JEWS, JANISSARIES, ESNAF AND THE REVOLT OF 1740 IN ISTANBUL
SOCIAL UPHEAVAL AND POLITICAL REALIGNMENT IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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The origins of the 1740 rebellion in Istanbul are imbedded in the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730. Despite the lack of definitive research on the rebellion of 1730 evaluation of and its subsequent influence on Ottoman history, the causes of the origins and some of the consequences of the Patrona Halil rebellion are well established 1). I have dealt with the socio-economic factors which contributed to the Patrona Halil rebellion in 1730 in another article 2), but a brief recapitulation of these factors is in order as the continued rebellions in Istanbul following the Patrona rebellion were directly involved in precipitating the revolt of 1740.

The treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Istanbul (1700) turned direct Ottoman attention from southeastern Europe for the first time in over three centuries. While the Ottomans were to be engaged in war in the Balkans against Venice, the Habsburgs, the Papacy, as well as Russia during the next two decades, this period did allow time for an

1) The best work on the Patrona Halil rebellion, although it suffers from a very weak conclusion, is that of Munir Aktepe, Patrona Isyanı (1730), (Istanbul, 1958). Also see Niyazi Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey (Montreal, 1954), pp. 23-63. 

Since this article has been in press I have published, The Siege of Mosul and Ottoman-Persian Relations 1718-1743: A Study of Rebellion in the Capital and War in the Provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Indiana University, 1975) which touches on the topic of this article, especially pages, 141-164.

I wish to express my thanks to my colleagues, Professors Betts, Tucker, Mayfield and Forand for their comments which greatly improved the article.
adjustment and adaptation of Ottoman policies to the "closing of the frontier" in Europe 3). After 1718 with Ahmed III (1703-1730) more firmly in control of the Sultanate and under the tutelage of his Grand Vizier, Nevşehirli Ibrahim Paşa, the Ottomans were able to embark on a "peace" policy of no more wars with European powers. The Treaty of Karlowitz and the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718) also resulted in increasing the trade between the lands under Ottoman dominion and the lands of the Habsburg Empire 4). The peace and prosperity policy of Ibrahim Paşa was to cause economic growth and a cultural flowering that has been characterized by the term "Tulip Period" (Lâle Devri), which also indicates the craze for tulips developed by segments of Ottoman society. The increased trade with Europe resulted in an accelerated growth of capital among the merchants and esnaf 5) of Istanbul, especially in the building-trades industries 6). The increase in free enterprise and the accumulation of capital were not effectively controlled by the "state capitalism" or the governmentally controlled monopolistic apparatus on which the majority of Ottoman


7) For some of the causes of these rebellions see Halil Sahillioğlu, "Sıviş Year Crises in the Ottoman Empire", pp. 230-255; also see the Turkish version of this article which is fuller and has accompanying graphs, "Sıviş Yılı Buhranları", IFM, 27 (October, 1967 - March, 1968), pp. 75-111.
industries were based. Corruption and bribery of governmental officials added to the lack of control. The increase in “free enterprise” also contributed to the frustrations of Ottoman attempts to industrialize; the domestic opposition was aided by foreign opposition 7). While many high officials apparently participated through bribery in the economic boom, the Porte did not. The arrears of ulûfe (wages of the soldiers) caused rebellion in 1717, 1718 and 1719 8). During this same period the Ottomans fought a major war with Russia in 1711, and with Venice and Austria in 1715. Inability to pay the soldiery further decreased those who answered the call for mobilization in time of war. In 1715 the roster (yoklama) of Timar holders in the eyalet (province) of Erzurum was only forty percent of the number available in 1616 9).

The opening of the Persian wars in 1723 was followed by an increase in taxes, rising food prices, and scarcity of food supplies, all of which were accompanied by a continued debasement of coinage. On top of all this, extraordinary “campaign” taxes were levied to meet the needs of the Persian war. The “campaign” taxes of imad-i seferrîye, avariz-i divaniyê and takâlîf-i őrâfîye increased the agitation among the population 10).

The higher taxes, the shrinking frontiers, and the agricultural decline resulted in the early eighteenth century in an unprecedented emigration from the provinces to the cities 11). The emigrants and refugees were

8) Ibid.
11) The flight from the land to the cities was not peculiar to the early eighteenth century but an acceleration of a pattern begun during the Celali rebellions in the
not only composed of Turks or Muslims, but also were from various millets and nationalities, the most troublesome of whom were the Albanians. The influx of refugees to Istanbul added greatly to the problems of the already seething capital beset by unemployment. The hungry and workless crowds were prone to riot and rebellion. One of the major ways in which they expressed their anger and contempt for the Porte and the luxury loving Ottoman court was arson 12). In the decade 1720-30 arson was a danger to the capital itself.

Unable to meet the domestic need for government spending, the Porte was forced to enact new revenue producing measures and taxes in 1726-27 in order to meet the needs of the war against Eşref Shah, the Afghan invader. No sooner had a treaty been signed with Eşref Shah in 1727 than the Porte was confronted with renewed threats from Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror, who was rapidly aggrandizing power and property in Persia. The economic measures of the Grand Vizier not only alienated the Janissaries, provincial soldiery and put increased burdens on the reaya, but it also put new demands on the esnaf (artisans and skilled craftmen), the petite [in some cases not so petite] bourgeoisie of Istanbul. The esnaf’s complaints centered on what they considered three major problems: (1) the continued debasement of the currency and the problems which accompanied it; (2) the changes resulting in the guild system of the esnaf because of the influx of emigrants from Anatolia and Rumeli; (3) the army tax (ordu akçesi) extracted from the esnaf in time of mobilization for war 13).

middle sixteenth century. See Mustafa Akdağ, Celâli Isyanları (1550-1603), (Ankara, 1963), and also the same author’s “Celâli Isyanları Büyük Kaçgunluk (1603-1606), Tarih Arastirmaları Dergisi, II, no. 2-3 (1966), pp. 149.


13) Aktepe, Patrona Isyant, 4-11; and see also Olson, “The Esnaf”, p. 335.
While social, economic and ethnic elements were the main forces that culminated in the rebellion of 1730 the cultural factors were nonetheless important, because the Patrona rebellion ended a cultural as well as an socio-economic epoch of Ottoman history.

The cultural significance of the Tulip Period has been noted by many Ottoman scholars whom I have mentioned in an earlier article 14). However, the fact that the topics which contributed to the Patrona rebellion are the same as those which precipitated the revolt of 1740 necessitates a recapitulation of the significance of the 1730 rebellion.

In the words of Professor Enver Karal, this first period of secularization (garpılasmak) represented by the “Tulip Period”—which appeared so promisingly to introduce needed reorganization and reform into the Empire — was ended with the outbreak of the Patrona Halil rebellion. The 1730 rebellion created a situation in which those who wished reform were “opposed by the ulema, Janissaries and the people of Istanbul” 15). Professor Karal concludes that antagonism between the two groups resulted in a cultural state of instability; in the rebellions subsequent to 1730 victories belonged to the second group. Those Sultans who desired reform too ardently were deposed and their Grand Viziers killed, usually in a cruel manner. A rebellion served notice to a “reforming” Sultan and his ministers that more imitation of Europe, whether in terms of culture or capitalism, would not be tolerated 16).

According to Professor Niyazi Berkes, the Tulip Period, insofar as it originated in the rationalist spirit of the pre-revolutionary France, “gave a religious colouring to the anti-reform movement. The religious reaction held the reformationists responsible for the destruction of both din (religion) and devlet (state), not only because of their alien innovations which undermined the ancient tradition, but also because

16) Ibid., p. 18.
of their complicity with those infidels [French and Russian] who were now threatening Muslim rule from two sides and from within. Thus a religiously oriented anti-western movement became the second strand running across the whole history of the Turkish transformation, in contrast to the Westernist strand” 17) which had begun during the reign of Ahmet III.

Although not a specialist in eighteenth century Ottoman history and relying upon secondary sources, I think it is noteworthy, that the well known Turkish political scientist, Professor Serif Mardin, suggests that the Patrona Halil Rebellion is an important example of the cleavage in the center-periphery relations of Ottoman and modern Turkish politics 18). The center in the Ottoman Empire consisted of the Sultan, the ulema or learned religious class and the elite members of the asakir or military class. Mardin stresses that several factors contributed to the strained relations between the center and the periphery, among which were the incompatibility of urban dwellers with the nomad society of Anatolia, the estrangement of the center from the pre-Ottoman nobility during the early history of the empire, and the religious orthodoxy (Sunni) of the center and the heterodoxy (Shi'i sects) of the provinces. This incompatibility often ended in rebellion or war. The fact that many members of the center, i.e. the military elite, Janissaries and the Sultan’s ministers were converted Christians, coupled with the organization of the non-Muslim communities into self-governing millets, provided them with a great deal of autonomy which further alienated the masses from governmental power centered in Istanbul. To be sure, there were administrative and politically integrative institutions and elements which made the Ottoman governmental apparatus flexible enough to ameliorate from time to time the accumulated tension among conflicting groups, but the Patrona rebellion introduced new disruptive urban elements on a scale hitherto

17) Berkes, The Development of Secularism, p. 52.
unprecedented in the capital which culminated in the first anti-modern Turkish outbreak. Professor Mardin concludes,

There had been many rebellions in Istanbul before, but this was the first to show a syndrome that was thereafter often repeated: an effort to Westernize military and administrative organization propounded by a section of the official elite, accompanied by some aping of Western manners, and used by another interest group [ulema] to mobilize the masses against Westernization. Turkish modernists have concentrated exclusively upon the background of political intrigues by statesmen which, indeed, was an aspect of this and similar revolts. However, for a complete picture we should also dwell on the cultural alienation of the masses from the rulers, of the periphery from the center. During later phases of modernization, this alienation was to be compounded 19).

During the course of the Patrona rebellion the rebels and some of their supporters succeeded for a short time in acquiring some of the highest offices in the Empire with the support of elements, especially the ulema, that had formerly supported the Sultan. The rebellion of 1730 caused a realignment of those groups which supported or opposed the policy of increased contact with Europe advocated by the Sultan and his Grand Vizier. The major support of the Sultanate prior to 1730 had come from the military elite and ulema. After 1730 elements of the military elite, especially those opposed to the introduction of western military methods, and the ulema who were opposed to the subversion of Ottoman society by Europe began to collaborate with the anti-Sultan forces whenever they felt it in their interests to do so. The post 1730-31 alignment was much more volatile than the pre-1730 one, because elements of the Janissaries and/or the ulema could alternate their support for the Sultan or for his opponents depending upon the circumstances and strength of the Sultan 20). This new instability was one of the reasons for the centralization of power in the hands of the Sultan—a policy which began to bear fruit during the reigns of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmut II (1808-1839).

The fluidity of the new alignment is also demonstrated by the actions of the esnaf or petite bourgeoisie of artisans and merchants who in 1730 were one of the most vocal opponents of the Sultan and Grand Vizier.

19) Ibid., p. 175.
In the spring of 1731 the esnaf in face of a threat to their businesses by the continuing disorders in the city, threw their support to the new Sultan Mahmut I (1730-1754) and the last supporters of Patrona Halil were executed or imprisoned. Even though Mahmut I promised to rescind the extraordinary campaign taxes imposed by his predecessor the newly won allegiance of the esnaf, many of whom were non-Muslim, was to be a mainstay of his reign. The switch of allegiance of the esnaf to the Sultan was one of the most sudden and significant changes resulting from the rebellions of 1730-31, and, indeed, of eighteenth century Ottoman history. One of the few people to observe this historic switch was Lord Kinnoull, the British ambassador to the Porte, who stated that the rebels “have made the Grand Signor stronger by showing the Janissaries that the merchants and tradesmen of the city will always be ready to join his favor unless he should make himself hated by some new impression” 21).

During the next decade the new allegiance of the esnaf was not an easy one for Mahmut I to nurture. The ten years following the Patrona rebellion were among the most trying of the new Sultan’s reign. Not only the territorial integrity of the empire but also the very underpinnings of the Caliphate and the sovereignty of the Sultan were threatened by the military successes and the religious propaganda of Nadir Shah of Persia. Peace on the eastern front was still being negotiated when war with Russia and Austria began in 1736. It seemed to the people of the Ottoman Empire, especially of Istanbul, that peace was as chimerical as contented Janissaries. The treaty of Belgrade (1739) despite its advantageous articles for the Porte did not quell the disquiet of the people of Istanbul or the war party at the Porte. The Russo-Austro-Ottoman war of 1736-39 was not without victories

21) For this highly significant development see the dispatch of Lord Kinnoull, the British Resident in Istanbul, dated 4/15 April, 1731 in State papers, Series 97, volume 26. Series 97 of the State Papers records correspondence between the British Residents of Istanbul with the Foreign Office in London. The State Papers are deposited in the Public Record Office in London. Henceforth the State Papers will be referred to by the abbreviation SP.
for the Ottomans, but the treaty of Belgrade did not satisfy those at the Porte who wished to pursue a more aggressive policy 22). Throughout the war with Russia and Austria the differences among the ulema, Sultan, Grand Vizier, Kızlar Ağası, Janissaries, and esnaf continued. The tension among different groups in Istanbul was exacerbated by the scarcity of provisions. The winter of 1739 was extremely severe and the mood of the people became more rebellious as the winter progressed. The tension in the city mounted as the desperate plight of the people began to find expression in arson. In April, 1740 the lack of provisions in Istanbul caused a clamor for bread. The Porte even engaged Everard Fawkener, the British ambassador, to intercede on its behalf to engage the English merchants to bring all kinds of provisions to Istanbul, even wood and candles, to which the ambassador commented, “It is not only that things are very dear, but they are not to be had for money” 23). There was a severe shortage of barley, wheat, fat, and honey. During the early summer the disgruntlement expressed in acts of arson were fanned into the flames of rebellion. The rebellion began on Sunday, June 6, 1740, (Rebiyülvel, 1153) in the sipahi bazar when shops were attacked and the goods were plundered 24). The shopkeepers were forced to close their shops. The rebels then proceeded to an area above the flea bazar


23) Fawkener, April 22, 1740, SP 97, vol. 31.

24) Mehmed Subhi Efendi, Tarih (İstanbul, 1198 A. H./1783-1784 A.D. fol. 177. Subbi’s history is also referred to as Sami-Şakir-Subbi. This is the main Ottoman source that I have followed for the June 6, 1740 rebellion. Subhi’s account of the rebellion is limited to folios 177-178. Everard Fawkener’s account consists of folios 61-66 in SP Series 97 mentioned above. In Fawkener’s dispatch of June 17, 1740 he states that the rebellion broke out on June 3, but Subhi states that it occurred on Sunday, June 6, 1740 (Rebiyülvel 11, 1153); cf. Faik Reşit Unat, Hicri Tarıbleri Milâdî Tarihe Çevirme Kilavuzu (Ankara, 1959), p. 58, which seems to put Fawkener’s date in error.
where the coppersmiths made pots, pans, kettles, and cauldrons
d). The British ambassador states that the rebellion broke out in the
quarter of Istanbul where the old clothes were sold, which would
have been the flea bazar
). According to Everard Fawkener, the
rebellion started when seventeen or eighteen people who seemed to
be quarreling among themselves suddenly broke apart with drawn
swords. One of the men then pulled a green flag out of his bosom
which he attached to a staff that he evidently had brought along for
that purpose. The rebels cried in unison that all of the shops should
be shut and invited “all good Mussulmans to follow them”
). The uproar spread quickly all over the city and the rumors of rebellion
caused mass confusion as shopkeepers hurried to close their shops and
to seek shelter. After surging through the coppersmiths’ market, the
crowd moved, lik a “pack of dogs,”
toward the flea bazar, pillaging
as they went and forcing shops to close. The shopkeepers who hesitated
to do so were killed. The crowd then headed for the area of the Bayezit
Mosque, gathering supporters on the way. The cries of rebellion
grew louder as the rebels barricaded and closed the largest and richest
of the shops
). The rebellion spread to all parts of the city.

Sultan Mahmut was not in Istanbul when the rebellion broke
out. He was taking the air at a new watering spot on the Bosphorus
near Hunkar Iskelesi in Beyköy
). The Grand Vizier, Yeğen Mehmet
Paşa, was likewise not in the city. He was relaxing at Sa’dabad on
the Golden Horn and did not return to Istanbul until the rebellion
had been crushed. The absence from the capital of both the Sultan

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hucuma münbaderet ve mevcut olan emval ve eşyaların yağma ve garet ile”.

26) The place where the rebellion began is important because selling secondhand
clothes was a work in which Patrona Halil had engaged. The flea bazar had shops
selling an assortment of used goods.

27) The significance of the green flag was that it represents Islam.


30) Ibid.

31) The Sultan was visiting Mehmed Emin Ağa’s new Kiosk on the Bosphorus.
and Grand Vizier paralleled the circumstances of 1730, but the results were not to be the same. In the absence of the Sultan and Grand Vizier, Nişancı Şehla Ahmet, Hasan Paşa, Ağâ of the Janissaries, and another Janissary officer, Kulluk Çorbacı Hasan, took quick action to prevent the disturbance from mushrooming into full-fledged rebellion. It was Çorbacı Hasan’s bravery which nipped the outbreak in the bud. Çorbacı Hasan was the leader of a group of Janissaries near the At Meydanı, the area where the rebels were headed. He confronted the mutineers directly and spoke with their leader. The exchange did not quiet the rebels, and Hasan’s comrades were reluctant to attack them. Hasan, however, charged into the mass of mutineers shouting that he preferred death to the bowstring. Without further ado he made straight for the rebel bearing the green flag whom he struck down in one blow. The quick death of the banner-bearer heartened the hesitating Janissaries, and they fell in behind Çorbacı Hasan and attacked the rebels. Despite the quick and unexpected death of their standard bearer the mutineers still offered resistance, but they were soon dispersed, carrying with them two dead comrades 32). The Janissary Ağâ, Hasan Paşa, arrived shortly thereafter with a force of a few hundred (bir kaç yüz nefer). The Janissary Ağâ split his forces with those of Çorbacı Hasan and formed a pincer which cut the rebels’ road to the At Meydanı, The rebels were trapped in the pincers and most of them were killed 33. At this point the Grand Vizier, Mehmet Paşa, arrived from Sa’dabad and issued orders to crush all those suspected of participating in the outbreak.

The immediate specter of a rebellion on the scale of 1730 was dispelled but the Sultan was taking no chances. He issued a ferman which stated that any shopowner who closed his shop during a rebellion would be considered a rebel and punished as such. Shopkeepers who did not heed the ferman were arrested and some of them were killed 34). The Janissary Ağâ and Grand Vizier patrolled the streets of Istanbul the

32) Subhi, Tarih, fol. 177-178; Fawkener, June 17, 1740 SP, 97, vol. 31.
33) Subhi, Tarih, fol. 178.
34) Ibid.
entire night and raided numerous hamams where the suspected instigators of the rebellion, “the perfidious and hypocritical” Albanians usually gathered. As in 1730, the main suspects were again Albanians. The Grand Vizier and Janissary Ağa showed no mercy to those they caught; all were killed. The estimated death toll for the June 6 rebellion and subsequent suppressions was as high as three thousand. Boatsful of rebels’ bodies, many of whom had been strangled, plied up and down the Bosphorus dumping their cargo in the Black Sea. The openness of this action, often undertaken in broad daylight, was surprising to residents of the city as such actions had formerly been carried out at night in a more discreet manner and in secluded places. Everard Fawkener was convinced this was proof that the Janissaries and other parts of the army were not involved in the rebellion. The Janissaries disclaimed their involvement and reiterated promises of allegiance to the Sultan which allowed the Porte to crush the uprising without fear from that sector. The Porte took more precautions to assure law and order in the city. Fermans were issued to return anyone who had not resided in Istanbul for at least ten years to his former place of residence. For days Hasan Paşa filled boats with people and sent them to Üsküdar and İzmit with the cooperation of the quarter (mahalle) imam. All of the hans, hamams and shops were checked for suspects; those apprehended were exiled to Anatolia. A ferman was sent to the Molla (chief religious dignity) of Edirne to take the strictest measures to prevent peasants from abandoning their plots of ground and immigrating to Istanbul. Especially strong measures were taken to keep Albanians from coming to Istanbul. Villages in Anatolia and Rumeli were to delegate one or two

35) Ibid., fol. 177.
36) Fawkener, June 17, 1740, SP 97, vol. 31.
37) Ibid.
38) Subhi, Tarih, fol. 178.
39) Ibid.
40) Mühimme Defterleri, no. 147, p. 152, “Arnavud taifesini bila terreddud geriye izlere üzere kaleyetlerine iade ve irac”. Mühimme Defterleri, henceforth abbreviated as MD, are registers located in Başbakanlık Arşivi (Prime Minister Archives) in Istanbul in which are recorded the correspondence, e.g. hatt-ı hümayun,
people to go to Istanbul to transact the necessary business and to buy provisions for the entire village. All merchants traveling in and out of Istanbul had to show a special permit to guards at the gate of the city. The merchants were allowed to pass only after diligent inspection.

Everard Fawkener thought that the batt-i hümayun which ordered all shopkeepers to keep their shops open during a rebellion was a remarkable proclamation in that the shopkeepers were also commanded on threat of being hanged from their own shopdoors to take up arms and to attack the insurgents. Three days later (June 9) there was another flare-up, but before it could gather momentum it was suppressed by the people in the neighborhood (mahalle) where it occurred. The people fell upon the rebels and “knocked on the Head the Mutineers as they were directed” by the batt-i hümayun which had called for the retaliation on the part of the esnaf who had been armed for this purpose. There were those in Istanbul who were of the opinion that the June 9 outbreak was not a general uprising of the people, but rather only a quarrel among Janissaries. But the suppression of it by the esnaf and people of the neighborhood could have given great offense to the Janissaries. According to Fawkener the retaliation on the part of the esnaf was detested by the Janissaries and it made the batt-i hümayun seem ill judged, for now the esnaf—many of whom were Christians and Jews—were called upon to take arms against the

batt-ı şerifs, fermans and other dispatches from the Sultan, Grand Vizier and Şeyhülislam to provincial, military and religious officials located outside of Istanbul.

41) MD, 147, p. 152; Subhi, Tarih, fol. 178; also see Münir Aktepe, “XVIII. Asrin İlk Yarısında İstanbul’un Nüfus Mes’ëlesine Dair Bazı Vesikalar”, Tarib Dergisi (TD), IX, no. 13 (September, 1958), pp. 19-20 “Ancak bir veya iki nefer adem tevkil ve arz ve mahzar ile o makulelerin kezâlik tüccar makulesinden asitaneye ecnâs-i zehâir ve eşya getürenlerin müürürlarına ruhsat verilup ve zehâir ve eşya nakleden tüccara hâlde muavenet olunarak bu vechile sahih erbâb-i mesalih ile zehâir ve eşya nakleden tüccardan maada efrâd-i âferide dahi vir Ferdin bilâ-emr-i şerif müürürlarına cevaz göstermeyüp ve eğer bir takrib ile gelecek olurlar ise bu cânibde daima tecessüs olmâla la-mehâle ahiz olunurlar”.

42) Fawkener, June 17, 1740, SP 97, vol. 31; Subhi, Tarih, fol. 178, says nothing regarding the esnaf’s call to arms.
Janissaries. Fawkener concluded that an interference of this type could lead to a "general Massacre of those people [which] may one day very easily be the effect of it, as well as what further Mischief may be apprehended from the Militia's being got together in arms, & fearing in punishment of it." 43) This, indeed, is a striking and highly significant passage.

The outbreaks of June 6 and June 9 resulted once again in a reshuffling of the government. On Tuesday, June 22 (rebiyülevvel 27) the Grand Vizier, Ivaz Mehmet Paşa, was replaced by Ahmet Paşa who held the office of Nişancı and had been instrumental in suppressing the outbreak of June 6. A host of lesser officials were either dismissed or assumed other posts. The purges and dismissal of officials deemed necessary to quell the disgruntled populace of the capital again parallel that of 1730. The scarcity of provisions increased the potential of rebellion and added to the already strained relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim population. Regarding the scarcity of provisions, Fawkener stated in his report of January 10, 1742, "There is shewn a great attention to the price of provisions, & some executions have been made for disobedience to the orders publisht (these orders stated that hoarding and greatly raised prices of food was forbidden): the Vizer & his emissaries are continually running about the streets in disguise, and it is said the Grand Signor does this sometimes. The Vizer hoping to make himself well thought of by the people; & by his vigilance in pursuing all suspicious or disorderly people, who might endanger the government, he courts the favour of his Master. These reports of the discovery of assembly's of ill disposed Persons, the executions which are said to be made, & the orders which are given as well that strangers who are unknown & without avowed business, especially Asiaticks and Albanese shall not stay here, or to be allowed to come hither and that nobody shall be abroad after such a time of night . . ." 44). Less than two weeks later more disturbances,

43) Ibid.
44) Fawkener, January 10, 1742, SP, vol. 31. The shortage of good grains was largely caused by the shipment of grain from the Danube basin to Trabzon rather
some which resulted from the shortage of food stuffs, the supply and distribution of which were in the hands of the esnaf, had deteriorated to the point that the Grand Vizier thought it wise to issue new sumptuary proclamations regarding the dress of Christians and Jews forbidding them to wear certain colors and furs. The new sumptuary proclamations caused great consternation, especially in the some of the foreign embassies, for as Fawkener states, the protection which the embassies gave to certain groups of Christians and Jews,

extended as so far to become equivocal, there now and then falls a victim to it. When the Druggomans of several of the foreign Ministers were the other day with the Chiaux [Çavuş] Boshi to get some particular explanation of the Vizier's intentions, he told them the order was not meant to extend to them or anybody belonging to any foreign Minister, but as to Persons protected by them, he would advise them to be cautious, for where the groups of that protection might be liable to discussion, the blows might be in the meantime given. [Fawkener then goes on to relate a very peculiar incident]. But the mistakes don't all happen on one side, for the other day the Servants of the Vizir who walk about the city to observe how these regulations are observed took up a Servant or dependent of a Jew, who is Agent or as they call it here Bazargan [Bezirgan] Boshi, of the Agau and body of the Janissaries, on account of some part of his dress, in the way to the Vizir's Palace they passt by the Station of one of the bodys of the ordinary Guard of the city, who are Janissaries, and the commanding Officer in each of those bodys of Guard is a Colonel or Chiorbagee [Çorbaci]. The Servant as he passt told the Guard to whom he belonged, and they immediately took him from the Vizir's People and sent him to some of their own Chambers; the Vizir displeas'd at this insult offerd to his Servants and authority, sent immediately to require this Person of the Janissary Agau; but he was told that the Body claimed him as one belonging, to them, and would be offended if he was taken out of their hands, and so the matter dropt. It is not easy to imagine the credit this Jew, Agent of the Janissaries has in that body. He disposes of all Offices, and applications are made by the pretenders to them to Him, in the first instances of this I have seen several proofs, for as he is an Honorary British Druggoman, and in vertue of his Baratç [Berat] or Commision from the Sultan in that quality, is under my protection, I have had applications from Officers of rank, even as high as Colonel, for recommendations to him; there is a jumble here of power and dependence not easily to be accounted for or explained" 48). (My italics.)

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than Istanbul in order to stockpile provisions for the war against Nadir Shah. The full dispatch is appended to this article, pp. 203-207.

45) Fawkener, January 23, 1742, SP 97, vol. 31. See the dispatch dated June 17 at the conclusion of the article.
It would be well perhaps to leave the British ambassador's statement as put, but it is at once too highly provocative and of potential significance not to attempt to unravel the "jumble of power and dependence" to which he alludes. We have evidence from Kinnoull's statement of April 4/15, 1731, that the "merchants and tradesmen of the city will always be ready to join in his [the Sultan's] favor". It was indeed a drastic switch of allegiance when we recall that the esnaf were among the major opponents of Ahmet III who were instrumental in precipitating the Patrona Halil rebellion. It does, however, partially explain the greater degree of stability that Mahmut I was able to obtain on his accession, despite recurring outbreaks, in contrast to his predecessor. The decision of the esnaf to support rather than to oppose the Sultan was due, in part, to the promise of Sultan Mahmut I to rescind the "extraordinary" campaign taxes which had been the main grievance of the esnaf prior to the rebellion in September of 1730. But the support which the esnaf gave the Sultan after 1730 was also doubtlessly encouraged by the continual upheavals and disturbances which greatly curtailed their business activities.

It is also significant that Everard Fawkener, the successor of Lord Kinnoull to the Istanbul Residency46), writing almost nine years later in his dispatch of June 17, 1740, was cognizant of the esnaf's support of the Sultan, at least, in regard to the Janissary and popular insurrections. Are we to assume then that it was the accepted policy of the British residents to recognize that the esnaf supported the Sultan to the extent that they were armed, even if unwillingly, in order to help suppress popular and Janissary insurrections?

The activities of the esnaf between the years 1730 and 1740 implies that they must have been aware of the dangers and the risks their new positions of importance gave them and the opposition this generated on the part of the Janissaries and the Muslim population. Increased tension between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities was indicated by the reimposition of the sumptuary laws in January, 1742.

46) Lord Kinnoull was replaced as British Resident in Istanbul by Everard Fawkener in December, 1735 and he served to September, 1742.
The Porte no doubt imposed them to quell increasingly strong opposition to the ostentatious display of wealth by Christians and Jews. The display of such wealth in a city in the throes of a severe food shortage, high unemployment, and suffering from an inundation of refugees from the provinces must have added to the animosity existing between the two communities. The esnaf’s support of the Sultan was in turn reciprocated by favors from the Sultan evidenced in the 1740 French capitulations which broadened the immunities and protection of the Jews and Christians from prosecution and taxes under aegis of the European embassies. As Professor Berkes stated “The religious reaction held the reformationists responsible for the destruction of both din (religion) and devlet (state) not only because of their alien innovations which undermined the ancient tradition, but also because of their complicity with those infidels [French and Russian] who were now threatening Muslim rule from two sides and from within. Thus a religiously oriented anti-Western movement became the second strand running across the whole history of the Turkish transformation”. What Professor Berkes does not mention in his well articulated statement is that the “religiously oriented anti-Western movement”—also gained support from the ulema-led Muslim masses who saw wealthy Christians and Jews with the apparent support of the Sultan gain in power to the extent that they were able to arm themselves to help put down rebellions in opposition to the government. To be sure, as Professor Mardin has stated, the rebellion of 1730 and subsequent rebellions were filled with political intrigue and established “a syndrome that was thereafter often repeated: an effort to Westernize military and administrative organizations propounded by a section of the official elite, accompanied by some aping of Western manners, and used by another interest group [ulema] to mobilize the

masses against Westernization”⁴⁹). But in view of the statements by Kinnoull and Fawkener is it not possible to deduce that the ulema and the masses’ [Muslim] alienation from “Westernization”, was due, in part, to the fact that they benefited little, if at all, from “Westernization” but that the esnaf, many of whom were Christians and Jews, benefited a great deal? Second that this policy was apparently supported by their Sultan—the leader and protector of all Muslims?

The “jumble of power and dependence” existing between the non-Muslim millets, the Janissaries and the Porte is well illustrated by Fawkener’s relation of the episode regarding the servant, either a Christian or Jew, of the Bezirgan Başı, the Jewish agent of the Janissaries, in their relations with the esnaf. This episode is important for several reasons. It is the first evidence I have seen indicating a close relationship, or, for that matter, any kind of relationship between the Janissaries and the Jews at such an early date. Second, it indicates that the position of his master was such that he felt that he did not have to comply with the newly reimposed sumptuary laws—a realization which was justified by the subsequent action of the Janissary Ağâ. Third, if we accept Fawkener’s statement that a Jewish agent controlled all applications to the Janissary corps. This is certainly a novel, highly significant, if not astounding statement, in itself. Finally it appears that the Grand Vizier was not aware of the extent of the relationship between the Janissaries and the Bezirgan Başı, but when informed of it in this particular instance he acquiesced to the Janissary Ağâ’s request that he drop charges against the servant of the Bezirgan Başı. This indicates some knowledge on the part of the Grand Vizier of the relations between the Janissaries, Jews and esnaf.

It is impossible to untangle the “jumble of power” implied in Fawkener’s statement on the basis of the available data but I hope this article is suggestive enough to encourage more research on a provocative topic.

⁴⁹) Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations”, p. 175. See above, p. 190.
Dispatch dated June 17, 1749 from Everard Fawkeener, The British Resident in Istanbul to the Duke of Newcastle, The British Foreign Secretary, Concerning the Rebellion of June 6-9 in Istanbul.

Constantinople the 17th June 1749

My Lord

(fol. 61) The last letter I had the honour of writing to Your Grace was dated the 29th past.

We have since had great alarms here, which however have had no other Effect than the change of the Vizir & a few subordinate Officers.

The first tumult hapned the third Jvs. [June] in the afternoon, in the quarter of the Town where old Cloths are sold, there did not appear above seventeen or eighteen People, who at first seemed to have some quarrel amongst themselves, but one of them, when the rest drew their Swords, pulled out of his Bosom a green Flag which he fixed to a Staff, & they then cried out that the Shops should be shut, & invited all good Mussulmans to follow them.

A great uproar immediately ensued & it was soon spread all over the City that there was a rebellion, which occasioned a general Confusion, the Shops were shut & all people were intent upon providing for their own safety.

The Sultan was at one of his Houses upon the canal, & the Vizir was out of Town upon an airing, & this small beginning either neglected or attended by any unlucky event, might very easily have proceeded to a like fatal Catastrophe with the rising ten years since, which at first was not so considerable as this; for matters were very well disposed, & if the flame had got ever so little head, it would not easily have been extinguished.

But the Janiser Aga, the Vizir Kayhauh [Kahya] ⁵⁰), & the Nisangee [Nişancı] ⁵¹) Pashau, late Camicam [Kaymakam] ⁵²) & now Vizir got immediately on horseback; it was also a fortunate Circumstance that a Guard of Janisaries which was near at hand was commanded by a Man of bravery. It is said, one Guard which was thereabouts withdrew upon the first Noise, but this officer made towards it, & had something of a Parley with the Mutineers; who seemed disposed to defend themselves. His people did not express any great forwardness to venture their Lives, but he reproaching (fol. 62) them with exposing their Commander to the String, told them he would at least avoid that ignominy, and made at the Ensign

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⁵⁰) The Vizier Kahya was the Grand Vizier's deputy responsible for domestic and military as well as ceremonial affairs. See Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, vol. i, part i, (Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 121-122.

⁵¹) The Nişancı Paşa was the official who traced the royal cipher (Tuğra) on imperial documents. He had the authority to examine, correct and the responsibility to harmonize new laws with previous laws. By the eighteenth century however the office of Nişancı was largely a sinecure. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, pp. 124-126.

⁵²) The Kaymakam was an official with the rank of Vizier appointed to replace the Grand Vizier when the latter was on a campaign. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, pp. 114-115.
Bearer with his sword, whom he had the good luck to lay dead at his feet; his followers encouraged by this fell upon the rest, & tho' they made some resistance, they were soon dispersed, one or two were killed upon the Spot & the rest taken.

The Grand Signor tho' he had this good news almost as soon as he heard of the rising, came directly to his Palace in town. Strong Guards were placed every where & the Vizir himself was upon the Patrol all night. Great Numbers of People were seized, & many put to death, & these executions continued with violence for a good while, & are not yet quite ceased. The number is made to amount high, I have heard as far as three thousand People but I dont see which way it is possible to come at any certainty in this point, since it is very doubtful whether any account is kept at all who or how many are taken off in such a Massacre.

The Mischief is fallen chiefly upon the Albanese & other Strangers about the City, & it has been remarked that large boats have gone out publicly, filled with the Carkasses of those Strangled Wretches, to be thrown into the Sea, which is a work which always used to done privately. This is said to be proof that the Janissaries & other Bodies of Militia were not concerned in this Business, & which they have disowned any part in & made fresh promises of allegiance & fidelity.

Such of those People who have upon this occasion fall'en into the hands of the Government, as have escaped the String have been sent away & no Person of low Rank is allowed to continue here, who is not established, or cannot find somebody to answer for him: and it has been said an account has been taken of the labouring people who are Turks, which has been reduced to such a Number as is thought equal to the work, & the rest are sent away.

But what is most remarkable is a Proclamation which was made all over the City by the Publick Cryers, by which the Shopkeepers of what Religion soever are forbid to shut up their Shops upon all (fol. 63) people who shall raise any uproar in the Streets, & to endeavour to seize or kill them, & all this under penalty of being hanged at their Shopdoors.

To shew an appearance of security the Grand Signor returned the day following to his palace upon the Canal, & it was hoped under the great attention of the Government the publick quiet was quite restored. Yet on the 9.th there was another appearance of a tumult & which was suppressed by the People of the Neighbourhood, who fell upon & knocked on the Head the Mutineers as they were directed by the Proclamation. There are those who say that this last affair was not an attempt to create a rising of the People, but reily a quarrel between a few Janissaries, & that this way of putting an End to it has given great offence to that Body. However this particular Case may be, that Proclamation seems ill judged for quarrels will unavoidably happen amongst the Soldiery & if at any time Christians or Jews should interpose in them in the manner precribed a general Massacre of those people may one day very easily be the effect of it, as well as what further Mischief may be apprehended from the Militia's being got together in arms, & fearing the Punishment of it.

Upon this second Ruffle it was thought proper to change the Vizir which was done the 12.th & he is succeeded by Achmet Pashaw, Camaican [Kaymakam] during the two last Campaigns & lately Nisanghee [Nişancı].

I have for a good while thought him a very likely Person to ascend one day to that great Dignity, & he seems to have been kept here on purpose for an Occasion,
yet if things had been quiet it is probable Bekeer [Bekir] Pashaw who is just arrived from Guidda [Jidda], might have preceeded him, but he was preferred for the present Conjuncture & the other succeeds him as Nisangee (Nişancı).

The Chiaux [Çavuş] 53) Pashaw is also deposed, & is sent to Baghdad to wait there another ambassador from Persia, & the Officer who killed the Ensign Bearer in the first tumult, has a Reward of his courage beside a sum of Money, the office of Muzur [Muhzir] 54) Agau or Commander of the Body of Janissaries which keeps guard at the Vizirs's Palace.

Other Changes are talked of particularly (fol. 64) that of the Reis Efendi 55); the Vizir Kayhauh [Kahya] is confirmed in his office, & I have been told with an express declaration from the Sultan to the Vizir, that He must consider him as a Person placed in that office by him directly & therefore as Kayhauh [Kayha] of the Empire.

He bears the Character of Fidelity & Integrity but it is somewhat out of the way to put in a place of so much Business a Person who can neither write or read. The late Vizir is made Bashau of Guidda [Jidda].

It is apprehended that great disorders must have ensued, if the Rebellion had taken place for as the Memory of the Executions after the Establishment of the present Sultan [Mahmud I] is so fresh, those who had brought about this, & had got the power in their hands, would have been desperate, & have tried all means for their own safety. In that case it is very probable the pretence of dissatisfaction would have been the accepting Belgrade demolished & consenting to such a Peace, whilst the arms of the Empire were in a condition to procure much greater Advantages: This would have been imputed to the arts of the Christian ministers & the ignorance & corruption of those of the Porte; and the heats this must have raised in a Mad Multitude might have put all Strangers in danger, especially those who would have been looked upon as more immediately concerned.

The Government has had a great deal of Reason for sometime past to be up on its guard, & no doubt these strong marks of an unquiet Spirit abroad will redouble all their vigilance & attention, yet if at last the Mischief should overturn them, these Executions will have exasperated Matters, & it will fall the heavier. I am afraid things would not pass as they have done heretofore upon the like occasions, but that we should have a long scene of Confusion & Tumult to go through. I have however great Confidence in the ability, Vigilance & Resolution of the present Vizir, who will not easily be surprised.

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53) The Çavuş Başi was one of the lieutenants of Grand Vizier in charge of judicial affairs and of carrying out the orders of the courts of justice. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, pp. 118-120.

54) The Muhzir Ağa was head of the Janissary Ağa's guard and controller of the prison located in the Janissary Ağa's headquarters. He also represented the Janissaries in dealings with the government as a member of the staff of the Grand Vizier whose residence was guarded, in part, by Janissaries under the command of the Muhzir Ağa. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, p. 325.

55) The Reis Efendi was the principal secretary of the Chancery in charge of all affairs except financial matters, but including foreign affairs. He also was in charge of preparing theTelhis or the communications from the Grand Vizier to the Sultan. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, pp. 122-123.
Seven months later the tumultuous situation was worsened by the lack of provisions. In a report dated January 10, 1742, Fawkener stated,

There is shewn a great attention to the price of provisions, & some executions have been made for disobedience to the orders publishht (these orders stated that hoarding and greatly raised prices of food was forbidden): the Vizir & his emissaries are continually running about the streets in disguise, and it is said the Grand Signor does this sometimes. The Vizir hoping to make himself well thought of by the people; & by his vigilance in pursuing all suspicious or disorderly people, who might endanger the government, he courts the favour of his Master. These reports of the discovery of assembly's of ill disposed Persons, the executions which are said to be made, & the orders which are given as well that strangers who are unknown & without avowed business, especially Asiaticks & Albanese shall not stay here, or be allowed to come hither & that nobody shall be abroad after such a time of night . . .

On January 23, 1742, Fawkener reported to the Duke of Newcastle that the disturbances had reached the point at which the Grand Vizier thought it wise to issue new proclamations regarding the dress of Christians and Jews. Both groups were forbidden to wear certain colors and furs. Regarding the issuance of this proclamation, Fawkener wrote that it caused concern in some of the foreign embassies as the protection which they gave to certain groups of Christians and Jews,

extended so far as to become equivocal, there now & then falls a victim to it. When the Druggomans of several of the foreign Ministers were the other day with the Chiaux (Çavuş) Boshi to get some particular explanation of the Vizir's intentions, he told them the order was not meant to extend to them or anybody belonging to any foreign Minister, but as to Persons protected by then, he would advise them to be cautious, for where the grounds of that protection might be liable to discussion, the blows might be in the meantime given. But the mistakes dont all happen on one side, for the other day the Servants of the Vizir who walk about the city to observe how these regulations are observed, took up a Servant or dependent of a Jew, who is Agent or as they call it here Bazargan Boshi [Bezirgan Başı] 56), of the Agau & body of the Janisaries, on account of some part of his dress, in the way to the Vizir's Palace they pass by the Station of one of the bodys of the ordinary Guard of the City, who are Janisaries, & the commanding Officer in

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56) According to Redhouse's *Lexicon of Turkish and English* (London, 1890), p. 322, a Bezirgan Başı was a "warden of the merchants guild". It also defines bezirgan as "a merchant", "a pedlar" and vulg. "a Jew".
each of those bodys of Guard is a Colonel or Chiorbagee (Çorbaci) ⁵⁷). The Servant as he passt told the Guard to whom he belonged, & they immediately took him from the Vizir’s People & sent him to some of their own Chambers; the Vizir displease’d at this insult offer’d to his Servants & authority, sent immediately to require this Person of the Janisar Agau; but he was told that the Body claimed him as one belonging to them, & woud be offended if he was taken out of their hands, & so the matter dropt. It is not easy to imagine the credit this Jew, Agent of the Janisaries has in that body. He disposes of all Offices, & applications are made by the pretenders to them to him, in the first instances of this I have seen several proofs, for as he is an Honorary British Druggoman, & in vertue of his Baratz [Berat] or Commission from the Sultan in that quality, is under my protection, I have had applications from Officers of rank, even as high as Colonel, for recommendations to him; there is a jumble here of power & dependence not easily to be accounted for or explained ⁵⁸.

⁵⁷) A Çorbacı Başı was a commander of an orta or one of the 196 companies of variable sizes which comprised the Janissary Corps. Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, pp. 319-322.
⁵⁸) See above, p. 199.