30. Virginia Aksan, “Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies in the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 31.

<sup>45</sup> Aksan, “Recruitment Strategies,” p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> The number of state-funded provincial militia (*miri levendat*) serving had been growing in the imperial army through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Around 10,000 of them served in

fight.<sup>47</sup> The exact number of men who fought in the Ottoman army during the wars of 1787-1792 is not known, but contemporary observers estimated the number of Janissaries to be 40,000 in 1792, with the total number of soldiers in the army reaching two hundred to three hundred thousand.<sup>48</sup> The numbers seems remarkable (and no doubt some figures are overly exaggerated), but the Janissaries and *timariot* cavalry had long since ceased to be effective fighting forces. For the most part they had been replaced by the provincial, non-Janissary *miri* (state-funded) troops who were mostly mobilized in times of war, constituted the real Ottoman army.<sup>49</sup> The training, organization, discipline and motivation of the provincial militia, however, were far from sufficient to accomplish the tasks that the central government was expecting from them.

### **I.3 Selim III and the *Nizam-ı Cedid***<sup>50</sup>

Selim III (1789-1807) ascended to the throne during the war with Austria and Russia between 1787-1792. Seeing the Ottoman army's lack of effectiveness and its disastrous result, the Sultan made perhaps the most spectacular move among those attempted by the eighteenth century Ottoman reformers<sup>51</sup>, creating a new army corps

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1683 at Vienna, the famous *seghban* commander and renegade Yeğen Osman had 10.000 *seghbans* at his disposal in 1687 and in 1711 Pruth campaign number of *miri levendat* amounted to 20.000. The numbers are compiled from Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," pp. 122-23; İnalçık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation," pp. 299-300.

<sup>47</sup> Aksan, "Recruitment Strategies," p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Aksan, "Recruitment Strategies," p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Aksan, "Recruitment Strategies," p. 31. See also, Mutağçieva, "Ayanlık," p. 180.

<sup>50</sup> Literarily, the phrase means "New Order". The name is given both to the era and the military and administrative innovations of Selim III.

<sup>51</sup> The reform attempts of Commte de Bonneval (1675-1747) and Baron de Tott (1733-1793) as well as other reformers coming from the Ottomans themselves in the eighteenth century were limited, and would not produce any serious and everlasting effect on the whole Ottoman military. For the detailed account of these reforms, see Levy, "Military Reform in the Eighteenth Century" and also Mehmet Doğan, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askeri İslahatları (1703-1789)" (MA diss, Ankara Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1999).

and financial system to support it, both entirely separate from the existing military and financial organizations.<sup>52</sup>

In 1792, the Sultan requested *layihas* (reports) from some of his leading bureaucrats in order to review the condition of the army and make recommendations to improve it.<sup>53</sup> These reports deserve attention, not only because they contain valuable information about the state of the Ottoman Army at that time, but also because one can see here what innovations, measures and reforms were considered in that atmosphere. These reports in fact provided the basic outlines which Selim III carried out in organizing and recruiting his *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps, and which later were used by Mahmud II to establish his *Segban-ı Cedid*, *Eşkinici Ocağı* and *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*.<sup>54</sup>

The reports agreed that the existing military forces were obsolete and ineffective. The Janissary Corps in particular was criticized on the grounds that most members were concentrating on commercial activities and therefore were unable and unwilling to provide an adequate service during campaigns. Both the Janissaries and the provincial forces were described as being devoid of professionalism, discipline and proper military training. Several of the reports proposed to replace the Janissaries and provincial forces with entirely new military organizations. Some others felt that they should be retained, but at least some elements within the corps should be reformed. Some felt that foreign instructors should be employed to train the new troops. One report stated that "...armed levies mobilized from the population (*nefir-i âm askeri*) do not suffice to take revenge from the enemy and to save the territories they had occupied. What is required is the formation of soldiers who are organized

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<sup>52</sup> İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 645.

<sup>53</sup> The *layihas* were published by Enver Ziya Karal as "Nizam-ı Cedid'e Dair Layihalar," *Tarih Vesikaları* 1, no. 6 (1941): 414-425, 2, no. 8 (1942): 104-111, no. 11 (1943): 342-351, no. 12, (1943): 424-432.

<sup>54</sup> See Chapter II for more information on these military organizations.

[in a fashion as will be described] and are permanently attached to the army and [army life] (*başıbağlı asker*)”.<sup>55</sup>

The reports also included other interesting ideas on Ottoman military mentality. Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Paşa, proposed a kind of general military reserve system, resembling the *Redif* organization that would be founded by the reformers some thirty years later.<sup>56</sup> One man would be taken as a musketeer from every household that had two or three eligible male members. These musketeers would drill for two days a week. Two hundred of them would always be ready for service “under the command of the viziers” and these men would be replaced with others every three months.<sup>57</sup> Another report suggested a similar plan for recruiting and training the soldiers that would be drawn from the provinces and sent to the capital for training, again on a rotation basis.<sup>58</sup>

Several of the reports emphasized that the recruits for the new military organization had to be “rootless” and isolated as much as possible. One report proposed that the recruits “...should be chosen among youth aged fifteen, who had not yet contacted intriguers (*erbab-ı fesad ile mülakat itmemiş*) and who should be trained at barracks that would be built far away from the cities.”<sup>59</sup> Abdullah Berri Efendi emphasized in accordance that:

A soldier has to be young. The recruit should be between 11 and 25 years old, and these must be from the people who had never participated in the previous campaigns. [It would be even better] if they are drawn from the village dwellers that have never been to any

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<sup>55</sup> Mehmed Raşid Efendi’s report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 1 no. 6, p. 420.

<sup>56</sup> *Redif* Army was formed in July 1834 as a reserve force for the regular army. Local battalions were formed in the provinces, officered by the local notables. The idea was to train soldiers without keeping them under arms for long periods, as was the case with the *Mansure* Army. The *Redif* soldiers were obliged to train twice a year and sent to fight if the empire was at war. (Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918,” pp. 80-81). For further details, see Mübahat Kütükoğlu, “Sultan II. Mahmud Devri Yedek Ordusu Redif-i Asakir-i Mansure,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1981-82).

<sup>57</sup> Yusuf Paşa’s report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 1 no. 6, p. 415. No details given on the total number.

<sup>58</sup> İbrahim Efendi’s report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 2 no. 8, p. 106.

<sup>59</sup> Reşid Efendi’s report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 2 no. 8, p. 105.

city or town...(Belki şehir ve kasabaya dahi girmemiş kura ahalisinden olmalı.)

He further insisted on stationing the troops in isolated barracks built outside İstanbul, thus preventing them from any contact with the “strangers”.<sup>60</sup> (*bigâne[ler]*) He proposed that an immediate source of manpower be found among orphans and the poor living in İstanbul and the countryside.<sup>61</sup> Although his report portrays the army as a tool for promoting social welfare for the poor and the destitute, the idea of recruitment among the orphans and people unable to afford a living, those most likely to be defenseless, lacking social connections, had nothing-to-lose and carried an “empty” mind to be manipulated. These at the same time would be “kept away” from the Janissaries, in order to prevent them joining their ranks. All these qualifications must have seemed necessary for Abdullah Berri Efendi to create an army that would be obedient and thus effective in an ideal sense. It must be noted that the “ideal” Janissary of the classical period was also an “orphan”, created by the central authority and not by natural causes. Niyazi Berkes thus notes that the “the *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army was thought to become a separate trained force, which would be transformed into a real *kul* (slave) army, commanded by the slaves of the sultan”.<sup>62</sup>

Other reports suggested that recruits be selected from the Janissaries,<sup>63</sup> and one even proposed to restore the *devşirme* system of recruiting youths from the

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<sup>60</sup> “İstanbul’a baid bir mahalde beşbin askere vefa edecek bir mahal inşa olunub etrafı mahfuz ve bigâne kemesne dahil olmamak üzere nizam verilmelidir”. Karal, “Layihalar”, 1 no. 6, p. 424.

<sup>61</sup> “Taayyüş eylemekten nice kimesneler vardır ki bir ekmek tedariki için gece gündüz hizmet eder. Niceler vardır ki evladlarını beslemeyüb bir ekmek verecek adem arar.” Abdullah Berri Efendi’s report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 1 no. 6, p. 424.

<sup>62</sup> According to Niyazi Berkes, the idea that was proposed by Koca Yusuf Paşa on the creation of a semi-standing provincial militia could not be accepted by the state, since they would bolster the authority of the already powerful *ayans* who were already strong. Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 95.

<sup>63</sup> Karal, “Layihalar,” 2 no. 8, pp. 109-10.

countryside.<sup>64</sup> It was also proposed that bachelors who had not participated in any trade be taken as recruits.<sup>65</sup> The reports wanted the soldiers in the new organization to remain under the authority of the state; the new army was supposed to be “pure” and obedient and not become a rival, like the Janissaries or *ayans*. Although there was no direct statement that the Janissaries were the “harmful strangers” that the new recruits should be kept from, the authors of the reports must also have been quite aware that the Janissaries, who were powerful as a result of their connections and brotherhoods in the capital and the provincial cities, might consume and “corrupt” them. The new organization had to be under direct central control.

The Sultan gave up the idea of reforming the Janissary Corps early in his reign, fearing that such an effort would produce an open revolt, though he felt that some reforms could be introduced in the artillery corps. The Janissaries were “...no longer able to defeat foreign enemies, ...[but] still had enough power at home to protect their interests”.<sup>66</sup> He instead chose a middle path that led to the coexistence of both Janissary Corps and his *Nizam-ı Cedid*.<sup>67</sup>

The first two regiments of *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps were formed respectively in 1793 and 1799<sup>68</sup> with European-style discipline and training.<sup>69</sup> European military advisors (mostly French), equipment and drilling manuals were extensively used in training and equipping the newly established formations.<sup>70</sup> The initial number of

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<sup>64</sup> “*Fimaba'd Anadolu ve Rumeliden genç uşaklardan devşirilüp Asitane'ye celp ve manavlık ve küfecilik ve sair sunuf adadına duhulleri bir vechle tecviz olunmayup li-ecli'l-ımtiyaz hey'et ve libasları nesak-ı vahid üzerine tertip ve...ale'd-devam sanayi-i harbiye talim ettirilmek...*” Mehmed Raşid Efendi's report. Karal, “Layihalar,” 1 no. 6, p. 421. However, it is not perfectly clear that whether these *devşirmes* should be taken from the non-Muslim population, as had done in the past. The mentioned occupations of *manavcılık* and *küfecilik* seem to be related to the lower class Muslims.

<sup>65</sup> Report of Mabeyinci Mustafa. Karal, “Layihalar,” 2 no. 8, p.110.

<sup>66</sup> Shaw, “The Nizam-ı Cedid Army,” p. 292.

<sup>67</sup> Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 92.

<sup>68</sup> Shaw, “The Nizam-ı Cedid Army,” p. 299.

<sup>69</sup> Aksan, “Recruitment Strategies,” p. 31.

<sup>70</sup> Sipahi Çataltepe, *19. Başlarında Avrupa Dengesi ve Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu* (İstanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1997), p. 121.

soldiers in the corps came to 448 men and 20 officers in 1794.<sup>71</sup> Its strength grew from 2,536 men and 27 officers in May 1797 to 22,685 men and 1,590 officers at the end of 1806.<sup>72</sup> According to the its founding regulation (*kanunname*), *Nizam-ı Cedid* recruits were defined in vague terms, such as being valiant, honest, healthy and young. They could not be older than twenty-five. Regular wages were guaranteed.<sup>73</sup> Immunity from taxation also was provided for the soldiers' families as well as pensions for those who were incapacitated or killed during the terms of their service. A recruit could leave after three years of service, but only after having paid back the salaries he had received by so far, thus greatly limiting this option.<sup>74</sup> Otherwise, the term of service was not specified.<sup>75</sup> Thus for all practical purposes, they were enlisted for life or until age or infirmity disqualified them from further service.

The nucleus of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army came from Austrian and Russian renegades who had been captured by the Ottomans during the recent war. Subsequently, most of the soldiers were Turks, "coming mainly from the unemployed in İstanbul, who joined [the army] as an alternative to starvation...by 1800, ninety percent of the enlisted men in the *Nizam-ı Cedid* were Turkish peasants and tribesmen from Anatolia."<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Anatolia served as the main source of men for new regiments as well as for enlarging those previously created in İstanbul. After the formation of two infantry and one cavalry regiments in İstanbul, starting in 1801,

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<sup>71</sup> The idea and the preparations for the new army were done through 1792-94. The official announcement of establishment was made on September 18 1794. Çataltepe, *Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu*, p. 99.

<sup>72</sup> Shaw, "The Nizam-ı Cedid Army," p. 300.

<sup>73</sup> Their pay was better than those of Janissaries. The Janissary pay ticket brought 7-8 *akçe* per day, while the daily wage of a *Nizam-ı Cedid* private together with his food allocations was 50 *akçe*. Karal, "Layihalar" 1, no. 6, p.422; Shaw, "The Nizam-ı Cedid Army," p. 306.

<sup>74</sup> Shaw, "The Nizam-ı Cedid Army", p. 298.

<sup>75</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918," in *Arming the State Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775- 1925*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 79.

<sup>76</sup> HAT 9125 in Shaw, "The Nizam-ı Cedid Army", p. 301. According to Shaw's article, the recruitment of the peasants and tribes men brought the problem of indiscipline, since they were not accustomed to army life. Many of them fled with uniforms and weapons, complaining about the hardships of the military service and the discipline.

it was decided to expand the corps into Anatolia by establishing new model regiments in certain selected districts. Beginning in 1802, a system of conscription was developed when governors and notables in Anatolia were required to recruit and send peasants to İstanbul for training. After they had been trained in İstanbul, they were formed into contingents and sent back home to act as local militias, while constituting a reserve for the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army when needed.<sup>77</sup> The regiments based in İstanbul also were expanded with men brought from Anatolia. By the end of 1806, half of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* troops were stationed in the capital and the rest were in the provincial centers of Anatolia.<sup>78</sup>

As recommended in the reports, the soldiers in İstanbul were kept in barracks which were isolated from the general population, as well as from the older military forces.<sup>79</sup> In 1801, they were given permission to work in “honorable” trades near their barracks, but only at times when they were not required to participate in military drills. The privates were supposed to remain single, and only officers were allowed to marry.<sup>80</sup> By 1807, the *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps was a well-trained and well-equipped effective force in the European sense, confirmed by the Western observers. It did not see intensive action, but proved its worth in defending Gaza against Napoleon following his occupation of Upper Egypt, and in suppressing bandits in the Balkans.<sup>81</sup> An attempt to extend the *Nizam-ı Cedid* organization into Rumelia produced violent opposition from both the Janissaries and the provincial notables, as is shown by the Edirne incident (1806), in which the combined forces of the Balkan notables confronted a newly-formed *Nizam-ı Cedid* regiment. A similar effort to

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<sup>77</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 1, p. 262.

<sup>78</sup> For detailed information on the establishment and recruitment of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* in Anatolia, see Çataltepe, *Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu*, pp. 159-210.

<sup>79</sup> Aksan, “Recruitment Strategies,” p. 32.

<sup>80</sup> Shaw, “The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army,” p. 302.

<sup>81</sup> Shaw, “The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army,” p. 302-303.

reform the *yamaks*<sup>82</sup>, resulted in the dethronement of Selim III and disbandment of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps in 1807. The Sultan's reluctance to use his new model army to quell the revolt was the main reason why he was dethroned and the *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps was destroyed.

The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army, despite its fateful end, must have "...showed those reformers who survived the importance of destroying the military arm of reaction and of expanding the scope and depth of reform if success was to be achieved."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the surviving members of the corps would form the core of Mahmud II's *Asakir-i Mansure* twenty years later.<sup>84</sup> Even its organization, regulations and earlier training methods would be copied without much change.<sup>85</sup> The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps was based on the modern patterns of professionalism, and trained by European instructors according to French drilling manuals.<sup>86</sup> The design was that the army would be the instrument that would only serve the interests of the central government, with its recruits coming from the "rootless" soldiers of Anatolia. The ideas presented in *layihās* and recruitment policies of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* provide clues as to the policies followed by Mahmud II. Yet, he did not have to meddle with the Janissaries and *ayans* after 1820s, which enabled him to raise an army solely under his control.<sup>87</sup>

The level of "mobilization" in Ottoman society had already increased during the wars of the late eighteenth century. The *nefir-i âm* (general call to arms) became

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<sup>82</sup> The guards of the forts which were defending the Bosphorus.

<sup>83</sup> Shaw, "The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army," p. 305.

<sup>84</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," pp. 380-81.

<sup>85</sup> Shaw, "The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army," p. 305.

<sup>86</sup> Çataltepe, *Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu*, p. 121.

<sup>87</sup> Slade comments on the Mahmud II's military policy in the late 1830s as follows: "The Porte expected probably that the inconvenience of juvenile levies would remedy itself, and be amply repaid, should they grow up uninjured by Janissariism[sic]; by which time also it hoped that the anti-reform feeling would be worn out, when the people no longer object to the new order of things". Adolphus Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, 2 Vols. (London: Saunders and Oetley, 1837), Vol. 2, pp. 488-489.

a frequent measure for obtaining desperately needed troops in this era.<sup>88</sup> Men from the common Muslim population had already been serving as *levends* or within the retinues of the governors and the *ayans*. Thus the already a certain “militarized” portion of the population must have been ripe for the state’s military recruitment efforts, with the incentives of having good salaries and receiving exemptions for those who had been enrolled. But again this is not a sufficient explanation for the government’s ability to raise an army composed of 26,000 long-term professional servicemen solely from Anatolia by 1807. This is almost half the number of *Asakir-i Mansure* in 1830s,<sup>89</sup> which both drew its recruits from European provinces (though they had fewer Muslim inhabitants) as well as Anatolia, while also employing a harsh conscription policy on both territories. The recruitment for *Nizam-ı Cedid* was supposedly voluntary, and no details have been found regarding the recruitment procedures in the countryside. The imprecise definition of “*kazaların tahammülüne göre*” was used when recruits were demanded from the *sancaks* of Karaman and Kütahya.<sup>90</sup> Another levy order to expand the Üsküdar regiment included some more details, as it prescribed the collection of between one-fourth and one-fifth of the able bodied men in the *sancak* of Aksaray,<sup>91</sup> which gives the impression that it emphasized filling quotas more than obtaining the consent of the people to join up. According to Malcolm E. Yapp, Selim III’s orders for conscription in 1802 and the general levy in 1805 were policies both having the aim to man his new regiments,

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<sup>88</sup> The full mobilization of the Muslims for war effort, which was materialized as *jihad*, was rarely employed through the history of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, this measure is sanctioned only if the whole Muslim community’s existence is endangered by a great threat. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, pp. 143, 190.

<sup>89</sup> The Ottoman field army was around 50, 000 men strong in 1837. (See Appendix A)

<sup>90</sup> C.As (Cevdet Askeriye) 1985 (Undated, but the recruits were being demanded for the *Üsküdar Ocağı* regiment, which suggests that it was issued after 1801) A full transcription of the document was done by Yücel Özkaya. See “III. Selim Devrinde Nizam-ı Cedid’in Anadolu’da Karşılaştığı Zorluklar,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1 (1963).

<sup>91</sup> C. As 34727, in Çataltepe, *Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu*, p. 151.

since there were few men who were willing to volunteer for the expanding army.<sup>92</sup> Although, the details of the recruitment procedure are not well-studied yet, it could be argued that a certain level of enforcement was in effect while the recruits for the new army were needed. The experience of wide scale recruitment might have been alive in the minds of the survivors of the rebellion of the 1807, and must have had effect on its re-introduction after 1826.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Malcolm E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792-1923* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 101.

<sup>93</sup> Shaw, "The Nizam-ı Cedid Army", p. 305; Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," pp. 191-92.

## CHAPTER II

### RECRUITMENT FOR THE OTTOMAN ARMY: 1826-1853

#### II.1 Abolition of the Janissary Corps and establishment of the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*

From 1808 to 1826 the Ottoman Army remained a rag-tag complement of provincial levies, detachments sent by *ayans*, irregulars, peasant levies, and Janissaries. An attempt was made to reconstruct a new army along the lines of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* under the supervision of Grand Vizier Alemdar Mustafa Paşa and Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa, both of whom were the supporters of Selim III. This effort would ultimately fail due to a new Janissary rebellion in 1808, though this time the Sultan, Mahmud II, managed to survive.<sup>1</sup> After the *Nizam-ı Cedid* was destroyed, the cannon and the cannon wagon corps were the only arms which remained relatively well-organized within the old army, so they were retained and enlarged by Mahmud II, and thus were able to play an important role in the destruction of Janissary Corps starting in 1826.<sup>2</sup>

During the Greek Revolution (1821-1827), the performance of the modern regiments<sup>3</sup> created in Egypt by Muhammad Ali Paşa (1805-1848) in place of the

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<sup>1</sup> The new corps was modeled after the *Nizam-ı Cedid* with minor modifications. Its soldiers consisted of the 3,000 regulars brought by Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa, recruits sent by the *ayans*, remnants of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* and volunteers from İstanbul. Its actual strength would reach 10,000 men and officers. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," pp. 101-102.

<sup>3</sup> Khaled Fahmy's *All the Pasha's Men* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) stands as the fresh and intelligent analysis on the creation of Mehmed Ali Paşa's conscript army, which perhaps one of main source of inspiration for this study. Mehmed Ali came to Egypt as major of one of the Albanian contingent to take over from France. He then was successful in controlling Egypt, appointed

Ottoman armies that had been stopped by the Greeks must have caused both admiration and jealousy in İstanbul.<sup>4</sup> According to Stanford Shaw, Mahmud II had made good use of the contrast between the efficiency of Egyptian regulars and the incompetence of the Janissaries in a “propaganda campaign” before his final move against the corps. The Sultan had previously assigned trusted men to key posts in the Janissary Corps while bribing others to ignore what he was doing.<sup>5</sup> By 1826 the Greek revolution was more or less under control while the most powerful notable in this era, Ali Paşa of Janina<sup>6</sup> was out of the scene. Now, Mahmud II felt secure in mounting serious action by creating a reformed body of troops, called the *Eşkinici* (active Janissaries) *Ocağı*, whose recruits were taken largely from the better young elements of the Janissary Corps. The Janissaries reacted with an open revolt which began on the third day after the new troops began their training. (June 15, 1826). In contrast to what happened when the Janissaries had overthrown Selim III in 1808, this time the revolt was crushed with the help of the loyal forces, who rallied to support the Sultan. Mahmud II therefore was left with a free hand to introduce drastic reforms, not only in the military but also in Ottoman government and society. On

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as its governor in 1805 and eliminated remaining Mameluks by 1811, whose numbers had already dwindled in Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. He expanded his economic power base by making a cadastral survey, abolishing the tax-immunities and tax farming, while establishing monopolies to sell cash crops. (Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men*, pp. 9-12) Seeing the unruliness of his complement of Albanian soldiers and his failure in bringing slaves from Sudan to be made into soldiers, he turned to a long-neglected source of manpower: The native people of Egypt. He introduced conscription of his subjects in early 1820s. The military recruitment was unpopular among the Egyptians that many “potential” recruits mutilated themselves to avoid conscription. The Egyptian Army officered by the “outsiders”, who were mainly Turkish speaking Ottomans. Foreign experts, particularly French, were brought to Egypt, to train and command the army as well as to create industrial enterprises and weapon factories. (Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men*, pp. 76-111 for detailed information) With his new army, Mehmed Ali Paşa aided the Ottoman Sultan in partly in the Wahhabi Uprising and then in the Greek Revolt.

<sup>4</sup> Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918”, p. 80. The Ottoman chronicler of the era, Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, underlines difference between the regular army of Egypt and the irregular of soldiers under the command of Mehmed Reşid Paşa who was the commander of Ottoman forces during the Greek rebellion. Ahmed Lütfi. *Tarih-i Lütfi*, prep. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel and Tamer Erdoğan (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> One of the strongest *ayans* in the Balkans survived well to the 1820s. He will be crushed in between 1820-22. Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

June 17, 1826 the Sultan decreed the complete abolition of the Janissary Corps and the foundation of his new army, *Muallem Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (Trained Victorious Soldiers of Muhammed). Ağa Hüseyin, former commander of the Janissaries, who had collaborated in their destruction, was appointed *serasker* (commander-in-chief) of the new army. According to Ahmed Lütfi, the enlistment began almost immediately and a regiment was formed three days after the “Blessed Affair”. By 20<sup>th</sup> July, formation of the first regiment was completed, with two more formed by the end of the month.<sup>7</sup> An ordinance based on the old *Nizam-ı Cedid* regulations was hastily drafted with some variations, which again implied a trained, professional, and disciplined army.<sup>8</sup>

The new army was supposed to have twelve thousand men organized into eight regiments (*tertib*).<sup>9</sup> Only men aged between the ages of 25 and 30 could be included, though men up to the age of 40 were at times taken if they were considered to be “courageous”. To be enlisted, men had to have a clear past and good standing in society, but they could not be converts from other religions. It was also clearly stated that the recruitment would only be voluntary. The term of service was declared as 12 years.<sup>10</sup> The soldier always had to accept regular military training and be ready

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<sup>7</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 177-79, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 183-84. Hereafter the transcription of one of the copies of this regulation (KK (Kamil Kepeci) Askeri Defterleri No: 1) would be used, which was transcribed in Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik* (İstanbul: Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları, 2002), pp. 94-106.

<sup>9</sup> Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik*, p. 97. The number twelve was seen as holy by the Turks, as many other peoples of the Near East and Central Asia. The number of Janissaries was 12.000 in the classical age, and it was the first plan for the *Nizam-ı Cedid* to increase its number to 12.000. (Çataltepe, *Nizam-ı Cedid Ordusu*, p. 103) Later on, the *Hassa* Army (Guards Army) would be set around 12.000 men strong as well. (Ahmet Uzun, “1257/1841 Tarihli bir belgeye göre Osmanlı Devleti’nde mevcut olan askeri birlikler ve bunlara yapılan harcamaların türü ve miktarları” *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 25, no.1 (2001). [Online]) Although it is hard to prove these figures here could not be coincidence, but might be a continuation of the Ottoman military tradition.

<sup>10</sup> Terms of service in the contemporary Russian, French and Prussian regular armies were 25, 7, and 2 years respectively. Russian Army relied on a system of forced levies that puts a certain part of the serf population virtually for life. In France the recruitment was carried out through drawing of lots, after 1815, the idea was to create a professional force serving for a long period rather than universal

for duty at his barracks or wherever he was stationed.<sup>11</sup> Pensions, equal to regular wages, were to be provided for men who became too old to serve as well as for those who became incapacitated or crippled either in peace or war, with those wounded in battle to receive pensions that were even larger than their regular wages. The old practice of giving pay tickets was abolished and muster rolls were prepared for dealing with the payment, which represented the more controlled and centralized approach that characterized the reign of Mahmud II.

While the new regiments were being organized in İstanbul, governors were ordered to build the same sort of new regiments in the provinces. By August 1827, there were about twenty one battalions (two of which comprised a regiment)<sup>12</sup> in the provinces and ten in the capital, with a total of about 25.000 men and officers.<sup>13</sup> Levy notes that during the initial phase of recruitment, in addition to the men who were recruited, the old corps and the personal retinues of loyal statesmen were incorporated into the *Asakir-i Mansure*. The opportunities for rapid advancement, along with the relatively good pay and uniforms must have encouraged the young men to enlist.<sup>14</sup> For the poor and the unemployed, enlistment meant pay and free rations, which were universal incentives for joining the army. Many able-bodied former Janissaries, whose organization had been wiped out and outlawed, and who

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conscription. Prussian Army was composed of a smaller regular army and a larger reserve force, the well-known, *Landwehr*. The universal service was the rule since 1814, but the emphasis made on the regular forces more than “politically inconvenient” *Landwehr* after the triumph of conservative reaction in 1819. Jeremy Black, ed., *Dretnot, Tank ve Uçak*, trans. Yavuz Alogan (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003), pp. 43-45.

<sup>11</sup> “...*tahrir olunacak neferat mechul’ül-hal,mühtedi ve fûrû-maye kabilinden olmamak üzere sinleri onbeşinden yirmibeş ve otuz ve dilaver ü bahadır olduğu suretde nihayet kırk yaşına kadar mesağ olup kırk yaşından ziyadesine mesağ olmamak üzere pak ü asil ü tüvana yiğitlerden hüsn-ü rızasıyle tahrir olunarak ale’ d-devam kışlaklarında ve me’ mur oldukları mahallerde mevcud bulunub talim ve taallüm ile sinai-i tahsil ve cümlesi saff-ı vahid hükmüne girmek suretinde kesb-i tefennün ve maharet eylemeleri...*”. Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik*, p. 101.

<sup>12</sup> Initially a regiment (*tertib*) was composed of two battalions. (*safs and later taburs*) Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 234-235.

<sup>13</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” p. 237.

<sup>14</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 360-61. For instance, a certain private was able to rise to the rank of colonel. Mübahat Kütükoğlu, “Sultan II. Mahmud Devri Yedek Ordusu Redif-i Asakir-i Mansure,” p. 129.

thus were deprived of their livelihood, also managed to infiltrate the ranks of the *Asakir-i Mansure* in order to make a living.<sup>15</sup> Still, a vigorous campaign of purging Janissaries was underway, and it included those who had entered the new army when they could be found. According to Ahmed Lütfi, former Janissaries were purged *en masse*: eight hundred *Mansure* soldiers were exiled to Aegean islands accused of being former Janissaries. Twenty men were briefly tried and executed on the accusation of talking about the possibility of restoring the Janissary Corps.<sup>16</sup>

The number of unemployed and renegades, who had “certain reasons” to join the army, nonetheless was limited in Ottoman society. The extermination of the Janissaries, which was carried out ferociously and unjustly, along with the introduction of new taxes must have dwindled any popular support available.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the ordinary subjects of the empire were to be forcefully and arbitrarily pressed into military service during the desperate internal and external crises between the 1820s and the 1840s, as a continuous demand for new recruits existed both for raising new regiments as well as replenishing existing ones. Dimitrov likens the new method of recruitment to the old *devşirme* levies, with the difference that the recruits were now Muslims, who did not volunteer for payment nor drafted within a defined conscription system.<sup>18</sup> The new army would indeed be a new efficient and obedient version of the Janissary Corps, as Berkes argues for the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army in his book.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See for instance, HAT 17481 (1241/1826). The report, after having mentioned the townsfolk and former Janissaries (*şehirler ve kasaba halkından ve ocak-ı mülğadan*) would like to enlist in the *Mansure* army, asks about further instructions on how to deal with the situation.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” p. 360-65; Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), pp. 44-45.

<sup>18</sup> Strashimir Dimitrov, *Sultan Mahmud II and the end of the Janissary Corps* (Sofia, 1993), p.251-53.

<sup>19</sup> See Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 95.

## II.2 The Recruiters

In most cases, the recruitment officials were the *sancak* district governors, *kadis* (judges) and *ayans* (provincial notables) who were required to work together to supervise the recruitment for both the *Asakir-i Mansure* and irregular local detachments. They were ordered to recruit specific numbers and types of soldiers.<sup>20</sup> Roughly speaking, the *mutasarrıfs* and *mütesellims*, who were the official administrators of their districts, were appointed as the grand overseers of the operation, while the notables were supposed to help them to provide the required number of troops in each locality.<sup>21</sup> The *kadis* and *naibs* were given the task of handling the transportation and provisioning within their areas as well as helping with the general recruitment and war effort. The center sent in *mübaşırs* (government agents), who could also include military personnel, to direct the recruitment effort.<sup>22</sup>

An eyewitness to the recruitment party describes the procedure as follows:

The *paşa* at the head of a considerable body of troops imposed a certain levy of so many people on every village in his province. The inhabitants, cowered by the latest revolutions, did not dare to object. They assembled under their chiefs and designated according to motives of convenience the required young men. The recruits were given means to arrive at the provincial capital, and were admitted into the army only after having been

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<sup>20</sup> Direct orders to notables also existed. See, for instance, C. As 52267 (Evasıt S 1244/ August-September 1828) for a separate order sent to an *ayan* of Karahisar to raise a contingent of 60 cavalry and join the *serasker*'s main body. Some other documents suggest that some orders were sent directly to the *ayan* and *naib* of the district. See C. As 54335 (Evail S 1244/ August 1828) for an order, commanding the *ayan* of Yalvaç and *mütesellim* of Konya to bring in 500 cavalymen each and after that to join up with *sadrızam*'s troops.

<sup>21</sup> If the documents were taken with their face values, one might see a large variety of people were put in charge of recruitment or other tasks related with war effort. It seems there was not a crystal clear division of the mentioned responsibilities. Especially, the title "notables" corresponds to a much heterogeneous group and Ottoman provincial administration still lacked a "standardization", which would be introduced after *Tanzimat*.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, an officer from *Mansure* Army was sent to *sancak* of Hamid to supervise the recruitment for the regular army. Isparta Court Records, no: 183, p. 72-B (21 Ra 1253/ 25 June 1837) in Halil Erdemir "1246-1254 (1831-1838) Tarihli 183 Numaralı Isparta Şer'ıye Sicili Üzerine Bir İnceleme" (MA diss., Konya Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1995), p. 12. The recruitment was supervised by a major in *sancak* of Kastamoni. C. As 8211. (19 C 1255/ 9 September 1839) Ahmed Lütfi defines the recruiters as "*memurin-i mülkiye ve zabitan-ı askeriye*" (members of civil bureaucracy and army officers). Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 1145.

examined. Those who were not healthy enough had to be replaced.<sup>23</sup>

During the war of 1828-29, the number of *Mansure* soldiers was simply insufficient. 15,000 regulars were kept at the capital while only another 15,000 were available to be thrown against the Russians. In contrast, the Russian army had around one million men in all,<sup>24</sup> out of which about 100,000 were committed to the European theater of war.<sup>25</sup> The remainder of the Ottoman army was constituted by irregular troops sent by the *ayans* and raised through general calls to arms carried out by the provincial authorities and local gentry.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary observers put the number of irregulars in the army at around 100,000.<sup>27</sup> Although the figures that will be given are not exact, it seems that irregulars were to constitute a significant proportion of the army in the reign of Mahmud II. At the battle of Homs (8 July, 1832), which was fought against the Egyptian army, 15,000 of the 25,000 Ottoman soldiers were irregulars.<sup>28</sup> Among the 20,000 troops fought in the battle of Bilan (29 July, 1832), only half were regulars.<sup>29</sup> In the climactic battle of Konya (20

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<sup>23</sup> Victor Fontainer, *Voyages en Orient entrepris par ordre du gouvernement français de l'année 1821 à l'année 1829*, Vol. 1, p. 300 in Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II", p. 368.

<sup>24</sup> Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *From Serf to Russian Soldier* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II", pp. 406-07. One document (C. As 16; Evasit Ca 1244/ November 1828) includes the orders for general mobilization in Rumelian provinces for "defending the true faith" in the war of 1828-29. It implies the number of troops sent to confront the Russians was not enough and calls for *jihad*, in which the Muslims between 12 and 70 were subjected to join. It seems the prime motivation of the Ottoman soldiers came from the religion during the period between 1850 and 1914. The battlecry of the soldiers were "*Allah Allah*" which was observed by the contemporary eyewitnesses. (Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918," p. 88; see also Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 191-92, for Turkish soldiers attacking *Yezidis* with the mentioned battlecry) The *Mansure* soldiers were required to pray five times a day and join the Friday prayers. Every battalion had its own *imams*. (See D. ASM (Asakir-i Mansure Kalemi Defterleri) 37344 for the total complement of *imams* serving in the *Mansure* Army) Designs were made to teach the basics of religion and prayers to the soldiers in the barracks. See, Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik*, p. 101.

<sup>27</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," pp. 406-07.

<sup>28</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, p. 63; H. Muhammed Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, (İstanbul: Eren, 1998), p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, p. 65.

December, 1832), around one-third of the soldiers were not from the regular army.<sup>30</sup>

Adolphus Slade, in relating one of his earlier voyages in the Ottoman Empire, vividly portrays the conduction of what he calls a *levée en masse* (which must have been an actual *nefir-i âm*) during the war of 1828-29:

Some measures, however, adopted, showed anxiety on the part of the Porte. A spirited proclamation was read in the mosques, and sent to the cities of the empire, commanding all Mussulmans, from sixteen to sixty to take arms...From Asia, not above two or three thousand men answered the appeal...They daily crossed the Bosphorus, in parties of a hundred or so-turbanned, wild, strange-looking beings, armed to the teeth in various modes, some with fine horses, others attended by their hunting dogs-and were sent at once, to [the Northern fortresses that defend the Bosphorus] ... In the city, coercive measures were employed to make the Mussulmans arm. No trade was spared; watermen were taken from their boats, porters from their loads, bakers from their ovens, &c. Universal disaffection prevailed; and this diseased state of the public mind, the more extraordinary while acting the prime lever of fanaticism, a Russian war, strongly marked the evil policy of the Sultan's edicts, respecting dress and finance, which had produced it. Of the mass thus collected, ten thousand, including all ages, from the downy-chinned youth to the white-bearded tiriaki, were sent, under the command of Osman Pasha, the bostandgi bashi, to re-enforce Adrianople.<sup>31</sup>

The provincial notables, who operated locally and supposedly knew the “backwoods” in their districts, were crucial in providing troops for the *Mansure* Army, as well as forming irregular detachments for the imperial army. Some even joined the campaign along with the detachments they raised.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, their power had been continuously curbed down since the beginning of Mahmud II’s reign.<sup>33</sup>

Provincial magnets like Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, Tırsiniklioğlu, Pazvandoğlu, Serezli

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<sup>30</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question*, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, pp. 367-369.

<sup>32</sup> The notables’ knowledge of and access to local resources had also proved to be vital for the war effort in late eighteenth century. Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*, p. 35. It would be the *ayans* who will be exiled for not bringing in the troops or the tribal chiefs, which in fact shows their roles in recruitment. See for instance, the documents C. Zab (Cevdet Zabtiye) 2280 (Evasit Ca 1253/ August 1837) for the exile of tribal leaders; C. Zab 3780 (Evasit C 1245/ December 1829) and C. Zab 2074 (3 Za 1247/ 4 April 1832) for persecution of local notables.

<sup>33</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, pp. 14-16.

İsmail who had built armies with thousands of troops in the late eighteenth century, were no more by the 1830s.<sup>34</sup> Some *ayans* rebelled, especially after the Egyptian army invaded Anatolia, but they were put down soon after. Mahmud II was the ruler of his tormented realm during the 1830s, especially successful in controlling the core provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia.<sup>35</sup> The Porte thus, with the help of the notables, could draw approximately 160,000 recruits for the *Mansure* army from 1826 to 1837.<sup>36</sup> The regular Ottoman field army was finally 91,187 men strong in 1841.<sup>37</sup> The creation of a reserve army (*Redif*) provided another 50,000 soldiers in 1830s, though these had much lower military value.<sup>38</sup>

Although the *Mansure* army was largely unsuccessful against foreign enemies on the battlefield, its foundation was alone a considerable achievement for the central authority compared to the far less successful efforts of Selim III. The Sultan had confined his efforts mostly to Anatolia and had faced serious reactions from the local notables when he attempted to expand the *Nizam-ı Cedid* to

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<sup>34</sup> According to a contemporary eyewitness, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa commanded around 80.000 troops when he moved to quell the rebellion in the Balkans in 1803. Tepedelenli Ali Paşa had his own police force, court and bureaucracy to run his domains. (See Peter Oluf Brondsted, *Interviews with Ali Pacha of Ioanina in the autumn of 1812; with some particulars of Epirus, and the Albanians of the present day*, ed. Jacob Isager (Athens : Danish İnstitute at Athens, 1999) for interesting details of his rule in Albania and Northern Greece). Another notable, *ayan* of Boşkar had 20,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry. Tırsiniklioğlu of Rusçuk could recruit an army of 20,000 men from his territories. (Mutafçieva, “Ayanlık”, p. 181) Alemdar Mustafa Paşa, one of the best known of the notables, was able to grow in strength to invade capital and place Mahmud II to the throne with an army of 15,000. (Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 35) The numbers do not seem to be accurate, but no doubt they give clues on the power that the notables managed to gain. See also, Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, pp. 34-35 for the power of provincial notables. He also assumes the powerful notables of the late eighteenth century as would not be the ones who would “kiss any pinky ring.”

<sup>35</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 63-64.

<sup>36</sup> Most of the Mansure soldiers had likely to come from the European provinces south of Danube with the exception of Albanian and Bosnian lands and the Anatolian provinces West of Euphrates. (See Appendix B, as approximately 22,000 soldiers recruited from the mentioned areas. See Appendix C for about 15,000 recruits taken from the sancak of Çirmen in Thrace) See Chapter III for more details on the connection between ethnicity and recruitment.

<sup>37</sup> İ. MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vala) 782 (1257/ 1841 in Uzun, “1257/1841 Tarihli bir belgeye göre Osmanlı Devleti’nde mevcut olan askeri birlikler,” p. 242.

<sup>38</sup> A series of muster rolls covering the time between 1835 and 1838 (1251-53), give the information that the total number of *Redif* soldiers as increased from 48,497 to 53851 in 1838. See D. ASM 38883 for a detailed track of each regiment’s number of men, including the salary paid to the reserve army for the mentioned years.

Rumelia.<sup>39</sup> His attempt ultimately failed in Rumelia as the notables of European provinces took serious action. They feared the endangerment of their established powers, if the Sultan managed to create a loyal army of the center.<sup>40</sup> Mahmud II, however, was far more successful as he suppressed the *ayans* of Anatolia and Europe alike. Without the protection of the local notables, ordinary people must have become ripe for being taken into the army by agents of the central government. The only way to avoid conscription for most was to run away to the mountains by deserting their villages or to desert after being taken into the army.

On the other hand, the provincial notables were not entirely exterminated during the reign of Mahmud II. Although they did not dominate the provinces and had less access to local revenues because of centralizing policies, they continued to have great influence in the countryside after *Tanzimat*. According to Quataert, “[t]he central state and local elites worked out a historic compromise: İstanbul retained political supremacy and local notables kept substantial power and wealth.”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Mahmud II used the local notables to secure recruits for his army, since their roles in this respect was indispensable until the creation of more efficient central control.<sup>42</sup> He gave them command of the *Redif* for the same reason.<sup>43</sup> The local notables’ sons were assigned as officers to the reserve regiments within their localities. However, in

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<sup>39</sup> It is a good point of interest that why Anatolian notables supported the recruitment effort and the others did not in the reign of Selim III.

<sup>40</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nizam-ı Cedid ve Tanzimat Devirleri (1789-1856)* Vol. 5 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), p. 80; Shaw, *Between Old and New*, pp. 345-46.

<sup>41</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, pp. 768-69. “*Ayanlık*, ..., did no more existed after the [new] arrangements after *Tanzimat* as an [officially recognized] institution. After 1840, the *ayans* did not have any [official] place in the relations between the state and the people. However, individuals of *ayan* origin became members of the councils in the *sancaks*, [and] they kept their influence on the administration of the cities with having other titles a lot more time.” Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> See, Münir Aktepe, “Tuzcuoğulları İsyanı,” *Tarih Dergisi* 3, no. 5-6 (1951-52), especially pp. 46-47. A local dynasty first revolted, but then forgiven as they were to dispatch recruits for the imperial navy.

<sup>43</sup> İnalcık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 768-69.

the founding ordinance of *Redif*, it was considered necessary to specify that they were not to interfere in local affairs, as if they were *voyvodas*.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the army itself was among the prime instruments of military recruitment. Moltke writes that the Ottoman Army forcibly recruited Kurds after their resistance to the centralizing efforts of the Sultan was broken during the punitive campaigns of the 1830s. He gives the example of Siirt, as a certain levy of 400 men was imposed soon after its capture.<sup>45</sup> The commander in chief Ömer Paşa tells to an eyewitness that he had taken a levy of 2000 men after he had crushed the rebellion in Albania.<sup>46</sup> During the 1850s, the situation remained the same in the Arab provinces, as the population census and military recruitment was carried out by the help of army regiments.<sup>47</sup> The recruitment parties could naturally be accompanied by soldiers, as could be seen in the excerpt from the traveler Fontainer. The proposition was made that the recruitment officers should call for the help of soldiers and officers in the case that the nomads within the certain recruitment districts resisted the conscription.<sup>48</sup> The practice continued as the punitive expeditions against nomads of Cilicia in mid-1860s, as the army forces were used to exert central control in order to secure taxation and conscription.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> From *kanunname* of Redif, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Hüsrev Paşa Kitapları 813/4, vr. 8b-14b transcribed in Bolat, “Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876)”, pp. 17-24.

<sup>45</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 197.

<sup>46</sup> Hubert v. Boehn, *Zustand der Türkei im Jahre der Propheziung* (Berlin, 1853), p. 29 in Gisela Haberer, “Die Aufstellung von Redif-Truppen in der Frühen Tanzimatzeit” (MA. diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1999), pp. 36-37.

<sup>47</sup> See for instance, İ. Dah 12223 (24 R 1266/ 9 March 1850) for the dispatch of two battalions and some irregulars to help taking of a census of the population. It was implied that the system of drawing lots would be established thereafter. See also, Moshe Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palastine 1840-1861* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 81-82; Karal, “Zarif Paşa’nın Hatıratı,” pp. 466-471.

<sup>48</sup> C. As 2103 (Not dated, but must be produced after 1843).

<sup>49</sup> See, Paul Dumont, “1865 Tarihinde Güney-Doğu Anadolu’nun Islahı,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 10-11 (1979-80), pp. 369-94.

### II.3 Collecting the recruits:

In fact, until the conscription (*kur'a*) law was enacted in 1846, there were no systemized regulations for military recruitment encompassing everyone or guidelines to define those who were considered to be eligible for recruitment. A few basic guiding principles were sometimes included in conscription orders issued before the law was introduced, such as the ratio of the recruits to able-bodied men in a particular district or an order implying the drawing of lots to choose recruits among the eligible men.<sup>50</sup> A census confined to Rumelia and Anatolia was carried out in 1831 in order to learn the number of taxpayers and manpower reserves for further levies.<sup>51</sup> But the data gathered was far from being satisfactory.<sup>52</sup> The 1831 census concluded that there were a total of 3.7 million men in the empire, of whom 2.5 million were Muslims, a number that seems to have been too low for the time.<sup>53</sup> The central administration thus did not possess reliable statistical data to plan and carry out a rational and egalitarian conscription system in the different provinces. Inevitably, the burden of military service fell disproportionately in different areas, which was in a sense “confessed” in the *Tanzimat* Decree issued in 1839.<sup>54</sup> It would

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<sup>50</sup> For example, one from every 10 able-bodied men was to be recruited in the levy order sent to Trabzon. HAT 28207/A (23 Ra 1251/ 19 July 1835). For an early practice of drawing of lots, see, Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) in Erhan Alpaslan, “1247-1254 H./ M. 1830-1838 Tarihli 2 No’lu Varna Şer’iye Sicil Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirmesi” (MA diss., Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, 1996), p. 445.

<sup>51</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003), p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)*, pp. 59, 154. An interesting *defter* (register) from the *Mansure* Army’s muster rolls (*Asakir-i Mansure Defterleri*) suggests the population census and the conscription was dealt accordingly at the bureaucratic level. D. ASM 37912 (25 Receb 1247-1 Şaban 1248/30 December 1831-24 December 1832) In this *defter*, the total number of able-bodied men in the Balkans and Anatolia was put at 911.620. Calling the rough number of 2.5 million as the total number of Muslim males, approximately two fifth of these men was seen suitable for conscription.

<sup>54</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 60.

be the census of 1844 which was specifically designed to ensure an efficient conscription within the empire.<sup>55</sup>

The number of men required in individual levies was decided on a yearly basis,<sup>56</sup> while some other orders were issued intermittently, according to need, to fill the gaps caused by desertion, retirement and death. Thus, for example, eighty recruits were sent to İstanbul on 1 August 1831 (21 S 1247) from the *kaza* of Kayseri, and after three months another group of eighty one more was sent on 26 October 1831 (19 Ca 1247). However, an order issued on 1 January 1832 (27 B 1247), demanded seventeen replacements for the soldiers from Kayseri who had just been retired with pensions (*mütekaid*s).<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, the aim was to fill the empty ranks in the existing regiments and form new ones with a steady flow of incoming recruits. Only the number of men required and the name of the district were the clearest information that could be found in each imperial conscription order. The requirements for the recruits were vaguely defined with clichés such as “young, fine, distinguished, of good social standing, valiant, not lacking any limbs, resistant to hardships, able to handle a musket”.<sup>58</sup>

The central administration, on the other hand, did not have the bureaucratic and medical infrastructure to carry out a physical examination of all the recruits.<sup>59</sup> As a result, conscription often resulted in the enlistment of men who were in fact too old or ill to serve as well as underaged boys, most of whom were probably orphans or

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<sup>55</sup> Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918,” p. 85; Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)*, p. 59.

<sup>56</sup> Zürcher notes that “[e]ach year the army’s requirements were determined in a decision (*kararname*) of the imperial council and communicated to the provincial authorities, who were left a free hand in the way they filled their quotas.” Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918,” p. 80.

<sup>57</sup> Kayseri Court Records no. 197/1 cases 15, 89, 121 in Mustafa Kılıç, “[Kayseri] 197/1 Numaralı Şer’iye Sicili (H. 1246-1248/M.1831-1832) Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme” (MA diss., Kayseri Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2002) pp. 71-74, 154-57, 190.

<sup>58</sup> “*Tüvâna*”, “*temiz*”, “*güzide*”, “*bahadır*”, “*tamü’l-aza*”, “*elleri tüfek tutmağa kadır*” were some of the adjectives used.

<sup>59</sup> Isparta Court Records no. 183, pp. (70-71)-B (not dated, but likely to be issued just after *Tanzimat*) in Erdemir “183 Numaralı Isparta Şer’iye Sicili”, pp. 12-13.

young men sent in place of adults. Ahmed Lütfi mentions that children under fifteen years of age were among the recruits sent from the provinces to the capital.<sup>60</sup> He states that such recruits were not used as soldiers but instead were given monthly salaries of five piasters (*guruş*) and were trained in religion, military affairs, apprenticeship, reading and writing. The boys also were given clothing and subjected to military exercises as if they were cadets, while some also were made apprentices with local craftsmen so they could learn a trade.<sup>61</sup> The names of some underage boys appear also on the regular regimental muster rolls.<sup>62</sup>

The levy orders sent to the districts forbade the conscription of children, the physically weak, and those who lacked any limbs<sup>63</sup> or were already suffering from disease.<sup>64</sup> One reason was that it would cost much to send such men who proved to be useless for the army, since accommodation and food would be provided for them on their way home.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, the recruiters seem to have filled their quotas by conscripting and sending many men to the army who were unsuitable for service in

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<sup>60</sup> Slade also makes remarks about these “boy soldiers”. See Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, p. 302; Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, Vol. 2, pp. 411-412. The age requirements were tried to be lowered as much as possible, in order to prevent Janissaries from infiltration of the new army. Slade also argues that the reason was to collect the “empty-minded”. It was for sure Mahmud II did not want his new army become like former Janissaries. But drafting of boys who were 15 or even younger just for that reason is problematic, since their bodies must have been physically inadequate for military life.

<sup>61</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 147-48. See, for instance, C. As 33918 (12 Za 1249/ 23 March 1834) showing a number of boys sent from different *kazas* of Anatolia, given to a variety of artisans to learn different trades. Another document implies the expenditure for the circumcisions of the soldiers who had not been circumcised yet.

<sup>62</sup> Four “soldiers” were registered as “*neferat-ı sıbyan*” with a *derkenar* (postscript) saying “*Bu çocukların mahiyesi onbeş yaşlarına girinceye değin beş ğuruşdur.*” Each couple of boys had same name for their father, which may suggest that they were brothers. One may think that, they might be orphans or sons of servicemen enlisted to the army. D.ASM 37849 (27 S 1247/ 7 August 1831)

<sup>63</sup> “...*neferat-ı merkume çoluk çocuk ve işe yaramaz makuleden olmayıb tüvana ve tammü'l-aza olmak üzere...*” Varna Court Records no. 2, case 32 (13 Ş 1247/ 17 January 1832) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, pp. 168-69.

<sup>64</sup> Varna Court Records no. 2, case 71 (13 M 1248/ 12 June 1832) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, p. 197-98. “*gayet güzide ve’ ilel ve eskâmdan müberra*”. See also Isparta Court Records no. 183, pp. (30-31)-A (Evail Za 1250, March 1835) in Erdemir, “1246-1254 (1831-1838) Tarihli 183 Numaralı Isparta Şer’iye Sicili,” pp. 10-11.

<sup>65</sup> “...*celb ve tahrir olunan neferat evvel emirde mahallerinde layıkıyla muayene olunamadığından Dersaadet’e vusullerinden sonra içlerinden bazı işe yaramayanları zuhur ederek iade kılınmakta ve bunların gidip gelmelerinden ahali beyhude masarif*” . Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, p. 444.

one way or another. Of the 22,272 men drafted to replenish the guards and line regiments in the mid-1830s, 3,794 men, nearly one-sixth of the total, were eventually handed back as not being suitable for military service.<sup>66</sup> In this levy, out of the 2,078 men sent to the army from the *kaza* of Kastamonu, 410 were found unsuitable and sent back to their homes. The percentage of the unfit increased to as much as seventy per-cent among the recruits sent from the *kaza* of İçil. The *kaza*'s designated share was 507 men, out of whom 361 were reported to arrive, but 247 of these, more than half, were found to be unsuitable and they headed back.<sup>67</sup>

Slade thus correctly defines the Ottoman conscription in his time as “a spider’s web catching the weak flies but allowing the strong ones to get through.”<sup>68</sup> According to Dimitrov, it was the youths from the poorest and underprivileged classes who were sent to the army in Bulgaria. The local notables in cities and villages, as well as their children, were able to avoid the same fate.<sup>69</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, who was the official Ottoman chronicler of the era, describes the manpower source of the army in the same way as “the desolated, powerless, and poor young men [who] were caught as if they were brigands by the government agents and army officers”.<sup>70</sup> Among the “strong flies”, were the rich and powerful, who possessed the resources, could afford to send substitutes or simply use their power, influence or money to

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<sup>66</sup> Mühimme-i Asakir Defterleri No: 30 (1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-235. It was inscribed in the register that these numbers shows the whole number of recruits came to capital up to 11 December 1835. (20 Ş 1251).

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix B for the details of the levy in question. Very much similar practice was present in Russia, while the most troublesome, the disabled and the old were given from the *mir* (the name used for the traditional Russian rural community) by the landlord in order to fill their quotas. Consequently, the annual intake of the Russian recruits was nearly equal to those rejected for health reasons, physical disabilities, age and height in the 1840s. See, Wirtschafter, *From Serf to Russian Soldier*, pp. 3-25; and John H. L. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar Army and Society in Russia 1492-1874* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 143-75 for details of the Russian conscription in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>68</sup> Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, Vol. 1, p. 494.

<sup>69</sup> Dimitrov, *Sultan Mahmud II*, p. 252.

<sup>70</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfî*, p. 1145.

avoid military service for themselves and their children.<sup>71</sup> The practice of sending substitutes began during the reign of Mahmud II, long before the new regulations were issued in 1846.<sup>72</sup> For instance, an artilleryman serving in a battalion stationed at Gallipoli was given permission for discharge in exchange for a slave whom he would send in his place. He had the pretext that he could not find anyone to care for his family at home.<sup>73</sup> The word "zenci" (black man) was inserted before the names of black soldiers, thus indicating that race was an important factor at the time.<sup>74</sup> A point of concern seems to have been the ratio of blacks to whites, which was five to seven in Kayseri while it was only one to sixty-six in the surrounding villages. It is most likely that the relatively well-to-do townfolk of Kayseri were sending slaves to complete the quota imposed on their community.<sup>75</sup> In an order sent to the *kaza* of Varna, it was stated that lots be drawn among the names of eligible men to decide who would be taken into the army. It was, however, felt necessary to stress in the document that "all the eligible men, no matter whether they were rich or poor" had to be brought in.<sup>76</sup> A similar attitude was taken in obtaining recruits by drawing of lots from the *kaza* of Tırnova. It was ordered that both "the rich and the beggar (*bay-u*

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<sup>71</sup> See for instance, the document Appendix 2 in Çağatay Uluçay, *Atçalı Kel Mehmed*, (İstanbul: As, 1968), p. 53 (Dated as 1829) It was mentioned that "those who could afford, sold their belongings in order to save their children from being taken into the army." It was also a known practice that a town or administrative district could collect and pay a substitution money (*bedeliye*) in exchange of sending soldiers to the army, of course, if they were permitted to do so.

<sup>72</sup> Haberer, "Die Aufstellung von Redif-Truppen in der Frühen Tanzimatzeit," pp. 37-38.

<sup>73</sup> "...ol-vechle gulam-ı merkume silk-i askeriye bi'd-dahl [ile] merkum [onbaşı] ihrac olunmuş olduğunu..." C.As 6095 (23 S 1258/ 5 April 1842).

<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, the references were made to the race of the black soldiers in bureaucratic documents of the era. See, for instance, Kayseri Court Records no: 197/1, case 237, in Kılıç, "[Kayseri] 197/1 Numaralı Şer'iyeye Sicili", p. 330, the retirement of a black soldier due to poor health. See İ. MVL (*İrade Meclis-i Vala*) 314 for the punishment of a soldier with the name "zenci Hayrullah".

<sup>75</sup> Two other detachments were sent respectively. The first would include two blacks and 43 whites (19 Ca 1247/ 26 October 1831) and the second included one black and 80 whites. (15 C 1247/ 21 November 1831). Kayseri Court Records no: 197/1 cases 89, 107 in Mustafa Kılıç, "[Kayseri] 197/1 Numaralı Şer'iyeye Sicili", pp.154-57; pp. 172-74.

<sup>76</sup> "...ne mikdar padişah askerliğine şayeste ve seza ve gerek ağniya ve gerek fukara her kim olur ise şayan tutularak ...celbolunub..." . Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) in Alpaslan, "Varna Şer'iyeye Sicil[i]", pp. 444-45. Interestingly, this seems to be a very early document with instructions for drawing of lots before it was spelled out in the reforms of 1843.

*geda*) should be brought to draw lots alike”.<sup>77</sup> Despite the sense of “equality” and “justice” in choosing the recruits that was contained in the official orders, the reports about the actual procedures followed indicate that wealth did, indeed, have an effect on an individual’s chance of being conscripted into the army.

Although it appears contradictory to the founding regulations of the *Asakir-i Mansure*, the flotsam of the Ottoman society was subjected to military recruitment, sometimes with priority. The army must have appeared a good place for both dumping and making such men “useful”, while their inability to defend themselves must have made it easier to collect them and send them off to the army. The reports on grievances which occurred after a general levy of 8,000 men had been imposed on İstanbul and its surrounding districts in the late 1830s confirm that the *bîkar* (idle or bachelor) and *serseri* (wanderers, tramps) were in constant danger of being pressed into the army at the first opportunity.<sup>78</sup> Two contemporary documents refer to abuses committed in this respect by the official in charge of guarding Üsküdar (*Üsküdar muhafızı*), who was accused of pressing men into the army with force (*cebren*) and fear, and even collecting more men than required. It was stated that he tended to “catch anyone he encounters, no matter whether he was a *bîkar* or a *mütehhil* (the married)”.<sup>79</sup> The hands of the men in question were seen to be tied, causing widespread terror among men in the vicinity.<sup>80</sup> A decree was therefore issued declaring that whenever an order was given to draft soldiers, it should not be carried

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<sup>77</sup> “...ne mikdar askerliğe şayan kesan bulunur ise bay-u geda seyane (equal) tutularak cümlesi celb ve bi'l-cümle ahali-yi belde kulları hazır oldukları halde meyanlarında kur'a olunarak bi'l-isabe[t] 150 nefer tefrik ve tahrir... olunduktan sonra...” C. As 46712 (13 R 1253/ 17 July 1837).

<sup>78</sup> HAT 18001 (1254/1838-39), HAT 23822 (T: 1254/1838-39).

<sup>79</sup> “...dersaadet ve havalisinden münasib vechle neferat toplanmakda ise de bu hususun usul-u hakimane ile icrası lazımeden yani herkese havf ve dehşet virecek suretle olmayub hadd-i meşrutundan ziyade bulunan esnaf takımından ve bîkar ve serseri gezmekte olan eşhasdan tedarik olunması medar-ı ali ıktızasından iken Üsküdar muhafızı canibinden ve memurin-i saire taraflarından bu usule riayet olunmayarak ve mütehhil ve bîkar aranmayarak heman rastgeldikleri eşhası ahz ve **girift** olunmakda olduğu ....” HAT 23822 (1254/1838-39).

<sup>80</sup> HAT 18001. (1254/1838-39)

out with the kind of abuses which had been reported.<sup>81</sup> Instead, recruitment of the *bikar* and *serseri* had to be carried out wisely (*usul-ü hakimane ile*), not by dread. At the end, the *muhafiz* in question was dismissed.<sup>82</sup> The authorities, however, did not think about the exemption of the men like *bikar* from conscription, and still found it rightful to take them to the army.<sup>83</sup> It was clearly stated that it had been the common and justified practice to round up an “excess” number of shopkeepers (*esnaf*) along with the *bikars* and *serseris*, which were more than those required by the *muhtesib*<sup>84</sup>, along with unemployed men and tramps. In fact, it was only the *indiscriminate* terror caused by the methods of recruitment that were of concern, since those who were settled down and had jobs had suffered from it. The central authority’s view of the flotsam of the society as an immediate manpower source was reflected in a spy report prepared in 1255 (1839/1840). The information was said to have been based on the speech of a *kapusuz*<sup>85</sup>, named Çerkes Arif. He states -most probably with fear- that of the seven thousand *kapusuz* living in the capital, the younger were to be caught and drafted to the regular army, while the old were to be expelled from the capital and sent to work as farmhands.<sup>86</sup>

Some documentary examples show that military service could be used to punish and get rid of the “troublesome” individuals within the Empire. Four captured brigands, who were seen fit for military service, were sent to army after their capture

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<sup>81</sup> “...ol suretle icra olunmayarak bazı neferat tutulsun dimek olmayub fakat herkese havf ve **dehşet** virecek halat vukua gelmeksizin..” HAT 18001(1254/1838-39).

<sup>82</sup> HAT 23822. (1254/1838-39)

<sup>83</sup> “...bundan böyle ol suretle icra olunmayarak bazı neferat tutulsun dimek olmayub fakat herkese havf ve haşiyet virecek halat vukua gelmeksizin o misullü serseri ve bikar eşhas usul-u hakimane ile cem ve tedarik olunması suretinin ıktıza edenlere tenbih ve te’kidiyle...” HAT 18001 (1254/1838-39).

<sup>84</sup> Superintendent in charge of examining the weights, measures, provisions etc. as well as the bazaars and shopkeepers.

<sup>85</sup> One who was not within any retinue of a significant notable nor a high ranking state official.

<sup>86</sup> “...der-alıyede bulunan kavaslar ve rical-i devlet-i aliye hazaratı ve küttab efendinin hidematında bulunan bi’l-cümle tebaanın mahiyeleri hazine-i şahaneye rabt buyrulmuş olarak virilecek imiş ve derun-u asitane-i aliyede yedi bin kadar kapusuz varmış. Ol kapusuzların gençleri askere tahrir edeceklerimş. İhtiyarlarını asitane-i aliyeden taşraya çıkarub ziraat ve rençberliğe göndereceklerimş...” C. Zab 3304. (1255/1839-40)

by the local governor.<sup>87</sup> Some two hundred able-bodied subjects from South-Eastern Anatolia, who were accused to collaborate with the bandits, were captured and delivered to capital as conscripts to be used in Army of Rumelia. It was also mentioned that this was an exceptional situation and new soldiers were desperately needed at that time.<sup>88</sup> During the insurgencies of Haleb and Nablus in 1856, the authorities did not hesitate to send the “rebels” to the army, again to be employed in the European provinces.<sup>89</sup>

Interestingly, however, one can also find some detailed instructions which were intended to be enforced, at least at the bureaucratic level, despite the general irregularities in military recruitment. The age was probably the clearest definition for the recruit. *Asakir-i Mansure* soldier could be between 15 and 30, at most 40. The *Redif* soldiers, according to their founding regulations, should be between 23 and 32. It was also stated that those with lower age should be reserved for *Asakir-i Mansure* in case a new levy was ordered for replenishing regular regiments.<sup>90</sup> There is no clear evidence that recruitment by drawing lots was a widespread practice earlier, but occasional orders were issued authorizing this procedure before it was declared as the official method in 1843. The directives given for the recruitment of an additional 1,000 *Redif* troops from the *kazas* surrounding Isparta imply that the number of recruits drawn from the families were dependent on their size. These recruits were supposed to be taken from families with two, three or four children. But recruiters also were allowed to take children from families with one child if the recruits taken

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<sup>87</sup> A. MKT. NZD (Mektubi Kalemi, Nezaret ve Devair) Dossier number (Hereafter D): 230 *Vesika* number (Document number, hereafter V): 87. (07 Z 1273/ 29 July 1857).

<sup>88</sup> İ. Dah 20795 (13 N 1271, 30 May 1855). The Crimean War was being waged in those days.

<sup>89</sup> Ufuk Gülsoy, “1856 Halep ve Nablus Olayları,” *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 9 (1994), pp. 279-288.

<sup>90</sup> Bolat, “Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876),” p. 19.

from larger families did not meet the quotas which had been assigned to them.<sup>91</sup> Occasionally, the central government authorized the reduction of the number of recruits required from a given district. In Ayıntab, the 500 recruits initially required for the *Mansure* Army was reduced to 250, based on an appeal from the locals.<sup>92</sup> But petitions did not always work, as in the case of the *sancak* of İçil. The notables and *naibs* (deputy of *kadı*) of the *sancak* of İçil petitioned for a reduction of the number of irregular soldiers demanded from 1,400 cavalry to 400 infantry and 300 cavalry.<sup>93</sup> Their excuse was that they lacked horses to furnish so many cavalymen and that even the notables were already in “poverty”. Their petition was denied, since the hard-pressed Ottoman government was in desperate need of soldiers for its “battle for [the sake of] religion and nation” against Russia.<sup>94</sup> Another petition complained about the misery of the families of recruits who were selected and imprisoned before dispatch by a major in the *kaza* of Viranşehir in order to provide the men needed to man a newly forming cuirassier regiment in İstanbul. The response was unusually humane. An order was issued to release those men who had families, since “their wives and children were left without anyone, and it would not be acceptable that the families should be left wretched by a draft of this kind.”<sup>95</sup> In certain areas that produced important products, the government exempted the local labor force from military recruitment. Conscription of men from the lumber-producing *sancak* of Kocaeli which had been providing timber for the imperial shipyard (*tersane*) and

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<sup>91</sup> Isparta Court Records no. 183, pp. (52-53)-A (27 Ca 1252/ 9 September 1836) in Erdemir “183 Numaralı Isparta Şer’iye Sicili,” p. 11.

<sup>92</sup> Ayıntab Court Records no. 142, pp. 205, 207 (19 Za 1245/ 12 May 1830) in Cemil Cahit Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Şer’i Mahkeme Sicilleri (Cilt 142 ilâ 143-Miladi 1826 ilâ 1838)*, (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Kültür Derneği, 1966), pp. 40-41.

<sup>93</sup> C. As 33514 (27 C 1244/ 4 January 1829).

<sup>94</sup> “...bu sefer...mutlak din ve millet gavgası olarak...ol babda herkes madden ve bedenen icab-ı farize-i gaza ve cihada şer’an me’mur olduğundan...” C. As 33521 (B 1244/ January-February 1829).

<sup>95</sup> “...bu misillülerin silk-i askeriye idhaliyle iyal ve evladlarının perişanlıkları münasib olmayacağı...” C. As 8211 (29 C 1255/ 9 September 1839).

imperial cannon foundry (*tophane*),<sup>96</sup> was postponed at first. It was exempted from sending 517 recruits in a levy being raised in 1839.<sup>97</sup> It was asked in a document presented to the *serasker* (commander of the imperial army) that whether the conscription of miners (*madenci taifesi*) would be postponed.<sup>98</sup>

#### II.4 Reforms of 1843 and Kur'a Law of 1846

The idea of reforming poorly-organized military recruitment was one of the major themes in the *Tanzimat* Decree (1839), which promised that conscription would be carried out with justice and that recruits would be taken according to the state of the population in the individual provinces and districts. It also promised to limit the seemingly never-ending terms of military service at “four or five years”, in order to improve the morale of the troops who were in despair as well as to eliminate the economic disruption caused by taking so many able bodied men from agriculture and commerce. The regulation (*Kanunname*) issued for the *Asakir-i Mansure* when it was first established had set the term of service at twelve years. Very few soldiers must have survived during the fifteen years of active mobilization between 1826 and 1841, except in cases where they were incapacitated, deserted or died from disease.<sup>99</sup> According to Mustafa Nuri Paşa, author of *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, when Ottoman subjects saw their sons conscripted into the army, they considered them dead, since they did not know when if ever their sons would be discharged.<sup>100</sup> The *Mansure* army began fighting in the 1828-29 war with Russia, and its regiments also fought

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<sup>96</sup> See for instance, C. As 47962 (8 Za 1258/ 11 December 1842). Timber was being sent from Canik, Kastamoni, Bolu, Kacaili, Vize, Varna, Ahyolu, Vize and Pınarhisari for the production of cannon wagons and mountings in *tophane*.

<sup>97</sup> See, İ. Dah 2, for the cancellation of a levy and an *i'lam* sent from the *kaza* including the appreciation of the locals (30 M 1255/ 15 April 1839).

<sup>98</sup> A. MKT (Mektubi Kalemi) D: 55, V: 15. (29 Za 1262/ 18 November 1846).

<sup>99</sup> During all these conflicts, the number of men lost in battle seems to be less than that caused by the desertion and illness. This might also frighten the potential recruits. See Appendices A and B.

<sup>100</sup> Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, prep. Neşet Çağatay, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), p. 298.

against Muhammad Ali's army at the battles of Homs, Bilan, Konya in 1832 and finally at Nizip in 1839. During the 1830s it was used against Bosnian, Albanian and Kurdish insurgents in order to put them under direct government control. The Ottoman regulars saw action along with the local irregulars and allied troops in retaking Syria, Lebanon and Palestine from Muhammed Ali Paşa in 1840-41.<sup>101</sup>

The central government seems to have been aware of the difficulties involved in military service; some documentary clues show that certain attempts of "improvements" were made even before the *Tanzimat* Decree was issued, such as shortening the terms of service and introducing the drawing of lots. Zürcher notes that already in 1838, the supreme military council (*Dar-i Şura-yi Askeri*)<sup>102</sup> proposed that the term of service should be no more than five years.<sup>103</sup> Another report announcing the completion of a levy from the *kaza* of Tırnova, which is dated as 1837, states that 150 recruits were selected by drawing lots. The levy order sent to the *kaza* of Varna stated specifically that the recruits were not being drafted for life, but only for five years, and that new recruits would be taken periodically to replace them, also for terms of five years. Again, drawing of lots was the desired method to decide whom to enlist and interestingly the procedure described in detail was very similar to the conscription law of 1846.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See, Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question*, pp. 161-180, for the details of the reoccupation on these territories.

<sup>102</sup> The council was founded in 1837 to discuss the military affairs by the high ranking state officials within. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

<sup>103</sup> Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918", p. 81. Moltke also writes about such an order in one of his letters, dated as 15 June 1838. Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 197.

<sup>104</sup> The eligible men between 15 and 30 years old from the villages of the *sancak* were to be summoned, regardless of their wealth. The names and father's names of the men would be written on separate small papers. Another set of papers equal to the first set would be prepared with only forty of them, which was the number of recruits demanded from the *kaza*, would be inscribed with the word "asker" (soldier) while the rest would be blank. The two sets of papers would be put in two separate bags. A "trustworthy" man would take a name from the bag with names and read the name aloud. The man bearing that name would come forward immediately and take a scrap paper from the second bag. If the paper he took was with the inscription "asker", he "gets the rank of being the soldier of the Sultan." (...askeri padişahi rütbesini ahz etmek...) Otherwise he would leave. The names of the

Rıza Paşa, commander of the guard corps, was appointed to carry out the task of military reform ordered in the *Tanzimat* Decree. On 6 September 1843, the regulations of the new recruitment system were made public with a great military ceremony in the capital.<sup>105</sup> On the same day, those who had been under arms for years were discharged. Until those discharged could be replaced with conscripts, the *Redif* reserve regiments which had already been brought to the capital for the ceremony were incorporated into the regular army. The “excess” shopkeepers of provincial origin and the unemployed living in İstanbul were drafted to fill the empty ranks as “usual”.<sup>106</sup> The reforms also included the creation of division of the existing forces into five armies. Two of these were to be based in capital, namely *Hassa* (Guards), *Dersaadet* Armies. The other three were named after the provinces that they would be based. (*Anadolu, Rumeli* and *Arabistan Ordu-yu Humayunu*). In 1848, a sixth was to be established in Iraq. The armies had their own *Redif* organizations attached to them.<sup>107</sup>

The guidelines for reforms which had been issued in 1843 were made the basis of the full-fledged conscription law issued in 1846 with its three sections and 63 articles.<sup>108</sup> The term of service was set at five years for the regular army (*Asakir-i Nizamiye-i Şahane*)<sup>109</sup> and seven years for the reserves (*Redif*). The soldiers of *Redif* regiments would come from those who had completed their five years of active

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soldiers and those left should be carefully registered through the procedure. Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, pp. 444-45.

<sup>105</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 1147.

<sup>106</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 1147-48. The chronicler himself was also among the recruiters and describes the process in detail. He writes that the shopkeepers from the provinces were collected. (*İstanbul ve Bilad-ı Selase’de sakin taşralı ne kadar esnaf-ı müslime var ise askere yarayacak nufusun evvel-emirde defterleri bi’t-tanzim askere alınacak kimselerin isimleri üzerine birer mim vaz olunmuş olan nüfus defterleri akşamdan tertib olunan hey’etlere bi’t-tevdi...*) The recruitment parties directed their effort also on the districts where the *bikâr* live.

<sup>107</sup> Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918”, p. 82.

<sup>108</sup> Between 1843 and 1846, it seems the recruitment orders included the mentioned main guidelines of drawing of lots and supervised by the military officials and local notables. See, for instance, the document C. As 48652 (Evasıt R 1261/ April 1845) including the orders sent to provinces to carry out the recruitment by drawing of lots.

<sup>109</sup> Tunalı, “Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma”, p. 29.

service in the regular army and from those who were lucky enough not to draw a low number in the conscription process (*kur'a*), and who therefore remained out of the army until they reached the age of twenty six. Recruitment for the regular army would still be carried out by the drawing of lots, but this time the procedure was defined in detail. Also, some explicit descriptions were made for who were eligible and who were exempted. Those who were responsible for the task of drawing of lots were made clear along with their responsibilities.<sup>110</sup> Each of the five territorial armies created in 1843, would draw their own recruits from the military districts which were assigned to them. The number of men taken by each army was in accordance with the men discharged every year. The number of recruits demanded would be distributed among the *kazas* of each army's recruitment zone, according to their population.<sup>111</sup> All male inhabitants aged from twenty to twenty five were required to assemble in the administrative center of each *kaza*.<sup>112</sup> The army would appoint an officer, a doctor, and a clerk (*katib*) to carry out the required examinations and other procedures. At the center of *kaza*, a council (*kur'a meclisi*) would be created, consisting of local notables, *kaza hakimi* (the chief judge), *kaza zabiti* (overseer of the *kaza*), and the Muslim *müfti*.<sup>113</sup> Finally, it was presumed that *kur'a* would be carried out in every spring.<sup>114</sup>

Exemptions from military service were granted to members of the scribal and administrative bureaucracy, *ulema*, *kadıs* and *naibs*.<sup>115</sup> Those who were performing services for the mosques, such as *imams* (prayer leaders), *müezzins* (those who call

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<sup>110</sup> A copy of the law is labeled as *Kanunname-i Askeri Defterleri* (KAD) No: 7 in the prime ministry archives at İstanbul. This copy of the law is used throughout this study. See also, Çadircı, Musa. "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Askere Almada Kura Usulüne Geçilmesi "1846 Tarihli Askerlik Kanunu." *Askeri Tarih Bülteni* 18 (1985), pp. 59-75 and Tunalı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma", pp. 46-79, for summaries of the text.

<sup>111</sup> KAD no. 7, pp. 5-6 (Article 3).

<sup>112</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 6 (Article 4).

<sup>113</sup> KAD no. 7, pp. 7-9 (Article 7 and 8).

<sup>114</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 7 (Article 6).

<sup>115</sup> "...*meratib-i ilmiyye ve kalemiye, ve mülkiyyeden*" KAD no. 7, (Article 14).

the Muslims to prayer), *hüteba* (preachers) and *kayyiman* (caretakers of the mosques) also exempted.<sup>116</sup> *Medrese* students had to prove their level of knowledge in certain examinations to obtain the exemption from drawing of lots, which would be carried out by *alay imamları* (regimental chaplains) or *mümeyyizs* (examiners) from religious schools.<sup>117</sup>

The Ottoman conscription looks like a combination of the contemporary French and the Prussian systems. Keeping only a proportion of the able-bodied men under arms were chosen by lots, was the recruitment policy employed by the French after 1815. On the other hand, maintaining a reserve force other than the regular army for war times was a Prussian innovation, formulated during the last years of the Napoleonic Wars. During the 1840s, Prussians relied on a conscript army serving for a shorter term, French soldiers were kept under arms for seven years. As a smaller but a highly professional force, the French army was perhaps seen the world's best at least until the Wars of German Unification (1866-71).<sup>118</sup> Interestingly, though, Prussian army, together with its regular and especially reserve elements, was considered as a mockery when compared to French army.<sup>119</sup> It is a point of interest that why Ottoman military reformers wanted to maintain an unpromising reserve army, which brought about enormous organizational and financial difficulties for its training even for a state like Prussia.<sup>120</sup>

Theoretically, all men except those who were exempted were to take a role in the military machinery according to these reforms. Those who were selected by the

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<sup>116</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 13 (Article 15).

<sup>117</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 7-8 (Article 7).

<sup>118</sup> Black, ed., *Dretnot, Tank ve Uçak*, pp. 40-45.

<sup>119</sup> Black, ed., *Dretnot, Tank ve Uçak*, p. 44.

<sup>120</sup> The Ottomans had been employing both Prussian and French army experts since the reign of Mahmud II. Moltke writes that the prominent Hüsrev Paşa (1756 -1855) highly praised the *Landwehr* organization in one of their meetings. He also notes that Mahmud II spoke in favor of *Redif* during his trip in Rumelia, as it was essential in defense of the realm, while also stressing that the similar organizations were established in other countries for the same purpose. Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 106.

conscription system were sent to the regular army and those not sent to the army were taken into the reserves. The discharged were to be added to the *Redif*, thus arranging, theoretically at least, for a large proportion of the eligible men to be in some way integrated into the Ottoman military. Still, the Ottoman conscription for the regular army was a universal one. It did not require every eligible male to serve for a shorter period of two or three years, but instead, it conscripted only a portion of the eligible men for five years. The law exempts many of those among the Muslim subjects, and the non-Muslims were excluded from the armed forces with minor exceptions.<sup>121</sup> The sending of substitutes was allowed for those who were occupied with “a trade, commerce or another important job”, which would be ruined if left for five years.<sup>122</sup> The selling of real estates in order to cover the expenses of finding a substitute was prohibited.<sup>123</sup> Thus it could be argued that the law already had designs to exempt the already rich and it was seen natural for the common subjects of lower strata to serve.

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<sup>121</sup> The law clearly states that military service was the duty of only the Muslims who live within the Ottoman lands. (KAD no. 7, pp. 4-5. (Article 1)) Some effort was to be put in the mid-1830 as well as early 1850s to take recruits from the non-Muslim population for the navy; however it brought about so little results and a lot of discontent, which led the authorities to abandon the project. Ufuk Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerinin Askerlik Serüveni* (İstanbul: Simurg, 2000), pp. 173-177.

<sup>122</sup> “...bir san’at, ticaret yahud ahar başlu bir kâr ve maslahatla meşgul bulunub da beş sene terk ve ferağatları takdirinde ol işlerine sekte geleceği cezm iderek...” (KAD no. 7, p. 18 (Article 28)). Interestingly, the same article also implies that the sending of black slaves as substitutes is banned, as only the white slaves would be accepted. A certain conscript named Ali, who drew a bad number, was obliged to give a white slave if he wants to send a substitute for him. (A. MKT. MHM (Mektubi Kalemî, Mühimme) D: 112, V: 100. (21 Ra 1268/ 14 January 1852)).

<sup>123</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 18 (Article 28).

‘...Zenginimiz bedel verir  
Askerimiz fakirdendir’<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER III

### THE OTTOMAN RECRUIT: 1826-1853

#### III.1 Popular Response to the New Army and Resistance to Military Recruitment

Sultan Mahmud II was certainly not among the most beloved of Sultans. The Janissaries, who had widespread connections and very deep roots in the whole Empire, were mercilessly destroyed in his reign. This incident was followed by the radical reforms imposed by the Sultan. The reforms were generally viewed as “alien” or “heathen” by many Ottoman subjects as well.<sup>2</sup> The life time tax-farming, remnants of the *timar* system, the revenues of pious foundations and guilds were attacked along with the political autonomy of the provincial notables. Mass deportations of urban workers, who had been allied with the Janissaries, followed the corps’ abolition,<sup>3</sup> and “the relatives and comrades of the thousands of [them] who had been strangled, thrown into the sea, and killed with cannon fire, were scattered all through the

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<sup>1</sup> “Our rich are exempted for money/ Our soldiers are of the needy” A verse from a Turkish folk song. The song seems to be from the second half of the nineteenth century, since it mentions about the “Martin tüfek” (Peabody-Martini rifles) as well as those fallen in Yemen in its other verses.

<sup>2</sup> The Sultan Mahmud II, the famous or infamous *gavur padişah*, was no doubt among the most eccentric personalities of the Ottoman history: He was the one who destroyed the centuries old Janissary Corps, commanded cavalry charges in person, dressed in frocks and pants, placed his pictures in government bureaus, tried to learn French, and imported Western musicians who trained his own band and so that concerts could be offered to foreign visitors. His reign is not very well studied, and a monograph is long overdue. For best existing scholarships on the subject see, Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, pp. 33-58, 123-169; Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, pp. 133-212 and Halil İnalcık, “The Nature of Traditional Society: Turkey,” in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, eds. Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University, 1964). Also, see Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997) for another interesting aspect of his reforms, the abolition of clothing codes within the empire. For some interesting anecdotes about his personality and reign see, Abdülkadir Özcan “II. Mahmud ve Reformları Hakkında Bazı Gözlemler,” *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 10 (1995), pp. 13-39.

<sup>3</sup> Quataert, “Clothing Laws,” p. 403.

Empire”.<sup>4</sup> The *Bektaşî* order, which was closely tied to Janissaries, was vigorously suppressed and its members were exiled from the capital and their *tekkes* were closed down throughout the empire.<sup>5</sup> The promise of paying for existing *esames* was not kept, and instead, the claimants faced the harsh court martial that accused them of being former Janissaries. As a result, some of those who did not have any direct connection with the Janissaries lost their means of income.<sup>6</sup> A plague broke out in the summer of 1826, which was attributed to the slaughtering of the Janissaries.<sup>7</sup> The “Blessed Affair” (*Vaka-i Hayriyye*) was considered a “curse” that caused the rapid increase in the prices of basic commodities<sup>8</sup> and the catastrophic defeat in the war of 1828-29. Consequently, sympathizers of the Janissary Corps were reported to do some demonstrations after the defeat, which were punished by the Sultan.<sup>9</sup> In Bosnia, a province with a Muslim nobility traditionally tied to “Janissarism”, the abolition of the corps was received with widespread resistance and discontent. Furthermore, Mahmud II did not grant any more fiefs to the Bosnian aristocracy, which had been controlled hereditarily. Thus, the Sultan’s reforms and centralization efforts were seen as a threat to their rights and practices, which were centuries old. The reaction would materialize in Bosnia as four successive upheavals in 1831, 1836, 1837, 1839.<sup>10</sup>

Although Mahmud II was one of the greatest reformers in the Ottoman Empire, it is doubtful that he had a master plan to modernize his state and society in the Western model or had any intention to do so. Due to his upbringing in a

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<sup>4</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>5</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 162; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 362-63.

<sup>7</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” p. 362.

<sup>8</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 45. (7 April 1830).

<sup>9</sup> Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, p. 297.

<sup>10</sup> Odile Moreau, “Bosnian Resistance to Conscription in the Nineteenth Century” in *Arming the State Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775- 1925*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 129.

traditional environment, the Sultan should not have been a revolutionary. His reforms, although many of them were radical and influential for the coming decades of *Tanzimat*, were in essence pragmatic solutions to the problems that were faced.<sup>11</sup> According to A. Levy, “[w]henver possible the Sultan preferred to operate through existing institutions-rather than resort to establishing new ones...When he introduced changes he preferred to do it gradually rather than with a single stroke.”<sup>12</sup> It seems in essence his aim was to build a bureaucratic and centralized monarchy, and to raise and maintain a regular modernized army solely under the state’s authority.<sup>13</sup> At this point, the Sultan’s destruction or suppression of the “troublesome” elements of the *ancien regime*, such as Janissaries, provincial notables, *ulema*, and guilds, was the only way to establish his own order.<sup>14</sup>

The Porte, however, was still trying to implement urgent changes in a reactionary traditional society, while lacking adequately trained military and civil personnel, which still functioned in the old system of patrimonial connections. He was additionally limited by insufficient financial resources to support his innovations.<sup>15</sup> His reforms eventually became accompanied by tax increases, inflation, continuous warfare, forced conscription and the strengthening of the center’s grip on the provinces.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, *Asakir-i Mansure* could be regarded by many Ottoman subjects as one giant source of trouble, rather than a useful tool for defending the Empire, as it brought about new taxes and the forced recruitment of sons and husbands.

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<sup>11</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 41; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” p. 653.

<sup>13</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 41; Quataert, “Clothing Codes,” p. 403.

<sup>14</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>15</sup> For handicap of the early reformers, see Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>16</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 42-48, Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, p. 63. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 44-45. As for the prices in İstanbul, they were almost tripled between 1821 and 1839. Şevket Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer öKentlerde 500 Yıllık Fiyatlar ve Ücretler 1469-1998*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), pp. 16-17.

The Sultan's autocratic rule not only attacked institutions and individuals of the previous order, but inevitably their symbols.<sup>17</sup> He had a policy of destroying the old symbols and introducing new ones. The usage of the words and terms related to the Janissary Corps were prohibited, including the word *Yeniçeri* itself.<sup>18</sup> The earlier terms used in *Asakir-i Mansure* organization, which were borrowed from the Janissary Corps, such as *tertip*, and *saf* would be soon substituted by *alay* (regiment) and *bölük* (company).<sup>19</sup> The introduction of military uniforms and a standard headgear, *fes*, were indispensable aspects of the Sultan's military reform. Furnishing the soldiers with standard uniforms had been mentioned by the reformers and pamphleteers as early as the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The principal reason of putting men in uniforms was not to have pretty looking soldiers, though, the uniforms marked the distinction of the soldiers from its civilian society, along with their isolated "dwelling places, style of life, traditions and codes of behavior...and [they] –common to both officers and men- became a symbol of this social unit."<sup>21</sup> Jeremy Black comments that

[U]niform was important to the cohesion to the armies. It represented both control and standardization, and each was

<sup>17</sup> One should remember Tsar Peter I (1672-1725) cutting the beards of his *boyars* (old hereditary nobility), scissors in hand.

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, C. Zab 1248 (Ra 1245/ August-September 1829) and C. Zab 1015 (Ra 1245/ August-September 1829). These are two documents ordering the exile of "undesirables" who were sympathizers of former corps. The Janissary Corps were carefully referred as the *ocak-ı mülga* (the abolished corps), without mentioning the exact word *Yeniçeri* through them.

<sup>19</sup> Necati Tacan, "Tanzimat ve Ordu" in *Tanzimat* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1999), Vol. 1 p. 131. Inevitably, some mistakes were done by the bureaucracy, as the minds of bureaucrats could not change just overnight. Even the Sultan himself had called the new army with the name "*Asakir-i Mansure Ocağı*" in his *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, which confirms the draft of the code for the *Mansure* Army on July 7, 1826. (Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik*, p. 92)

<sup>20</sup> İbrahim Müteferrika's *Usulü'l-Hikem fi Nizami'l-Ümem* mentions of a professional, segregated army wearing the same uniform which distinct itself from the civilian population already in 1732. (Mehmet Doğan, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askeri Islahatları (1703-1789)" (MA diss., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1999), p. 43). Although unsuccessful, the reform minded vizier of Halil Hamid Paşa (1782-1785) ordered each military branch to wear a distinct dress, and prohibited the civilians to use the same garbs. (Levy, "Military Reform in the Eighteenth Century", p. 236.) See also, *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi* praising the uniformity of the *Nizam-ı Cedid*'s ranks comparing with the other elements of the Ottoman military. (*Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*, prep. Abdullah Uçman (İstanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser)).

<sup>21</sup> Corvisier, *Armies and Societies*, p. 171.

focused on the sovereign. The use of European-style uniforms elsewhere in the world was a testimony to the impact of the European military model. Many uniforms were in practice of limited utilitarian value for moving and fighting, but image of the state power and unit cohesion was important.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that western travelers did not like the new uniforms, mentioning them as careless and artificial, not fitting the Ottoman Turks.<sup>23</sup> They all praised the charming views of former *kaftans* and *sarıks*. According to Berkes, DeKay<sup>24</sup> understood the changes in clothing of the soldiers better than others. DeKay considered the new uniforms as being a part of the ongoing changes in the country which had been taking place for ten years. He accepted that the Ottoman soldiers did not look as chic as they once did, but claimed that they became more agile and had a better freedom of movement in their new outfits. He further comments that without the baggy trousers and the headgear, there was hardly a difference between the Turkish and the European soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

*Fes* was accepted as the standard head gear for the *Mansure* soldiers in 1827, which was a part of the reforms.<sup>26</sup> Seeking the promotion of equality among his subjects and servants by imposing visual uniformity, the Sultan ordered the abolition of clothing codes and *fes* and pants were made compulsory outfits for the official-classes in a law decreed in 1829. Needless to say, many Ottoman subjects did not

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<sup>22</sup> The author makes these comments on an officer's uniform of Prussian Army in 1789. Jeremy Black, *War and the World*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 132.

<sup>23</sup> See for instance Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 101, p. 214; Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, 1832, pp. 265-67. The latter also cited by Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 196.

<sup>24</sup> James Ellsworth DeKay, *Sketches of Turkey in 1831 and 1832* (New York, 1833).

<sup>25</sup> Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, pp. 196-197, citing from DeKay p. 225. On the contrary, Slade claims that the new uniforms were physically limiting the soldiers. Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 2, 1832, p. 211.

<sup>26</sup> The former headgear of the *Mansure* soldiers was the *şubara*, which was adopted by *Nizam-ı Cedid* troops thirty years before. See İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Asakir-i Mansureye Fes Giydirilmesi Hakkında Sadr-ı Azamın takriri ve II. Mahmud'un Hatt-ı Hümayunu," *Bellekten* 70 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), p. 224.

like the idea and created new social markers,<sup>27</sup> while the uniforms and *fes*es of the army were seen as alien by many subjects.<sup>28</sup> The feelings of a discontent subject during the war of 1828-29 were manifested as follows:

“How do you expect them to fight," said an old Osmanley to me, whom I was rallying on the pusillanimity displayed by the troops at Aidos, "with this thing on their heads?" pointing to his own fez with unmixed contempt. [“]It certainly is a very stupid head-dress, neither calculated to keep of the rays off the sun, or a sabre's stroke, which the turban can, be the former of Lybia, the latter of Damascus[“].<sup>29</sup>

The uniforms and even the bayonets could be frustrating inventions for the Ottoman subjects.<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that the bayonet was a source of disdain for the Ottoman soldiers during the eighteenth century, even as it was a weapon of symbolic significance that might lead to change in existing military structure.<sup>31</sup> A further objection would occur in Bosnia with the introduction of the cross belts used to hold the knapsacks, which was interpreted as the Christian cross on the chests of Muslim soldiers.<sup>32</sup> The *Mansure* soldiers were seen as premature and unfamiliar, as they were really a combination of untried and badly trained recruits, fashioned in “heathen” ways by the traditionally-minded. Macfarlane quotes the opinions of “a grim old *Osmanli*, from the inland district of Magnesia, a true Turk, who looked upon every change as a crime”<sup>33</sup> on a newly raised *Mansure* regiment at İzmir, as follows:

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<sup>27</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance, Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, 1832, pp. 265-266. Also see Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 197, for some interesting comments on *fes*.

<sup>29</sup> Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, 1832, p. 370. According to Zarfif Paşa, the Arab nomads of Siverek were shocked by his appearance with his military uniform, which must have included western-style tight trousers. Their frustrated chieftain reprimanded him for his outfit by saying “*Sizin hiç utanmanız hayanız yok mudur? Böyle elbise mi olur her tarafınız görünür?*”. Karal, “Zarfif Paşa’nın Hatıratı”, pp. 456-57.

<sup>30</sup> See for instance, Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 2, 1832, p. 211.

<sup>31</sup> Levy, “Military Reform in the Eighteenth Century”, p. 230.

<sup>32</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” p. 369.

<sup>33</sup> Charles MacFarlane, *Constantinople in 1828: A Residence of Sixteen months in the Turkish Capital and Provinces* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1829), p. 29.

“So these are the new troops”, said he, “that I have heard so much of; these are the troops that are to defend the Ottoman empire from its enemies! And what in Allah's name can the Sultan expect to do with these beardless, puny boys, with their little shining muskets? Why, they have not a yataghan among them! What does this mean? It was with the yataghan the Osmanlis conquered these territories and the countries of the Christians; and it is with the yataghan they ought to defend them.<sup>34</sup> The yataghan is the arm of Mahomet and of his people, and not that chibouque-wire I see stuck at the end of their guns. Mashallah ! And what sort of a monkey's dress is this? What sort of ugly-faced, shrivelled, puling dogs are these? Why, they don't look like Osmanlis! And the land of Mahomet to be defended by such as these!—Baccaloom!” He continued somewhat in this style, blaming all he saw, and breathing his choler from time to time with a –If it please Allah! Allah be praised!” “We shall see!”<sup>35</sup>

The quotation above could be a model speech made by those who were punished for “employing words that are improper to be spelled” for the *Asakir-i Mansure*.<sup>36</sup> A certain notable named Hacı Mustafa from the *kaza* of Gördes, was exiled to Bozcaada for vilifying and insulting the army, which was the “Sultan’s precious”.<sup>37</sup> Lütfi writes that the *ayan* of Tosya rejected to send recruits and was executed for saying “There are no men left to send, shall we send the calfs in their place?”.<sup>38</sup> Usually, the prominent figures on the local level were exiled with accusations of not dispatching the detachments they had been ordered to, or crippling the military recruitment effort in their districts.<sup>39</sup> These accusations might also

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<sup>34</sup> The pamphlet known as *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi* was also mentioning the reactionaries who were giving the very same argument some thirty years before, defending the chivalrous sword against the new methods. Uçman, *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*, p. 44.

<sup>35</sup> MacFarlane, *Constantinople in 1828*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>36</sup> “...lisane alınmak caiz olmayacak kelama ibtidar itmiş...” See C. Zab 1909 and C. Zab 1912 (both dated as Ra 1241/ September 1829) for the banishment of four persons to island of Midilli from İstanbul, including the *berberler şeyhi* and *kebabcıbaşı* of İstanbul. Unfortunately, no detailed information was given on the speeches.

<sup>37</sup> “...nur-u dide-i padişahımız olan asakir-i nusret-mefahir şahane zımnında tezvil ve tahkirane hariç ez-had ve imkan itale-i lisane ictisar eylediği...” C. Zab 2074 (3 Za 1247/ 4 April 1830).

<sup>38</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 643.

<sup>39</sup> See for instance, C. Dah (Cevdet Dahiliye) 6760 (15 C 1244/ 23 December 1828), C. Zab 3780 (Evasit C 1245/ December 1829); C. Zab 1382 (18 Ra 1245/ 17 September 1829); C. As 46532 (Evail S 1244/ August 1828). The last document was on a *müfti* “sabotaging the military effort determinately” within his *kaza* together with some others. It was mentioned in the document that one rationale of his exile was to “scare those [dare to behave] like him”, by making him an example.

include the charges of resisting taxation, and causing unrest and upheaval among the populace.<sup>40</sup> One nonetheless could not be sure whether the mentioned crimes really took place, and the accusations might have just been pretexts for sending off the “undesirables” from their power bases. But it is also logical to see serious loathing coming from the countryside elite for the new army, which was central in the Sultan’s policies.

Thus it would be wiser to be skeptical about the earlier “excitement” told of by the chroniclers, since a lot of subjects, including the local magnates, did not like the developments emanating from İstanbul. According to S. Dimitrov, the authorities already did not have any prospects to reach their initial plan of 12,000 men with volunteers, and forced military recruitment began almost immediately.<sup>41</sup> Utilizing the primary documents, he remarks that pressing the men into uniforms was almost immediately employed in Bulgaria. The recruits were to be sent to the capital by July 1826, but the forced impressment resulted in mass desertions.<sup>42</sup> For the level of volunteerism, one document indicates that just two out of ninety-one recruits volunteered to join from the *kaza* of Priveşte in the Balkans.<sup>43</sup>

The examples given are insufficient to understand the social impact of the conscription on the Ottoman population perfectly, and the issue deserves a further study of its own. But the response of many Ottoman subjects to being taken into the *Mansure* Army was no doubt unpromising, especially as more effort was put forward to increase the size of this army, and also to replenish the empty ranks during the

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(...hilaf-ı rıza harekete harekete ictisar idenlerin icra-i te'dibleriyle emsalinin terhibi lazimedden olduğuna binaen...)

<sup>40</sup> C. Zab 3780 (Evasit C 1245/ June 1830); C. Zab 2074 (3 Za 1247/ 26 April 1830).

<sup>41</sup> Dimitrov, *Sultan Mahmud II*, p. 251.

<sup>42</sup> Dimitrov, *Sultan Mahmud II*, p. 252-53. The author’s information is based on the local court records of Timovo.

<sup>43</sup> The volunteers were marked with the notes “courageously volunteered to be sent” (*Gönüllü olup iş'ara cesaret*). C. As 1984 (Not dated, but the document should be written during the 1820s-1840s, as the term *Mansure* is used).

1830s. In 1836, one memorandum on the military recruitment strongly underlines the “obviously known fact” of the Anatolian population’s fright and refrain of being conscripted into the *Mansure* Army.<sup>44</sup> The author of the report argues that the population was otherwise already inclined to enlist for *Redif* regiments. It suggested not taking any more recruits from Anatolia for that year in order to remove the feelings of fright and hesitation towards the *Asakir-i Mansure*, and instead to concentrate on the training of the existing *Redif* force alone.<sup>45</sup> The recruits needed to refill the empty ranks were recommended to be provided by the deserters hiding in the countryside. According to Mustafa Nuri Paşa, the indefiniteness of the term of service brought a widespread hatred among the population for the army.<sup>46</sup> The disaffection reached new heights as women resorted to abortion in order to save their unborn children from ending up in the army.<sup>47</sup> Even as late as 1844, almost five years after the declaration of *Tanzimat* and three years after the truce with Egypt, a spy report drafted in İstanbul still included the following words, quoted from a *Rum* middleman from Bursa:

They make too many abuses in Anatolia. They took each and every son into the army. There is no one left except the old. If two [persons] exist for cultivating the land, they took them both. Still, they are demanding for recruits, not caring whether there exists any. The countries are being ravaged [and still] no one is aware of it.<sup>48</sup>

Did the recruitment methods and life in the army really change after reforms of 1846? More curiously, what were the views of the common subjects on

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<sup>44</sup> “...ve Anadolu ahalisinin *Asakir-i Mansureye* yazılmakda bi’t-tabi derkar olan tevahhüş ve içtisabları münasebetiyle...” HAT 22433-B (19 Ca 1252/ 1 September 1836).

<sup>45</sup> “...Anadolu ahalisinin *Asakir-i Mansureye* dair tereddüd ve tevehhüşlerinin izalesi için fakat bu senelik Anadolu’dan *asakir* istenilmedide işbu *asakir-i redifenin* icra-i ta’lim ve taallümlerine ziyadece ikdam oluna...” HAT 22433-B, (19 Ca 1252/ 1 September 1836).

<sup>46</sup> Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, p. 298.

<sup>47</sup> İnalçık and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Vol. 2, p. 790.

<sup>48</sup> “...Bursalı simsar Andonaki’nin nakli: Anadolu civarlarında çok zulm idiyorlar. Herkesin evladlarını askere aldılar. İhtiya lardan başka kimse kalmadı. Çift sürecek iki kişi var ise ikisini dahi aldılar. Andan sonra daha asker matlub iderler. Acaba varmış dimezler. Memleketler harab oluyor, kimsenin haberi yok deyyu söylediği işitilmiş olduğu”. İ. Dah. 4463, Lef 2, (7 C 1260/ 24 June 1844).

conscription after 1846? Did the reforms really lead to a general acceptance and devotedness of the Muslim Ottoman subjects who were required to serve? For the 1850s, the contemporary observers, such as H. A. Ubcini and Slade tend to describe the army and the conditions of service as improved.<sup>49</sup> Ömer Paşa, the famous Ottoman commander-in-chief in 1850s, said to say to a traveler that the soldiers did not desert as they used to before, since they knew they would serve for five years.<sup>50</sup> The Ottoman chroniclers, too, wrote in favor of the new reforms and so did many of the modern Ottoman historians following them, with the common narrative implying “everything became much better” after military reforms and regulations in the early 1840.<sup>51</sup> They might be right to some extent: a more explicit set of regulations to avoid arbitrariness and keeping the term of service at five years might persuade some subjects to serve more confidently, while drawing of lots might seem just for the entrants. In addition to these, exemptions were granted to the potential recruits on yearly basis, who were recognized as the sole breadwinners of their families.<sup>52</sup> However, it could be easily documented that the people continued in their efforts at escaping from conscription, even after the “generous” new terms had been offered by the central authority.<sup>53</sup> The ballot system was abused frequently, as those with the weakest social bonds were sent to army. Besides, it would take many years to introduce the fundamental reforms in most parts of the empire, including the conscription system. Good statistical data is still needed, such as the number of

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<sup>49</sup> H. A. Ubcini *Osmanlı'da Modernleşme Sancısı [Lettres sur la Turquie, 1851]*, trans. Cemal Aydın (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 1998), p. 324; Adolphus Slade, *Türkiye ve Kırım Harbi*, trans. Ali Rıza Seyfi (İstanbul: Askeri Matbaa, 1943), p. 20-21.

<sup>50</sup> Boehn, *Zustand der Türkei im Jahre der Propheziung*, p. 29 in Haberer, “Die Aufstellung von Redif-Truppen in der Frühen Tanzimatzeit,” pp. 36-37.

<sup>51</sup> Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, p. 298, Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 144-49.

<sup>52</sup> KAD no. 7, pp. 13-15 (Articles 18-23).

<sup>53</sup> One memorandum written in 1851, informs that both the deserters and the remnants of the previous years' quotas that could not be recruited (*kur'a bakayası*) amounted to 5,000 in the very central recruitment district of the Guards (*Hassa*) Army since the establishment of *kur'a* system in 1846. İ. Dah 13698 (09 Ra 1267/ 12 January 1851).

actual soldiers, deserters, draft dodgers and the total number of eligible men, in order to reach definite conclusions and generalizations for the years after 1846. Nonetheless, certain clues point out that conscription was not very much liked in the empire until its end.<sup>54</sup> There exists a large body of dirges for those fallen in the service and also soldiers' songs, representing discontent within the population.<sup>55</sup> The Ottoman soldiers did not only fought in the disastrous campaigns of Turco-Russian War (1877-78), Balkan Wars (1912-13) and First World War (1914-18), but also in the endless struggles with the rebellious elements in the peripheral regions like Macedonia, Albania, Lebanon and Yemen.<sup>56</sup> The Ottoman State did not have sufficient industry and infrastructure to equip, train, transport and support a modern army formed by universal conscription.<sup>57</sup> As late as the First World War, the Ottoman Army would have as many as half a million deserters, which was half of those claimed to be under arms.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps, it happens to be our luck that the initial military recruitment during 1826-1839 was treated as a terrible experience by the Ottoman chroniclers, thus we now are aware of a general picture for the earlier Ottoman military recruitment as well as the conditions of the recruits. Ahmed Lütfi clearly admits that the recruitment had been a dreadful burden until the reforms of 1846 without hesitation in his seventh volume.<sup>59</sup> He freely described the despair of the troops while also praising

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<sup>54</sup> Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918," pp. 85-86.

<sup>55</sup> See, Mehmet Bayrak, *Eşkiyalık ve Eşkiya Türküleri*, (Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 1985), pp. 11-13 for a collection of soldier songs and dirges sung for those who fallen in the army. The attrition-war in Yemen especially used to be a common theme for these songs. The long term of service was another source of despair, as one song wants the sultan to send the beloved one back in one year instead of ten: "Padişaha söylen yari göndersin/ Bu kanunu bu zagonu döndersin/ On seneyi bir seneye indirsin/ Hiç mi merhamet yok Sultan Aziz'de" (Bayrak, *Eşkiyalık ve Eşkiya Türküleri*, p. 13).

<sup>56</sup> Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918," p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918," p. 91.

<sup>58</sup> Edward J. Erickson, *Size Ölmeyi Emrediyorum: Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Ordusu*, trans. Tanju Akad, (İstanbul : Kitap Yayınevi, 2003) p. 314.

<sup>59</sup> See Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 1144-49.

the new reforms, as did the others like Mustafa Nuri Paşa and Abdurrahman Şeref.<sup>60</sup> Here, a contrast exists between the treatment of the earlier Ottoman conscription and that of Muhammed Ali Paşa in Egypt. “Nationalist” histories on the era of Muhammed Ali did not mention the tragedy of the Egyptian conscripts. Instead, they tend to interpret Muhammed Ali’s conscription as an initial step for the national awakening of the native Egyptians, as the Arab soldiers eagerly took up arms, a “privilege” which was denied to them for centuries.<sup>61</sup> The Egyptian historians’ interpretations could be understood in this light; but one may still wonder why Ottoman chroniclers recorded this setback to the empire without distraction. The answer is not perfectly clear, however, and a suggestion could be made that the Ottoman chroniclers’ attitude was to praise, if not to justify *Tanzimat*, as an improvement of the conditions in military service was a part of the reform agenda.<sup>62</sup>

The social, political and cultural impact of the conscription for the rest of the nineteenth century is still an interesting subject to be explored.<sup>63</sup> The central authority tried to tap into more manpower sources by establishing itself gradually in the peripheral areas and finally managed to conscript non-Muslims after 1909,

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<sup>60</sup> Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l-Vukuat*, p. 298; Abdurrahman Şeref, *Muhasebe-i Tarihiye*, prep. Mübeccel Nami Duru. (Sucuoğlu Matbaası: İstanbul, 1980). Consequently, many modern Ottoman historians<sup>60</sup> did not see any inconvenience in repeating the “unpleasant” picture (desertions, evasion of military recruitment) given for the conscription for the *Mansure* Army, which no doubt contradicts with Turkish national pride about military service. See for instance, Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nizam-ı Cedid ve Tanzimat Devirleri (1789-1856)*, pp. 178-80.

<sup>61</sup> See Fahmy, *All the Pasha's men*, pp. 9-37, for an assessment of the Egyptian nationalist historiography and image of Muhammed Ali Paşa.

<sup>62</sup> According to Christoph Neumann, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s historical writings included elements for the justification of *Tanzimat*. Ahmed Cevdet’s approach was a stadialist one, as the *Tanzimat* reforms were depicted as an “expected” and “normal” continuation of the reforms begun in the reign of Abdulhamid I and continued by Selim III and Mahmud II. Thus, the reforms were incorporated into the Ottoman tradition of reform by the historian. Christoph K. Neumann, *Araç Tarih Amaç Tanzimat Ahmed Cevdet'in Siyasi Anlamı* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000) p. 218.

<sup>63</sup> Although it deals with a limited period, Erdem’s “Recruitment for the “Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad” in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828” is quite inspiring from this aspect. Tunali’s Ph.D. dissertation had considerable information on the military reforms after *Tanzimat*. She extensively used laws, regulations, *Takvim-i Vakayi* and the *Ceride-i Askeriye* (Military Journal issued after February 1864) which were all issued directly by the Ottoman State. However, these sources are simply not sufficient for fully explaining popular response to the army and conscription, due to their “official” characteristics.

widening the range of conscription which had been falling disproportionately on the shoulders of the Turkish population.<sup>64</sup> Even so, it proved to be the Turks that were heavily recruited and depended on as soldiers, at least until the Committee of Union and Progress took control. Consequently, it is argued that there was a certain effect of military service in the formation of Turkish national consciousness, as the role of military service in nation-building is concerned.<sup>65</sup> It is quite early to talk about nationalist sentiments among the Turkish population in the early nineteenth century,<sup>66</sup> and the Ottoman State, with no doubt, was not a nation-state of the Turks. However, it seems that the Turkish recruits had become much preferred soldiers by the Ottoman central authority and the military commanders by that time<sup>67</sup>

According to Erdem, this “preference” could be attributed to the experiences of Ottoman field commanders, who usually “urged the center to be provided troops of the *Türk Uşağı* (Turkish lads) rather than unreliable and disloyal, salaried, say, Albanian troops.”<sup>68</sup> As he shows in his article, during the attempt on creation of a *Mansure* regiment in the Haleb and Şam provinces, “Turkish lads” were requested from the Anatolian provinces. The local Arabs were initially seen unfit, and after they were recruited, proved to be inadequate and inconvenient as soldiers. One reason given for inconvenience was the possibility of fraternization with the locals,

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<sup>64</sup> V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp eds., *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 351-353.

<sup>65</sup> Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918”, p. 91; Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," p. 190-92.

<sup>66</sup> Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 73.

<sup>67</sup> Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," pp. 191-93.

<sup>68</sup> Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," Ahmed Lütfi describes the Albanian irregular contingents as unruly and unthankful mobs. He even goes further by saying that they “would go to hell if someone happens to pay their salary”. (Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 192-93). A local commander underlines he wants *Türk uşağı* instead of Albanians, to garrison the fortresses in Morea. C. As 46942 (not dated by seems to be from late eighteenth or early nineteenth century)

since the soldiers would be also recruited from the same localities.<sup>69</sup> Almost twenty-five years later, two reports written in the early 1850s from the *irade* collection could still complain that the Arabs were increasing in the Army of Arabia.<sup>70</sup> Again, the sending of Turkish recruits (*Türk uşağı*), who were to be a part of yearly intake from Anatolian provinces, was required. Otherwise, the entire army “was to be made up of the sons of Arabs”<sup>71</sup> and “an inconvenience due to ethnicity”<sup>72</sup> might occur. The mentioned documents do not include any more specific information why it was the Turks who were especially required. In fact, the legislators of the conscription law of 1846 already did not want the regiments to be filled entirely by men from the same country (*hemşehri*) and the same ethnicity (*cinsiyet*).<sup>73</sup> Some mistrust might be felt against the Arab recruits as well, who might be used against their own countrymen during the 1850s, which marked Syria and Lebanon’s resistance against the centralization efforts. Adding more Turks to the regiments in Arabia might change the ethnic composition to more favorable terms from this aspect. On the other hand, one could ask the question of why there was not an emphasis on another major “inconvenience due to ethnicity” within the Ottoman Army, since most of the soldiers must have been Turkish speakers by the 1850s, as entire regiments must

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<sup>69</sup> Implication made that Kurds should not be among to the recruits sent from Anatolia, which shows a clear incline to use Turks as soldiers. Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," pp. 196-201.

<sup>70</sup> İ. Dah 14404 (21 Şevval 1267/ 19 August 1851); İ. Dah 16001 (20 Ca 1268/ 22 March 1852) in Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 137. These illuminating documents, probably first cited by Ortaylı, are re-inspected while making this study. Ortaylı remarks that the Ottoman army was much more ethnically homogenous when compared to civil bureaucracy, began to rely on the ethnic Turks as its soldiers. (Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 137-38)

<sup>71</sup> “...ordu-yu hümayun-u mezkurun kuvve-i askeriyesi bütün bütün evlad-ı arabdan kalarak ...” İ. Dah 14404.

<sup>72</sup> “...sair ordular neferat-ı cedidesinden münasib mikdar Türk uşağı gönderilerek hemcinslik mahzurunun def-i icabı maslahatdan olacağına...” İ. Dah 14404.

<sup>73</sup> “...ve eğerçe her bir alaya lüzumu olacak neferat-ı cedide bu vechle ol alayın bulunduğu mevki[n]in civar kazalarından virildiği ve alaylar dahi buldukları mevkilerde mütemadiyen ikamet eyledikleri takdirde birkaç sene zarfında alayların neferatı cümle hemşehri ademlerden ibaret olmak mahzuru dahi derkâr ise de...” The article 13 (KAD no. 7, pp. 10-12) anticipated the continuous rotation of the regiments in order to assure the recruits to be drawn from different areas, as with the new regulations every army had its designated recruitment districts to draw their soldiers.

have been formed of Turks only throughout the Empire. It seems it was the increase in the number of Arabs which created a nuisance in the minds of the Ottoman officials, and their prime aim was not to create ethnically balanced regiments. Therefore, it is logical to think, as Erdem and Ortaylı argue, that the Turks happened to be the “favorite” soldiers in the eyes of the Ottoman military commanders and state officials.

The mentioned “preference”, however, does not imply that the Turkish recruits, who lacked nationalistic ideals of the modern sense, the status of the Ottoman warrior caste of the classical age or good pay, adored being taken into the army. Soldiers continued to desert and able-bodied men ran away from their villages in large numbers when a recruitment party was near or, after *Tanzimat reforms*, they tried to avoid the drawing of lots. But it seems that the Turkish population just appeared to be less reactive and obedient to the military recruitment and service when compared to the Arabs, Kurds, Bosnians and Albanians. These non-Turkish Muslim peoples often revolted all together against the centralization efforts which sought to bring central authority, military recruitment and taxation. In Bosnia, the center had to contend with a *Redif* force for almost thirty years after the abolition of the Janissary Corps. Several regular regiments, which were altogether 4,800 men strong, could only be created in 1864-65, and they would not serve outside the province.<sup>74</sup> Albanians also fiercely resisted against the initial military recruitment and Mahmud II’s attempts on strengthening ties with the center.<sup>75</sup> Moltke writes that the Kurds, who had been forcibly impressed into the army before battle of Nizib, ran away in great numbers and even turned their guns on their former officers during the

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<sup>74</sup> Moreau, “Bosnian Resistance to Conscription in the Nineteenth Century,” pp. 130-32.

<sup>75</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütüfi*, pp. 191-93, 669, 675-76.

rout.<sup>76</sup> Berkes argues that Arabs, Kurds and Albanians did not see any benefit in taking a part in the general military effort.<sup>77</sup> In one way or another, the Turks were left to the hands of the central state to be recruited for practical reasons, like the fact that they were living mostly in the core provinces which were already under central authority after submission of the *ayans* and much easier to access. Another reason was perhaps due to something argued by Ortaylı, as the Ottoman center alleged itself to be made up of “Turkish” elements by the eighteenth century.<sup>78</sup>

### III.2 Evasion of military recruitment

Thousands of Ottoman subjects were taken into the army between the 1820s and the 1850s, while many others developed or resorted to various methods of avoiding conscription into the ranks. The basic way to avoid military recruitment was desertion from the villages. These people either ran up to the hills or hid themselves in forests *en masse*.<sup>79</sup> The other way to evade the draft was, of course, securing the help of the local powers or being a member of the power structure. One interesting case for this aspect is the exile of two “troublemakers” from Alaiye for not sending a number of soldiers. Although they completed their task of bringing fifty recruits from the *kazas*, they were accused of not bringing in the twelve demanded from the *kaza* of Alaiye, which happened to be their hometown.<sup>80</sup> The local notables were by definition a part of the *kur’a meclisi* after 1846, which puts those councils in a dubious position. In the distant Albanian and Arabian provinces, the drawing of lots proved to only be for show in some occasions. In Albania, tribal chiefs were reported

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<sup>76</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 271-72.

<sup>77</sup> Berkes, *Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 206.

<sup>78</sup> Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 72-73.

<sup>79</sup> HAT 28207/A, (23 Ra 1251/ 19 July 1835). It was mentioned in the document that all those except children and the weak (*sıbyan ve na-tüvanadan maada askerliğe elverecek eşhas*) ran away to the forests in the *kazas* of Sürmene, Rize, Hemşin and Lazistan.

<sup>80</sup> C. Zab 1382 (18 Ra 1245/ 17 September 1829).

to choose the recruits themselves, as late as 1909.<sup>81</sup> The ballot system was widely abused in Syria after its introduction in the 1850s, as the weakest in the society were handed in to the authorities while sons of the rich and influential were able to buy their way out.<sup>82</sup> Those who wanted to run away from the drawing of lots escaped from the cities or, more terribly, maimed themselves in order to evade conscription.<sup>83</sup> The documents indicate that the old method of forced impressment could still be used to collect recruits. It was reported that “some several hundred found in the bazaars were pressed into the army” in the provinces of Damascus and Sayda. As a result, the subjects were terrified and started to believe that the “just” method of drawing of lots had been put aside.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, misconduct, evasion and resistance were not solely confined to peripheral regions, as various reports indicate irregularities in conscription within the “core” provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia as well.<sup>85</sup>

After the regulations of 1843 and 1846, attempts at evasion from conscription did not stop, as the Ottoman subjects invented new ways to slip through. These regulations had set a clear set of laws, but the struggle between the “hunter” and the “hunted” evolved within the rules. The exemptions given by law provided some opportunities for those who wanted to exploit them. Knowing this, some articles in the *kur'a* law already included potential evasion possibilities and possible measures

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<sup>81</sup> Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System, 1844-1918”, p. 84; Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840-1861*, pp. 81-86.

<sup>82</sup> Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840-1861*, p. 82.

<sup>83</sup> Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840-1861*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>84</sup> A. MKT. UM (Mektubi Kalemi, Umum Vilayet Yazışmaları) D: 306 V: 61 (21 C 1274/ 6 February 1858). Bazaars seemed to be good targets for press gangs, since they were bustling with activity and people. Egyptians employed a similar method to collect men for their army in Syria, as the marketplaces of Ayıntab and Kilis were raided by recruitment parties. (HAT 26254/F, 1251/ 1835-36).

<sup>85</sup> See for example, İ. Dah 14640 (18 Z 1267/ 14 October 1852) for malpractices of a *kur'a meclisi* in İzmir; A. MKT. MVL (Mektubi Kalemi, Meclis-i Vala) D: 103 V: 45 (21 R 1275/ 22 July 1859) for evasion of the notables’ sons from recruitment; A. MKT. MVL D: 65 V: 31 (22 Za 1269/ 27 August 1853) for misinforming the authorities to evade the ballots; C. Adl (Cevdet Adliye) 4911 (27 C 1273/ 22 February 1857) for the selling of fake *rüüs* (diplomas given to those who were qualified to enter the *ulema* class), which would enable the owners to evade.

for them. According to the regulations of 1846, *imams*, *müezzins*, *kayyiman*, and *hüteba* were not required to serve in the army. Consequently, the demand for the diplomas (*cihet*) required for these occupations increased after 1846 and orders were sent for investigating matters of these kinds in various places.<sup>86</sup> In one of the entries of the Karahisar-i Sahib court records, it was stated that the increase in petitions for *cihets*, along with the building of new *mescids* (small mosques), caught the attention of the *Meclis-i Vala-yı Ahkam-ı Adliye*<sup>87</sup> (Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances).<sup>88</sup> It was demanded that the qualifications of candidates should be examined closely, before being appointed to the mentioned posts. In addition, it was prohibited to appoint a preacher to smaller villages. The *medrese* students, who were exempted, had to prove themselves in certain examinations. Needless to say, these examinations were abused at the local level on occasions, and furious orders were sent to inquire about the abuses in the drawing of lots.<sup>89</sup>

A universal phenomenon is perhaps the strong tendency of the nomadic groups to run away from tax collectors as well as military recruiters. The situation seemed to remain the same during, the recruitment of the *Asakir-i Mansure*, and later the *Nizamiye* Army, after 1840.<sup>90</sup> For instance, a number of leaders among the Turcomans of Zile were to be exiled because they did not send in the recruits that they were obliged to.<sup>91</sup> Those who ran away from the recruiters also sought refuge among the nomads, who had better opportunities to evade military recruitment.

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<sup>86</sup> Attention was paid that the *rüüs* had to be given to those who were not of the military age (*esnan-ı askeriye*).

<sup>87</sup> The council was created for reviewing and producing new laws in 1838-39. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> Karahisar-ı Sahib Court Records no. 568, case 141(3 R 1263/ 21 March 1847) in Naci Şahin “568 Numaralı Karahisar-ı Sahib Şer’iye Siciline göre Afyon (H. 1260/1265-M. 1844/1849)” (MA diss., Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, 1998), pp. 250-51.

<sup>89</sup> See for instance, A. MKT. UM D: 189 V: 86 (21 B 1271/ 9 April 1855); İ. Dah 14640 (18 Z 1267/ 14 October 1852).

<sup>90</sup> See Mühimme-i Asakir no. 30, p. 235 (1251/ 1835), for the recruits levied on the nomads of Teke and Zile.

<sup>91</sup> C. Zab 2280 (Evasıt Ca 1253/ August 1837).

When their sons were demanded by the *Mansure* Army, some fathers from the villages nearby Kayseri went over to the *Avşar* Turcomans.<sup>92</sup>

### III.2 Desertion

Subjected to forced recruitment, unlimited years of service and disease, the *Mansure* soldiers deserted in large numbers: around 20,000 soldiers deserted just in-between 1826 and 1837.<sup>93</sup> The military medical school, which was founded in 1827, was quite immature and far away from supplying adequately trained personnel.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, Moltke describes the surgeons who were brought with the army confronting Egyptian forces in 1838 as totally useless.<sup>95</sup> He claims that disease killed almost one-third of the army in a year.<sup>96</sup> Desertion was rampant among the *nefir-i âm* irregulars, who were recruited by general calls to arms. Slade writes that of the five hundred *nefir-i âm* soldiers gathered from Selanik for the war of 1828-29, four hundred fifty went back to their homes. He further argues that no one reached Edirne from the ten thousand levies that had been raised in İstanbul.<sup>97</sup> He describes the sick and despaired young soldiers in Rumelia in 1837 as follows:

...the army, which had marched by to the northward a few days before our arrival, [was] sending in its sick to the number of five or six hundred. Poor boys! [T]heir condition excited our warmest commiseration. Laid on the bare floors, the rain trickling through the roofs of the wooden houses, they were without bedding, without medicine, and with scarcely wholesome food. Some were dying every day of actual neglect. We never witnessed a more deplorable sight than the convalescents—so they were termed—when led out to air and exercise. Few of them appeared above fifteen years old, while the

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<sup>92</sup> HAT 24997/B (15 C 1246/ 1 December 1830).

<sup>93</sup> Some several thousand could be added to this figure from the 21,298 men, who were classified as missing in battle (*ğaib olan*). See Appendice A.

<sup>94</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, p. 29; Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 210. See Appendix D for the number of the deaths from disease in the military hospitals around İstanbul.

<sup>95</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 187.

<sup>96</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 209, 241.

<sup>97</sup> Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey*, Vol. 1, pp. 367-369.

looks of each of these victims of a harsh, ill-levied conscription seemed to say "I shall never see my home again."...<sup>98</sup>

Ahmed Lütfi emphasizes that the Albanians could not be accused for their resentment to recruitment effort in 1828, since they were not given any money. At the same time they "could end up in any place between Belgrade and Baghdad" and their families were left behind without protection.<sup>99</sup> The monthly wage for a *Mansure* private was initially set at 15 *guruş* and it was then increased to 20 *guruş* on 25 August, 1826.<sup>100</sup> It seems that the 20 *guruş* wage remained the same well into the end of the 1840s, in an era when inflation was rampant.<sup>101</sup> According to Levy, any pensions under 350 *guruş*, which were granted to the lower ranks, was not sufficient for any man to live on.<sup>102</sup> The mercenaries used in the Eastern and the Arabian provinces were generally paid 60 *guruş* if they were infantry and 80 *guruş* if they were cavalry.<sup>103</sup> Besides, the pensions, which were mostly equal to the soldiers' actual wages, were not granted to every individual who lost their health or was incapacitated during service.<sup>104</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the amount of money paid to the regular conscripts could not be seen as a motivator to stay, especially when the wages of the irregulars were concerned. In this context, one should recall that one important advantage of conscription in European states, despite some certain

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<sup>98</sup> Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, Vol. 2., pp. 411-12.

<sup>99</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>100</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II", pp. 186-87.

<sup>101</sup> See, C. As 44920 (R 1256/ June 1840); KK 7025 (Nisan-Mayıs 1265/ May-June 1849). The wage of the privates in the regular army remained at 20 *guruş* over these years.

<sup>102</sup> Avigdor Levy, "The Officer corps in Sultan Mahmud II's New Ottoman Army, 1826-39," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2 (1971), p. 38.

<sup>103</sup> C. Zab 4068 (Ş 1259/ 4 September 1843), C. Zab 1262 (9 Ra 1265/ 2 February 1849), C. As 46872 (Haziran 1265/ June-July 1849).

<sup>104</sup> See for instance, C. As 38816 (18 B 1256/ 15 September 1840) and C. As 38815 (26 M 1257/ 20 March 1841). In C. As 38815, it was clearly emphasized that the soldiers who lost their health and became useless for the army were being discharged on the condition that they would not demand any pensions. Between 1826 and 1837, only 1,834 men were entitled to pensions of the 15,297 men who had been discharged. (See Appendix A) The discharged should not include the recruits who were rejected for health reasons in the first place, since those who were rejected for health reasons numbered around 8,000 just in one levy in mid-1830s. (See Appendix B)

shortcomings for the ruling classes,<sup>105</sup> was that it was much cheaper than hiring mercenary units.<sup>106</sup>

According to Moltke, although the soldiers were treated nicely and had adequate food, desertion from the army did not stop during the military build-up in South-Eastern Anatolia against the Egyptian army. Furthermore, the captured deserters did not feel any remorse or fear, despite bastinado and occasionally the use of firing squads. They immediately began looking for new opportunities to run away.<sup>107</sup> Moltke attributes the widespread desertions to the soldier's yearning for their families.<sup>108</sup> According to several other contemporary accounts, what the soldiers left behind was not safe. Morel expresses the situation in an anecdotal sentence as "while either the regular or reserve soldier was shedding his blood for the fatherland, he has to put up with the loss of his little possessions at home".<sup>109</sup> Slade comments on the soldiers sent to fight in the Crimean Peninsula in 1854, that especially the older reserve soldiers (*Redifs*) were thinking deeply about their families and beloved ones at home during their journey to the front for the very same

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<sup>105</sup> The European states came to a dilemma in the revolutionary era about the process of military recruitment. The smaller armies of the *ancien régime* were politically reliable and under direct control of the sovereigns. An army recruited on the national level would include the discontent and dissatisfaction within the nation. (Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 8-18) The mass conscript armies required an authoritarian army superstructure under the supervision and the control of the state, which trained, equipped, fed and housed them. (Black, ed., *Dretnot, Tank ve Uçak*, p. 23.)

<sup>106</sup> Black, ed., *Dretnot, Tank ve Uçak*, p. 23.

<sup>107</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 232-33, 241.

<sup>108</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 197.

<sup>109</sup> Eugène Morel, *Türkiye ve Reformları (La Turquie et ses Réformes, 1866)*, trans. S. Belli (Ankara: Ütopya Yayınları, 2000), p. 186-87. A much argued aspect of conscription is that it drained and also impoverished the Muslim Turkish population. Morel argues that the Christians, who were exempted from military service, tended to have new possessions after every war, whether it was a victory or a defeat. (Morel, *Türkiye ve Reformları*, p. 187) Although the conscription was not as dreaded as it used to be, leaving their villages and fields for five years must have wrecked the families of conscripts. The British consulate in İzmir writes in his report to London that Turks were becoming poor, and lost their population. The discharged soldiers found "everything had changed" and in despair, they sold their lands to the non-Muslims. (Bilal Şimşir ed., *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians 1856-1880*, Vol.1 Ankara: 1986, 16 vd in Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerinin Askerlik Serüveni*, pp. 178-79)

reasons.<sup>110</sup> Documentary evidence also points out that the families and possessions of the soldiers which were left behind were usually vulnerable to abuses and harassment. In one case, a soldier from the fifth regiment of the guards sent a complaint to his local court stating that his wife was taken by four individuals from his village. Afterwards the case was examined by the court. The verdict was declared that the woman had not been murdered, but that she had died in three or four months because of “her grief after the death of her father”. Nonetheless, the harassers were punished for kidnapping her and detaining the soldier’s wife for several days.<sup>111</sup>

The desertions could occur in groups, as well as on an individual level. On one occasion, *Redif* soldiers deserted with their officers, while whole companies vanished into thin air overnight.<sup>112</sup> The recruits might desert while on the way from the villages to their destinations. Of the 200 recruits from the *sancak* of Ankara being sent to the Balkans during the war of 1828-29, 19 soldiers deserted, four of whom ran away “in the middle of the night” (*nısfı’l-leyl*).<sup>113</sup> The report of a recruitment officer who was bringing new recruits from the *kaza* of Beyşehir states that five deserted, four became ill and one died during the journey.<sup>114</sup> One other favorable opportunity for escaping from the army was the furloughs granted to soldiers. It was stated in the founding regulations of the *Mansure* army that one in five men was

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<sup>110</sup> Slade, *Türkiye ve Kırım Harbi*, p. 168. Some sad cases recorded in court registers tell us some of the *Redif* soldiers’ fear that they would not see their families proved to be right. Three wives from the city of Kütahya petitioned the court for the legal confirmation of their husbands’ deaths, who were serving in the *Redif* army. They did this most probably to clarify the legal status of themselves as well as their family possessions. Those three reserve soldiers had died during the famous siege of Silistre, two of them due to illness, and the third due to natural causes. Several other reservists, who were with the deceased soldiers, testified in the court. (Kütahya Court Records no. 33, cases 212, 260, 278 in İsmail Gümüş, “33 Numaralı Kütahya Şer’iye Sicili Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme,” MA diss., Kütahya Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, 2003).

<sup>111</sup> Karahisar-ı Sahib Court Records no. 568, cases 63 (15 Ş 1261/ 19 August 1845), 64 (11 L 1261/ 13 October 1845) in Şahin, “568 Numaralı Karahisar-ı Sahib Şer’iye Siciline göre Afyon,” pp. 197-98.

<sup>112</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*. pp 215, 233, 266.

<sup>113</sup> C. As 33309 (1244/ 1828-29).

<sup>114</sup> Karahisar-ı Sahib Court Records no. 568, case 187 in Şahin, “568 Numaralı Karahisar-ı Sahib Şer’iye Siciline göre Afyon,” pp. 297-98.

given permission to take a furlough every 6 or 8 months.<sup>115</sup> Some of them chose not to come back. For example, there were 168 men reported to be missing from the guard regiments during 1245-1247, who went back to their homes.<sup>116</sup> It was mentioned in various documents that a lot of soldiers were vanishing as soon as they got to their home provinces.<sup>117</sup> Some of them were reported to be working as farmhands on private farms, while their “employers” hid them from authorities, most probably in exchange for their services.<sup>118</sup> The deserters often escaped with the weapons given to them by the army. The documents stating capture of deserters included the weapons seized from them.<sup>119</sup> It was not something unusual that deserters from the army turned into bandits.<sup>120</sup>

To combat desertion, the center developed its own methods as well. These methods included encouragement of other subjects to give away the deserters that were hiding, as well as imprisonment, extension of the term of service, corporal punishment and execution. Severe punishments were given to those who deserted in the War of 1828-29, including the cutting off of the ears and noses.<sup>121</sup> It did not happen always, but some deserters could be executed for their acts as well.<sup>122</sup> The brothers or relatives of five deserters were ordered to be conscripted to the army in the *kaza* of Varna.<sup>123</sup> Bonuses in cash were offered for each captured deserter as other soldiers were used for pursuit.<sup>124</sup> In one report, it was expected that the local

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<sup>115</sup> Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik*, p. 100.

<sup>116</sup> D. ASM 37592 (Ca 1245 to R 1247/ October 1829 to October 1831).

<sup>117</sup> İ. Dah 13698 (09 Ra 1267/ 12 January 1851); C. As 44980 (C 1267/ April-May 1851);

<sup>118</sup> Varna Court Records no. 2, case 346 (1837/ 1252-53) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, pp. 501-02.

<sup>119</sup> C. As 2896 (not dated, but soldiers are from *Mansure* Army); C. As 7110 (25 Za 1249/ 5 April 1834).

<sup>120</sup> See for instance, İ. MVL 10290 (23 C 1269/ 3 April 1853) for the interrogation of a former *imam*, who was being accused of becoming a bandit after his desertion from the army.

<sup>121</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, pp. 333, 338.

<sup>122</sup> See HAT 17601-A (1245/ 1829-30) for execution of six deserters from the *Mansure* army.

<sup>123</sup> Varna Court Records no. 2, case 45 (19 N 1247/ 21 February 1832) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil[i]”, p. 179.

<sup>124</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, pp. 197, 262.

*Redif* troops would bring in deserters in exchange for “little promises” made to them.<sup>125</sup> The conscription law of 1846 already states that money would be given to the informer who would show the house that the deserter was hiding in. The prize money was to be taken from the individuals who hid the deserters and be given to the informers.<sup>126</sup> This practice consequently maddened the deserters as well as the persons who hid them, and accordingly they attacked the informers. For instance, one informer complains that he was harrassed by the *imam* and the *muhtar* of his village, who hid the three deserters he had handed in.<sup>127</sup> After the reforms of 1843, each army had a recruitment district assigned to it. As a matter of fact, the deserters tended to go back to their homelands and were captured there if possible, probably with the help of an informer. Those who deserted became vengeful and could even kill the informers that had handed them in. It was later implied in an official memorandum that the deserters should not be sent to the armies they had escaped from. Instead, they should be put in armies that were far away from their homelands in order to prevent them from misdoings.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> “...*asakir firarilerini asakir-i redifenin haber virecekleri me'mul idüğüne mebni onlara biraz şey vaadiyle o makule firariler ele götürülse heman taburların ikmal noksanlarına vefa ideği mazmun...*” HAT 22433-B, T: 19 Ca 1252.

<sup>126</sup> KAD no. 7, p. 10 (Article 12)

<sup>127</sup> AMK. UM D: 234 V: 94. (21 Ş 1272/ 27 April 1856)

<sup>128</sup> İ. Dah 15245 (8 Ca 1268/ 29 February 1852).

“*Şu tedbir-i dil-pezir bir nev’ millet askeri tedariki demek olduğu şayan-ı tahsindir.*”<sup>129</sup>

## CONCLUSION

While accompanying the *Mansure* army in Anatolia, which was confronting the Egyptian forces, Moltke was amazed by the low morale and desertion among the soldiers. He comments that, “there is hardly anything inherited by these men from their forefathers’ fighting spirit”, making reference to the military class of the classical age, which was composed of the Janissary Corps and the *timariot* cavalry.<sup>130</sup> *Asakir-i Mansure Muhammediye* was indeed an army manned by common Turkish subjects. Most of its soldiers were now coming from the villages, in contrast with the city-dwelling Janissaries of the former period; a practice which had been experimented with during the creation of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* Corps thirty years before. These new soldiers did not constitute a privileged ruling class, as Janissaries and *timariots* did in the classical age. They were not paid well, were kept under arms for years and died from disease in the barracks and camps in large numbers. Accordingly, they did not have the motivation of their “grandfathers” to perform the required duties.

In fact, the common subjects took their place as foot soldiers first as *levends* and tribal forces in the late sixteenth century. These irregular troops became indispensable for the Ottoman military by the late eighteenth century. But the *Mansure* army was different from the *nefir-i âm* levies and *levend* contingents which had dominated the Ottoman armies just a few decades before. In contrast with these

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<sup>129</sup> “This measure [of establishment of the *Asakir-i Mansure* by collecting recruits from all over the empire] could be seen as the creation of a national army.” The official chronicler Ahmed Lütfi comments on the creation of *Asakir-i Mansure*. Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, p. 186.

<sup>130</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, p. 232.

mentioned forces, *Mansure* soldiers wore distinct uniforms, were housed in isolated barracks, and subjected to European-style discipline, command, tactics and organization. The Ottoman authorities learned a lot from their past experiences and were careful to comb out the ex-Janissaries and not to enroll those who were old enough to be a former Janissary. The travel accounts mention that the age of the soldiers were quite young to eliminate the former Janissaries, and recruits were put under close control and discipline, which would prevent them from becoming new “Janissaries”.<sup>131</sup> This time, however, the task was easier for Mahmud II to create an army of the center than Selim III. Firstly, since the Janissary Corps ceased to exist after 1826, there was little chance for them to become a distinct political faction with established roots in the cities. The *ayans*, who could oppose an effort which would strengthen the central authority and might also be afraid of being deprived of able-bodied men in their districts, were subdued. The new army had been designed to be an instrument of the central authority and was tightly controlled by it.

The recruiters of *Asakir-i Mansure* were composed of the provincial notables and officers sent from the center. Although the center tended to use provincial notables initially, as it did in the late eighteenth century, it relied more on its own appointees well into the 1840s. After the Tanzimat and the reforms of 1843-46, the recruitment was officially supervised by the military and administrative bureaucracy of the center, as they became the highest authority in local recruitment efforts. However, the notables never disappeared, and they would still have an important place in the countryside as the members of various provincial councils.

The earlier military recruitment to the army was arbitrary and oppressive in most cases; a practice that would be accepted by many contemporary sources,

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<sup>131</sup>Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, Vol. 2, pp. 488-89; Victor Fontainer, *Voyages en Orient entrepris par ordre du gouvernement français de l'année 1821 à l'année 1829*, Vol. 1, p. 300 in Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II”, p. 368.

including Ottoman chroniclers. The men were mostly taken from their villages not by voluntarism but with force. The soldiers further suffered badly from attrition, mostly caused by disease. The balance sheet was horrible by 1837: of the 161,036 men collected, one third of them died in barracks, camps and hospitals, and one-eighth deserted. Accordingly, the able-bodied men fled from their villages to avoid the recruitment parties. Through this vigorous military recruitment in the reign of Mahmud II, the weak and the flotsam of Ottoman society were subjected to military recruitment in the first place. The conscription law of 1846 did not guarantee any equality, as it authorized the sending of substitutes and granted exemptions to various groups.

The disruption in the countryside must have been so widespread and troubling that one of the articles in the *Tanzimat* Decree promised a just method of conscription. Four years later a new system of recruitment –the drawing of lots– introduced along with wide ranging organizational reforms in the army, would produce the army that would fight in the Crimean War, and the system would remain almost the same up to 1869. Some order must have been introduced by these reforms to the Ottoman military recruitment, which was in quite bad shape before *Tanzimat*. Indeed, the Ottoman army and soldiers fought relatively well in the Crimean War, when its performance in the wars against Egypt is concerned.<sup>132</sup> A reforming and centralizing state, especially strong in the inner provinces when compared to the 1820s, helped to make forced military recruitment easier. Another reason might be that the conscription had been going on for almost twenty-five years by 1853, which

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<sup>132</sup> Although the Ottomans would probably have been vanquished without the intervention of France and England, the Ottoman forces managed to conduct attacks over Danube in 1853, hold off the Russian forces in defense of Silistre and beat an attacking Russian army at Gözleve in Crimean Peninsula. (For further details, see Tefik Gürel, *1853-55 Türk Rus Savaşı Mütefiklerin Kırım Savaşı*, İstanbul: Askeri Matbaa, 1935) One important reason for these successes was the employment of the Polish and Hungarian officers, who escaped from their countries during the 1848 revolutions as well. (Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, pp. 29, 136)

must have created some acceptance, especially in the core “Turkish” provinces, as the people became less reactive or sometimes simply get used to it to some extent.<sup>133</sup> However, it also appears that conscription was still unpopular in the Empire by the 1850s. The Ottoman subjects still tried to abuse or resist the established system, among whom were not only the Arabs, Albanians and Bosnians, but also the Turks.

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<sup>133</sup> One student of French conscription explains how the Bourbon Monarchy (1815-30) tried to establish state the system of drawing lots, after the awful conscription experience during the Napoleonic Wars, as follows “The regime was careful to issue departmental quotas of moderate proportions. The annual conscription lottery might on rare occasions touch off a local commotion, and was still evaded by certain migratory workers, but it had become as a routine as Easter communion, the harvest festival and taxes.” Woloch, “Napoleonic Conscription: State Power and Civil Society,” p. 127.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: The balance sheet for the *Mansure* Army between 1826 and 1837

<b>Active Army in February 1837</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of soldiers ready for duty in their regiments	47,639	29.58
Those granted furloughs	5,478	3.4
In hospitals	1,553	0.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,670</b>	<b>33.94</b>
<b>Discharged since June 1826</b>		
Discharged (without pensions) since the establishment of <i>Asakir-i Mansure</i>	15,297	9.49
Discharged with pensions <sup>1</sup>	1,834	1.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,131</b>	<b>10.63</b>
<b>Losses since June 1826</b>		
Died since the establishment of <i>Asakir-i Mansure</i> <sup>2</sup>	45,496	28.25
Deserters	20,117	12.49
Missing in combat <sup>3</sup>	21,298	13.22
Killed in combat	1,269	0.78
Prisoners	1,055	0.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,235</b>	<b>55.41</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>161,036</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Kamil Kepeci Askeri Defterleri No: 6799. This *defter* was probably first referred to by Avigdor Levy in his Ph.D. dissertation in 1968. (See Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” pp. 597-599) The source was reconsulted and the figures showing those hospitalized and granted furloughs are added.

<sup>1</sup> According to two registers, the number of pensioners who were living in İstanbul was given as 358 and 322 respectively in August-September 1837 (Ca 1253) and January-February 1838 (Za 1253). D. BŞM (Başmuhasebe Kalemî ve Bağlı Birimlere Ait Defterler) 10455; D. BŞM 10479.

<sup>2</sup> The reason of deaths was not mentioned but they are likely due to disease.

<sup>3</sup> “*Hin-i muharebede ğaib...*” It is not clear how these men got lost. It is likely that they deserted, ran to the opposing side, became prisoner or simply been killed in battle.

**APPENDIX B: The number of soldiers demanded from the provinces and rejected for health reasons during a levy conducted in the mid-1830s**

Name of the sancak/kaza	Number of recruits that was demanded	Number of recruits that have arrived	Number of recruits that was seen unfit sent back	Remaining number to be delivered
Çorum Sancağı	683	690	9	2
Vize Sancağı	11			11
Baba-ı Atik	9			9
Burğos Kazası	28			28
Çorlu Kazası	14			14
Hayrabolu Kazası	30			30
Silivri Kazası	7			7
Ahyolu Kazası	29			29
Ereğli Kazası	30			30
? maa ? nevahisi	130	123		7
Aydos Kazası	70	59		11
Kocaeli Kazası	450	247		203
Bolu Kazası	445	293		152
Sultanönü Kazası	270	120		150
Hüdavendigâr Sancağı	1605	1621	24	8
Varna maa Silistre Sancağı	1796	1860	244	180
Vidin Sancağı	553	592	128	89
Manastır Sancağı	1116	855	243	504
Samako Sancağı	878	696	142	324
Üsküb maa Köstendil Kazası	908	256	49	701
Cuma maa Dubrice ve Radomir Kazası	80	60	3	23
Istomice Kazası	65	38	35	62
Beyşehir ve Tırhala Sancağı	214	50	2	166
Köprülü Kazası	115			115
Doyran Kazası	40			40
? Kazası	605	328	80	359
Aydın Sancağı	1875	1549	280	606
Kütahya Kazası	2521	2476	266	311
Safranborlu Kazası	620	672	231	175
Kastamonu Kazası	1700	2078	410	32
Manisa Kazası	900	602	123	421
Isparta Kazası	900	357	112	655
Burdur maa Terkemiş Kazası	478	483	97	92
Karahisar-ı Sahib Sancağı	925	735	173	363
Muğla Kazası	744	421	71	394
Suğla maa İzmir Kazası	879	494	67	452
Ankara Kazası	1085	1106	214	193
Kanğırı Kazası	975	1069	171	87
Alaiye Kazası	555	970	29	214

Teke Kazası	645	712	174	107
Bozok Kazası	908	192	92	808
İçil Kazası	507	361	247	260
Denizli Kazası	500	107	78	471
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26898</b>	<b>22272</b>	<b>3794</b>	<b>8895</b>

Source: Mühimme-i Asakir No. 30, pp. 232-35. The latest arrival is dated as 20 Ş 1251/ 11 December 1835.

**APPENDIX C: The number of recruits sent from the *sancak* of Çirmen during the reign of Mahmud II (1826-1829)**

Years	The total number of recruits sent	The share of the city of Edirne
1242/1826	3,054	367
1245/1829	880	80
1245/1829	500	30
1247/1831	1,028	20
1247/1831	780	54
1248/1832	475	70
1248/1832	3000	250
1253/1837	1,500	150
1253/1837	1,500	117
1254/1838	2,648	324
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,365</b>	<b>1,462</b>

Source: Mehmet Esat Sarıcalıoğlu, “II. Mahmut Döneminde Edirne’nin Sosyo-Ekonomik Durumu (Şer’iye Sicillerine göre)” (Ph.D. diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1997), p. 154, table 19.

The Muslim male population of city of Edirne was given as 8,313 in the census during the reign of Mahmud II. 1831. 2,793 were registered as children, 3,409 as old and 2,111 as *mükellef* (viable to duties).<sup>4</sup> The data could be wrong, as it is known that the census of 1831 was an inaccurate and incomplete one. Otherwise, the available data here leads one to think that 1,462 men were demanded out of the 2,111 men who were not registered as children or old! The total Muslim population living in the city was guessed around 40-50,000 in 1830-35.<sup>5</sup>

The total number of recruits taken from the *sancak* of Çirmen (which covered Eastern and Western Thrace) amounted to 15,365 by 1838, which was enough to furnish almost ten *Mansure* regiments. This was also one-tenth of the total recruits taken into the army between 1826 and 1837. The short distance from the capital must have enabled the authorities to impose tight control and conduct a heavy recruitment policy. From this aspect, the “core” areas, like the *sancaks* of Hüdavendigâr, Kütahya, and Kastamoni, were likely to bear a heavier burden in term of sending recruits.

<sup>4</sup> Sarıcalıoğlu, “II. Mahmut Döneminde Edirne’nin Sosyo- Ekonomik Durumu,” p. 19, table 1.

<sup>5</sup> Sarıcalıoğlu, “II. Mahmut Döneminde Edirne’nin Sosyo- Ekonomik Durumu,” p. 19.

**APPENDIX D: Deaths in Military Hospitals around İstanbul**

Source	Starting Date	Ending Date	# of Deceased	# of Months	Name of the Military Hospital(s)
D. BŞM 42154	13 February 1831	12 May 1831	388	3	Maltepe
D. BŞM 10000	21 April 1833	18 July 1833	451	3	Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others ( <i>ve mahal-i saire</i> )
D. ASM 38363	12 January 1834	10 February 1834	219	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. ASM 38364	11 February 1834	11 March 1834	188	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. ASM 38375	12 March 1834	10 April 1834	266	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. BŞM 10077	11 April 1834	09 May 1834	264	1	Maltepe
D. ASM 38476	08 July 1834	06 August 1834	139	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. ASM 38476	05 September 1834	04 October 1834	227	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. BŞM 10148	03 November 1834	02 December 1834	299	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. ASM 38573	01 January 1835	30 January 1835	303	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. ASM 38587	31 January 1835	28 February 1835	270	1	Maltepe, Mühimmat-1 Harbiye and others
D. BŞM 10262	22 November 1835	20 December 1835	230	1	Maltepe, Kavakağacı
D. ASM 38922	19 March 1836	17 April 1836	168	1	Maltepe, Sakızağacı and others
D. BŞM 10453	3 August 1837	1 September 1837	78	1	Maltepe, also including those who died in their regiments
C. As 42211	14 September 1843	14 October 1843	240	1	Maltepe, Bab-1 Müşiri

**APPENDIX E: Personal belongings of an Ottoman corporal**

Name of the Item	Total Value (Guruş)	Quantity
En`am-ı Şerîf	15	1
Beyaz Pantol	1.5	1
Müsta`mel basma entari, yelek	9	1+1
Köhne aba pantol	2	1
Aba nimten	5	1
Müsta`mel aba yağmurluk ma`a başlık	16	1
Mavi Frenk Şalı	17	1
Yenikapukari Yemeni	15.5	6
Kaba Yazma Yemeni	11	2
Fes	5	2
Köhne Parilce İmameli Çubuk Takımı	7.5	1
Cedid Basma kıza? Entari	17	2
Fes ma`a püskül	20.5	1
Def`a Müsta`mel Fes ma`a püskül	9.5	1
Kemik Tarak	5	4
Siyah Kapzalı Kama	2	1
Gömlek	2	1
Çorap Şişi	0.5	5
Bakır Yüzük	2	2?
Boyun Bağı	0.5	1
Kahve Kaşığı	1	1
Def`a Aba Yağmurluk	8	1
Aba Terlik, Köhne Hegbe	2	1+1
Nakd-i Mevcud	268	
<b>Yekunü't-terike</b>	485.5 guruş 10 para	
<b>Techiz ve Tekfin ber mut`ad dellaliye-i eşya</b>	51.5 guruş 10 para	

Source: Karahisar-ı Sahib Court Records no. 569, case 105 (16 Ca 1261/ 23 May 1845) in Mehmet Biçici, "569 Numaralı Karahisar-ı Sahib Şer'îye Sicili," MA diss., Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, 1998, pp. 93-94.

This is the *tereke* of a deceased discharged soldier, named Mehmed Ağa ibn Ahmed. The *tereke* shows his belongings and their values when he died due to poor health in Bolvadin. The deceased soldiers' possessions were sold and the money gained kept as *Beytü'l-mal* (Public Treasury) in case his inheritors claimed it. When he died, he was on his way to his homeland in Teke from his battalion stationed in the capital. According to regulations, the monthly wage of a corporal was 30 guruş per month by that time. (See for instance, KK 6979 (1256/ 1840-41) and KK 7023 (1264/ 1847-48)) We do not know much about him, say, his term of service, wages or the allocations he was given. If he had served for five years, it seems he was able to accumulate only 268 guruş, which is equal to his nine months' salary during this time.

## APPENDIX F: “The Talk on the Street”

It seems the Ottoman authorities, like many others, liked to know what the common people think on certain issues in the turbulent years of early 1840s. The outcome was a collection of spy reports based on what people talked, especially those heard in the coffeehouses, barbar shops and inns of İstanbul.<sup>6</sup> The novelty of these reports is that they seem to directly quote the individual who was speaking, perhaps with minor alterations on the names, state officials, and institutions, which appear to be re-written in a more elaborate way. The following excerpts are compiled from various reports submitted in early 1840s to the Sublime Porte, which are in a sense connected with the common subjects’ view on the Ottoman army, state, current politics and their own lives. Some are no doubt exaggeration and even baseless, but they are helpful to capture a glimpse of what “the man on the street” think on these issues.

*...berber Ali'nin dükkanında ? mahallesinde müteehhil Mustafa Beyin nakli: “Mısır’dan gelen esirlere tayinat vermişler. Ve elbise giydirmişler dadlıca ? işdir. Yarın Mehmed Ali feth olub onlar vilayetlerine gönderildiği vakit orada onlara görünölmüş olur ve asker-i devlet-i aliyeye muhabbet ider[ler]...” (İ. Dah 1210, Lef 8 (N 1256/ October-November 1840))*

*Sultan Bazarında bakırcı dükkanı önünde ? Arab Şakir ve kestancei Abdullah Mısır’dan gelen esirler önlerinden geçdikden sonra birbirleriyle Arapça: “Bunların çoğu Mısır’ın Redif askeridir ve kimisi karındaşımız ve kimisi akrabamızdır. Mehmed Ali'nin Allah belasını versin, boynu altında kalsın, ismi batsın. Böyle zalim herif olmaz. Memleketimizde dahi çoluğumuz çocuğumuz böyle sefil oluyor. İnşallah-i Teâla tek mil ? karib oldu. Ber-eş’sam taraflarını zabt itdiler. An karib, Arabistan içlerini dahi zabt iderlerde ahali rahat eder” deyyu bir takım inkisar eyledikleri işidilmiş olduđu.(İ. Dah 1210, Lef 8 (N 1256/ October-November 1840))*

*Cennetmekân hazretlerinin türbe-i şerifinde...iki hatun dikilüb: “İbrahim Paşa'nın Allah belasını versin bu kadar çocuğumuz çoluğumuz telef olmasına sebeb oldu. Evladlarımızın kara haberi geldi. İnşallah-ı Teâla sancağı geldiği gibi başları dahi buraya gelir şu cennetmekân ruhu şâd olur” deyyu söyledikleri işidilmiş olduđu. (İ. Dah 1210, Lef 8 (N 1256/ October-November 1840))*

*Balık Pazarında yüksek kahvede Komaniçeli tatar Süleyman'ın nakli: “...andan sonra memleketin içini asker ile doldurmalydı, fukara rahat etsin. Asker de barınsın. Devlete asker ne içündür? Ancak serhad içündür. Andan sonra kendini de rahat olur?. Bunlar [governors making abuses in the Balkans] askeri kendülerini bekletmek için yabmışlar...” (C. ZB 556 (Not dated, but from the era in question))*

*Samanpazarı'nda ağa hamamında ? Ali Aga'nın kahvesinde çörekçi Ali Ağa'nın nakli: “Sultan Pazarı civarından asker geçerken bir frenk -biz devlet-i aliyede asker kal[ma]dı zannederdik. Bu kadar askeri ne vakit hazır eylemiş?-didikde (merkum ali) daha bu ne olacak devlet-i aliyede dört milyon asker vardır” dimiş... (İ. Dah 2438, Lef 6 (Za 1257/ December 1841-January 1842))*

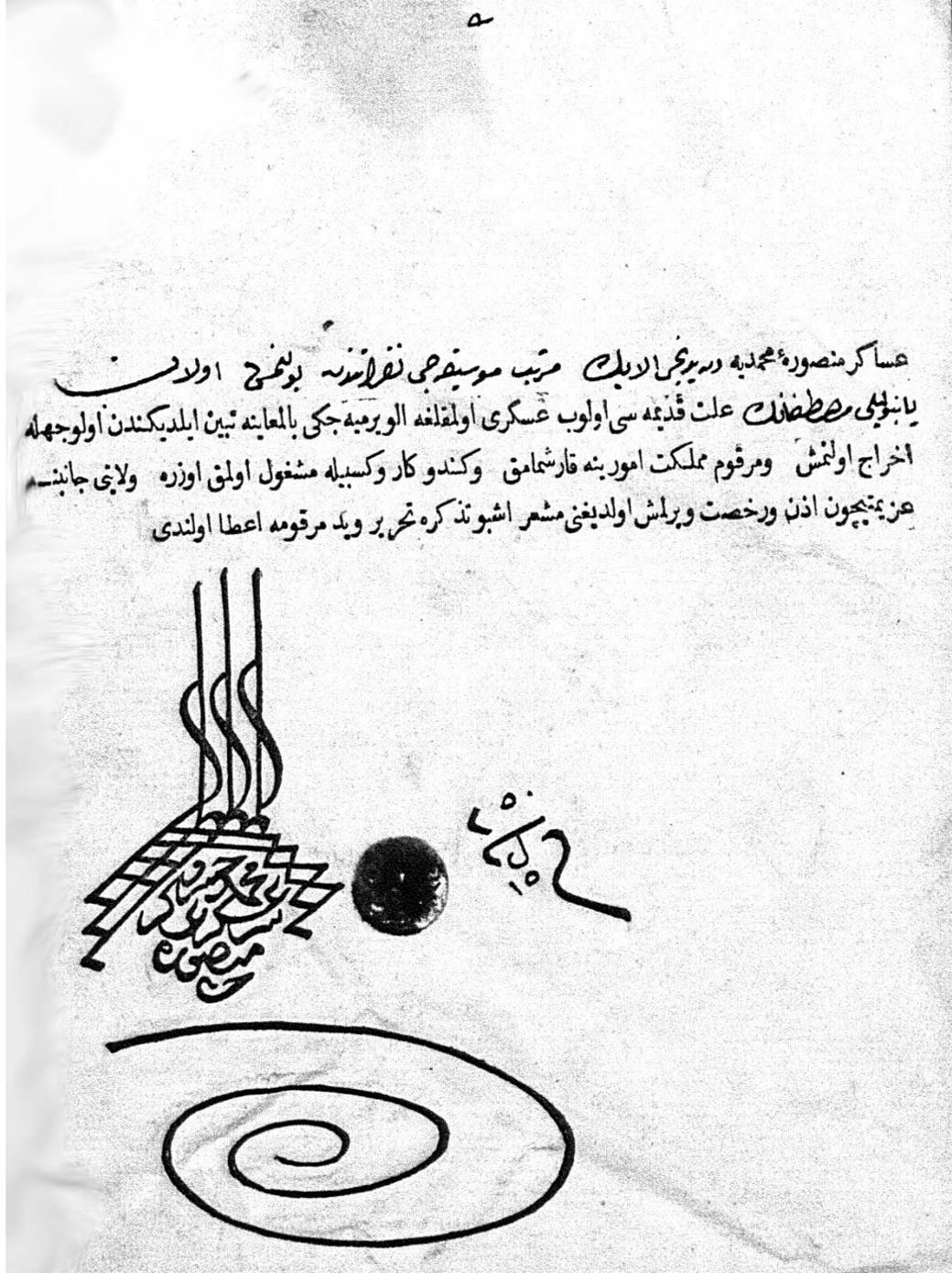
<sup>6</sup> See Kırılı, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire," pp. 75-80.

...Beşiktaş'da ?nin kahvesinde Eflaklı yürüğünün nakli: “Yirmi senede vucuda gelecek şeyleri devlet-i aliye birkaç senede husula getürdi. Bu kadar asker bu kadar tertib cümlesi sırasına girdi. Çok şeydir.Bu keyfiyeti düvel-i sairede olsa ancak yigirmi sene de sırasına koyabilür.Bundan beş altı sene daha bir taraftan bir muharebe olmaz ise devlet-i aliyenin gerek askeri ve gerek tertibi bundan üç kat ziyade yoluna girer” deyyu söylediği işidilmiş olduğu. (İ. Dah 4022 Lef 2 (29 Ş 1259/ 24 September 1843))

Bursalı simsar Andonaki'nin nakli: “Anadolu civarlarında çok zulm idiyorlar. Herkesin evladlarını askere aldılar. İhtiyarlardan başka kimse kalmadı. Çift sürececek iki kişi var ise ikisini dahi aldılar. Andan sonra daha asker matlub iderler. Acaba varmış dimezler. Memleketler harab oluyor, kimsenin haberi yok deyyu söylediği işidilmiş olduğu.” (İ. Dah. 4463, Lef 2, (7 C 1260/ 24 June 1844) – Also cited in the Chapter III-)

## APPENDIX G: Sample Documents

I-) Discharge paper of “Yanbolulu Mustafa”, who was a member of the military band of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mansure Regiment, who was relieved due to his former illness. He was set free to go back to his home to make his living, at the same time commanded “not to meddle with other matters”. (C. As 108, 15 L 1250/ 14 February 1835)

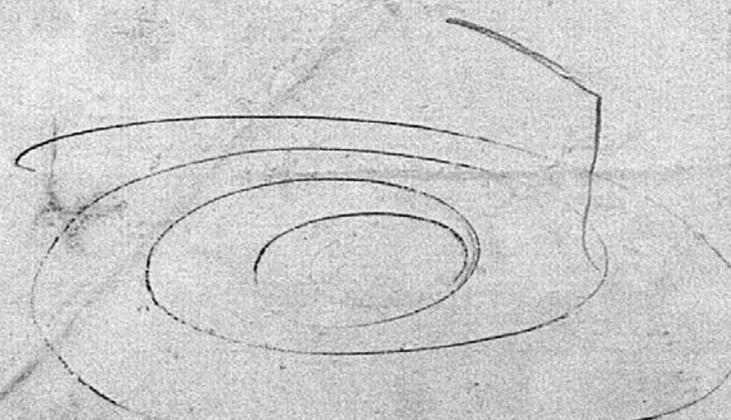


II-) Discharge paper of sergeant Mustafa from the army due to his poor health. It seems that he was not granted to any pension. (C. As 917, 20 Ra 1255/ 3 June 1839)

عسکر نظامه صوفی شاهانه میردادی حادثه فرهاد باشا لوانسک بیخبر الایک او بیخبر بدین  
اوین بدو کنده ایکنجی صوفی مظهری ولد علی و مریم اولو بیفتت ضایع حکیم پاشا  
طرفند بالعیان علی نبیه ایکنجی و کیفیت باشا صوفی الیه طرفند لدرالعدم معلوم معلوم فی الحقیقه علی  
اولوب عسکریکه الویری صوفی اعدم ایکنجی اولو بیفتند اولو جمله معلوم سلان عسکریکه اضرایق نفع  
اولو بیفتن مظهر صوفی سر عسکریکه ایکنجی صوفی صوفی اولو

صوفی شاهانه  
عسکریکه  
نظامه

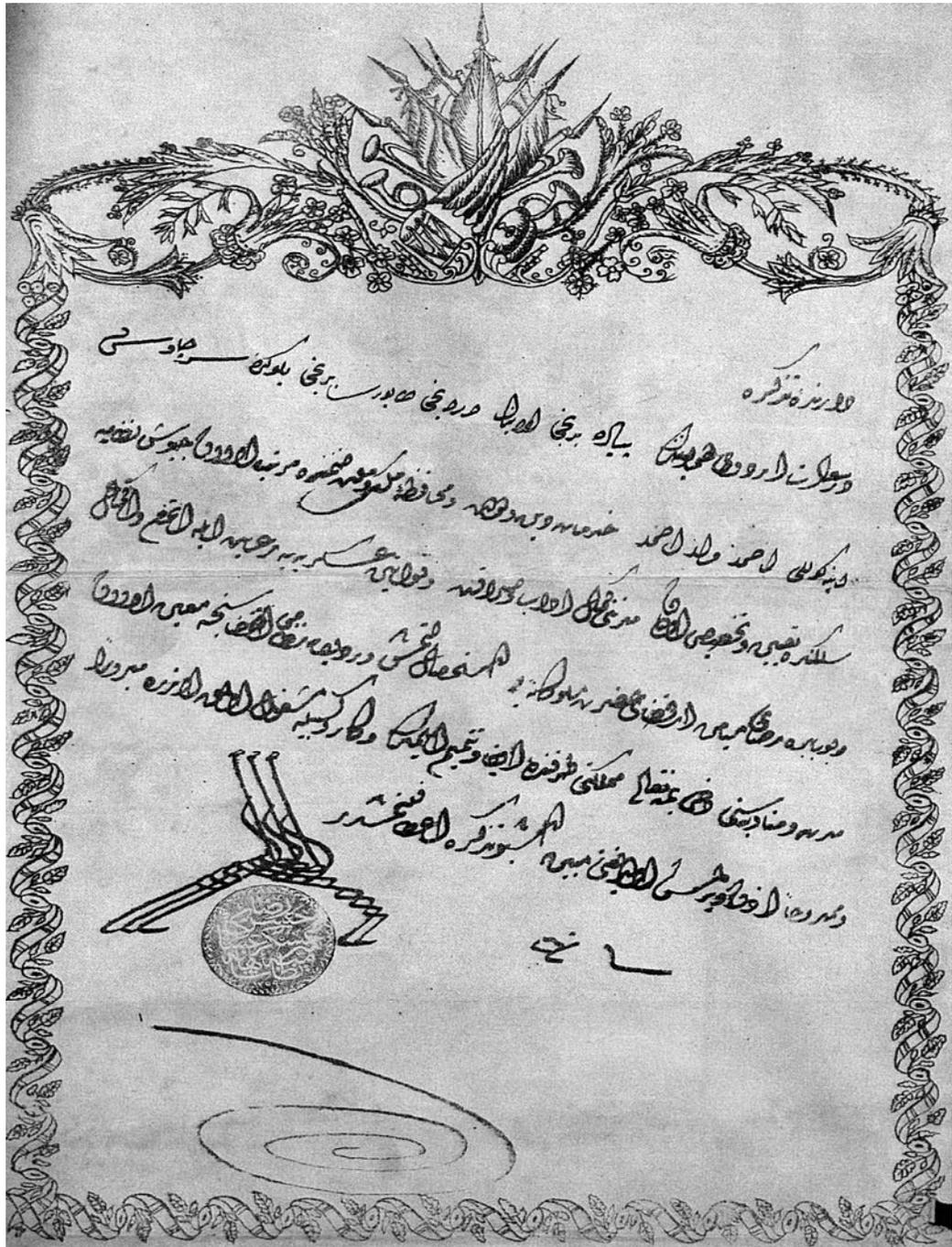
صوفی شاهانه



III-) Corporal Ahmed, son of Mehmed from Kütahya, was authorized to leave for a three months furlough. Note that the some of the documents authorizing discharge, furlough, are printed, perhaps including the signature of the famous *Serasker-i Asakir-i Mansure* Mehmed Hüsrev Paşa. The name, unit and the date of leaving were left blank. (See C. As 8238 and C. As 53163 as similar examples) Utilization of the printed documents for dealing with bureaucratic routines is an interesting aspect of the bureaucratization and standardization of the Ottoman military during the reign of Mahmud II. (C. As 4094, 15 Ş 1251/ 6 December 1835).



IV-) The *tezkere* (the document showing the honorable discharge of its owner) of Sergeant Ahmed from İnegöl, “who [had] served faithfully in the service of the religion and the state, and in defense of the country”. The script, which was written inside a fancy printed border, gives the impression that the document was a draft of an original. The document might be one the earliest of its kind, for its design and the reason that very few soldiers must have been discharged except the health reasons or incapacitation before the promulgation of reforms and mass disbandment of the “grogards” in 1843. (C. As 4494, 1260/ 1844)



V-) Another aspect of military bureaucratization: The printed muster rolls for *Asakir-i Mansure* regiments. The regiment was attached to the Ferhad Paşa's brigade. Note the *sınıf-ı musikar* (the musicians) attached to the regiment. The soldiers who were ready for duty, sick or went on a furlough were registered separately. (S 1254/ April-May 1838)

The image shows a printed muster roll for the *Asakir-i Mansure* regiments. At the top, there is a decorative emblem featuring a crescent moon and a star, with a central medallion containing Arabic calligraphy. Below the emblem is a large table with multiple columns and rows, containing handwritten entries in Ottoman Turkish script. The table is organized into several sections, likely representing different categories of soldiers or musicians. At the bottom left of the page, there is a signature and a circular stamp.

VI-) A muster roll with similar characteristics showing the detailed information on a Redif regiment. The writing in the title is a poem in praise of the Redif force: "Daima feyz-i hüdevend-latif/ Asker-i Mansureye olsun Redif". (C. As 635, Ş 1252/ November-December 1836)

