

The Anatomy of an Assassination:
Assassination of Mahmûd Şevket Paşa
(11 June 1913)

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“From a drop of water,” said the writer, “a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it. Like all other arts, the Science of Deduction and Analysis is one which can only be acquired by long and patient study...”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, Vol. I, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1930), p. 23.

“I don’t want to wipe out everyone... Just my enemies”

Michael Corleone, “The Godfather: Part II.”

“Assassination is the extreme form of censorship.”

George Bernard Shaw.

Abstract

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was one of the most significant military and political figures of the Second Constitutional Period. Coming to İstanbul as the commander of the Action Army in the time of 31 March Uprising, he turned to become a defining feature of almost all military and political developments. As well as his reforms and policies in his life time, he managed to leave apparent traces in the Ottoman Empire together with his death thus making shifts in the balance of political power. The objective of this study is to revisit the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa who played an effective role in the Second Constitutional Period and to seek to understand political and social drives, the assassins' personal motivations, the developments in the assassination and implications of the assassination in the light of present papers, periodicals, archival documents and memoirs.

Özet

Mahmud Şevket Paşa, II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi'nin en önemli askeri ve siyasi kişilikleri arasında gelmektedir. 31 Mart Ayaklanması sırasında Hareket Ordusu Kumandanı olarak İstanbul'a gelen Mahmud Şevket Paşa, bu tarihten itibaren hemen hemen tüm askeri ve siyasi gelişmelerin merkezindeki kişi haline gelmiştir. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, yaşadığı süre boyunca, icraatlarıyla olduğu kadar, ölümüyle de Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda siyasal güç dengelerinin değişmesine neden olmuştur. Bu çalışmanın amacı II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi'nde etkin bir rol oynamış olan Mahmud Şevket Paşa'ya yapılmış olan suikasti arkasındaki siyasi ve toplumsal nedenleri, suikastçilerin kişisel motivasyon durumları, suikastin gelişimini ve suikast sonrasında yaşanan gelişmeleri elimizde mevcut bulunan gazete, dergi, arşiv belgeleri ve hatıratlar ışığında yeniden anlamaktır.

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To my Grandmother and Grandfather
Beser Gündoğdu and Kamer Gündoğdu

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INTRODUCTION

Etymology

The term “*suikasd*” used in Turkish language is indeed an Arabic origin word and stems from the words of “*su*” which means evilness and those of “*kasd*” (intent), Persian by origin. By definition, *suikasd* refers to “the secret involvement based upon setting up a plan which aims at killing someone, doing evil things and causing negative consequences in the target’s life.”¹ In another resource, the act in question is defined as “the aggression which targets the leading state officials or other notable people with the aim of killing or wounding them through use of weapon or explosive substances.”²

The term “assassination” used in the Western literature was adopted from Arabic language and passed to Europe in the aftermath of the Crusades. This word has origins in Arabic word “*haşbaş*” and its plural “*haşbasyün*.” Poppy, “*haşbaş*” in Arab language is the name of a plant, which has addictive nature because of the substance the plant has. However, İsmailites living in the mountainous regions of Iran and Syria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and exterminating their enemies through assassinations were also named as *Haşbâşîn*. The greatest reason of calling İsmailities as *Haşbâşîn* originated from İsmaili assassinator’s use of poppy before getting stimulated for assassination attempts.

¹ *Büyük Lügat ve Ansiklopedi ve Ansiklopedi*, Vol. XI, (İstanbul: Meydan Yayınevi, 1971), p. 601.

² *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. XXIX, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1980), p. 473.

The word *assassination* used in English is originally French, and it is defined as “an enterprise of killing or killing attempt.”³ Another English language source defines assassination as: “the act of killing an administrator or political leader who has a public reputation.”⁴

The commonality relating to the definition of assassination in different languages is that the act of assassination is regarded to be plotted secretly against someone well known in societies. There are three major characteristics distinguishing assassination from other killing acts: First, the chosen target should have a political personality. Second, the act of killing should have political origins. Third, the assassination should have political implications. One of the most significant characteristics distinguishing an assassinator from a murderer is that the assassin involves himself in the crime because of political motives.⁵

The Haşşâsîs

Though the history of assassination dated back to the emergence of human being, *Haşşâsîs* are regarded as the most effective and the well armed organization in history using assassination as an effective weapon. The very name *Haşşâsî* is a title given to İsmailites inhabiting the mountainous regions of Iran and Syria and

³ Bernard Lewis. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 11; Noah Webster. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1953), p. 107; *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1950), p. 355.

⁴ *The Encyclopedia Americana International Edition*, Vol. II, (New York: Americana Corporation, t.y.), p. 523.

⁵ Benjamin Nichols. *The Politics of Assassination: Case Studies and Analysis*, (Tasmania: Paper Presented to the Australian Political Studies Association Conference, 2003), p. 2; Donald M. Reid. “Political Assassinations in Egypt,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. XV, No. 4, 16 April 1982, p. 626.

removing their enemies through assassinations. Opium (*Cannabis Indica*) is a type of drug and was sometimes used by the dervishes of İsmaili and Kalandaria to reach to God during their rituals.⁶ According to another claim, the assassinator candidate was stimulated and encouraged by the *Haşşâşî* leaders to commit the planned crime and opium served to this stimulation.⁷

Majority of the resources on *Haşşâşîs* are based upon observations and hearings of the Crusaders Historians and the official delegations sent to the region. For example, German Priest Brocardus thinks that *Haşşâşîs* were blood thirsty creatures murdering the innocent for money. *Haşşâşîs* could, like the evil, imitate the dressing, languages and behaviors of different societies.⁸

Famous traveler Marco Polo makes mention of the *Haşşâşîs* as well. Coming to Iran in 1273, Polo illustrates vividly the location of *Haşşâşî* dwelling in the valley of Alamut.⁹ A man named “master” being the leader of *Haşşâşîs*, who were chosen from the brave guys ranging from twelve to twenties in age and picked up from surrounding mountain villages. After receiving a thorough education for some time, those youth depart from the site for assassinating the rulers of neighboring lands and would absolutely commit themselves to the aim even at the expense of losing life.

⁶ *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, p. 355.

⁷ This claim does not seem credible as the use of drug would pacify the potential assassinator. However, the assassinators might be encouraged to use drugs in daily basis. Thus, the assassinators might be offered a virtual heaven should they reach to success in assassination attempt. Laurence Lockhart. “Hasan-i Sabah and the Assassins,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1930, pp. 675–696.

⁸ Bernard Lewis. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, p. 2.

⁹ *The Travels of Marco Polo: 1271–1295*, (New York: The Heritage Press, 1934), p. 72

With the fourteenth century, the words of *assassin* or *ḥaṣṣāṣīn* started to refer to “murderer” rather than to the name of a religious sect. However, the interest towards this mysterious sect started to increase to an accelerating extend. The first academic European study on the *Ḥaṣṣāṣīn* came from Lyon in 1603 by Denis Lebey de Batilly. The publication date of this work is, for Bernard Lewis, is quite significant. In the date of publishing that work, one sees across Europe the rise of absolutist monarchies characterized by rulers fashioning the destiny of religion and state substantially. European nobility, like the *ḥaṣṣāṣīn*, started to employ assassination as an effective instrument of political change and consolidation of their power. The time was the rule of monarchy and the monarch was entitled to rule on his own.¹⁰

Assassination is regarded as a “barbarian” and “illegal act” by many contemporary people. In spite of this, historical evidence demonstrates that assassination was used as an effective mobilizing force to facilitate rapid social and political changes. For instance, the assassination of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar in the Senate by a number of assassins in B.C. 44 leads some historians to claim that this breaking event brought about the end of an epoch called ‘the Golden Age of Roman Empire.’¹¹ Assassination is not an act restricted to political spheres. Some religious teachings defend the view that assassination should be used as an instrument to reach to the ends.

Some assassinations molded the turn of events in history and resulted in the formation of new balances in world politics. The Assassination of Austrian archduke

¹⁰ Bernard Lewis. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, pp. 9–10.

¹¹ Carl Sifakis. *Encyclopedia of Assassinations*, (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), pp. 26-28.

Francis Ferdinand in Bosnia in 28 July 1914 is only one of them.¹² The powder keg of Europe, the Balkans, was incited severely by this assassination which resulted in death of both the Archduke and his wife Princess Sophie and the region in question played a catalyzer role in the outbreak of the First World War rapidly. Following this assassination, the clashes between the Great Powers in the Balkans re-emerged and 'behind the scene' games for increasing more power in the region were nakedly revealed. Every great power coveted to Balkan states for domination.

Models of Assassination

The history of mankind is in a way the history of assassinations and conspiracies. Development in the means of production and the subsequent social differentiation brought itself with new antagonisms that would have to be resolved. Assassination was seen by both the sovereigns and opposition as a practical way of removing rivals in circumstances where social differentiation gains new momentum. In both historical and contemporary context, assassinations are bred by both individual and national factors. Some assassinations were used as instruments of changing the balance of power to the pro-assassination circles while some of those were used merely to satisfy an egoistic end.

For historians, political scientists, sociologists and psychologists, personal and organizational motivations play important role as much as the assassination itself. As much as the implications emerging after the act of assassination, sociological and

¹² Carl Sifakis. *Encyclopedia of Assassinations*, p. 64.

psychological factors driving the assassinator to kill someone without hesitation are important.

David Rapoport makes use of the two general typologies in relation to political assassination. The first concerns the typology of Machiavelli focused on the style of assassination (*modus operandi*). According to Machiavelli, assassinations are made up of two stages: The first is represented by preparation of assassination while the second relates to execution, the act of assassination. However, Rapoport believes that both stages have their unique problems. For example, espionage could easily leak the details of the assassination plan to the opposite party.¹³ In spite of containing some defects this dual typology has in its nature, Rapoport holds the belief the typology in question would help to build up an alternative and more representative typology, a four pillared typology.

The first pillar of this proposed four pillared assassination typology is preparation. In this stage, discussions are held between the assassins to understand if the social actor targeted should be murdered or not. The second stage shows that the preparation stage is completed and that the decision is reached on killing a certain social actor through assassination. However, some technical problems that emerged at this time may even result in the failure of the assassination. The third stage of assassinations is the case of failure. Though the assassination plan completed the first two phases, the target may not be seriously harmed by the assassination. The reason of such a failure is sometimes an unexploded mine, a broken rifle, and

¹³ http://www.hinet.hr/kosta-krauth/topics/political_assassinations.html.

sometimes a bombed envelop, which does not reach to the destination. The fourth stage concerns successful assassinations. The assassinations at this stage may have completed the all three stages all successfully or partially successfully. It is possible to divide the fourth stage into two sub-divisions according to Rapoport. The first stage is called “absolute success stage” in the sense that the targeted person has been exterminated and both the organization and the assassins have born fruits eventually. The second stage is called “partial success” as the targeted person may escape from the fate of death even if the person in question could survive with serious injuries.¹⁴

David Rapoport’s four pillared typology does not provide sufficient clues in relation to the motivations of assassins except for making assassination more comprehensible by dividing the act into certain stages. For instance, this typology seems to fall short of noticing social, political and economic factors affecting the assassins. The disappointment created by political and economic circumstances on the masses could trigger the assassins for action. Some members of societies could be such sensitive to socio-economic problems such as poverty, the inefficiency of governments to provide social and political rights, low quality of living standards and that they could be motivated to punish those held responsible for social problems in question.¹⁵

¹⁴ http://www.hinet.hr/kosta-krauth/topics/political_assassinations.html.

¹⁵ Zaryab Iqbal and Christopher Zorn. “The Political Economy of Assassination: 1946–2000,” A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, 3 April 2003, p. 4.

Some scholars such as James Kirkham, William Crotty and Sheldon Levy, propose an alternative typology including the assassinator's personal motivation to assassination analysis. In this new assassination typology, one sees five types of assassinations. The first type is called "elitist assassinations," which aims to replace the political leader in power with another. In general, the assassinators do not aim at systematic and ideological change. Indeed, "elitist assassinations" result in a sort of power struggle. The second type of assassination refers to "anti-despotic assassinations," which aspire to replace an oppressive despot with a less brutal and oppressive one. This assassination is a typical and well known one. In this sort of assassinations, assassinators have many moral and philosophical premises in general. The third type is called as "terroristic assassinations," which aims at pacify the government in power and make it ineffective. The real aim behind such type of assassinations is to ensure the emergence of minority rule by majority through intimidation. Fourth, "anomic assassinations" refer to the assassination where a political personality may be killed by completely personal reason. In order to justify the assassination bred by psychological disorders, the assassinator could resort into a political discourse or a premise. The fifth and the last type of assassination is "propaganda oriented assassinations," organized to remove a certain political personality on a well organized basis. The orientation, in such types of assassination, is to attract the public towards a certain subject or problem.¹⁶

¹⁶ http://www.hinet.hr/kosta-krauth/topics/political_assassinations.html.

This five pillared typology taking the assassins' a personal motivation into account has also some shortcomings. Some types of assassinations might not necessarily be exclusive of each others reasons. For instance, as seen in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, some assassins took part in the assassination because of quite personal reasons; some others might have been with the quest for political power change. In this respect, a new assassination typology called "revengeful assassination" comes to the stage, as offered by Nahman Ben Yehuda. Such assassinations may target a message to "others." As the goal is to propagate a belief and dissatisfaction through assassination, Nahman Ben Yehuda's new typology meets the propaganda oriented assassination typology proposed by James Kirkham, William Crotty, and Sheldon Levy.¹⁷

When looked at many assassinations staged in the past, one sees that the assassins tried to justify their criminal action through labeling the target as "traitor," "colloberator," or "agent." We sometimes see that the assassins could be members of same social group. Some assassins could see the act of assassination as an instrument of providing social justice be it achieved through smooth or violent means and claim to have seen paralysis in channels making social justice possible. Such a way seems to be the most popular and least costly method of restoring justice in the assassins' own imagination.

In his work *The Road to Sarajevo* Vladimir Dedijer points to personal motivation of assassins as done and proposed by James Kirkham, William Crotty, and

¹⁷ http://www.hinet.hr/kosta-krauth/topics/political_assassinations.html.

Sheldon Levy. According to Dedijer, the assassinations staged between the years 1792-1914 could be categorized on a five group based scheme. In the first group, one sees “personal oriented political assassinations,” whose examples could be given as the assassination of the British prime minister Spencer Perceval (11 May 1812) and that of the US President James Garfield (19 October 1881). For Dedijer, both assassinations were staged because of personal reasons rather than of political purposes. Thus, it does not seem easy to decide on whether the assassinator is insane or not. In the third group lies “anti-despotic assassinations” which justifies and legitimizes its origins in the unjust rule of a dictator and despot. So, the act itself could be viewed as “the noblest humanitarian action.” In the fourth group lies “anti-oppression national or international assassinations” which seek to attract the attention of international community towards a dispute or disputes in a country or region. To this category could also be added “political assassinations” seeking to change political system. The last and fifth type of assassination belongs to “dynastic assassinations” staged by the losing dynasty to the winning one in power. Several examples of this type could empirically be observed in the Ottoman and other European dynasties.¹⁸

The Assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was one of the most significant military and political figures of the Second Constitutional period. Coming to İstanbul as the commander of

¹⁸ Vladimir Dedijer. *The Road to Sarajevo*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), pp. 21–24.

the Action Army in the time of 31 March Uprising, he turned to become a defining feature of almost all military and political developments. As well as his reforms and policies in his life time, he managed to leave apparent traces in the Ottoman Empire together with his death thus making shifts in the balance of political power. According to Tarık Zafer Tunaya, the Second Constitutional Period is divided into two with the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The multi-party and “pluralist” Constitutional Order commenced in 1908 and lasting five year ended and was replaced by single party rule under the domination of the Committee of Union and Progress. In this new era, the Committee of Union and Progress is in power on its own.¹⁹ Together with the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, ongoing British-German contest for expanding the sphere of influence over the Ottoman lands resulted in the benefit of Germany. This assassination became the first example in Ottoman history after the assassination of the famous Grand Vizier, Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, of a Grand Vizier removed publicly through a bloody conspiracy.²⁰ Another defining feature of Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination is that majority of assassins were old members of the Committee of Union and Progress. Thus, the method of suppression and threat adopted by the Committee of Union and Progress against its dissidents came to develop as a boomerang effect ready to hit those who introduced the suppression as an ingredient of policy making. Applying authoritarianism and restrictions, Mahmud Şevket Paşa became a victim of this terror.

¹⁹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), pp. 140–141.

²⁰ [http:// www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/10/06/pazar/yazortay.html](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/10/06/pazar/yazortay.html).

As described by a scholar, the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa took place in the period of 1870-1914 regarded as “Golden Age of Assassinations.” In 1870-1914 period, 4 kings, 4 prime ministers, 3 presidents, 2 crown princes were assassinated in the United States of America and Europe. Russia in those years witnessed bloody assassinations prepared by ardent Socialists.²¹

The objective of this study is to revisit the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa who played an effective role in the Second Constitutional Period and to seek to understand political and social drives, the assassins’ personal motivations, the developments in the assassination and implications of the assassination in the light of present papers, periodicals, archival documents and memoirs.

This study is comprised of two main parts comprising the biography of the victim, Mahmud Şevket Paşa, and the anatomy of the assassination act. The first episode deals with general biography of Mahmud Şevket Paşa which is based upon primary and secondary sources written on Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the Committee of Union and Progress and the post-Second Constitutional Period predominantly. This episode begins with Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s childhood years and ends with the coup d’état attempt named as “Taklîb-i Hükûmet” taking place in his period of Grand Viziership. The main motive behind the preparation of this episode is derived from the need for illuminating the reader with the question and professional building up of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, and his journey in the troubled waters of the late Ottoman Empire era which would culminate in his reach to become the most important

²¹ Donald M. Reid. “Political Assassinations in Egypt: 1910–1954,” p. 639.

official in the state apparatus but which would simultaneously and ironically prepare the conditions for his bloody downfall, an assassination. This episode will denote to Mahmud Şevket Paşa's political and military dimensions rather than to his humanitarian qualities. This stress is largely necessitated by the availability of resources which highlight Mahmud Şevket Paşa's military and political credentials.

So far, many books and theses have been written on Mahmud Şevket Paşa's both military and political traits. Amongst these works, the oldest biographic work came from a work called "*Mücadele-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*" published by *Mir'at-ı Sicil-i Memûrîn Hey'et-i Tabiriyesi* just after the 31 March Uprising.²² However, the study can not be regarded as a complete and a perfect one, on the ground that it has made as its subject only the time period from Mahmud Şevket Paşa's childhood to his reach to the commander post of the Action Army. The article named "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti" and published in *Tanîn* paper in 18 June 1913 possesses the quality of being the first summarized biographic study which covers the whole lifetime.²³ The biographies and news published in *Tanîn* paper after the death of Mahmud Şevket Paşa were later used by Ziya Şakir and compiled in a book titled *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*.²⁴ This book was written with an "investigative journalism" fashion and reveals the

²² *Mücadele-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, (İstanbul: Artin Asaduryan ve Mahdumları, 1327).

²³ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, pp. 3-4.

²⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul: Muallim Fuat Gücüyener Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943).

author's shortcomings such as his subjectivity towards news and commentary made in the paper.

Some theses handling the political and military dimensions of Mahmud Şevket Paşa were also written. The first of such theses came from doctoral study of Glen W. Swanson submitted to the Indiana University in 1970.²⁵ Swanson examined the military modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire under the initiatives of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the basis of German and British archives. The greatest shortcoming of this study is that the scholar in question did not make use of the Turkish Prime Ministry, Ottoman Archives. The doctoral thesis prepared at the University of Anadolu, Eskişehir, by Kemal Yakut is both comprehensive and it focuses Mahmud Şevket Paşa era period the center of study.²⁶ The work in question made use of predominantly archive documents, regular publications of Mahmud Şevket Paşa era and a number of secondary resources. However, neither Swanson nor Kemal Yakut managed to analyze the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa comprehensively and exhaustably.

The second episode of this thesis contains a *narrative* telling of the assassination attempt to the reader, and it magnifies the assassination in both pre and post-assassination settings. This episode begins with the meetings arranged amongst the oppositional factions in the house located in Glavani Street and informs the reader

²⁵ Glen Wilfred Swanson, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, (Indiana University, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 1970).

²⁶ Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, (Eskişehir: Anadolu University, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 1998).

about the preparations of the assassins, developments occurring in the day and aftermath of the assassination in the light of archive documents, papers, periodicals and memoirs. The documents serving to this episode are made up of those found after catalogue search in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*) Dâhiliye Nezareti Tasnifi, İradeler Tasnifi and Meclis-i Vûkela Tasnifi. Some of the findings in these sources relate to the assassination directly. But, some of them consist of the petitions of those exiled outside İstanbul after the assassination event. Other than the archive evidence, I made use of difference sources in Ottoman, British and French publications such as *Tanîn*, *İkdâm*, *Le Moniteur Oriental*, *The New York Times*, *The Orient*, *Servet-i Fünûn*, *Polis Mecmuası* and *Şebbâl*, in relation to the second episode. I could not make use of the *Sabâh* paper published in the time of assassination in question on the ground that Taksim Atatürk Library has been repairing issues of this paper in the recent months. As some news articles about the assassination and the assassins published in *Tanîn* and *İkdâm* contained much subjective evaluation, I have chosen either not to use it at all or have given some assessments in the footnotes. Some writers who made mention of the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa such as Ziya Şakir, Galip Vardar, and Mustafa Ragıp Esatlı preferred to base their understandings on subjective news coverages in *Tanîn* and on the memoirs of Cemal Paşa thus creating not much except for repeating each others.

In the conclusion of this work, the questions of private life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, his personality and how and by whom the assassination might have been staged under the title of “Who shot Mahmud Şevket Paşa?” Some information on Mahmud

Şevket Paşa's private life and personality could be accessible in *Tanîn* paper issued in 20 June 1913. There is also some interesting detail on private life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in a brief biography published with the title "Great Commander: His life and Nature of His Personality" ("Büyük Kumandan Hayat ve Tabiatı")²⁷ One sees some other interesting details on Mahmud Şevket Paşa's private life in Sadri Sema's work, *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*,²⁸ (*Memoirs from Old İstanbul*) and the memoirs of Ali Haydar Mithat.²⁹ Ali Haydar Mithat as a person who both served as an intermediary to Mahmud Şevket Paşa from the Committee of Union and Progress which offered Mahmud Şevket Paşa the post of Grand Vizier and also as the person who got association with Mahmud Şevket Paşa thanks to the Ali Haydar Mithat's father linkage, makes Mithat's observation crucial. Ali Haydar Mithat's meetings with Mahmud Şevket Paşa before the assassination and his observations on the offer a valuable insight to Mahmud Şevket Paşa's state of mentality those last days of his life. So does the interview made with the Paşa's wife by Ziya Sakir in the aftermath of Mahmud Şevket Paşa Assassination. Another source promising deeper insight to Mahmud Şevket Paşa's life is his diary.³⁰

²⁷ "Büyük Kumandan: Hayat ve Tabiatı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, p. 3.

²⁸ Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2002).

²⁹ Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hatıralarım: 1872–1946*, (İstanbul: Akçit Yayın, 1946).

³⁰ *Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1988).

Mahmud Şevket Paşa (1856-1913)

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was born in August 1856¹ (in 1273 according to Muslim Calendar) in Baghdad. He was a son of Süleyman Kethüda-zâde, one of the prominent figures in the area who had served as a governor of Müntefik, a province in Basra. Under the roots of Kethüda-zâde family lies the corps of military slaves in Baghdad but the family² was originally from Georgia.³ The reason why the family had adopted the title of Kethuda-zâde is a mystery. But it is supposed that the head of the

¹ *Mücâhid-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, [Freedom Fighter Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Action Army], (İstanbul: Matba-i Artin Asaduryan ve Mahdumları, 1327), p. 5; “Merhumûn Terceme-i Hâli,” [Biography of the Deceased] *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, p. 1; Zekeriya Türkmen, *Osmanlı Meşrutiyetinde Ordu Siyaset Çatışması*, [Army-Politics Struggle during Ottoman Constitutional Period], (İstanbul: İrfan Yayınevi, 1999), p. 135; İbrahim Alaettin Gövsa. *Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi*, [Encyclopedia of Famous Turks], (İstanbul: Yedigün Neşriyatı, 1961), p. 237; Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, [Grand Viziers of the Ottomans], (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), p. 1869; Ahmet Turan Alkan, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Devrinde Ordu ve Siyaset*, [Army and the Politics in the Second Constitutional Period], (İstanbul: Ufuk Kitapları, 2001), p. 235; Turan Tuyan, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul Üniversitesi, Unpublished Graduation Thesis, 1951), p. 1; *The Orient*, No. 25, Vol. IV, 18 June 1913, p. 6; Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2002), p. 510.

² In some resources, Mahmud Şevket Paşa is introduced as Chechen See: Zekeriya Türkmen, *Osmanlı Meşrutiyetinde Ordu Siyaset Çatışması*, p. 135; *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, [Encyclopedia of Lives and Works of Ottomans, Vol. II] (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), s. 72; Arsen Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet ve İktidar Sisteminde Çerkesler*, [Ottoman Empire and the Circassians in the System of State and Power in Kemalist Turkey], (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004), p. 140; Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, p. 1881.

³ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” [Life of the Honorary Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the Great Commander] *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; *Mücâhid-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 6; Glen Swanson, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defence of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, (Indiana University, Unpublished Ph. D thesis, 1970), p. 3; Turan Tuyan, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul Üniversitesi, Unpublished Graduation Thesis, 1951), p. 1.

family, Kethüda Hacı Talip Ağa,⁴ had served as the chief doorkeeper of one of the governors in Baghdad.⁵

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's father, Süleyman Bey, had migrated to İstanbul during the rule of Sultan Aziz (1861-1876) and become one of the most significant intellectuals of the period. It is said that Süleyman Bey, who had made close friendship with Namık Kemal in İstanbul, had a strong pen, yet where and how he published his writings is not known.⁶ However, Süleyman Bey's relationship with Young Ottomans and Namık Kemal had caused him trouble afterwards. When Namık Kemal was exiled from İstanbul, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's father, Süleyman Bey, was exiled to Basra Desserts to become a provincial governor in the Müntefik Division of the Basra Province.⁷ During his exile years,⁸ he had married to a daughter of one of the highly reputed families in Baghdad, Cin Murad family. His wife gave birth to five sons named Numan, Ragıb, Halid, Murad and Arif Hikmet as well as Mahmud Şevket.⁹ Cin Murad family was amongst the notable Turkish families in Baghdad who had come to the town from Anatolia together with Sultan Murat IV

⁴ According to Swanson, Kethüda Hacı Talip Ağa's ancestors were originally Christian Georgians but captured by the Ottomans during a Caucasian campaign and sold to the governor of Baghdad, and then with the help of the governor, he completed his education to become the commander of the military corps in Baghdad.

⁵ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul: Muallim Fuat Gücüyener Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943), p. 11.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷ In the thesis of Turan Tuyan, the place mentioned as "Mustekit (d)" is indeed "Müntefik". Zekeriya Türkmen repeats the mistake of wrong use which was quoted from the work of Turan Tuyan. The province of Müntefik is the name of a place near Basra-Nasırıye. See: Nuri Akbayar. *Osmanlı Yer Adları Sözlüğü*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001), p. 122.

⁸ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 11-12.

⁹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanin*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

when the town was overtaken. Cin Murad Ağa was commissioned as the superintendent of guilds and markets¹⁰ in Baghdad.¹¹

Mahmud Şevket Paşa lived in Baghdad and Basra throughout his childhood. He took his primary education in a public school in Basra where he learned to recite Kuran. Then, his father Süleyman Bey decided to send him to Baghdad for a better education. The governor of Baghdad, Midhad Paşa (1869-1871) who had made important contributions for the modernization of the town enrolled Mahmud Şevket Paşa to David Sassoon School, also known as “Alliance Israelite” at that time.¹² The most important reason why Alliance Israelite was chosen for Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the poor quality of education in public schools of Baghdad. Even though Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not Jewish, he was still accepted to study in Alliance Israelite.¹³ With the help of the education he received at this school, Mahmud Şevket Paşa could speak both French and German such fluently that he could make translations.

¹⁰ Person in charge of municipal activities.

¹¹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

¹² Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hâtralarım: 1872-1946*, [My Memoirs 1872-1946], (İstanbul: Güler Basımevi, 1946), p. 247; Glen W. Swanson, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, pp. 4-5; Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, [Mahmut Şevket Paşa and His Period] (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi, Unpublished PhD thesis, 1998), p. 12.

¹³ Glen W. Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, p. 5; In the documents at hand there is no explanation how it was possible for Mahmud Şevket Paşa to go to this school where only Jewish children were accepted. It is likely that Midhad Paşa’s influence had an effect on this. In many sources except Swanson’s and Kemal Yakut’s, there is no mention of *Alliance* school in Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s education. For further information about Alliance Schools see: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com>

For the claim that Mahmud Şevket Paşa was a freemason and a former pupil of Alliance Israelite, see the following webpage: <http://www.le-carrefour-de-lislam.com/occultare/translation-occultus3.htm>.

His Education in İstanbul

Being clever and full of desire to learn, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was well aware that the education in Baghdad would not be enough for him. “With his diligent mind and energy, he sought for a field of activity where he could improve himself, little Mahmud Şevket wanted to become a soldier.”¹⁴ Paying attention to his son’s wish, Süleyman Bey decided to send Mahmud Şevket Paşa to İstanbul while he was only thirteen. Mahmud Şevket Paşa came to İstanbul in 1870 and moved in with his relatives living at Üsküdar. After going to Üsküdar Atlamataşı Military High School, he was registered to Kuleli Preparatory School for Military in 1872.¹⁵ During school years at Kuleli, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was among the most flourishing students and graduated as the second of the classroom with 240 students. After he finished Kuleli, he was transferred to Military Academy in 1877, he became Second Lieutenant of General Staff in June 1879; he was Captain of the General Staff on July 2, 1882 when he graduated from the Military Academy.¹⁶ Mahmud Şevket Paşa had always been a successful student and got the best grades from the examinations he took.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 13.

¹⁵ “Mahmud Şevket Paşa,” *Resimli Kitap*, [Book with Pictures] No. 8 Nisan 1325, p. 748; “Mahmud Şevket Paşa Merhûm,” [Late Mahmud Şevket Paşa], *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132; Ziya Şakir, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 13.

¹⁶ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; “Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, p. 1.

¹⁷ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; “Mahmûd Şevket Paşa,” *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, Nisan 1325, p. 748; “Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûm,” *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132.

Upon graduation, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was appointed to the Second Department of General Staff and started to work at the Bureau of Copyright and Translation. While he was making translations, he also wrote articles to be published in the Magazine of Military Science [*Mecmûa-i Fünûn-ı Askeriye*]. Ziya Şakir wrote the following about his achievements:

It was natural that this duty was commissioned to Mahmud Şevket Bey. Because, having a good command of foreign languages was not so abundant in those days. In fact French, German and Russian languages were attached to the curriculum of both in Military Academy and schools of general staff. Yet, the number of staff who was able to speak at least one language fluently was limited. While Mahmut Şevket was at the same time studying his lessons, he managed to develop his French and German well enough to make translations during the school years. It was for this reason that as soon as he graduated, instead of being commissioned to one of the armies, he was kept in İstanbul and appointed to a position which was envied by even the high privileged ones.¹⁸

Three months after Mahmud Şevket Paşa took this job, there was an upheaval in Egypt: Urâbî Paşa Revolt. Although Sultan Abdülhamid II wanted to dispatch a military force to suppress the rebellions, he ordered a military force to get stationed on the island of Crete, but to wait for instructions since he was afraid that some countries would interfere as well.¹⁹ Mahmud Şevket Paşa was also posted to Egypt with the military committee in charge of the armed forces in Crete. After England empowered the rebellions with its own armed forces, the Sultan decided to put a halt

¹⁸ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 14.

¹⁹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 15; *Mücâhid-i Hürriyet Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 6.

on dispatching Ottoman forces to Egypt.²⁰ Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the other hand, returned to İstanbul to continue his duty at the office of Copyrights and Translation after he had spent one year in Crete. Except, two months later, on 15 March 1833 he was posted as an instructor at the Military Academy teaching geometry and algebra.²¹

In the meantime, German General Comlar Freiherr von der Goltz who was invited to the Military Academy for improvement and restructuring of Ottoman Army was looking for assistants among young and talented officers. Given the fact that he spoke the language fluently, it is not surprising to see Mahmud Şevket Paşa appointed for this position. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, therefore, became the assistant of Von der Goltz Paşa, and also helped another German officer, Field Marshall Kampofner for almost one year.²²

Von der Goltz, who afterwards served at the Ottoman State and became an Ottoman General, was not late to appreciate the intelligence, capacity and diligence of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Whence he made Mahmut Şevket Paşa work for improving and reorganizing the academy, he also changed the lessons he was teaching. Now, instead of geometry and algebra, he started to give Science of Weaponry (*Fenn-i Esliha*) and Theory of Firing (*Endab-ı Nâzariyâtı*) for the third year classes in the academy.²³

²⁰ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 14.

²¹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa," *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, Nisan 1325, p. 748; "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûm," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132; "Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; "Mahmoud Shevket Paşa," *The Orient*, No. 25, Vol. IV, 18 June 1913, p. 6.

²² *Müccâhid-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, pp. 6-7; "Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

²³ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 15; "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

In 1883, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was advanced in rank to be a lieutenant commander. Goltz Paşa was so happy with his young assistant, while assigning him to essential tasks; he was also making use of his translation capability.²⁴ When Mahmud Şevket Paşa had translated a French article titled as “*Seferi Zabitâna Mabsûs Muhtıra*” [“Memorandum for Officers on Campaign”], which was written by Goltz Paşa, into Ottoman, and Goltz Paşa was so content with it that he could not resist presenting it to Sultan Abdülhamid II. Having examined it carefully, Sultan Abdülhamid II also praised the translation and rewarded Mahmud Şevket Paşa by advancing his rank in 1886 as a major.²⁵

Travel to Germany

Sultan Abdülhamid II also included the army in the operations of reforms which he had launched in several fields and took initiatives in order to equip the Ottoman Army with modern weapons. Meanwhile, Mauser rifles were the most advanced of the European armies among the available weapons. Sultan Abdülhamid II considered equipping the Army with these rifles as well.²⁶ A commission was assembled and supervised by Tevfik Paşa of Vidin to check those weapons to be purchased from Germany. Goltz Paşa wrote a letter to Sultan Abdülhamid II

²⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 16.

²⁵ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 16; “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

²⁶ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 19.

advising that Mahmud Şevket Paşa be attached to that commission as a “technical weapons expert”:

His majesty! The sole person who would the most faithfully fulfill this duty concerning the survival of the Ottoman Army is the Staff Major Mahmud Şevket Bey. This person is especially expert in the science of arms. For this reason, it would be very useful if Mahmud Şevket Bey were in the commission ... Then... it is likely that the persons in charge of purchasing arms and munitions might well be bought off by the factory owners. However, Mahmud Şevket Bey has a strong character that could never be taken under influence. In this regard, if his presence in the commission would prevent the misappropriate transactions.²⁷

Upon receiving Goltz Paşa's letter, on 21 February 1887 Sultan Abdülhamid II ordered Mahmud Şevket Paşa to participate in the arms commission heading for Germany. On behalf of the government, the commission was going to purchase 500,000 rifles of 9.5 mm, 50,000 chevalier carbines and 100,000,000 cartridges with black powder. However, at that point, studies were made in an attempt to narrow the caliber of rifles, even the father of Mauser rifles, Herr Mauser, was about to test a 7.65 mm gun. Becoming aware of these developments, Mahmud Şevket Paşa wrote a report to İstanbul saying that purchase order of 9.5 mm guns should rather be cancelled. Instead, new order had to be made for narrower guns.²⁸

Now it is urgent to stop the order of 9.5 mm guns made to the factory. For the reason that if the guns with 7.65 mm caliber which the managing director of the factory Herr Mauser has

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁸ “Mahmûd Şevket Paşa,” *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, Nisan 1325, p. 748; “Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûm,” *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132.

been testing prove to be successful, wide caliber Mauser rifles will immediately lose their value. In this case, both the Army supply would remain to be inadequate and the millions of lira which has to be paid by the government for such arms will be wasted.²⁹

Sultan Abdülhamid II was quite content with Mahmud Şevket Paşa's report and showed his appreciation by promoting him to be the military prefecture on 29 March 1889.³⁰ Afterwards, as the report of Mahmud Şevket Paşa suggested, the Ottoman Army was equipped with narrow caliber Mauser rifles and the Mauser factory began manufacturing these guns for the Ottoman government. Later on, Sultan Abdülhamid II increased the number of initial order by 200.000 for rifles and 100.000.000 for cartridges. This prolonged Mahmud Şevket Paşa's stay in Germany.³¹

Mahmud Şevket Bey had then settled down in Germany. He spent all his days on the polygon of the factory testing guns. He worked without any break. He was entirely away from fun and pleasure.³²

His successful work in Germany cemented Mahmud Şevket Paşa's image as a trustworthy statesman in the eyes of the government, and furthermore he was chosen as the head of several committees commissioned to Germany by Sultan

²⁹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 20.

³⁰ "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa," *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, Nisan 1325, p. 748; "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûm," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 20; "Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

³¹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 20–21

³² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 21.

Abdülhamid II. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was in charge of the committee commissioned to test the rapid firing cannon balls and armored turrets at Grozon Factory in Magdeburg, Germany.³³

In Magdeburg, where these tests were run, 270 officers of different nationalities were present, and all of them were content with the performance of the rapid firing cannon balls after a week long test firings. When the tests were completed with satisfaction, some of the arm dealers traveled to İstanbul. A few of the palace staff who attempted to make a fortune out of arms sales, were trying to convince Sultan Abdülhamid II to buy rapid firing cannon balls by using influential agents.³⁴ A couple of days prior to signing of the purchasing contract, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's comprehensive report regarding the tests reached to the palace. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was praising the cannon balls and listing their advantages compared to the *mantelli* cannon balls. But he also added that rapid firing cannon balls should not be acquired immediately, reasoning that they would eventually be developed with the upcoming tests. Mahmud Şevket Paşa's appraisal put off the purchasing contract and prevented Ottoman government from making an unnecessary expense.³⁵

Sultan Abdülhamid II was so pleased with the determined work done by Mahmud Şevket Paşa as well as his preventing the contract to be signed which would put the Ottoman government under obligation of paying hundreds of thousand liras

³³ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 21.

³⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 22.

³⁵ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

debt that, in 1889, he promoted Mahmut Şevket Paşa to be the staff colonel and appointed him to the office of second commander in the commission of testing weapons.³⁶ Now, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was one of the most significant figures who would decide the quality, the model of the arms to be supplied for the Ottoman Army as well as their suitability.³⁷

Within the efforts for supplying modern weaponry to the Army, French factories manufacturing arms presented an armored turret to Sultan Abdülhamid II, in 1894. Again, some people after making money through arms purchasing tried to persuade Sultan Abdülhamid II to make a decision in favor of choosing those turrets. Yet, the Sultan knew better now: he was cautious, so he urged a commission for tests to be assembled and to check the strength of the turrets.³⁸

Now that Sultan Abdülhamid II relied on evaluations of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, he also sent a letter to him through the Embassy in Germany and asked for a report on armored turrets. Hence, another commission to go to France was assembled on 17 April 1894 headed by Mahmud Şevket Paşa and consisting of Navy Colonel Fuad and Military Prefecture. Following several tests held in France, it was reported that those armored turrets were not strong enough to resist the cannon balls currently

³⁶ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 21.

³⁷ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 17.

³⁸ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

being used, and that the purchasing order should rather be cancelled for the time being until their resistance capacity would be developed.³⁹

While Mahmud Şevket Paşa spent most of his time on polygons of arms factories for test firings, he also composed his experiences and wrote articles about the subject. In 1894, he was able to spare some time to write an article in Germany, titled “*Küçük Çaplı Mavzer Tüfeklerine Dair Atlas*” [“Manual for Small Caliber Mauser Rifles”] and sent it to İstanbul. Şakir Paşa presented this piece of writing to Sultan Abdülhamid II. In 1894, on account of this article and other services, the sultan advanced the Paşa’s rank to be a major general.⁴⁰

Working hard throughout the years he spent in Germany, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had worn out. He was so exhausted that, it affected his nervous system. Doctors recommended him to take a long rest without any work at all.⁴¹

Return to İstanbul

Almost lost in his mental faculties, when Mahmud Şevket Paşa had arrived back in İstanbul from Germany, he went straight to his house at Erenköy and secluded himself as the doctors recommended.⁴² In the meanwhile, on 18 April 1897

³⁹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; *Mücâhid-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 8; “Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 May 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

⁴⁰ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 23.

⁴¹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 23.

⁴² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 24.

war broke out with Greeks and Mahmud Şevket Paşa wanted to take part in it. But, when his health did not permit him to go to war, he became more depressed which delayed his cure.⁴³

Even though his health improved partially doctors did not let Mahmud Şevket Paşa to work more than two hours a day. After his return to İstanbul, Dr. Fischer, a German medical doctor who had regularly examined Mahmud Şevket Paşa, recommended him to work as a brigade commander, this would allow him to be outdoors to get fresh air instead of working indoors at the office. Mahmud Şevket Paşa applied to Sultan Abdülhamid II in order to be able to follow the doctor's instructions and requested to be appointed as brigade commander. However he could not get the sultan's consent.⁴⁴ According to one view, the reason why Mahmud Şevket Paşa was declined might be the influence of the palace staff that could not make any money out of the arms purchasing:

They immediately took action as soon as they found out his plea. They kept denouncing Mahmud Şevket Paşa in order to ruin Sultan Hamid's confidence in him. Despite the rumors about him, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had contacted to Veliahd Reşad Efendi secretly and arrived in İstanbul by using his poor health as an excuse. He intended to take command of military units of a few thousands of soldiers... Then, eventually abduct the sultan by this force and throne Reşad Efendi.⁴⁵

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 25.

This was originally implied in an article published in the daily newspaper, *Tanîn* on 18 June 1913. Although there is no clue that Sultan Abdülhamid II received a report about Mahmud Şevket Paşa, it is obvious that there were “some” among the palace staff who were annoyed with Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s rapid rising.

Sultan Abdülhamid II, however, did not completely turn down this man, a hardworking officer who prevented the government to undertake many redundant debts. A few months later on 13 June 1899, Sultan Abdülhamid II appointed Mahmud Şevket Paşa to Imperial Arsenal of Ordnance and Artillery. This way, Sultan Abdülhamid II not only made Mahmud Şevket Paşa happy but also responded the request of palace staff.

At his new office Mahmud Şevket Paşa found himself in the middle of a power struggle. Since the rivalry between Arsenal Marshall Zeki Paşa and Military School Head Inspector Zülüflü (of palace guards), İsmail Paşa, one of the most privileged police officers of Sultan Abdülhamid II had been going on.⁴⁶ Zülüflü İsmail Paşa disliked Mahmud Şevket Paşa. It is also said that in his report he presented to Sultan Abdülhamid II about Mahmud Şevket Paşa, which was found in the archives at Yıldız Palace, he wrote, “Devil (*yezîd*) Mahmûd is the most dangerous person for you.”⁴⁷ Arsenal Marshall Zeki Paşa was quite aware of Zülüflü İsmail Paşa’s hostile feelings for Mahmud Şevket Paşa. And since Ziya Paşa considered Zülüflü İsmail Paşa an enemy, he was careful to find colleagues who would not cooperate with İsmail Paşa.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

Because, Zeki Paşa believed that Mahmud Şevket Paşa would fit into that category, he also supported his appointment.⁴⁸

“Zeki Paşa not only benefited from Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s military duties, but also assigned civil tasks to him.”⁴⁹ For instance, in the budget commission assembled in 1897 under the supervision of Minister of Public Works, Mahmud Celâleddin Paşa and in several other budget commissions supervised by Zihni Paşa and Ziya Paşa, Mahmud Şevket Paşa also took role and participated at the meetings. His tasks at such commissions allowed him to investigate the inner works of the Ottoman Empire. After a short period of time, Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s rank would be advanced again, this time with the application of Arsenal Marshall Ali Rıza Paşa he would be a division general on 18 May 1901 and rewarded by Sultan Abdülhamid II with The Mecidiye Order.⁵⁰

Mahmud Şevket Paşa served as the vice president of Test and Inspection Department for a while, and then in 1898, became the president. In the meanwhile, he was also participating in the military commission assemblies called on by Minister of War Rıza Paşa at Yıldız Palace where he was invited specially.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 27; “Merhûmun Terceme-i Hâli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p.1.

⁵¹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

The Telegram Line in Hejaz

One other significant policy of Sultan Abdülhamid II period was the connection maintained between the central government in İstanbul and several telegram stations throughout the empire. Administrative centralization, the main theme of the Tanzimat Reforms could only be realized during Sultan Abdülhamid II period with the help of outstanding improvement of the communication media. It was during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II that telegram poles were erected rapidly and lines reached every provincial center throughout the Empire, therefore, central government would for the first time be able to communicate with its provincial offices directly.⁵² Now, İstanbul could reach to the farthest areas; get news from there and then engage in the recent developments. Still, it was not that easy for the central government to get a control over the provincial governments, because local authorities sabotaged all the incentives.⁵³

While, on one side having constructed the Hejaz Railroad in order to strengthen central authority, Sultan Abdülhamid II also considered installing telegram lines between Mecca and Medina. But he was having difficulty to find someone suitable for the job.⁵⁴ Finally he made up his mind: being familiar with the area, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the only person who could handle this task. Sultan Abdülhamid II posted him to the Hejaz in 1901, and ordered a travel allowance of two hundred

⁵² Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), pp. 119–120.

⁵³ Yavuz Selim Karakışla. "II. Abdülhamid'in Saltanatı (1876–1909): Kızıl Sultan mı? Ulu Hakan mı?" *Toplumsal Tarih*, Cilt. XVIII, No. 103, July 2002, pp. 10–19.

⁵⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 28.

liras.⁵⁵ When Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assigned to this duty, many thought that he was meant to be deported from İstanbul, hence sent to exile. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the other hand, did not expect that appointment at all. Assuming that he was exiled to Arabian deserts after he had spent many years serving for the imperial palace, he too was disappointed. According to many sources,⁵⁶ the appointment was in fact an “exile”⁵⁷ concocted by the palace staff in order to get Mahmud Şevket Paşa out of their way. However, in the memoirs of Tahsin Paşa, general secretary to Sultan Abdülhamid II, it is stated that Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not sent to exile but posted to the Hejaz to perform a secret mission:

Late Mahmud Şevket Paşa was rather highly appreciated by Sultan Hamid. According to the memoirs of Von der Goltz Paşa, His Majesty appointed Mahmud Şevket Paşa to the Commission of Scientific Research at the Arsenal and also commissioned him to supervise the construction of telegram lines in the Hejaz and Damascus. Mahmud Paşa’s duty was evidently said to be that much. In fact, bearing his mental and military faculties in mind, Sultan Hamid had confidentially ordered Mahmud Şevket Paşa to get reports about the plots set up around the Hejaz, Egypt and Syria, and to take steps and actions against them.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ BOA, İrade-i Husûsiye, Genel No: 159, Husûsî No: 32, 17.Ra.1319; “Merhumun Terceme-i Hâli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, s. 28; “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; “Mahmud Şevket Paşa,” *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, Nisan 1325, p. 749.

⁵⁷ It may be that the impression Mahmud Şevket Paşa was “exiled” was given on purpose so that he could perform his duty in the Hejaz easily. The actual cause of this duty was rather collecting information about the separatists than constructing telegram lines.

⁵⁸ *Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1990), p. 400.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to accept this new task however, though reluctantly. There was only one thing he could do now, to go to the Hejaz as soon as possible and to accomplish his duty in the best way possible. But, no matter how hard Mahmud Şevket Paşa tried to get used to this “inevitable” task, an incident he experienced had put him down and hurt his feelings.

As a result of an incident,⁵⁹ two of the eunuchs of the palace, Şerif Nasır Paşa and his brother Şerif Bey, were sent to exile to the Hejaz. For the Hejaz trip of the convoy consisting of the maids and the eunuchs, a steamboat was allocated named Mürüvvet by Ministry of Marine.⁶⁰ When Sultan Abdülhamid II had ordered Mahmud Şevket Paşa to join this convoy, Mahmud Şevket Paşa felt so miserably that he believed he was exiled out of İstanbul.⁶¹

One of the officers from Test and Inspection Department, Captain Hacı Mahmud accompanied Mahmud Şevket Paşa in this trip.⁶² One month journey on a rotten and slow boat wore Mahmud Şevket Paşa out and his illness recurred. Nonetheless, determined to complete his task successfully, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had put up with it and remained calm. As soon as the steamboat landed in Jeddah Harbor he started working.

⁵⁹ For further information: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 29–31.

⁶⁰ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanin*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 31.

⁶¹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 31–32.

⁶² BOA, İrâde-i Husûsiye, Genel No: 166, Husûsî No: 37, 22.Ra.1319.

First thing Mahmud Şevket Paşa did in Jidda was trying to make friends with Mecca Emir Avnürrefik Paşa and the Hejaz Governor Ahmed Ratib Paşa. His effort was not fruitless. Avnürrefik Paşa and Ahmed Ratib Paşa helped him to find locations where he could get materials for the construction of telegram lines.⁶³ Yet, their attitude was not sincere at all. Since both Avnürrefik Paşa and Ahmed Ratib Paşa were after their own interest, they did not like the idea of a fast communication line with İstanbul. It would enable reports to reach in İstanbul within a matter of a day or a few hours.

Mecca Emir Avnürrefik Paşa and Ahmed Ratib Paşa were in agreement with each other. They had been making a fortune from the pilgrims during the Hajj season. Also the military units stationed in the Hejaz were a good source of income: they were selling them food and doing their transfers. It was obvious that neither Avnürrefik Paşa nor Ahmed Ratib Paşa would give up that kind of income.⁶⁴ So, in time they changed their attitude; attempts started to disrupt the communication lines.

One other problem faced during the construction of the Hejaz Telegram Lines was the difficulty to keep the region safe. While Mahmud Şevket Paşa was working in the construction site, he was concerned about the local tribes sabotaging the telegram poles at various locations.⁶⁵ In addition to this, when the

⁶³ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 32.

⁶⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 32–33.

⁶⁵ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 22.

transfer of the materials required for the construction became a problem Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not able to move a pole from one point to the other was impossible. Because Mecca Sheriff kept all means of transportation, e.g. camels, mules and porters and he demanded a high price for their usage.⁶⁶ And on top of this when Ahmed Ratib Paşa did not provide the military force to defend the lines unless he was paid 30,000 liras,⁶⁷ things became more complicated, so much that installation of telegram lines had almost reached to an end.

A little while after Mahmud Şevket Paşa arrived in the Hejaz, he discovered all benefit related to connections and reported them to İstanbul by cable. In the telegram he sent to the capital he mentioned that the Governor of the Hejaz had not defended the lines, that he did not take necessary steps to arrest the saboteurs and that he set many difficulties for the men working on the construction site.⁶⁸

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had realized that under those conditions he faced in the Hejaz construction of telegram lines could not be completed. And, since he did not get along well with Ahmed Ratib Paşa and other tribe leaders, he would rather leave the area.⁶⁹ İstanbul approved his request and asked him to put all the

⁶⁶ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 32–33.

⁶⁷ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 23.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

materials in a warehouse in Jidda Harbor and hand over to the commander in charge. However, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to delay his departure because of the cholera epidemic and returned to İstanbul as a “hajji” after his nine-month assignment.⁷⁰

As soon as he arrived in İstanbul, Mahmud Şevket Paşa presented a comprehensive report about the conditions in the Hejaz. In his report he mentioned the source of wealth of Mecca Sheriff Avnürrefik and Ahmed Ratib Paşa, he mentioned the theater staged on the region and indicated the role of the consuls of the Great Powers.⁷¹ Even though it was decided that the report to be recited in the cabinet, Minister of Marine Hasan Paşa stopped it saying: “It is common knowledge that condition of that region is horrendous. Why need to worry to no avail reciting the contents of the report which has evidently been penned in a touching discourse.”⁷² Later on, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not inquired any further information about the conditions in the Hejaz and he went back to his previous office in the Test and Inspection Department.

In the meantime, since Bulgaria ordered rapid firing cannon balls to France and, Serbia to German-Austrian Empire, Ottoman government had felt that they

⁷⁰ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 25.

⁷¹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 3.

had to reschedule their purchasing to an earlier date.⁷³ They did not need to wait for the artillery to be more developed. Since Mahmud Şevket Paşa followed the recent developments closely, he did not hesitate to raise an objection against this to the military commission assembled in the Yıldız Palace. On the other hand, due to tight cash, purchasing was a problem. The government made a loan agreement for 2.500.000 liras with Germany. With this amount received artillery and munitions purchasing order was made to German Krupp Factory.⁷⁴

Although Mahmud Şevket Paşa's Hejaz journey had many dangers and difficulties the climate of the region he stayed for nine months improved his health. He almost cured from his illness. Consequently, he could spare more time for reading and writing. Yet he did not spend long hours as he used to do but, paying attention to Doctor Fischer's advice he did not miss any opportunity to request being appointed to a military unit as a commander.⁷⁵

Kosovo Governorship

Finally on 16 April 1905, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's expectations had borne fruit when he was posted as Kosovo Governor. In the decree concerning the appointment of Mahmud Şevket Paşa to the post of Kosovo Governor, it was stated that due to the "importance of the existing conditions" in Kosovo,

⁷³ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 27.

⁷⁴ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 27

⁷⁵ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

Divisional Lieutenant General Seyfullah Paşa was ordered to fulfill his primary duty urgently as the deputy governor until the arrival of the new governor.⁷⁶ This time Mahmud Şevket Paşa left İstanbul willingly and was happy to leave the polluted air of the city.

Before he left for Kosovo in the beginning of 1905, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was promoted to be the Divisional Lieutenant General. Meanwhile, Kosovo province had been annexed to the “administration of the tri-provinces.” Because of the international extent of the Macedonian problem, Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s appointment evoked suspicions.⁷⁷ In 1904, the bandit leaders in exile who were arrested during a military mission and sent to inland Anatolia were pardoned by force of Russian and Austrian governments and upon their return to Kosovo, the situation there became worse.⁷⁸ The government lost its authority in all the subdivisions (*sancak*) but Skopje, Şemsi Paşa, whose rank would be advanced to lieutenant general was increasing his power in the area. Mahmud Şevket Paşa worked day and night; on one side he strived to bring an end to the turmoil in Albania, and, on the other, he tried to prevent the damage Bulgarian and Serbian bandits caused.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ BOA, İrade-i Husûsiye, Genel No: 128, Husûsî No: 56, 13.S.1323.

⁷⁷ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 28; “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

⁷⁸ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 3.

When Mahmud Şevket Paşa arrived in Kosovo as the Governor, he found himself amidst a big turmoil. Attempts of the great powers had encouraged ethnic and other movements put the region on fire. The reforms started by the Ottoman Empire in response to these developments bellowed the fire but deepen it. Albanian local notables and men of religion (*eşraf* and *ulema*) inhabited in Kosovo had begun opposing the government when reforms limited the authority of the sultan, where Christians were recruited to the police force and the scale turned in favor of Serbs.⁸⁰

Mahmud Şevket Paşa settled in Skopje, the capital of Kosovo province. Initially he inspected the recent developments of the region. Then, he started fighting against the rebel bandits.⁸¹ However it did not seem so easy to stop the turmoil. Even after one year since Mahmut Şevket Paşa held the office, public order was not completely maintained because of the political, social and economic structure of the region. Albanian bandits continued to violate the Serbian border plundering Serbian households. At the same time Bulgarians were busy with arms smuggling via Serbia. In attempt to reestablish the order and impede the activities of the bandits Mahmud Şevket Paşa had mobilized troops to restore the order.⁸²

⁸⁰ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 29.

⁸¹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 36.

⁸² Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 32.

During the promulgation of the Second Constitutional Period on 23 July 1908, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was holding the office of Kosovo Governorship. This was no secret neither in Salonika nor in Monastir; arrangements made by the Committee of Union and Progress for the following period was already known eight months. Yet, given that the main policy of the Committee of Union and Progress was established in September 1906 as a secret, this fact was not revealed by the government. One other reason why the committee could not be traced was that some of the high rank officers in Macedonia were also involved in the organization. In May 1908, the committee began considering revealing itself to the public instead of continuing to be underground in order to be able to handle the situation in Macedonia under control. Hence, a decision was taken in Salonika to introduce the committee to the great powers of Europe. The message intended to be given to those countries was that only the committee would be able to end the chaos in Macedonia. But none of the authorities intended to acknowledge a secret society. In the meanwhile, the committee continued its efforts for arrangements and in July 1908, was in a position to start and manage a revolt.⁸³

After the committee exposed itself to the public, spies of Sultan Abdülhamid II immediately took actions terrifying the committee members. Thus, the Committee of Union and Progress decided to strike back determinedly

⁸³ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1995), p. 16.

and ruthlessly at the spies.⁸⁴ As some “significant” figures of Salonika and Monastir were assassinated in those days, secret agents commissioned by the Sultan Abdülhamid II had begun arriving in. They stopped over Skopje as well. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been assisting the committee provided that no news would be leaked to İstanbul, and with the support of the committee members he did not let any assassinations plotted in Skopje. This way, unlike Salonika and Monastir he did not draw much attention to this town in Kosovo Province.⁸⁵

Towards the end of June in 1908, principal of the Austrian School applied to Mahmud Şevket Paşa for his permission to organize a daily trip for the students to the nearby woods in Firzovik. Although the Paşa were aware of the hostility against the foreigners in Northern Albania, given the fact that the students are locals, and that some of them were Muslims, he approved it. The news spread rapidly: There was no one left unaware of the fact that Austrian School students were going on a daily expedition to Firzovik. When Mahmud Şevket Paşa discovered that the local households were discontent about this trip, he forbade the students going to Firzovik. Yet, the rifle was triggered; local men were rushing to the place where the students were expected with their guns on their shoulders. According to some, this was a matter of honor, since it was unacceptable for girls and boys to be together. Some others were concerned that such events were indication of Austrians plans to invade Macedonia. Rumors

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁵ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

spread around fast. Consequently, armed Albanians from Prizren, Priştine and Yokova were flooding the meeting place.⁸⁶ During the demonstrations when Şemsi Paşa, together with a couple of battalions and other volunteers had passed by Firzovik on their way to Monastir to reach Resne where Niyazi Bey and his fellow men took to the hills, the demonstrators got more excited.

Declaration of Liberty

As soon as having heard about the meeting in Firzovik, considering taking an advantage of the event to affirm the Constitution, the Committee of Union and Progress commissioned a few of the prominent figures among its members. At the same time, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had assigned Galip Bey, then the Kosovo Gendarme Commander and Mufti of Skopje Hasan Fehmi Efendi to stop the demonstrations in Firzovik. Afterwards Necip Draga Bey also joined them.⁸⁷ Both Galip Paşa and Necip Draga Bey were in fact among the leaders of the committee. Galip Bey and Necip Draga launched their propaganda among the Albanians together with the twenty committee members.⁸⁸ Upon their arrival at the meeting place, the two prominent figures of the Committee of Union and

⁸⁶ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi: İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), p. 35.

⁸⁷ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi: İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 36.

Progress launched their campaign in favor of the Constitution. They wired cables to main subdivisions of Kosovo Province to invite the notables to the meeting.⁸⁹

Reports against Mahmud Şevket Paşa who was posted to his office in Salonika by Sultan Abdülhamid II were fruitless. Şemsi Paşa, who was commissioned to follow Niyazi Bey, was assassinated in Monastir and the committee proclaimed its victory. The meeting, which started off as a simple protest in Firzovik, had turned out to be a revolt where constitutional government was demanded.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa gave his support to the revolt by not administering violence against the thousands of demonstrators gathered in Firzovik. In the early morning hours of 7 July 1908, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was at his desk waiting to hear the resolution taken at the meeting in the Plain of Firzovik. Telegram Bureau Director hurried to his office saying, "His Excellency! A group of men has just rushed in our administration center. They demand this message to be wired to İstanbul immediately. I would follow your instructions. What should I do...?" And he handed the piece of paper to Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Looking over the message instantly, Paşa returned it to the man and instructed him to do his job.⁹⁰

Sultan Abdülhamid II, in the meanwhile, watched the developments in Firzovik through the eyes of his private spies. When Şemsi Paşa was killed on the

⁸⁹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

⁹⁰ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 37–38.

way to Monastir, going after Niyazi Bey in the mountains of Resne, the Sultan thought that he could no longer expect that the rebellion would be suppressed without shedding blood. As the number of protestors in the Plain of Firzovik increased continuously, Sultan Abdülhamid II had no other alternative but to declare constitutional government. Sultan was also trying to find ways to use the opportunity to strengthen his power. There was only one way though: to take the step before the Committee of Union and Progress.

The strict censorship of the Hamidian regime had prevented the news from Macedonia from reaching the public. Hence the Sultan could successfully present his own version of events, which was that he had been misled by treacherous advisers into thinking that the country was not ready for constitutional rule, but that he now, and of his own accord, had come to the conclusion that the time was ripe.⁹¹

Thus, by bringing the constitution back in force, Sultan Abdülhamid II sought to gain respect from the people to protect his power, while, at the same time to get their support. Seeing that the declaration of constitution could no longer be postponed, Sultan Abdülhamid II had approved the declaration on 23 July 1908. This was a turning point both for the Ottoman Empire and Mahmud Şevket Paşa. From that date on Mahmud Şevket would rapidly ascend in power and uphold the control of events.

While the constitution was celebrated in Salonika and Monastir, the conflict continued in Skopje. Notables of the town were not allowed to join the meeting,

⁹¹ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 139.

so the Albanians gathered in Firzovik advanced towards Skopje after they had their message wired to the Sultan. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was concerned that if they went in town, the chances of clashing with the Bulgarians, Serbians and the Greeks would be high which would cause trouble for the constitutional monarchy. Mahmud Şevket Paşa immediately started negotiating with the protestors to persuade them to stay six miles out of Skopje, but he also took measures by ordering the military units to shoot them, if the demonstrators storm into the town by force. When Mahmud Şevket Paşa discovered that some prisoners held in Skopje Prison would be released, he prevented their release.⁹²

The security forces stationed in Skopje, consisting of 300 soldiers and approximately 300 policemen were already armed. In addition to these forces, the artillerymen were posted at strategic locations around town to stop the Albanians going in Skopje. Nonetheless, the protestors fall apart in effect of the precautions taken as well as fruitful negotiations and Skopje was back in order shortly. Only after the order was sustained, it was possible to celebrate the constitutional monarchy on 26 July in 1908.⁹³

Although Mahmud Şevket Paşa supported the constitutional monarchy, according to the letter he wrote to Von der Goltz Paşa on 27 July 1908, he thought that the Ottoman society was not advanced enough for the constitution:

⁹² "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, pp. 3-4.

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 4.

But for someone who is well aware of the situation in Ottoman Empire, since the plot and the heir, as well as the entire palace household employed by the palace and the prince are enslaved by the Ottoman dynasty, and because they will never get the education required for the office they will one day hold, and when the two forms of government are compared with each other, there is no doubt that the constitutional monarchy facilitates more competence for governing the country. For this reason I would like to inform you that your application is worth considering.⁹⁴

Although Mahmud Şevket Paşa in general seemed pleased with the declaration of constitutional monarchy, in his letter he sounded precautionary. By the statement saying “your pupil’s action is worth considering” towards the end of the letter, he implied the support he had given to the Committee of Union and Progress during the declaration of constitutional monarchy. In the following lines, Mahmud Şevket Paşa mentioned that even though he did not approve the military to be involved in politics, under the prevailing circumstances in order to save the country from being disintegrated he had to violate his principle, but in the meantime he hinted his future views about the military and politics relationship:

It is possible that some groups will by no means approve the army interference for getting involved in this political movement. They may be right. However, in order to enable rapid decisions to be taken, to prevent the intervention of the countries whose benefits lie on these pieces of land, as well as to avoid Ottoman Empire to be disintegrated, the Army could not possibly stay out

⁹⁴ *Tabsin Paşa'nın Yıldız Hatıraları*, p. 369.

of the movement. For this reason it was for the Army to take the lead.⁹⁵

While the intervention of the army was inevitable according to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, he could not stand up for the military forces to get involved in politics either. Because this was one of the prohibitions required to maintain discipline within the army. No matter how hard Mahmud Şevket Paşa supported the military forces to stay away from politics, he himself was always in the center of political events and in case future conditions required, he kept the possible intervention routes open:

But, now that the intention is well known, in order not to violate the military discipline the officers should no longer participate in political activities. Nonetheless they should not stop being watchful. Because the work of art they have created cannot be allowed to be re-destroyed by the forces of ancient régime.⁹⁶

Predictions made by Mahmud Şevket Paşa for the relationship between the army and the politics include both anticipations for the future and warnings for the danger awaiting the constitutional monarchy. Besides, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not mistaken for most of his forewarnings. When the revolt, renowned as the counter-revolution of 31 March 1909, erupted against the constitutional monarchy, he could prevent the forces of ancient régime from destroying the work of art created by the Action Army under his command. Another remarking point in the letter stressed by Mahmud Şevket Paşa is about the military

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 369.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 370.

command justifying its intervention in politics. Both in the pre-republican and post-republican periods, be it during the constitutional or the republican system, the Army has always considered itself as a creator unit and sees itself entitled to authorize the fight against any possible “anti-revolutionary” attempts. This kind of “perception of missionary behavior regarding the situation” was not only characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, but has also been in practice in modern Turkey, and at the same time was a means of justifying military intervention.

During the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period, the role of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his connection with the Committee of Union and Progress is worth studying from the point of researchers. Albeit Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not a member of the committee, he followed its activities closely and supported them implicitly. He explained the reason why he had not directly involved in the process until the Declaration of the Constitutional Period as he was the General Governor of Kosovo, and the circumstances allowed him only for “legal action.”⁹⁷

Mahmud Şevket Paşa not only gave priority for the security and order in the years he had held office in Skopje, but also for the development of the region. He had spared 40.000-50.000 liras for public works and at the same time he raised the assets of the municipality from 3.000-4.000 liras up to 8.000-9.000 liras. Likewise, he had several elementary school buildings constructed as well as a

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 369.

bridge,⁹⁸ a few sea ports, and a 4 miles long railroad, a hospital with a capacity of 1000 beds, a prison for 300 people capacity, a bakery and many teahouses. He also completed the elementary school founded by Hafız Paşa and the theater building by Şakir Paşa, and with the machinery he transferred he had the town lined with pipes for water supply.⁹⁹

Third Army Commandership

On 25 August 1908, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been appointed to the commandership of the Third Ottoman Army, replacing Field Marshall İbrahim Paşa. At the time of the appointment, there was neither order nor military discipline in the Third Ottoman Army because of the role that specific army played during the establishment of the Constitution hunting bandits on the hills.¹⁰⁰

As soon as Mahmud Şevket Paşa held his new office, he tried improving the current military divisions and issued a memorandum forbidding all military staff to get involved in politics but only to deal with military matters.¹⁰¹ While, on one hand, he strived to reset discipline within the army, on the other hand Mahmud Şevket Paşa also challenged the danger the Constitutional government had been

⁹⁸ Later this bridge was named after his name.

⁹⁹ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 43–44.

facing.¹⁰² His efforts would be appreciated by the Committee of Union and Progress leaders and would contribute in climbing up to the power in the following years. As a matter of fact, on 29 November 1908, when General Inspector of Rumelia Region, Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa had been asked to go to the capital to take part in the Cabinet as the minister of internal affairs, his vacancy was filled by Mahmud Şevket Paşa who was appointed as the acting General Inspector of Rumelia in addition to his current duty.¹⁰³ More, he was also assigned as the chairman to the Financial Committee of the Three Provinces (*Vilâyet-i Selase Mâliye Komisyonu*), consisting of Austrian, Italian, and Russian representatives.¹⁰⁴

Also, at the time of his new appointment, the political agenda included the declaration of independence by Bulgaria, annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria, and the bandit gangs taking up the hill in the Balkans. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had spent all his time to re-establish the order throughout the region by arming the elements loyal to the Ottoman Empire by combining all the small task forces scattered all around the region. One more assignment assumed by Mahmud Şevket Paşa towards the spring of 1909 was to represent the Grand

¹⁰² Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 43.

¹⁰³ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, if any problems occurred in Bosnia from legal, administrative or military point of view.¹⁰⁵

Since he became the chairman of Financial Committee of the Three Provinces (*Vilâyet-i Selse Mâliye Komisyonu*) in November 1908, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had given good impression to the foreign members. During performing this duty, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had many experiences on the economic problems affecting the Rumelia Region of the Ottoman Empire. In March 1909 seventy percent of the budget totaling to 164,000,000 liras allocated for the Financial Committee was reserved for the Army. The foreign members of the Committee had been criticizing Mahmud Şevket Paşa for not paying the salaries of the military staff, and also for not paying the wages of military contractors on a regular basis. In reply to those complaints, Mahmud Şevket Paşa explained that the creditors and the staff could not be paid regularly due to the urgent situations,¹⁰⁶ however, he added that the payments would be made as of February. But his efforts for the betterment of the economic conditions of the region would be cut off when the 31 March Uprising broke out.¹⁰⁷

The 31 March Uprising and Commandership of Action Army

¹⁰⁵ Glenn Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁶ It was the time when the Third Army weaponry was renewed.

¹⁰⁷ Glenn Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, p. 45.

It was not even one year after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period on 23 July 1908, when an anti-constitutional upheaval, known as the 31 March Uprising broke out in İstanbul. The Committee of Union and Progress was the largest political movement in the post-constitutional period, yet it did not take the power in its own hands. Firstly, because Sultan Abdülhamid II made the public believe that he had taken the leading role in declaring the constitutional monarchy, the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress did not feel strong enough to dismiss the Sultan. Secondly, most of the members of the committee did not have the experience and depth to meet the political expectations of the Ottoman society. This forced the Committee of Union and Progress to govern behind the scenes. Besides their lack of age and seniority, since the members of the Committee of Union and Progress did not have enough experience to hold high rank offices in the administration, they were also hesitant to assume responsibility.¹⁰⁸ The committee preferred to leave politics in the hands of the existing cabinet under Grand Vizier Said Paşa and acted as a “watchdog” with a mission to guard the new found constitutional freedom, interfering in the politics when regarded necessary.¹⁰⁹

As observed during the process of Declaration of the Second Constitution, Sultan Abdülhamid II had no intention to hand the power over to the Committee of Union and Progress. Political conflicts aroused occasionally because of the attempts to take the politics under the dual control of both the committee and the Sultan. The

¹⁰⁸ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 141; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 32.

first political crisis that the Committee of Union and Progress was involved in broke out when the Sultan wanted to appoint the ministers of war and marine directly, instead of merely approving the choice made by the Grand Vizier. Because the office which appointed these two ministers would be able to control the military forces as well, the committee believed that allowing the Sultan to consolidate his powers on these two important posts would weaken the maneuvering power of the committee.¹¹⁰ And, when Grand Vizier Said Paşa defended the Sultan during the crisis, the committee asked him to resign and on 6 August 1909 replaced him with a Cypriot Turkish, Kâmil Paşa, with the reputation of being a dedicated pro-British.¹¹¹

Another development of significance during the post-Constitution became the elections being held in November 1908, for the first time after a long-term of absolutism. The Committee of Union and Progress had been unrivalled in the first elections. In addition to the Balkan provinces, the committee also intensified its efforts of getting organized in all provinces of the Ottoman Empire, therefore the Committee of Union and Progress was the most equipped political candidate. Then, there was the Ottoman Liberal Party (*Osmanlı Abrar Fırkası*),¹¹² founded by the followers of Prince Sabahaddin. Because Ottoman Liberal Party was just a very newly

¹¹⁰ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 37.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 141–142.

¹¹² Ottoman Liberal Party was established on 14 September 1908 by the followers of Prince Sabahaddin in order to have a powerful opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress. Nureddin Feruh Bey was one of the founders with Ahmet Samim Bey, a journalist, who would be killed by the Unionists in 1910. Although Prince Sabahaddin did not take part in the management, his close friends were in contact with the organization, such as Ahmet Fazlı, Mahir Said, Celaeddin Arif and Nureddin Ferruh. For more information on Ottoman Liberal Party, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt. I: *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908–1918*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984), pp. 142–170.

formed organization, it was not expected to get many votes.¹¹³ As expected, the Committee of Union and Progress had the majority of seats in the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebûsân*) after the elections. However, some of the deputies of the Committee of Union and Progress would turn out to become future opponents.¹¹⁴

In spite of the majority of seats held, the Committee of Union and Progress had not yet acquired enough power to restore political stability and reconciliation in the country. Locked between the increasing opposition of the Ottoman Liberal Party, and the pressure exerted by Islamic conservative groups simultaneously, the Unionists had difficulty in establishing the stability they long desired. When Hasan Fehmi, the editor of *Serbesti*, one of the major newspapers opposing the Union and Progress Party, was assassinated in street in daylight on 6 April 1908; it stimulated the increase of the oppositional strength. His funeral procession next day turned out to be a big meeting and demonstration. In October 1908, oppositional demands had spread out to the streets and during that Ramadan, the bars and theater houses were shut down, taking photographs were forbidden, and women's freedom was restricted. All the accomplishments achieved by the Second Constitution Period were jeopardized piece by piece.¹¹⁵ On 5 April 1908, the opposition groups took one step further and a group of people gathered around the *Volkan* newspaper, established the

¹¹³ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 142.

¹¹⁴ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: Cilt. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi (1908–1918)*, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 143.

Union of Mohammedans Society (*İttihâd-ı Muhammedî Cemiyeti*)¹¹⁶ led by Nakshbendi Sheikh Dervish Vahdeti. Dervish Vahdeti protested the unreligious and worldly ideas of the Unionists, and demanded the introduction of the Islam, the restoration of the *şariat*.¹¹⁷

Even if the Committee of Union and Progress members were aware of the opposition, when on 13 April 1909 (31 March 1325 in Muslim Calendar) this movement turned out to be a revolt demanding Islamic Law, they were devastated.¹¹⁸ On 13 April 1909, soldiers and religious fanatics gathered at Sultan Ahmed Square terrorized the city. A group among them shouting “We demand Islamic Law!” occupied the Ottoman Parliament, murdered the Minister of Justice Nazım Paşa, because he looked alike Ahmed Rıza and executed representative of Latakia Arslan Bey after mistaking him by Hüseyin Cahit Bey.¹¹⁹

The rioters also demanded the grand vizier, ministers of war and marine to be dismissed, some officers supporting the Committee of Union and Progress to be exiled, Chairman of the Parliament Ahmed Rıza Bey to be replaced. Besides, they demanded that Islamic Law should come in force, a general amnesty for the rebellious soldiers should soon be declared, and any demonstration demanding

¹¹⁶ On 3 April 1909 (21 Mart 1325 in Muslim Calendar), Dervish Vahdeti addressed to the public after a religious ceremony held in Saint Sophia Mosque announcing the establishment of *İttihâd-ı Muhammedî Cemiyeti*. This society provoked the opposition against the Constitution with the support of articles issued in the *Volkan* newspaper published by Dervish Vahdeti. For further information, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt.I: *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918*, pp. 182-205.

¹¹⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye’nin Tarihi*, pp. 143–144.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, s. 144.

¹¹⁹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt III: *İttihat ve Terakî*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), p. 406.

Islamic Law should be celebrated by gunfire.¹²⁰ After the riot, a hunt for military academy graduate officers started in the streets of İstanbul. The uprising which had targeted against the Union and Progress, as well as the Constitution initially turned out to be against the “academic” officers provoked by the uneducated officers.¹²¹ In the view of such demands, Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa presented his resignation to the Palace, and a new cabinet led by Ahmed Tevfik Paşa who was known to have close ties with the sultan was appointed. Sultan Abdülhamid II took the opportunity of restoring his power after the 31 March Riot.

Groups opposing Committee of Union and Progress, especially the Ottoman Liberal Party supported the riot and motivated the community to condemn the committee. 31 March Uprising was in fact a military revolt and could have been characterized as show of strength for the “uneducated” (*alaylı*) officers versus “academic” (*mektepli*) officers. It seems that religion was a dynamic prompting the crowds.¹²² Some of the members of the Committee of Union and Progress went underground as soon as they were informed about the riot, and some left İstanbul heading to Salonika. The Ottoman Parliament on the other hand had to bow to the demands of the rioters.

Although the Committee of Union and Progress was overpowered, its influence throughout Macedonia, which was regarded as the heart of their political force,

¹²⁰ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, s 86; Erik Jan Zürcher *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 144.

¹²¹ Zafer Toprak. “11 Nisan İnkılabı ve 10 Temmuz İyd-i Milli'si: İrtica'dan İnkılap'a,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, Cilt. XX, No. 124, Nisan 2004, s. 80; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 64.

¹²² Zafer Toprak. “11 Nisan İnkılabı ve 10 Temmuz İyd-i Milli'si: İrtica'dan İnkılap'a,” pp. 80–81.

continued. Upon hearing the news about the uprising, the members of the Committee of Union and Progress bombarded the palace with wire cables and threats. On 14 April 1909, a meeting was held with the incentive of Mahmud Şevket Paşa at the 11 July Square in Salonika, where people gathered willingly.¹²³ The committee would not give in to the demands of the rioters, but took a resolution to move towards İstanbul together with the Third Army Forces upon receiving a telegram from Ahmed Tevfik Paşa.¹²⁴ As a result of the long lasting negotiations, it was decided that the Third Infantry Battalion stationed in Monastir within the Third Army Forces would be sent to İstanbul. While the battalion was at the railway station waiting for the train to İstanbul, Mahmud Şevket Paşa came along saying, "I do think that they will incite you to fight in İstanbul. Beware of the intrigues! Recruits should obey the higher ranks. And the police should watch the military guards. If not, you shall find me right there to teach you your lesson."¹²⁵

Operation against the rebels was led by the Third Army Commander Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The regular forces under his command were accompanied by voluntary irregular units which mostly consisted of Albanians led by "the hero of 1908 Revolution," Niyazi Bey.¹²⁶ As soon as Mahmud Şevket Paşa saw the Army off, he headed for İstanbul on a private train from Salonika. On the train, Edirne deputy

¹²³ *Mücadele-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 12.

¹²⁴ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, Wednesday, p. 4; Târik Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Cilt III: İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 407.

¹²⁵ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 Haziran 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 45.

¹²⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 145.

Talat Bey had given him the good news that the Imperial Navy would cooperate with the Action Army.¹²⁷ Thus, Mahmud Şevket Paşa suggested that the navy should go and wait a few miles away of Ayastefanos (*Yeşilköy*) coastline.

After a four year turn of duty in the Balkans, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was now in Ayastefanos, İstanbul in order to command the forces which would suppress the rebellion. This would become another turning point in the life of the Paşa. He, who had always tried to keep the military out of politics, would become one of the most influential characters on the political stage, an oppressor during the Martial Law he put in effect following the suppression of the revolt. In some publications supporting the Committee of Union and Progress, such as *Resimli Kitâb*, Mahmud Şevket Paşa would be introduced as a Hero of Freedom, who had saved the country from a big disaster in plenty of articles praising him:

Having seen that timing was all right and ordered the blessed and sacred Ottoman Army to go ahead against the centralized tyranny and injustice on the twelfth day of the disaster, there is no doubt that this honest commander Mahmud Şevket Paşa is one of the biggest men, the biggest commanders in the world.¹²⁸

The commander of the Action Army, Mahmut Şevket Paşa upheld significant power in his hands. When he landed in Ayestafanos he was greeted by the Chairman

¹²⁷ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

¹²⁸ "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa," *Resimli Kitap*, No. 8, April 1325, p. 748.

of the Parliament Ahmed Rıza Bey, in person.¹²⁹ At those very moments, there was a joint meeting (*Meclis-i Milli*) in which both the senators and the deputies participated and headed by the Chief Senator Said Paşa held at the Parliament.¹³⁰ When Mahmud Şevket Paşa came in with the accompany of Ahmed Rıza Bey, Said Paşa made a short speech expressing gratitude to Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the army under his command. Mahmud Şevket Paşa responded him by saying, “We shall either accomplish our goal or die on the streets of İstanbul.” Then, he left among cheers and clapping and headed to the army headquarters at Halkalı.¹³¹

As the circumstances in İstanbul severed day after day, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had seen no reason to wait longer, so the next morning he ordered the military forces he commanded to move towards İstanbul from all four directions. The Action Army forces occupied the powder mill at Makriköy, the barracks at Davutpaşa and Rami, at finally Kâğıthane area. During the military operation at the barracks of Davutpaşa, blows were exchanged with soldiers who had came from the offices of Ministry of War, however the clashes was over shortly.¹³²

¹²⁹ While we go through the daily newspaper *Tanin*, we read that Chairman of the Parliament Ahmed Rıza Bey had greeted him when Mahmut Şevket Paşa arrived in Ayastefanos, in memoirs written by Ahmed Rıza Bey this is not the case. Ahmed Rıza explains their meeting as follows: “... Members of the Parliament were at a meeting discussing the present situation. At that time an adjutant came to inform us and said, ‘Mahmud Şevket Paşa has just landed at Ayastefanos with the Action Army. He would like to see your excellence urgently. So we, Said Paşa and I stood up. But he added, ‘No, he will only talk to Ahmed Rıza Bey,’ and took me to him. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was waiting for in an abandoned house.”

Ahmet Rıza. *Meclis-i Mebûsân ve Ayân Reisi Ahmet Rıza Bey'in Anıları*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1988), p. 38.

¹³⁰ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanin*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³² *ibid.*, p. 4.

Towards evening, Mahmud Şevket Paşa moved his headquarters to Bakırköy. He spent that day sending wire cables. When the day broke, he still gave directions by telegram. Next day, it was almost ten in the morning when the operation had finally come to an end. All the barracks where the rebels were stationed were taken under control. The Action Army had easily captured the Topkapı Palace, Fatih Police Quarters, the Sublime Port, Aziziye Police Station, Tophane, Maçka and İplikhane. Only the soldiers in the barracks of Taşkılla and Beyoğlu resisted against the Action Army, but after a heavy gunfire they had surrendered too.¹³³

Military operation took place only on the European side of the city; Üsküdar and its surroundings were not included. When the operation was completed successfully, Mahmud Şevket Paşa went down to Sirkeci together with his attendants, and there he was joined by a group of cavalry unit posted previously. He took command of the cavalymen to go to the Ministry of War, which was surrounded by surrendered rebellious soldiers. Among them were some groups that he saw off from Salonika. Mahmud Şevket Paşa stood in front of the military units and eyed each and every one of the soldiers. His anger grew when he came by the infantry battalions; he shouted them saying, “You men! What have I told you before departing from Salonika, have I not warned you not to get incited? Have I not mentioned that otherwise I would be right there to teach your lesson? You did not listen to my

¹³³ *Mücadebid-i Hürriyet Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 29.

words. Yet, I have kept my promise. Here I am now to teach your lesson and to punish you as you deserve,” and he turned away.¹³⁴

Mahmud Şevket Paşa now moved his quarters to the offices of the Ministry of War. After suppressing the 31 March Uprising, Martial Law was put into effect in İstanbul and its surroundings and people were warned that any attempt to breach the peace would be severely punished. In fact, when Marshal Law which lays under the authority of the Constitution and the political power was put in force by Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the legitimacy of the government were in fact shaken.¹³⁵

Now that the revolt was suppressed, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was considerate about the voluntary forces registered in the ranks of the Action Army. Some of the thousands of volunteers who had come along to fight with the Action Army against the rebels were first declined. In order not to dispirit the mass of people which comprised almost 2,000 volunteers of different nationalities, those people were enlisted in the Action Army. And now, since the uprising was over, they needed to be sent back to Rumeli. Also, because there were no signs of rebellions left in İstanbul, the Grand Assembly (*Meclis-i Umûmî*) was informed that the parliament might as well be transferred back to Saint Sophia from Ayastefanos. Accordingly, the parliament members returned to Saint Sophia on Monday 26 April 1909 and following meetings

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³⁵ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 110.

would be held there instead of Ayastefanos. Meanwhile, the volunteers were successfully sent back to their hometown, Rumelia.¹³⁶

Dethroning of Sultan Abdülhamid II

Another important problem which had to be solved following the 31 March Uprising was to settle “the dethronement of the sultan issue.” As the leading actor of the riot, the Committee of Union and Progress accused Sultan Abdülhamid II and Union of Mohammedans Society (*İttihâd-ı Muhammedî Cemiyeti*) led by Derviş Vahdeti. In this claim, they depended on the fact that plenty of money had been found in the pockets of the rebels, and also payments to the soldiers were made in gold. Having taken the close ties between the government in England and Ottoman liberals into consideration, the Committee of Union and Progress also suspected that England had incited the revolt behind the scenes. Yet, they did not have any solid proof. Throughout the riot, Sultan Abdülhamid II was cautious not to show on which side he took sides with. He neither supported the rebels, nor took any steps to please them.¹³⁷

Although his role in the riot had not been clearly determined, it was still inevitable for Sultan Abdülhamid II to continue his reign. Dethroning of the sultan had been in the agenda of both the Grand Assembly and the Action Army since the outbreak of the riot. However, the Action Army Commander Mahmud Şevket Paşa

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 147.

had objections to it.¹³⁸ During his meeting with the Chairman of the Parliament Ahmed Rıza Bey, Mahmud Şevket Paşa pointed out that dethroning of the Sultan as intended by both the cabinet and the senate members could not be materialized because the circumstances did not allow it yet:

I have got the message on the way here. The cabinet and the senate discuss dethroning. I convinced the soldiers to fight against the rebels saying, 'We shall overcome the men who are against the Constitution and the Sultan. The lives of the Sultan and our people are in danger'. If they find out that we are the ones who shall dethrone him, we are in trouble. You please explain the senate and the cabinet members that for the moment we should not take any action. When the right time comes I shall let you know ...¹³⁹

The Parliament accepted to stand by the strategy determined by Mahmud Şevket Paşa and put a hold on discussions of dethroning the Sultan for that time. After the revolt was over, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had seen no more reason to start discussions. On the other hand, as a military person he did not wish the Action Army or himself to get involved in process. According to him, the solution lay in the hands of the Parliament. During the Grand Assembly on 26 April 1909 Tuesday, which was held in Saint Sophia with the participation of 240 deputies and 34 senators, the resolution that dethroned Sultan Abdülhamid II was accepted.¹⁴⁰ And,

¹³⁸ *Mücadehid-i Hürriyet Mahmûd Şevket Paşa ve Hareket Ordusu*, p. 27.

¹³⁹ Ahmet Rıza Bey. *Meclis-i Mebûsân ve Ayân Reisi Ahmed Rıza Bey'in Anıları*, p. 38.

¹⁴⁰ İsmail Hâmi Danişmend. *İzâhlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, Cilt. IV, (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1972), p. 376.

the next day the Grand Assmebly declared that Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had been ascended to the throne.¹⁴¹

Mahmud Şevket Paşa refused to give the notice of his dethronement to Sultan Abdülhamid II himself. In the meantime, the he was preoccupied with where to accommodate the deposed Sultan. In the end, he decided that Alatini Kiosk in Salonika would be the best place. But he did not share this information with anybody else, except for his own military staff. Then, he arranged a private train for the deposed Sultan's transportation.¹⁴² And he commissioned Divisional General Hüseyin Hüsnü Paşa and Major Commander Fethi Bey to pick Sultan Abdülhamid II up from Yıldız Palace and take him to the train. So, the arrival of Sultan Abdülhamid II to Salonika was kept as a secret until the next day, when it was publicly announced in the newspapers.¹⁴³

Iron Will Cloaked in Velvet

After the 31 March Uprising, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the savior of the Constitution according to some, and "the Second Conqueror of İstanbul" to some others. Such exaggerated praises were perfect signs of the power and the respect Mahmud Şevket Paşa gained upon suppressing the revolt. During the eleven days of the uprising, both the local and foreign inhabitants of the city had experienced a

¹⁴¹ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 66.

¹⁴² Yavuz Selim Karakışla. *Exile Days of Abdülhamid II in Salomica (1909–1912) and Confiscation of his Wealth*, (Boğaziçi University, unpublished M.A. thesis, 1990), p. 17.

¹⁴³ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

great deal of hard time. The residents of İstanbul, especially the foreigners were excited to see the Commander of the Action Army who had put an end to the chaos in person. French traveler Marcelle Tinayre who had happened be in İstanbul during and after the 31 March Uprising wrote about her meeting with Mahmud Şevket Paşa at the Ministry of War:

Despite his gray hair, a young and fashionable officer Pertev Paşa who reminds me of Parisians, took us to a rather large room shining with bright daylight furnished in red Louis XV style and coffee tables and armchairs polished in gold. The entire staff was up standing; and the General Staff looked at me smiling when I approached. The room was so large that I felt so small in it. But Şevket Paşa put his hand forward and bent his head toward me. And I looked at this man who put his life in danger in order to save his country or die, who hung the Islamist rebels and who would hang himself if he did not succeed.¹⁴⁴

Mahmud Şevket Paşa represented the “master of the moment” and “the spirit of the Revolution” for the foreign residents of İstanbul at the time of the riot. During their talk when Marcelle Tinayre told Mahmud Şevket Paşa “... you do a great job as soon as you put your hands on executions, I should say, they are scared of you!” the Paşa’s reply included his future thoughts in between lines: “True people would not be scared... Others do! Do you see? There will be some more men to be hung. I am here for cleaning. I shall not leave until it is completed.”¹⁴⁵ Truly, he did not leave İstanbul where he returned after a long period of time.

¹⁴⁴ Marcelle Tinayre. *Bir Kadın Gezgini Tinayre'nin Günlüğü: Osmanlı İzlenimleri ve 31 Mart Olayı*, çev. Engin Sunar, (İstanbul: Show Kitap, 1998), pp. 121–122.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 122.

After the 31 March Uprising, the power was in the hands of the Army, especially Mahmud Şevket Paşa.¹⁴⁶ As the Commander of the Action Army, being the savior of the Constitution, Mahmud Şevket Paşa preferred not to lose his authority and did not take role in the cabinet led by Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa upon Sultan Mehmed Reşad V's accession to the throne. In fact, acting on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress, Talat Bey had offered Mahmud Şevket Paşa to form the new cabinet and become the Grand Vizier. But, since Mahmud Şevket Paşa believed that the army should not get involved in politics, he refused this offer. He then offered Ahmed Muhtar Paşa as Grand Vizier, but Ahmed Muhtar also refused this offer for similar reasons. In the end, it was decided that Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa should be the one to form the new cabinet. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had other influences on political power as well; he also refused to take the post of Ministry of War and in turn offered the Commander of Edirne Army, Salih Hulusi Paşa, to the task instead.¹⁴⁷ In his letter to Von der Goltz, Mahmud Şevket Paşa wrote that he had refused both of those two political tasks in order not to lose his influential position and respect which he would later need to restructure the Ottoman army.¹⁴⁸

Outbreak of the 31 March Uprising had shaken the organization of the Committee of Union and Progress in İstanbul. Now the members strived to pull it together, however they were well aware that they had less significance compared to

¹⁴⁶ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakkî: 1908–1914*, p. 70; Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 149.

¹⁴⁷ Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defence of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, pp. 75–76.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, s. 76.

that of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the other hand, tried to fill the authority gap by establishing the Martial Law in İstanbul and appointing the Minister of Arsenal Hurşit Paşa to the head of the Military Council (*Divân-ı Harb-i Örfî*), therefore giving the impression that both the military and political affairs were under his control.¹⁴⁹ At first, non-military members of the Committee of Union and Progress regarded the Martial Law as a “sincere and innocent attempt” and supported it, due to the requirements of the current unstable political and social conditions. Later on, however, they started to accuse the military of taking arbitrary actions irrelevant to the real purpose of the Military Law. According to Hüseyin Cahit, the major cause of arbitrary proceedings was lack of qualification of the Committee of Union and Progress members to govern the country. Furthermore, they were not ready to overtake the power. And, they neither saw the need to be in power by themselves, nor were they capable accomplishing this.¹⁵⁰ In his writings, Hüseyin Cahit frequently pointed out the fact of power struggle upon the outcomes of the suppression of the 31 March Uprising. Since the Committee of Union and Progress could not manage directly and did not have the courage to rise into power fully during the period from the Declaration of the Constitution until the 31 March Uprising, it was inevitable for the Army and especially Mahmud Şevket Paşa to fill in the authority gap. Hüseyin Cahit expressed his concerns as following:

¹⁴⁹ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, pp. 70–71; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁰ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. *Siyasal Anılar*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000), p. 178.

The victory achieved with the initiative of the Action Army resulted in another chaos. Non-military groups in the Union and Progress were left alone by the army members. They were culpable and could not achieve their task ... Then, the Action Army led by Mahmud Şevket Paşa was in charge. The Union and Progress was not on stage.¹⁵¹

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's personality and extraordinary authority overshadowed the Committee of Union and Progress, making its members uncomfortable. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was also aware of this fact. When he went to Germany on 6 September 1909 to supervise the military maneuvers, Mahmud Şevket Paşa admitted to Von der Goltz Paşa that he was more powerful than the Committee of Union and Progress which had been useful both for him and the government. When Von der Goltz Paşa suggested him to establish a military dictatorship, Mahmud Şevket Paşa objected to this idea explaining that it would be a terrible example for the future and would cause uprisings all over the country.¹⁵²

When Mahmud Şevket Paşa hit the road from Salonika to save İstanbul, he had no intention to allow his power and authority to be restrained by the Constitution. Now that the 31 March Uprising justifying the legitimacy of the Action Army had been suppressed, his commandership could not presumably be sustained. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to find a legal excuse for his presence in İstanbul. Upon his plea, on 15 May 1909, he was appointed as the General Inspector of the First, Second and the Third Ottoman Armies by Minister of War Salih Paşa with an additional salary of

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁵² Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, s. 79.

15,000 kuruş.¹⁵³ It was Hadi Paşa who acted as commander of the Third Army, and who had been officially appointed to the post in place of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Thus, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had a brand new post arranged in the Ottoman Army to serve his interests and to solve the legitimacy of his presence in İstanbul.¹⁵⁴ In his new office he was posted to, he did not even report to the cabinet which was supervised by both the Minister of War and civil authority.¹⁵⁵

Mahmud Şevket Paşa intended to keep the Army out of political affairs and modernize the organization in the army. However, it seemed to be not so easy to accomplish this, since both the Army and the staff officers had been involved in politics since the Declaration of the Constitution. Some members of the Committee of Union and Progress objected to this view, claiming that the Army could not be separated from their committee, and therefore could not ignore the political movements in which the Committee of Union and Progress had already been involved. As experienced during the 31 March Uprising, the Committee of Union and Progress had only the Army to rely on.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, they had to support the ideas of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, because since the Second Constitution,

¹⁵³ BOA, İrade-i Askeriyye, Genel No: 97, Husûsî No: 35, 27.R.1327; "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanin*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 149; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 62. With the appointment of Mahmud Şevket Paşa to the post of General Inspectorship of the First, Second and the Third Ottoman Armies, the salaries of the Lieutenant Generals and Divisional Generals were increased to 12.500 *kuruş* and salaries of the Field Marshalls were increased to 13.500 *kuruş*. This increase in the salaries of the high ranking officials can be regarded as a "hush money".

¹⁵⁴ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 71; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, pp. 134–135.

¹⁵⁵ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 63.

military interference had been contradictory to the main principles of the central and modern government which the Committee of Union and Progress had aimed for.¹⁵⁷ Many ranks had been eliminated within the Army as instructed by Mahmud Şevket Paşa, many officers were forced to retire and an entire restructuring process started. In this process, non-academic (*Alaylı*) military staff who got to higher ranks during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II had also been abolished from the Ottoman Army.¹⁵⁸

One other issue which Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to see after he was appointed as the General Inspector for the First, Second and the Third Armies was to bring order and discipline back to the Ottoman Army. Modernization efforts started in cooperation with the Germans during Sultan Abdülhamid II period continued. For this purpose, Mahmud Şevket Paşa and one of the major generals, Tevfik Bey, left for Germany together on 7 September 1909 upon receiving invitation from German Empire to make observations about the recent innovations in German Army during the military exercises there at which 130,000 soldiers participated. According to the official decision taken at the Cabinet meeting 200 lira travel allowance was given to Mahmud Şevket Paşa and 120 lira was given to Tevfik Bey.¹⁵⁹ During these military

¹⁵⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, pp. 149–150.

¹⁵⁹ BOA, İrade-i Askeriyye, Genel No: 1280, Husûsî No: 19, 11.Ş.1327; “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

maneuvers German Empire rewarded Mahmud Şevket Paşa with the imperial Red Hawk medal.¹⁶⁰

Mahmud Şevket Paşa took the opportunity to observe the recent innovations in some of the German military organizations closely. He also received another medal during one of many visits he paid to Mauser Factory from the King of Wurtenburg.¹⁶¹ But this visit had annoyed the government in France and was expressed in a diplomatic language.¹⁶² For this reason, in order not cause a diplomatic crisis, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had decided to pay a visit to France as well. When he arrived in Paris, he heard about the French soldiers killed in an airplane accident in Tiran, and he got on his uniform and went to their funeral. The French military appreciated his kind gesture. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was honored with *Légion d'Honneur* by the French President. Here again, the Paşa had spent some time visiting some of the French military organizations.¹⁶³

Modernization of the Ottoman Army

Upon his return from France and Germany, in order to see the results of the military reforms he had been working on for a long time, Mahmud Şevket Paşa

¹⁶⁰ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Hasan Amca. *Doğmayan Hürriyet: Bir Devrimin İçyüzü 1908-1918*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1989), p. 98.

¹⁶² Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, s 136; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 74.

¹⁶³ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; Hasan Amca. *Doğmayan Hürriyet: Bir Devrimin İçyüzü 1908-1918*, p. 97.

organized military maneuvers to be exercised with the participation of 25,000 soldiers on the Seyyidler Plain between İstanbul and Edirne. Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had also observed the exercises together with the military attachés of other countries stationed in İstanbul. When the drills were completed successfully, soldiers paraded in the presence of the Sultan, before the feast given for 250 people. Mahmud Şevket Paşa made a feverish speech thanking Sultan Mehmed Reşad V. On the other hand, a cholera epidemic was diagnosed among the soldiers participating in the military exercises. Despite all efforts, the disease had spread, since those soldiers were transferred back to their stations in various parts of Rumelia and Anatolia. This incident made people forget the success of the military drills and accuse Mahmud Şevket Paşa for the incident.¹⁶⁴

Mahmud Şevket Paşa gave an utmost importance for the modernization of the Ottoman Army. Since he was well aware the difficulties for transportation of soldiers, he spared 150,000 liras out of the budget of Ministry of War to purchase steamboats for this purpose. So, a purchasing commission was assembled to go to Europe, while Mahmud Şevket Paşa applied to the Treasury Funds for an authorization of purchasing five more boats. Modernization in the army was not only limited with improvement of military vehicles and equipment, radical changes had been made in the organization as well. Then, the Ottoman Army consisting of seven armies and two individual divisions have become an army of fourteen army corps and five individual divisions after Mahmud Şevket Paşa put the new structure system

¹⁶⁴ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 76–77.

in effect. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had also established control points and inspectorships between different military divisions. With the help of the reports written by these inspectors, restructuring of the army was possible. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was in favor of reducing the number of the reserve army like other countries, therefore he eliminated some of them.

While making fundamental changes in the organization of the army, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had also been striving to increase the budget share for the army. During the sessions at the Parliament about the military budget when objections were raised, Mahmud Şevket Paşa made enthusiastic speeches and in the end accomplished convincing the members of the Parliament. Besides his efforts in restructuring the army, he also spared some of his time for improvement of the military factories. As a result of Mahmud Şevket Paşa's personal initiatives, powder production at Makriköy and Zeytinburnu Gunpowder Manufactories has been increased. At the time when Mahmud Şevket Paşa resigned, daily production of gunpowder at Makriköy manufactory was 500 *kyye*.¹⁶⁵ While the daily production at Zeytinburnu Manufactory was limited to 30,000 cartridges, it had increased to 130,000 cartridges per day after the betterment. And 350 Martini rifles were manufactured a day at Tüfenkhâne, while Zeytinburnu Manufactory produced 250 cannon balls. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had also taken the initiative to found an air force academy around Ayastefanos, so that modern aircrafts could be also flown by Ottoman air forces, and before he

¹⁶⁵ 1 *kyye* is equal to 1.282 grams.

resigned he ensured that “seventeen aircrafts” and “one balloon” would be supplied to the air fleet.¹⁶⁶

Mahmud Şevket Paşa as Minister of War

The dual government following the 31 March Uprising had pushed both the civilians and the military to compromise. The Action Army Commander Mahmud Şevket Paşa had earned a great deal of respect by eliminating the threat against the Constitutional Monarchy. Both the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa himself were aware of his power. Both sides were cautious not to create any crisis. Yet, in practice, things were different and ideas involving power clashed. “The military that once again provided the Constitutional rule for the people had also granted them the government. On the other hand, the civilians had authorized the military to interfere in the government affairs by accepting the Martial Law, whereas Martial Law meant giving authority to the military over the civilians.”¹⁶⁷ In the beginning, the Committee of Union and Progress had offered the military leader of dual government, Mahmud Şevket Paşa to become the Grand Vizier and the Minister of War in order the political authority to take him under control, but he refused it outright. Leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress were not happy with the military power to be out of reach of political power. They tried every way to take Mahmud Şevket Paşa in the government; they even made a public survey

¹⁶⁶ “Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri’nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 78.

through the daily *Tanîn* and asked the public “who do you think should be the ministers at the Cabinet?” According to *Tanîn* newspaper, most of the people replying the survey stated that they would like to see Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the Minister of War.¹⁶⁸

In December 1909, the power struggle between the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa had taken a different course. The project of merging Hamidiye Navigation Company, an Ottoman navigating firm running boats on the Euphrates and the English Lynch Company had accelerated the fight between the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa. “The newspapers supporting the committee wrote that the opposition campaign against this project was incited by Germans. They accused Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Von der Goltz Paşa by trying to tear down all the power of the Committee of Union and Progress and replace it with military system which would serve the Germans.”¹⁶⁹

The quarrel between the military and the civilians had turned out to be a power struggle, and on 22 December 1909 the Army proved its strength by closing down the daily *Tanîn* newspaper. This was not the end of it though; the dispute was then taken to the Parliament. Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, who was in favor of merging the Hamidiye and the English Lynch companies, had asked for vote of

¹⁶⁸ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 139.

¹⁶⁹ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, pp. 79–80; Committee Union and Progress members seem to have some ground to their claims. During the military exercises in Germany, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been offered to establish a military government by Von der Goltz and according to what the Paşa said, he refused pointing out that this might cause a chaos in the country. See: Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 79.

confidence from the Parliament. However, he gave his resignation on 28 December 1909, even though the votes supported him.

This resignation would help the Committee of Union and Progress in two ways: While ending the policy of “compromise and peace”¹⁷⁰ with the Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa Government which the committee had been practicing, on one hand, it would also provide Mahmud Şevket Paşa another opportunity to take the state affairs under his control. Committee of Union and Progress leaders did not miss their chance and approved the resignation. Yet, when they offered Mahmud Şevket Paşa to form the Cabinet as the Grand Vizier, but he declined it saying that the Army should not involve in politics. On 12 January 1910 former Ottoman Ambassador to Italy Hakkı Paşa was appointed as the prime minister.¹⁷¹

The first action taken by Hakkı Paşa as soon as he became the Grand Vizier was to appoint Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the Minister of War, a post which the Committee of Union and Progress had long been trying to take under its influence. The intention of Hakkı Paşa intention was to put an end to the power dilemma. Although Mahmud Şevket Paşa was inclined to decline this appointment, which he considered as a part of the policy practiced by the committee to take him under control, he stated that he would only accept it, if the government plan includes developing the country and if the military reforms are supported. His conditions

¹⁷⁰ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, s. 75.

¹⁷¹ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 80; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 139; Mahmud Kemal İnâl. *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basınevi, 1969), p. 1871; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 80; “Mahmoud Shevket Paşa,” *The Orient*, No. 25, Vol. IV, 18 June 1913, p. 6.

were reasonable to Hakkı Paşa so Mahmud Şevket Paşa participated in the cabinet as the minister of war.¹⁷²

Both in domestic and international platforms, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's new post had been welcomed. Yet the expectations of the Committee Union and Progress were not met; the struggle between the Army and the civilians had continued.

Hakkı Paşa intended not only to supervise Mahmud Şevket Paşa but also supposed that his cabinet would have more respect in the Parliament. However, his strategy would soon be overruled. Mahmud Şevket Paşa represented a sole authority in the cabinet and consequently endless quarrels took place among the cabinet members.¹⁷³

Main objective of both the Committee of Union and Progress and Hakkı Paşa was to make fundamental reforms in the administrative and economic structure of the Ottoman Empire. They wanted to rearrange the tax system as well as increasing import taxes after negotiating with the European countries. Additionally, the new government intended to restrict the expenditure, although was cautious enough not to obstruct the administration of the Ottoman Empire. While taking precautions the non-military power did also take the demands of military power into consideration,

¹⁷² Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 140; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 79; "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4; "Mahmud Şevket Paşa Merhûm," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, p. 132.

¹⁷³ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 94.

and pointed out that “special” effort would be spent not to limit the budget of the Ministry of War.¹⁷⁴

As a result of the economic program followed by the new government the revenues increased but not enough to cover the deficit in the budget. The reason to this was the high share of the Army from the budget. Besides the economic crisis, things got worse with the military interference.¹⁷⁵

During the budget talks on 16 June 1910 the dispute heightened between the military and non-military factors of the government, while discussing the Army budget in Parliament. When Mahmud Şevket Paşa had began speaking in favor of the military budget, he explained that priority should be given to national security and that it would be useless to start restructuring public works and finances before ensuring security. Since national security was not an issue which had to be dealt by the committee, when casting votes the Parliament members had to put aside the policy of their parties and should use their common sense. What Mahmud Şevket Paşa asked from the Parliament members was a budget of 9.500.000 gold liras in addition to 5.000.000 gold liras worth credit in case of emergency.¹⁷⁶ However, the Minister of Finance Cavid Bey asked the members of the Parliament to vote against it. If the credit were granted, the deficit would be too high to surmount. Three days after the discussions, the Parliament had approved the budget draft, including both

¹⁷⁴ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 95; This special arrangement is interesting enough to indicate the power of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in the cabinet of Hakkı Paşa.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁷⁶ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, s. 96; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, pp. 82-83.

the ordinary and the emergency plan. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the winner of the debate between the civilian and the military power.¹⁷⁷ Even the budget negotiations at the Parliament are sufficient by themselves to have an opinion about the influence of Mahmud Şevket Paşa over the government and the Committee.

Besides his prominent role in domestic politics, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was also influential in foreign policy. Issues with Albania and Crete had the top priority in the agenda of the cabinet led by Hakkı Paşa. Ottoman Empire was almost familiar with the regional uprisings, which were ordinary events throughout the nineteenth century. Still, such revolts were a cause of disappointment for the Committee of Union and Progress that had come to power in purpose of combining all elements and representing them.

One of those uprisings, the Albanian Revolt, had been triggered long before March 1910. The reasons prompted the Albanians who had quite influence within the Committee of Union and Progress were the tax system and methods of recruiting soldiers. But, the real headache for the Committee was the objection of Albania to the centralization policy.¹⁷⁸ Especially after local Albanian notables had started to lose their influence, the region once again went into turmoil. And, since some of the Albanian rebels were executed by the Court Martial, the movement against the Constitution had accelerated in Albania. With the memorandum to the Parliament issued by Mahmud Şevket Paşa on 5 May 1909 in which he accused Berat deputy

¹⁷⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 155.

İsmail Kemal ve Ergiri deputy Müfit Bey of inciting revolts in Albania, and demanded them to be trailed at the Court Martial had caused the plight to climb. There were agitated discussions at the Parliament, when the forces in command of Cavid Paşa searching villages had burnt down some houses belonging to the notables of the region and when violence were practiced in an attempt to bring the protests to an end. Consequently, the government had to make several reforms in order to prevent things go out of control and to calm down the reactions of the international public. On 1 September 1909, having determined the necessary reforms, Mahmud Şevket Paşa assigned Cavid Paşa and the governor of Priştine to put these reforms into practice.¹⁷⁹ Yet, Albanians of Prizren, İpek and Priştine had responded to this attempt by protesting the reforms of the central government. Cavid Paşa had taken violent action to be able to suppress this revolt; as a result some villages were burned down with artillery fire. Albanian members of the Parliament also protested against the violent acts exercised in Albania. One of them, Necip Draga, objected to it by saying “you cannot declare Martial Law when two people are injured and killed,” while another Albanian Hasan of Priştine complained about Cavid Paşa being keen in “shedding blood” and “slaughtering” Albanians, and Yanya deputy Müfit went further by calling Cavid Paşa “a murderer, a monster, a devil.”¹⁸⁰ Upon the reactions of the Albanian deputies in the Parliament, although Cavid Paşa was dismissed from his task by the cabinet and appointed to Skopje where the Fifth Military Divison was

¹⁷⁹ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 193.

¹⁸⁰ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. *Siyasal Anılar*, p. 216.

stationed, the government could not avoid the political pressure. So, the government tried to calm down the opposition in the Parliament by promising to deport Cavid Paşa out of Albania.¹⁸¹ Because violence was practiced in attempt to suppress the resistance in Albania, opposition among the local forces against the central government had heightened. In 1910, new conflicts arouse in the region. In addition, when İpek governor and one of the prominent figures of the Committee of Union and Progress, İsmail Hakkı Bey were wounded, and when the Commander of Seventh Regiment Major Rüştü got killed, central government did not hesitate to Declare Martial law in İpek and to call Court Martial into action. Searches were started to arrest one of the murderers, Yaşar, son of Abbas Baloyo, but it had raised protests against the government among the local people, which could not have been stopped. Even though the government had sent additional troops to the region, it was impossible to overpower the rebels.¹⁸²

Due to the arousing conflicts within the region, the central government had taken some actions to suppress the revolts and to arrest the rioters to trail them at Court Martial, while initiating several reforms to be put in practice. However, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had already taken one step further than the civilian power, by undertaking the task of coordinating military operations and public reforms.¹⁸³ Mahmud Şevket Paşa believed that only severe measures would quell the rebels in

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, pp. 198–199; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 68.

¹⁸³ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 200.

Albania. Yet, violent actions of both the government and Mahmud Şevket Paşa backfired and the riots scattered to other regions of Albania. But, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not change the policy he had been pursuing. His persistence was strictly criticized at the Parliament, and after long discussions, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was asked to go to the region to take necessary precautions. Mahmud Şevket Paşa left for Kosovo in May 1910, together with a large military force.¹⁸⁴ Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the army in his command had stormed throughout Albanian lands, from north down to south. During the operation, many houses were destroyed, while hunted rebels were arrested and many weapons were seized. And, in İstanbul, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been accused of exercising ruthless methods in Albania.¹⁸⁵

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was quite happy with the result. After his army accomplished quelling the revolt, he visited every single village in the region and gave speeches to their residents. Albeit they all listened to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, they showed no signs of repentance. Now that the riots ceased, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's priority was carrying out the required reforms in the region as well as setting up a reliable infrastructure in big towns such as Kosovo, İpek, Prizren and Priştine. He spent great effort in collecting funds for this purpose. In June 1910, the positive signs of the reform program had been seen and peace was maintained in Albania. So,

¹⁸⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, s. 70; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, s. 200. Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1908–1918)*, p. 246.

¹⁸⁵ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 201.

pointing out that he accomplished his task in Albania, Mahmud Şevket Paşa returned to İstanbul on 10 June 1910.¹⁸⁶

Upon his return, Mahmud Şevket Paşa followed up the Albanian issue and he himself determined the policies to be pursued in the region. He had the full support of the other members of the government in this. However, the opposition did not praise him but criticized sharply. In his political memoirs, former Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi accused Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the army in his command, by insulting the Albanians and grasping their belongings, and he asserted that this was one of the significant reasons why Ottoman Empire lost its territory in Rumelia.¹⁸⁷

Besides the Albanian Riot, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was also in action during the Crete Issue, and expressed his opinions about it at the cabinet meetings. He stated that he had hard evidence indicating that Greece was intended for annexation of Crete, and if the Greeks did not give up their policy he would take the army forces under his command and venture a war against the threat to the national sovereignty of Crete.¹⁸⁸ Thus, the four big countries in Europe commissioned an international

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁸⁷ “Arnavut Mebuslar, evvel emirde evamiri hükümete itaatin vücubını Arnavutlara tefhim edebilecek bir heyet-i nasiha gönderilmesini ve tarik-i muhalefet de ısrarları tahakkuk etmedikçe birçok Müslüman’ın iraka-i dem ile Rumeli’nin miftah-i mekâmından olan Arnavutluk’un mahv ve perişan edilmemesini teklif ile istirhamatda bulunmuşlar ise de fırka-i ekseriyet ve hükümetçe kabul olunmadı. Mahmud Şevket Paşa’nın kumandası altında bir ordu sevk ile Arnavutlar şiddetle tedip ve birçoğu zevceleri yanında alenen darp ile haysiyet-i milliyeleri izaa ve tahkir edildi ve ellerinde ne kadar silah var ise zinet eslihasına varınca müsadere olundu. Gerçi hükümet, Rumeli’nin öteden beri bir kala-i ahenini ad olunan Arnavutluk’u darp ve tenkil eylemekle âlem-i Osmaniye karşı irae-i kudret ve satvet etti. Amma bundan hakikat de Balkanlar müstefid ve Osmanlılık âlemi mutazarır oldu... İşte Hakkı Paşa’nın Meclis-i Mebûsân kürsüsünde Osmanlı tacının bir pırlantası tabiriyle tavsif ettiği Arnavutluk’u o tacı muhteşem ve muazzamdan koparıp atan bu tedbiri gayrı makule, Balkan hükümetlerini aleyhimizde ittifaka sevk-i teşçi’ ederek bilahare bütün Rumeli’nin elimizden çıkmasını müstelzim olan esbabın başlıcalarından biridir.”

For the claims of Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin see: Mahmud Kemal İnâl. *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, p. 1885.

¹⁸⁸ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, pp. 148–149.

peace force to the island in 18 August 1909 in order to defend the current status on Crete. Still the temporary order in Crete had only lasted until the end of 1909. Hakkı Paşa cabinet had been persistent to persuade the Sultan that the rights the Ottomans had on the island should not be overshadowed.¹⁸⁹

Due to the recent developments in both local and foreign politics, the political opposition reappeared towards the end of 1909 and early 1910. Because the army was called in to quell the rebels, and since the Martial Law had still been practiced in İstanbul and its surroundings, and violent acts had been exercised by the court martial, opposition against the government among the people had been strengthening. Growing opposition held Mahmud Şevket Paşa responsible for the destructive conditions throughout the country, being the most authorized and influential government member. Before the end of 1909, two new parties appeared in the political platform: Party of Ottoman Liberals (*Mutedil Hürriyetperverân Fırkası*)¹⁹⁰ and Party of Fundamental Ottoman Reforms (*Islâhât-ı Esâsiye-i Osmâniyye*)¹⁹¹ came

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁹⁰ Party of Ottoman Liberals may be considered as the continuation of Ottoman Liberal Party. Arabian, Greek and Albanian descent deputies had contributed in the establishment of the party. The party merged with Party of Freedom and Understanding in November 1911. One of the main accomplishments of Party of Ottoman Liberals was to make a motion for interpellation to the Parliament on 5 October 1911. For more information, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Cilt I*, s. 234; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, pp. 209–210.

¹⁹¹ Party of Fundamental Ottoman Reforms was founded in 1909 at Paris. Kurd Şerif Paşa, the former ambassador to Sweden and Pertev Tevfik Bey were also among the founders; both would play important roles in assassination plot of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The Committee of Union and Progress claimed that the party which was structured abroad had long been in action in the country though underground. Daily newspaper *Tanin* wrote that this secret organization was getting directions from Dr. Rıza Nur and Mustafa Nâtk, and that the subdivisions of the party led by these two men was working on a plot to assassinate Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat Bey and Necmeddin Molla. For further information about the party, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Cilt I*, s. 234; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, pp. 219–221.

into being.¹⁹² Both political parties were radically opposing the policies pursued by the Committee of Union and Progress and especially by Mahmud Şevket Paşa. One other attack of the political opposition was the new party established on 21 February 1910; People's Party (*Ahali Fırkası*) was both in opposition to the cabinet as well as the Committee of Union and Progress. People's Party was founded by some of the Parliament members, who used to be members of the committee.¹⁹³ There were many sympathizers of the People's Party among the Committee of Union and Progress ranks. The committee was alarmed because of the rising of the opposition, once again. This strengthened the ties between the committee and the Army. In the meantime, the opposition against the committee and the government was not only limited within the borders of İstanbul, but moved to Macedonia as well. While the Committee of Union and Progress did not care about the opponents in İstanbul, having been challenged in Macedonia where the committee was supposed to be most influential annoyed the members of Committee of Union and Progress.¹⁹⁴ And, they were determined to destroy such an opposition before it spread. On 31 May 1910, a

¹⁹² Erik Jan Zürcher. *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, p. 151.

¹⁹³ People's Party was founded by deputies who were former members of the Committee of Union and Progress, and later in 1911 merged with Party of Freedom and Understanding. During its short period of time, the People's Party was a tough opponent at the Parliament and assumed opposition against the Law for Justice of Peace, the military operation to Albania, arrests of the Democratic Party and Socialist Party members as well as cross examining of the Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Paşa. For further information about the party, see: Tanık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Cilt I*, s. 234; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁴ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 108.

local organization from the opposition had been shut down and its members were arrested.¹⁹⁵

After the 31 March Uprising, the opposition at the Parliament continued its activities by publishing a newspaper and establishing associations under the Martial Law stipulated by Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The destructive development in domestic and foreign politics, the trials at the Court Martial and the despotic rule exercised by the Martial Law have fed the grounds which the opposition depended on. In the secret reports of the Police Department, the details of the activities which the opposition engaged in were stated. Seeing these, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had started putting pressure on the government to exile some persons under suspicion out of the capital.¹⁹⁶

Another incident which incited the opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress occurred on 9 June 1910 with the murder of Ahmed Samim, the prominent opponent and chief editor of the newspaper, *Sadâ-yı Millet*. It was Committee Union and Progress which all the opposition accused. This time, in order not to allow any chaos as faced after the murder of *Serbestî* newspaper editor Hasan Fehmi before 31 March Uprising, the committee had the government opponents arrested. According to the press supporting the committee, a “secret organization” happened to be behind this plot, which had been trying to set grounds for a revolt by assassinating the cabinet members. It was written that the head office of that “secret

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 108–109.

¹⁹⁶ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 221.

organization” was in Paris, and its activities led by former Ambassador to Sweden Şerif Paşa, who was the leader of Party of Fundamental Ottoman Reforms. Since during the budget discussions the argument between the army and the committee had weakened their ties, the opponents tried to take advantage of this and accelerated their anti-government activities. But, the government this time made use of the presence of the “secret organization,” in order to destroy the opposition movement. As a result of the examination carried on by the Investigation Committee it was found out that Dr. Rıza Nur was also among the members of the “secret organization.” And, there were more such as Mustafa Nâtk, who was a colonel dismissed from the army, Dr. Mustafa Münir and Kemal Bey. After the trials of the suspects, 19 of them had been punished, while 26 were released.¹⁹⁷ The fact that some members of the “secret organization” were released upon their trial, it implies that activities such an organization engaged in were specifically exaggerated by the Committee of Union and Progress. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the other hand, had tried his best in order to outlaw the opposition. During a conversation he made with Major Tyrell, an English Military Attaché, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was asked if the plot had any significance, he replied, “It would be unless it was prevented.”¹⁹⁸ When the members of the “secret organization” were tried, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been criticized by the opposition severely. Opponents called Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the

¹⁹⁷ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt I: *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 221–222; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, pp. 221–226.

¹⁹⁸ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 110; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 81.

“Turkish Napoleon,” and accused him of torturing many “freedom fighters” in the dungeons of Bekir Ağa. They also claimed that the Martial Law under the command of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had put an end to freedom with despotic methods and involved in illegal actions.¹⁹⁹

The more the tension between the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa continued, the more the opposition movement got encouraged and sought new solutions. Opposition against the government, which had been tried to be outlawed with the allegation of “secret organization” in the beginning of 1911, had been reborn as the New Party, (*Hizb-i Cedid*). Former representatives of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Parliament, who were not happy with the policies pursued, were among the founders of this new party. The party leaders were Colonel Sadık and Abdülaziz Mecdi Bey. Just like the People’s Party, the New Party was a conservative party opposing the social and political views of the Committee of Union and Progress.²⁰⁰ In January 1911, the political tension in İstanbul was quite high. There were rumors that the Parliament would be abolished. In an article published in the newspaper *Atnikos Agon*, it was written that the Committee of Union and Progress members had been discussing the need of military dictatorship because of the revolt in Arabia as well as the military operations to both Albania and Macedonia, and that the cabinet led by Hakkı Paşa would resign to be replaced by

¹⁹⁹ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 227.

²⁰⁰ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, p. 113.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa.²⁰¹ Even though the political atmosphere was not as bad as it was portrayed in that article, the Committee of Union and Progress had to give up on Minister of Internal Affairs, Talat Bey, in attempt to calm down the opposition by asking him to give his resignation on 10 February 1911. Talat Bey did what he was instructed for, but he continued his leadership in the committee.²⁰²

Talat Bey had resigned, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa was still the most significant figure which the Committee of Union and Progress held onto. However being the ruling party the committee had already worn out. Occasionally, Mahmud Şevket Paşa pretended to support the committee, but in fact, he acted indecisively. The Committee of Union and Progress was unable to take any action; Unionists could neither object to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, nor could take any further step without him.²⁰³ The leaders of the committee had suggested deporting the opposition leader, Colonel Sadık Bey out of İstanbul so that the opponents would be shaken, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa had rejected it. Hereupon, the committee tried to take other measures. Talat Bey paid a visit to Colonel Sadık, so as to make peace with the opposition. Yet, the result was fruitless. To come to an agreement, Colonel Sadık Bey stipulated the Committee of Union and Progress to be removed from both the cabinet and the Parliament. Then, since the opposition was reluctant to compromise,

²⁰¹ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, DH. EUM. KADL, Dosya No.18, Sıra No. 1–5.

²⁰² Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, pp. 113–114; Tefik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Ustasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, (Ankara: İmge Kitapevi, 2001), p. 189.

²⁰³ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 114.

the Committee of Union and Progress prepared a reform program²⁰⁴ of ten items and published it in all the daily newspapers on 23 April 1911. According to this program, all demands put forward by the opposition would be accepted, provided that they were called for the attention of the representatives during the next congress of the committee.²⁰⁵ With the help of the reform program, it was possible to calm down the opposition at least for some time, and also, Hakkı Paşa cabinet could obtain vote of confidence. In the meantime, though, Colonel Sadık whom the committee had been trying to get rid of was appointed to Salonika.²⁰⁶ Still, nothing was enough to put an end to the cold war between Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Committee of Union and Progress. On the contrary, Mahmud Şevket Paşa pulled on the reins and continued “his absolute rule” in İstanbul, when practice of Martial Law was decided to be prolonged once again on 13 March 1911. Nevertheless, the crisis in Hakkı Paşa’s cabinet continued to grow worse and the ministers representing the Committee of Union and Progress, Cavid and Babanzâde İsmail resigned on 8 May 1911. Since the dispute among the Society members heightened, Talat Bey had this

²⁰⁴ For details of the reform program, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Cilt I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 100–101.

²⁰⁵ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, p. 114.

²⁰⁶ Although the Committee of Union and Progress demanded Colonel Sadık Bey to be sent to exile, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not approve this. But, according to Ziya Şakir, what Mahmud Şevket Paşa responded to Sultan Mehmed Reşad V’s will to send Colonel Sadık Bey out of İstanbul was, “I keep a close eye on Sadık Bey. But I am waiting for the right time to either send him away or to punish him.” Yet, when Lûtfi Bey, the chief chamberlain of the sultan pointed out that “The sultan is in high-command. His orders are indisputable,” Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to felt the necessity to post Colonel Sadık to Salonika. See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 82–83.

time given up his leadership on 18 May 1911 and İzmir deputy Seyit Bey was appointed to be the new leader.²⁰⁷

Tripoli War and Mahmud Şevket Paşa Once Again at the Office Ministry of War

On 9 September 1911, Italy waged war against the Ottoman Empire. The efforts spent by the Sublime Porte of Ottoman Empire were not satisfactory and benefiting enough in the view of Italians, while at the same time Italian government saw their citizens in Tripoli under threat. In fact, Italy had long considered Tripoli as a “promised land,” and had been waiting for the right conditions to occupy Tripoli. Because of the splitting in the Ottoman internal affairs, Hakkı Paşa cabinet was late to take necessary precautions in strengthening the Ottoman sovereignty at Tripoli. Again, the Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Paşa was accused for the misguided policies in Tripoli. Since Mahmud Şevket Paşa restructured the forces in Tripoli, the military power in the region had weakened. In 1910, the number of cavalry regiments was reduced to only one, and next year the number of battalions stationed in Tripoli decreased down to 350 from 750. Four battalions in Tripoli were called in to quell the revolt broke out in Yemen in 1911, because it was a short distance for transportation of the weapons as well as the soldiers.²⁰⁸ And, these arrangements

²⁰⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, pp. 117–118.

²⁰⁸ Even though the commander in Tripoli Müşir İbrahim Paşa explained the possible game the Italians played on Tripoli and Benghazi and opposed to this order, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was insistent. Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 85.

made by Mahmud Şevket Paşa had left Tripoli defenseless against a possible Italian attack.²⁰⁹ More mistakes were made during the government of Hakkı Paşa as well: there was no navy equipped for the attack. While Ottoman Empire did not pay attention to the developments in the region, Italy was closely watching them and focused on the region.

Since Hakkı Paşa cabinet did not believe that Italy would fight against the Ottoman Empire, they were shocked when they received the diplomatic note informing declaration of war on 29 September 1911. The opposition took advantage of this to strike against the Committee of Union and Progress. Under these circumstances Hakkı Paşa had no other choice, but resign. So, he admitted that he could be held responsible of the current situation, and he gave his resignation on 29 September 1911. The Committee of Union and Progress offered Kâmil Paşa to be the grand vizier then, but he declined the offer. Afterwards, Said Paşa became the Grand Vizier to the Ottoman Empire of the eighth time on 30 September 1911. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was once again the Minister of War, this time in Said Paşa's cabinet.²¹⁰

The first step taken by the new government was to ask England to arbitrate between the Ottoman and Italian governments, in order to eliminate the causes of war. When this attempt proved to be useless, Mahmud Şevket Paşa decided to confer

²⁰⁹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 84–85; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 155.

²¹⁰ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 148–149; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, pp. 119–120; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 90.

with the German Ambassador Marschall von Bieberstein to convince Germany to be the arbitrator.²¹¹ Yet, Mahmud Şevket Paşa could not get any results either. Since all the diplomatic efforts turned out to be fruitless, the Ottoman government tried to get out of the puzzle on its own. Mahmud Şevket Paşa still believed that the Italians could be calmed down through diplomatic ways. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had also written a letter to Von der Goltz Paşa on 23 September 1911, asking for his advice about the possible war. In his reply, Von der Goltz Paşa penned after a couple of days, he stated that if Italy was to be dismissed from the Triple Alliance, this would only help the enemies, therefore the best solution would be the military forces in Tripoli to cooperate with the local people.²¹² According to Von der Goltz Paşa, Italian invasion could only be prevented with the help of local forces. On 30 September 1911, Mahmud Şevket Paşa instructed the military forces not to show any resistance against Italians, and to transport their weapons and ammunition to the inner lands, since efforts were spent on the political platform to make peace with Italy. No matter how hard the Ottoman government tried for a political solution, an Italian military commission disembarked in Tripoli on 1 October 1911, demanding for the surrender of the city.²¹³

²¹¹ Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 134.

²¹² In accordance with the strategy of Von der Goltz Paşa, it was expected that, when the Italians moved inland they would be far away from the supply lines which would then expose them to attacks. It seems that Mahmud Şevket Paşa accepted Von der Goltz Paşa's strategy in Tripoli and ordered the soldiers to move to the inner land together with their weapons and ammunitions. In the meantime it is also possible that political efforts continued as a part of the same strategy in order to facilitate the transfer of the soldiers. See; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the War and Revolution During Young Turk Period*, p. 135.

²¹³ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 161; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 90.

Tripoli War had also incited the opposition movement. Opponents, especially the Tripoli deputies Mahmud Naci and Sadık Bey were giving harsh speeches against the Hakkı Paşa cabinet and making a motion to take the members to the Supreme Court (*Divân-ı Âli*). Five of the nine articles in the proposal submitted to the Parliament by Mahmud Naci and Sadık Bey pointed at the military mistakes made and Mahmud Şevket Paşa was held responsible for all these. But, since the majority of the Parliament seats were taken by the Committee of Union and Progress, their proposals were rejected immediately.²¹⁴ The opposition parties took one step further on 26 November 1911; Draç deputy Esad Paşa gave another proposal against Mahmud Şevket Paşa. According to these allegations Esad Paşa put against Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Italians had invaded Tripoli because of his “carelessness and indulgence.” Esad Paşa questioned the reason of reducing the number of forces in the region, and not strengthening the fortifications, and furthermore the motive behind withdrawal of the soldiers to the inner lands of Tripoli. However, as was the case before, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not respond to any of the questions.²¹⁵

In the name of defending Tripoli and Benghazi, young officers like Enver (Paşa), Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) rushed to the region, and started to organize a guerilla resistance against the Italians. The forces they brought together among the

²¹⁴ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 91; Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), p. 364.

²¹⁵ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 163.

that target is achieved, this party is doomed to be knocked down on the very day.²¹⁷

Party of Freedom and Understanding was a heterogeneous party, combining various political conventions and it depended on power of different opponent groups gathered against the Committee of Union and Progress.²¹⁸ These people found it redundant to support or pursue any ideological views, once the Committee of Union and Progress had been fallen apart.²¹⁹

On the other hand, military officers opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress got organized as well. They called themselves Saviour Officers (*Halaskâr Zâbitân*), Guardians of Liberty (*Nigebbân-ı Hürriyet*) and Guards of the Nation (*Hıfz-ı Vatan*), demanding that the Said Paşa cabinet should resign immediately and the new government members should be chosen among unbiased people. In Monastir, an Albanian soldier named Captain Tayyar had taken to the hills together with 12 other officers and some 50–60 private soldiers.²²⁰ The most significant opponent group against the government and the Committee of Union and Progress, though, was the Saviour Officers established in May of 1912. In addition to the crises caused by the anti-government movements in Albania and Monastir, there was also an attempt to force military rule initiated by an officer named Kemal from Gallipoli region, who

²¹⁷ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. *Siyasal Anılar*, p. 230.

²¹⁸ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Cilt I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 263–265; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, p. 127.

²¹⁹ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Ön Türkler*, p. 373.

²²⁰ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Cilt I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 322; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 93–94.

served as an intelligence and translation officer at the Second Division of the General Staff. While Kemal had been posted in Macedonia, he observed that the Macedonian people had turned against the Committee of Union and Progress, and that there were factions in the Ottoman Army. He wrote a statement on behalf of the Saviour Officers stating that the prevailing conditions would permit a movement against the ruling power. Afterwards, he contacted with Prince Sabahaddin and he took his word for financial support. Then, personal assistant to Prince Sabahaddin, Satvet Lütüfi made copies of the statement penned by Kemal. The group of officers even held one of their meetings at the grove in the estate of Prince Sabahaddin at Kuruçeşme.²²¹ Although the tie between the Savior Officers and Party of Freedom and Understanding was not clear, Dr. Rıza Nur and some other Party of Freedom and Understanding members had evidently supported them.²²²

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was well aware of the connections between Savior Officers and other political parties. In the beginning, he had tried to take peaceful measures against them. He wrote a draft of bill, forbidding military officers to get involved in politics and stipulating severe punishments, unless they violate the law. At the same time, he struggled to make the Saviour Officers fall apart, using some mediators he chose among the influential officers. When his attempts proved to be unsuccessful, Mahmud Şevket Paşa gave an order to the officers who supported the Committee of Union and Progress to break into the house, where the Savior Officers

²²¹ Hasan Amca. *Doğmayan Hürriyet: Bir Devrin İçyüzü 1908-1918*, p. 104.

²²² Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Cilt I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 324-325; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908-1914*, p. 134.

held their meetings at Beyazid. Yet, nothing was achieved during the busting, except a few books and accounting sheets kept by the group.²²³

At the same time, the Committee of Union and Progress members had been losing their confidence in Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The opposition they had been secretly working within and around the committee had already turned out to be an obvious uprising, due to the failure in Tripoli War and the Macedonian riot. The Unionists did not trust Mahmud Şevket Paşa any more. They had even started secret talks to replace the Minister of War with a more appropriate person. In addition to such efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress, things got even more complicated for Mahmud Şevket Paşa, when the Saviour Officers accelerated their attempts to pull the government apart. Although the members of the committee initially wanted to put a severe policy plan in action against its opponents, they had to step back because of the influence of the opposition group within the army. There was only one way out: to persuade Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resign and to form a new cabinet. This would calm down both the opposition, and the Committee of Union and Progress would be able to get rid of someone, who had now been considered as an obstruction in front of their policies.²²⁴

Either Mahmud Şevket Paşa would be persuaded to resign, or he would be forced to do this. It was obvious that Mahmud Şevket Paşa would not accept the first option. Thus, the only alternative left was to process the interpellation which

²²³ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 94.

²²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 95.

had long been pending against the Chief of Supply Office (*Levâzımât Dâiresi*) İsmail Hakkı Paşa, who was accused of exploiting military property, and make Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resign.²²⁵ Actually, the Committee of Union and Progress leaders were determined to sacrifice Mahmud Şevket Paşa, long time ago. During the talks about the interpellation at the time of Tripoli War, the Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Paşa was badly insulted at the Parliament.

The incident of interpellation was triggered, when Dersim deputy Lütfi Fikri Bey was forced to proceed to Police Department while he was on his way downtown from Yeşilköy, on 5 November 1911. Lütfi Fikri, though, had refused to do what he was told and headed to the Parliament building right away. Upon this incident, an interpellation cosigned by three parties including the Committee of Union and Progress was presented to the Parliament. They demanded Mahmud Şevket Paşa to make an explanation at the Parliament about this insult against the Constitution. At first, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had not responded to this demand. However, later on, he sent a message to the Parliament informing that either himself or a representative of his would summon to the Parliament. Receiving this reply, members of the Parliament got furious, and they declined Mahmud Şevket Paşa's request, after putting it to vote. Hence Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to report to the Parliament, where he was brutally accused of being a dictator. The Grand Vizier Said Paşa and Varteks Efendi made speeches defending him. While the incident of interpellation was being discussed at the Parliament, the deputy of Benghazi Yusuf Şetvan who had

²²⁵ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, pp. 136.137.

just arrived back from the battlefield in Tripoli warned the other deputies that they could not afford any dispute “at a time like that,” but cooperate instead. His words had made an effect on the members of the Parliament and Mahmud Şevket Paşa was set free. Since the Committee of Union and Progress leaders had already begun questioning both Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the office he held, they only watched the mistreatment he was exposed to. The approach of the Committee of Union and Progress during the incident of interpellation was an indication for its future policy about Mahmud Şevket Paşa.²²⁶

Resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa from the Office of Ministry of War

Committee of Union and Progress took advantage of the situation, and used the excuse of the rumors about misuse within the Ottoman Army to force Mahmut Şevket Paşa to resign. In line with the directions forwarded by Talat Bey, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been chosen as the victim and the scapegoat.²²⁷ According to the plan of the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters, Minister of Interior Affairs Hacı Adil and group leader of the Committee of Union and Progress at the Parliament Seyit Bey paid a joint visit to the Ministry of War on 8 July 1912. They informed Mahmud Şevket Paşa that some deputies collected documents about the misuse of the Chief of Supply Office (*Levâzımât Dairesi*) İsmail Hakkı Paşa and that

²²⁶ For further information about the incident of interpellation see: Tanık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, pp. 123.125.

²²⁷ Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, p. 147.

they planned to summon İsmail Hakkı Paşa at the Parliament and wear him down. They added that this would create an opportunity to the opposition to make allegations against the committee, therefore Mahmud Şevket Paşa should walk out of his office immediately.²²⁸ After a second thought, Mahmud Şevket Paşa compromised with them and he presented his resignation on the next day. He was appointed as a senator by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V and got actively involved in politics.²²⁹

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had not mentioned the role of the Committee of Union and Progress played in his resignation letter dated 9 July 1912.²³⁰ The reason behind the resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not convincing for many people. In his book, *Sultan Reşad Han'ın ve Halefinin Sarayında Gördüklerim* ("My Observations at the Palace of Sultan Reşad Han and His Successor") Lütfi Simavî Bey points out that the reason put forward by Mahmud Şevket Paşa for walking out of the office was totally unrelated to the reality:

Chief Secretary Halid Ziya Bey made a telephone call to me saying that he and some of other notables would like me to see both of us in order to discuss an important issue, and that he was asleep when he received the call. A few minutes later, I was at his mansion.

²²⁸ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 96.

²²⁹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmud Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 4.

²³⁰ "Ordu-yu Hümayûn siyasetle men'-i iştigalinin kanunen te'yidine âhiren lüzûm hâsıl olması üzerine bu babda askerî kanunnâme-i hümayûnuna tezyil edilmek üzere taraf-ı çâkerânemden takdim kılınan lâyiha-i kanuniye Meclis-i Mebûsân'ca kabûl edildiği gibi bu günde Meclis-i Âyân'ca tasdik edilmiş olduğundan kariben kesb-i kat'iyet ederek ahkâm-ı münîfesine ibtidar olunacaktır. Ancak üç seneye karib bir zamandan beri Harbiye Nazırlığı'nda bulunmakta olduğum cihetle ahkâm-ı cedide-i kanuniye tatbikatının bir nazır-ı cedid vesadetiyle icrasını maslahaten daha muvafık görüyorum."

Tarik Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 616.

Minister of Internal Affairs Hacı Adil, Minister of Communications Talat and Minister of Estates Hayri arrived. Hacı Adil started explaining that because of the theft committed by the Chief of Supply Office İsmail Hakkı Paşa, being responsible of his acts Mahmud Şevket Paşa would have hard time at the Parliament in providing answers to the several questions he would be posed, on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress he, himself has just advised Mahmud Şevket Paşa to give his resignation within twenty four hours, and added that the reason of their visit was to inform us that we had to warm up the Sultan for the coming resignation of the Minister of War.²³¹

At the time of the Tripoli War and Albanian Riot, when the office of Ministry of War was left unattended, Minister of Marine Hurşid Paşa was appointed as acting Minister of War as well. In a letter Mahmud Şevket Paşa wrote to Hurşid Paşa²³² a few days later on 19 July 1912, he mentioned that the real reason behind his resignation would be understood in future. He also admitted that besides the reason he put in his resignation letter, there were some other causes. This way, he indirectly implied a plot prepared against him. As a person experienced in politics, in case he would be subjected to other plots in future, Mahmud Şevket Paşa also felt in need of warning Hurşid Paşa and wrote “I would like your Excellency not to pay any attention to any rumors about course of events (*maslahat nâmına sizden ricâ ederim* *keş*).”²³³

Sudden resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had different reactions in local and international press. In the Unionist daily *Tanîn*, it was reported that since the

²³¹ Mahmud Kemal İnal. *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, s. 1873; Lütü Simavi. *Osmanlı Sarayının Son Günleri*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Yayınları, xxxx), pp. 296–297.

²³² Hurşid Paşa held the offices of both Ministry of War and Ministry of Marine at that time.

²³³ “Bir Suikast İhbarı,” *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1 February 1965, p. 27.

Parliament and the Senate approved the draft of law forbidding the military to get involved in politics, Mahmud Şevket Paşa thought it would be more appropriate that the law to be put in force by another commander and decided to resign.²³⁴ Another newspaper called *İstanbul* had stated the reason behind the resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa was that he was not successful to keep the military away from politics and he had to resign “because of his neglect and carelessness” on this issue. One of the English newspapers published in İstanbul, *Levant Herald*, had commented Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s resignation as a “noble behavior” and pointed out that all the ministers had appreciated his decision. In the view of *Levant Herald*, by such an approach, Mahmud Şevket Paşa “inhibited not only the military forces to get into politics, but also himself.”²³⁵ There were also different reactions to this sudden resignation in the international press. While German and Austrian newspapers were in shock and upset, Italian press was quite happy about it. In an article issued in an Austrian newspaper called *Freie Press* it was pointed out, “A man of great importance, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the most powerful sustenance of Young Turks. By sacrificing their perfect soldier Young Turks have proved their infirmity.” *Neue Wiener Tageblatt* wrote that Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the victim of the discontentment with the Committee of Union and Progress. German press echoed the resignation widely. *Berliner Tageblatt* announced the resignation of the Minister of War as a victory of a military officer “who has long been on stage.” While *Nasyonel Zeitung* had a

²³⁴ *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Esbâb-ı İstifası*, (İstanbul: Şems Matbaası, 1330), p. 8.

²³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 9.

pessimistic approach saying, “Because this would dispirit will of fighting and eagerness of Ottomans, there are no grounds for the enemies of Turkey to be hopeful.”²³⁶ Cavid Bey’s reaction to the articles published in international press was quite harsh. Referring to the report of the *Freie Press*, he had stated, “They call him the greatest man and sustenance of Young Turks! Yet they do not know the degree of hostility he did.”²³⁷

During the discussions took place at the Parliament after Mahmud Şevket Paşa left his office, the deputy of Draç Esad Paşa argued that the real cause of Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s resignation was the alleged corruption of İsmail Hakkı Paşa. Said Paşa claimed that his argument was irrelevant, and he defended the official cause of the resignation.²³⁸

After Mahmud Şevket Paşa walked out of his office, since the wars of Tripoli and Albanian Uprising continued, this post was offered to his main rival within the army, Nâzım Paşa. Nâzım Paşa said he would accept the duty provided that a general amnesty would be granted, Martial Law would be over, and he would be in charge of General Staff Commandership as well. Yet, this last condition was considered to be against the Constitution, and no agreement was made. So, an offer was made to Abdullah Paşa, then to Mahmud Muhtar Paşa, but they both declined it. When the acting Minister of War Hurşid Paşa resigned on 16 July 1912, the Grand Vizier Said

²³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 10–12.

²³⁷ Mahmud Kemal İnal. *Osmanlı Devrinde Sadrazamlar*, p. 1873.

²³⁸ Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 257.

Paşa resigned, as well. The most outstanding reason why the cabinet of Said Paşa walked out of office was that, all the generals they had appointed to the Ministry of War merely went on a boycott.²³⁹

When Said Paşa cabinet fell apart, the opponent groups took it as their victory. But this was indeed a failure for the Committee of Union and Progress, while they planned to calm down the opposition after they pushed Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resign; now they had lost the power. During the process of forming the new government, both the Committee of Union and Progress and the opposition parties strived to find a Grand Vizier close to them. The Committee of Union and Progress did not wish someone like Kâmil Paşa who was both the opposition leader and their enemy to be the Grand Vizier. In the letter they addressed to the Sultan, the Saviour Officers asked him to assign Kâmil Paşa as the new Grand Vizier. At first, the Sultan appointed the Ottoman Ambassador to England, Tevfik Paşa, to that post. But, when Tevfik Paşa stipulated that the Parliament should be shut down -which was simply against the Constitution- to accept the duty, he changed his mind. As Nâzım Paşa was not included in the Sultan's list of Grand Vizier candidates, it meant that Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had accepted the request made by the Committee of Union and Progress. As a matter of fact, when Tevfik Paşa was crossed out of the list, the Sultan appointed Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa as the Grand Vizier and his cabinet took duty on 22 July 1912.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 170–171.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 172.

Towards the Babiâli Coup

With the formation of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa cabinet also known as “the great” or “father and son”²⁴¹ cabinet, the Committee of Union and Progress became the opposition party, albeit its majority of seats at the parliament. Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa could only hold his office as the grand vizier for 4 months 8 days. Within that period of time, Balkan War broke out on 8 October 1912 and in the end Ottoman Empire lost its territory in Europe as well as the islands in the Aegean Sea. The opposition, who wanted to see Kâmil Paşa as the Grand Vizier, was not very happy with Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa cabinet, and in the wake of Balkan War opponent groups accelerated their action plan to bring Kâmil Paşa into the office. In the end, Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa could not resist the pressure put on the cabinet members from the Party of Freedom and Understanding, the Saviour Officers, as well as from the Albanians and resigned on 29 October 1912. Kâmil Paşa became the Grand Vizier for the fourth and the last time.

Kâmil Paşa was known as an opponent of the Committee of Union and Progress. The most important reason why Kâmil Paşa was appointed as the Grand Vizier was to gain the support of international forces, especially that of the Allied Powers. While the opposition was quite content with the new Grand Vizier, the Committee of Union and Progress did not like it at all. The opponents, especially of the ones in favor of the Allied Forces, claimed that Kâmil Paşa was a political genius

²⁴¹ His son, Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa and three former Grand Viziers were also among the members of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa cabinet.

who could easily gain the support of England and France, and therefore the outcome of the war would be in favor of the Ottoman Empire.²⁴²

Kâmil Paşa cabinet came to power at the height of the crisis throughout the country. The continuing war had almost become a total destruction for the Ottoman military forces. Because the Minister of War had been changed, the previous plans were cancelled and the Ottoman Army was caught unprepared. Ottoman Army had been giving many casualties, since it was unorganized on most of the battlefields. In November 1912, Ottoman Army had withdrawn back to Çatalca defensive lines 65 km. away from İstanbul. Harsh voices were heard within the government, while Kâmil and Nazım Paşa's, who the former admitted his "military genius," were on strained terms.²⁴³ The winds in İstanbul had continued changing direction against Kâmil Paşa; the immigrants who left their lands due to the invasion flooded the streets of the Sublime Porte. Streets of İstanbul were full of hunger, cholera and despair. Kâmil Paşa, who came to power promising great hope, had long lost his credit. His cabinet did not have the strength to fight, so tried to look for grounds to come into reasonable terms with the enemy.

Kâmil Paşa had faced some difficulties in foreign politics and he had had to take precautions in order to save the government. He was well aware that Committee of Union and Progress would take the opportunity of the prevailing circumstances; therefore he felt it necessary to disable the organization throughout the country.

²⁴² Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 187; Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908-1914*, p. 142.

²⁴³ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 189.

When the Greek Army invaded Salonika on November 1912, Kâmil Paşa initiated severe measures against the Committee of Union and Progress. Reşid Bey, the Minister of Interior Affairs had proposed to pass a transitory law to shut down all political associations and to punish all suspects.²⁴⁴ With this law in force the headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress had been busted. While some of the members were arrested and imprisoned, some others sent on exile to Anatolia or to Europe, and others were forced to run away to European countries. The operation was made to maintain a peaceful atmosphere prior to the ceasefire agreement to be signed; however, the outcome was a failure when the Sublime Porte was assaulted by a raid on 23 January 1913.

The fighting forces had met in London to start the peace talks. Representatives of the Ottoman government had surrendered the territories in Rumelia, except Edirne, to the victorious Balkan countries. However, none of the demands of the Ottomans were accepted by the Allies. This blocked the negotiations, and both parties left the assembly room to meet on a future date. According to the resolution taken at the Parliament held on 13 January 1913, the Ottoman government was asked to leave Edirne to Bulgaria and the Aegean Issue would be solved by the Great Powers. It was also stipulated that, if the Sublime Porte refused the resolutions, it would once again be subjected to face a war.²⁴⁵ Kâmil Paşa could not wait to sign the peace agreement. But the Committee of Union and Progress members emphasized

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 189–190.

²⁴⁵ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 145.

that Ottoman Empire would not surrender any piece of its territories, unless a decision taken by the Parliament. Therefore, they demanded an Parliament session, and started a propaganda campaign among the public in order to get their support.²⁴⁶

On 21 January 1913, Kâmil Paşa called for a Parliament meeting at the Dolmabahçe Palace. Former Grand Vizier Hakkı Paşa, former Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Minister of Finance Naim Bey were not present, even though they were invited too. Most of the attendees favored the peace agreement to be approved. On the other hand, what Kâmil Paşa aimed for was to share the burden on his cabinet with the Parliament, but instead he had more trouble; whence the news about the assembly which was supposed to be kept secret was found out by the public. The Committee of Union and Progress leaders could not have missed this opportunity. They immediately prompted propaganda against the Kâmil Paşa cabinet. They planned to provoke the people by emphasizing the fact that Edirne, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire would soon be lost.

At first, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to pull the government down with non-violent tactics, but could not succeed. The committee preferred Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the Minister of War, and wanted a more neutral cabinet. In order to put that plan into action, on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress, Talat Bey and Said Halim Paşa had paid a visit to Kâmil Paşa on 6 November 1912, but the Grand Vizier refused to cooperate with them.²⁴⁷ Now that

²⁴⁶ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 191.

²⁴⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti: 1908–1914*, p. 147.

the non-violent plan had failed, the Committee Union and Progress had only one other choice; to incite a coup against the Sublime Porte and knock the government down.

Babîâli Coup

On 23 January 1913, the coup started a new era by overthrowing the government violently and it ended 4 months 19 days later, on 11 June 1913, when Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assassinated at the Beyazid Square. The coup d'état prompted a blood feud between the opposition and the Committee of Union and Progress, which had long been competing with each other.

The leaders of the Committee Union and Progress had been planning overthrowing the Kâmil Paşa cabinet by using the fact that the cabinet failed to take proper action during the Balkan Wars, as well as exploiting the rumors among the public that Edirne would be abandoned to Bulgarians. It was Talat Bey, who first put the idea of a coup d'état forward. In order to get support of the Parliament members, Talat Bey had asked for a meeting to be held at a residence of someone, most reliable among the first members of the committee, Emin Beşe. Except for Enver Bey,²⁴⁸ all the prominent figures of the Committee of Union and Progress were present at Emin Beşe's house in Vefa: Prince Said Halim Paşa, Hacı Adil, Ziya Gökalp, Major İsmail Hakkı, Major Fethi Okyar, Mithad Şükrü, Lieutenant Colonel Cemal, Dr. Nâzım,

²⁴⁸ Enver Bey, who was among the staff offices under the command of Hurşid Paşa in İzmit, had arrived in İstanbul that day by train, but since he missed the boat at Haydarpaşa he could not make it to the meeting place; See: Tevfik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Üstasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, p. 289; Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya Enver Paşa*, Cilt III: 1908–1914, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999), p. 382.

Kara Kemal and Mustafa Necib.²⁴⁹ During the first meeting, Fethi Okyar objected to the plan proposed by Talat Bey, pointing out that at times of Constitution such revolutionary methods could not be accepted. But, moderate characters such as Ziya Gökalp and Said Halim Paşa supported Fethi Okyar Bey. Then Talat Bey assumed a different attitude, and the meeting held in the absence of Enver Bey, was called off.²⁵⁰ Following the first meeting, Talat Bey met with Enver Bey and they agreed on the coup d'état plan. Afterwards, a second meeting was held at which Enver Bey also participated, and the proposal about a raid to the Sublime Porte would finally be approved.

According to the plan, the coup d'état would take place on 23 January 1913,²⁵¹ during a cabinet meeting. Three different groups would take the streets towards the Sublime Porte, and the guards who were previously stationed at several coffee houses around the area would gather at the Sublime Porte and they would take their directions from Kara Kemal. On the other hand, Enver Bey would be waiting for a signal at the headquarters of the Committee Union and Progress; he would get on his white horse and ride towards the Sublime Porte together with Hakkı of Sapanca, Mustafa Necib and Yakup Cemil. As for Talat Bey, he and his men would hold the gate of the Sublime Porte and would not let anybody else in. While Enver Bey and his escorts rode through the gate, Ömer Naci would give a zealous speech to the public

²⁴⁹ Tevfik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Üstasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, p. 289.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 290.

²⁵¹ It was best to set the date of the coup on 23 January 1913. That was the deadline of the official reply to be given to the Great Powers by the Kâmil Paşa cabinet.

and try to get their support by explaining the aim of the coup. In the meanwhile, the Unionist guards would occupy the Police Headquarters and the communication center. Unless necessary, no blood would be shed, during the entire operation.²⁵²

On the very day, all precautions were taken prior to the coup.²⁵³ Enver Bey, accompanied by a group of guards led by Yakup Cemil, set off towards the Sublime Porte departing from the headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress at Nuruosmaniye. As planned before, another group headed to the Sublime Porte. The Unionist guards gathered at the points of significance, such as Meserret Coffee House,²⁵⁴ around the Sublime Porte. Enver Bey and the guards arrived at the Sublime Porte carrying flags and citing the name of God.²⁵⁵ In the meantime, Ömer Naci, the famous Unionist preacher in those days, was giving speeches telling the public: “It is the Committee of Union and Progress that called the Action Army to İstanbul, it is also the Committee of Union and Progress that presented us the Constitution and the Liberty, all of us, the citizens come together and unite, let us break in the Sublime Porte and put an end to this government of traitors.”²⁵⁶ Ömer Naci had ended his speech shouting, “Long Live the Nation! Long Live the Union and Progress!” While

²⁵² Galip Vardar. *İttihâd ve Terakîî İçinde Dönerler*, (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1960), pp. 108-109.

²⁵³ During the Babiâli Coup Unionist officers Esad and Ziya Bey's cut off the lines of telephone communication center. See: Yavuz Selim Karakışla. “Arşivden Bir Belge: Babiâli Baskınıyla İlgili Bir İhbar (1915),” *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi*, Vol. XVI, No. 91, July 2001, p. 24.

²⁵⁴ An old Coffee house where Ankara Street and Ebussuut Street intersect on the way from Sirkeci to Babiâli. See: “Meserret Kiraathanesi,” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt V, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1994), pp. 405-406.

²⁵⁵ Zafer Toprak. “Babiâli Baskını,” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. I, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), p. 523.

²⁵⁶ Galip Vardar. *İttihâd ve Terakîî İçinde Dönerler*, p. 114.

the soldiers on duty to safeguard the Sublime Porte had been striving to comprehend the developments, Enver Bey had already broken into the building.²⁵⁷

As the adjutants at the Sublime Porte tried to stop Enver Bey the moment they saw him, Police Superintendent Celâl Bey was shot dead by a bullet fired by Mustafa Necip. The adjutant to the Grand Vizier Nafiz Bey was also shot when he came out hearing the shootings. After that the adjutant to the Minister of War, Kıbrıslızâde Tevfik Bey was killed too, but he shot Mustafa Necip Bey before he died. All of a sudden, it was a total chaos. When Nazım Paşa came out of the meeting room to see what was happening he was also shot on the forehead by Yakup Cemil, one of the Unionist guards.²⁵⁸ During the unexpected bloodshed, the members of the cabinet hid themselves in panic. Ali Fuad Türkgeldi, the chief secretary to the Sultan, who was at the office of the Grand Vizier Kâmil Paşa when the Sublime Porte was broken, in reported those moments as the following:

Looking out of the window I saw a crowd of men, some turbaned, some not, heading towards the Sublime Porte citing the name of God, and I spotted some children among them. I asked the Grand Vizier “Is there a meeting today? Crowds of men are coming towards the Sublime Porte.” The Grand Vizier replied “No,” and continued reading the telegram he had just received. But it was getting noisy outside. When I turned my head, and saw the crowd, I said, “Sir, they are climbing over the fence to get inside,” he ordered “Go and tell them to shut the gates.” Then, I thought since those are robust guys, they will no doubt break into the Grand Vizier’s office;

²⁵⁷ According to the allegations, since troop commander of the guardians at the Sublime Porte was someone among the followers of the Committee of Union and Progress, who was recommended by Enver Bey, there was no serious resistance against the raiders during the operation. See: Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılâp Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 390.

²⁵⁸ Zafer Toprak. “Babîâli Baskını,” p. 523; Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutîyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 196.

therefore it would be dangerous for me if I did not leave. So I went out with an excuse to inform the others. The chief eunuchs and servants were in shock, they gathered in a room, crying, “What will happen to us?” You could hear the lasses broken; guns were fired in another room further away.²⁵⁹

After the shootings were over, Enver Bey and Talat Bey had entered in the Grand Vizier’s office and demanded him to resign. Without any objection, Kâmil Paşa sat down to pen his resignation letter saying that he had to walk out of his office in accordance with the order he received from the military officers. But, Enver Bey asked him to add one more cause to it: “the will of the people.” So, the reason of Kâmil Paşa’s resignation became “in accordance with the request made by the people and the military forces.” Taking this letter of resignation written by the Grand Vizier, Enver Bey and his friends left immediately. In the meantime, Talat Bey had already taken the command at the Sublime Porte.²⁶⁰

Enver Bey rushed to the Dolmabahçe Palace with a car provided for his service by Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi which was waiting at the gate. He presented Kâmil Paşa’s resignation letter to Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, and he asked the Sultan to appoint Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the new Grand Vizier. Enver Bey achieved his goal; Sultan Mehmed Reşad V approved his candidate for the office of Grand Vizier. Now, there was only one more problem to be solved: to convince Mahmud Şevket Paşa to be the Grand Vizier.

²⁵⁹ Ali Fuad Türkgeldi. *Görüp İştiklerim*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1951), pp. 77–78.

²⁶⁰ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. *Makedonya’dan Ortaasya’ya Enver Paşa*, Cilt III: 1908–1914, p. 387; Zafer Toprak. *Babıâli Baskını*, p. 523; Ali Fuad Türkgeldi. *Görüp İştiklerim*, p. 78; Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 426.

In order to take the proposal to Mahmud Şevket Paşa one of the most trustworthy members of the Committee of Union and Progress, Midhat Paşa's son Ali Haydar Mithat was selected together with Mithad Şükrü and İsmail Hakkı. A few days prior to the coup, Talat Bey had seen Ali Haydar Mithat and told him to visit Mahmud Şevket Paşa asking him what his opinion would be to become the Grand Vizier and explaining him the importance of this duty. Therefore, Ali Haydar Mithat had been to the mansion of Mahmud Şevket located at Şemsipaşa quarter of Üsküdar, long before the others.²⁶¹ When he arrived there, he had to wait until Mahmud Şevket Paşa's other visitors left. Later on, when they were alone Ali Haydar Mithat explained the reason of his visit as follows:

Tomorrow or the day after a meeting will be held at the Palace during which a resolution will be asked in favor of giving up Edirne to the Bulgarians. The border will be lined up by Midya and Inos. Before this resolution is taken, Kâmil Paşa cabinet should definitely be overthrown. The entire public has respect and affection on you. It would be a great service, if your Excellency accepts to be the Grand Vizier and take the command.²⁶²

Having listened to those words, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had stood up and walked to the window, pointing at the Maiden's Tower he had said:

You have just advised me to float by the draft. I have no hope left personally about winning the war. If I even had forty percent hope, I would not hesitate to jump into it. Let those men gather at the

⁶¹ Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hatıralarım: 1872-1946*, (İstanbul: Akçit Yayını, 1946), p. 247; Tevfik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Üstasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, p. 293.

⁶² Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hatıralarım: 1872-1946*, p. 244.

Palace, let them take a resolution in giving up Edirne to Bulgarians. After we see the consequences and the events, we can take our action accordingly.²⁶³

When Mahmud Şevket Paşa was first told about breaking into the Sublime Porte, he called it “an exuberant idea” of Enver and added that it would be a big mistake for an attempt of a coup d’état, he had expressed his objection to it. Mahmud Şevket Paşa also asked Ali Haydar Mithat, who visited him to offer him to be the Grand Vizier, to go and find Enver to stop him, and then to tell him that he would be expecting his visit. After getting such a discouraging reply from Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Ali Haydar headed to Beşiktaş to look for Enver’s address, but could not find it since it grew dark, and returned to his room at Pera Palace Hotel. So, Ali Haydar Mithat sent a wire cable to Enver Bey from the hotel. In his reply, Enver informed him that he would be waiting for him at 8:30 in the morning at his house on Nalbant Street. Ali Haydar Mithat Bey was at the address punctually and he recited every word of Mahmud Şevket Paşa to Enver Bey. Having heard his words, Enver Bey told Ali Haydar Mithat, “I do not agree with Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In winning the war, I still have eighty percent hope. And all arrangements are made for the coup d’état. It is impossible to retreat now. Mahmud Şevket Paşa will definitely become the Grand Vizier.” In other words, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not given any

²⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 244.

choice, but accept the offered duty, “in order to save the country from the traitors” everybody had had to unite.²⁶⁴

As Enver Bey pointed out, after they broke into the Sublime Porte, it was already too late to step back. There was no other alternative for Mahmud Şevket Paşa but to accept the duty he was assigned. Enver Bey was determined to convince Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Then, the headquarter of the Committee of Union and Progress sent out Mithad Şükrü to Üsküdar to visit Mahmud Şevket Paşa and inform him that Enver Bey was going to break into the Sublime Porte. Mahmud Şevket Paşa seemed to be decisive by saying, “but this is very dangerous... in case of a failure, the result would be disaster for all of us.” Thereupon, Mithad Şükrü assured Mahmud Şevket Paşa that all the arrangements were already made, nothing was left unconsidered, and that it was decided by the Committee of Union and Progress leaders that Kâmil Paşa would be pushed to resign to be replaced by Mahmud Şevket Paşa himself. Listening to what Mithad Şükrü Bey told him, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had started “pacing back and forth in the room clanking his spurs” and muttering, “what if something goes wrong... what if something unanticipated, something unexpected occurs.” Once again, Mithad Şükrü Bey assured him, “Your Excellency Paşa, do not worry, every detail has been considered and planned. We shall even cut off the telephone lines at the Sublime Porte, thereby no one will be able to resist.” Having given a long thought again, Mahmud Şevket Paşa in the end wished good

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 245–246.

luck to Mithad Şükrü Bey, implying that he had accepted the duty.²⁶⁵ Now, all lied on the success of the raid, since Mahmud Şevket Paşa puzzle was solved.

As we have seen above, later on Enver Bey went to see the Sultan Mehmed Reşad V at the Dolmabahçe Palace and handed him Kâmil Paşa's resignation and got his approval for Mahmud Şevket Paşa's new post as Grand Vizier. While Enver Bey was at the palace, Mahmud Şevket was across the Bosphorus at Üsküdar, waiting for the flashing news. During the Sublime Porte operation, one of the military officers, Major İsmail Hakkı went to see Mahmud Şevket Paşa to pass him the updated developments. Yet, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not hear anything about the final. So, he was very concerned. İsmail Hakkı Bey and Mahmud Şevket Paşa opened the windows of the living room they were in, and tried to hear the sounds across the Bosphorus to make out what was going on.²⁶⁶ But, they could neither hear any shootings, nor see a signal. It was getting dark. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was getting quite worried. As he muttered to himself, "What if they failed!" the telephone rang. Even though he was excited he behaved calm and asked İsmail Hakkı to answer it. It was Enver Bey calling. He said that everything went all right and he requested Mahmud Şevket Paşa to proceed to the Dolmabahçe Palace immediately. On the other side of the room, Mahmud Şevket Paşa tried to listen to the telephone conversation between İsmail Hakkı and Enver Bey carefully. Finally, he saw the cheerful expression on İsmail Hakkı Bey's face, and made sure that everything was all

²⁶⁵ Mithat Şükrü Bleda, *İmparatorluğun Çöküşü*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 1979), pp. 74–75.

²⁶⁶ Ziya Şakir, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 110.

right. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had no more obstructions left to be the Grand Vizier. After the telephone call, İsmail Hakkı Bey turned to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, saying, “After you your Excellency... We are now leaving for the Palace immediately.” Then Mahmud Şevket Paşa asked for his sword and military cloak. İsmail Hakkı Bey and Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s servant Kazım Ağa escorted him to the jetty where he got on a rowboat.²⁶⁷ When Mahmud Şevket Paşa arrived at the Palace, he was accepted by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, who promoted him to be a Marshall right ahead, and assigned him as the new Grand Vizier.²⁶⁸ Then, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V and Mahmud Şevket Paşa went into an argument about who to appoint as the Şeyhülislam. The Sultan preferred Cemaleddin Efendi, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa objected to him and offered Şerif Ali Haydar instead. When they could not come to an agreement, they left it aside until the next day.²⁶⁹

It was not the right time to arrange a parade for the new Grand Vizier. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Enver Bey and Chief Secretary to the Sultan headed to the Sublime Porte by car. Since Mahmud Şevket Paşa had left his house in a hurry, he was not in his big uniform, but in casual clothes. At the time he arrived the Sublime Porte, the crowd was shouting, “Oh, Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Save Edirne for us!” And inside, Kâmil Paşa and former members of the cabinet were still under arrest. Talat Bey had already sent telegrams to all the provinces to inform the latest news. In

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 110–111.

²⁶⁸ Tahsin Uzer claims that Enver Bey and his wife went to Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s house in Üsküdar and by great effort they persuaded him to accept Grandviziership. See: Tahsin Uzer. *Makedonya Eşkiyalık Tarihi ve Son Osmanlı Yönetimi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1987), pp. 322–323.

²⁶⁹ Ali Fuad Türkgeldi. *Görüp İşittiklerim*, p. 80.

order to calm the crowd, Mahmud Şevket Paşa though loudly, “Better to have the imperial decree read at once, then I can say a few words to the crowd, and hopefully make them go away.” But, there was no one around to read the decree or to recite prayers. It was the Chief Secretary to the Sultan in the end, who read the appointment decree. And, Kastamonu deputy İsmail Mahir Efendi had to recite prayers, since there was no other clerical available.²⁷⁰ Afterwards, Mahmud Şevket Paşa gave a short speech to the crowd, and asked them to go home. Within one day, Kâmil Paşa cabinet was overthrown and replaced by Mahmut Şevket Paşa cabinet.

The Mahmud Şevket Paşa Cabinet

Together with the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, the Committee of Union and Progress had also come into power. Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the Minister of War as well as the Grand Vizier. Senator Said Halim Paşa had become the president of the State Council (*Şurâ-yı Devlet*) in the cabinet; Minister of Interior Affairs was Hacı Adil; Minister of Foreign Affairs by proxy was the previous Ottoman Ambassador to Greece, Muhtar Bey; Çürüksulu Mahmud Paşa became the Minister of Marine while the ex-governor to İstanbul İbrahim was the Minister of Justice; Minister of Finance was Rıfat, former Judge of Court of Audit; Minister of Public Works was Senator Baserya Efendi; Minister of Mortmain Estates was Hayri Efendi; Minister of Education was the deputy of Saruhan Şükrü Bey; one of the Tax Office inspectors

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 80.

Oskan Efendi was appointed as the Minister of Communications; and the ex-governor to Aydın, Celal Bey become the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce.

Even though Talat Bey's name was uttered for the Ministry of Interior Affairs, since Talat had offended him when he asked Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resign, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not approve him to take part in his cabinet. Later on, when changes made among the cabinet members; Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhtar handed over the office he held by proxy to Said Halim Paşa. And he was replaced by Said Paşa, who was appointed as the Head of State Council (*Şurâ-yı Devlet Reisi*).²⁷¹

The dilemma of Şeyhülislam during the appointment of Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the Grand Vizier, was finally solved when Mehmed Esad Efendi was assigned to that office. The most important difference of the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet with the other Ottoman cabinets formed following the Second Constitutional Period was the high number of the Committee of Union and Progress members appointed as ministers.²⁷² Although Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not openly supporting the committee, the opposition believed that he was a sympathizer. In any event, Mahmud Şevket Paşa never denied his inclination towards the Committee of Union and Progress; and during a speech he made at the Parliament, he expressed it by saying, "... I, myself admit that I have full support of the program presented by the Committee of Union and Progress. It included what I believe in. I have read the program written by the Party of Freedom and Understanding as well. And I do not

²⁷¹ Mahmud Kemal İnal. *Son Osmanlı Sadrazamları*, s. 1876; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 119

²⁷² Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 137.

approve it.”²⁷³ In the cabinet of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, there were some prominent members of the Committee of Union and Progress, such as the Minister Interior Affairs Hacı Adil Bey, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Said Halim Paşa, the Minister of Mortmain Estates Hayri, and the Minister of Education Şükrü.²⁷⁴

Because Kâmil Paşa cabinet was ready to give up on Edirne, the public had lost all its confidence in the Ottoman government, and as a consequence the government was overthrown. The new cabinet led by Mahmud Şevket Paşa was welcomed by the public on the hope that it would save Edirne. The opposition seemed to be withdrawn in order to re-cover. Still, the Committee of Union and Progress leaders took necessary precautions in the view of their experiences. A few hours after Mahmud Şevket Paşa was at the palace as the Grand Vizier, he came across Cemal Bey and asked him to be the chief of İstanbul Guardianship (*İstanbul Muhafızlığı*) and take every precaution required to protect the city.²⁷⁵ And, it was Azmi Bey who was appointed as the head of Police Department (*Polis Müdüriyeti*) in İstanbul.

The most important agenda of Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet was the Balkan War and the peace talks related to it. The new cabinet had to respond to the memorandum of the Great Powers. The members of the cabinet had been having meetings to discuss this matter, but they could not come to any decisions. Some of the ministers, such as Hacı Adil and Şükrü and Unionist officers like Enver were in

²⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 134–135.

²⁷⁴ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 199.

²⁷⁵ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1977), p. 9.

favor of continuing the battle. But, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not find it appropriate to continue the battle, considering the military and political situation, he was against it. According to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the chances of winning the battle were almost none. At the same time, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was threatening the cabinet members that he would resign if a resolution in favor of peace was not taken.²⁷⁶ It was only a few days after the Babiâli Coup, and according to the Committee of Union and Progress, the public could not afford another resignation and the country would be dragged into a new chaos. So, the committee leaders decided that it would be best to give up fighting.

Only on 30 January 1913, the response to memorandum of the Great Powers was available. One of the most important reasons of this delay was the arguments among the cabinet members. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had invited the Head of General Staff (*Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umûmiye*) İzzet Paşa to attend the cabinet meeting and asked him to give a brief report on the conditions of the soldiers. İzzet Paşa, too, had mentioned that the conditions would not allow the Ottoman Army to go on a war and advised the cabinet members to make a peace agreement. However, some of the ministers supporting the Unionists like Hacı Adil and Şükrü objected to his views. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to strive for at least three or four days to persuade them.²⁷⁷

In the end, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was able to convince the cabinet members and Ottoman Empire gave its pending official response to the Austrian Ambassador

²⁷⁶ *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1988), p. 9.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

Pallavicini, on 30 January 1913. On that very day, Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his assistants paid a visit to Pallavicini at 11:00 in the morning to present him the draft letter on which some more corrections had to be made. And, at 2:30 in the afternoon, he gave the finalized letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Said Halim Paşa.²⁷⁸ According to that reply of Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, the government agreed to give up on the territory on the right bank of Maritza River to the Bulgarians. But, since there were housings, mosques, tombs and historical sites on the left bank, it was also emphasized that Edirne should be kept within the borders of Ottoman Empire. Otherwise, it would cause more conflict within the country. The government refused giving up on the Aegean Islands to Greece, because they were almost adjacent to the Dardanelles and the Anatolian coast.²⁷⁹ In the letter in reply to the Great Powers, Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet had not only lined the new borders, but also stated the rules of free trade in line with regulations of modern law. Hence, the Ottoman Empire provisioned trade agreements which provide equal rights for both parties involved; required all foreigners to pay their taxes related with such transactions; dictated that customs duty would be increased four percent until a fair trade was accomplished, and asked the Great Powers to cancel the mail coaches and to guarantee that capitulations granted to foreigners would be removed.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, pp. 187–188.

²⁷⁹ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur. *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi* Cilt II, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1943), p. 280; Glen Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, s. 188; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 301.

²⁸⁰ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur. *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi* Cilt II, p. 281.

Since the letter drafted by Mahmud Şevket Paşa had a moderate language, not closing all negotiation means, it was welcomed throughout Europe, and especially in France and Germany. But, the Bulgarians were not satisfied at all, the day the letter was presented Bulgarian Command-in-chief General Savoff declared that according to the terms of the armistice, he would start the battle in four days. Thereupon, Mahmud Şevket Paşa reproached the Balkan states and told them that Ottoman Empire would be able to defend itself. On the other hand, he believed that within four days of time, a possible war could be prevented with the influence of the Great Powers. But, the memorandum did not have any effect and the battle started again.²⁸¹ Bulgarian armed forces began firing at Edirne and Gallipoli. But, there was no attack in the Çatalca Front. Mahmud Şevket Paşa ordered the troops at Çatalca, Edirne and Gallipoli not to start firing, unless Bulgarians shoot. In order to see the battlefield himself, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been to the Çatalca defense line 5 February 1913.²⁸² Even on the second day of the fighting, Bulgarian troops did not start firing at the Çatalca Front, but instead they had started to pull back. However, Bulgarians would begin firing in the following days. Mahmud Şevket Paşa made a tour at the

²⁸¹ *Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 10.

²⁸² Mahmud Şevket Paşa's visit to Çatalca front has appeared in *Hayat Mecmuası* (Turkish Life Magazine) issued on 1 January 1965 on an article about his memoirs title as "Kânunusani'nin 3. günü" [Third day of January]. The mistake made on the date was repeated again in the diaries published by IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık in 2001, edited by Adem Sarıgöl. On page 10 of the memoirs of Mahmud Şevket Paşa published by Arba Yayınları, "*Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*," it is mentioned that his visit to Çatalca was dated "16 January." In his doctoral thesis, Glen Swanson points out this day as 5 February 1913. In my view, most probably it was 5 February 1913, when Mahmud Şevket Paşa visited the Çatalca front as stated by Swanson, because Mahmud Şevket Paşa himself provides us the actual date by saying "it was the second day of the skirmishes." Therefore, the date given as 3 January 1913 might be a translation error. On the third day of January ("*kânunusani'nin üçüncü günü*") Mahmud Şevket Paşa was not even the Grand Vizier yet nor held the office of Ministry of War for the second time, so it was impossible for him to visit the Çatalca Defense Line.

frontline that day, and was content to see the troops ready for battle. Especially, the soldiers who arrived from the Third Inspectorship in the Blacksea Region drew his attention and checked a few of their troops and made a note of this visit as follows:

The road 10-15 miles behind the frontline at Çatalca was in terrible condition. Some parts were obviously repaired but all military units did not pay attention to this. Carcass lying by the road made the scene more disgusting.²⁸³

After Mahmud Şevket Paşa completed his Çatalca trip, he got on his car and drove back to Hadımköy to make a meeting with İzzet Paşa to evaluate his impressions about his inspection. Despite some distressing developments by the frontline, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not give up on his peace-making policy and called the members of the Parliament to discuss the personal opinions of Tevfik Paşa, Ambassador to England who had been on negotiating terms with the Great Powers in London. According to that view, since it was believed that there would be no outcome from the talks continuing with “the spoiled Balkan States,” it would be better to leave the matter to the hands of the Great Powers. Mahmud Şevket Paşa liked Tevfik Paşa’s suggestion. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Said Halim Paşa agreed with him as well. However, when Said Paşa did not approve the plan in the light of the resolution taken by the previous government about “the autonomous structure of Edirne,” Hacı Adil Bey and Şükrü Bey disapproved the plan as well.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ *Sadraşam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa’nın Günlüğü*, pp. 10–11.

²⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

While Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been striving to convince the cabinet members, Enver Bey took action planning to constrict the Bulgarian forces between his troops at Şarköy and Bolayır. If he succeeded, the Ottoman Army would be able to move towards Edirne and set the town free from Bulgarians. Yet, according to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the chances of losing were also high. So, he would rather go for the proposal forwarded by Tevfik Paşa. But, the cabinet members were opposing it. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, on the other hand, claimed that if Bolayır fell, the influence of the Great Powers would have no effect at all.

Ultimately, the military operation at the Bolayır Front ended as Mahmud Şevket Paşa had foreseen; due to the unsuccessful operation, the Ottoman Army had lost a significant number of its troops and equipment. Consequently, the two hard core ministers of the Cabinet Hacı Adil and Şükrü Bey would change their mind about the plan designed by Tevfik Paşa. Moreover, having had been unable to find another way out, the Ottoman government had to accept Tevfik Paşa's plan and informed him and other ambassadors in the foreign capitals accordingly.²⁸⁵ Despite the peace talks intended by the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, the Great Powers notified the government that they would support the armistice provided that the Ottomans took their 17 January 1913 memorandum into consideration. In the meantime, the Balkan states stipulated that the Ottomans should withdraw their border to the area between Midye and Tekfurdağı. Greece, on the other hand, demanded that Greek citizens should also be entitled for the capitulation privileges same as other nations.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

It seemed that the best solution for the Ottoman Empire would be signing an armistice. Because of the cholera epidemics among the troops defending Edirne, as well as the food shortage they had been experiencing, the soldiers had no more strength to fight. Under such circumstances, Mahmud Şevket Paşa felt it necessary to encourage the troops at the frontline and keep their spirits high by sending them telegrams.

Halil Menteş Bey, one of the prominent figures of the Committee of Union and Progress and also the Chairman of the Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebûsân Reisi*) and Talat Bey who both involved in overthrowing the Kâmil Paşa government promising to save Edirne had paid a visit to Mahmud Şevket Paşa on 15 February 1913, in order to stop the armistice talks the government pursued. Mahmud Şevket Paşa accused them of determining a policy irrelevant to the prevailing conditions, and he especially reproached Talat Bey by calling him a “narrow-minded” (*mahdûd fikirlî*) and “unlearned” (*yarım alim*) person.²⁸⁶ What we can conclude from this visit is that, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been cautious with the Committee of Union and Progress and especially with its leader Talat Bey, and he had refused to be their puppet. Once again, in the following months the Committee of Union and Progress would start looking for ways to eliminate Mahmud Şevket Paşa who insisted taking independent actions from the committee.

In the meanwhile, an unanticipated development had been observed: İzzet Paşa, Fahri Paşa and Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) asked for their resignation; their

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p 18.

motive was the new general commander of Gallipoli Troops, Hurşid Paşa who had just been appointed to that post, as well as Enver Bey. When he realized the conflict between the two commanderships, Mahmud Şevket Paşa thought he would rather make a short visit to Gallipoli on 30 February 1913. Then, on 21 February 1913, he received a letter signed by Fethi and Mustafa Kemal. They expressed their objections about Enver Bey's expected appointment to İstanbul, and they also pointed out that this would incite rivalry among officers. Mahmud Şevket Paşa then changed his mind and ordered that both Hurşid Paşa and Enver Bey should be removed from Gallipoli. The underlying reason behind his action was that Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not want Fethi Bey and Mustafa Kemal to proceed to İstanbul and assume an opposing attitude since he would not prefer a repetition of the Sadık Bey incident.²⁸⁷

While Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been striving to prevent any dispute between the officers, at the same time, he tried to persuade his cabinet members for peace. A former Grand Vizier Hakkı Paşa had sent a telegram to him saying that during his conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey had advised him to settle down for armistice. Later on, at the cabinet meeting, Minister of Marine Mahmud Paşa and the Second Commander-in-chief İzzet Paşa would read the reports of German military inspector Lüson. In all of the three reports, it was stated that the troops did not have the capability to support an offensive plan and an immediate armistice was recommended. After the telegram from Hakkı Paşa and other reports were recited at the cabinet meeting, an argument broke out between

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

the ministers in support of and against peace. Ministers of Interior Affairs and Education, Hacı Adil and Şükrü Bey respectively, who were spokesmen of the Committee of Union and Progress were severely opposing an armistice, emphasizing that “time is not right for peace.” Hereupon, he had replied, “It is too late for making peace” and he suggested to give up on Edirne in favor of Bulgarians and to sign a peace agreement with them. According to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, unless a peace agreement was signed, the enemy forces could have easily trespass Bolayır and Çatalca frontlines which would give more damage to the country. He debated that the ones opposing peace were in fact ready to give up on Edirne, but they pretended that they were not, so that they would tell the public, “look, we have tried our best but we lost the town,” in order to avoid accusations such as “albeit the people’s will to resist, you have handed the town to the enemy.”²⁸⁸

Mahmud Şevket Paşa believed that to oppose making a peace agreement meant treachery and threaten on the part of the Committee of Union and Progress. However, some of the cabinet members ignored Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s warnings and refused to come to terms with armistice. Mahmud Şevket Paşa confronted the opponent ministers by saying, “I am an independent man. I cannot accept being a puppet of the Committee of Union and Progress, and I am well aware that there are only narrow-minded men at the headquarters of the committee.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 29.

The next day, on 23 February 1913, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's warning had proved to be productive. In his telegram Mahmud Şevket Paşa wired to Tevfik Paşa, the Ottoman Ambassador to England, he wrote that they would sign the peace agreement, if only it would be accepted that the troops in Edirne would be released with their weapons, and that the territory the Ottomans lost to Balkan states would cover their share of the debts of Ottoman Empire to other countries. Moreover, the Muslim inhabitants of the lands being handed over to the enemy forces and their property should be protected by law.²⁹⁰ Ottoman Ambassador to England Tevfik Paşa informed the conditions set forward by his government to English Minister of Foreign Affairs Sir Edward Grey and asked him to start negotiations with the Balkan states in line with the stated principles. However, Balkan states would not make any respond to the initiatives of the English Minister of Foreign Affairs for a long time. What they aimed for was to achieve more success in the battlefield, therefore to have an upper hand during the peace talks. Then on 14 March 1913, Balkan states proceeded for negotiations demanding severe conditions on part of Ottomans: Gallipoli would remain with the Ottomans, while the borderline would be redrawn by Malatya and Tekfurdağı; all the lands on the west of this line, including Edirne and İskodra would be handed to the Balkan states; and Ottomans should move out of all the islands in the Aegean Sea and should have no ties with Crete any more. Additionally, Ottoman Empire was required to pay a war indemnity and give its word

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 30.

to discuss the social, political and economic rights their co-religionists and merchants would have in the future.²⁹¹

The conditions put forward by the Balkan states were more like a memorandum declaring war than a peace agreement. They implied that almost all the conditions stipulated by the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet on 23 February 1913 were declined. It seemed that peace talks were blocked, while the battle was still being fought. Edirne, a town of strategic importance for the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and the Committee of Union and Progress was about to be lost. In the beginning of March 1913, food shortage was unbearable for the troops throughout Edirne which was led by Şükrü Paşa against the Bulgarian armed forces supported by the Serbian forces. Daily food allowance for the soldiers was only limited to have only 150 gr. of unsalted bread and a cup of non-fat flour soup. Most of the animals were dead due to lack of food. Edirne would not be able to resist any longer. Finally, the enemy forces seized the town followed by a heavy gunfire the day after they prompted intense firing on 24 March 1913. Şükrü Paşa wired a telegram to Mahmud Şevket Paşa informing him that the enemy had been shelling their bastion for twenty hours. Towards the sunset, more distressing news reached to the Ottoman capital from Edirne. Three of the Bulgarian regiments had captured the Ottoman fortress, and were hardly driven away. In the morning of 26 March 1913, Mahmud Şevket Paşa received another telegram from Şükrü Paşa. This time, he explained that many of their bastions fell and the soldiers were worn out because of both cold and hunger,

²⁹¹ Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 305.

and that they could no longer fight. On the same day in the afternoon, Edirne had surrendered to the armed forces of the enemy.²⁹²

Coup d'état Attempt

After the Babiâli Coup, the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet had pursued a compromising policy and declared a general amnesty. But, because they put the Ottoman Army into trouble during the Balkan Wars, and especially the degree of pain they caused in Rumelia, former Grand Vizier Kâmil Paşa, Şeyhülislam Cemaleddin Efendi, Minister of Finance Abdurrahman Bey and Minister of Interior Affairs Reşid Bey were made to retire and were forced to leave the country. Among the other opponents, such as Ali Kemal and Dr. Rıza Nur, who were imprisoned at the Military Headquarters were sent on exile to Europe but were allowed to be paid big salaries. Opponent press was forbidden, while their chief editors were reminded of the “difficult times the country had been living through,” therefore they were asked to be cautious to pen articles giving utmost significant to the benefits of the country and avoid reports aiming for conflict.²⁹³ Committee of Union and Progress was targeting to establish and maintain unity throughout the country with the help of the “national cooperation government” planned to be formed by Mahmud Şevket Paşa.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt. IX, s. 337; *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, pp. 60–61.

²⁹³ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 22.

²⁹⁴ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt. IX, s. 204; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. *Siyasal Anılar*, p. 235.

In spite of all measures taken by the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, opponent groups continued their underground activities. Since talks spread around among the people that Edirne would be surrendered to the enemy forces, İstanbul Guardian Cemal and Head of the Police Department Azmi Bey had warned Mahmud Şevket Paşa about a possible coup d'état. As Mahmud Şevket Paşa had expected helpless scenes from the Rumelian immigrants wandering İstanbul streets in vain and considering that they would support any action to be taken against the government, he ordered such people to be deported from İstanbul.²⁹⁵

Opponents were organized in small groups. While former Gümülcine deputy, İsmail Bey, a member of Party of Freedom and Understanding were making some arrangements to overthrow the government, Sadık Bey and Salih Paşa were also up to other plans to abolish the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet. Among the group led by İsmail Bey, there were two men who would be sentenced to death upon Mahmud Şevket Paşa's assassination as well: Muhib and Pertev Tevfik. Prince Sabahaddin, Dr. Nihad Reşad, Nevzat and Satvet Lûtfi had been cooperating in another group. According to the information passed on to Mahmud Şevket Paşa by İstanbul Guardian Cemal Bey, the leader of another opposition group was the Second Crown Prince (*İkinci Veliabd*) Vahîdeddin.²⁹⁶ Opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress did neither have a well organized structure, nor a specific leader.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ *Sadrâzâm ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 39.

²⁹⁶ *Sadrâzâm ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 38.

Since the opposition had a divided structure, it was necessary to have someone in charge of communications between the groups which was performed by Ahmed Bedevi. He supported the ideas of İsmail of Gümülcine while trying to keep informed about the other groups, and at the same time he was a messenger between Staff Officer Kemal, Major Lieutenant Kudret, Kemal Paşa and other military officers. According to Ahmed Bedevi, the ones among the opponent groups that were ready to risk anything and to shed blood were a Circassian, Major Lieutenant Çerkes Kazım and Nazmi who would be involved in assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on 11 June 1913. Their motive was “irrelevancy of a political movement having no powerful grounds” and they believed it was essential to kill few of the Committee of Union and Progress leaders as well.²⁹⁸

Committee of Union and Progress, on the other hand, being experienced in pursuing rebellious acts, followed the activities of the opponent groups closely, and hired some secret agents among the opposition ranks to keep itself better informed. Major Lieutenant and Poet Celis, for instance, was one of them. He passed all the information he collected to Talat Bey and Cemal Bey. Other military officers who cooperated with the Committee of Union and Progress and keep its members

⁹⁷ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılâp Tarîhimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 394; Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İnkılâp Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele*, (İstanbul: Çeltüt Matbaası, 1959), p. 595.

⁹⁸ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılâp Tarîhimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 395.

informed were Major Lieutenant Hilmi and Şükrü Paşazade Major Lieutenant Fethi.²⁹⁹

Regardless of all the information it collected through its spies, the Committee of Union and Progress could not manage to prevent the activities composed by the opponents. The most organized opponent group was the one led by Prince Sabahaddin. In one of the meetings held at the waterside residence of Prince Sabahaddin in Kuruçeşme, in which Satvet Lütfi, Sıdkı of Erzurum, Said of Muş and Çerkes Hasan residing at Horhor had participated, a coup d'état plan was devised. According to that plan, after a big demonstration to be organized at the Sublime Porte, the government would be driven out by force. Later on, the crowd would proceed to the Palace demanding the overthrown government to be trialed at the Supreme Court and a new "decentralized" government to be established. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Hilmi Efendi who was introduced to Dr. Nihad Reşad by a Sami of Ohri would devise a plot against Enver Bey, the "Hero of the Liberty." The group who had been planning overthrowing the government had got in touch with the army for collaboration. After eliminating the present government, three or four thousand men would leave Gallipoli by boats to arrive in İstanbul in order to unite with the other opposition forces in the capital and to invade some strategic points at the Sublime Porte, İstanbul Guardianship and the Ministry of War. Then, they would blockade the residences of the Committee of Union and Progress leaders. On the other hand, torpedo boats named Yarhisar, Yedigâr-ı Millet and Musul would anchor in front of

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 395–396.

Dolmabahçe Palace to give the impression that navy was backing the coup d'état.³⁰⁰ While last preparations were in process, Çerkes Hasan were on the job to collect detailed information about the military forces at the Sublime Porte and tried to find out the number of guardians as well as the armed forces stationed in the patrol outposts.³⁰¹ The arrangements for the coup d'état would be completed after the flyers addressing "To the Ottoman Nation and the Army" would be printed at a printing house named Anadolu Matbaası at Tünel quarters in İstanbul owned by M. Pantazi, a Greek descent. Only Ahmed Bedevi was allowed to be present during the process of printing, no other person was going to be permitted in. But, when Serdar Sıdkı handed some of the flyers to Mustafa Vasfi, who was about the set off for Erzurum whereabouts, he would not hesitate taking them to the İstanbul Guardian Cemal Bey. Thus, the government forces having found out about the coup d'état attempt started searching all printing houses in the capital. Pantazi was so concerned for a break into his workplace that, he transferred all the printed material to his own house. During the search made at the Anadolu Matbaası, the government forces found the blue print of the leaflets on which Sıdkı Bey made some corrections.³⁰² In those days when an attempt was surfaced, Mahmud Şevket Paşa visited Enver Bey at Ayastefanos to inform him that Prince Sabahaddin had been working against the government and that flyers about to be handed out among the public were confiscated. In the view of

³⁰⁰ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No: 610, Husûsî No: 51, 25.C.1331; Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 427.

³⁰¹ Hasan Amca. *Nizamiye Kaptısı ve Yarıda Kalan İhtilal*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1991), p. 139.

³⁰² Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. *Siyasal Anılar*, pp. 258–259; Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Cilt: III*, p. 427.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa, it was essential to take additional measures in İstanbul, so he suggested Enver Bey to try to get back to his military division and after that Mahmud Şevket Paşa would post him to İstanbul from Ayastefanos.³⁰³

When the plot devised to take over the government had been brought to light, one of the group members, Satvet Lütfi took refuge in the apartment house where a translator of Austrian Embassy Monsieur Lazar lived at Pangaltı. Ahmed Bedevi found himself a shelter at another apartment house in Tepebaşı and İsmail of Gümülcine hid in a house behind the Tokatlıyan Hotel. Some other opposition members like Pertev Tevfik and Muhib also disappeared in similar ways. They still held their secret meetings, sometimes at Dr. Nihad Reşad's residence and sometimes at the house of İsmail of Gümülcine.³⁰⁴ As Prince Sabahaddin's waterfront mansion was being watched, no one had been in that vicinity. On the other hand, at the end of a close follow up by the İstanbul Guardianship many who got involved in the plot directly or indirectly were arrested to be trialed with the allegation of "attempting overthrowing the present government by illegal methods." They were Satvet Lütfi, Hacı Serdarzâde Sıdkı Efendi of Erzurum, Hasan Vasfi Efendi, Said Efendi of Muş, Ahmed Bedevi Efendi, Agah Bey, Lütfi Efendi of Asitane, Road Master of the Municipal Office Salih Efendi, Haliç Steamboat Inspector Sıdkı Efendi of Bosna, Mahmud Efendi, Major Commander Hüseyin Avni Efendi and Tevfik Efendi.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ *Sadrâzâm ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 34.

³⁰⁴ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İnkılâp Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele*, p. 598.

³⁰⁵ BOA, İrâde-i Harbiye, Genel No: 610, Husûsî No: 51, 25.C.1331.

Following the arrests, even though Court Martial tried to get testimony of Prince Sabahaddin, since Talat Bey thought that this might raise the international tension he secretly sent a message to him and helped him to escape from the country. Another person in the plot who was able to run away abroad was Dr. Nihad Reşad again with the support of Talat Bey.³⁰⁶

After their arrest, during the trials held at Court Martial the verdict said Satvet Lütü, Serdarzâde Sıdkı, Hasan Vasfi, Said of Muş Ahmed Bedevi, Haliç Steamboats Inspector Sıdkı of Bosna and Lieutenant Lütü would serve a life sentence confined in a fortress due to their “secret cooperation in an attempt overthrowing and eliminating the present government by illegal methods,” while Tevfik, Mahmud and Salih were sentenced for serving ten years confined in a fortress. In consideration of their denouncing the plot against the government, the court pardoned Rahmi, Fethi and Mustafa Vasfi, but required them to be under police custody for two years time. One of the detainees, Major Commander Hüseyin Avni, was found innocent and released, while the printer Leonid was only made to pay fifteen lira fine.³⁰⁷ Satvet Lütü, Tevfik, Mahmud, Salih, Ahmed Bedevi, Sıdkı, Hasan Vasfi and Said who would serve life sentence were then transferred to Bodrum Fortress.³⁰⁸

“Attempt of coup d’état” was the first organized takeover plot against the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet. “The coup attempt” was soon brought into light and

³⁰⁶ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 26.

³⁰⁷ “İrade-i Seniye Sûreti,” *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*, No. 1502, 19 Receb 1331, 11 Haziran 1329, 24 June 1913, Tuesday, s. 3; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No: 610, Husûsî No: 25.C.1331.

³⁰⁸ BOA. Dâhiliye Nezareti, DH. EUM. EMN, Dosya No: 27, Gömlek No: 25, 23.B.1331.

the ones involved were all arrested. According to the English Ambassador Lowther, the attempt was a plot to discard the enemies of both the government and the Committee of Union and Progress in order to get out of the trouble they fallen in after the fall of Edirne.³⁰⁹ In many ways, “the coup attempt” was an unsuccessful imitation of the Babiali Coup, which makes us think that the Committee of Union and Progress might have devised a plan similar to the coup materialized against the Kâmil Paşa cabinet.

³⁰⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, p. 156.

insisted that “bloodshed is inevitable.”¹ A couple of days before the coup attempt, when Çerkes Kazım had come across to Hasan Vasfi, a member of Prince Sabahaddin group at a coffeehouse in Aksaray, he expressed his determination for overthrowing the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and for killing some notable members of the Committee of Union and Progress as follows: “We shall die, but we shall rescue the community from this devil.”² Before, through the first years of the Constitution, Çerkes Kazım had been a feverish supporter of the Committee of Union and Progress with the influence of Hakkı of Sapanca. At the time when Balkan War broke out, Unionist leaders had selected Çerkes Kazım as Erzurum chief delegate, however, the war broke out, and Çerkes Kazım had been appointed commander of a military division. As for Nazmi, he had been on the Çatalca Front fighting against Bulgarian forces during which he got wounded and transferred to a hospital in İstanbul. As the battle on the frontline turned against the Ottoman Army and the rumors about Edirne would be surrendered to the enemy by Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, Çerkes Kazım and Nazmi felt thwarted. Since Çerkes Kazım had lost all his confidence in the Committee of Union and Progress, he began saying, “Those in power are not capable of anything but destroying the country. You can neither rely on their patriotism nor their wisdom.”³ Kazım had thought of one way out, no matter

¹ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Taribimiz ve Jön Türkler*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), p. 395.

² Hasan Amca. *Nizamiye Kapısı ve Yarıda Kalan İhtilal*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1991), pp. 138–139.

³ Hasan Amca. *Nizamiye Kapısı ve Yarıda Kalan İhtilal*, p. 136; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul: Muallim Fuat Gücüyener Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943), p. 170.

what the price would be the government had to be overthrown. Yet such an attempt required men and money.

Glavani Street

It was not only Çerkes Kazım and his followers who had been planning to overthrow Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet. A Kurdish descent Şerif Paşa who lived in Paris had also been making plans against Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and he sent his private assistant Pertev Tevfik⁴ to İstanbul. First Pertev Tevfik had stayed at several different addresses in İstanbul until he finally settled in an apartment in a building on Glavani Street, where the head office of a newspaper called *Müdâfâa-i Milliyye* was located as well.⁵

This address located at a quiet street of Pera (*Beyoğlu*) far way from inquisitive passers by had been a perfect place for the opponents. In order to maintain strong ties between the opponent groups meetings were held there which prominent figures of the opposition or their representatives participated: Pertev Tevfik, Prince Sabahaddin's paymaster Kemal Mithad, former Chief of Political Bureau in Police Department Muhib, Mehmed Ali, Gümülcine Deputy İsmail, Emin whose nickname was Spectacled, Nazmi, Çerkes Kazım and Şevki from the Navy. There were some

⁴ Pertev Tevfik had published an opponent newspaper called *Muabede* [Treaty] in İstanbul in 1910 (1326) but it was shut down by the government authorities in a short period of time and he was imprisoned in the jail of Bekirağa Military Division. As soon as Pertev Tevfik was released from jail, he went abroad and continued his activities against the government in coopeartion with Kurdish Şerif Paşa who resided in Paris then. See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 159.

⁵ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönemler*, (İnkılap Kitabevi, 1960), p. 186; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 159.

occasional participants though; they were followers of this “secret society” such as Ziya, Hakkı, Topal (lame) Tevfik, and Kara (black) Ahmed.⁶ They began holding those meetings before the Babıâli Coup at which the agenda included condemning the policy pursued by the Committee of Union and Progress. But, when the Unionists came back in power once again upon the coup the opposition was shaken badly so that agenda had to be changed. Seeing the victory achieved by the Committee of Union and Progress, the opposition moved on to find ways in order to eliminate the cabinet led by Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Among the first operations of Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet was to send some of the tough opposition members to exile. And the remaining ones were asked to proceed to the cabinet; they were given a notice that due to the vulnerability of the country under prevailing conditions whatever they intended to do should be encouraging unity among the people.⁷ In spite of the policy of the Committee of Union and Progress to “live in peace” the opponents had not given up overruling Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet. But the opposition had been indecisive and had an unorganized structure without a leadership. On one side, Gümülcine deputy İsmail, Staff Officer Kemal, Major Lieutenant Kudret, Kemal Paşa and some other military officers had been collaborating with Prince Sabahaddin, Çerkes Kazım and Nazmi, and on the other, Cypriot Şevket and his brother Adjutant Tevfik had been up to another plot so that the Committee of Union and Progress cabinet would be abolished. Although those

⁶ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 186–187.

⁷ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1977), p. 22.

groups had kept in touch with each other they could not manage to cooperate. Çerkes Kazım and Nazmi had several attempts to work together with Prince Sabahaddin but since they were in favor of “shedding blood” they were always declined.⁸ Prince Sabahaddin’s followers, in the meanwhile, planned discarding the cabinet by heading towards the Sublime Porte and making a big demonstration which would be supported by some military troops as well as the civilians. They were almost prepared to put their plan in action. Yet Chief of Guards Troops in İstanbul, Cemal Bey had been informed before the coup attempt could have been in process and he took the necessary precautions promptly by arresting some of the prominent figures involved.

Even though the “coup d’état attempt” had failed, Çerkes Kazım was still determined to activate his plan to overthrow the government and he continued working on it. He became a regular participant at the meetings held at the apartment Pertev Tevfik lived at Glavani Street. Nevertheless, the agenda of those meetings had been continuously changing. They began discussing assassinating Mahmud Şevket Paşa explicitly as well as some important figures of the Committee of Union and Progress such as Talat Bey, Cemal Bey, Azmi Bey, Nesim Ruso and Emanuel Karasu.⁹ But they needed a huge amount of money to provide guns and gunmen to give the job. Çerkes Kazım and Muhib had suggested that the best person to be applied for financial aid was Prince Sabahaddin. So, Çerkes Kazım, Muhib and Nazmi

⁸ Ahmed Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 395.

⁹ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331.

had paid a visit to his residence at Kuruçeşme and told about their new plan against the government but in more gentle terms. Then, they asked 1,500 liras from him to be able to cover their expenses in pursuing the plan. Çerkes Kazım wanted 1,000 liras to be deposited to a bank account for the expenses which may occur during the operation and the rest to be paid them in cash.

Yet, Prince Sabahaddin had already known what kind of plan Çerkes Kazım had in mind through Pertev Tevfik. He waited till Çerkes Kazım explained the whole thing before pointing out, "I had asked for three thousand lira loan. One thousand and three hundred of this amount has already been spent for the failed 'coup attempt.' And the rest has been spent for this and that," and added, he "would see to it afterwards."¹⁰ When Çerkes Kazım got a negative respond from Prince Sabahaddin, he had tried to find other financial sources and through Muhib he had applied to another opponent of the Committee of Union and Progress who might have money: Damad (son-in-law) Salih Paşa. In the meantime, Çerkes Kazım and Muhip had told about their efforts to get financial support to Pertev Tevfik, the secretary to Kurdish Şerif Paşa, and Pertev Tevfik had handed 700 lira to Çerkes Kazım on behalf of Kurdish Şerif Paşa so that Çerkes Kazım could start the assassination plot immediately. However, that amount was not enough to cover the expenses.

In the meantime, information kept being conveyed to the Guardianship in İstanbul about a possible assassination plot for Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat, Cemal,

¹⁰ "Canilerin İtirafatı," *Tanin*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

Azmi as well as Nesim Ruso and Emanuel Karasu.¹¹ Chief of Guards Troops, Cemal Bey had also been following every step taken by the opposition closely. The spies of Guards Troops in İstanbul had been watching the opponent groups and informing every single detail about how they spent their days to. Although Cemal Bey was informed about the plans of the opposition, he thought it was not the right time yet to act. He rather waited until he found out every collaborator the opposition cooperated, so that he would be able to arrest them with solid evidence when he took action.

Being quite experienced in following up adversary groups, former Chief of Political Bureau in Police Department Muhib had soon realized that the apartment on Glavani Street was being watched and he warned Çerkes Kazım right away. Thereupon, Çerkes Kazım, Muhib, Nazmi and Pertev Tevfik made a meeting to evaluate the situation and they decided to leave the apartment immediately. So, it was decided that Çerkes Kazım and Muhib would go to Romania to get the money from Kurdish Şerif Paşa, after that they would meet with the other opponents residing in Europe and then would return to İstanbul and move to a new address. Çerkes Kazım started to work his plan straight away, leaving the apartment secretly; he boarded a steamboat setting off to Constanza in Romania. Three days later, Muhib joined him in Constanza to continue devising their plot.¹²

¹¹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 31.

¹² BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 175–176; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 187; “Canilerin İtirafı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

Trip to Romania

While Çerkes Kazım and Muhib had been struggling to find a financial aid required for coup d'état, they got together with other opponents in Romania. They held one of their meetings in a house owned by a journalist Abdullah Zühtü, a follower of Kâmil Paşa. Other than the owner of the house Abdullah Zühtü,¹³ Dr. İbrahim Temo, number one registered founder of the Committee of Union and Progress, Asaf Muammer, Mehmed Paşa of Kalkandelen and Deralan's son Mehmed had been present as well.¹⁴ During this meeting, Çerkes Kazım and Muhib revealed the details of their plans for assassinating Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat Bey and some other significant figures from the Committee of Union and Progress members and then attempting for a coup in order to get the opinions of Dr. İbrahim Temo and other opponents. Dr. İbrahim Temo's reply was not what they expected; he mentioned that because of the trust they had put on him, he would not share this information with anybody, but he did not approve killing a brave man like Talat who had served his country even if he made some mistakes.¹⁵ Çerkes Kazım replied to Dr. İbrahim Temo saying, "Doctor, you object to Talat's murder because of the freemasonry ties between two of you, but let me tell you, when I was a member of

¹³ Abdullah Zühtü is one of the first journalists. After the Constitution, he took sides with Kâmil Paşa and run away to Romania after 31 March Uprising which he was thought he had been involved. See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 181.

¹⁴ İbrahim Temo. *İbrahim Temo'nun İttihad ve Terakkî Anıları*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 2000), p. 224; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. EUM. 1. Şb, Dosya No. 4, Gömlek No. 3, 18.Ş.1334; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 181; Topal (lamed) Tevfik is also indicated as one of the participants at the meeting in memoirs of İbrahim Temo differing from Ziya Şakir's.

¹⁵ İbrahim Temo. *İbrahim Temo'nun İttihad ve Terakkî Anıları*, p. 224.

the Committee of Union and Progress, Talat tried encouraging me killing you. You made me surprised with your innocence.”¹⁶ Dr. İbrahim Temo’s advice had been neglected and the meeting ended without arriving at a solution.

Before going to Romania, Çerkes Kazım and Muhib were hopeful in finding the money they needed when Damad Salih Paşa had written a letter to a former Minister of Interior Affairs Reşid, and when Pertev Tevfik had applied to Kurdish Şerif Paşa. Kazım and Muhib tried to make contact with Reşid Bey in Bucarest. But he had been there only for a short period time to take his family to France. So Muhib began asking for Reşid Bey’s Paris address. Luckily the letter written by Dr. Nureddin to Asaf Muammer included the information Muhib needed; Reşid Bey stayed in Hotel Continental in Paris.¹⁷

But, Çerkes Kazım and Muhib were not able to work out where they would get financial aid. Thus, it was pointless for Muhib to spend more time in Romania. They decided that Kazım would stay in Romania waiting for a message from Kurdish Şerif Paşa while Muhib would return to İstanbul and continue his efforts by getting in touch with Damad Salih Paşa once again. Muhib would also take necessary precautions in order to provide Kazım’s arrival in İstanbul Port safely. So Muhib and

¹⁶ İbrahim Temo. *İbrahim Temo’nun İttihad ve Terakki Anıları*, pp. 224–225; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 182.

¹⁷ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331. In an interview published in *Tanîn*, one of the assassins, Ziya claimed that Çerkes Kazım and Muhib had contacted with Reşid Bey in Romania. See: “Cânilerin İtirâfâtı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 2. In the same interview, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali said that Reşid Bey arrived in Romania from Paris and handed 500 lira to Kazım. Sadri Sema in his book, *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, writes that when Muhib found out that Reşid Bey is in Hotel Continental, he went too Paris to see him. See: Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2002), p. 515.

Çerkes Kazım used the amount of money left in their pocket to buy boat tickets and said goodbye to each other.

While Çerkes Kazım and Muhib had been looking for a financial source in Romania, the situation in İstanbul got worse. In his petition former Grand Vizier Kâmil Paşa wrote to Sultan Mehmed Reşad V against the Committee of Union and Progress leaders, he hinted on a possible coup attempt against the Mahmud Şevket Paşa government. In fact, Kâmil Paşa had not been informed about a plan in overthrowing the cabinet, he wrote such a letter in order to take revenge of being dismisses from the government. When Sultan Mehmed Reşad V handed this letter to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the government applied more pressure on the opposition. The Guards Troops of İstanbul had been encircling the opponents, so many of the opponents including Kemal Midhat, Pertev Tevfik and Gümülcine deputy İsmail left the city in order to be out of sight. But, Prince Sabahaddin had not given up his hopes yet; he continued his efforts to come to an agreement with the cabinet by negotiating with Talat Bey, although he was also cautious enough to take refuge on a French warship anchored in front of Kabataş shores.¹⁸

When Muhib arrived in İstanbul, he disembarked the boat in secret to avoid being seen by the police. He had to make sure that he was not being followed before heading to his close friend Gözlüklü Emin's house, who had also worked for Damad Salih Paşa.¹⁹ As soon as he reached there Muhib gave Emin the updates on the

¹⁸ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 188; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönemler*, p. 187.

¹⁹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 188.

developments, and explaining that they did not succeed finding any financial resource, he asked Gözlüklü Emin to advance Damad Salih Paşa to get the money required for their plan. After giving it a thought for some time, Gözlüklü Emin, in the end, had decided to give a hand to Muhib and told him to wait for his message at a secure place. The next day both Emin and Muhib had gotten on a car and drove to Damad Salih Paşa's mansion. Damad Salih Paşa listened to what Muhib had to say, and then, stood up saying, "All right, I agree," while taking an envelope out of his pocket and handing it to Muhib.²⁰

Çerkes Kazım, in Romania on the other hand, had kept waiting for the message he expected from Kurdish Şerif Paşa without a penny in his pocket. But, Çerkes Kazım did not have to keep waiting; soon he received an envelope including a letter from the Kurdish Şerif Paşa together with 10,000 Franks.²¹ Çerkes Kazım decided to keep 1,000 Frank to himself and deposit the remaining to a bank account. On May 1913, Çerkes Kazım went to Marmozore Blank Bank in Constanza, and introducing himself as one of the officers in Ottoman army named Mehmed Hasan he opened a bank account to which he deposited 9,000 franks. Just after that something unexpected happened. This surprised Çerkes Kazım: he received yet another money transfer. This time it was 19,000²² franks. He rushed to Marmozore Blank Bank again to deposit the money delivered to him. Now the account balance was 28,000 franks,

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 190.

²¹ Both the money and the letter were handed to Çerkes Kazım by someone unknown.

²² We have no clue about the source of this money transfer to Romania.

more than enough to cover the expenses for their plot.²³ Çerkes Kazım had written two consequent letters to Muhib in İstanbul. In his first letter, he informed Muhib that he had found the money. In the second one, since Çerkes Kazım was well informed about the hunt pursued by the police, he asked Muhib to get Damad Salih Paşa's assistance in order to be escorted by the chief translator of the Embassy when disembarking the boat in İstanbul.²⁴ So Muhib Bey appealed to Damad Salih Paşa to provide a "chief translator" to accompany Çerkes Kazım disembarking the boat. In fact, Çerkes Kazım did not actually need help getting off the boat.²⁵

At Constanza, Çerkes Kazım found out that a Romanian tourist convoy would go on a trip to İstanbul. And he immediately went to the travel agency and enlisted to that convoy using a Romanian name. It had been a perfect opportunity for him to land in İstanbul without drawing any attention. Çerkes Kazım had two more things left to do before leaving Constanza: he had to withdraw 28,000 Franks from Marmozore Blank Bank and disguise himself like a Romanian tourist.

Early in the morning on 14 May 1913 Çerkes Kazım headed towards the bank. He asked to withdraw the money he deposited in English sterling or in Ottoman lira. But the bank manager declined his request because they only had Romanian franks in their register which they could pay in banknotes of thousands and hundreds. Kazım

²³ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Vesika No. 1-7, 17 Haziran 1329.

²⁴ Even though the name of the "chief translator to the Embassy" has not been mentioned in the report written by military staff, according to the memoirs of Cemal Paşa, it is highly possible he talked about Fitz Maurice, the chief translator to the English Embassy. Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 31; for the military report, see: BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331.

²⁵ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331.

had a friend with him in order to interpret his negotiation.²⁶ On the other hand, since Çerkes Kazım had to catch up with the tourist convoy before departing for İstanbul, he had to accept the bank's offer. He took the money and left the bank.²⁷

He ran to a store selling outfits and bought a hat and a badge same with the Romanian tourists wore.²⁸ Therefore, he was now ready for the trip to İstanbul.

Finally, Çerkes Kazım arrived in İstanbul as another tourist among the Romanian convoy and moved in a house next to Galatasaray Hamam (Bathhouse) owned by Madame Iulya.²⁹ Police Chief Latif had been waiting for him there. Çerkes Kazım asked him to find Muhib for him, which he did. Muhib updated him on the last developments. He told Çerkes Kazım that since the Guards Troops have been making frequent spot checks restricting their ability to move, they would rather move out of the apartment on Glavani Street.³⁰ Thus, the three men, Çerkes Kazım, Muhib and Police Chief Latif began completing their plot against the government. At first they had to make a list of the names who would involve in the assassination. The plot had two stages: in the first one the Grand Vizier Mahmud Şevket Paşa, renowned Committee of Union and Progress leaders Talat, Cemal, Azmi, Nesim Ruso and

²⁶ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Vesika No. 1-7, 17 Haziran 1329; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 191; Later on, the manager of Marmozore Blank Bank recognized Çerkes Kazım on the photo shown to him. However, no information could have been provided about the person who helped Kazım to negotiate at the bank.

²⁷ Çerkes Kazım not only had cash but a check issued by Crédit Lyonnais Bank for 1256.75 frank which he handed to one of the assassins Mehmed Ali. Even though Mehmed Ali had hidden this check underneath the wooden flooring in his prison cell, it was seized during the search made. See: BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, DH. SYS, Umûmî No. 3165, Husûsî No. 115. 25 Haziran 1329.

²⁸ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 191.

²⁹ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332.

³⁰ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, DH. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

Emanuel Karasu would be murdered subsequently. When those assassinations were completed, the group of Çerkeses transferred to İstanbul from İzmit would incite a revolt giving the impression that the government had no authority left in the capital.

The Çerkes men had already arrived in İstanbul and settled in various parts of the city. Now the only detail to be taken care of was to determine the right ferocious assassins. Yet, what they needed was not too far away. Some of the participants who used to be present at the meetings held at Pertev Tevfik's house were the perfect for this job: Nazmi, Ziya, Topal Tevfik, Kara Ahmed, Hakkı, Ragıp and Gendarme Kemal. Every one of them had an individual interest in overthrowing the cabinet. And, when the names of the assassins were listed, the organizational chart of the assassination committee was more or less set. Çerkes Kazım and Muhib were the heads of the committee. Then came the ones who had been harassed by the Committee of Union and Progress leaders: Colonel Fuad, Prefecture Zeki, Nazmi, Topal Tevfik, Ziya and his younger brother Hakkı, Navy officer Şevki, Kara Ahmed, Ragıp, Major Lieutenant Mehmed Ali, Abdullah Safa, Gözlüklü Emin,³¹ Driver Cevad, Gendarme Kemal, Çerkes Kazım's brother Hikmet, a retiree gendarme captain Mehmed, Mustafa of Kavak, and Abdurrahman, son of Çerkes Nazmi Paşa.³²

³¹ In *Tanin* dated 14 June 1913, the reason why Emin was nicknamed as *Kör* "Blind" is explained as follows: "... There is a story told about how Emin has lost his one eye. Once Emin and some of his gang members forced a young and honest boy at a house around Kadirga and attempt abusing him. And the boy grabs a pocketknife in order to protect himself and run away, and he succeeds by hitting Emin with it." See: "Kör Emin," *Tanin*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

³² BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 192–193.

All the men who hired as gunmen had been made to take vows. Even if it took shedding their own blood, they “would not hesitate to take all action required in the name of the sacred goal of their underground society.”³³ Furthermore, the gunmen had been provoked by being promised that the revenge of former Minister of War Nazım Paşa would be taken, while at the same time, they were agitated with the words that what they would do also meant fighting against the movements such as freemasonry and Zionism which had been giving harm to the people.³⁴ A red polka dot handkerchief was given to each and every one of them so that they would recognize each other, and also soldiers who would occupy the Imperial Palace would recognize them.³⁵

The Assassins

Çerkes Kazım and Muhib were meticulous to select the assassins among the ones who had in one way or another some kind of hostility against the Committee of Union and Progress. They picked such men who would not hesitate risking their lives in the name of killing one of the Committee of Union and Progress leaders. Although they had different backgrounds, they had one thing in common: revenge.

Their leader Çerkes Kazım from Adapazarı was the most significant, the bravest and the most experienced among the murderers of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. His

³³ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332.

³⁴ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

³⁵ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

classmates at the Military Academy nicknamed him as “Pehlivan Kazım” because of his tall height and athletic built body.³⁶ Çerkes Kazım had been graduated from the Academy as a lieutenant in 1901 and had assumed active role during the declaration of the Constitution in quelling the revolts broke out in Dersim (today’s Tunceli). The commander of the division called in to Fahrettin Altay Paşa had described Kazım as follows:

We went for a picnic by Munzur Stream ... The water was so cold that we could not even dip our hands into it. Captain Kazım dived into the water. He was at the other bank after crossing the stream with one or two strokes. When got his cloak on trembling he turned to Staff Captain Basri, “Hey, staff officer! Why do you say, can you make it ...?” ... (Çerkes) Kazım had attempted suicide two years ago in by aiming his chest, but luckily he survived. Later on, he faced charges as one of the assassins of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and got executed. He was a tall, athletic and energetic Çerkes.³⁷

Çerkes Kazım had been a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, with the influence of another Çerkes, Hakkı of Sapanca and had become a zealous fan within a short period of time.³⁸ In an article published in *Tanîn*, during the event of the “Secret Society” (*Cemiyet-i Hafiye*) Çerkes Kazım had conveyed the names of all members of the “Secret Society” to the government and contributed in arrest of Dr.

³⁶ “Palavracı Kazım,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3; In a biography published in *Tanîn* about Çerkes Kazım it is claimed that one of his nicknames was “Palavracı” (Braggart) Kazım. The reason behing this claim was the public regarded him and his friends as ordinary criminals rather than political ones.

³⁷ Taylan Sorgun. *İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete: Fahrettin Altay Paşa Anlatıyor*, (İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 1998), pp. 47–48.

³⁸ Galip Vardar. *İhtihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 178; Hasan Amca. *Nizamiye Kapısı ve Yarıda Kalan İhtilal*, p. 136.

Rıza Nur and others.³⁹ After some time, Çerkes Kazım had to leave the Committee of Union and Progress because of some members he disliked and sided with Colonel Sadık but when he could not see what he expected from him, he joined in with the Saviour Officers (*Halaskârân*).⁴⁰

Like all the opponents of the Committee of Union and Progress, Çerkes Kazım had also fled from İstanbul after the Babıâli Coup, Kazım went to his hometown in İzmit. The government established after the coup took severe measures against all opponents in order to get rid of them. İstanbul Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey wired a telegram to the Commandership in İzmit asking Çerkes Kazım to be arrested and transferred to İstanbul immediately. When İzmit Commandership delivered this message to Çerkes Kazım, he replied sending a note to the commandership and promised that he would report to the Guards Troops himself and surrender. However, Çerkes Kazım never showed up.⁴¹

A few days later, Çerkes Kazım wrote a letter explaining that since there was the possibility for the Bulgarians to attack to Çatalca again, he had to go to Çatalca Frontline, and therefore could not report to the Guards Troops and he asked to be pardoned. Then, Kazım left İzmit for İstanbul and headed towards one of his schoolmates, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali's house to find out what happened with the

³⁹ "Palavracı Kazım," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3; In this news report of the Unionist follower newspaper *Tanîn*, Çerkes Kazım was called an ordinary criminal and an informant.

⁴⁰ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 170.

⁴¹ "Suikast Tertibâtının Mukaddemâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

arrested soldiers.⁴² When Lieutenant Mehmed Ali told Çerkes Kazım that the Unionist government had been planning to waste all the opponent officers by posting them by the battle site, Çerkes Kazım changed his mind about surrendering. After the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, when Lieutenant Mehmed Ali was caught injured at Pire Mehmed Street in Pera, he told the following about Çerkes Kazım as published in *Tanîn*:

He used to make propaganda among the public, accused this and that by being a member of masonry and confuse anybody who came across his way. He even did that to me. Now I think, if he could manage poisoning an intelligent person like me with his ideas, he could more than accomplish this on everybody else. He even promised them the office of ministry of war, and the undersecretary to some other.⁴³

When Chief of Guards Troops, Cemal Bey had heard no news from Çerkes Kazım, he started a search warrant for him. It turned out that Çerkes Kazım had never been to Çatalca Front. So, in line with the regulations applied to the officers disobeying the orders, an announcement was made to Çerkes Kazım through daily newspapers and he was asked to obey the order. But being aware of Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey's intention, Çerkes Kazım did not reply to any of such calls. Then

⁴² *Tanîn* reports that Lieutenant Mehmed Ali had been removed from school during his school years in Bursa because of an "immoral act." Then he enrolled to the Military Academy in Edirne where he wounded one of his classmates Sabri Efendi after, which he was expelled to Ordu. Later on, with the help of his father, Rıza Paşa, he was promoted to be an officer. It was also said that Mehmed Ali became a regular gambler in İstanbul. See: "Mülazım Mehmed Ali," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁴³ "Cânilerin İtirâfâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

Cemal Bey appealed to military court and had him dismissed from the Army staff.⁴⁴ Hearing this, Çerkes Kazım got so mad that he took an oath for revenge.

The day after he arrived in İstanbul, Çerkes Kazım went to Casino Luxembourg⁴⁵ at Pera to find an ex-navy officer, Şevki who resigned from the Navy.⁴⁶ Şevki was watching a pool game when Çerkes Kazım entered in. After an initial meeting ceremony, they sat at a table at the back to converse. The conversation between the two got heated when Çerkes Kazım began telling about the plot of overthrowing Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and assassinating some reputable leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress. When Çerkes Kazım explained that he would easily find gunmen for the job in his hometown, İzmit, Şevki interrupted him saying, "It takes more for a coup d'état." A lot of money and financial sources were required to bring those Çerkes men to İstanbul and have them accommodated as well as armed.⁴⁷

Çerkes Kazım agreed. However, the action should be taken soon to eliminate power of the Committee of Union and Progress. After their conversation ended, Çerkes Kazım and Şevki left the casino to meet later in the evening at a liquor house around Sakızağacı. Later in the day, Çerkes Kazım had met with Lieutenant Mehmed

⁴⁴ "Suikast Tertibatının Mukaddemâtı," *Tanin*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, p. 1.

⁴⁵ For more information about Luxembourg Cafe, See: Sermet Muhtar Alus. *İstanbul Kazan Ben Keççe*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), p. 101.

⁴⁶ Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 178; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 171.

⁴⁷ Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 178.

Ali, Nazmi, Ziya and Ziya's younger brother who worked for *Alemdar* newspaper. He told them about to plan and also invited them to the same liquor house.

Nazmi was the son of Navy Colonel Hasan Kâmil who lived in a house at Küçük Mustafa Paşa. One of the leading actors of "Coup Attempt" and a close friend to the personal assistant of Prince Sabahaddin, Satvet Lütfi since the Mercan Preparatory School, Nazmi⁴⁸ had involved in several incidents with casualties.⁴⁹ He was there at Vasil's liquor house at Ayakapısı where, on 11 April 1909, Nazmi's best friend Topal Tevfik had killed former minister of Foreign Customs Cemal's nephew Şekib and wounded one navy captain named Adil. Nazmi had faced charges for the murder and was condemned to the galleys for three years in the initial trial, but in the end of second trial he was found innocent and was released. Then, in 1911, Nazmi had been charged against having a man named Aziz wounded and sentenced to three month imprisonment.⁵⁰

In the evening, Çerkes Kazım, Şevki, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali, Nazmi, Hakkı and Ziya had gathered around a table at the liquor house and began toasting their glasses filled with raki. They were all excited and taking vows to get the revenge of the Sublime Porte Riot as well as Nazım Paşa's.⁵¹ But their enchantment was blocked

⁴⁸ In the news report published in *Tanîn* of June 14 1913, Nazmi was accused of being "pederast": "... Once Nazmi had killed a boy after he raped who he had captured in his house by force." On the other hand this news might have been made up by *Tanîn* to make the public have prejudice against him. See: "Kâtillerden Firâri Nazmi," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 1.

⁴⁹ "Kâtillerden Firâri Nazmi," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 1.

⁵⁰ "Nazmi Kimdir?" *İkdam*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 1.

⁵¹ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 173; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp 178–179.

when the money issue and how to find a financial source was discussed. In the end, Çerkes Kazım finally told them that they could contact with Pertev Tevfik who Nazmi recommended. Pertev Tevfik was one of the most significant men working for Kurdish Şerif Paşa; therefore he could have provided the money needed from Kurdish Şerif Paşa. At the same time, they could have applied to Prince Sabahaddin who was renowned of being a government opponent. When Çerkes Kazım told this possibility to him, Muhib supported him; hence they made up their minds to go to Prince Sabahaddin first.⁵²

Ziya was the son of Hasan Captain who lived at Tatlıkapı around Şehremini.⁵³ His elder brother Çerkes Arif was a reliable pupil of Fehim Paşa,⁵⁴ a prominent figure during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. He was honest and trustworthy but an alcoholic as well as a bandit. He and Rifleman Tahir Paşa, an Albanian descent had been in charge of the security of the imperial palace of Yıldız during Sultan Abdülhamid II period. Fehim Paşa and Tahir Paşa were secret rivals; this fact affected both the Çerkeses and the Albanians of the imperial household. One day Tahir Paşa's closest ally Pale Rifled-man Mustafa had got drunk and stood by Galatasaray Lyceum began molesting passers by, and then drawing his scimitar tucked in his waist he had challenged the policemen. Çerkes Arif had been in the neighborhood, he heard Mustafa yelling and went ahead to grab the scimitar in his

⁵² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 172; Galip Vardar. *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 179.

⁵³ "Hasan Kaptan Oğlu Ziya," *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

⁵⁴ After the declaration of the Constitution, Fehim Paşa had been lynched by the people of Bursa.

hand. Thereupon, Mustafa was arrested and taken under custody. Following this incident, Çerkes Arif and Mustafa became enemies.

One night while Çerkes Arif had been enjoying his drink at one the liquor houses at Galata, Mustafa had stepped in, and sitting at one of the tables, he began saying annoying words. In the end, Çerkes Arif was angry, he pulled the guns out of his waist belt, but Mustafa had been swift enough to shoot him first. He was then arrested to be triled against charges. On the day of the trial, 28 March 1907 when he was taken to the court Mustafa had been shot dead by Çerkes Arif's brother Ziya, who had been waiting for that moment.⁵⁵ Ziya had been sentenced to death and sent to Sinop Prison where he escaped with the help of the guardians and Çerkes Blond Mehmed, a pupil of Sultan Abdülhamid II and got sheltered in Mahmud Paşa's farm in Egypt. Upon the declaration of the Constitution, Ziya had once again been in the scene.⁵⁶ Ziya and his younger brother Hakkı, a journalist of *Alemdar* were among the assassins of Mahmud Şevket Paşa as well.⁵⁷

Another person who would not hesitate risking his life was Paşazâde Abdurrahman. He was an eighteen years old good-looking and learned man. Like

⁵⁵ In a news report of *Tanîn*, it was written that Ziya had killed Mustafa at the courtyard. See: "Kör Ziyâ," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3. For further information, see: Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 176.

⁵⁶ "Hasan Kaptan Oğlu Ziya," *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2; "Kör Ziyâ," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3. It was claimed that Çerkes Ziyâ, or as named by *Tanîn* "Kör Ziyâ" had started casino business at Beyoğlu and Şehzadebaşı upon his return to İstanbul.

⁵⁷ According to a news report published in *Tanîn*, one of the hands of Hakkı was disabled, when, once he was beaten and his fingers were cut off by a man around Aksaray named Arab Salahaddin because of a woman they were both interested in. See: "Kör Ziyâ," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

most of the assassins he was also Çerkes. His father Hacı Nazmi Paşa had been rewarded by being posted to the office of prefecture after his success during the Ottoman-Russian War (1877–1878).⁵⁸ But, before that Hacı Nazmi Paşa had served as chief commander first in Prizren, then in Monastir, and later as Head of Provisions Commission in the army. Regiment Mufti and the Principal of Monastery Military School, Vehbi were also part of that commission. Hacı Nazmi Paşa and Vehbi were not on speaking terms because of military provisions. In the days when the Constitution flag was raised in Rumelia, the Regiment Mufti had reported Hacı Nazmi Paşa that he had heard some plans being devised against Sultan Abdülhamid II, and mentioning that he had to inform the Yıldız Palace by a telegram, he asked him whether he would also sign it or not. Hacı Nazmi Paşa declined him.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, the Mufti had sent the telegram to the Sultan informing the developments in Rumelia. Sultan Abdülhamid II showed his appreciation by inviting the Mufti to Yıldız Palace. During the dinner when the Mufti praised Hacı Nazmi Paşa, the Sultan had invited him to İstanbul as well, and appointed him to be the commander of a brigadier to hunt Niyazi of Resne who took to the hills.⁶⁰ That would put Hacı Nazmi Paşa in a difficult situation; he was concerned about the

⁵⁸ "Hacı Nazmi Paşa," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁵⁹ In a biographical article of *Tanîn*, Hacı Nazmi Paşa had been introduced as a servant of Sultan Abdülhamid II. The charges against him included that during the years Hacı Nazmi Paşa served at Rumelia he had collaborated with Şemsi Paşa who were assigned for the duty of hunting the Committee of Union and Progress members, and that he took action to hunt Niyazi of Resne and his friendp. See: "Hacı Nazmi Paşa," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 170; "Hacı Nazmi Paşa," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

retort of the Committee Union and Progress. Thankfully, officers under the command of Hacı Nazmi Paşa, who were supporters of the committee, understood his concern, so advised him to pretend chasing Niyazi. And Hacı Nazmi Paşa, let alone going after Niyazi, he did not even move.

After the 31 March Uprising, Hacı Nazmi Paşa had fallen in a more complicated situation when the Principal of Monastery Military School Vehbi accused him of being a spy of the Palace, after which he was trialed by Court Martial. According to the verdict he was demoted; he lost his military rank “Paşa” which was granted to him by Sultan Abdülhamid II after the Constitution.⁶¹ This incident had affected Hacı Nazmi Paşa’s son Abdurrahman badly, so much that he vowed to take his revenge. Paşazâde Abdurrahman had been waiting for perfect timing to take his father’s revenge from the Committee of Union and Progress leaders. One day he told all about it to Çerkes Kazım, who in return offered Abdurrahman to join their secret society. Abdurrahman did not miss this opportunity and became one of the assassins.⁶²

As for Topal Tevfik, he was the most merciless among them all, and he was the only one who could fire his gun without a second thought. When other assassins drove away from Bayezid Square during the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Topal Tevfik did not even hesitate for a second to go up the footstep of Mahmud

⁶¹ Galip Vardar, *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 170–171; “Hacı Nazmi Paşa,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁶² Galip Vardar, *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 171. For biographies of Hacı Nazmi Paşa and Paşazâde Abdurrahman see: Ziya Şakir, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 219–223.

Şevket Paşa's car and aiming at his head, he fired all remaining bullets in his gun. Weapons and bloodshed had always been part of Topal Tevfik's life. He had become lame when he got knifed during a fight with a boatman named Laz Hasan.⁶³

Once, he was at Vasil's liquor house with a friend of his, Nazmi at Ayakapısı,⁶⁴ he got involved in a fight and killed former minister of Foreign Customs Cemal's nephew Şekib,⁶⁵ and wounded one navy captain named Adil, and then broke out. After he absconded he was sentenced for fifteen years imprisonment, but it was not so long when he was released during the general amnesty.⁶⁶

Topal Tevfik regarded his friend Nazmi as an "intellectual"⁶⁷ and since he was only a high school graduate he relied on Nazmi's ideas. When the two came together they usually talked about ordinary stuff. However, since Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet came into power, the topic of their conversations had somewhat changed. Nazmi had begun pointing out the disaster the country would soon face and complaining that there was "unfortunately" no one who would sacrifice himself to save the country. And Tevfik replied to him, "You are a learned man, no doubt some

⁶³ Hasan Amca. *Doğmayan Hürriyet: Bir Devrin İç Yüzü 1908-1918*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1989), p. 126.

⁶⁴ Ayakapı, was a neighborhood in south of Golden Horn, somewhere in between Cibali and Fener. Today, that area is within Küçükmustafapaşa quarter at Fatih. The word Ayakapı, meaning Saint Gate was given after one of the entrances behind the city walls: Aya Teodosia Gate. For more information see: Aksel Tibet. "Ayakapı," *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt I, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), pp. 436-437.

⁶⁵ In a biography of Topal Tevfik published in *Tanin*, Şekib was pointed out as Cemal Bey's brother. See: "Topal Tevfik," *Tanin*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁶⁶ "Topal Tevfik," *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2; "Topal Tevfik," *Tanin*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

⁶⁷ During his interrogation at the Guards Troops in İstanbul, he said that Nazmi was a graduate of Law School. See: "Cânilerin İtirâfâtı," *Tanin*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

of your friends are cognizant of the issues, because I had only a high school education, my ideas are not as bright as yours, if you are willing to sacrifice yourselves, I may join you.” Nazmi’s reply to Tevfik was, “Hopefully we can accomplish to serve our deprived country.”⁶⁸ In the end, when the secret society led by Çerkes Kazım which Nazmi was also a member decided to take an action against the government, Topal Tevfik was also with them.

Spectacled (Blind) Emin who had introduced Muhib to Damad Salih Paşa to help the group to find financial aid was also Muhib’s best friend. Emin was from Adana, he worked at the house of Undersecretary to Customs Office Mehmed Ali as a servant, then after befriended with him he was appointed to Sirkeci Customs House as the Deputy Chief. Later on, when Mehmed Ali was posted to Beirut as the governor, he brought Emin with him as the police chief because of his “confidentiality and loyalty.” After the declaration of the Second Constitution, Emin came to İstanbul but because of overstaff, he was dismissed. For sometime, he could manage unemployed and penniless, then, together with Tahir Hayreddin he got attached to the journalists working at *Alemdar* newspaper. Then, again, his close ties with the Minister of Interior affairs provided him another position: a police inspectorship. In fact, it was not an easy decision for the office of the ministry to appoint Emin to that position, but Damad Salih Paşa’s reference had helped him. Emin used to visit Damad Salih Paşa and had long chats with him.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ “Cânilerin İtirâfâtı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

⁶⁹ “Kör Emin,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 3.

Assassination Plot and Arrangements

Since Guards Troops in İstanbul increased the pressure on the opponents of the Committee of Union and Progress, the secret society members had begun looking for a new address where they can pursue their activities. They found a house on the left side of Pire Mehmed Street down the Ağa Câmii at Beyoğlu. Bahriyeli Şevki rented the house owned by an Italian lady, Madame Karavana.⁷⁰ Then the group picked up the pace in completing their assassination plans throughout the meetings held at that house. Çerkes Kazım was determined to take action as soon as finding the right gunmen upon completion of the plan. According to this plan, Çerkes Kazım would disguise as a contractor with a hat on and a briefcase under his arm, and he would head for the Ministry of War. His comrades would go behind him. After taking a tour around the offices of General Provisions Department, they would eventually enter into the office of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. When this sudden visit together with the guns aimed at him left Mahmud Şevket Paşa in shock, it would not be difficult to kidnap him. At the same time, Çerkes Kazım's comrades would seize the building. Then Mahmud Şevket Paşa would be forced to make phone calls to cabinet members and to Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey asking them to proceed to the ministry to discuss a significant matter. When all arrived at the

⁷⁰ "Bir Numaralı Hâne," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 1; In his book Ziya Şakir pointed out that it was Chief Translator of the English Embassy Fitz Maurice who arranged the lease contract for that house. See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 192.

Ministry of War, assassination team would put an end to lives of many Unionist ministers starting with Cemal Bey, and consequently seize the power.⁷¹

This first plan Çerkes Kazım composed had been nothing but a bad copy of the Babiâli Coup. Yet chances of accomplishing were none. Because Cemal Bey knew the plans being made to overthrow the government he increased the security measures at the key points such as the Ministry of War and the Sublime Porte. So Çerkes Kazım had to give second thought on the plan and realized that it would be impossible implementing it.

Çerkes Kazım had to make a “more thrilling plan” after admitting that a daytime break-in to the Ministry of War was doomed to be failed. This time, he concentrated on catching unawares of both the Unionist leaders and the Guards Troops as well as destroying their counter-attacking arrangements. The Guards Troops had taken all necessary measures but had not thought of a possible capture of the car Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been driven. According to the second and the final plan, Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Cemal Bey, Talat Bey and Azmi Bey, as well as Nesim Ruso and Emanuel Karasu would be murdered simultaneously. The motive behind this was outlawing the despotism of the Committee of Union and Progress. But, as for the two Jew members of the Committee of Union and Progress, their murder would exploit the religious faith of the public and give them the impression

⁷¹ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 194.

“the secret society” took action against the Zionists and freemasonry which had been causing harm throughout the country by killing them a message of the public.⁷²

As the draft of the plan had been completed, there had to be a role share among the assassins. “The real revolutionaries had gathered at Pire Mehmed Street, they were brave, young men used to bullet whistles, and who consider killing a man nothing more than shooting a target.”⁷³ Those bodyguards were the actual assassins; none of them would shudder but obey the command ordered. Every single one of them was carefully selected by Çerkes Kazım; they all took oath that they would fight for the “secret society” till the last drop of their blood was shed.⁷⁴

A few days before the house at Pire Mehmed Street was rented, Çerkes Kazım had once again contacted with Prince Sabahaddin and made an agreement with him to establish a new government under the leadership of Kâmil Paşa. Thus, Kemal Midhat and his men who worked according to Prince Sabahaddin’s instructions had united with Çerkes Kazım’s group of men. And as a result to this alliance, one of Kemal Midhat’s men, Bahriyeli Şevki, had joined with Çerkes Kazım together with some weapons he acquired.⁷⁵ While the preparations for the assassination had been progressing, persons who would hold the offices of key positions such as Guards Troops commandership, Garrison Commandership, and Gendarme General Commandership had to be determined as well.

⁷² BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

⁷³ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 187–188.

⁷⁴ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 187–188; Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 516.

⁷⁵ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

Çerkes Kazım had ordered Ziya to pay a visit to Colonel Fuad together with Süleyman Paşa's son Captain Adil and invite the colonel to the house at Pire Mehmed Street. When Ziya and Captain Adil went to Colonel Fuad's house, he met them in his nightgown. Captain Adil explained the reason of their visit, but the colonel said that he had a guest that night and would not be available. But, two nights later, Colonel Fuad had showed up at the headquarters of the "secret society" on Pire Mehmed Street accompanied by Captain Kemal.⁷⁶ During his interrogation on 17 June 1913, Çerkes Kazım told the following:

After the coup d'état, we needed some people in order to sort out some matters. Since I had no contact with any notable men, I began looking for qualified persons who could take the command at the Guards Troops and Garrison Commandership as well as Gendarmerie Commandership. I had to make inquiries. Then I thought I could invest some trust in Colonel Fuad and I send a message to him through Süleyman Paşazâde Adil. Ziya went for Adil because Ziya did not know where Fuad lived. Then they paid a visit to him together to invite him. But, he refused to come along that night. Then I called Captain Adil. I told him to tell him that I needed to see him. Adil left and came back the following night. He said either I should go to Adil's house or Fuad would pay a visit here. I said he could come here. First Fuad went to Adil's house in uniform, and then he came to our house in daily clothes. Before he arrived, I had sent Kemal to our house, and I got there before him.⁷⁷

In addition to Colonel Fuad at the confidential meeting held at the house on Pire Mehmed Street, Colonel Kemal and Prefecture Zeki had also been present. Prefecture Zeki sat in a corner while Kemal and Fuad took some notes. Also at this meeting, Çerkes Kazım offered Colonel Fuad to be Chief General Staff, Colonel

⁷⁶ "Cânilerin İtirâfâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

⁷⁷ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. EUM. 1.Şb, Dosya No. 4, Gömlek No. 3, 18.Ş.1334.

Kemal to be Chief of Guards Troops and Prefecture Zeki to be Garrison Commander if the coup d'état succeeded. Having had accepted Çerkes Kazım's offer, they all had taken oaths and received one of the red polka dot handkerchiefs as a sign of membership to the "secret society."⁷⁸

After this agreement, Çerkes Kazım had begun operating on behalf of both groups, speeding up the preparations and distributing the roles among his men. According to job distribution there were five groups of assassins. Topal Tevfik, Abdullah Safa, Bahriyeli Şevki, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali, Paşazâde Abdurahman and Cevad were in the first group led by Ziya and Nazmi. They were in charge of shooting Mahmud Şevket Paşa in his car passing by the Bayezid Square. Since the risk of being caught for this group would be higher than the others, they were going to run away by car. But, the others would leave the site on foot by making themselves disappear among the crowd after they finished with their preys.

The second group consisted of Mustafa of Kavak, Laz Ali, Edhem and Raif. Their duty was to kill the former secretary to Minister of Finance, Nesim Ruso. The group contained Ziya's younger brother Hakkı and Ragıb, as well. They were in charge of murdering the deputy of Salonika and an honorary member of Macedonian Resort Masonic Lodge Emanuel Karasu (Emanuele Carasso).⁷⁹ The fourth group consisted of the Çerkes hit men brought from İzmit and Mehmed Ali who was a

⁷⁸ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15. According to Galip Vardar, if the coup attempt succeeded Colonel Fuad would become the chief of Guards Troops, and Colonel Kemal was considered to be the Garrison Commander which he refused and did not join with the rebellions. When Colonel Kemal declined the duty, Prefecture Zeki had put himself for the duty and participated in the plot. See: Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 188.

⁷⁹ Angelo Iacovella. *Gönye ve Hilal: İttihad-Terakki ve Masonluk*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), p. 7.

retired gendarme officer. Their goal was to get the Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul, Cemal Bey. The fifth and the last assassinating group were put together in order to murder the most loathed person by the opponents: Talat Bey, the most prominent figure of the Committee of Union and Progress. Besides Çerkes Kazım's brother Hikmet and Gendarme Kemal there were some other Çerkes gunmen among them.⁸⁰

Every group was supposed to follow their prey and collect information about them so as to determine the ideal place for assassination. Because of the security reasons, each group would arrive at the determined place at a certain time which would be informed to them individually. When the first group made the move and killed Mahmud Şevket Paşa, other groups would act their roles and kill their preys.

In the meantime, Kemal Midhat assumed the responsibility of composing a memorandum to inform the Embassies about the last developments. The memorandum which notified the foreign countries that the revolt against the Committee of Union and Progress had broken out and that they should allow their soldiers aboard the warships anchored in Bosphorus to go ashore to protect their own citizens.⁸¹ After the assassination teams completed their missions successfully,

⁸⁰ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 188–189.

⁸¹ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 189.

everybody would meet in the headquarters of the “secret committee” at Beyoğlu in Pire Mehmed Sokağı and they would march to the palace all together from there.⁸²

There had been one other duty to be fulfilled, someone had to appeal to the Dolmabahçe Palace to convince Sultan Mehmed Reşad V to support the coup. Çerkes Kazım and Kemal Midhat had thought that Field Marshall Şakir Paşa was the right person for it. Since Çerkes Kazım had not met the Field Marshall before, he asked Kemal Midhat to talk to him. But, Field Marshall Şakir Paşa would not accept the duty. Even though there were other candidates such as Field Marshall Fuad Paşa and Georgian Bahri Paşa, in the end, Damad Salih Paşa was thought to be more appropriate. So, Muhib paid a visit to Damad Salih Paşa. He requested him to proceed to the Sultan during the coup and inform him about the last developments trying to get his support. And Damad Salih Paşa accepted his offer.⁸³

Guards Troops in İstanbul Finally On Action

Chief of Guards Troops in İstanbul Cemal Bey had eventually found out that a coup attempt had been planned by the opposition together with an assassination plot for Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat Bey, himself and for some other leading Union and Progress members. In fact, Cemal Bey had long been informed about those efforts even before Çerkes Kazım had visited İzmit, therefore Cemal Bey had already ordered his men to keep tailing him and watch his moves. While being informed

⁸² BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15.

⁸³ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. EUM. 1.Şb, Dosya No. 4, Gömlek No. 3, 18.Ş.1334; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332.

about Çerkes Kazım, Cemal Bey had also some evidence indicating Muhib's involvement in the same attempts. Thereupon, he commissioned his staff to watch Muhib as well. So, in the end Cemal Bey had revealed that Muhip and Çerkes Kazım had been up to organizing a serious assassination plot which had also been supported by Damad Salih Paşa, Pertev Tevfik and Prince Sabahaddin. In the meantime, when Prince Sabahaddin had suddenly got disappeared, Cemal Bey was assured that the foreign powers had been propping up the plot. In his opinion, Chief Translator to English Embassy Fitz Maurice and Military Attaché Major Tyrell had been encouraging the attempts.⁸⁴

In a report presented to Cemal Bey, Damad Salih Paşa was pointed out as the leader of the plot. Although Damad Salih was a member of the Party of Freedom and Understanding (*Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası*) in opposition with Union and Progress, Cemal Bey regarded this piece of information unlikely. Damad Salih Paşa was a member of the dynasty and Cemal Bey had to keep him away from the conspiracies, so he sent one of his adjutants to Damad Salih Paşa's mansion in order to invite him to the Headquarters of Guards Troop. Damad Salih Paşa accepted the invitation. Cemal Bey told him about the hard times the country had been passing through and explained him the reason he requested to see him:

Your Excellency! Please allow me to picture the situation in front of your eyes. Being the son-in-law of the Sultan, you have a high reputation and office which some people, I assume, try to take advantage of and scheme some plans on your behalf. They are trying

⁸⁴ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 31; "Suikast Tertibâtının Mukaddemâtu," *Tanîn*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

to get supporters among the military and government officers by telling them that there is as a secret society established under your leadership which is working out plans to overthrow the government in power by killing many of the cabinet members. I believe Your Excellency has not been aware of these developments, however those men have been using your name and putting burden on your shoulders. It is my duty to protect Your Excellency, a member of honorary Ottoman Dynasty, hence to keep you informed.⁸⁵

According to Cemal Bey, the assassination attempt could have been prevented if Damad Salih Paşa went to Europe and stayed there for three-four months.⁸⁶ But Damad Salih Paşa had explicitly stated that he would not agree with Cemal Bey:

Gentleman, let me put it explicitly. Thanks to the Sultan, I have been leading a perfect and a luxurious life. I live so comfortably that I would not think of being deprived of one minute of it. Thus, I cannot accept your offer and leave for Europe. Moreover, what you have just told me is nothing but a mere fiction. It is just made up! If I happen to agree with you and head to a European country, I would put myself in a situation accepting the accusations. Therefore, I shall not go anywhere. I reproach you to call me here to make me worried.⁸⁷

When Cemal Bey got such a hypocritical reply from Damad Salih Paşa, he changed his calm attitude and answered him unkindly:

Paşa! I see that you have full confidence in your plot and you believe that you will accomplish. Therefore, you prefer to wait here and take the opportunity of getting your share after your victory. Let me tell

⁸⁵ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 32.

⁸⁶ "Suikast Tertibâtının Mukaddemâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, Monday, p. 2; In his book, Ziya Şakir wrote that Cemal Bey addressed Damad Salih Paşa in a harsh tone saying, "... until this committee achieves its duty, I should say it would be the best if you leave İstanbul." See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 198.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 33.

you that this attempt is doomed to fail. There maybe individual assassinations but nobody can accomplish overthrowing the government.⁸⁸

Then, Cemal Bey decided to make one last offer to Damad Salih Paşa. But, it was in vain. So he had one option left: to assign someone to follow Damad Salih Paşa around the clock. When Cemal Bey threatened him, Damad Salih Paşa replied, "Please do your best. I am not the person who would go here and there," and left the room. After this conversation at the İstanbul Guards Troops, Cemal Bey assigned someone to watch Damad Salih Paşa for twenty four hours a day.

A short time later, General Director of Liquor and Tobacco, Monsieur Weyl came to visit Cemal Bey at his office. It did not look like an ordinary visit. Then, he explained that the reason of his visit was the "bad attitude" Damad Salih Paşa was exposed to at Cemal Bey's office. Monsieur Weyl told Cemal that Damad Salih Paşa could by no means be a part of a "shameful attempt." And Cemal Bey replied to him that he had been well aware of the severity of his words to Damad Salih Paşa, however, he did utter them in the light of detailed investigations about him. Cemal Bey also added that when Damad Salih Paşa had not paid any attention to him, he had to have him watched around the clock. In order to prove Damad Salih Paşa's involvement in the assassination plot, Cemal Bey suggested Monsieur Weyl to ask Damad Salih Paşa the following questions: "Has someone, an unidentified person

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 33.

delivered an unsigned letter to his the day before? Did somebody invite him to an address in Beyoğlu in that letter?”⁸⁹

The next day, Monsieur Weyl had once again showed up at Cemal Bey’s office after having a talk with Damad Salih Paşa. He mentioned to Cemal Bey that Damad Salih Paşa admitted that he had received such a letter, but he said he did not know who and why had sent him an invitation. According to Damad Salih Paşa, that letter was only a scam to put him in a difficult situation. After Monsieur Weyl had passed what Damad Salih Paşa said to him to Cemal Bey, he also informed him that from then on he would not pursue the issue any longer, but he requested Cemal Bey to provide some protection to Damad Salih Paşa against the slanders. As per allegations put forward by Cemal Bey, the house in Beyoğlu on Pire Mehmed Street where Damad Salih Paşa had been invited to was the address of the headquarters of the “secret society” where Çerkes Kazım had been hiding.⁹⁰

There was an unanticipated development in the meanwhile: when one of the organizers of the plot against Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Gümülcine deputy İsmail realized that he had been followed he rushed to the Guards Troops immediately to see Cemal Bey. He told Cemal Bey that he stopped getting involved in any coup attempt as he promised while he was in prison in Garrison Commandership. Even though Cemal Bey did not believe what he said, he told İsmail of Gümülcine that he

⁸⁹ Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, pp. 34–35; “Suikast Tertibâtının Mukaddemâtı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, pp. 35–36; “Suikast Tertibâtının Mukaddemâtı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

would not be able to make a judgment unless he had solid proof. So, İsmail thanked Cemal Bey and left. Later on, Cemal Bey would mention this incident in his memoirs writing that he wished he had not let the man go that day instead of arresting him:

He thanked me and left. This was a big mistake on my part. I could have at least issue an arrest warrant for the man as a precaution, he could not have fled after the assassination of Mâhmud Şevket Paşa but would have imprisoned in the light of the evidence maintained after the interrogation.⁹¹

Kâmil Paşa Returns to İstanbul

Ten days or one week before Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assassinated, Police Chief Azmi had informed Cemal Bey that the former Grand Vizier Kâmil Paşa had arrived in İstanbul on a boat named Maritime Messenger, but had not yet disembarked. When Cemal Bey heard the news, he sent Chief of Police Department to Kâmil Paşa to ask him to go back to Egypt without setting foot in İstanbul. But Kâmil Paşa ignored Cemal Bey and moved in to the mansion he used to live. According to Cemal Bey, this sudden visit of Kâmil Paşa had been organized by the group of assassins and had been an indication of the coming events.⁹² However, since Cemal Bey could not prove this yet, he asked Azmi to take necessary safety measures around Kâmil Paşa's residence. Cemal Bey informed Azmi that he would commission an officer of Guards Troops and a few soldiers to be on guard at Kâmil

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 38.

⁹² Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, pp. 38–39, Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 200; Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999), p. 206.

Paşa's mansion and told him to commission sufficient number of police forces there as well. After Kâmil Paşa's residence had been taken under control, no body under suspect would be allowed to enter there any more. In addition, Cemal Bey ordered his adjutant Captain Hilmi to pass the following message to Kâmil Paşa:

In the light of the internal affairs throughout the country, Kâmil Paşa's presence in İstanbul may be detrimental. Therefore, the government requests the Paşa to go back on board Maritime Messenger to return to Egypt where he came from. Moreover, if the boat stays here for three more days, Paşa would rather get on aboard maximum in twelve hours. Otherwise, the government will have to take regretful measures.⁹³

Captain Hilmi had passed this message Kâmil Paşa but he did not accept it. He said that he was very exhausted to be able to stand to another boat trip. Such a reply made Cemal Bey to increase the stricter measures in the mansion and he ordered that no visitors should be allowed in. While such safety measures were being taken, Chief Translator to the English Embassy Fitz Maurice's visit to Kâmil Paşa was also forbidden by the police forces on duty. So, Fitz Maurice appealed to Mahmud Şevket Paşa to make a complaint that he had not been allowed to visit Kâmil Paşa, and he pointed out that "this would make a bad affect on the English public."⁹⁴

Mahmud Şevket Paşa *versus* Cemal Bey

⁹³ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 40.

When one of the sons of Kâmil Paşa, Şevket found out that his father's residence had been blockaded by Guards Troops in İstanbul, he went to the Ministry of War to discuss the matter. He requested Mahmud Şevket Paşa to have the blockade to be removed and to prevent him to be forced to leave İstanbul borders. Mahmud Şevket Paşa's reply to Şevket was, "You are being unfair, if you father did not were impartial, I would not hesitate to pay my respect in his presence. But he was the one who had imprisoned one hundred and twenty men. He even had me tailed. Now, he is making fuss about the same situation."⁹⁵

In addition to the threat Fitz Maurice implied when Mahmud Şevket Paşa got this complaint from Kâmil Paşa's son Şevket, he got furious. He made a phone call to Cemal Bey ordering him to be present at his office immediately. Cemal Bey obeyed him. He was there in the afternoon. Mahmud Şevket Paşa asked Cemal Bey, "What is happening? Have you imprisoned Kâmil Paşa in his own house? Have been forcing him to leave İstanbul?"⁹⁶ Cemal Bey explained that it was imperative to deport Kâmil Paşa out of the city; otherwise the capital would not be a safe place soon.⁹⁷ Cemal Bey's reply infuriated Mahmud Şevket Paşa, he retorted, "How dare you? Get your men back from Kâmil Paşa's mansion now. And stop pushing him to go back on board the boat."⁹⁸ Mahmud Şevket Paşa had nothing to say more for the

⁹⁵ *Sadraşam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 166.

⁹⁶ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 40.

⁹⁷ *Sadraşam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 167.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 167.

time being, he had made up his mind about discussing the matter some time later. Cemal Bey's eyes filled with tears, he left the room saying, "yes, sir!"

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been quite upset with Cemal Bey's attitude. After he left, the Mahmud Şevket Paşa called Kâmil Paşa's son Şevket to tell him, "Please inform His Excellency that I pay my respect to Paşa, he should feel comfortable, I ordered the watch guard to be removed from his residence." Mahmud Şevket Paşa also sent a message to Şevket's brother Abdullah inviting him to the Ministry of War the next day.⁹⁹

When Cemal Bey stepped out of Mahmud Şevket Paşa's office, Minister of Marine Çürüksulu Mahmud Paşa happened to be around. He caught up with Cemal Bey and took him to the Ambassador Office. Mahmud Paşa and Cemal Bey stood in front of the window for a while without uttering a word. Cemal Bey's eyes were still in tears. In the end, he turned Mahmud Paşa asking, "Have you witnessed how I was treated? Can one put up with this in the name of his country?" Mahmud Paşa replied to him, "You are absolutely right. But please remain calm and do not lose your patience."¹⁰⁰ Cemal Bey had almost collapsed because of the treatment he had confronted which he had not deserved at all whilst working day and night in order to guard the government. In the meantime, the Minister of Marine Çürüksulu Mahmud Paşa had spent a little more time with Cemal Bey to calm him down, and then he left. When Cemal Bey had returned to his office in the Guards Troops Commandership,

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁰⁰ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 41.

called for Police Chief Azmi to tell him that the policemen around the residence of Kâmil Paşa should now be removed with the order he just received from Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Yet Cemal Bey would not completely leave the Kâmil Paşa's mansion unattended, he commissioned one military policeman and a policeman to stand by around the house in civilian clothes and watch. After Cemal Bey had dealt with the Police Chief, he sat down at his desk writing two different memorandums to Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In the first one, he informed that the guards around the residence of Kâmil Paşa would be removed. The second report was a kind of resignation letter. He wrote that because of his ill-health he acquired due to working hard for the last three or four months, he would like to be pardoned since he would not be able to continue his duty at the Guards Troops Commandership.¹⁰¹

The next day, Kâmil Paşa's son Abdullah, a member of the Supreme Court consented to Mahmud Şevket Paşa's invitation. During their meeting at the Ministry of War, Mahmud Şevket Paşa told him that it would be difficult to protect Kâmil Paşa in İstanbul so he should better leave for İzmir. A little later, Chief of Guards Troops, Cemal Bey's reports arrived. The resignation letter was recited at the cabinet meeting where many ministers who were the Committee of Union and Progress followers mentioned that it should be declined. Mahmud Şevket Paşa agreed with them and began seeking for a solution.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰² *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 168; Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 43.

At last, Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Cemal Bey had come together at the Grand Vizier office at nine o'clock that night. Mahmud Şevket Paşa tried to appease Cemal Bey, adding that whatever happened between them in the earlier hours of the day should be considered as a "fleeting anger between father and son."¹⁰³ And, Cemal Bey explained Mahmud Şevket Paşa that the reason why he penned his resignation letter had nothing to do with Mahmud Şevket Paşa's bad treatment to him, but because he believed that he was no longer "qualified" for the duty. And then, Cemal began telling him about the coup attempt being devised as follows:

Your Excellency, unfortunately you may not be aware of the secret decisions taken in favor of a revolt.¹⁰⁴ Because I do not wish to give any harm to your strength which you have devoted for the nation, I do not occupy your precious time about the security issues and I avoid mentioning the serious essence of the matter to you. But I assure you Your Excellency, Kâmil Paşa has arrived in İstanbul in order to attend your funeral and take your office. His arrival is a sign of the coup attempt coming soon.¹⁰⁵

Cemal Bey believed that if Kâmil Paşa had been sent away from İstanbul, one bastion of the "secret society" would be shattered.¹⁰⁶ After listening to what Cemal

¹⁰³ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Being the head of the cabinet, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's unawareness about the coup attempt is an indication of the weakness of the government. Until the day Kâmil Paşa arrived in İstanbul most of the activities pursued by the "secret society" had been reported to Cemal Bey by the detectives of İstanbul Guards Troop. The fact that those reports had not been submitted to the Grand Vizier, Mahmud Şevket Paşa or the excuse of not willing to "occupy your precious time about the security issues" for not having him informed about an assassination plot is, in my view, irrelevant.

¹⁰⁵ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ The assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on 11 July 1913 proves Cemal Bey's intuition invalid.

Bey had said, Mahmud Şevket Paşa told Cemal Bey that he gave him authority to take necessary measures but also warned him that he should not act violently.¹⁰⁷

Kâmil Paşa's son Abdullah paid a visit to Mahmud Şevket Paşa on Thursday, 29 May 1913. Mahmud Şevket Paşa told Abdullah, "Kâmil Paşa may well be honored in İzmir. I have no offence against him. But it is not safe for him to stay in İstanbul." And, Abdullah explained Mahmud Şevket Paşa that his father had not been interested in politics any longer, and that he had intended to sell his mansion in İzmir and move to Cyprus. Even though Mahmud Şevket Paşa was happy to hear that, he did not seem to believe that "this old wolf" would so willingly give up on politics.¹⁰⁸ Abdullah headed to Cemal Bey's office after he went out of Mahmud Şevket Paşa's office; Cemal Bey had asked him to stop by. Cemal Bey explained Abdullah that Kâmil Paşa should leave İstanbul immediately, and that decision was not subject to be changed, and unless Kâmil Paşa leaves İstanbul he would be arrested and sent in exile to a remote town in Anatolia. Thereupon, Abdullah assured Cemal Bey that he would advise his father accordingly, and he would come back that night with his confirmatory response.¹⁰⁹

The moment Abdullah stepped out of Cemal Bey's office he appealed to Mahmud Şevket Paşa once again, and told him that Chief of Guards Troops had him

¹⁰⁷ Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not mention the above conversation quoted by Cemal Bey, he only noted the following: "I asked for Cemal immediately. I told him that I did not approve his resignation and I assured him that I would send Kâmil Paşa to İzmir in a few days." See: *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 168. For the dialogue between Cemal Bey and Mahmud Şevket Paşa, see: Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 45.

detained him insulting ruthlessly, and that he also warned him to take his father out of İstanbul.¹¹⁰ First, Mahmud Şevket Paşa calmed him down, and then they decided to have Abdullah's father Kâmil Paşa on board the boat departing for İzmir the next day. Later on Mahmud Şevket Paşa informed Cemal about this, also told him to stop chasing Kâmil Paşa for the following two days.¹¹¹ At the same time, the English Ambassador had unexpectedly put a phone call to Mahmud Şevket Paşa to make a complaint about Cemal Bey, since the police did not let him to visit Kâmil Paşa. So Mahmud Şevket Paşa called Cemal Bey once again reproaching him, "Do you intend to create one more diplomatic problem?"¹¹²

Finally, talks between Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Cemal Bey came to a conclusion and on 30 May 1913 Friday, and Kâmil Paşa left his residence heading to the harbor to get on the boat to İzmir. The car which picked him up was allocated to him by the English Ambassador Lowther to take him to the boat which soon would weigh anchor for İzmir.¹¹³ In the end, Kâmil Paşa issue which caused tension among the cabinet members as well as a small diplomatic crisis with the English Embassy was over when Kâmil Paşa left İstanbul. However, it did not in the least end the activities of the assassinating group led by Çerkes Kazım.

¹¹⁰ In his memoirs, Cemal Bey did not mention anything about Abdullah's being "detained" and "insulted." Abdullah might have exaggerated the whole thing subjectively.

¹¹¹ Kâmil Paşa might have left İstanbul with the help of the moderated attempts initiated by Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Although, Cemal Bey noted in his memoirs that Kâmil Paşa's departure for İzmir was an accomplishment of his own efforts.

¹¹² *Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, pp. 169-170; Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 206.

¹¹³ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 45.

Assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa

Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and the Committee of Union and Progress had been going through hard times in the beginning of June 1913, when Edirne had been given up to Bulgarians in accordance with the London Peace Agreements. Following the Babiâli Coup, the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa government has gained the public support with the promise of saving Edirne had already lost this support within the first four months. It did not seem unlikely that guns would soon be fired in İstanbul. The talk around the streets and the coffeehouses emphasized that it was no later a political event would break out and many would die.¹¹⁴ Kâmil Paşa's departure did no negative effect on the plans of the "secret society" at all. Assassins kept following their assigned preys and determined on the possible locations suitable to hunt them. Also, red handled Smith Wesson guns had been bought by Topal Tevfik at the weapons shop of Mehmed Efendi at Galata and handed over to the gunmen.¹¹⁵ All was ready and the "operation" could have started at any time.¹¹⁶

On Wednesday, 11 June 1913, people living in İstanbul had been on their way to work without being aware of the guns soon to be fired. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had worked at his office at the Ministry of War for long hours, and then feeling exhausted, instead of going to his house at Üsküdar, he had laid on the wooden

¹¹⁴ *Dersim Mebusu Lütfi Fikri Bey'in Günlüğü*, Yayına Hazırlayan: Yücel Demirel, (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 1991), pp. 98-99.

¹¹⁵ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. KMS, Umumi No. 2454, Hususi No. 91, 1332.B.15.

¹¹⁶ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 45.

bench next to his desk. When he woke up he saw to some ministerial affairs and gave orders to his Undersecretary Fuad on some military issues.¹¹⁷

That morning, Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul Cemal Bey also proceeded to the Ministry to get instructions from Mahmud Şevket Paşa in person and in order to warn his adjutant officers that they should be extremely cautious on their way to and from the Sublime Porte. Upon the warning, his adjutants had placed guns in the pockets by the car doors.¹¹⁸ Mahmud Şevket Paşa seemed to be rather happy and assured of the precautions being taken. In order not to cause a turmoil, Cemal Bey had only mentioned Mahmud Şevket Paşa that there were some rumors about a possible assassination plot, and that he might have to arrest a few men to prevent this, and he also pointed out that all safety measures had been taken to maintain the security and order in the capital city. Cemal Bey had not neglected telling Mahmud Şevket Paşa that despite all the precautions, it might not be possible to prevent individual attempts and advised him to watch out. Mahmud Şevket Paşa replied him calmly, “Come on! Inevitable is not unavoidable. So what? Everything is God’s will.”¹¹⁹ Then, Cemal Bey asked Mahmud Şevket Paşa his permission to leave the office and headed to the upper floor where he would see Major Sadullah and Kemal at the Third Precinct of General Headquarters.

¹¹⁷ “Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, pp. 44–45; “Mahmud Şevket Paşa 36 Yıl Evvel Bugün Öldürülmüştü,” *Akşam*, No. 11015, 11 June 1949, p. 4; The date of Cemal Bey’s visit to Mahmud Şevket Paşa is written as 15 June 1913. This visit was actually made on the day of assassination, 11 June 1913.

¹¹⁹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 46; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 209.

One day prior the assassination, Bahriyeli Şevki, Mehmed Ali, Nazmi, Topal Tevfik and Ziya had come together and made an appointment to meet at Bayezid Square the following day. On Wednesday morning, they were all at the Bayezid Square at 10:30 sharp. After a briefing they, one by one, started taking stroll in the streets and kept waiting for Mahmud Şevket Paşa to go out of the Ministry of War. Not to draw attention of the passers by, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Cevad had parked the car they would drive during the assasination on Mescid Street.¹²⁰

As usual, after working until ten, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was about to leave the Ministry of War to go to the Sublime Porte. His driver İsmail had pulled the Grand Vizier's automobile in front of the Ministry and kept waiting. It was not long when Mahmud Şevket Paşa walked outside accompanied by his adjutants Captain Eşref and Navy Lieutenant İbrahim, and got on the car. Mahmud Şevket Paşa seated himself on the right as usual with Captain Eşref on his left and Navy Lieutenant İbrahim across them. In the front seat next to driver İsmail, there sat Mahmud Şevket Paşa's servant Kazım Ağa and co-driver Mehmed. The car pulled out on the road heading to Bayezid Square via tramline and then onto Divan Road to take the usual route. Topal Tevfik who had been watching the gate of the Ministry of War on a pile of earth he had climbed at one side of Bayezid Square saw that Mahmud Şevket Paşa left his office at 11:20 and sent a coded message to his comrades.¹²¹

¹²⁰ "Cânilerin İtirâfâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, pp. 1-2; "Kâûiller Cinâyeti Nasıl İrtikâb Etdiler," *Tanîn*, No. 1633, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

¹²¹ A. Sami. *Mahmûd Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şehadeti*, (İstanbul: Matba-i Nefaset, 1913), p. 5; "L'assassinat de Mahmoud Chevket Pacha," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6592, 13 June 1913, p. 1; For another news report

Beforehand, Çerkes Kazım had checked out at what hour Mahmud Şevket Paşa left the Ministry of War to go to the Sublime Porte and after making the trip between the Sublime Porte and Bayezid Square, and measuring the distance he had found out that the automobile which Mahmud Şevket Paşa rode had to make a stop at the narrowest part of the road, Saka Fountain,¹²² which would be the perfect spot for killing him. Then again according to the plan,¹²³ Topal Tevfik went to Bayezid Square, while the assassin team pulled their car,¹²⁴ to the leftside of Saka Fountain on the tramline, where a road construction had also been going on. On the right side of the Saka Fountain, there laid a huge coil of telephone cables left there by the İstanbul Telephone Company. Behind it was a perfect shelter spot for the assassins. The reason they parked their car on the left was to pull over as soon as Mahmud Şevket

mentioning that Topal Tevfik was the watchman during the assassination see: "Vâkıa'nın Sûret-i Cereyânı," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2; "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139; "The Grand Vizier Assassinated," *The Orient*, No. 25, Vol. IV, 18 June 1913, p. 3; "Grand Vizier Slain by Assassins," *The New York Times*, No. 20228, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 3; Samih Nafiz Tansu, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, (İstanbul: Çınar Matbaası, 1969), p. 113.

¹²² According to *Tanîn* and *Servet-i Fünûn* magazine, the name of the fountain is Fatma Sultan. See: "Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, p. 1; "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139; *Servet-i Fünûn* had corrected the name of the fountain as "Saka Çeşmesi" in its following issue. See: "İstanbul Hadisâtı," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1151, 22 Receb 1331, 13 Haziran 1329, 26 June 1913, Thursday, p. 161.

¹²³ In his book, Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu claims that Çerkes Kazım initially had planned to kill Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat Bey, Cemal Bey and Enver Bey all at the same time when they were together, but later on he changed his mind to kill Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Cemal Bey and Enver Bey while they were at the Ministry of War and then to kill Talat Bey afterwards. According to the plan claimed to be made by Çerkes Kazım, a watchman would signal the assassins the moment when Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Cemal Bey and Enver Bey were in a car at the same time so that all three would be murdered right at the spot. See: Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu, *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Komitacılar*, pp. 494–495; For the news report mentioning Enver Bey as one other prey of the assassination, see: "Tahkikât ve Ta'kibât," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹²⁴ *Le Moniteur Oriental* wrote that the car was red-and-black according to the eyewitness report. See: "Le Crime," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6590, 11 June 1913, p. 1; *Tanîn* wrote that it was a brown automobile, quite elegant and large. See: "Otomobil ve İkinci Kâtil," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

Paşa's automobile showed up and to make his driver stop. However when an unexpected funeral procession appeared, there was no need to move towards Mahmud Şevket Paşa's car.¹²⁵ The assassins had parked by the Saka Fountain around eleven o'clock, and the watchmen had went to different spots as determined before. At the same time, in case additional help would be required, another group of men had been waiting at a coffeehouse around Aksaray who were ready to give their lives if necessary.¹²⁶

The car pulled aside on the road being repaired drew driver İsmail's attention.¹²⁷ It was parked and its driver had been looking at them. İsmail had recognized Paşazâde Abdurrahman, but ignored his looks. While Mahmud Şevket Paşa's car moved slowly because of the bumps on the road, a group of praying men came along carrying the funeral of Saraylı Hanım of Gedikpaşa.¹²⁸ When the crowd blocked the way, driver İsmail intended to pull along slowly next to them, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa had picked up the intercom at that moment and asked him, "Let us pay some respect to the deceased and wait."¹²⁹ So, the automobile which

¹²⁵ "Tahkikât ve Ta'kibât," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹²⁶ "Cinâyetin Sûret-i İkâi," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Saturday, p. 2. *Tanîn* wrote that among the men arrested at the coffeehouse, there were many who got involved in the "Coup d'état Attempt."

¹²⁷ Since it as a commercial vehicle, it was not paid much attention to the car used during the assassination.

¹²⁸ *Le Moniteur Oriental* quoted *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* saying that while the assassins planned to obstruct Mahmud Şevket Paşa's car by pulling over, they did not need to because of the funeral procession appearing coincidentally at the spot. See: "L'assassinat de Mahmoud Chevket Pacha," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6592, 13 June 1913, p. 1.

¹²⁹ "Mahmud Şevket Paşa 36 Yıl Evvel Bugün Öldürülmüştü," *Akşam*, No. 11015, 11 June 1949, p. 4; "Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No: 1-6, 1331.10.20; Some writers claimed that the funeral procession was a trap organized by the assassins. However, it turned out to be that it was nothing but a coincidence. See:

Mahmud Şevket Paşa rode had come to a full stop and let the funeral procession pass.

It was right at that instant, when Nazmi who had been standing by the parked car, and Ziya, Şevki, Topal Tevfik and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali at the back fired their guns aimed at Mahmud Şevket Paşa's automobile. Driver İsmail Bey had not realized what was happening; he thought one tyre blew out and he asked his co-driver Mehmed to get off the car and have a look. While he was about to check the tyres on the right, he heard the second and then the third round of shootings.¹³⁰

One of the first bullets had hit Mahmud Şevket Paşa's right cheek. Head Adjutant Eşref had initially assumed that the explosions came from the car engine, but then, when he saw blood running from Mahmud Şevket Paşa's body, he grabbed Mahmud Şevket Paşa's gun and got off of the car to fire back the assassins. One assassin had seen him coming out of the car, even though he shot at him, he missed it. And, when Eşref wanted to fire at the man, his gun did not fire.¹³¹

One of the bullets flying between Kazım Ağa and İsmail whistled in his ears and hit Navy Lieutenant İbrahim's head. And, İbrahim collapsed at the feet of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Head Adjutant Eşref and Kazım Ağa pulled out their guns and began shooting. But they were surrounded from various directions and bullets kept

Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu. *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Komitacılar*, p. 494; Süleyman Nuri. *Uyanan Esirler*, (İstanbul: Tüstav Yayınları, 2002), p. 57.

¹³⁰ "Mahmud Şevket Paşa 36 Yıl Evvel Bugün Öldürülmüştü," *Akşam*, No. 11015, 11 June 1949, p. 4.

¹³¹ A. Sami. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şehâdeti*, p. 5; "Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; İsmail Hami Danişmend. *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* Cilt IV, (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1972), p. 403; Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 207.

coming towards them. Topal Tevfik on one side, and Ziya and Nazmi on the other had taken them in crossfire. When Kazım Ağa was hit and fell down, Ziya in his beige trench coat had fed his gun with more bullets and fired them inside the car.

Five bullets had hit Mahmud Şevket Paşa and left him soaked in blood. During the shooting, while Nazmi, Ziya and Topal Tevfik fired at Mahmud Şevket Paşa's car, others such as Paşazâde Abdurrahman, Cevad and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali had remained alert in case the police came on the crime scene.¹³² After guns were fired and Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his adjutant İbrahim were slain, Nazmi had turned Ziya shouting, "Why stay here, let us go," and they got on the car driven by Paşazâde Abdurrahman towards Aksaray.

But, Topal Tevfik stayed behind, seeing that Eşref and Kazım Ağa followed the others, he did not want to miss the opportunity to open the car door and he discharged his revolver at Mahmud Şevket Paşa. As Topal Tevfik realized that the people in the neighborhood had disappeared after the shootings started, he left his gun on the footstep of Mahmud Şevket Paşa's automobile and headed towards the place where their car was supposed to be waiting. But it was gone, so he started running to Gedikpaşa.¹³³ Lieutenants Mehmed Ali and Bahriyeli Şevki had succeeded

¹³² Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, pp. 167–168; "Mahmud Şevket Paşa 36 Yıl Evvel Bugün Öldürülmüştü," *Akşam*, No. 11015, 11 June 1949, p. 4; "Cânilerin İtirâfâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya Enver Paşa*, Cilt. II, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999), p. 398.

¹³³ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; A. Sami. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şebâdeti*, p. 6; "Kâtiller Cinâyeti Nasıl İrtikâb Etdiler," *Tanîn*, No. 1633, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 168; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 223.

dodging with the help of the chaos in the streets and went to the house in Beyoğlu at Pire Mehmed Street.

While guns were fired at Bayezid Square, Cemal Bey was at the Third Precinct of General Headquarters having a discussion with Kemal Bey about some regulations. In his memoirs, Cemal Bey quoted that moment as follows:

I was making a discussion with Kemal Bey about one regulation. It was a quarter of a time or so later; a noise came from the direction where Ministry of War stands, it sounded as if a thick plank was hit with a huge hammer, we heard it five times on a row with equal intervals. Since I was alert for some kind of event at any time I was all ears.¹³⁴

As soon as Cemal Bey had heard the gunfire outside, he turned Kemal Bey asking, "I wonder if it is gunfire." Kemal Bey's reply was, "I do not think so, either somebody is shaking off a carpet, or hammering a nail."¹³⁵ Still, Cemal Bey was not convinced, he was expecting unpleasant news at any time. Five minutes later, he would get the bad news. Cemal Bey's loyal servant Ramazan¹³⁶ rushed in shouting, "They shot the Paşa!" Hearing him, Cemal Bey had run outside crying out, "Which Paşa was shot? Who shot him? Where did they shoot him?" Ramazan answered, "On his way to the Sublime Porte, at Bayezid Square! I do not know who did it."¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 46.

¹³⁶ In an interview published in *La Türkiye*, Cemal Bey told the moment he learned Mahmud Şevket Paşa was shot as follows: "In the morning, I worked with Mahmûd Şevket Paşa at his office. When he left the Ministry, I was still there. It was not long I heard shooting from the direction Mahmud Şevket Paşa headed. First, I did not realize that it was gunfire. But, after a couple of minutes, Paşa's adjutant officer walked into the Ministry. He was in shock. He told me that the Grand Vizier had been assassinated." See: "Cemâl Bey'in Beyânâtı," *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹³⁷ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, pp. 46–7; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 210.

Every single one of the assassins disappeared into different directions. There was no single soul on the street; among the procession walked in front of Mahmud Şevket Paşa's car, there was neither the imam nor the coffin at sight. When Mahmud Şevket Paşa was slayed in the daylight at Bayezid Square, the people in the neighborhood got panicked; they began running away towards Okçularbaşı. The shopkeepers seeing them also left the immediate area closing their shops. As the news reached at Kapalı Çarşı (Covered Bazaar), the trade stopped, all the entrances were closed for security reasons. Police Chief Azmi Bey immediately went to the Ministry of War to avoid the panic turned into turmoil. After Azmi Bey spoke to Garrison Commander Refet Bey for sometime, he immediately issued one order for police patrol throughout the capital, and one for forbidding the entries to the Ministry as well as the exits. The patrolling police, in the meantime, had pushed the curious crowd gathered at the coffeehouses close to the crime scene.¹³⁸

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's driver İsmail Bey brought the car back to the Ministry of War as soon as it all calmed down. Luckily, the head adjutant Eşref and İsmail Bey had survived the assassination while Mahmud Şevket Paşa's private servant Kazım Ağa was slightly injured, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa's other adjutant Navy Lieutenant İbrahim¹³⁹ had died on the spot. When driver İsmail Bey pulled the car in front of

¹³⁸ "Tedâbir-i İnzibâtiye," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

¹³⁹ A short biography of Navy Lieutenant İbrahim was published in *Tanîn*. "İbrahim Halil was born as a son of a merchant family of Tevfik Efendi in Küçükpazar. He was graduated from the Navy Academy on 11 June 1321. In 1323, he was risen in rank as Lieutenant. He was assigned for different duties, he served at the Red Sea, as well as taking command of a squadron on Barbaros Steamboat, and on Kosova Steamboat. He was a decent young man of almost twenty-five." See: "Mülazım İbrahim," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs

the Ministry Mahmud Şevket Paşa was still alive. Kazım Ağa took him in his arms and carried upstairs to the Military Department.¹⁴⁰ Going down the steps at that moment, Cemal Bey saw Mahmud Şevket Paşa's blood soaked body in Kazım Ağa's arms. He noted that instance in his memoirs:

When Kemal Bey and I running downstairs to the second floor, we saw the late Paşa soaked in blood being carried to his office upstairs. (I still hear his touching and heartbreaking sound since that day.) I stood in the corridor for a while. My eyes were focused on Paşa's pale face. I gave it a thought for a moment. Where should I stay to fulfill my duty?¹⁴¹

While Mahmud Şevket Paşa was being carried upstairs to the Department of Military Committee, Cemal Bey thought he should better go to the Guards Troops to issue a warrant for the hunt and arrest of the assassins as well as to take security measures to maintain order in the capital. Meanwhile, his adjutant officer Captain Hilmi Bey had come along. The moment Cemal Bey saw him, he told him, "let us go," and they went out to the courtyard outside the Ministry. When they were about to turn the corner, Cemal Bey asked one of the military policeman if the slayer was caught. He said, "I do not know, sir. I am on my way to get a squad of soldiers." Cemal Bey reproached him, "What are you going to do with soldiers? Come on! You better go to the crime scene right ahead; murderers should be arrested without being

1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2. For a similar version the biography published in *Tanîn*, see: "Mülâzım İbrahim Halil Bey," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 133.

¹⁴⁰ "Mahmud Şevket Paşa 36 Yıl Evvel Bugün Öldürülmüştü," *Akşam*, No. 11015, 11 June 1949, p. 6; "Tafsilât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 165.

¹⁴¹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 47.

able to get away with it! Having taken a clear order, the military policeman ran towards that neighbourhood.¹⁴²

Since Mahmud Şevket Paşa was still alive when taken upstairs to the Department of Military Committee, a group of medical doctors -Lambeki Paşa, head of inspectors committee, Dr. Numan Bey, Emin Paşa, Colonel Yanko one of the staff of Government Health Office, Major Mustafa Talat, Halid and Dimitraki, two forensic medical doctors- conducted initial medical treatment to him under the supervision of İsmail Besim Paşa, Chief of Health Care Department of the Ministry of War, and Nicholas, one of the forensic medical doctors and military head doctor.¹⁴³ Mahmud Şevket Paşa was laid on the desk and his wounds were bandaged. But, the last bullet which hit him on his right temple had been through his eye and into his brain. Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been in treenodus pain, breathing deeply and shivering.¹⁴⁴ The treatment did not bring any help, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was getting worse every minute. He kept muttering with froth in his mouth. The ones at his bedside had probably heard him saying, "Traitors! They betrayed their country... They betrayed the liberty!"¹⁴⁵ In the end, Mahmud Şevket Paşa could not put of with the pain he suffered and he died at the Ministry of War where he had worked for

¹⁴² Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 47; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 212.

¹⁴³ "Tahkikât ve Ta'kibat," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ "Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 165.

¹⁴⁵ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 166.

very long days and nights.¹⁴⁶ According to the post-mortem report, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been hit by five bullets. One bullet went in his left temple and out from the right; the second bullet went through his shoulderblade and sunk into his arm. The third one travelled through his nape and got stuck in the spine. The other two sunk at his back. Only three of the bullets had been removed out of his body during the autopsy.

Garrison Commander Refet Bey left the deceased body at the Ministry of War and went to the garrison where Police Chief Azmi Bey had long been waiting for him. Then, the two of them headed to the Police Quarters. Meanwhile, according to the instructions of Azmi Bey, all eyewitnesses had gathered at the Garrison Commandership and they were taken to the Police Quarters to be interrogated. Head of Court Martial Interrogation Committee, Nafiz Bey and District Attorney Bedri Bey were also present at the interrogations.¹⁴⁷

Topal Tevfik's Arrest

When Tevfik's disabled foot had been taken into consideration during devising the assassination plan, it was obvious that he would not be able to get away from the site swiftly, so it would be best for Topal Tevfik to act only as watchman. Still, Topal Tevfik could not refrain himself from pulling out his gun. While other assassins left the crime scene by car, he could not manage it, but tried to run towards Gedikpaşa

¹⁴⁶ For the postmortem report, see: "L'assassinat de Mahmoud Chevket Pacha," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6592, 13 June 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴⁷ "Tahkikât," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

through the street next to the coal shop just near the house where Münir Bey, the messenger of Foreign Affairs lived. In the meantime, policeman İsmail Hakkı Efendi,¹⁴⁸ who had been waiting in the courtyard of Bayezid Mosque had been informed about the assassination and headed that direction. When his eye caught Topal Tevfik hurrying with a revolver he tried to hide, İsmail Hakkı Efendi decided to go after him.¹⁴⁹ Although İsmail Hakkı Efendi warned him, “Freeze!” Tevfik responded by firing at him while he was still running. When he saw Tevfik limping, İsmail Hakkı Efendi thought that he was wounded. However, Topal Tevfik continued to run while shooting İsmail Hakkı Efendi at the same time. After a while, having seen that İsmail Hakkı Efendi was exhausted and slowed down, Topal Tevfik did not miss the opportunity of hiding in Çakır Ağa Han,¹⁵⁰ next to the pharmacy in the Gedikpaşa Çarşısı. İsmail Hakkı Efendi had caught up with him and was almost in the business center he was hiding, but could not find Topal Tevfik.

Then, İsmail Hakkı Efendi came across some police soldiers who asked him what he was up to. When İsmail Hakkı Efendi told them about his hunt, they came to a conclusion that Topal Tevfik could be at Çakır Ağa Han and made a search there. Nonetheless, Topal Tevfik was nowhere to be seen even though every single hole in the building had been searched, but the toilets. Having gone in the toilet area, the soldiers saw a man inside and called him out. The man who came out was no one

¹⁴⁸ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1–6, 1331.10.20; In the book written by Ziya Şakir, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, the name of this policeman was given as Hüseyin Avni Efendi.

¹⁴⁹ “Tahkikât ve Ta’kibât,” *Tanin*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ In police and military records, the name of the business center was entered as Aşiret Han, but it is Çakır Ağa Han in other resources.

but Topal Tevfik himself, yet İsmail Hakkı Efendi could not recognize him at the spot. In order to make sure, İsmail Hakkı Efendi asked him to take a stroll to see if he would limp or not, but Topal Tevfik succeeded to cover his limpness which was a minor one anyway. Since İsmail Hakkı Efendi believed that Topal Tevfik had got wounded in his leg, he asked him to show the wound. Again, the evidence was not there, Topal Tevfik, of course, did not have any sign of injury.

İsmail Hakkı Efendi was not sure, so he lit a match and went into the toilet to look around. When he found a few cartridges, he began searching thoroughly. Meanwhile, a military officer named Ali Efendi had come along to help the policemen. Besides a couple of more cartridges, there was also a tobacco bag found in the water tank on the wall. But, Topal Tevfik denied he was a smoker. As the search continued, İsmail Hakkı Efendi would find more cartridges and a gun charger in the toilet hole. They also did a body search and discovered a waist belt, a cartridge holder which was very recently cut into pieces and some cigarette paper. And more, under the staircase of the building a knife with a goat foot handle, a Smith Wesson revolver and some additional cartridges were located. While those cartridges were for the Smith Wesson, the charger brought into light in the toilet were for the Webley gun he had left at the footstep of the automobile after shooting Mahmud Şevket Paşa.

As soon as Topal Tevfik had gone into the building, he tried to get rid of the evidence by leaving them underneath the staircase. But, then, when he realized İsmail Hakkı Efendi was close by, he had decided to hide in the toilet. There, he emptied

his pocket and hid the cartridges and the charger in various spots, but his panick made him to forget to throw away the cartridge holder he meant to get rid of when he cut it. He claimed that neither the waepon nor the cartridges belonged to him. Topal Tevfik also said that he was usual visitor to Çakır Ağa Han. However, when the police confronted Çakır Ağa and Topal Tevfik, Çakır Ağa mentioned that it was the first time he saw the man. His testimony was also verified by the shopkeepers in the building. Hence, Topal Tevfik was arrested and taken to the Garrison Commandership guarded by the gendarme. At the garrison, an old lady name Üsküdarlı Kâmile Hanım in her sixties had been waiting to identify Topal Tevfik. The lady confirmed that he saw Topal Tevfik shooting at Mahmud Şevket Paşa with his revolver. Another eyewitness Nuri Efendi, who happened to be in a coffeeshouse of the neighborhood at the time of the crime, mentioned that he saw Topal Tevfik with a black handled hand gun.¹⁵¹

Flight of the Other Assassins by Car

Other assassins Nazmi, Ziya, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Cevad had got in the car where they parked next to the Saka Fountain and drove fast passing by the house where the chief secretary of Foreign Affairs, Münir Bey lived, then driving along Reşitpaşa Street after they made a turn at the corner of Dr. Namık Paşa's residence,

¹⁵¹ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH, KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; BOA, DH. SYS. Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-6, 1331.10.20; "Tafsîlât-ı Vâkıa," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 30 Mayıs 1329, 7 Receb 1331, 12 June 1913, Thursday, pp. 1-2; A. Sami. *Mahmûd Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şehadeti*, p. 7; "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139.

they headed to Enfiyeci Street which met with Tramvay Street leading to Aksaray. While the car passed by the Enfiyeci Street, its speed made the the customers in the shops trembled.¹⁵² The car went downhill Aksaray and continued towards Topkapı, leaving the city walls behind. Outside the city walls, they first drove to Maltepe Hospital, then to Eyüp, after passing by the military barracks at Rami. There, Ziya and Nazmi got off the car at Eyüp, but Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Cevad continued their flight. Since they had to refill water in the cooling radiator of the car, they made an emergency stop in front of an inn on the way to Silahtarağa Road. When co-driver Cevad got off the car and opened the engine cover to add water in the radiator, the boiling water inside had spurted out and burnt his temple. Then, they set out on the road right away, and crossed to the other side of İstanbul through the Kağıthane Bridge. When they arrived in Kağıthane village, Paşazâde Abdurrahman left the car to Cevad who drove to Şişli,¹⁵³ and then at 12:20 sharp, he parked the car¹⁵⁴ at the parking lot¹⁵⁵ owned by Hristo Mercanof, across Osmanbey Casino. After the police

¹⁵² While the assassins passed along Enfiyeci Street, the shopkeepers had recognized the driver. "Tahkikât ve Ta'kibât," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁵³ *İkdâm* reported that the murder suspects had right away headed to Aksaray after which they left the car outside the city walls and continued their flight on foot, and that the car was driven to Şişli by Paşazâde Abdurrahman alone. See: "Fâiller Nasıl Kaçmışlar?" *İkdâm*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ See: BOA. Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH, SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-10, 1331.11.6. But, in the news report published in *İkdâm* quoted from *La Türkî* daily, it was told that the car rented for 400 liras by one of the assassins, Şevki. See: "Otomobilin Sâhibi," *İkdâm*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 224; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH, KMS, Umûmî No. 2454, Husûsî No. 91, 1332.B.15; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 975, Husûsî No. 5, 17.R.1332; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-6; 1331.10.20; "Otomobil ve İkinci Kâtil," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, p. 2; "Cinâyetin Sûret-i İkâr," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, p. 2; "Kâtiller Cinâyeti Nasıl İrtûkâb Etdiler," *Tanîn*, No. 1633, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

investigation in Municipal Office, it was discovered that the car was registered in the name of Abdurrahman, and that the car driven by the assassins had been sold to Paşazâde Abdurrahman by a man named Hristo Mercanof of Austrian descent and the deal was made at Çemberlitaş the shop of Zakariya, who actually sold bicycles. Paşazâde Abdurrahman had only been able to pay one third of the total price, 300 liras at that time. When the police put a hold of the car, Mercanof protested it claiming that the car should be returned to him.

After the assassination, while the Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey had been to the crime scene to inspect the security measures taken, one of the military policemen had informed him that a suspect named Topal Tevfik had been arrested, but that others had run away by car. Although Cemal Bey was happy to hear the arrest of Topal Tevfik, but he was also upset that others had fled. He immediately returned to the Guards Troops Commandership and issued a search warrant to be made in both Beyoğlu and Üsküdar areas, as well as in the town center.¹⁵⁶ It was not half hour later upon the murder that the streets of İstanbul were full of cavalry and infantry forces, and one hour later a military memorandum was issued to announce the assassination to the people:

Today at 11:00 in the morning, when the Grand Vizier and the Minister of War Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his adjutant officers Captain Eşref and Navy Lieutenant İbrahim Bey had been slayed by five or ten guns fired at them after they mounted on the car and left the ministry heading to the Sublime Porte via Bayezid Square where they turned the corner next to the fountain, some gun whose

¹⁵⁶ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 48.

purpose is not known to us. Mahmud Şevket Paşa survived the assassination attempt heavily wounded, but he deceased one hour later, while Navy Lieutenant İbrahim Bey died instantly. May God's mercy and grace be upon them. A murder suspect, namely Topal Tevfik, has been arrested around Gedikpaşa and taken in custody at the Garrison Commandership. According to some eyewitnesses, other slayers have been seen in the Davudpaşa vicinity by a car they acquired before their plot. However, the security forces are still on duty and there is no doubt that they shall be arrested soon.¹⁵⁷

In the military memorandum issued by Cemal Bey, it was also stated that the order and security of the capital had been maintained with the help of the emergency measures taken by the government, and that any person attempted to cause trouble would be severely punished. In between the lines, it could have been read that the martial law put in force by the government previously would continue to be implemented in stricter terms.

Cemal Bey had also taken into consideration that the members of the "secret society" might try to go to the Dolmabahçe Palace in attempt to contact with the Sultan. So, he called the chief secretary to the Palace to warn him as well as to ask him to inform the Sultan that all security measures had already been taken.¹⁵⁸ Cemal Bey made one more call to the Second Chief Commander İzzet Paşa at Hadımköyü to give a report on the assassination and asked him to send two of cavalry regiments under his command in the interim, which. İzzet Paşa agreed.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ "Beyânnâme-i Askeriye," *İkdam*, No. 5858, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 48.

Throughout İstanbul, assassination news had been spreading, while people had been trying to find out the meaning underlying in Mahmud Şevket Paşa's slay. According to some, that was a new 31 March Uprising, and some others made such comments that it was a brand new Babiâli Coup. Especially the Levantines residing around Pera, when they had heard the gunfire, they thought that a revolt similar to 31 March Uprising broke out.

Amidst all that turmoil, only one person remained calm: Talat Bey. He had received the news at a meeting held at the general headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress in Nuruosmaniye. Many of the Committee of Union and Progress members present could not hide their shock and tried to comprehend what was happening. However, Talat Bey did not hesitate to make a phone call to Guards Troops and to receive the updated information. Then he turned to his comrades saying, "What is wrong with you? Keep in mind that sometimes such acts are nothing but good solutions. So, why sorry! Remain calm!"¹⁶⁰

The Funeral

Cemal Bey was determined to prove everybody that assassination attempts would not harm the order in the capital at all, so he decided to organize a big funeral for Mahmud Şevket Paşa. He made his secretary to write invitations for the notables and prominent figures, and ordered all high-ranking government officers, the general

¹⁶⁰ According to Ziya Şakir, when Talat Bey learned that Mahmud Şevket Paşa was slayed, he said, "So what? Sooner or later, this will be the end for all of us." See: Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 215; Tevfik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Üstasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, p. 325.

staff to attend the funeral. He also issued memoranda for the foreign embassies, as well as the commanders of the warships anchored at the harbor requesting them to attend at the funeral together with the military attachés and all the officers in full uniforms.¹⁶¹ Thus, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's funeral turned out to be a show of strength on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress.

With such a big funeral, the message intended to be given both to the opposition and to the foreign representatives was that the government and the Committee of Union and Progress was on duty and it took everything under control. This was an important issue. Because, any incident occurred during a funeral organized at a time while suspects had not yet been arrested, and while another attempt had still been expected, might have lead to worse events, even more, it could have been taken as an excuse by the Great Powers to occupy İstanbul, whose warships were already nearby. Yet, the Committee of Union and Progress was decisive to face that challenge.¹⁶²

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's funeral was due the next day he got murdered by a big ceremony organized by Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey. The memorial service program was announced in the daily newspapers of 12 June 1913. According to the program, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's funeral would be taken from the Ministry of War to the Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi on Thursday at ten thirty in the morning. The military staff and the cabinet members would line up in between the gates of the ministry facing Bayezid and Beyazid Square, commander in front, followed by a squad, half of

¹⁶¹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 50.

¹⁶² Tevfik Çavdar. *Bir Örgüt Ustasının Yaşam Öyküsü: Talat Paşa*, p. 326.

Light Cavalry Regiment, Marine Battalion, Gendarme, Police and Municipal Authorities, Dervishes, and the coffin of Mahmud Şevket Paşa attended by the guards, respectively, unarmed infantry, relatives of the deceased, officers representing the Army and Navy Forces, Combat Forces, Ministers, Ambassadors, Military Attachés, Cabinet Members, Military staff, Marine Forces Cavalry Regiment, Artillery, and finally the people. When the coffin was carried by the infantrymen, artillerymen and cavalrymen, the former should have their rifles in one hand while the last two their swords, and third rank of guard troops had to escort them. The funeral procession would wait for a command to leave the ministry borders heading to Bayezid Square and then turning onto Divan Road to arrive at the Saint Sophia Mosque.

Before entering into the mosque, the cavalry regiment and the infantry battalion leading the procession would walk down the road and wait by the Topkapı Palace and Soğuk Çeşme Gate, while the battalion following the regiment would line along the tramway and the garden in front of Blue Mosque Square. Of course, all the roads reaching to both Blue Mosque and the Saint Sophia would be blocked by the military policemen to avoid crowds going to that direction. At the same time, the gendarme, the police and municipal squads would stand by at the Saint Sophia Square. Upon the ritual funeral worship, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's coffin would leave the Saint Sophia Mosque and carried along through Tramway Street down to Sirkeci, where a steamboat kept waiting. All would get on board the boat except the cavalrymen in the lead and the artillerymen in the tail but proceed to Dolmabahçe via Tophane.

The steamboat would pull alongside Dolmabahçe, where Mahmud Şevket Paşa's coffin would be taken out to be carried to his eternal rest place, the Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi via Dolmabahçe, Gazhane, Taşkışla, Beyoğlu Main Street, passing along the Academy of War. The academy students would line up along both sides of Abide-i Hürriyet Street together with the police, gendarme, municipal, military police and infantry squads. ¹⁶³

The weather was perfect on the day of the funeral of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, so inhabitants of İstanbul rushed out of their houses to watch the ceremony. The coffin containing Mahmud Şevket Paşa's deceased body had first been given a bath, shrouded and placed in his coffin at the Library of Fortification and Construction Department underneath the building of Ministry of War. After this ritual, former ministers, high-ranking officers, and then Head Chamberlain Halil Hurşid and one of the sons of Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, Ömer Hilmi, accompanied by Ziyaeddin Efendi and his adjutant Fuad Bey had arrived in the Ministry of War. Commander of Imperial Navy Admiral Williams Paşa, undersecretary to Ministry of Marine Rüstem Paşa and Hasan İzzet Paşa, as well as the military attachés to French, German, Swiss Embassies, Directors of Finance and civil servants had also joined in the procession.

¹⁶³ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH, MTV, Dosya No. 51, Gömlek No. 32, 1331.B.9; "Cenâze Merâsimi Programı," *İkdam*, No. 5858, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; "Cenâze Merâsimi Programı," *Tanin*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2; "Les Funérailles," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6591, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

As soon as the hodja cited the Qoran the funeral procession had set out on the road.¹⁶⁴ First they walked through the university students lined up in a certain order; they paused by the corner of Saka Fountain, where the assassination took place. Then, the coffin covered with a gilt threaded red satin had been taken to the Saint Sophia Mosque via Divan Road, while watched by curious looks of the people and being passed through the gate facing the Ministry of Justice to be placed on the stone before the funeral service. At the same time, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's deceased adjutant İbrahim's body had also been brought the Saint Sophia Mosque from the Gülhane Military Hospital. The government authorities and the military attachés attending the funeral had taken some time to rest at the Courthouse. Later on, while the military attachés had left the saint Sophia Mosques heading to the Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi, others went into the mosque for the prayer.

Afterwards, the cortege had left the Saint Sophia Mosque. Both coffins, of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his adjutant İbrahim, had been places on Rehber steamboat moored at Sirkeci Port while Deputy Minister of War Mahmud Paşa and other high-ranking officers had got on board İhsân steamboat. The rest of the cortege had taken their places on other steamboats, Kamer and Tophane as well as boats registered with the numbers 65, 69, 70 and some of them had had to go on a ferry. They had left the port at one thirty in the afternoon. While the steamboat

¹⁶⁴ "Cenâze Merâsimi," *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Cenâze Merâsimi," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Les Funérailles," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6591, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

Rehber had sailed along the ships with foreign colors, they lowered their flags to pay their respects to the deceased Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his adjutant İbrahim Bey.¹⁶⁵

A group of foreign military attachés and the commanders of the warships anchored by Bosphorus had greeted the cortege at Kabataş Port. As Mahmud Şevket Paşa's coffin had been carried out of Rehber steamboat on hands by several high-ranking adjutants and officers, Navy Lieutenant İbrahim Bey's coffin had taken ashore by the Army and Navy soliders.

Then, the cortege had moved towards going to Taksim Square via Dolmabahçe, Gazhane, Taşkılla, and from there on to the Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi through Pangaltı and Şişli. In order to prevent any possible incident, Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey had been riding on his horse leading the six cavalymen during the procession. At one point, Cemal Bey had got off his horse, got on a car and driven to Beyoğlu vicinity to have a look at the cortege where he caught up with in front of Notre Dame de Sion. But, he did not get nearer to hide his eyes full of tears and left immediately.¹⁶⁶

Two pavilions had been set up in the garden within the Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi, one for the princes, and the other for the ministers and high-ranking officers.

The two graves by the Liberty Monument had been prepared for the burial. Mahmud

¹⁶⁵ "Cenâze Merâsimi," *İkdâm*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Cenâze Merâsimi," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Les Funérailles," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6591, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; "Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûmun Cenâze Merâsimi," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 138; "The Grand Vizier Assassinated," *The Orient*, No. 25, Vol. IV, 18 June 1913, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶⁶ "Cenâze Merâsimi," *İkdâm*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Cenâze Merâsimi," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 50.

Şevket Paşa would be buried in the grave on the right, and his adjutant İbrahim on the left. The crown princes Ziyaeddin Efendi, Ömer Hilmi Efendi, and Osman Fuad Efendi together with a group of the ministers and ambassadors had stood by the left side of the entrance, while some senators and deputies accompanied by combat units fought in Çatalca frontline had taken the right side of the entrance to greet the cortege. Then, Mahmud Şevket Paşa and İbrahim Bey were buried along with tears and prayers cited by the Şeyhülislam Esad and İmam Hilmi Efendi.¹⁶⁷

Finally, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been put to rest after an impressive funeral service attended by 150,000 people including high officials, ambassadors and military staff of foreign countries.¹⁶⁸ When the service ended, a French Major Sarou had thanked and congratulated Cemal Bey “because of the perfect order maintained” and after that he had quoted a conversation he had made with the Italian Navy Commander and General Baumann who had been assigned for the task of making reforms in the gendarme forces:

Cemal Bey must be a great man! He did not hesitate to organize such a memorial service the day after the assassination even though the slayers have not been arrested yet and to gather all the ambassadors and the foreign navy commanders in such a small place. This is an indication of moral courage and an evidence for the perfection of the security measures. If one of the rebels had exploded a hand grenade and injured a few of us, even though lightly, Ottoman capital would be occupied by our forces aboard the warships immediately. In any

¹⁶⁷ “Cenâze Merâsimi,” *İkdam*, No. 5859, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 2; “Cenâze Merâsimi,” *Tanin*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, pp. 1–2; “Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Merhûmun Cenâze Merâsimi,” *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 138.

¹⁶⁸ In his memoirs, Cemal Bey mentioned that 150,000 people attended to the funeral service. See: Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 50.

case, all measures taken have been checked by our authorities as required. But we are still here and safe. If Cemal Bey accomplishes arresting the murderers as well as their sponsors in a couple of days, that would be a great service to his country.¹⁶⁹

The New Cabinet

After the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the Committee of Union and Progress had immediately acted to establish the new government to avoid lack of authority in the country. Talat Bey had called chief secretary of the Palace, Ali Fuad Bey, to inform him that Minister of Foreign Affairs Said Halim Paşa had been assigned as the acting Grand Vizier. Thereafter, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had dictated an imperial decree addressing to the Sublime Porte which had been handed to Said Halim Paşa on 11 June 1913 Wednesday afternoon by chief secretary of the Palace, Ali Fuad Bey and Ertuğrul Steamboat Naval Cavalry and second chief adjutant Colonel Hafız İbrahim Bey. And, Said Halim Paşa had passed it to the undersecretary to the Grand Viziership, Adil Bey. Later on, the imperial decree had been recited during the ceremony held at the Sublime Porte.¹⁷⁰

On the very same day, Minister of Marine Mahmud Paşa had been appointed to the vacant post of Ministry of War after Mahmud Şevket Paşa's death. Since it would be regarded as disrespectful if Said Halim Paşa's standing appointment had been

¹⁶⁹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, pp. 50–51.

¹⁷⁰ "Hatt-ı Hümayûnun Kiraati," *İkdam*, No.5858, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; "Sadâret Kaymakamlığı," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2; "İstanbul Hadesâtı," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 161; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 196.

made on the day of the assassination, it had been postponed for a future date. But the next day, on 12 June 1913, on the very day of the funeral services held for Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had issued a second imperial decree appointing Said Halim Paşa as the Grand Vizier.¹⁷¹

It was Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, Ambassador to Austria in Wien who Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had in mind as the future Grand Vizier, and he would keep Said Halim Paşa as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. But, since Said Halim Paşa had refused to cooperate with Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa and sent a message to the Palace, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had no other choice left but to appoint the candidate of the Committee of Union and Progress to the post.¹⁷² Therefore, with the appointment of Said Halim Paşa to the Grand Viziership, the Committee of Union and Progress had ended its policy of governing behind the scenes pursued in the wake of the Second Constitutional Period and had taken the political power under control. In the new cabinet, Grand Vizier Said Halim Paşa had also held the office of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the former Grand Viziers, Said Paşa, who had been the Head of State Council in Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, had been appointed as the Chief Senator and his post had been taken by Chairman of the Parliament, Halil Bey. Talat Bey had become the Minister of Interior Affairs; Ahmed İzzet Paşa, the Minister of War;

¹⁷¹ "Said Halim Paşa'ya Sadâret Tevcihi," *Tanîn*, No. 1630, 8 Receb 1331, 31 Mayıs 1329, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 3; "İstanbul Hadesâtı," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 161; Galip Vardar, *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 197.

¹⁷² Ali Fuad Türkogeldi, *Görüp İşittiklerim*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1951), p. 100; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 210. During the discussions on the distribution of roles, the guerilla figures of the Committee of Union and Progress, like Mümtaz of İzmit, Hakkı of Sapanca, Yakup Cemil and Auf Bey argued that if Talat Bey became a cabinet member, the balance between the government and the party would be spoiled.

judged. It had not been the opponent group members taken under custody or arrested only but some people who had no connection with the assassins as well.¹⁷⁶

When Topal Tevfik had been caught on the spot with the weapons he had hidden at Çakır Ağa Han, the Guards Troops Office had commissioned Nazif Bey and Reşid Bey to trace the car by which the assassins ran away. Nazif Bey and Reşid Bey had searched many parking lots throughout the city until they had found the car in a lot owned by an Austrian descent, Mercanof. And, they had arrested the co-driver Cevad.¹⁷⁷ The investigations pursued by Guard Troops of İstanbul had proved fruitful and lots of evidence had been available when consequent arrests had been made. In his testimony at the Police Department, Topal Tevfik admitted that he had committed this murder “for the amount which was promised to be paid” and he had also uttered a few names among the “secret society” members.¹⁷⁸

However, Çerkes Kazım had nowhere to be found. In the meantime, some of the opponents of the government listed in a book by the police before the murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been taken into custody: Former Chief of Political Bureau in Police Department, Muhib, and superintendent of Gelenbevi High School,

¹⁷⁶ *İkdam* declares one of the arrestations to its readers as follows: “Hüseyin Paşazâde Mazhar Bey, who was a friend of one of the murderers, Ziya, had a mistress in a brothel in Beyoğlu Tarlabası. Last morning the woman was seen with a small luggage while getting out of the brothel, and then she was arrested and taken to the Police Department. In the luggage, some documents and pictures were found. The Investigation Committee had started to investigate the documents and pictures found in the luggage. Due to results of the investigation of the case, it was decided to arrest the woman. See: “Mazhar’ın Dostu,” *İkdam*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ “Otomobil Bulunmuş,” *İkdam*, No. 5858, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; “Tafsîlât-ı Vakıa,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; “Cinâyetin Sûret-i İkâi,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ “Topal Tevfik’in İtirâfâtı,” *İkdam*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

Abdullah Safa, Colonel Fuad and more. Gözlüklü Emin who had close ties with Damad Salih Paşa had also been arrested; a promissory note of 1,000 lira had been found in his pocket during the body search. With this proof in hand, Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey had immediately issued an arrest warrant for both Damad Salih Paşa and his brother Tahir Hayreddin.¹⁷⁹

The driver, Paşazâde Abdurrahman, on the other hand, had headed for Değirmendere after he got off the car at Kağıthane village. But, the next day, when he saw his name listed by the newspapers among the assassins, he thought it would not be safe to stay in Değirmendere. So, he left, travelling through deserted roads he first went to Bandırma, and then to Ayvalık. There, he got on a sailing boat of a Greek fisherman and sailed to Limnos, where from he moved to Greece to stay only for a short period of time and got on a boat of French Messenger Company to land in Marseilles.¹⁸⁰

Arrest of Damad Salih Paşa

According to Cemal Bey, the arrest which had some degree of significance compared to other opponents was Damad Salih Paşa's. Cemal Bey thought that if Damad Salih Paşa were interrogated, more evidence could have been acquired about the identity of the assassins. Yet, Cemal Bey was hesitant about arresting him: Damad Salih Paşa belonged to the imperial dynasty, and at the same time he was

¹⁷⁹ "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139.

¹⁸⁰ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakkei İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 172–173. Paşazâde Abdurrahman wrote a letter to Şerif Paşa from Marseilles asking for his protection. Şerif Paşa wrote back to him and invited him to Paris whereafter Abdurrahman married to Şerif Paşa's daughter.

protected by French government because of his Tunisian citizenship. Cemal Bey commissioned the cleverest of his undercover agents to get Damad Salih Paşa to the Guards Troops Commandership. He told him to treat the Damad Salih Paşa politely and escort him there. It was the day after the assassination; Damad Salih Paşa was at his residence in Nişantaşı, reading the newspapers. The doorbell rang and the janitor answered the door. Someone asked if Damad Salih Paşa were at home. Hearing him, Damad Salih Paşa asked the janitor to let the visitor in. The visitor was the agent commissioned by Cemal Bey. After he entered the house, he greeted Damad Salih Paşa respectfully and he informed him that Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul, Cemal Bey had invited his Excellency to his office for a brief talk. Damad Salih Paşa asked why that would be needed. But, the agent replied that he did not have the details. Damad Salih Paşa gave it a thought for a while, and then he said, "All right, wait a minute." He went into another room and ordered his secretary Hüseyin Avni Bey to get the car ready. Next, he turned his wife Münire Sultan, "I have received an invitation from Cemal Bey." Münire Sultan looked worried listening to his husband. "What does he want from you? Please do not go. It may be a scam or a trap. What if they put charges against you about Mahmud Şevket Paşa's murder, Paşa...!" she objected. But, Damad Salih Paşa was assured of himself, he said, "They cannot touch me, as long as I have a wife such as you are." So, when Damad Salih Paşa got on his car pulled in front of his mansion he had no idea about the developments soon to take place. While the car passed by Bahçekapı, the agent turned to Damad Salih Paşa

saying, "You are now under arrest, Paşa. We shall proceed to the Police Department right ahead." Damad Salih Paşa was in shock.¹⁸¹

The news had shaken the palace. Whilst Damad Salih Paşa had been arrested, others like Prince Sabahaddin, Kemal Midhat, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Pertev Tevfik had been able to evade from the hunt pursued by the Guards Troops and went abroad. In the meantime, the gangleader Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali had been hiding at the house on Pire Mehmed Street at Beyoğlu. Çerkes Kazım had panicked when he read in *Jön Türk* newspaper that Topal Tevfik had been arrested and started making a plan to avoid it in case they would be arrested. This plan involved inviting Talat Bey to the headquarters of the "secret society" and forcing him to make an agreement.¹⁸² However, neither Çerkes Kazım nor his comrades would find an opportunity to implement the plan.

Hakkı Was Arrested on Galata Bridge

Hakkı and Ragıb, the former being the brother of the assassin Ziya had been commissioned to kill the former deputy of Salonika, Emmanuel Karasu. After they slayed Mahmud Şevket Paşa, believing that nobody would recognize him, Hakkı had been comfortably wandering the streets and bringing food and beverage to the Pire Mehmed Street to his comrades.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, pp. 168–169; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 234–235.

¹⁸² "Mülâzım Mehmed Ali'nin İfâdâtı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1. According to *Tanîn*, when he read that Topal Tevfik had been arrested, Çerkes Kazım started to cry.

¹⁸³ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 190.

On that Wednesday afternoon Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assassinated, when Hakkı was strolling alongside Galata Bridge, he drew the attention of the policeman on patrol. The policeman walked towards Hakkı to get him, but Hakkı pushed the man away. A detective in civilian clothes had seen the scene; he approached Hakkı and ordered him to proceed to the Police Quarters with him. Hakkı came to understand that it was impossible to evade, he said to him, "I will follow you. But I have got to stop by my house. I would come with you if you promise me to let me go home." So, thinking that it might be useful for him to see where the man lives, the detective accepted his wish, they walked to Tünel together and there, they hired a car to Beyoğlu.¹⁸⁴

The owner of the house on Pire Mehmed Street, Madame Karavana had talked about the day Hakkı came to the house in an interview made by *La Türkî* daily:

On Thursday, a fourth person appeared in the house. Next to him there was a police detective I happened to meet before but he was in civilian clothes. That fourth person went upstairs, while the detective remained downstairs. I told him he could come in, but he said he preferred to wait down there. The fourth person came down after a few minutes and the two left.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ "Le Siege de la Rue Pire Mehmed," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6593, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH, KMS, Dosya No. 63, Gömlek No. 63, 1332.B.15; "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139; In the police report, it was written that Hakkı asked permission to see a friend of his. But, Galip Vardar wrote that Hakkı told the detective, "I have a pair of new shoes somewhere at Beyoğlu. I cannot walk around in these old shoes. Let us go together to get the new ones." See: Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 190.

¹⁸⁵ "Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülâkât," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

Apartment House on Pire Mehmed Street

The apartment house where Hakkı lived was curious to the policeman who went there with him. After he took Hakkı to the Police Quarters, he decided to make a report about it to the Police Department. It was considered that there might have been found evidence related to the assassination, the Police Department had set up check points around the house around seven o'clock in the evening. Even though Hakkı wanted to warn his comrades by going there before handing himself over to the police, he actually revealed the address on Pire Mehmed Street.

On Friday 13 June 1913, police detectives saw someone going outside from the apartment house on Pire Mehmed Street and took him under custody. They brought him to the Police Station, stripsearched and interrogated him. First he said his name was Çerkes Kerim,¹⁸⁸ and that he came from Caucasia. But, afterwards he changed his testimony and told the police that he was asked to come to İstanbul from İzmit. Police had found two pistols –one Mauser¹⁸⁹ and the other Négant– and twenty nine cartridges for each gun as well as a few liras in a small bag and a stamp on which it was written “Pişmaf.” On the way to the Guards Troops from the Police Station, Çerkes Kerim had made a naïve offer to the policemen: “I have some money. Why

¹⁸⁸ A. Sami wrote that it was Said. See: A. Sami *Mahmûd Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şehadetî*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁹ Mauser pistols were invented by a German Engineer Paul Mauser. It was used mostly by the military and for sports; it was delivered to German Army after 1872. Later Mauser rifle was used by other armies.

do not I give them to you, so maybe you may set me free somewhere along the road?"¹⁹⁰

Now, the house had constantly been watched by the police after Hakkı had made a trip to with a detective, and also after the testimonies made by Çerkes Kerim. On Friday, the police control around the apartment had been severed, so all the streets meeting with Pire Mehmed Street had been blockaded in case of a possible operation.

The apartment house was on the left side of Pire Mehmed Street after you went down at the corner of Ağa Camii and made a turn on the third. The building was owned by a man named Yanko. He had sublet it to an Englishman from Malta, Nicholas Frych, who lived with his Italian wife, Madame Karavana,¹⁹¹ and his father-in-law Francesco Berkoli. Madame Karavana was a red-haired, soft skinned young and strong woman. Her husband was short and dark, skinny man and had an oblong face.¹⁹²

On the second floor of the building, there was sign by the bay window written in French: Rooms for Rent." It was not so easy to find vacant rooms around

¹⁹⁰ "Çerkes Kerim," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Le Siege de la Rue Pire Mehmed," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6593, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Tahkikât," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1150, 15 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 139.

¹⁹¹ On *Le Moniteur Oriental* of 13 June 1913, it was reported that Çerkes Kazım, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali and Bahriyeli Şevki had took refuge in a brothel house owned by a woman named Olga. See: "Arrestation d'un des Assassins du Grand Vezir," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6592, 13 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

¹⁹² "Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakât," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

Beyoğlu; many were rented out. So, most people who came in to ask for rooms, there were no rooms available.¹⁹³

In reference to *Tanîn*, Gözlüklü Emin, Ziya and Hakkı, three of the assassins, had rented that flat as a game¹⁹⁴ and brothel house.¹⁹⁵ A few days ahead of the assassination, the police had already discovered that some “inappropriate” business and planned to break in, however, the English Consulate had not allowed it because the building was registered to an English citizen, Nicholas Frych.¹⁹⁶

The day before the assassination, the flat was rented by Bahriyeli Şevki who was already dismissed from the Navy. Bahriyeli Şevki had been there ten days ago and wanted to rent a room. He was let in by Madame Karavana to have a look at the room. Bahriyeli Şevki did not like the furniture, but when he told the woman that he was willing to pay five lira rent per month, Madame Karavana agreed to renew the furniture, since she could not lose a well paying tenant. Therefore, Bahriyeli Şevki decided to rent the place.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ “Bir Numaralı Hâne,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ In the interview published in *La Türkî* daily, Madame Karavana did not accept that the rooms were used as brothel: “Most of the newspapers have been claiming that the building is actually a game house, a brothel, etc. Wrong, my apartment house is a descent place. Previously it was run as a gambling house. But, that was during the management of a Doduros from Büyükağa.” See: “Ev Sahibesi Madam Karavana’nın İfâdesi,” *Tanîn*, No. 1633, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

¹⁹⁵ For another article saying that the apartment house was a brothel, see: “Le Siege de la Rue Pire-Mehmed,” *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6593, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ “Bir Numaralı Hâne,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ “Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakât,” *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

Next to this apartment house protected by an iron door and iron fences, surrounded by stone walls there were other buildings, too. Before renting the apartment, Bahriyeli Şevki had explored the building and the neighborhood. And he had decided that in case of a skirmish, the setting would allow for protection and for escaping with the help of various exitways. Furthermore, the property was registered to an Englishmen, which would be another help to them. Before the police broke in, they needed to get the permission of the English Consulate which would allow time to Bahriyeli Şevki and his comrades to get prepared for run away or for skirmish.

After Bahriyeli Şevki moved in, he did not go out of the flat that much and he accepted very limited guests. In his room, there was an iron bed, a sofa, a mattress, a wardrop with mirror doors and a table as well as some chairs lined by the wall. In order not to draw attention his guests visited him after dark when they worked on the assassination plot clandestinely. Bahriyeli Şevki had no personal belongings, but a backbag.

Since he had to be cautious, Bahriyeli Şevki preferred to have his meals served from the “ordinary” restaurants in the neighborhood as well. After his meals, he drank quite a lot of mastika.¹⁹⁸ Many empty bottles were found in the flat after the skirmish. Bahriyeli Şevki shared the room with Çerkes Kazım and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali. Their visitors brought all sorts of different bits and pieces hidden underneath their trench coats. After the skirmish, the police had discovered around twenty loaves of bread, approximately a hundred eggs, a few kilos of black olives and

¹⁹⁸ A Greek kind of *raki* (an alcoholic drink made of anesate).

several bottles of liquor in the wardrop. Besides food, there found hats in different colors, many dresses for disguising, other than some dynamite, a thousand cartridges, six revolvers,¹⁹⁹ two swords and a Mauser rifle locked in a cupboard. The amount of food stored in the flat was an indication that Bahriyeli Şevki, Çerkes Kazım and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali made their plans considering a long skirmish and besiege.²⁰⁰

The evidence available in the flat also indicated that Bahriyeli Şevki, Çerkes Kazım and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali and their comrades had long been planning the plot against Mahmud Şevket Paşa. After they committed the murder, Bahriyeli Şevki, Çerkes Kazım and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali had returned to their flat and never went out. But, they accepted a few visitors. All the three comrades had shared their food and the room.

The Break-in

When Hakkı had stopped by the building before going to the police station, and since Çerkes Kerim had came out from there as well, the police had almost been assured that some of the other assassins had been hiding in that apartment house. Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul Cemal Bey was determined to force an entry to the building no matter what the consequences would be. So, he called for the Police Chief Azmi Bey and ordered him to make the necessary precautions for the operation. The police forces commissioned for this duty included the police captain

¹⁹⁹ A revolver, called *altıpatlar* "six shooter" in Turkish, has a cylindrical bullet holder and is able to shot six times in a row. It had been in use since the 1850's and it is a useful gun especially during close combat.

²⁰⁰ "Şevki Nasıl Hayât Geçiriyormuş," *İkdâm*, No. 5861, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 4.

Hilmi Bey, gendarme commander of the Sublime Porte guards, Mehmed Ali Bey, Chief of Political Department of the Police, Samuel Efendi,²⁰¹ police superintendent Levhi Bey as well as nine gendarme soliders, twenty police detectives and policemen.²⁰²

All was ready for the operation. Policemen were stationed around the neighborhood. Gendarme soldiers took up their positions on the roofs. Samuel Efendi went to the building and asked Madame Karavana to come downstairs, but Madame Karavana refused him. So, Samuel Efendi started to walk up and down in front of the building and asked her if there were any suspicious men in the house. Madame Karavana told him no. Then Samuel Efendi left, warning her to watch out, "otherwise you may pay for it as well." Madame Karavana seemed astounded to hear this and replied, "this house is under the protection of the English Consulate. If you would like to get more information, you better see the Consul." Thus, Samuel Efendi was now sure that assassins were hiding in that building.

Towards one-thirty in the afternoon, when Samuel Efendi came back, Madame Karavana was having lunch with her husband:

The door was hammered at one-thirty while my husband and I were eating our meal. I answered the door. It was the same detective again; he asked what had been happening in our building.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Samuel İzisel was the most reliable member of the Salonika branch of the Committee of Union and Progress led by Talat Bey. He was wounded during the operation and nicknamed as Topal (Lamed) Samuel thereafter.

²⁰² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 228.

²⁰³ "Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakât," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 3 Haziran 1329, 11 Receb 1331, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

Madame Karavana had seen that a break-in would soon be coming when she saw the preparations around. She decided it would be best if they left there immediately. Her husband, her daughter and she went to another house nearby without even changing their clothes.²⁰⁴

After the preparations had been completed, the policemen forced an entry to the building breaking the door with axes.²⁰⁵ Samuel Efendi, Police Captain Hilmi Bey and one of the officers of investigation desk of Beyoğlu Precinct Mehmed Ali Bey stormed in as soon as the door was opened. Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali who had been following the developments closely had gone to the upper floors of the building to get positioned for a skirmish. When they realized that the door was broken, they pointed their guns down the stairs to shoot Samuel Efendi, Captain Hilmi Bey and Mehmed Ali Bey. A bullet out of firing guns hit Samuel Efendi on his buttocks and Captain Hilmi Bey on his upper chest. Captain Hilmi Bey ran out the door crying in pain. At the same time, the main door of the apartment house was shut against Samuel Efendi and Mehmed Ali Bey, which left them stuck in there. Samuel Efendi told the later developments to one of the chief editors of the *İstanbul*, Paul Janev in his bed at the French Hospital in Taksim:

²⁰⁴ "Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakât," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 3 Haziran 1329, 11 Receb 1331, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2. There is no information about how Madame Karavana had gone out of the building. It might be that the police let them out in order to avoid them to get injured during the operation.

²⁰⁵ *İkdam* reported that the door to the house was opened by an elderly man. See: "Ağa Câmîi Vak'ası," *İkdam*, No. 5860, 1 Haziran 1329, 9 Receb 1331, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

I was there on the floor next to Mehmed Ali Bey and I realized that even though we had our revolvers at hand ready to fire we were stuck there for two hours. We were hearing gun fires inside and outside with our eyes focused upstairs.²⁰⁶

After the assassins went up to the third floor, they began shooting at the police and gendarme forces outside. Since the operation on Pire Mehmed Street was getting serious, some of the gendarme soldiers were sent up to the roof of the building. Meanwhile, security forces put a ladder in the façade of the house facing Sakızağacı Street, which belonged to Mavrides across the headquarters of the “secret society” while the inhabitants were evacuated as well the students of the Ottoman Greeks. When the evacuation was completed the gendarme soldiers climbed up the ladder to fire at the assassins.²⁰⁷

While Samuel Efendi and Mehmed Ali Bey were trapped inside, it seemed impossible to open the door from the inside. Because, to be able to open the door, Mehmed Ali Bey had to turn his back on Çerkes Kazım and Bahriyeli Şevki, even for a minute. And this meant to get shot at his shoulder. And outside, shooting kept going. When a gendarme soldier, Tevfik Efendi counter-fired at Lieutenant Mehmed Ali Bey’s firing, he hit Mehmed Ali Bey’s hand, which was smashed into pieces.²⁰⁸ The gendarme soldiers took the opportunity of the trap they put the assassins in and

²⁰⁶ “Samuel Efendi’nin İfadatı,” *İkdam*, No. 5861, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 4.

²⁰⁷ “Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakat,” *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

²⁰⁸ “Madam Karavana ile Bir Mülakat,” *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

went into the building to rescue Samuel Efendi and Mehmed Ali Bey from the Beyoğlu Precinct.

The gunfire continuing had drawn the attention of the neighborhood and especially the journalists. Correspondents had been striving to arrive at the scene through the alleys parallel to the Pire Mehmed Street. But it was not that easy; all the streets were blocked by the security forces. Since all the measures had been taken by the police, there was no disorder. Still, some shopkeepers at Beyoğlu who were annoyed of the gunfires had pulled down the shutters of their shops. There was a death silence except the shootings in the vicinity. The people had been trying to understand what was happening. Dersim deputy Lütfi Fikri Bey noted the Friday, 13 June 1913 in his diary as follows:

Today (13 June 1913 Friday), some murderers were caught at Beyoğlu, and it turned out to be a big event. Five to six hundred bullets were fired and panic went the rounds. Although we were at Ayestafenos, we were scared! We even thought of escaping on a rowboat if we had to! My God, what is going on? It has been so many years now that we experience such turmoil.²⁰⁹

Monsieur Paul Janev, who had eyewitnessed the operation at Pire Mehmed Street on behalf of *İstanbul*, he reported the details of the conflict as follows:

At every corner, by every doorway there were at least two or three soldiers with full loaded pistols and ready to fire. Several houses were occupied by the police forces. Gendarme soldiers were positioned in between the window fences. There were fifteen or so meters between us and the house under siege. Since there were only two of us, policemen left us alone. Suddenly we heard two shots, followed

²⁰⁹ *Dersim Mebusu Lütfi Fikri Bey'in Günlüğü: Daima Muhalefet*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1991), p. 103.

by an immediate counterfire. Someone by a window behind us gave an order. Right after that, the security forces began firing at another house on Pire Mehmed Street. It was 3:30 sharp. Afterwards there was a deep silence. At that moment, we were asked to keep away from where we stood. We had to go back to the corner of Tarlabası and Kader Streets. At the windows of the houses nearby, we caught sight of some figures. People were impatient to see what was going on. They looked out of the windows from time to time. Fifteen minutes later a police officer approached the building. At the back, there were two policemen walking by the wall with revolvers in their hands. Then, all of a sudden a heavy fire broke out. We could even hear the clicks of the guns.²¹⁰

Although they were encircled in the apartment they had been hiding, it was not so easy to capture them. Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali kept responding the police and gendarme forces by counterfiring and did not let any body near the building.

Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey concluded that it would be appropriate to ask help from the guarillas of the Committee of Union and Progress— Mümtaz of İzmit,²¹¹ Çerkes Kuşçubaşızâde Eşref, and his brother Hacı Sami, and famous Unionist Topçu İhsan²¹² and Yakup Cemil²¹³ in order to confine Çerkes Kazım.²¹⁴ Cemal Bey called them to his office with an urgent warrant, and after explaining them what was happening on Pire Mehmed Street. He requested them to proceed to the site and get Çerkes Kazım. Mümtaz, Eşref, Hacı Sami and Yakup Cemil agreed to it

²¹⁰ “Ağa Câmîi Vak’ası,” *İkdam*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, pp. 1–2.

²¹¹ He would become the adjutant officer of Enver Paşa.

²¹² Former Minister of Marine.

²¹³ Yakup Cemil was a famous hitman of the Committee of Union and Progress. Mustafa Ragıp Esatlı. *İttihad ve Terakki Tarihinde Esrar Perdesi ve Yakup Cemil Niçin Öldürüldü?* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Yayınları, n.d.), 728 p.

²¹⁴ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönerler*, p. 191.

provided that nobody would interfere in whatever they did, while they were at Pire Mehmed Street. Cemal Bey accepted this condition and he allocated his car to get them there.²¹⁵ When they reached the site, it was already two hours since the skirmish started but not yet ended. Yakup Cemil and Hacı Sami headed to the building encircled by the security forces and stood by the main door, while Mümtaz and Eşref planned to enter in the house next door and to go up to the roof where they would be able to open a hole on the wall of the flat where assassins had been hiding. Then, through the hole Mümtaz would try talking Çerkes Kazım into surrendering.²¹⁶

Çerkes Kazım had no idea about what was happening outside. When he realized that somebody was digging a hole on the roof, he opened fire on that direction, and he ordered his friends to fire upwards as well. It was difficult to dig the roof under heavy fire, but it was still possible. Mümtaz Bey called for Çerkes Kazım through the hole: “Kazım! I am not a stranger. It is me, Mümtaz. Eşref is with me, too. If you stop firing, we can talk!” Çerkes Kazım recognized the voice of his old comrade immediately. First he ordered his friends to cease fire, and then he asked, “Is it really you, Mümtaz?” Mümtaz Bey answered him, “Yes... It is me!” Çerkes Kazım was excited to hear Mümtaz Bey, his voice trembled saying, and “Do you see what they put us into?” Mümtaz Bey told him, “Well... It would be better if they did not,

²¹⁵ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 230.

²¹⁶ What was written in *Tanin* and what Ziya Şakir told about this stage of the skirmish contradict with each other. *Tanin* reported that delving the roof was Police Chief Azmi's idea while not mentioning the names of Mümtaz, Kuşçubaşı Eşref, Hacı Sami or Yakup Cemil at all. On the other hand, because they had enough bullets, it does not sound logical that the assassins had stopped firing after a hole was dug in the roof. Therefore, as Ziya Şakir wrote, it is more likely that when someone like Mümtaz Bey, who Çerkes Kazım knew very well, interfered the skirmish had come to an end. For a similar version of the story, see: Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönemler*, pp. 191–192.

but..." Çerkes Kazım asked him, "What do you have to tell me, when I am in such a trouble?" Mümtaz Bey replied, "You see that there is no way out. Why fight in vain? We are here to take and hand you in. You shall surrender."²¹⁷

Çerkes Kazım was silent, he considered the situation. The house was surrounded by the police. He would either surrender or stop this blood shedding or he would keep fighting with the policemen among who he knew some closely. He was silent, because it was not easy for him to absorb surrendering. But his quietness did not last long. He called out his comrades, "What do you say? Shall we surrender?" Çerkes Kazım and Mümtaz Bey knew each other very well. If Çerkes Kazım surrendered, he was sure that Mümtaz Bey would not let anybody to abuse him. When Mümtaz Bey could not hear anything from Çerkes Kazım after a while, he said, "Well, it is up to you." Hearing him, Çerkes Kazım said, "All right. I surrender. But I beg you; please do not let them to insult us."²¹⁸

After Mümtaz Bey and Eşref Bey got Çerkes Kazım's final word, they went downstairs to inform Yakup Cemil and Hacı Sami. In order to avoid another firing session, Mümtaz Bey and his comrades told the policemen positioned near the building to back a few feet.²¹⁹ Finally the main door was opened. Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali appeared. The police got what they came for.

²¹⁷ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 231–232.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 231.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 232.

Now that the skirmish was over, it was time to transfer the assassins to the Guards Troops Commandership. Before that, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali had already started accusations against Çerkes Kazım and he told the policemen, “What should I have done? This guy had forced me to stay here. He threatened me and did not let me out. He said, if one of dies, all of us should die!” The testimony Lieutenant Mehmed Ali gave about the police raid at Pire Mehmed Street which was published in *Tanîn* on 20 June 1913 was as follows:

That day a little before the police I arrived at the apartment on Pire Mehmed Street. Kazım was in panic. He was about to go out. But he told us to stay. Then he came back. He said this building belongs to an Englishmen, nobody can enter in. It was an hour later when the police arrived. The landlady assured Kazım. Since I do not have any confidence in Kazım, he did not let me out. They took out a few revolvers from a cupboard and cleaned them. Kazım was saying, I have contacts with many foreigners, do not worry, they would come and warn me. One day after the assassination, when Kazım read in *Jön Türk* daily that Topal Tefvik was arrested, he shed tears. But he held himself while there were women around. At the hour when the soliders and the gendarme came encircling us, Kazım headed to the door as if to surrender. Then, he told the gendarme soldiers to go away. He fired. Şevki was also shooting where he was hiding. When I saw them, I jumped over balcony to the next building. Kazım saw me; he called me, “Bastard! You are a deserter!” He aimed his gun at me. When I caught him inattentive, I stumbled for a pen and a paper to write a few lines. I explained that I was kidnapped and then I rushed outside. Thereafter, they showed this paper to me during my arrest.²²⁰

Just before Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali were transferred to the Commandership of Guards Troops, someone among the crowd

²²⁰ “Mülazım Mehmed Ali’nin İfâdâtı,” *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1.

called out to Çerkes Kazım, “Look man, you pretended to be tough guys, and now you have surrendered?” Çerkes Kazım’s to these words was: “Come on then, why do not you be in our shoes and commit suicide!”²²¹

After Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali came outside, the police officers who were told to stay clear of the site attempted to swear at them. This made Mümtaz Bey very angry. At that moment his eyes caught Police Chief Azmi, turning him he said, “Give orders to your men to shut up. We promised them. We convinced them to surrender. Unless your men stop swearing, I would like you to aim your guns at them.”²²²

But Azmi Bey’s one single hand movement was enough made the policemen to shut up. In the meantime, Mümtaz Bey and his comrades had asked for two automobiles to take the suspects to the Guards Troops Commandership, when those arrived, they left.²²³ During the body search on the assassins, a Colt²²⁴ gun, 30 French liras and some Romanian banknotes worth of 280 liras were found in Çerkes Kazım’s pockets.²²⁵ When taken in the presence, Cemal Bey shouted at Çerkes Kazım saying,

²²¹ “Cânilerin Nakli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

²²² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 232.

²²³ Edhem Eldem. “L’Illustration’dan Seçmeler: Mahmud Şevket Paşa’nın Katillerinin Yakalanması,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. XX, No. 126, June 2004, p. 9; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, p. 232.

²²⁴ It was first manufactured by Colonel Colt in 1835. It takes six bullets.

²²⁵ “Kâtiller Ne Yapıyorlar,” *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1; According to the news report of *İkdâm*, Çerkes Kazım had 500, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali and Bahriyeli Şevki had 400 liras in their pockets. See: “Paraları Kim Vermiş?” *İkdâm*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

“Well, are you happy now? Are you not ashamed of yourself? Now you will pay for what you have done!”²²⁶

When the arrested were taken out, Cemal Bey called Mümtaz Bey in to reproach him. Cemal Bey said, “Come to your senses. They told me that you protected this damned guy, Çerkes Kazım. I would not expect such a behavior from you!” Mümtaz Bey’s response to this was, “I am a strong-willed man. However, I believe that a man should not be sworn after he has surrendered.”²²⁷

In fact, Cemal Bey had no intention to offend Mümtaz Bey, but he could not keep his mouth shut. Later on, Cemal Bey and Mümtaz Bey shook hands before they departed. The success accomplished on Pire Mehmed Street made Cemal Bey proud of himself. Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali were then transferred to the prison at the Garrison Commandership for their interrogation to be completed. Because he was wounded, Mehmed Ali was only handcuffed, while Çerkes Kazım and Bahriyeli Şevki were shackled. But, when Çerkes Kazım asked for a cigarette from a gendarme sergeant in charge of him, the sergeant did not turn him down and handed him a cigarette. Çerkes Kazım was touched by his generosity. He said, “Damn, what have I done? Who have I slayed?” Sergeant replied, “You did kill not only my father, but the father of the people.”²²⁸ On the other hand, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali denied all charges against him and said that he was made to fight.

²²⁶ Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 232–233.

²²⁷ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 192; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 232–233.

²²⁸ “Cânilerin Nakli,” *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

According to his words, he was there at the house on Pire Mehmed Street, because, “I was broke. I found four coins. Then, I went there to gamble, but they locked me in.”

The notes which the Chief Guards Troops Cemal Bey took about the developments on the events in the wake of the arrests were as follows:

On Friday, with the help of God, I had the gangleader Çerkes Kazım and some of his comrades arrested on Pire Mehmed Street of Beyoğlu for the price of losing my adjutant Captain Hilmi Bey and having caused one police officer Samuel Efendi to be lamed for the rest of his life. And I handed them to the interrogation team of Court Martial.²²⁹

The skirmish occurred on Pire Mehmed Street was one of the biggest in İstanbul. It lasted for hours during which hundreds of bullets were fired. Initially, security forces had planned to break into the apartment house where the assassins had been hiding from three different points. But, afterwards they decided that two of them were impractical. In the end, they succeeded to take the delivery of the assassins by opening a hole on the roof. The first of the three points from where an attack would be initiated was the left corner of Mavrides’ house. The second was the liquor house and the grocery store facing the apartment, and the third was the apartment house opposite Pire Mehmed Street. So the firing had started from these points, but in the course of time it turned out to be that the corner of Mavrides’ house was not convenient. Also the gendarme soldiers positioned on the Pire Mehmed Street were

²²⁹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 51.

exposed to firing opened from the bay window on the second floor. The only suitable angle was of the liquor house and grocery store, but not availed what the security forces planned to get. When Police Chief Azmi Bey realized that they had to find better positions in order to be able to arrest the assassins, he thought of going into the building through a house on Koyun Street. Therefore, he decided to keep the security forces in Mavrides's house and at the liquor house and the grocery store, he would move another group to the roof of the building where the assassins were hiding. From then on, they were able to get to the murderers by delving into the roof and to detain them.²³⁰

House Search after the Skirmish

When the firing stopped, the policemen had searched the house and discovered a few Muaser pistols, revolvers and some documents. The search continued till late hours assuming that they would be able to find evidence related to the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Each and every item which was discovered would be delivered to the Investigation Committee assembled within the İstanbul Guards Troops Commandership after registered in a book. Searches were made not only in the flat the assassins had been hiding, but also in the apartments and houses in the neighborhood in case there were more assassins who might have sneaked in there.

²³⁰ "Cânilerin Tahsîngâhı," *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 2.

Garrison Commander Refet and Police Chief had even searched the basement and the attic of the building where the assassins rented an apartment themselves.²³¹

The “pitched battle” had turned the outside walls of the building on Pire Mehmed Street into wreckage. The floors were almost covered with shell cases and the inner walls had so many holes. The correspondent of *La Türkî* described this scene explicitly:

Upon the arrest of the slayers, when we went into the building on Pire Mehmed Street and entered in the flat where heavy fire was opened, we saw a terrible scene. What we saw was the remnants of a pitched battle. On the floor at the entrance of the building there were many shellcases and the walls were full of bullet holes but the police and gendarme soldiers inside were calm in their positions. We climbed the stairs. The building was six storeys with four floors and nine flats. A flat on the ground floor was opening to a small garden at the back of the building. We came across to more shell cases on the stairs. Many holes were opened in the walls, and the bedroom was a mess. The staircases were illuminated by a lamp placed on one of the steps. We picked up the lamp among the wrecks –not an exaggerated phrase. On the first floor, we saw an unusual clutter. It was a large, low class flat, but it looked worse now with window glasses shattered into pieces, window panes broken and the furniture turned upside down.

The flat the English gentlemen, Monsieur Karavana and his wife lived was right across this one. On the second floor there lived a woman, Mademoiselle Cornellia in a flat facing the street. There was a muddle here as well; the bed, the chairs, the cupboards and the chest were all turned upside down. The gangsters must have entered in here as well in a panic when looking for shelter. We saw some postcards on a table. In another flat across this one there stayed a Greek couple, Monsieur Yorgo and his wife. On the third floor, we came to the apartment, looking out to the street, rented by one of the murderers nine-ten days ago. He was a dark man of middle height in his mid-twenties. Although he was dressed in civilian clothes, the others he shared the flat thought that he was a navy

²³¹ “Apartmanda Taharriyât,” *İkdam*, No. 5861, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 4.

lieutenant called Şevki. Of course, they were right. One day ahead of the terrible murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, two of Şevki's friends, namely Çerkes Kazım and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali, had come to rent the flat across his. It is also possible that Şevki had rented another flat if there were any vacant. In both apartments the wall were covered with holes. Another flat on the forth floor with a balcony looking out to the garden was also cluttered.²³²

Death of Hilmi

One of the adjutant officers of Cemal Bey, Captain Hilmi Bey from Amasya²³³ had been taken to Beyoğlu Precinct first, after he got shot on his chest during the firing at Pire Mehmed Street where a medical officer Yusuf²³⁴ had given him the initial treatment. However Captain Hilmi Bey was in a serious condition, so they took him to the Gümüşsuyu Military Hospital. He was operated there to take out the bullet that hit his chest, but he did not survive.²³⁵ A doctor at the Gümüşsuyu Military Hospital told the last hours of Captain Hilmi Bey to a reporter from *Tanîn*:

²³² "Pire Mehmed Sokağı'ndaki Hâne," *İkdam*, No. 5861, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 4.

²³³ Captain Hilmi, the adjutant officer of Chief of Guards Troops in İstanbul Cemal Bey, was the brother-in-law of the director of the *Türk Yurdu Mecmuası* Kâzım Nâmi Bey. He had three children. See: "Üçüncü Kurbân," *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1; Fatma Rezzan Hürmen. *Münever Bir Türk Hanımı Ressam Naciye Neyyal Hanımefendi'nin Mutlakıyet, Meşrutıyet ve Cumhuriyet Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2000), p. 325.

²³⁴ *Tanîn* reported that it was the police doctor Samuel Efendi who applied the initial treatment for Hilmi Bey. See: "Hilmi Bey'in Mecnûhiyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 3.

²³⁵ "Hilmi Bey'in İrtihâli," *İkdam*, No. 5861, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 Haziran 1913, Sunday, p. 4. *Tanîn* wrote the last words Hilmi uttered on the way going to the hospital: "I am shot. I am shot in the name of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Long live the Turks! Long live the Homeland! I shall soon die. I entrust my my three children to my people." See: "Hilmi Bey'in Mecnûhiyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 3. *Tanîn* published a testament claimed to be penned by Hilmi Bey. See: "Hilmi Bey'in Mecnûhiyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1631, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 3.

Oh, you should have seen him, and his love for his country and his duty. While we were not able to express how we felt sorry for him, he consoled us in a dignity and comfort of a person who had completed and fulfilled his duties in life saying, "What is the big deal? If I survive, I shall live as an honest and good person who performed his services, and if I die, I shall die. We shall all die one day, shan't we?"²³⁶

Hilmi Bey's funeral service was performed at 10:20 in the morning first in front of the Ministry of War, and then the funeral procession took to the Saint Sophia Mosque via Divan Road for the prayer. After the prayers are fulfilled, the coffin containing the deceased body of Hilmi Bey was taken to the *Hürriyet-i Ebediye Tepesi* via the New Bridge, Galata Tramway Road, and Beyoğlu Main Street to be buried next to Mahmud Şevket Paşa.²³⁷

In an official memorandum issued by the Guards Troops in İstanbul, the conflict occurred at Pire Mehmed Street had been announced to the public as in the following:

...is one of the assassins of Mahmud Şevket Paşa who took refuge in a brothel house behind the holy Ağa Camii at Beyoğlu and shot himself inside daring to open counterfire to the security forces positioned and encircled the building determined to arrest the slayers. As a result of the great efforts of the security forces, all three murderers have been captured. The murderers are Çerkes Kazım, a military captain from Second Division of the Ninth Regiment; Şevki, a lieutenant who was expelled from the Navy known to serving to Şerif Paşa, and Mehmed Ali who was sent in military exile to Sivas but then resigned from the Army and settled down in İstanbul.

²³⁶ "Üçüncü Kurban," *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1.

²³⁷ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezaretî. DH.MTV, Dosya No. 51, Sıra No. 3066, Gömlek No. 32. 1331.13.9; "Hilmi Bey'in Cenâzesi," *İkdam*, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

During the skirmish, one of the adjutant officers of the Guards Troops in İstanbul, Captain Hilmi Bey from Amasya had been hit at his chest, and the Chief of Political Bureau in Police Department, Samuel Efendi on his kneecap. And the assassin Mehmed Ali had been hit shot by his foot and his hand.²³⁸

Although the key persons of the “secret society” had been arrested during the operation to Pire Mehmed Street, there were still some assassins could not be seized yet: Mustafa of Kavak, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Nazmi. All the security forces, uniformed or not, were mobilized to search all the villages and hills in and outside of İstanbul to trace them.

A couple of days after the operation at Pire Mehmed Street, one other person involved in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on Beyazıt Square, Ziya paid a visit to his cousin Enis Avni during which Enis Avni advised him to hand himself to the police as soon as possible. Listening to his cousin, Ziya told him, “I am not afraid of dying. If I deserved it I would not hesitate to sacrifice my life. But, I would not prefer to be insulted under arrest.” Then, Ziya handed Enis Avni a piece of paper which he wrote his involvement in the plot, and he promised to give himself in to be executed, if he were sentenced to death. Yet, Enis Avni was able to convince him that there would not be any insult in being arrested. When Ziya decided to proceed to the police station to give in, Enis Avni went to see the Chief of Guards Troops Cemal Bey. Later on, Cemal Bey ordered the Police Chief Azmi Bey to take a few policemen with him and go to the house where Ziya had been hiding at Şişli. Azmi Bey and the policemen went to the house and arrested Ziya. When he was taken into

²³⁸ “İkinci Beyanname,” *İkdam*, No. 5860, 9 Receb 1331, 1 Haziran 1329, 14 June 1913, Friday, p. 2.

the car to go to the police station, Enis Avni accompanied him as well together with the policemen. In another car behind them, there were Pangaltı Precinct Superintendent Dilaver Bey and two policemen from the investigation bureau, Ali and Ahmed. Ziya had a fur cap on, and he had his moustaches shaved.²³⁹

The Hunt for the Other Assassins

Police Chief Azmi Bey was determined to arrest all assassins involved in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and he worked day and night to accomplish his goal. There were denouncements made to him indicating whereabouts they might be upon which he commissioned his most reliable officers to verify the information he was handed to. One day he was informed that the assassins might be around the villages at Kağıthane. The Police Chief called Ali Rıza Bey and ordered him in a sharp tone: "Do not come back here unless with the murderers! I do not like to see you here now, please go. There are enough policemen in the vicinity of Kağıthane. If necessary, you may get some more help from Murad Bey, Beyoğlu Police Station Director. No matter what it takes, you find those slayers!"²⁴⁰ Thus, a search team of five had been assembled; all of them were disguised in different identities. Some put on Edirne style puckered trousers, some disguised as hunters and some as fire squad units; they went outside the city walls by Topkapı and arrived at Küçükköy behind

²³⁹ "Ziya Tevkîf Olundu," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1, "Ziya'nın Süret-i Teslimi," *İkdam*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, p. 2; A. Sami. *Mahmûd Şevket Paşa'nın Facia-i Şehadeti*, p. 11.

²⁴⁰ Ali Rıza Öge. *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Bir Polis Şefinin Gerçek Anıları*, (Bursa: Günlük Ticaret Gazetesi Tesisleri, 1957), pp. 198–199.

Eyüp. They told the peasants who they came across on the roads that they were emigrants from Balkans and they set out the roads to buy sheep. At the end of the first day they headed to Ayazağa village to rest. The peasants had gathered at the coffeehouse after a long day's work. They were looking at the newcomers with curious eyes. The undercover policemen told them the same story, that they were some emigrants looking for sheep to buy. But the former rural guard had not believed in them. Meanwhile, the exhausted and hungry policemen after wandering on the roads all day long had their meals consisting of bread, cheese and olives. Then they asked the coffeehouse proprietor to let them sleep in there. However, while they were getting ready to bed four gendarme soldiers entered in and told them to proceed to the gendarme station with them.²⁴¹ Ali Rıza Bey asked them naively if there was anything wrong. And one gendarme soldier replied to him shouting, "You were not asked to talk, do not make me to force you, let us go!" Ali Rıza Bey thought that he did not need to make any explanations; he turned to his colleagues saying, "Come on, and let us go out." A few minutes later Ali Rıza Bey and his colleagues left the building followed by the soldiers. On the way out, Ali Rıza Bey turned to the soldiers to ask, "Are we suspects?" But he was told, "I do not want to hear any more words from you. Do not open your mouths until we arrive at the station. If you move a little or take your hand to your waist, we shall not hesitate to shoot." And then, Ali Rıza Bey realized that they had a difficult task waiting for them. Towards midnight they arrived at the Maslak Gendarme Station. A corporal soldier

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 199.

interrogated them. When he asked them who they were and why they were there, the police undercover had to reveal their identities. Hearing this, the corporal allowed them to be seated, and then the police made a phone call to the Police Chief Azmi Bey to inform him about the situation. The corporal had not believed any of their stories until he spoke to Azmi Bey himself. Then he served tea to them. When the policemen asked him who denounced them, they learned that it was the former rural guard who came to the Gendarme Station in person. Since it was after midnight, the policemen spent the night at the station.²⁴²

After the failure of their first search attempt, the policemen had left the gendarme station to head towards Zekeriya village via Büyükdere. Since they did not have their breakfast, when they came across some loaves of bread dropped on the road from a bakery's truck, some of them wanted to pick them up, but Ali Rıza Bey warned them not to, and reminded them that they should not draw the attention of the peasants nearby. At the end of a long walk, they arrived at Hacı Osman Heights where they saw a couple of cars waiting.²⁴³ One of the drivers had recognized the police officer Çolak (one-armed) Hayri Bey, despite his disguised clothes. That driver was a close friend of Paşazâde Abdurrahman, one of the assassins wanted. Since Ali Rıza Bey knew that Çolak Hayri Bey took every opportunity to talk to the people he came across while on duty, he warned him not to do it; it might be dangerous. Then, the police officers continued their walk to Zekeriya village, but had to take refuge behind a huge rock by Büyükdere when a storm broke out. When it calmed

²⁴² *ibid.*, p. 200.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 200.

down, they went down to the port to get on a steamboat on their way home. They would meet outside Topkapı in the late afternoon after they changed their clothes drenched in rain and rested.

When they met again towards evening, Ali Rıza Bey heard a boy selling the newspaper *Tercümân-ı Hakikat* reading out, “The murderers are arrested, the murderers are detained.” He bought one copy right ahead and could not refrain himself from laughing. What was written in the news report of *Tercümân-ı Hakikat* was nothing but what Ali Rıza Bey and his colleagues had experienced the night before; the event had been made into a story telling that the assassins were arrested. Ali Rıza Bey went in to the Topkapı Police Station immediately to call the senior police officer of Beyoğlu Police Station and he questioned the source of this news report. Murad Bey explained to him solemnly, “Right, I commissioned a gendarme cavalry unit, and some police officers went by car.” Ali Rıza Bey responded, “Well, all in vain. The assassins who wore the outfits mentioned in the news piece happen to be nobody but us.” Then Murad Bey asked Ali Rıza Bey to report to the Beyoğlu Police Station as soon as possible to give him an official explanation. Therefore, Ali Rıza Bey had got on a car to talk to Murad Bey and had given him a comprehensive report. This event indicated to Azmi Bey that their search was doomed to be failed and he cancelled the mission. Even though Ali Rıza Bey and some of the other police officers continued their search, they could not accomplish anything.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 201–202.

Still, İstanbul Police Chief Azmi Bey believed that the fugitive assassins would be trapped, so he continued issuing several search orders more. One morning, Azmi Bey asked Ali Rıza Bey to his office again and ordered him, “Go to Üsküdar now. Go and see the senior police officer of Üsküdar Police Station, Nihad Bey. I was told that İsmail of Gümülcine is in disguise and seen around Kartal district in the melon fields. Nihad Bey will give you the details. You get the guy and fetch him here.” As soon as Ali Rıza Bey left the police chief’s office, he went on a steamboat to Üsküdar and visited the Üsküdar police station to see Nihad Bey. In the meantime, though, an unexpected development had occurred: Nihad Bey was informed that one of the fugitives, a retired gendarme captain officer Mehmed had been hiding in a farm that belonged to Sefer around Sapanca.²⁴⁵ Nihad Bey changed his mind right and then. He would not hunt for İsmail of Gümülcine. He turned to Ali Rıza and told him, “I have asked the Police Chief to send you for İsmail. But now we have a more important task. I will give you a letter to be delivered to Azmi Bey. Actually, I could give you more information, because I know that he would commission you for this task.” Nihad Bey continued, “There is a man at Sapanca named Arab Nadir. One of the murderers has been hiding in the wood area around Sapanca. Nadir is here to collect the cleaned laundry. He is staying at Hotel Bandırma at Galata tonight. He is leaving for Sapanca by the first train in the morning to deliver the laundry. That is it; you shall go after him. Of course, Azmi Bey will inform you with more details,” and handed the letter to Ali Rıza Bey. As soon as he got the letter, Ali Rıza Bey returned

²⁴⁵ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1–7, 1331.10.27.

to his precinct and delivered it to his chief. Azmi Bey told Ali Rıza Bey to wait a little. Upon which Ali Rıza Bey went to his office to wait for Azmi Bey to call him. It was not half an hour later when Azmi asked him to his office to say: “Take two policemen with you. Go to Hotel Bandırma at Galata. Find out who Arabian Nadir is, without making the man suspicious. Do not let the man run away. The officers should wait there until they spot Nadir and hand him to you.” Ali Rıza Bey commissioned two police officers lived around Üsküdar district. Hasan and Nusred had got excited for the hope of being promoted if they accomplish their duty. Azmi Bey instructed Ali Rıza Bey to go to Beşiktaş after he did what he had to do at Hotel Bandırma. He explained why:

Across the Dolmabahçe Palace, there is a Fire Brigade. There is a young officer there named Lieutenant Nuri Bey. He is originally from Sapanca. The necessary instructions have already been passed to his superiors. Nuri Bey should take twenty soldiers with him. Twenty five more gendarme soldiers would be provided as well. All should complete to get ready until dawn tomorrow. They should be there at the bridge before the first steamboat departs to Haydarpaşa Port. You should watch Hotel Bandırma till morning. Then you may tell those tow policemen to return to Üsküdar.²⁴⁶

Ali Rıza Bey responded Azmi Bey saying, “Sir, these two officers know the man very well. If you allow me, I would like to take them with me, it would be helpful.” Azmi Bey accepted his suggestion. Then, Ali Rıza Bey went down to Galata Wharf and sat at a fisherman’s café until the daybreak. Some time later Arab Nadir showed up at the cafe. Ali Rıza Bey left the officers, Hasan and Nusred by themselves for a

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 204.

while and went to Beşiktaş to see lieutenant Nuri Bey. He returned to Galata Wharf back, after checking all preparations were made. At daylight the gendarme and the soldiers arrived at the seaport and waited for Ali Rıza Bey. In the meantime, Arab Nadir checked out of the hotel and headed to the seaport with the laundry bag under his arm to buy the boat ticket. When Ali Rıza Bey, Hasan and Nusred saw him buying his ticket, they approached him to take him to the lower deck of the steamboat.²⁴⁷ In order to avoid anybody else in, Ali Rıza Bey put two armed guards at the entrance. When the steamboat arrived at Haydarpaşa, the train station manager informed Ali Rıza Bey that Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul Cemal Bey had reserved a private train car for him. After necessary security measures were taken Ali Rıza Bey and his accompanies got on board the train taking Arab Nadir with them. Meanwhile, lieutenant Nuri Bey had warned Cemal Bey that with only this much people through the Sapanca Woods, they would not be able to achieve any success. So, Cemal Bey had ordered for twenty five more gendarme soldiers to join them at İzmit.²⁴⁸

When the train arrived at Derbent Station, lieutenant Nuri Bey was not late to spot Dilaver who came to pick up the laundry from Arab Nadir. He ordered the soldiers to arrest Dilaver immediately and brought on to the wagon. Dilaver was in shock to see Arab Nadir opposite him. Lieutenant Nuri Bey asked Dilaver why he needed to see Arab Nadir. Dilaver replied astounded, “He was going to bring me

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 204–205.

²⁴⁸ BOA, Dâhliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1–7, 1331.10.27; In the telegram send to the Ministry of Interior Affairs by İzmit Governorship on 29 June 1913, it was stated that sufficient number of military units were given under the command of Lieutenant Nuri Bey.

some of my belongings from İstanbul, so I came to collect them.” But, he was so nervous that he began trembling, and then he attempted to change what he just said, “Actually, he was going to collect some money on my behalf and bring it to me.” Nuri Bey was well aware that the two knew each other. In order to verify that what Dilaver had just said was a lie, Lieutenant Nuri Bey took him to another carwagon and asked him from whom the money was to be collected. However, Dilaver could not give a proper answer to that question. It was all clear now. Arab Nadir and Dilaver were going to take the laundry to Mehmed. Both Ali Rıza Bey and Lieutenant Nuri Bey tried to make Dilaver to admit this, but they could not manage to get it. The train was approaching to Sapanca anyhow. In case the two would try to escape, Arab Nadir and Dilaver were both handcuffed. In the meantime, Lieutenant Nuri Bey had a talk with the train operator and made an agreement with him. Not to draw attention of anybody, the train would make a brief stop before Sapanca Train Station, so that the security forces would get off the train. This plan worked well. The forces got off the train quickly and started encircling the Sapanca Woods in such an order that they would be able to see each other. This way, no exits or entries would be allowed to and from the woods.²⁴⁹

One of the gendarme soldiers next to Ali Rıza Bey knew the area quite well, because he was originally from Sapanca. Ali Rıza Bey was accompanied by one gendarme and one soldier other than Hasan and Nuri. They were all armed with Mauser pistols and several other weapons. Since the wood area was a swamp, they

²⁴⁹ Ali Rıza Öge, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Bir Polis Şefinin Gerçek Anıları*, p. 206.

do exactly the same. In the meantime, guns were fired. A few minutes later, Ali Rıza Bey heard the fugitive gave out a cry, but no other sound was heard afterwards. The other soldiers had also triggered their pistols and the forest became a battlefield. No one heard Ali Rıza Bey ordering them to cease fire. The only way he could make them to cease firing was to blow the whistle he took out of his pocket. After some silence, Ali Rıza Bey and the sergeant from Karamürsel drew near where the fugitive was, and they found a Mauser pistol with hundreds of cartridges and some rakı bottles. The spot where the fugitive assassin chose for himself was entirely secluded from the outside; it was covered with berrybushes and there stood a huge tree in front. Among the bushes the man had made an opening for himself.²⁵¹

The body was carried on a stretcher made of tree branches by the soldiers. When they left the woods, Lieutenant Nuri Bey was waiting for them. He congratulated Ali Rıza Bey and they shook hands. Then the soldiers left for Sapanca together with the dead body by a car, which they had stopped passing by. Ali Rıza Bey and the security forces were welcomed by the police detectives came from İstanbul and the highest authority of the Sapanca district when they arrived in town. Photographs were taken. Then, Ali Rıza Bey went to the district administration office. During the search made on the dead body, six English liras were found. Ali Rıza Bey gave one of it to the district authority to cover the funeral expenses. After that Ali Rıza Bey and the security forces returned back to İstanbul.²⁵²

²⁵¹ "Un des Assassins de Mahmoud Chevkett Pacha," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6609, 30 June 1913, Monday, p. 1.

²⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 205–206.

Executions and Exiles

After the assassination, the Guards Troops Commandership of İstanbul was not late to take active action. At first, many opponents whose names were discovered beforehand had been arrested, and the ones who were found to be directly involved with the assassination had been turned to the Court Martial. Their trials began on 19 June 1913 at the Court Martial assembled on the third floor of İstanbul Police Department. The Court Martial members were Prefecture Remzi Bey, Staff Major Muammer Bey, Captain Kemal Bey, Captain Abdi Bey, Captain Hüsnü Bey, Gendarme Officer Rıza Bey and former Karesi deputy Nail Bey. Police Chief Azmi Bey also participated the court session. The government wanted to come to the verdict as soon as possible. On the first day the court was held at night, it took two hours for the judge to read the file, therefore the session ended at three in the morning. All the assassins had been cross-examined one by one and made to confront each other when felt necessary. Also, the eyewitnesses were asked to be present at the court to recognize the accused. After the trials lasted for three days, the court finally came to a verdict.²⁵³ While some of the suspects had been trialed in their presence –Damad Salih Paşa, Colonel Fuad, Çerkes Kazım, Muhib, Ziya, Topal Tefrik, Bahriyeli Şevki, Mehmed Ali, Abdullah Safa, Driver Cevad, Gendarme

²⁵³ "Fâillerin Mahkemeleri," *İkdam*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2; "Mahkeme Devâm Ediyor," *İkdam*, No. 5868, 17 Receb 1331, 9 Haziran 1329, 22 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1; "Tahkikât ve Ta'kibât: Mecrûmların Mahkemeleri," *Tanîn*, No. 1639, 17 Receb 1331, 9 Haziran 1329, 21 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1.

Kemal, Hakkı, Kara Ahmed, and Gözlüklü Emin Efendi– some others had been trialed in absentia: Prince Sabahaddin, Reşid, Şerif Paşa, Kemal Midhat, Pertev Tevfik, Prefecture Zeki, Nazmi, Paşazâde Abdurrahman, Hikmet, a retired gendarme soldier Mehmed, Mustafa from Kavak, Raif, İsmail of Gümülcüne, and Paşazâde Adil.²⁵⁴

According to the verdict, all the accused were sentenced to death; Prince Sabahaddin, Şerif Paşa, Reşid, Damad Salih Paşa, Colonel Fuad, Kemal Midhat, Pertev Tevfik, Çerkes Kazım, Prefecture Zeki, Muhib Bey and İsmail of Gümülcüne in line with the Article 56 and 57 of the Criminal Law, (*Mülkiye Ceza Kanûnnâme-i Hümayûnu*), Ziya, Topal Tevfik, Bahriyeli Şevki, Mehmed Ali, Abdullah Safa, Nazmi, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Driver Cevad in accordance with the first item of Article 45, and also in line with the first addendum of again the first item of Article 58; Gendarme Kemal, Çerkes Kazım's brother Hikmet, Ziya's brother Hakkı, the retired gendarme captain Mehmed and Mustafa from Kavak according to the Article 56 and 57.²⁵⁵ Kara Ahmed, Ragıb and Raif, though were sentenced to be imprisoned for fifteen years each as said by the last item of Article 57 in Criminal Law. Gözlüklü Emin and Süleyman Paşazâde Adil Bey were sentenced for life time imprisonment in line with the first item of Article 58. The verdict the Court Martial had come to for

²⁵⁴ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331; "Mazbata-i Hükmiye," *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1151, 22 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329; 16 June 1913, Thursday, pp. 162–166; "Mazbata-i Hükmiye," *Tanîn*, No. 1641, 19 Receb 1331, 11 Haziran 1329, 24 June 1913, Tuesday, pp. 1–2; "Mazbata-i Hükmiye," *Polis Mecmuası*, No. 1, 10 Temmuz 1329, pp. 4–10; "Mazbata-i Hükmiye," *İkdam*, No. 5870, 19 Receb 1331, 11 Haziran 1329, 24 June 1913, Tuesday, pp. 1–2; "Le Sentence," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6603, 24 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 1.

²⁵⁵ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331.

Staff Colonel Kemal, Law School student İzzeddin, Captain Adil, Driver İsmail, Gendarme Sadık, Butcher Fehmi and Sheikh Mustafa was innocent.²⁵⁶

All in all, among the thirty-seven accused trailed at the Court Martial in regards to the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, twenty-four of them had been sentenced to death, out of which twelve had been executed. Among them there was only one person who could have caused a trouble to the government: Damad Salih Paşa. Being a member of the imperial dynasty, the verdict against him had initiated arguments both before and after his execution. The verdict had to be approved by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V. The French government, in the meantime, had begun seeking ways to avoid him to be executed through the French Embassy in İstanbul. Since the French Ambassador Monsieur Bompard was on vacation, it was the undersecretary Monsieur Boppe who was commissioned to prevent Damad Salih Paşa from being executed. Monsieur Boppe and Chief of İstanbul Guards Troops Cemal Bey were close friends and that was why he believed that he would be able to stop the execution. In the evening on the day of the verdict, Monsieur Boppe had called Cemal Bey to tell him they needed to talk about an important matter. The next day, Cemal Bey paid a visit to the French Embassy at Beyoğlu. Monsieur Boppe did not make the short story long; right away he talked about the subject:

Mon Cher, Cemal! I received a telegram from Monsieur Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs. I do not think it is necessary to repeat that he highly regards Turks as friends. You are well aware of it. And you also care about France very much. I believe you would

²⁵⁶ BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Genel No. 833, Husûsî No. 82, 18.B.1331.

understand my point after you read the telegram. This conversation is strictly confidential between two of us. It should not necessary to pass it to anybody else. Will you please regard me as if I were a person asking your advice on a private matter?²⁵⁷

Monsieur Boppe took out the telegram out of his pocket and handed it to him.

Cemal Bey began reading:

According to some information we have received, the son of Honorary Hayreddin Paşa Family, Damad Salih Paşa has been arrested in the city of İstanbul and thereafter has been detained to be executed as per the verdict of the Court Martial. The news has caused turmoil in Tunus, where Salih Paşa has been highly respected. Since the French Government is concerned that some uprising may outbreak in one of the emirates under its command, in Tunus due to a tragedy which would be confronted by this highly respected person it is our duty to interfere in favor of Salih Paşa.²⁵⁸

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs Monsieur Pichon ordered Monsieur Boppe by telegram that he should visit the Grand Vizier and he should make sure that Damad Salih Paşa was released and safely arrived in Tunus. Cemal Bey kept his silence after he finished reading. And then, he turned to Monsieur Boppe explaining that Damad Salih Paşa had been tried on some severe charges put against him with strong evidence and that the verdict had already been submitted for the approval of the sultan. Chief of Guards Troops of İstanbul Cemal Bey was determined to punish the organizer of the coup attempt against the government most severely so that an example would be set for the other opponent groups. Furthermore, the government

²⁵⁷ Cemal Paşa, *Hatıralar*, p. 54.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

was also determined to perform the executions. Cemal Bey asked Monsieur Boppe to change his mind and not to mention any of the foresaid in the presence of the Grand Vizier, since the public might jump into a conclusion that “France had supported the coup attempt.” After a second thought, Monsieur Boppe realized the sensitiveness of the matter, and he took Cemal Bey’s advice about not paying a visit to the Grand Vizier.

Two days later, Monsieur Boppe telephoned Cemal Bey this time and called him for another appointment. Monsieur Boppe presented a second telegram to him. French Minister of Foreign Affairs Monsieur Pichon reprimanded Monsieur Boppe for not appealing to the Grand Vizier and ordered him to perform his duty immediately to save Damad Salih Paşa. As Cemal Bey did not want to put Monsieur Boppe into more trouble, he told him, “Mon cher, it is already too late! The verdict has been presented to the sultan for his approval. It should be performed early this morning.”²⁵⁹ Despite the initiatives taken both by the French government and Monsieur Boppe, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had signed the verdict requiring Damad Salih Paşa to be executed.²⁶⁰

The assassins were at the Investigation Bureau of the Police Department in the heat of the night on 23 June 1913, they were put in separate rooms in groups of three or five. Towards eleven o’clock, the prisoners were taken downstairs and were handcuffed. At twenty past eleven, there was a commotion outside the police

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 56.

²⁶⁰ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1–5, 1331.10.18.

department when three cars pulled up. A policeman went near the arrested, and told them, "They will inquire some questions. The Court Martial Committee needs you to answer them," and then he ordered them to get into the cars. Çerkes Kazım, Bahriyeli Şevki, Abdullah Safa, Driver Cevad and Muhib were in the first car together with the police guards; Topal Tevfik, Ziya, Hakkı, Gendarme Kemal, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali were on the second car. And, finally Damad Salih Paşa and Colonel Fuad still in uniform got into the third car. They were still handcuffed even in the cars.²⁶¹

The cars arrived at the Ministry of War via Bahçekapı and Fincancılar Road and made an entrance through the Mercan Gate to stop just in front of the Garrison. When the prisoners got off the cars, their handcuffs were unlocked. Seeing the committee members, the head of Court Martial Remzi Bey, District Attorney Bedri Bey, Garrison commander Refet Bey and Police Chief Azmi Bey, they came to understand why they were inquired here in the middle of the night. When the prisoners got off their cars, head of Court Martial handed the imperial decree of execution to the district of attorney and asked him to read it loudly. After Bedri Bey finished reading the decree, he turned to the prisoners and told them, "If you wish to write down or say your testimonial, you may do so." He then asked them to utter if they had one last wish. Damad Salih Paşa put his hand into his pocket, took his

²⁶¹ "Hükm-i İdâmın İcrâsı," *Tanîn*, No. 1641, 19 Receb 1331, 11 Haziran 1329, 23 June 1913, 24 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 1; Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönemler*, p. 193; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 246–247; Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 520.

testimonial out and threw it at the desk. Çerkes Kazım, Ziya and Topal Tevfik,²⁶² kept their silence. But, others were in shock. Only Colonel Fuad was able to remain calm and wrote down a few sentences on a piece of paper he was given. When one military officer attempted to take off the epaulets on Colonel Fuad's uniform as instructed by the Garrison Commander Refet Bey, Colonel Fuad resisted. However, in the end the officer was able to follow the instruction. Later on, the prisoners were made to put white shirts on. Their identification written on a piece of paper was pinned just above their chests. After all the preparations were completed, the imam called them one by one told to ask for pardon. But, when the imam prolonged his speech, the district attorney Bedri Bey got furious and warned him to make it short, "Otherwise we shall be late. The day is about to break."²⁶³

The imam finished citing the prayers and the prisoners were taken to the execution area. Some of them had lost their tranquility while some were walking towards the gallows with confident and upright gait. Damad Salih Paşa, Abdullah Safa, and Lieutenant Mehmed Ali could hardly walk. Only Çerkes Kazım and Topal Tevfik were able to keep their dignity. The first one on the gallows was Çerkes Kazım. He was asked if he had anything to utter. Çerkes Kazım did not miss his last chance to swear and insult all prominent figures of the Committee of Union and

²⁶² Sadri Sema wrote in his memoirs that Topal Tevfik did not accept seeing the imams until the last minute. See: Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 520.

²⁶³ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 194; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 247–248.

Progress.²⁶⁴ Before he finished, the executioner hurried to put the loop of the greasy rope around Çerkes Kazım's²⁶⁵ neck and kicked the gallows. Then, it was Topal Tevfik's turn. When the hangman put the loop around his neck, Tevfik shouted at him, "You slime, hurry up, do your job quickly, I want no pain!" As the hangman kicked the gallows, Topal Tevfik was hung loosely in the air for a while and passed out. The last two to be hung were Damad Salih Paşa and Colonel Fuad. When asked for his final word, Colonel Fuad said, "I have already said it. What else do you want from me?" with a high pitched voice. As for Damad Salih Paşa, before he had a chance to open his mouth, the hangman kicked the gallows.²⁶⁶

It took more than one hour to execute the twelve prisoners. Since it was still dark, there was a death silence at the Bayezid Square. Inhabitants of İstanbul had no idea about the recent developments. They would only find out when they got up.²⁶⁷ The bodies were on display during the day hanging down from the trees. Then

²⁶⁴ Sadri Sema claims that Çerkes Kazım shouted, "Long Live Justice!" just before he was hung. See: Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 521.

²⁶⁵ Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu inserted a copy of the testimonial of Çerkes Kazım in his book. See: Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu. *Sultan İkinci Abdülhamid ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Komitacılar*, pp. 497–498.

²⁶⁶ Galip Vardar. *İttihad ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler*, p. 195; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 248–249; One soldier, Halil Koç, born in 1893 at Haliloğlu village of Çanakkale, who were among the task unit to hang the dead assassins on the trees told the night of the execution as follows: "Towards dawn one night twenty-four gallows were built on the Bayezid Square. I was one of the ones who erected them. I was positioned at the military carpentry then. I watched Topal Tevfik while he was hung behind the fences around the garden of the Old Palace. Topal Tevfik was the twelfth to be hung. When climbing the gallows, he uttered, "I have slain the chief of slimes. Long Live the Nation!" In the first attempt the rope broke off. In the second it worked fine. His dead body was left hanging for four hours at the Square."

See: <http://www.canakkale.gen.tr/gaziler/g7.html>.

²⁶⁷ Colonel Hüsamettin Ertürk wrote in his memoirs that a couple of translators from the French Embassy had demanded the greasy rope by which Damad Salih Paşa was hung, and the hangman who they talked to had asked via the Armenian translator, "What would that be for?" And, the translator answered that "Paşa's father is a Tunisian. The Frenchmen shall display the rope in the revolutionary museum." See: Samih Nafiz Tansu. *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, p. 114.

Damad Salih Paşa was buried next to his father Hayreddin Paşa, and the other eleven were buried in Edirne Cemetary.

Twelve of the twenty-four sentenced to death by the Court Martial had been executed, the other half had managed to escape and leave the country. The government promised a reward for anybody turning the fugitive assassins, Nazmi, Hikmet and Paşazâde Abdurrahman, and made an announcement through the newspapers. Accordingly, if all three were handed in 500 liras; if only Nazmi were handed in 300 liras would be paid. For Hikmet or Paşazâde Abdurrahman, the prize was 100 liras only.²⁶⁸ Detectives of Guards Troops in İstanbul worked day and night in order to discover whereabouts of Nazmi, Hikmet, Paşazâde Abdurrahman and Mustafa of Kavak. They searched and watched all possible exits migt have been taken including the passengers ships moored at İstanbul seaport. One night, just before the passenger ship of Italian flag, called Serbia had left the harbor, four passengers were brought to the ship by a rowboat of the maritime company. Thereupon, the detectives informed the Italian Embassy that those four passengers boarded the ship at the last minute were assassins on the run and demanded that they should be turned in. However, the Italian Embassy refused to cooperate claiming that those four men were nothing but political criminals. Then the ship sailed off. At the Pireaus seaport it turned out to be that those four were son-in-law of Kâmil Paşa, Esad Bey and his three sons. The three of those passengers left the boat to see the

²⁶⁸ "Fırarileri Haber Vereceklerle Mükafat," *İkdam*, No. 5862, 11 Receb 1331, 3 Haziran 1329, 16 June 1913, Monday, p. 1; "Fırarî Kâtiller," *Tanîn*, No. 1639, 17 Receb 1331, 9 Haziran 1329, 22 June 1913, Sunday, p. 1.

authorities and to ask to be allowed to go to Cyprus, but the fourth one remained on board.²⁶⁹

Nazmi had been in Romania since after the assassination, but he came to İstanbul in disguise to see his ill mother. Police Chief Azmi Bey was informed that Nazmi stayed in his house in Cibali, and he ordered his officers to circle the house. When Azmi Bey called Nazmi asking him to surrender, Nazmi opened the window and responded, "Surrender? No way! I would rather commit suicide than allow you to commit homicide," while he pulled out his gun and pointed out at his temple. Then he pulled the trigger.²⁷⁰

Mustafa of Kavak had stayed in the city hiding for a while after the assassination. Then, on 15 July 1913, he went to Egypt by a steamboat called İsmailiye where he settled in an inn, Han-ı Halil, belonged to a tannery.²⁷¹ The diplomatic efforts spent by the Ottoman government to persuade the Egyptian authorities to return Mustafa of Kavak back to them did not produce any results. Police Chief Azmi Bey could not manage capturing him in Egypt before he left that country. But, five months after the assassination, in early November 1913, when Azmi Bey got the information that Mustafa would be arriving in İstanbul by a

²⁶⁹ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti. DH. SYS, Doya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-3, 1331.10.4; "Fırafı Dört Kişi Hakkında," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Çarşamba, p. 3; "Dört Kaçak," *Tanîn*, No. 1636, 14 Receb 1331, 5 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p.1; "Sırbiye Vapuru Fırarîleri," *İkdâm*, No. 5866, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 1; "Sırbiye Vapuru Fırarîleri," *İkdâm*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

²⁷⁰ Samih Nafiz Tansu. *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, p. 115; Ahmed Bedevi Kuran. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İnkılap Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele*, p. 603.

²⁷¹ Through the intelligence services, it was discovered that Paşazâde Abdurrahman was in Egypt, too. See: BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti. DH.SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-3, 1331.10.4.

passenger ship on his way to Russia, he once again had the opportunity. Azmi Bey called for Ali Rıza Bey and chief detective Osman Bey telling them, “I want you to arrest Mustafa. No matter how you do it, take the man off that ship.” So, Ali Rıza Bey and Osman Bey began pondering. They were worried. Because of the capitulations, it was not so easy to take a man off board. Then, after devising a plan in his head, Osman Bey turned Ali Rıza Bey and asked him to “wait for me by the ship. This is a highly complicated matter. The Russian Consul and his wife are good friends of mine. I hope they shall not turn me down. Now, I go and visit them. You wait for me on the wharf, I shall signal you if I have got achieved my task. Then you should call Azmi Bey immediately to ask for a car.”²⁷² However, Ali Rıza Bey was quite aware of the seriousness of the matter, so he thought it would be better to call for a car beforehand. Azmi Bey had also agreed with him and sent a car to the wharf. Ali Rıza Bey had been there for two hours. In those hours, Osman Bey had gone to the Russian Consulate. His wife greeted him at the door and welcomed him into the living room. But, Osman Bey began whining, “Oh, Madame, please help! Osman is wasted!” Madame asked him, “Oh, My God! What happened?” Before Osman Bey answered her question, the consul came in teasing him, “Osman? I thought you did not know the way to our house forgot our house.” Osman Bey did not have much time left; he began his story right ahead. “In my precinct there was a homicide committed; one Turk killed another. The murderer is on board the ship at your wharf. Now, I am in big trouble. If I do not arrest him, they shall fire me. I came to

²⁷² *ibid.*, p. 209.

you to ask your kind assistance.” Since the consul believed that he might need to cooperate with someone like Osman any time, he did not wish him to be fired. So he said, “Do not worry. I shall make that guy to be arrested right now.” Then the consul penned a note to the captain on board the ship and commissioned his messenger to leave with Osman Bey and take it to the captain. The messenger and Osman Bey arrived at the wharf by an automobile of the Russian Consulate. They went on board to explain the situation to the captain. When ordered by the captain, they went down to the cabin where Mustafa of Kavak was staying and forced him out and took him down the landing stage where a car kept waiting. The Court Martial assembled once again to try Mustafa of Kavak in his presence this time; he was once again sentenced to death, and his penalty was executed on 29 November 1913.²⁷³ Falih Rıfkı Atay told the story of Mustafa’s arrest in his novel book *Zeytindağ*:

Mustafa of Kavak who had slain²⁷⁴ Mahmud Şevket Paşa had succeeded to flee out of the country. We do not know whose bright idea it was, but he sailed towards İstanbul on a Russian ship heading to Romania. Ottoman government authorities were not authorized to arrest any passengers on board Russian flag ships. The Union and Progress leaders appealed to the Police Chief Azmi Bey. Azmi Bey devised a plan to take him and put him in prison. It was no doubt that the Russian Ambassador would pay a visit at the Sublime Porte and demand Mustafa of Kavak back. Concerned with this possibility, Talat Bey and the Grand Vizier Said Halim Paşa decided to leave for Edirne for a while. So, when

²⁷³ The arrestation of Kavaklı Mustafa by force later resulted in a diplomatic crisis between Ottoman Empire and Russia. Following this diplomatic crisis, Russian ambassador demanded the resignation of Azmi Bey. But the Unionist government instead of dismissing Azmi Bey appointed him to the governorship of Beyrut. Ali Rıza Öge, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Bir Polis Şefinin Gerçek Anıları*, pp. 209–210; BOA, İrade-i Harbiye, Sıra No. 6387, Genel No. 2394, Husûsi No. 87, 28.Z.1331; Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000), p. 267.

²⁷⁴ Kavaklı Mustafa aslında Mahmud Şevket Paşa’ya suikast yapacak olan grubun içinde bulunmuyordu. Onun görevi Nesim Ruso’yu öldürmektir.

the Ambassador visited the Sublime Porte, he would not find high ranking person to negotiate with, and that night Mustafa would be strangled to die.²⁷⁵

Consequences of the Assassination

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's murder had not been welcomed by some local notables and authorities. Many articles were published in magazines and newspapers protesting the conspiracy. *Tanîn* reported the murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his adjutant officer İbrahim Bey in its headlines. One of the columnists of *Tanîn*, Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, had written the following in his column titled, *Siyâset*:

Once again, yesterday, this deprived country experienced an ill-omened event. Some slime and treacherous bastards murdered a valuable man of utmost importance vital for this country. The assassins besmeared the most brilliant page in our history. But let me remind them: The Creator had scribbled the noble life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in our history in gold. Even though the bullets killed his body, his soul shall live till the eternity. The historical monument Mahmud Şevket Paşa built with his valuable services, are strong and high enough to confront the assaults of some bandits.²⁷⁶

In the following days of the assassination, the "official gazette" of the Committee of Union and Progress, *Tanîn* continued to give comprehensive reports on the details of the assassination and the assassins, while at the same time publishing articles praising Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In the news reports, the murderers were mostly introduced as a "group of bandits" who had no political aspects. *İkdâm*,

²⁷⁵ Falih Rıfkı Atay. *Zeyindağı*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1970), pp. 13-14.

²⁷⁶ Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı. "Milleti Dağdâr Edecek Bir Vak'a," *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

on the other hand, preferred to publish the articles trying to avoid comments, therefore, only quoted other newspapers and press agencies.

In a foreign newspaper being published in İstanbul, *Le Moniteur Oriental* an article titled “Mahmud Şevket Paşa Homicide,” signed by A. de. La. Jonquiére, the incident was described as a “loathsome murder”:

This morning a loathesome crime was committed; I say “loathesome” because political murder is the most loathing crime. General Mahmud Şevket Paşa who prevented the most dangerous threat to the victory on 13 April 1909 which after saved the Constitution and Turkey had been slain by bullets came out of some vicious men’s guns. The honest and decent people would no doubt despair because of such a terrible homicide. Political ambitions cannot be any excuse for such a villain act. We believe that even the opponents of the Grand Vizier would take it against their honor to somehow cooperate with the murderers and would decline it and also, would demand their punishment ... Let us not allow his death to be in vain and let him be the last victim sacrificed for personal and political benefits.²⁷⁷

The Committee of Union and Progress had commissioned the Senator Şerif Cavid Paşa, former Minister of Interior Affairs Halil Bey, and chief columnist of *Tanîn* Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı Bey to visit Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s family at their mansion at Üsküdar to pay condolences of his death.²⁷⁸ The Committee of Union and Progress had also initiated to organize a public protest with all its associations both in the capital and throughout the several provinces in order to get the public support lost upon the fall of Edirne. Many telegrams sent from various parts of the

²⁷⁷ “L’assassinat de Mahmoud Chevket Pacha,” *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6590, 11 June 1913, Çarşamba, p. 1.

²⁷⁸ “İttihâd ve Terakkî’nin Ta’ziyeti,” *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 3.

Ottoman territory had been published in *Tanîn* with an attempt to give a message to the political opponents that the people were supporting the Committee of Union and Progress.

The day after the assassination, there came many telegrams to the İstanbul Post Office from various parts of the country such as İzmir, Trablus, Bandırma, Söke, Mudanya, Nazilli, Ünye, Ürgüp, Şam, Rize, Gümüşhane and Rize, protesting the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In a telegram addressed to the Ministry of Interior Affairs from İzmir cosigned by several notables of the town, the murder was described as a “dagger plunged into the heart of the country.” They also pointed out that they expected the “slaughterers to be punished by overpowering law” in a way that they deserved.²⁷⁹ Two local newspapers of İzmir, *Anadolu* and *Köylü* had published articles protesting the murder. *Anadolu* announced the murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in a headline read as “black news.” *Anadolu* described the event as a meaningless and in vain attempt to drag the country into a chaos. *Köylü* had protested such a villain assassination committed at a time the country required unity and brothership and wrote “Enough is enough! The country is on fire already!”²⁸⁰ In the

²⁷⁹ “Taşralarda Teessürât,” *İkdâm*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 2. The cosignature under the telegram wired to Ministry of Interior Affairs were: the Mayor Refik Bey, the Rabbi Nesim Danun Efendi, Müftü Rahmetah Efendi, Armenian priest Evsab Eşceyan, merchants Midhat Bey, Cemal Bey, Selim Mizrahi, Hacı Osman Efendi, Ziya, members of the ulema Ali Haydar, Mihran, Cemal, Nazmi, and Said, former İzmir Deputy to the Parliament Seyit, Merchant Tevfik, Professor İbrahim Edhem, Merchant Hacı İsmail, Halil Fikri, Kemal Caferi, Manzurzâde Adem, Director of *Köylü* Refet, Hocaazade Ahmet, Merchant Hafız Ali Brothers, Attorney of Law Mehmet Ali, Merchant Ahmet Refik, Karaburunlu Hasan Hilmi, Clockmaker Mehmet Tevfik, Hacı İsmailzâde Zühtü, Çuvallızâde Mehmet Arif, Tırhalalı Mehmet Hurşit, İpekçizâde Rıfat, Timber trader Ahmet Sabri, Merchant Nişli Hüseyin, Cretan Hasan Behçet, Director of *Anadolu* Ali Nihad, Attorney of Law Emin Zeki, Finance Office Director İbrahim Edhem, Timber trader Cihan, and Merchant Remzi.

²⁸⁰ “Vilâyetde Teessürât,” *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 3.

telegram sent from Nazilli it was stated that the loss of “Mahmud Şevket Paşa who devoted his life for the good of his country and his people” had been mournful throughout the country. Ürgüb Mayor Şükrü expressed his deep condolences due to the loss of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. After the assassination, a meeting was held at the Haydarpaşa Egyptian Club and a telegram was penned to be wired to the Committee of Union and Progress headquarters expressing the sorrow of the members.²⁸¹ In another telegram sent by Damascus Science Society in the Syria Province, the society members expressed their condolences to the family of the deceased and to the Ottoman community for the murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa.²⁸²

Besides the ones protesting the murder of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, there were some others who were quite happy with it. In Bagdad, Mufti Hasan, Şükrî'l-Fazlî, Ali Efendizâde Süleyman, and Suveydizâde Yusuf Efendi sent a telegram expressing their content for the loss of Mahmud Şevket Paşa to a Damastian newspaper to have it published. The tax collector in Akdağ, a county of coal miners in Yozgat, Akif and the chief secretary of Court of First Instance Şükrü had written in a telegram they wired to *Türk* newspaper in İzmir that although the murderers of a great soldier, Nazım Paşa could have not been found yet, searches prompted in order to hunt the assassins of Mahmud Şevket Paşa could only spoil the confidence the people had invested on justice and equity. A railroad worker, Salim bin Talip from Eskişehir, working in the Locomotive Factory had made five banners with slogans against

²⁸¹ “Mısırlılar Kulübü’nün Taziyesi,” *Tanîn*, No. 1632, 10 Receb 1331, 2 Haziran 1329, 15 June 1913, Sunday, p. 3.

²⁸² “Şam Cemiyet-i İlmiyesi,” *İkdâm*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 2.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Committee of Union and Progress. He and a colleague of his Mehmed placed them on the counter of the lathe operator Osman and began chanting the words on them. A committee commissioned by the government to investigate the incident discovered that it had been prompted by Zeytunzâde Tevfik, Mehmed Ali, and Tanner Hacı Veli, chief columnist of *Metânet* Burhaneddin, Vahap and Süleyman, who were all members of the Party of Freedom and Understanding.²⁸³ Another incident worth mentioning had happened in Niğde. A man named Fazlı of Niğde had congratulated the men he came across with at the shopping area of the town right after the death of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and he treated the customers of the nearby coffeehouses with tea and ice cream.²⁸⁴

It was not only within the Ottoman borders that the loss of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been echoing, the voices were heard also in Germany, England, France, Austria, Russia and Egypt. The newspapers published in those countries had been publishing articles questioning the military and political identity of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, as well as the reasons behind the assassination. In France, *Nan* wrote that Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been murdered due to yet unknown reasons, adding that it should be connected with the murder of former Minister of War Nazım Paşa. The chief columnist of *Le Matin* Monsieur Stefan Lauzannes wrote an article pointing out that Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been a successful soldier and a good lecturer and he observed:

²⁸³ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1–2, 1331.8.9; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, pp. 327–328.

²⁸⁴ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezareti. DH. KMS, Dosya No. 86, Sıra No. 1–2, Gömlek No. 2, 1331.Z.21.

Aforementioned had been a very meticulous political person during he held the office. It had been no one but the aforementioned who brought the Action Army in front of Ayastefanos in order to abort Abdülhamid. He had also had been the hope and spirit of the Young Turk Movement. Nevertheless in the year (1909) when he came into power and held the office of Ministry of War, his first task had been to close all the doors to the ones belonging to the Parliament and the political circles. While Mahmûd Şevket Paşa had been the Minister of War, he used to decline the memoranda from the Grand Vizier inviting him to attend the sessions at the Grand Assembly saying, "Assemblies witness many worthless and unnecessarily long lectures." Even more, the aforementioned refused to step in the assembly building: "I shall of course take the opportunity of seeing the deputies when I shall demand money."²⁸⁵

According to Stefan Lausannes, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was a military man rather than a politician who was able to see the misconduct of the country and who also strived to stop it. Monsieur Lausannes pointed out that France knew Mahmud Şevket Paşa quite well and reminded the readers what Mahmud Şevket Paşa had said about France and the Frenchmen: "You are a great nation. Because, even if you object to something it is certain that you have some ideas ... We do not grasp on our ideas ... There has been men among you who died for their ideas. We have some men died as well, but they were lack of ideas."²⁸⁶

In Germany, where Mahmud Şevket Paşa had spent many years, his assassination upset the society, in many newspapers there were reports condemning the event. In a leading article in *Neue Freie Presse* praised Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the most powerful person of all the Ottomans in both political and military platforms

²⁸⁵ "Fransız Matbû'âtı," *İkdam*, No. 5863, 12 Receb 1331, 4 June 1913, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ "Fransız Matbû'âtı," *İkdam*, No. 5863, 12 Receb 1331, 4 June 1913, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

and claimed that the Ottoman Empire had lost the most serious soldiers in the country who did not let the enemy to go further than Çatalca.²⁸⁷ Another article of *Neue Freie Presse* written by General Hymhof Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been described as follows:

Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the last qualified and generous person the Ottoman government had. He was a man of a soul under a skin like all of us but could not refrain from striving for his country day and night without going to bed. If the capable man in Turkey to be sacrificed one after the other, who shall then govern the country? Now is the time to bring an end to the conflicts between the political parties so that the people live peacefully?²⁸⁸

Frankfurter Zeitung had published an article titled “The slaughterers of Mahmud Şevket Paşa” which said:

One of the murderers shouted “Long Live Liberty!” when he was seized at the Pire Mehmed Street of Beyoğlu. This is a cry of a man who shall be deprived from freedom till eternity. When he shot Mahmud Şevket Paşa, did he not know that he would kill the greatest statesman in Turkey? Or did he indeed believe that he did it in the name of liberty? Hey man, is this how you struggle for liberty? What such men expect from liberty and what they call liberty is nothing but to seize power so that they can exploit it.²⁸⁹

Another German newspaper, *Nord Deutsche Zeitung* reported the death of Mahmud Şevket Paşa as a “grievous loss.” *Lokal Anzeiger* described Mahmud Şevket Paşa as a “distinguished and cordial sample of Ottoman soldiers.” An Austrian

²⁸⁷ “Alman Gazetelerinin Mütalaâtı,” *İkdam*, No. 5863, 12 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ “İmhof Paşa’nın Makâlesi,” *İkdam*, No. 1634, 12 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 17 June 1913, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2; “İmhof Paşa’nın Makâlesi,” *Tanin*, 12 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

²⁸⁹ Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 513.

newspaper, *Neue Wiener Tageblatt* wrote that Mahmud Şevket Paşa was a brave and capable military officer, who was renowned as the victorious commander during the quelling of the 31 March Uprising.

One of the prominent newspapers in England, the *Times* highlighted the article informing the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa with a headline saying, “Touchy Times” and asserted that this “villain” murder was the second event which might lead Turkey to darkness and continued:

There is no doubt that there are political motives behind the plot. Whoever the assassins might be and whoever sponsored them, there is no doubt that it meant to be a coup attempt against the stability prevailed in Turkey, and that the country lost one more reliable and capable men.²⁹⁰

Arab world condemned the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa as well. An Egyptian newspaper, *El-Suab* evaluated the event as follows on 19 June 1913:

Yesterday we have received some disastrous news from İstanbul. A handful of traitors who sold themselves and their faith did not hesitate to aim their revolvers at the Grand Vizier Mahmud Şevket Paşa and shoot constantly. The hero of liberty departed this life due to the bullet wounds opened in his body and left the people he strived for. Murderers, villains! Are they not as low as wild monsters? Do they not know that every single bullet they shot hit the heart of the country and of their countrymen?²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ “İngiltere Matbû’âtı,” *İkdam*, No. 5863, 12 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

²⁹¹ Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, p. 514.

Another Egyptian newspaper, *El-Mukattam* wrote in its issue dated 7 June 1913 that “Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s murder” was the result of his approach caring even for his enemies. The *Beyrut* published in French in Beirut said:

Mahmud Şevket Paşa passed away. A vicious assassination took the life of this hard-working, powerful and great statesman. This inauspicious plot somehow coincided with the time when he devoted all his strength and power to his country trembling in the face of war threats and when he was need the most for improvement. The hands taken the life of this distinguished martyr should not be able to destroy the work he has so far initiated promising success.²⁹²

Upon the assassination, English, French, Spanish, Bulgarian, Austrian and German Ambassadors in İstanbul had all paid their condolences to the government.

Sinop Exiles

The day after Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assassinated, the government authorities had initiated an intensive search for opponent groups in and around İstanbul. The ones found to be in connection with the assassination had been sent in exile to Sinop. Thanks to the assassination, the Committee of Union and Progress government was also able to get rid of some opponents who had been giving them some trouble for some time. Among the arrested, there were Refi Cevad (Ulunay), Refik Halid, Burhan Felek, one of the owners of *İfshâm* and the future founder of Turkish Communist Party Mustafa Suphi, and Ferid and some other prominent figures of the intellectuals and politicians. This hunt for opponents were not only

²⁹² *ibid*, p. 514.

limited with the writers and men of learning, all “vagabond and idle” men were deported out of İstanbul. On 18 June 1913, in line with the item two of the article six of the decree issued by the Martial Law, the government members decided to send the would be threat opponents to Sinop by a passenger boat named *Bahr-ı Cedid*. On the day of 19 June 1913, according to some five hundred, according to others four hundred and fifty three people got on board the *Bahr-ı Cedid* for their exile in Sinop.²⁹³ Among those in exile were:

Name	Occupation
1. Hüseyin Bey	Sular Müfettişi.
2. Basri Bey	Tophane Posta Telgraf Müdürü.
3. Ahmed Nureddin Efendi	İstanbul Nüfus Memuru.
4. Ali Nureddin Efendi	Adliye Nezareti Temyiz İstida Dairesi Ketebesinden.
5. Ahmed Efendi	Galata Gümrüğü Muayene Memurlarından.
6. Ahmed Zühdü Bey	Ziraat Bankası Kontrol Şubesi Mümeyyizi
7. Bekir Sıdk Efendi	Beyoğlu Cadde-i Kebir Posta Memuru.
8. Hasan Bey	Yeniköy Mahkeme Başkatibi.
9. Müslim Sami Bey	Şehremaneti Heyet-i Fenniye Katiblerinden.
10. Asaf Bey	İstanbul Nüfus Dairesi Evrak Memuru.
11. Galib Efendi	Posta Telgraf Nezareti Ketebesinden.
12. Hüseyin Kazım Efendi	Düyun-ı Umûmiye Komiseri Kalem Ketebesinden.
13. İsmail Efendi	Rûsumat Müdüriyet-i Umûmiyesi Sevk Memuru.
14. Burhan Efendi	Evkaf Ketebesinden.
15. Mehmed Bey	Adliye Müdavenet Kalem Ketebesinden.
16. Şevket Efendi	Mebusan Katiblerinden.
17. Mehmed Sadi Bey	Birinci Ticaret Mahkemesi Zabıta Katibi.
18. Hafız Mehmed Kamil Efendi	Evkaf Müfettişi.
19. İbrahim Efendi	Hariciye Nezareti Tabiyet Kalem.
20. Mehmed İzzeddin Bey	Dahiliye Tahrirat Kalem Ketebesinden.
21. Ali Haydar Efendi	Anadolu Şimendüfer Merkez Tercümanı.
22. Ziver Efendi	Elektrik İnşaiye Memurlarından.
23. Mazlum Bey	Üsküdar Belediye Muhasebe Ketebesinden.
24. Ali Fuad Bey	Dahiliye Nezareti Muhaberat Dördüncü Şube.
25. Münir Efendi	Daire-i Sıhhiye Evrak Kalem Ketebesinden.
26. İsmail Efendi	Daire-i Sıhhiye Muhasebe Kalem Ketebesinden.
27. Mehmed Şükrü Bey	Rûsumat Müdüriyet-i Umûmisi Muhafaza Ser-Müfettişi.
28. Sadedin Arif Bey	Adliye Nezareti Muhasebe Kalem.
29. Süleyman Razi Bey	Şehremaneti Heyet-i Fenniye Üçüncü Şube Başkatibi.

²⁹³ “Te’bid Olunanlar,” *İkdam*, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1; “İstanbul Hadisâtı,” *Servet-i Fünûn*, No. 1151, 22 Receb 1331, 13 Haziran 1329, 26 June 1913, Thursday, p. 161; Kemal Yakut. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, p. 327. In the archives where files of exiles inn Sinop are kept, the number of people is indicated as “500 plus.” See: BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti, DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 2, 1331.11.24.

30. Hüseyin Faiz Bey
31. Feridun Bey
32. Orhan Bey
33. Halil İbrahim Efendi
34. Münir Efendi
35. Bedri Bey
36. Halil Efendi
37. Müşir Asaf Paşazâde Cemal Bey
38. Muhlis Sabahaddin Bey
39. Cevad Bey
40. Kadri Efendi
41. Mehmed Şerif Efendi
42. Hasan Vasıf Bey
43. Hadi Bey
44. Zühdü Bey
45. Yusuf Kenan Bey
46. Nazmi Bey
47. Ali Haydar Bey
48. İhsan Efendi
49. İsmail Efendi
50. Mehmed Fahreddin Efendi
51. Murad Bey
52. Mehmed Münib Bey
53. Nazım Bey
54. Şükrü Bey
55. Fahreddin Efendi
56. Mustafa İhsan Efendi
57. Ali Necati Bey
58. Tahir Hayreddin Bey
59. Mahmud Bey
60. Ziver Bey
61. Nizameddin Bey
62. Feruh Niyazi Bey
63. Ali Rıza Bey
64. Necati Bey
65. İbrahim Hakkı Bey
66. Mustafa Halid Efendi
67. Selahaddin Bey
68. Cemil Tevfik Efendi
69. Ferid Bey
70. Subhi Bey
71. Osman Nuri Efendi
72. İbrahim Efendi
73. Aziz Nuri Efendi
74. İsmail Subhi Bey
75. Hamid Bey
76. Ali Haydar Efendi
77. Mustafa Reşad Efendi
78. Halil Said Efendi
79. Abdülkadir Efendi
80. Aziz Efendi
81. Mahmud Celal Paşa
82. Halid Yekta Efendi
83. Hacı Hayri Efendi
84. Ahmed Nazif Efendi
85. Hafız Mustafa Rasih Efendi
86. Abdülfettah Efendi

Beyoğlu Bidayet Mahkemesi İcra Muavini.
 Adliye Nezareti Umur-ı Cezaiye Dairesi Memuru.
 Sadaret Evrak Kalemi.
 Mahkeme-i İstinaf Katiblerinden.
 Maliye Nezareti Vezne Ketebesinden.
 Yeniköy Belediyesi Heyet-i Tahririyesinden.
 Maliye Nezareti Vezne Ketebesinden.
 Eshab-ı Emlaktan.
 Mülga Demokrat Fırkası Katibi.
Alemdar Sahib-i Ref'i.
Alemdar Müdür-i Mesulü.
 Marif Nezareti Tahkik Memur-ı Sabıkı.
 Mülga Cemiyet-i Rusumiye Azasından.
 Meclis-i Marif Azası Sabıkasından (Hafiyeye).
 Dahiliye Mühürdar-ı Sabıkı.
 Kastamonu Vilayeti Muavin Sabıkı.
 Dahiliye Birinci Şube Müdür-i Sabıkı.
 İstanbul Polis Müdür-i Umumîsi Muavin Sabıkı.
 Hariciye Evrak Odası Kadro Harici.
 Sadaret Evrak.
 Divan-ı Umûmiye İdaresi Evrak Müdür Sabıkı.
 Hariciye Nezareti Sabık Mümeyyizlerinden.
 Mülga Cemiyet-i Rûsumiye Azasından.
 Mülkiye Kaymakam.
 Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi Mütেকaid.
 Divan-ı Umûmiye Evrak Memur-ı Sabıkı.
 Meclis-i Marif Mümeyyizliğinden Mütেকaid.
 Evkaf Nezareti Muhasebe Müdür Sabıkı.
 İstanbul Mebus Sabıkı.
 Mülga Cemiyet-i Rûsumiye Azasından.
 Kosova Marif Müdür-i Esbaki.
 Polis Müdüriyet-i Umûmîsi Taharriyet Başkatib Sabıkı.
 Doktor.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
Vazife gazetesi Muharririnden.
Vazife gazetesi Sermuharriri.
Vazife gazetesi Müdür-i Mesulü.
İkdam gazetesi Muhabiri.
Osmanîşer Lloyd gazetesi Muhabirlerinden.
Adalet gazetesi Müdür-i Mesulü.
 Mekteb Muallimi ve Muharrirlerden.
 Beyoğlu Bidayet Mahkemesi Riyaset-i Dava Vekili.
 Muallim.
 Dava Vekili.
 Dava Vekili.
 Beyoğlu Dairesi Memurlarından.
 İstanbul Vilayeti Müfettişi Muavinlerinden.
 Beyoğlu Mutasarrıfı Sertatib Sabıkı.
 Beyazıt Dersiamlarından.
 Beyazıt Dersiamlarından.
 Beyazıt Dersiamlarından.
 Sultan Selim Türbedarı.
 Fatih Dersiamlarından.

87. Mehmed Atıf Efendi	Fatih Dersiamlarından.
88. Ahmed İsmet Efendi	Mahmudpaşa Mahkemesi Naib Sabıkı.
89. Abdülkadir Efendi	Bab-ı Meşihat.
90. Bahaeddin Efendi	Meclis-i Eytam Sabık Muhasebecisi.
91. Abdülaziz Halid Bey	Ergani Naib Sabıkı.
92. Resul Bey	Kaza Naibi.
93. Yusuf Kenan Bey	Meclis Kalemi Ketebesinden.
94. Mehmed Tayyib Efendi	Fatih Dersiamlarından.
95. Ahmed Hamdi Efendi	Meşihat Taharriyat Kalemi Ketebesinden.
96. İsmail Hakkı Paşa	Amasya Mebus Sabıkı.
97. Mehmed Şükrü Paşa	Üçüncü Ordu Topçu Livalarından Mütেকaid.
98. Abdülhadi Efendi	Birinci Ordu İstihkam Birinci Tabur Binbaşılığı. Müt.
99. Remzi Bey	Kaymakamlıktan Mütেকaid.
100. Galib Bey	Bahriye Binbaşılığından Mütেকaid.
101. Tevfik Bey	Nizamiye Miralaylığından Mütেকaid.
102. Ali Galib Bey	Topçu Kaymakamlığından Mütেকaid.
103. Hafız Kemal Efendi	Topçu Yüzbaşılığından Mütেকaid.
104. Emin Bey	Piyade Binbaşılığından Mütেকaid.
105. Ferhad Efendi	Bahriye Yüzbaşılardan.
106. Mustafa Behçet Efendi	Binbaşlıktan Mütেকaid. ²⁹⁴

There were nineteen non-Muslims, around one hundred and fifty Muslim tradesmen, and fifty local imâms among the exiles.

Refi' Cevad (Ulunay) later wrote the story of the opponent hunt in his *Eski İstanbul Kabadayları* as follows:

After Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been assassinated, all the opponents in İstanbul were sent to Sinop. Being a friend of some assassins, Haydar Molla was in exile as well. When İsmet Molla's son saw his uncle arrested, he objected, "I shall not let my uncle go." They told him, "Well, you may come, too, if you wish!" So, all the males in the family went along with him.²⁹⁵

Many authors told the story of the witch hunt pursued upon the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in their books, and some in their novels. Ahmet Hamdi

²⁹⁴ "Te'bîd Olunanlar," *İkdam*, No. 5865, 14 Receb 1331, 6 Haziran 1329, 19 June 1913, Thursday, pp. 1–2; "Les Deportés," *Le Moniteur Oriental*, No. 6598, 19 June 1913, Thursday, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ Refi' Cevad Ulunay. *Eski İstanbul Kabadayları: Sayılı Fırtınalar*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1994), p. 270. İsmet Molla was one of the most famous criminals and trouble makers of old İstanbul.

Tanpınar, for instance, in his novel titled *Saâtleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü*, had written the tale of hundreds, guilty or innocent, but exiled as a result of the witch hunt:

... Though not known when exactly, the amount of hashish Seyit Lütfullah²⁹⁶ smoked that day has obviously been related to the good news. Still, especially at that time when Mahmud Şevket Paşa has just been murdered and while İstanbul was in a political turmoil, he could not have tolerated it. ... For goodness, after the dizzying effect of hashish was over he has been able to speak clearly in the first round of interrogation.... Two days later, Seyit Lütfullah was sent to Sinop in exile for the reason that he was a “junky, who behaves insane but might be dangerous if set free.”²⁹⁷

One of the Sinop exiles and the accused during the “Coup d’état Attempt” trial, Ahmet Bedevi (Kuran) narrates his first impressions after he arrived at the port of Sinop:

When we set foot on the quay we saw a huge crowd.... Due to the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, the Committee Union and Progress government deported everybody from İstanbul and sent in exile to Sinop no matter a threat to the government or not but found to be opposing their politics. Those totaled to five to six hundred. During the absolutist regime of Sultan Hamid, Tripoli, Fizan and Yemen were the cities renowned to be for exiles, and it was accustomed that the ones condemned by the sultan would end up in those places. The Committee of Union and Progress which replaced the Sultan Hamid government would evidently need such a place. Sinop had a perfect dungeon trapped in between a fortress and the sea. Compared with the size and charm of İstanbul, Sinop was quite small and boring town so that all the exiles there had to find new means of entertainment such as hurrying to the harbor on the days when a steamboat arrives. So, this was the reason of the crowds at the quay.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Seyit Lütfullah is a character in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s novels.

²⁹⁷ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. *Saâtleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002), pp. 71–72.

²⁹⁸ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Taribimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 407.

In Sinop, the exiles were allowed to live in their houses, and they could walk around the town as they wished.²⁹⁹ But, twice a day, one in the morning, and one in the evening, they were supposed to be present at the local police station. With the arrival of the political exiles, Sinop almost turned out to be a refugee camp. All classes of people were among them. Some were even isolated from life. All who were collected off the streets of İstanbul were exiled to Sinop by boats. Arab Abdullah, for instance, who was a renowned brigand around Erenköy and Pendik areas during Sultan Abdülhamid II period, or Şeyh of Melamis Terlikçi Salih. Some of them had been spending their days sitting at a coffeehouse which was run by another exile named Ata. Others had befriended with the townspeople. The intellectuals who were among the obligatory guests in Sinop had been gathering to discuss and explore the daily matters. There was one among those, Ferid who seldom went out of his house, but preferred to spend his days with his family. Refik Halid had only spoken to certain men. İsmail Hakkı Paşa had stayed in the house of Dr. Rıza Nur and had only contacted with a few people.³⁰⁰

Dispute of the Assassination at the Assembly

²⁹⁹ The families of the twenty-six exiles consisted of eighty-six members who applied for financial aid from the government were paid 293 kuruş each. In another document, it is written that 100 families with a total of 532 members applied for financial help, and they were given 1129 kuruş. See: BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti, DH. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 2, 1331. 11. 24.

³⁰⁰ Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. *İnkılap Taribimiz ve Jön Türkler*, p. 408.

The first notes we come across with regarding the arguments for the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa are dated 13 July 1914, during the annual budget negotiations of the National Security.³⁰¹ The argument prompted when Sana Deputy Seyit Ahmet Habbani Efendi complained about the difficult conditions the police had been going through and their insufficient salaries. Karesi Deputy Hüseyin Kadri Bey rose to speak and hinting at the Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination, he said, "... The police were informed beforehand about the daring plan which resulted in the death of Mahmud Şevket Paşa; therefore the police officers had enough information. Although such information had been submitted to the government why had the police taken necessary measures and what kind of charges were placed against the officers because they did not perform their duties?" There were only two deputies present at the parliament who could respond to that question directly. One was the Edirne Deputy and Minister of Interior Affairs who assumed leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress, and the other was the former Police Chief and Çorum Deputy Azmi Bey. Talat Bey had risen up in reply to the question posed by Hüseyin Kadri Bey. He said that he was not a government officer at that time, he also pointed out that Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been the most significant statesman born and raised in this country who had deserved to be highly respected. He added:

Indeed the police had been informed prior to the event and the necessary measures had been taken. However, it is not possible to change a man's destiny. Furthermore, the deceased himself was also been informed that an assassination attempt might have been made,

³⁰¹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* Vol. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 138.

yet he did not see the necessity of changing his daily route. We did not believe that it could have happened, either. According to the informants, even I could have been assassinated that day. I left home after I read the *Tanîn*. I did not have any guards with me. I did not think that I might need protection. I believe that upon the assassination it was the policemen who did their jobs. One of the murderers was arrested immediately, which eventually led the arrest of his collaborators. This again led the police to be able to arrest and detain all but two of the murderers who were punished as they deserved.³⁰²

Baghdad Deputy Murad Efendi spoke in reply to Talat Bey and claimed that there had been no policeman at any point on the route of Mahmud Şevket Paşa that day. Seeing Murad Efendi's accusatory approach towards the government, Talat Bey only said, "There were several police officers." But Murad Efendi was not satisfied and he insisted that no policemen had been sent to standby in the area that day. Hereupon, Talat Bey rose up once again explaining that there were police officers all right, but two of them could not perform his duties because they were scared and that those two faced charges against this. The discussions related to assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa were far beyond the budget negotiations. Antep Deputy Hüseyin Fazıl Bey asserted that the real task for the police was to prevent a crime before it was committed. According to him it was not that important to arrest the murderers after Mahmud Şevket Paşa was shot. He finished his speech asking, "If the police was informed, why did the police officers not taken the necessary precautions then?" This time it was the former Police Chief Azmi Bey who rose up to speak:

³⁰² *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, pp. 210-211.

Sir, I was the police chief then. Right, the government was informed about the plot. The details of the plot were all revealed. But, of course there was no information about how many they were; who they were, and so on so forth. It was general information what was acquired by the police and all arrangements were made accordingly. And, the deceased Mahmud Şevket Paşa was informed as well. Information was given to him, to his adjutant officers and also to the minister. Some precautions were taken, and Mahmud Şevket Paşa were warned. It was also considered to change his usual route. Later on, the deceased Mahmud Şevket Paşa left the Ministry of War and came to the Sublime Porte. If a funeral procession did not come along his way, nothing would happen. It was bad luck, destiny. What can we say? The car had to stop and during that time the murderers shot their guns at him. Then one of those murderers was arrested by a policeman. We rewarded him with one years' salary.³⁰³

After Azmi Bey gave the details of the assassination, he pointed out that the police had performed the utmost of its capacity. But, when Karesi Deputy Hüseyin Kadri Bey came up with another theory claiming, "At the time of the murder, a car had stopped there for some time and shot bullet," Azmi reprimanded him sharply. "These are all tales, let me tell you, but I have already told you." Hüseyin Kadri Bey was not satisfied with any of the replies made and accused the government of shelving the Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination:

The guns were fired, yes, but no information was available from anybody or any newspaper saying that there was a policeman in the neighborhood. Afterwards, after his death, the news was spread. Only after that the police was informed and only after that the hunting was initiated.³⁰⁴

³⁰³ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol. II, p. 211.

³⁰⁴ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol. II, p. 213.

After Hüseyin Kadri Bey finished his words, he inquired for the precautions taken by the government. So, Azmi Bey explained that at that time around 1,200–1,300 police officers had been on duty throughout İstanbul, and that it would not have been possible for them to send task units or to set up check points to several locations. When Azmi Bey's speech was over, Aydın Deputy Mehmed Ubeydullah Efendi came up with another theory: "How did they shoot the Archduke Ferdinand?" Halid Süleyman Bey, Divaniye Deputy and the brother of Mahmud Şevket Paşa who was at the Parliament then asked for permission to speak and he said: "It was around 9:30 or 10:00 in the morning, when the deceased left for his office at the grand viziership every day. Since the time he left and the route he took were available and since the government had been denounced about a possible attempt, it could have been possible to prevent it." His words implied negligence of the government officers for the assassination. Azmi Bey asked for permission to speak again. He said, "There were many policemen on patrol, though. Halid Süleyman Bey, however, objected to this and insisted that during and after the assassination the policemen had not stood firm against the murderers. Halid Süleyman Bey also claimed that some assassins were arrested not because of the success the police achieved, but because Topal Tevfik was coincidentally arrested at a building. Azmi Bey denied this accusation, and told Halid Süleyman Bey that he could explain the details to him. But Halid Süleyman still insisted on the negligence of both the government and the police:

You say that he did not change his daily route even though he was informed about a possible plot. At such a critical time, you cannot advise someone who holds a significant office. Of course, he would not agree to make any changes; he would regard that as an insult. Instead of giving such an advice to him, his adjutant officers should have ordered to change the route.³⁰⁵

Azmi Bey stood up to speak again after Halid Süleyman Bey returned to his seat. He said that the adjutant officers of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had also been informed of the situation. But, Halid Süleyman Bey did not change his mind and still continued saying that safety measures taken were insufficient. Azmi Bey, once again assured him that all necessary measures had been in place, although it was not possible to implement them at every corner. Azmi Bey also reminded him that the assassination plot had not been aimed for Mahmud Şevket Paşa in person but had been an overall threat, and that it had been a matter of overall security, therefore overall precautions had been taken.

As the duel between Halid Süleyman Bey and Azmi Bey seemed would never end, Chairman of the Parliament interrupted the two of them and turned to the other deputies asking if they had anything to say. Thereupon, Erzurum Deputy Ohannes Varteks Efendi raised his hand:

We have heard many things about words about Mahmud Şevket Paşa who was a very good Ottoman. And the Police Chief was accused here not being able to prevent it. I do believe such incidents could happen anywhere. Take Abdülhamid for instance, he was so well guarded, you cannot find another person who called for the police and had himself protected. But, still, he too was bombed. So, such things are possible everywhere. Only two weeks ago, the Austrian

³⁰⁵ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, p. 214.

crown prince had been assassinated. They could not prevent it. So he died. You cannot see the assassinations happening. There is no enemy you recognize, you cannot tell where he will come from or what he will do. For this reason, I do not think the Police Chief deserves the accusations.³⁰⁶

Ohannes Varteks Efendi added that he was “one of the persons who respected Mahmud Şevket Paşa the most.” Yet, the police did not deserve to be accused, because “even if the police had one thousand eyes, there are some men who could still cheat the police.” When Ohannes Varteks Efendi finished his words, Halid Süleyman Bey rose up again repeating that it was the negligence of the Police Department, which caused the assassins accomplished their plan. And he set an example by pointing out the fact that Topal Tevfik had opened the car door and fired three or four more shots at Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Halid Süleyman Bey continued as follows:

If the government had taken the necessary precautions, probably after the second of the third shots of fire, would have sent at least two police offices to the crime scene. I have lost my brother, my heart is aching. All the family is mourning. The people present here should hear that the police did not perform its duty. Here, I am telling you this.³⁰⁷

Following Halid Süleyman Bey, Hüseyin Kadri Bey stood to speak saying that after Mahmud Şevket Paşa was assassinated the police could not efficiently perform his duty, and more, although the police forces were informed about the assassination

³⁰⁶ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, p. 214.

³⁰⁷ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, p. 215.

plot and the assassins, they could prevent it. Then, Azmi Bey asked for permission to talk once again to tell the following in the view of the accusations of Hüseyin Kadri Bey:

It is said that the police was informed by a phone call made from the Ministry of War. Well, no, that is not right. Immediately after it happened, the Police Department was informed and the Police Chief went out to perform his duty. The source of the information was not the Ministry of War.³⁰⁸

After Azmi Bey had finished his words, Yozgat deputy Şakir Bey put more serious charges forward, claiming that a few hours prior to the assassination, one of the assassins had come to the police station to inform the plot. Azmi Bey's reply to Şakir Bey was, "These are nothing but tales, all made up."³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, p. 215.

³⁰⁹ *Meclis-i Mebûsan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1330, D III, Vol.. II, p. 216.

Conclusion

A General Look to the Life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa

Mahmud Şevket Paşa managed to witness the German working ethic closely and turned this working discipline into one of the basic foundations of his life. He worked until late hours in the Ministry of War and sometimes stayed in the office and slept in the wooden bed in his office by not leaving for his residence in Üsküdar. Particularly during his services as the Grand Vizier and the Minister of War, he came home once a week and returned immediately to his work after taking his shower.¹ The Balkan Wars correspondent from *The Daily Chronicle*, M.H. Donuhue, who was able to know Mahmud Şevket Paşa closely, makes the following assessment on the latter's work ethic:

In the time of the Italian War, Mahmud Şevket Paşa spent his entire time in his office with his uniforms on. He slept on the wooden bed next to his working table... I sometimes found Mahmud Şevket Paşa at his table working when I visited him in person at his post as the Ministry of the War. Though being a simple and sympathetic man, he was one of the ardent supporters of Prussian military tradition and an advocate of Von der Goltz.²

¹ *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1988), p. 77.

² "Grand Vizier Slain by Assassins," *The New York Times*, No. 20228, 12 June 1913, p. 3

Sometimes, feeling exhausted by busy work conducted between the Ministry of War and Babıâli, Mahmud Şevket Paşa felt compelled to take a nap in Babıâli even if it could last merely an hour.³

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had the habit of reading all the papers published in Ottoman as soon as he woke up and started the day. He read the all news covered about him with a great attention. Once, he got furious with the news about himself published in *Meydân* newspaper, and ordered the Law Office (*Hukuk Müşavirliği*) to launch a legal process against the newspaper in question. Mahmud Şevket Paşa read the whole articles published about him and then read them all once more very carefully. His favorite columnists in the Ottoman-language press were Hüseyin Cahid Bey and his fellow countryman Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı Bey, writers of the *Tanîn* paper. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, who was known to follow and read the essays and articles in *Tanîn*, criticized some of those writings for being extreme and disproportional.⁴

Diran Kelekyan Efendi, one of the columnists in *Sabâh* paper, visited Mahmud Şevket Paşa every night when he stayed in the Ministry of War, and they discussed on the problems of the Ottoman state. But, Mahmud Şevket Paşa got seriously discontented with the change of attitude by *Sabâh* paper towards his personality just after his resignation from the Ministry of War. About Mahmud Şevket Paşa, several critical writings and caricatures were published in various newspapers and caricature periodicals. Mahmud Şevket Paşa showed his brothers and a leading state official, Emin

³ *Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 103.

⁴ "Büyük Kumândan: Hayât ve Tabiatı," *Tanîn*, No. 1637, 15 Receb 1331, 7 Haziran 1329, 20 June 1913, Friday, p. 3.

Ali Bey those caricatures published and satirizing Mahmud Şevket Paşa in the magazine, *Cem*, counseled his mates' opinions of the publications in question, and then later stated that "reading papers is like taking bitter pills."⁵ From the foreign press, he regularly read the *Neue Freie Presse*.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa could not have the time to read the newly published books owing to his activities spent on the country's several problems. However, he could find some time following his resignation from the Ministry of War. Mahmud Şevket Paşa regularly read from the work of Mehmed Akif Bey, *Safahat*.⁶

In spite of his intensive working tempo, Mahmud Şevket Paşa spent his daily life in a great order. He slept in certain hours, woke up at certain time and never disrupted his sleep and meal times. He ate very lightly, drank tea and never drank alcohol, coffee and smoked heavily. Even in official receptions, he sipped his mouth with a little drop of champagne, tried hard not to drink coffee by making his coffee get colder and not to smoke during his conversations with those attending receptions. Mahmud Şevket Paşa liked to eat beef, vegetable courses, boiled meat stuff and drink lots of milk.⁷

Mahmud Şevket Paşa had the habit of taking a nap for one hour afternoons as well. In his free time, he enjoyed riding on horses and taking walks. Even if he was appointed to the post of the Grand Vizier, he never hesitated to go on walking and irrespective of the time, he got the habit of walking from the Üsküdar maritime location to his kiosk at the Şemsi Paşa quarter. Especially, he liked so much to ride on a

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 3.

horse across the Çamlıca Hill. In his work *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, Sadri Sema, illustrates a horse journey made by Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the following:

Tough sounds of horse shoes were heard and a cavalry was seen from the steep and of the hill. A high quality animal and on it a high ranked soldier. The closer he approached; the sounds of the sword were mixed with those of the horse shoes. Those days, I saw this scene several times. He came up to the hill in the evenings and walked around too. He then stopped around the tent and started watching the skies. He had a tough, but cure face. Two eyes as sharp as bayonets, but they glitter with devotion. A dense beard, and an equally dense moustache ornamented the face. A fez was leaning on one side of his eyebrow, and a large cloak on his back all the time. He sometimes asked for coffee from the old man in the café house and drank the cup. He leaned one of his hands to his back and watched the sunset deeply. He turned to become a sculpture erected on the grass of Çamlıca comprised of diverse plants and flowers. I witnessed the might even in this great soldier's shade falling around and trembling on the grass. This man was a monument of heroism, and was committed to Çamlıca by heart. He looked at İstanbul and ruby-like sun waning amidst red fires and at the palaces of the crowned murderer in the heart of greenness. Then, he cuddled his horse, which started to jerk and hoarse, spurred the horse and left. Who was this man? Mahmud Şevket Paşa.⁸

Mahmud Şevket Paşa felt a deep feeling of love for his family members, especially for his beloved brother Captain Halid Bey. He had no children of his own, and this gave him deep sorrow. Whenever he saw a child playing on the street, he would go and start talking to the child.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa like working hard, devoted much of his time to working, and this remained unchanged even in the events of health disorders. Six weeks before he resigned from his post of Ministry of War, he fell off his horse on one of his rides on the Çamlıca Hill. His left leg fell under the horse, while the right one was twisted as

⁸ Sadri Sema. *Eski İstanbul Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2002), p. 473.

it was on the stirrup. The doctors cured him for three weeks owing to this accident, but Mahmud Şevket Paşa chose to continue to his work rather than return home and take some rest there.⁹

Though being a consistent opponent of the army's involvement in politics, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was an Ottoman Paşa who had always been deeply involved in politics. Monsieur Stephan Lozan, a journalist in *Le Matin*, described the opinions of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on politics and the Parliament blended with pragmatism and condemnation as the following:

Mahmud Şevket Paşa tore down into pieces the letter of invitation from the cabinet and stated the following: 'In the Parliament, subjects and things -more than enough and not really worthy- are discussed.' He did not even concede to step into the Parliament. 'There is still time to come and demand from the members of the Parliament.'¹⁰

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's insulting attitudes towards the politicians and the Parliament did not fall short of notice amongst the other journalists who kept an eye on the daily life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. M. H. Donuhue, a correspondent of *The Daily Chronicle*, expresses this narcissist attitude behind Mahmud Şevket Paşa's attitudes to the readers:

⁹ "Büyük Kumandan Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri'nin Hayât-ı Faâliyeti," *Tanîn*, No. 1635, 13 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 18 June 1913, Wednesday, p. 3.

¹⁰ "Avrupa Matbûatının Teessürü: Fransa Matbûatı," *İkdâm*, No. 5863, 12 Receb 1331, 4 Haziran 1329, 17 June 1913, Tuesday, p. 2.

Everyday, he was at least ten times before the camera and gave shots to the both amateur and professional in his physical appearance characterized by a head pulled backwards, his one hand on his waist the other one being on his sword and dark Arabic eyes glittering like a diamond.¹¹

Fierce looks and the ‘frightening face’ of Mahmud Şevket Paşa horrified those around him. The chief secretary to the Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, Ali Fuad Türkgeldi describes the Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s harsh looks spreading fear and the influence of this harsh face on the Sultan as the following:

His excellence was frightened by Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s horrible face and tough footsteps shattering the ground with his spurred boots. The sultan sometimes told the chief secretary that ‘this man (Mahmud Şevket Paşa) can not manage the the office of the Grand Vizier and the Ministry of War concurrently. I wish he would stay in the latter and leave the former.’ However, the Sultan showed appreciation and complement to Mahmud Şevket Paşa.¹²

Mahmud Şevket Paşa translated into Turkish many books and articles on military and technical fields published abroad in German and French as he had a good command of the languages in question. The books translated and covering military and technical subjects were the following: *Logaritma Cedavili Risalesi*,¹³ *Usûl-ı Hendese*,¹⁴ *Fenn-i Eslîha*,¹⁵ *Zâbitâna Mahsûs Muhtıra*,¹⁶ *Küçük Çaplı Mavzer Tüfengleri Risâlesi*,¹⁷ *Küçük Çaplı*

¹¹ “Grand Vizier Slain by Assassins,” *The New York Times*, No. 20228, 12 June 1913, p. 3.

¹² Ali Fuad Türkgeldi. *Görüp İhtiklerim*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1951), p. 102.

¹³ Jean Dupuis. *Logaritma Cedâvili Risâlesi*, çev: Mahmud Şevket Paşa, (İstanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1890).

¹⁴ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Usûl-i Hendese*, (İstanbul: Karabet ve Kasbar Matbaası, 1885).

¹⁵ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Fenn-i Eslîha*, (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Fünûn-ı Harbiye-i Hazret-i Şâhâne Matbaası, 1885).

Mavzer Tüfeklerine Mabsûs Atlas,¹⁸ *Mükerrer Ateşli Tüfekler*,¹⁹ *Asâkir-i Şâhâne'nin Piyâde Sınıfına Mabsûs 87 Modeli Mükerrer Ateşli Mavzer Tüfengi*,²⁰ *Devlet-i Osmâniye'nin Bidâyet-i Te'sisinden Şimdiye Kadar Osmanlı Teşkilât-ı ve Kıyâfet-i Askeriyesi*,²¹ *Hendese-i Mücesseme*,²² and *9,5 mm'lik Mavzer Tüfengleri Risâlesi*.²³

Mahmud Şevket Paşa translated not only technical and military works but also those literary ones which became popularized in the nineteenth century İstanbul and which belonged to the French Romanticism such as Abbe Prevost' tale published in 1880 and told the story of a capricious prostitute, Manon Lescaut,²⁴ and his lover.²⁵ Furthermore, there is the novel of Alphonse Karr published in 1897 translated into Turkish with the title *Ihlamurlar Altında*.²⁶ Sue Eugene's novel, translated into Turkish as *Muhabbet Çocukları*²⁷ and Alexandre Dumas' work, *La Dam O Kamehya*,²⁸ published in 1901 are amongst the literary works Mahmud Şevket Paşa translated.

¹⁶ Comlar Freiherr Von Der Goltz. *Zâbitâna Mabsûs Muhtıra*, çev: Mahmud Şevket Paşa, (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Fünûn-ı Harbiye-i Hazret-i Şâhâne Matbaası, 1889).

¹⁷ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Küçük Çaplı Mavzer Tüfengleri Risâlesi*, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1894).

¹⁸ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Küçük Çaplı Mavzer Tüfeklerine Mabsûs Atlas*, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1893).

¹⁹ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Mükerrer Ateşli Tüfekler*, (İstanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1891).

²⁰ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Asâkir-i Şâhâne'nin Piyâde Sınıfına Mabsûs 87 Modeli Mükerrer Ateşli Mavzer Tüfengi*, (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Fünûn-ı Harbiye-i Şâhâne Matbaası, 1887).

²¹ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Devlet-i Osmâniye'nin Bidâyet-i Te'sisinden Şimdiye Kadar Osmanlı Teşkilât-ı ve Kıyâfet-i Askeriyesi*, (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Harbiye Matbaası, 1901–1902).

²² Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *Hendese-i Mücesseme*, (y.y.: t.y.)

²³ Mahmud Şevket Paşa. *9.5 mm'lik Mavzer Tüfengleri Risâlesi*, (y.y.:t.y.)

²⁴ Alphons Karr. *Ihlamurlar Altında*, çev: Mahmud Şevket Paşa, (İstanbul: Kasbar Matbaası, 1893).

²⁵ Sue Eugène. *Muhabbet Çocukları*, çev: Mahmud Şevket Paşa, (İstanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1884).

A report dispatched to the German Emperor, Kaizer Wilhelm, by the German ambassador Wangenheim in 26 April 1913 contains interesting assessments on Mahmud Şevket Paşa's political opinions. For Wangenheim, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was a man of mathematics and technique, and did not deal with analysis and synthesis like did Said Paşa. The primal political rule of Mahmud Şevket Paşa was to facilitate the Ottoman Empire's ability to stand on his own feet without reliance on any Great Powers. According to Mahmud Şevket Paşa, this 'active neutrality' would enable the Ottoman Empire to recover herself from the shrinking and reorganize her magnificence. However, such a policy was in no way acceptable to the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm. No matter what the cost may be, Mahmud Şevket Paşa had to define his side. Such an attitude contradicts with the claims of some writers such as Hasan Amca who accused the Mahmud Şevket Paşa of being a collaborator with the Germans. Mahmud Şevket Paşa pursued such a pragmatic politics that he would refrain from supporting a certain state explicitly and supported the policy of strengthening the Ottoman Empire through certain concessions to both Germany and the Great Britain. The third assessment made by Wangenheim is compatible with the observations of Stephan Lozan on Mahmud Şevket Paşa who had a negative opinion of politicians and political institutions. The German ambassador thinks too that Mahmud Şevket Paşa does not like assemblies at all. The other point that Mahmud Şevket Paşa often referred to was the inefficiency of the Ottoman bureaucracy, be it military or civilian. The greatest foundation of military and civilian reforms in the country would be Germany.

²⁸ Cihangir Gündoğdu. "Mahmud Şevket Paşa: 1856–1913," *Tophumsal Tarih*, Vol. XX, No. 130, October 2004, pp. x-y.

However, the modernization of the Ottoman Navy -as usual- would be in the hands of the Great Britain.²⁹

Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Committee of Union and Progress started waiting for an imminent military takeover likely to take place very soon in the aftermath of the Babiâli Coup. Mahmud Şevket Paşa visited Enver Bey in St. Stefanos on 2 March 1913 to take essential measures against a possible military takeover, and expressed his intention to take Enver Bey and his division to İstanbul.³⁰ Stressed much by the probability of a military takeover initiative night and day, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not even contemplate thinking that such an initiative consequently could cost him his own life. In his memoirs, Ali Haydar Mithat Bey describes that stressful environment poisoning Mahmud Şevket Paşa's peaceful thinking:

While I was with Mahmud Şevket Paşa, his aide came and told him that the İstanbul Guard Cemal Paşa wanted to see Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Hearing this, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's face changed abruptly, he became anxious, he hit the pen on his hand to the surface of the table and said the following: "Let them leave me alone anymore! I did not ask to be appointed as the Grand Vizier; they were themselves to insist on me accept the post. They told me that the state was in danger and that I had to accept this offer. I, as a response, accepted the offer. Very often Cemal Bey is dropping in and disturbing me with threats such as assassination information, bombs set on my doorstep! I am sick of these! May them withdraw me from the post of the Grand Vizier and offer it to whoever wished. May they really set me free?"³¹

²⁹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), pp. 145–146.

³⁰ *Sadrazam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, p. 34.

³¹ Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hâtıralarım: 1872–1946*, (İstanbul: Akçit Yayın, 1946), pp. 247–248.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's psychological state started to deteriorate notably in the days close to the assassination event. Ziya Şakir on his long meeting with Emine Dilşad Hanım, the wife of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, revealed the state of psychology in Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the following:

One week before the event took place, the state of Mahmud Şevket Paşa almost changed. Though looking quite tough at his professional life, he was quite cheerful and happy. However, the feeling of sadness replaced this cheerfulness suddenly. In most of nights, he stayed in the Babiâli. When he returned home, he looked quite sad. However, when compared to his physical appearance, he did not reveal anything verbally about things passing deep inside his heart. He tried very hard to look happy. In the evenings he stayed at home, I am very convinced that, his sleep had become much lighter. He heard even the lightest sound, the sound of the door opening in the ground floor and woke up in trembles. I got terrorized by this state of him and wanted to catch some truth from his words, but failed to figure out anything relating the threat waiting for him.³²

As revealed by the expressions made by Ali Haydar Mithat Bey and Emine Dilşad Hanım, the wife of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, he seems to have been much consumed by political stress and the informs that he could be assassinated soon. It is highly possible that Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not take the assassination inform seriously under the belief that this warning were of causal nature like other various informs.

Who Shot Mahmud Şevket Paşa?

³² Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, pp. 216–217.

The İstanbul Guardian, Cemal Bey, though being well-informed by the assassination set against Mahmud Şevket Paşa, could not avoid the assassination plan bear its fruits owing to insufficiency of the measures and a number of mistakes made. Cemal Bey had already learned from the intelligence reports of inspection officers and from the informs that a rain of assassinations would be staged by Çerkes Kâzım and Muhib Bey against many people such as Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Talat Bey, Azmi Bey, Nesim Ruso Efendi, Emanuel Karasu Efendi and even himself. Surveillance officers assigned by the İstanbul Guardianship informed Cemal Bey about the activities of the opposition in the city and prepared detail reports of who met with whom and where. However, Cemal Bey wanted to catch the suspects on the spot together with the collaboratist circles in the city rather than take the initiative for catching the assassins immediately. Timing mistake of Cemal Bey lasted in the later stages of the assassination preparations and in the day, Wednesday, when the Guardianship of İstanbul was prepared to move for catching the assassins, Mahmud Şevket and his aide, İbrahim Bey, were murdered inside a car in the Beyazid Square in front of everyone in daylight.³³

Another striking neglect in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa is that no security measures were taken on the day of assassination in the road used by Mahmud Şevket Paşa to go to the Sublime Porte regularly. The morning of the assassination day, no security measures were taken against a probable assassination attempt. Consequently, the assassins could freely walk around the avenue and make

³³ "Suikast Tertîbâtının Mukâddemâtı," *Tanîn* No. 1640, 18 Receb 1331, 10 Haziran 1329, 22 June 1913, Monday, p. 2.

necessary preparations. Had the officials been informed about the possible assassination attempt and security measures taken, the assassins could not have done their preparations such easily and probably could have been seized immediately.

In the morning of assassination to be held, Cemal Bey went to the Ministry of War to warn Mahmud Şevket Paşa against a possible assassination. However, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not really mind this warning. As a response to this indifference, Cemal Bey warned the aides of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, but did not contemplate thinking of changing the route or did not thought of providing Mahmud Şevket Paşa with an armored and helmeted vehicle. Thus, these insufficiencies enabled the assassins to apply their plans with ease.

Another security deficit relating Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination is that the police was rather late in intervening the assassination and the criminals' subsequent disappearance events. As understood by the scheme³⁴ prepared by the Police Department in the aftermath of the assassination, there was no intervention to the assassination on the part of policemen though the police spot was quite near the crime zone. The assassins simply escaped from the event zone without any difficulty.

Though all suspects of Mahmud Şevket Paşa were trialed and many of them executed, the fog of mystery covering this assassination still remains. For some, behind the event lie the Great Britain which was quite discontent with pro-German policies pursued by Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Britain oriented secret service agents. For some others, the responsibility should go to Germany which was quite allergic to the

³⁴ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, D.H. SYS, Dosya No. 119, Sıra No. 1-6, 1331.10.20.

policy of “active neutrality” advocated by Mahmud Şevket Paşa and which also wanted to open up more spaces for pro-German military staff. The third and last thesis claimed in relation to Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination is that he became a victim of clash between the Committee of Union and Progress and policies of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Though having been aware of the assassination in question, the Committee of Union and Progress chose to remain silent and passive towards the involvements of the assassins as it had seen Mahmud Şevket Paşa as a barrier before its policies.

For those who claim to see Great Britain and her intelligence service behind the assassination, the British Government was concerned about tough peace negotiations and supervised the opposition in İstanbul to rid of Mahmud Şevket Paşa.³⁵ The leading advocates of this theory, Enver Ziya Karal, Ziya Şakir, Yılmaz Öztuna, Mustafa Müftüoğlu and Ahmet Emin Yalman, aborted attempt of Prince Sabahaddin, Coup d'état Attempt (*Taklîb-i Hûkûmet*), would lead the British intelligence service to rid of pro-German Mahmud Şevket Paşa and replace him with pro-British Kâmil Paşa or Sabahaddin Bey. Thus, the Great Britain would achieve two ends at the same time. On one hand, she would rid of pro-German Mahmud Şevket Paşa and on the other hand, she would take the revenge of the Babiâli coup when the Committee of Union and Progress overthrew of the pro-British Kâmil Paşa. According to this claim, this

³⁵ Enver Ziya Karal. *Osmanlı Tarihi* Cilt. IX: *İkinci Meşrutîyet Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), pp. 205–206; Ziya Şakir. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa*, (İstanbul: Muallim Fuad Gücüyener Kitap Deposu, 1943); Yılmaz Öztuna ve Ayvaz Gökdemir. *Türkiye’de Askerî Müdahaleler*, (İstanbul: Tercüman Tesisleri, 1987), pp. 32–33; Mustafa Müftüoğlu. *Yakın Tarihimizde Siyasi Cinayetler*, (İstanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 1975), p. 269; Ahmed Emin Yalman. *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim*, (İstanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1970), pp. 182–815.

operation was held by the British Intelligence Service's representatives in Turkey, Fitz Maurice and the military attaché Major Tyrell.

One of the greatest supporting bases of those claiming to see the British link behind the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa comes from the memories of Cemal Paşa, published later.³⁶ In his memoirs, he openly expresses his opinion that “the plot was this time set by the leading translation officer, Fitz Maurice, and the military attaché, Major Tyrell apparently.”³⁷ Evidence strengthening this thesis is that the former Grand Vizier Kâmil Paşa came to İstanbul some days before the event of the assassination and that Fitz Maurice made a visit to Kâmil Paşa immediately. In the court statements made by the convicted in relation to the assassination, the assessment of “Kâzım Efendi's visit to İstanbul with an embassy translator” gives birth to the opinion that under the assassination lied Great Britain.³⁸

The circles claiming to see the British link under the assassination tend to see the assassination in question as a consequence of German - British clash over the territories of the Ottoman Empire. The former Grand Vizier, Kâmil Paşa, with his visit to İstanbul and his close association with the British Embassy, could be regarded as an important clue behind the Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination. However, all these developments on their own do not suffice to prove the British factor behind the assassination automatically. The months ago before the assassination event, the Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, during a meeting with Mahmud Şevket Paşa told him that he got

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁷ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1977), p. 31.

³⁸ BOA, Dâhiliye Nezâreti, DH. KMS, Dosya No. 63, Gömlek No. 63, 1332.B.15.

news from Kâmil Paşa who told the Sultan that “Kâmil Paşa and Mahmud Şevket Paşa in cooperation could rescue this country.” According to this proposal made by Kâmil Paşa, Kâmil Paşa would become the Grand Vizier, and then Mahmud Şevket Paşa as the Minister of War. Bitterly dissatisfied with his forceful removal from the power through the Babiâli Coup event, Kâmil Paşa sought for ways to regain his lost seat. To this proposal, Mahmud Şevket Paşa reacted harshly and notified to the Sultan Mehmed Reşad V that he rejected this offer by his words “The greatest problem for the country is Kâmil Paşa!”³⁹ Though burning with desire of power, he never applied to extreme methods to gain power. The British Ambassador Lowther was much uneasy with forceful isolation of Kâmil Paşa from İstanbul, but had to adopt a cautious attitude to this situation. Because, any explicit British support to Kâmil Paşa would translate into collapse of the balance in “active neutrality” policy pursued by Mahmud Şevket Paşa.

Indeed, the thesis of seeing Great Britain behind Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination should not all be discarded. Prince Sabahaddin’s protection by Fitz Maurice and Major Tyrell soon after the aborted takeover attempt and some observations of the German Ambassador Wangenheim imply that we should handle this British related thesis with caution and sensitivity. According to the observations made by Wangenheim, the British Government was skeptical of Germany’s activities in the territories of the Ottoman Empire and tried to undermine these activities as much as possible. According to Wangenheim, the best example to this attempt was Kâmil Paşa’s attempt to return to power replacing Mahmud Şevket Paşa. The ambassador,

³⁹ *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa’nın Günlüğü*, pp. 97–98.

albeit indirectly, pointed to the British existence behind the assassination but tended to exclude the British Government from the event itself and instead developed the idea of an assassination project confined to the British Embassy Translator office head Fitz Maurice. Wangenheim believes that the British Ambassador is too weak to isolate himself from the influence of Fitz Maurice.⁴⁰ From the telegrams sent by the British Ambassador to the British Foreign Ministry in the aftermaths of Mahmud Şevket Paşa Assassination, the ambassador's poor command of the assassination case is revealed. For instance, in a telegram sent on 13 June 1913 to the British Foreign Ministry, the ambassador presents the assassination as a work of a Circassian gang which sought to revenge from Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In another telegram sent in the same day, the ambassador wrote that he did not know exactly whether the assassination is an enterprise to get the revenge of Nâzım Paşa or an organized crime by the opposition. It seems from the telegrams sent to the British Foreign Ministry in the following days that Lowther failed to grasp the motives and actors behind the assassination.⁴¹

Poor level of intelligence in the British ambassador Lowther weakens the thesis that the assassination was staged greatly by the Great Britain. Had this widely believed and defended thesis been all correct, the names and dynamics behind the assassination would have been clearly stated in the telegrams sent to London. In this respect, there is only one possibility left: As claimed by German Ambassador Wangenheim, that this assassination was staged and supervised by Fitz Maurice. However, there is at hand no

⁴⁰ Glen W. Swanson. *Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Defense of the Ottoman Empire: A Study of War and Revolution During the Young Turk Period*, p. 290.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 296.

other evidence other than those statements made by Wangenheim and Cemal Bey. Indeed, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's 'active neutrality' policy served to the Great Britain too. From the British dimension, the death of Mahmud Şevket Paşa would mean the policy change and the emergence of new uncertainty. When looked at events after the assassination, it is seen that the greatest loser in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been the Great Britain presumably.

The other event eroding the Great Britain's image in the Ottoman public was the use of a British subject's, Madam Karavana's, residence by Çerkes Kâzım, Lieutenant Mehmed Ali and Bahriyeli Şevki and some other assassins both before and after the assassination. However, there is no subtle evidence denoting to the relationship between the British Embassy and the assassins too. On the other hand, the role played by Prince Sabahaddin in both the coup d'état attempt and the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa strengthen the suspicion that Great Britain may have played role in these events. About the role that Prince Sabahaddin played in the Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination, there is no much document except for the publication from the Court Martial and a number of small coverage of media. With the failing coup d'état attempt, Prince Sabahaddin initiated a new search for ridding of the Unionist Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet and contacted to Çerkes Kâzım group through his personal secretary, Kemal Midhad Bey. The task of preparing a declaration to be distributed to the embassies of the Great Powers in İstanbul just after the overthrow of Mahmud Şevket Paşa government was given to Kemal Midhad Bey. Except for this, the name of Prince Sabahaddin as well as Kâmil Paşa was pronounced as candidates who would

replace Mahmud Şevket Paşa soon after the overthrow of the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet. However, Prince Sabahaddin rejected all these claims in a monthly periodical, *Meşrûtiyet*, in a letter sent to the periodical for publication and defended himself as the following:

The cabinet of the Committee of Union and Progress has charged me with being one of plotters in the assassination which cost the life of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his aide and trialed me to the execution. Indeed, I was not involved in the assassination in question and suggested many opponents of the committee to become more respectful to the lives of their enemies. I also suggested them not to apply to political murders, typical of the Unionists. Though the government was perfectly aware of this situation, it resorted to the method of ridding of the all opponents ultimately.⁴²

There has been a mention of the opinion that the greatest loser after the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa had been the Great Britain. However, there must be winners of this assassination too. Mass trials and exiles initiated in the aftermath of the assassination demonstrate that the real winners of this assassination were not the anti-Unionist opponents. Following the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, great majority of those involved in the assassination were either sentenced to death penalty immediately or were forced to flee abroad.

Seemingly, the greatest winner of the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa is the Committee of Union and Progress. As a consequence of the assassination, the Committee managed to eradicate the opposition, the target of the unionist attack since

⁴² Nezahet Nurettin Ege. *Prens Sabahaddin: Hayatı ve İlmi Müdafaaları*, (İstanbul: Güneş Neşriyatı, 1977), p. 289.

the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period in the late Ottoman rule and could turn the country to thorn free rose garden. The second constitutional period is divided into two, following the assassination event: “Pluralist” and “multi-party based constitutional” era was closed after the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, and was replaced by the Committee of Union and Progress leadership’s absolutist single party rule.⁴³ In this new era starting with the assassination, the Committee of Union and Progress concentrated the power in itself and the members of the Committee who had been overshadowed by elderly Ottoman Paşas’ for a long period of time started pushing themselves to the publicity more.

The relationship based on compulsory coexistence of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Committee of Union and Progress started with the promulgation of the Second Constitutional period and ended with the Mahmud Şevket Paşa Assassination on 11 June 1913. This mutual process based on affection and hatred underwent many ups and downs. Mahmud Şevket Paşa closely watched the activities of the Committee of Union and Progress during the process of the promulgation of the Second Constitutional period, but refrained from obstructing the their activities. This attitude adopted by Mahmud Şevket Paşa was appreciated by the Committee and enabled Mahmud Şevket Paşa to climb up the ladders of power rapidly.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s turning point in his military and political career became his reach to İstanbul as the leading officer of the Action Army which aimed suppressing the 31 March Uprising. Commanding the Action Army, he started accumulating more

⁴³ Tanık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler* Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, pp. 140–141

political prestige and reputation. Trying to exclude the army from political sphere on one hand, Mahmud Şevket Paşa directly entered into political activities and introduced a rather suppressive order just after the suppression of the 31 March Uprising. The power passed to the hands of Mahmud Şevket Paşa as a result of the Unionist debacle in the 31 March Uprising. Indeed, after the promulgation of the Second Constitutional period, the Committee of Union and Progress endorsed supervisory method of administration characterized by employment of the Ottoman Paşa's close to the Committee. This model served indeed to the ends of the Committee as well. Bringing an elder and widely respected brother to the circles of young and ambitious officers, the Committee both aimed to counteract against the competition amongst the officers subordinated to the Committee and to increase the Unionists' respect in the eyes of the public.⁴⁴ As Mahmud Şevket Paşa was closely allied with the committee, he became a source of sympathy amongst the Unionists, but the 31 March Uprising meant revisions of thoughts about Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his future moves. Then, started the times of obstructing the rise of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Talat Bey was the first actor to employ this obstructive strategy by offering Mahmud Şevket Paşa to the post of Grand Vizier untimely. Understanding the fact that behind this offer lay the Committee of Union and Progress which sought to check and balance Mahmud Şevket Paşa, however, he rejected this offer. After the 31 March Uprising, the Committee of Union and Progress lost the power over the army to Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Under these circumstances emerged a dual power model.

⁴⁴ Sina Akşin. *Jön Türkler ve İttihat Terakki*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1998), p. 200.

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's personality and extraordinary powers enabling him to push the Committee of Union and Progress to the inferior position, started to breed tension amongst some members of the committee. For example, Hüseyin Cahid Bey, one of the leading personalities of the committee, likened the Unionist attitude towards Mahmud Şevket Paşa to 'the cat pouring milk' in one of his comments.⁴⁵

There was only one method of resolving the discontent emerging in the circles of the Committee of the Union and Progress: Bringing Mahmud Şevket Paşa as part of the government and check him. This "military monster" created by the Committee of the Union and Progress turned to become a threat towards those who opened the way to the emergence of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Many ways were introduced to take Mahmud Şevket Paşa under control and even *Tanîn* paper prepared a question of "who should be assigned to the cabinet."⁴⁶ The result of this survey, though being a matter of question, revealed that majority of respondents wished to see Mahmud Şevket Paşa in the post Ministry of War. It is not clear to what extend the result of this survey impacted upon Mahmud Şevket Paşa but the Committee of Union and Progress seemed to have reached to its wish by Mahmud Şevket Paşa's decision to accept this ministry post in Hakkı Paşa cabinet. After a while, the Committee would soon realize that Mahmud Şevket Paşa developed a power center himself and this power would grow each day more. The greatest discussion between the army and civilian power was experienced during the military budget sessions. Mahmud Şevket Paşa increased the

⁴⁵ Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2000), p. 179.

⁴⁶ Kemal Yakut, *Mahmud Şevket Paşa ve Dönemi*, (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, 1998), p. 139

military budget with the excuse of “national security” and succeeded in this argument too.⁴⁷

The Committee’s first attempt to oust Mahmud Şevket Paşa from power coincided with the post-Tripoli war period. When Mahmud Şevket Paşa almost issued an invitation to the Italian occupation through his military designs in Tripoli, the opposition immediately reacted to Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Hakkı Paşa cabinet was toppled in 29 September 1911 as a consequence of fierce criticism raised by the opposition and replaced by Said Paşa. Mahmud Şevket Paşa retained his post in the newly-founded Said Paşa cabinet too. The opposition’s ability to have the upper hand in both civilian and military factors disturbed the Committee of Union and Progress significantly. Mahmud Şevket Paşa consumed his credits in the eyes of the committee rapidly owing to these developments. The campaign pursued against Mahmud Şevket Paşa slowly and secretly in the circles of the Union turned to become an open criticism and protest due to the military debacle in Tripoli and the rebellions in Macedonia. The Unionists did not have confidence against Mahmud Şevket Paşa any longer. The secret meetings were launched to decide on whom to appoint to the Ministry of War and who could pursue policies compatible with the unionist politics. In order to remove Mahmud Şevket Paşa from power, the Committee first lent support to ‘the vote of confidence’ and passively observed the opposition’s aggressiveness in eroding the image of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Talat Bey, aware of the fact that Mahmud Şevket Paşa would never be discouraged by such an enterprise, involved himself in the second

⁴⁷ Feroz Ahmad. *İttihat ve Terakki: 1908–1914*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1995), p. 97.

attempt, the policy of targeting against the supplies chief İsmail Hakkı Paşa who was charged with permitting corruption in the army. The instrument of such a targeting would be to propose 'vote of confidence' and to force Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resignation. Mahmud Şevket Paşa resigned from the post of Ministry of War and disguised the Committee's oppositional role in his resignation petition.

Forceful resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa from the post of the Ministry of War would lead Mahmud Şevket Paşa to question his involvement in the committee and adopt a more cautionary approach in his relations to the Unionists. Mahmud Şevket Paşa would, from that date on, never forgive Talat Bey who played major role in the former's resignation. Indeed, the Committee of the Union and Progress aimed at softening the reaction of the opposition in its forcing Mahmud Şevket Paşa to resign but was at the same time deprived of the power at its hands. Said Paşa had to resign from his post of Grand Viziership as he could not find a new candidate to the post of Ministry of War emptied after the resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. From that date on, the Committee would experience hard struggles in its opposition phase during the event until the Babiâli coup, especially in the government of Kâmil Paşa, many of its branches and members would be made dysfunctional.

The Committee of Union and Progress decided to take the initiative as a result of Kâmil Paşa cabinet's loss of public prestige to an accelerating extend, tried getting rid of the government in question through a peaceful method first. This first remedy of the committee would be to found a new cabinet which would offer Mahmud Şevket Paşa the post of Ministry of War. However, when this peaceful solution plan failed, the

Committee of the Union and Progress felt compelled to stage the famous military takeover known as Babiâli Coup in 23 January 1913. The Committee of the Union and Progress once again invited Mahmud Şevket Paşa to serve to the new government as the Grand Vizier though just a while ago it was the same committee which staged conspiracies against Mahmud Şevket Paşa. Being more distancing to the committee this time, the Mahmud Şevket Paşa chose not to accept this offer immediately. Ali Haydar Mithat Bey who was a member of the team trying to convince Mahmud Şevket Paşa to found the cabinet after the Babiâli Coup, figured out that Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not approve of the overthrow event and that he had no hopes to regain Edirne.⁴⁸ However, Enver Bey would break the ice in Mahmud Şevket Paşa and convince him to found the new cabinet through intermediary personalities sent from the committee.

After the aborted Babiâli Coup, escalated crisis between Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Talat Bey surfaced again. When the name of Talat Bey was mentioned for the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Mahmud Şevket Paşa opposed to this appointment. It was apparent that Mahmud Şevket Paşa could not close the account of the past and would show his intent not to do so in the future either. The new cabinet founded under the leadership of Mahmud Şevket Paşa was welcomed by the public under the belief that the new government could actively pursue a policy to return Edirne to the Ottoman territory. However, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not share the same interest of regaining Edirne at once realistically. Since the first day that the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet was founded, the opposition had always been a source of threat for the government. Aware if this

⁴⁸ Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hâtıralarım: 1872–1946*, p. 244.

threat, Mahmud Şevket Paşa assigned Cemal Bey, one of the most trustworthy Unionists, to the office of İstanbul Guardianship and the other trustable man, Azmi Bey to the leadership of police forces as soon as the former was equipped with the ministerial power.

The most important characteristic of Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet was its composition representing the power of the Unionists. Predominantly, there was Unionist ministers within the cabinet. Though not being a Unionist, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was known by the opposition for the former's Unionist tendencies. Indeed, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not hide his tendency and stated the following in an Parliament session: “..I express this explicitly that I have endorsed the program of the Committee of Union nad Progress. This is my commitment. I have read the program of the Party of Freedom and Understanding. I do not endorse that.” Through such statements, he did not hesitate to reveal his tendency towards the Committee of Union and Progress openly.⁴⁹

The most important file on the table of Mahmud Şevket Paşa was the recapturing of Edirne from the hands of Bulgarians. The Committee raised popular expectations by promising to regain Edirne should the Unionists come to power. Under such circumstances, either Edirne would be regained or Mahmud Şevket Paşa government would be ousted from power like that experienced by its predecessor, Kâmil Paşa government. However, Mahmud Şevket Paşa's opinions that the Ottoman Army was incapable of regaining Edirne and that the problem could be resolved only through

⁴⁹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt. III: *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 134–135.

peaceful methods led to strained relations again suddenly between Mahmud Şevket Paşa and the Committee of Union and Progress. One of the leading actors of these straining relations was the Minister of Interior Affairs, Hacı Adil Bey, who played a major role in the resignation of Mahmud Şevket Paşa from his post as the Minister of War. The Unionist ministers in Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet Hacı Adil and Şükrü Bey and the Unionist officers in the army, such as Enver Bey, opposed to the peace policy of Mahmud Şevket Paşa resented against the Paşa's peaceful policy and advocated the continuation of the war. Both from inside and outside the cabinet, even from the center of the committee came the voice of dissatisfaction and criticism. One of the turning points on the emerging fault lines between the Committee of Union and Progress and Mahmud Şevket Paşa was experienced in 15 February 1913. The head of the Parliament, Halil Menteş Bey and Talat Bey, tried to obstruct Mahmud Şevket Paşa and his initiatives to build peace by their visits. Mahmud Şevket Paşa accused Halil Menteş and Talat Bey of "designing policies without grasping the situation" and complicated his accusations by criticizing Talat Bey, with whom he had several clashes for a long time, for being "narrow minded" and "unlearned"⁵⁰

Silenced by the event of seeing Mahmud Şevket Paşa government in power, the opposition launched its activities again thanks to the rumors that Edirne would be deserted to the Bulgarians. Indeed, the opposition was domestically quite disorganized and lacked leadership.

⁵⁰ *Sadrâzam ve Harbiye Nazırı Mahmud Şevket Paşa'nın Günlüğü*, pp. 16–17.

The group headed by Prince Sabahaddin, moved forth for a governmental takeover in early March but the intervention by İstanbul Guardianship nullified such an attempt. While several prominent figures of this group were caught and trialed, Sabahaddin and Dr. Nihad Reşad would manage to save themselves from imprisonment, thanks to last minute warning of Talat Bey.⁵¹ Prince Sabahaddin Bey, one of the architects of this first organized plot against the Mahmud Şevket Paşa cabinet, would later lend support to the activities of “secret society” founded to organize the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on 11 June 1913 in Beyazid Square. Following this first aborted overthrow attempt, the opposition activated themselves this time more decisively under the leadership of Çerkes Kâzım and Muhib Bey. This time, the event would be better organized and more blooded.

When looked at Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s diary more closely, it is to be seen that he was not aware of the coup d’état preparations set against his government.⁵² Mahmud Şevket Paşa knew that the opposition had initiated anti-government activities, since the former came to power but perceived those events as casual ones not really worth thinking. The first information relating to bloody coup d’état against Mahmud Şevket Paşa which would cost him his life was provided to Mahmud Şevket Paşa during Kâmil Paşa’s visit to İstanbul. İstanbul Guardian Cemal Bey, in a meeting held with Mahmud Şevket Paşa, told the latter that “...Kâmil Paşa was brought to İstanbul to replace you

⁵¹ Cemal Paşa. *Hatıralar*, p. 26.

⁵² Alpay Kabacalı. *Türkiye’de Siyasal Cinayetler*, (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1993), p. 158.

after stepping on your coffin.”⁵³ Thus, this was a closed warning against Mahmud Şevket Paşa. However, frequent information of assassinations to be held against him discouraged Mahmud Şevket Paşa to take all these events seriously. Mahmud Şevket Paşa almost suffered from inability to distinguish the truth from the lie amidst a pollution of information. Ali Haydar Mithat Bey described the following observation he made in one of the meetings made with Mahmud Şevket Paşa:

Very often, Cemal Bey is coming here nowadays. He is disturbing me with threats such as that there is assassination information against me or that there is a time bomb set against me! I am sick of these things. May they remove me from the post I occupy and give it to whoever they wish, but I hope that they shall set me free.⁵⁴

On one hand, Mahmud Şevket Paşa was occupied by domestic political agenda, on the other hand, he got focused on peace negotiations ongoing in London with the Balkan States. Those days when the peace settlement negotiations were being held, the military capability of the Ottoman Empire started improving. Under this positive upsurge lies then Balkan States’ drag into deep impasse over the war gains. The position of the Balkan States provided a golden opportunity for the Committee of Union and Progress planning to rid Edirne from Bulgarian aggression.

However, there stood some “barriers” before this plan. The first barrier related to Mahmud Şevket Paşa’s presence in the head of the government coinciding with the calculations of the Committee on Edirne issue. Mahmud Şevket Paşa at odds with the

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 44

⁵⁴ Ali Haydar Mithat. *Hatıralarım: 1872–1946*, pp. 247–248.

Committee would probably capitalize upon the air of joy stimulated by the return of Edirne to the Ottoman hands and would seize the whole power by consolidating “a military dictatorship system” attributed to him several times by others. The second barrier derived from conjuncture change. The prominent figures of the Committee were not any longer of those inexperienced politicians, typically seen three or four years ago. No one wanted to see the prestige of returning Edirne to the Ottoman lands slide into Mahmud Şevket Paşa and to live under the shade of Mahmud Şevket Paşa. In the aftermath of the 31 Mart Uprising, Mahmud Şevket Paşa, thanks to the recognition gained as the commander of the Action Army, started pursuing an independent policy which would later annoy many members of the committee. In this situation, there was only one way left: to wait for long awaited and well prepared Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination.

Though not having direct ingredient of the committee in Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination, the Committee of Union and Progress managed to suppress the opposition and got rid of Mahmud Şevket Paşa seen as an obstacle for some time. Although the Committee of Union and Progress did not have direct links to the assassination, Süreyya Engin writes that some Unionists were already members of “the secret society” founded with the aim of assassination.⁵⁵

Another indirect winner in the Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination in addition to the Committee of Union and Progress was Germany. As understood from the report sent by German Ambassador Wangenheim to the German Emperor Kaizer Wilhelm,

⁵⁵ Süreyya Engin. “Mahmud Şevket Paşa’nın Katli Hadisesi,” *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, Vol. II, No. 23, November 1951, p. 1113.

Germany was much displeased by “active neutrality” policy pursued by Mahmud Şevket Paşa. But, Mahmud Şevket Paşa did not intend to lose the German connection despite the former’s well balanced policy. He put forward his idea concretely by planning to bring a German group of soldiers for modernization of the Ottoman Army. In the aftermath of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, fast rise of Enver Bey, seems to have satisfied Germany as well. However, no evidence of relationship between the assassins and Germany has been found. Had Germany really been the power behind Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination, Ambassador Wangenheim would not have been concerned about Kâmil Paşa’s return to İstanbul; instead, he would have been much delighted to see this event. Mahmud Şevket Paşa assassination does not seem to have been an assassination planned or supervised by Germany. However, the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa facilitated the rapid rise of Enver Paşa and his fast reach to the title of Paşa and to the Ministry of War respectively.⁵⁶ Enver Bey’s such a fast rise in the escalation of power soon after the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa brings into mind the possibility of seeing Germany behind this assassination to certain extend.

⁵⁶ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. *Makedonya’dan Ortaasya’ya Enver Paşa*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999), s. 430.

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- “Sadrâzam ve Hârbiye Nâzırı Mahmûd Şevket Paşa Hazretleri Dün, Beyazıd’da Otomobil İçinde Yaveriyle Beraber Şehid Edilmiştir. Kâtillerden İkisi, Topal Tefk ile Otomobil Makinisti Cevad, Birbirini Mütetip Derdest Edilmişlerdir,” *Tanîn*, No. 1629, 7 Receb 1331, 30 Mayıs 1329, 12 Haziran 1913, Perşembe, s. 1.
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VISUAL MATERIAL



Mahmud Şevket Paşa

"Mahmud Şevket Paşa" (1876-1908)



Mahmûd Şevket Paşa
“Mahmûd Şevket Paşa merhûm”



Mahmûd Şevket Paşa



Mahmud Şevket Paşa Commander of the Action Army

Mahmud Şevket Paşa in Arabian Costume



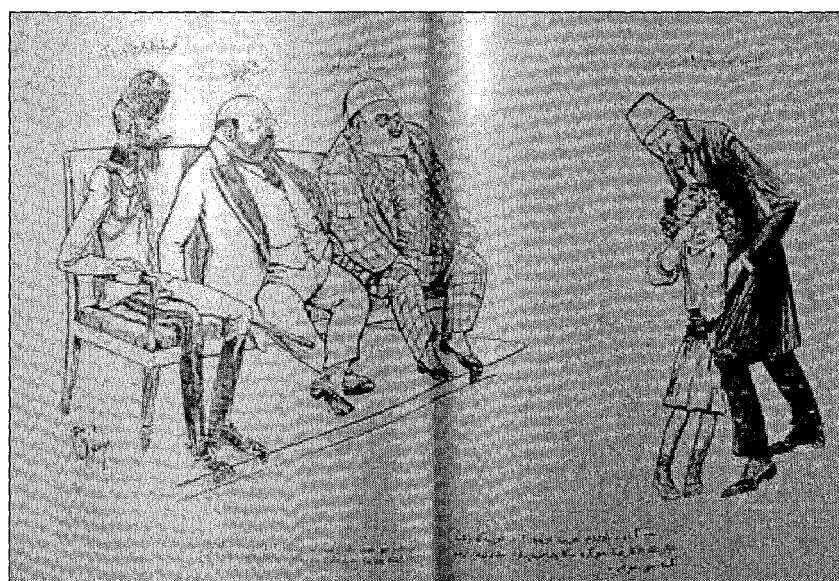
Mahmud Şevket Paşa in Arabian Costume

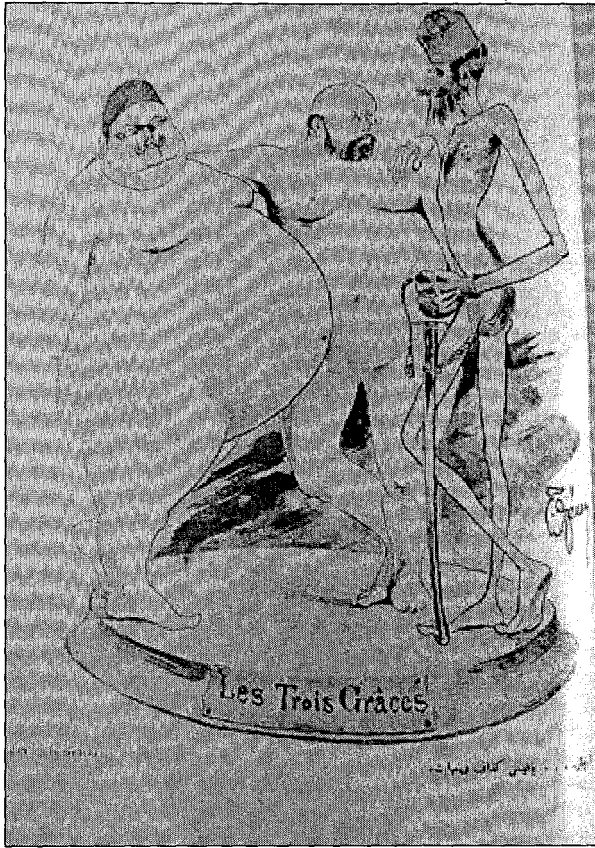


Mahmud Şevket Paşa with some of the officers of the Action Army



The cover page of the *Resimli Kitab*







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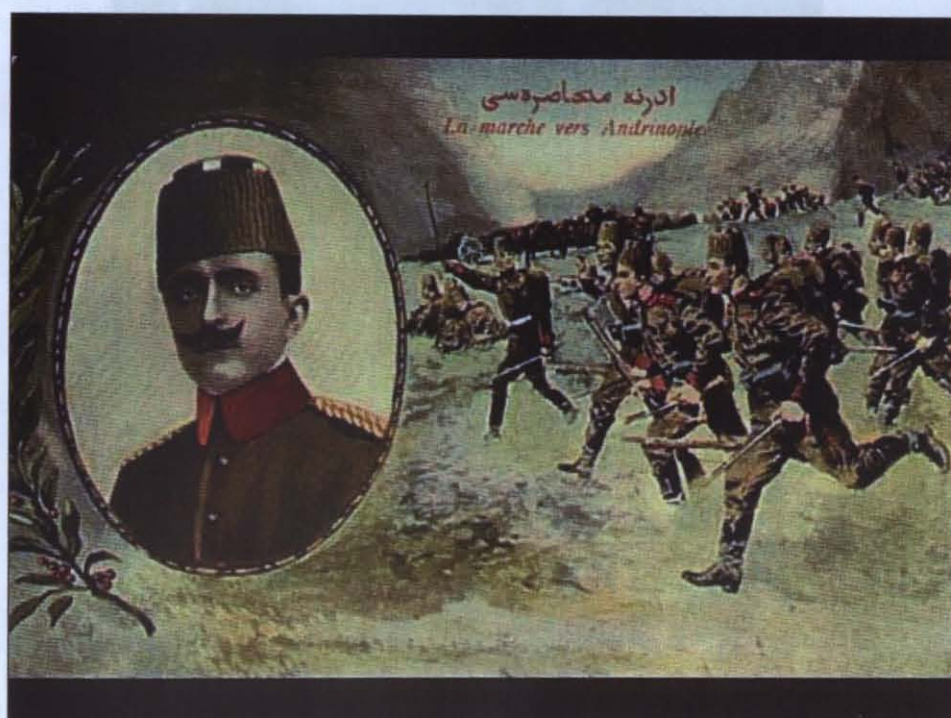
Talat Paşa



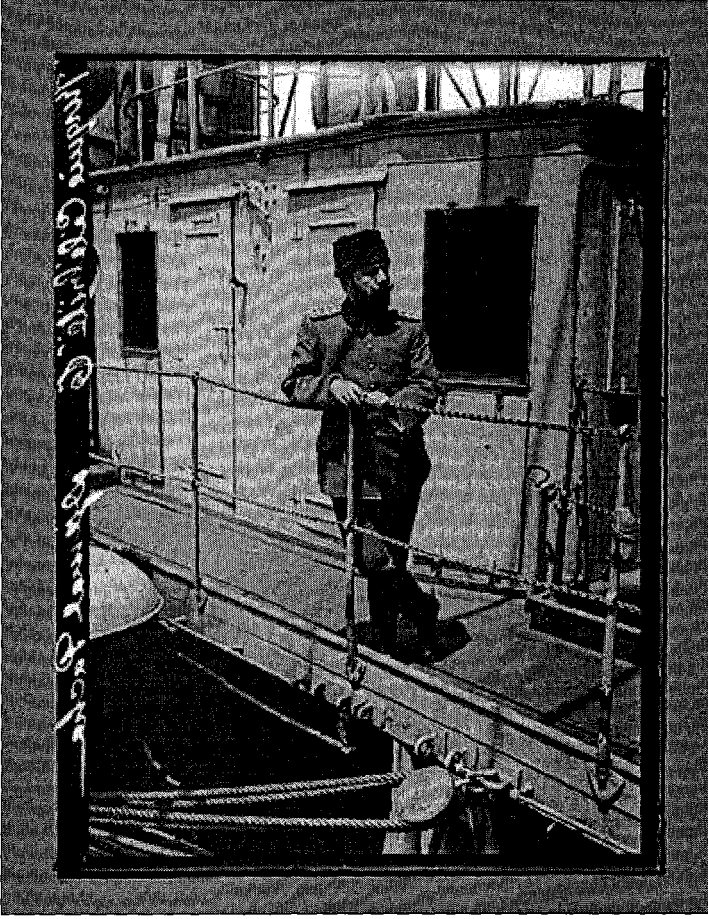
One of the caricatures of Talat Paşa



Enver Paşa



“Edirne Muhâsarası”: The siege of Edirne



Cemal Paşa



“Sadr-ı Esbâk Said Halim Paşa”



Minister of Finance Cavid Bey



Niyazi Bey



Ahmed Rıza Bey



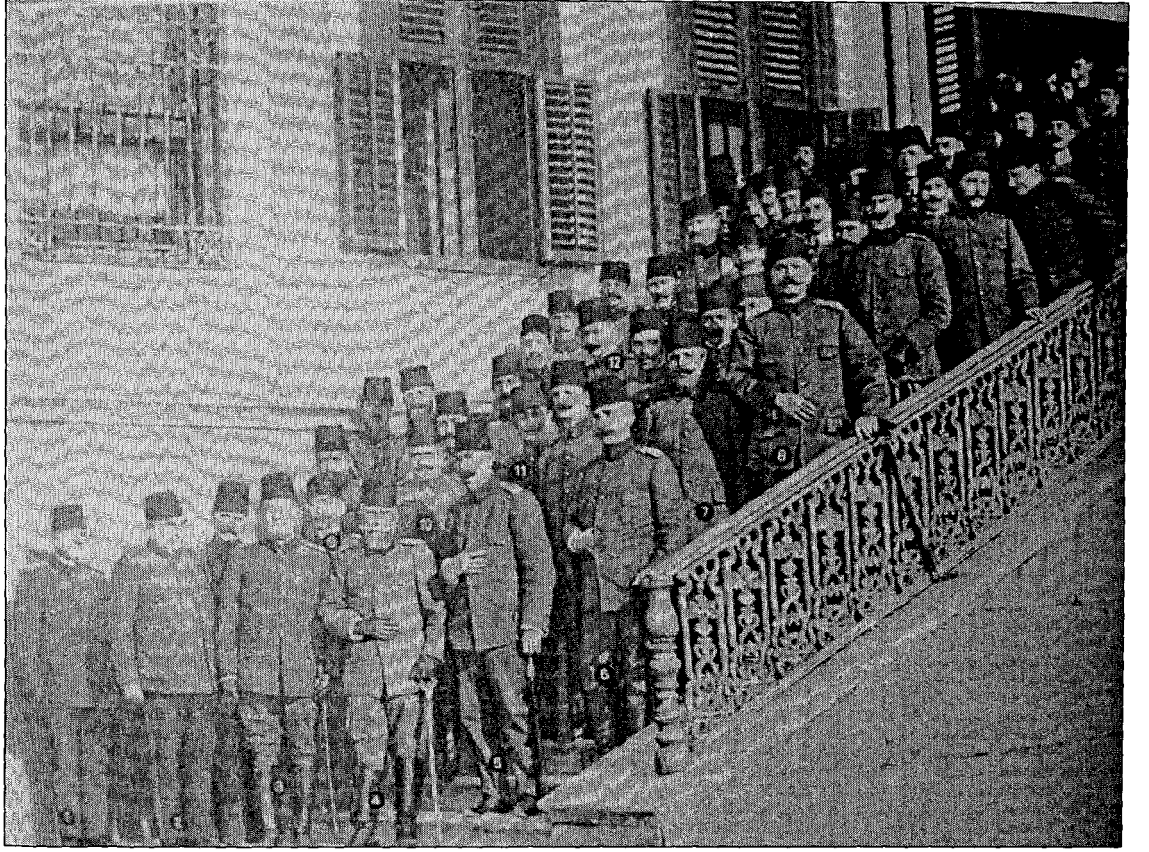
Captain Hilmi Bey



Lieutenant İbrahim Bey



Damad Salih Paşa

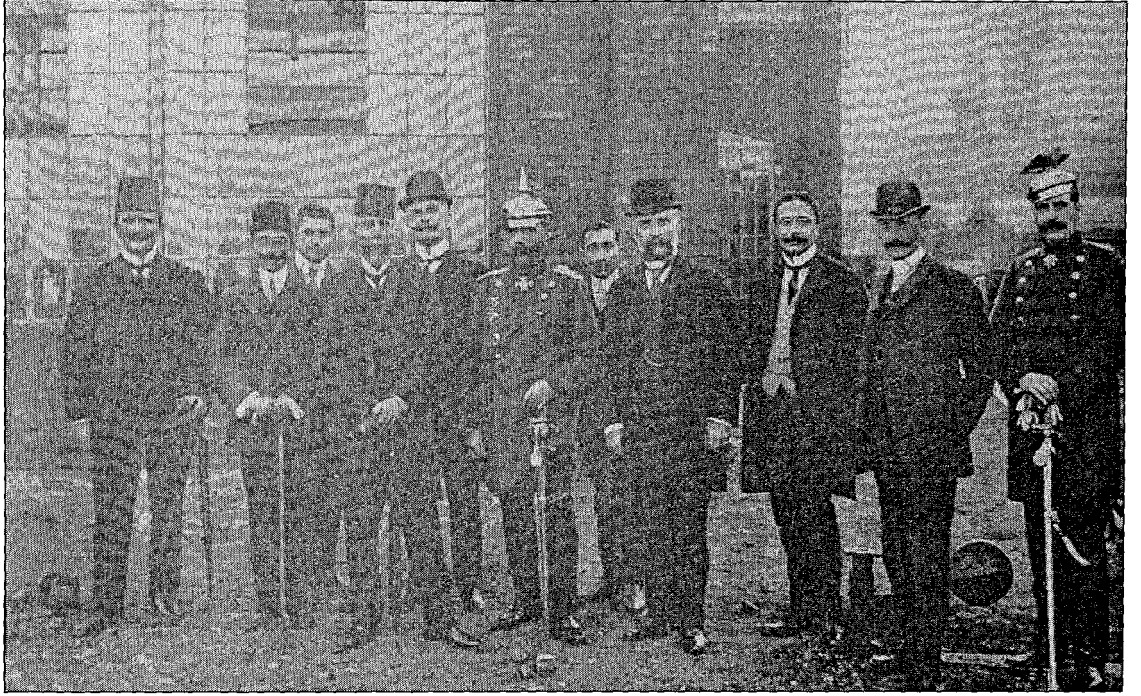


In front of the War Academy:

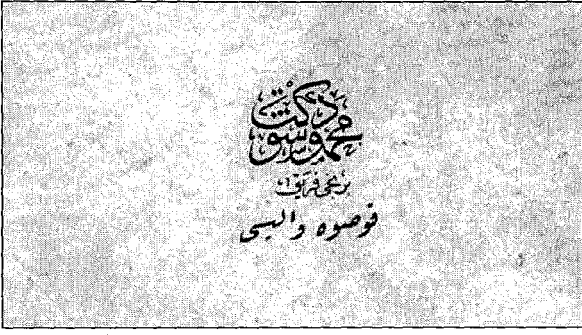
1. Yaver Paşa, 2. Nazım Paşa, 3. Goltz Paşa, 4. Mahmud Şevket Paşa, 5. Salih Paşa, 6. Esat Paşa, 7. Vehip Paşa, 8. Başyaver Salih, 9. Pertev Paşa, 10. Cemil Conk, 11. Cevat Paşa, 12. Fahrettin Paşa



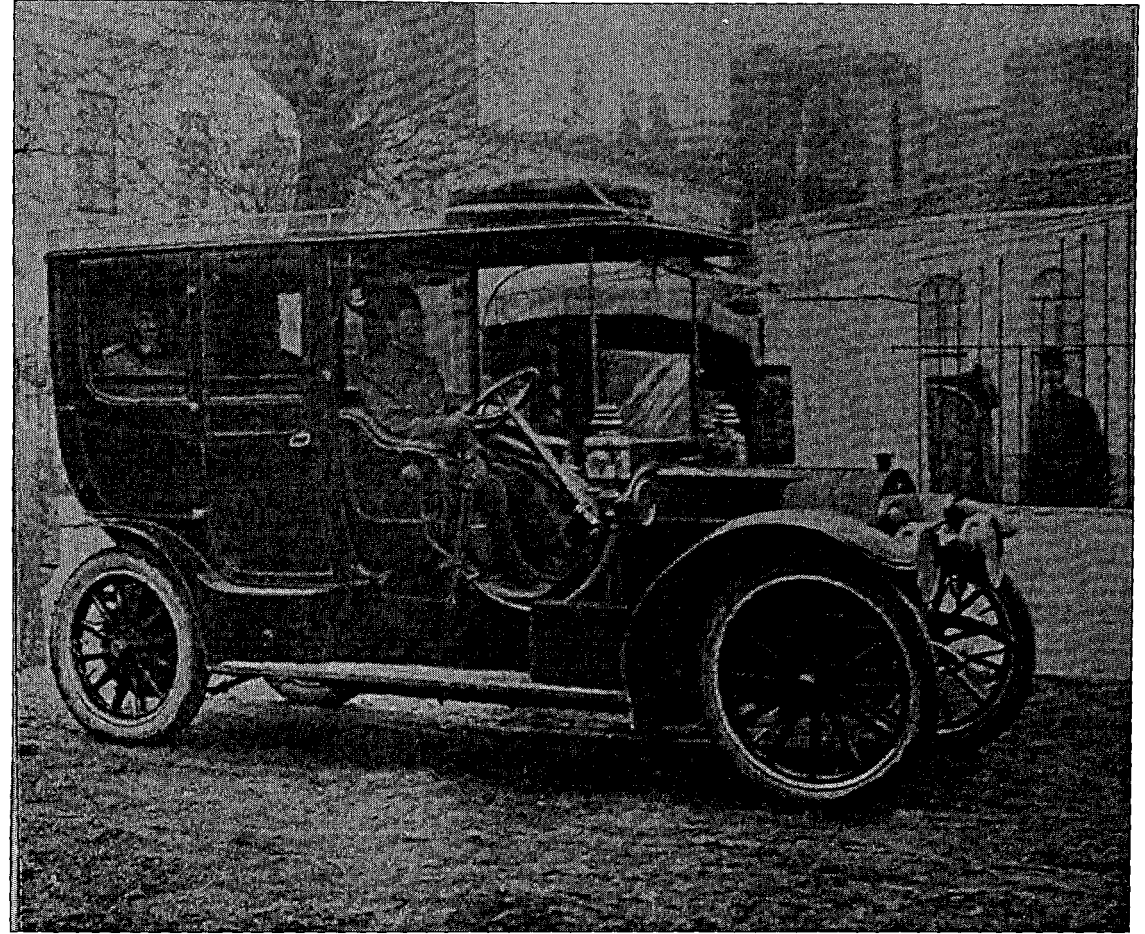
Mahmud Şevket Paşa seen with some high ranking foreign officers during the military maneuvers in Edirne.



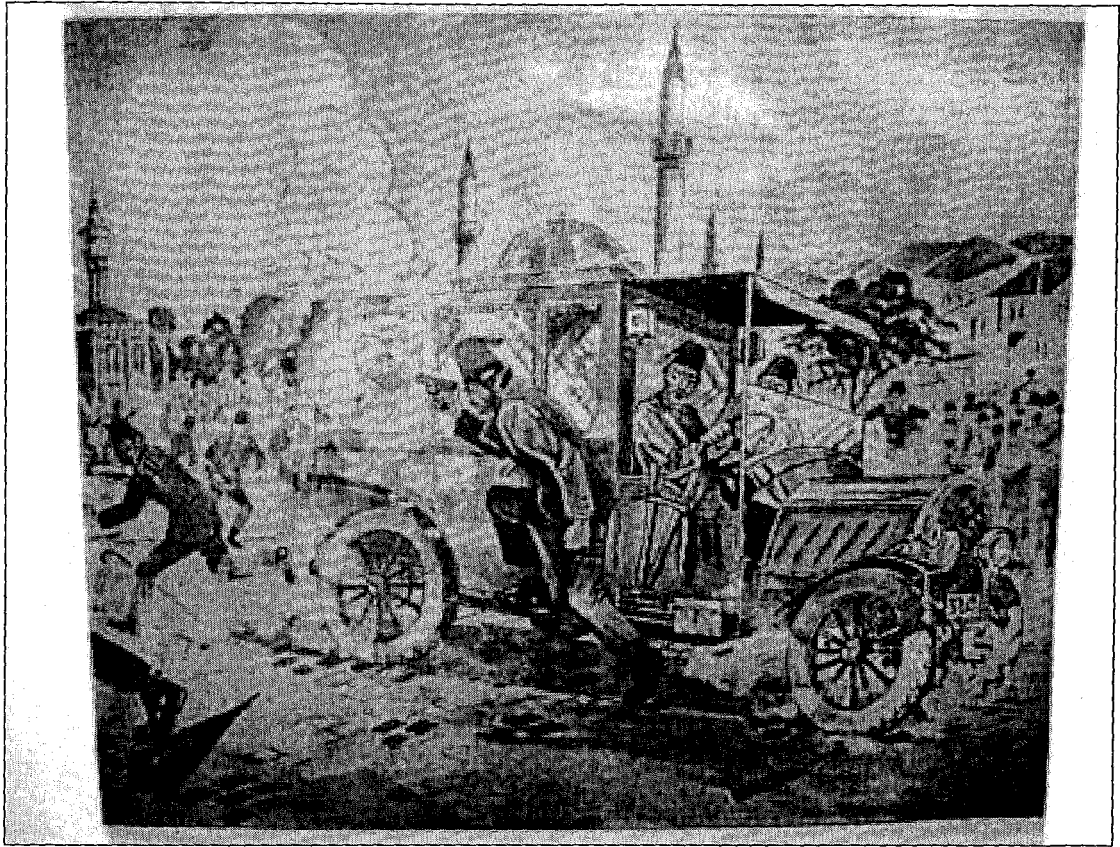
A picture taken during Mahmud Şevket Paşa's visit to Erhard Factories (Germany)
(22 September 1909)



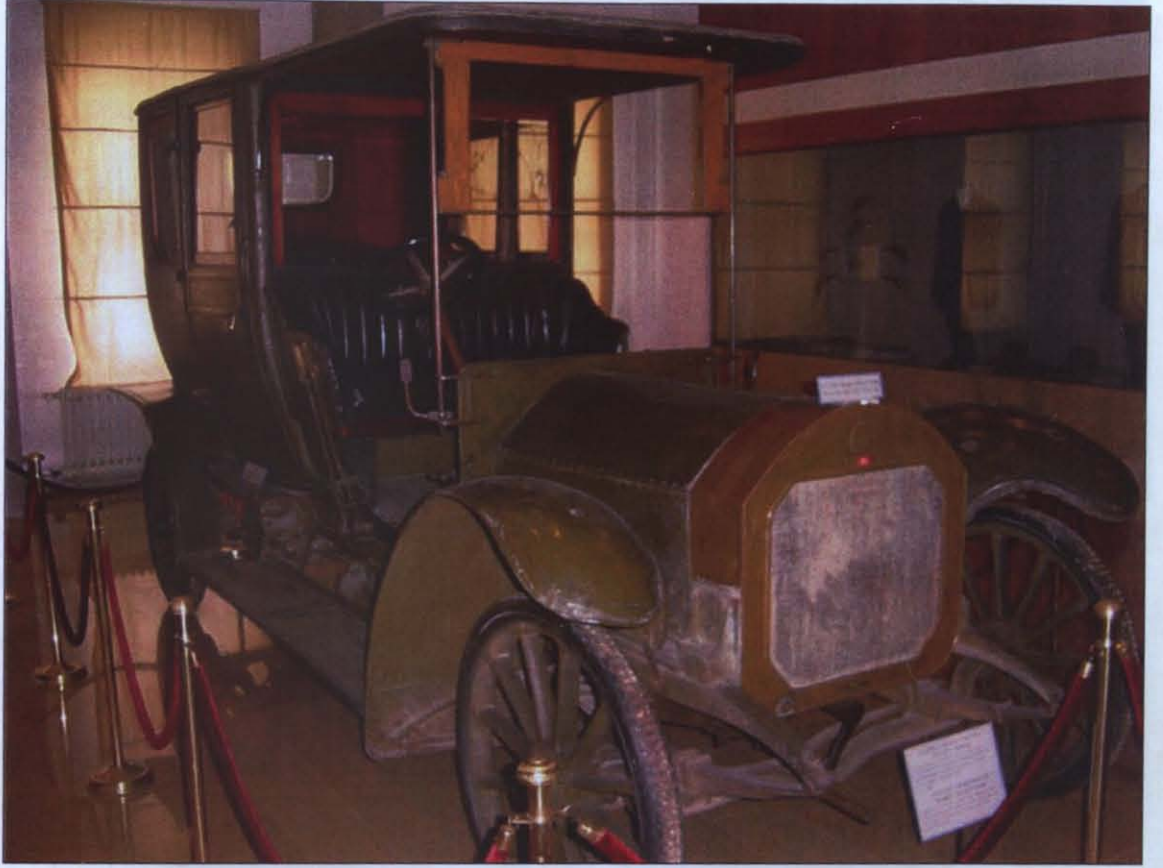
Mahmud Şevket Paşa Lieutenant General and Governor of Kosovo



Mahmud Şevket Paşa sitting on the right side of the automobile

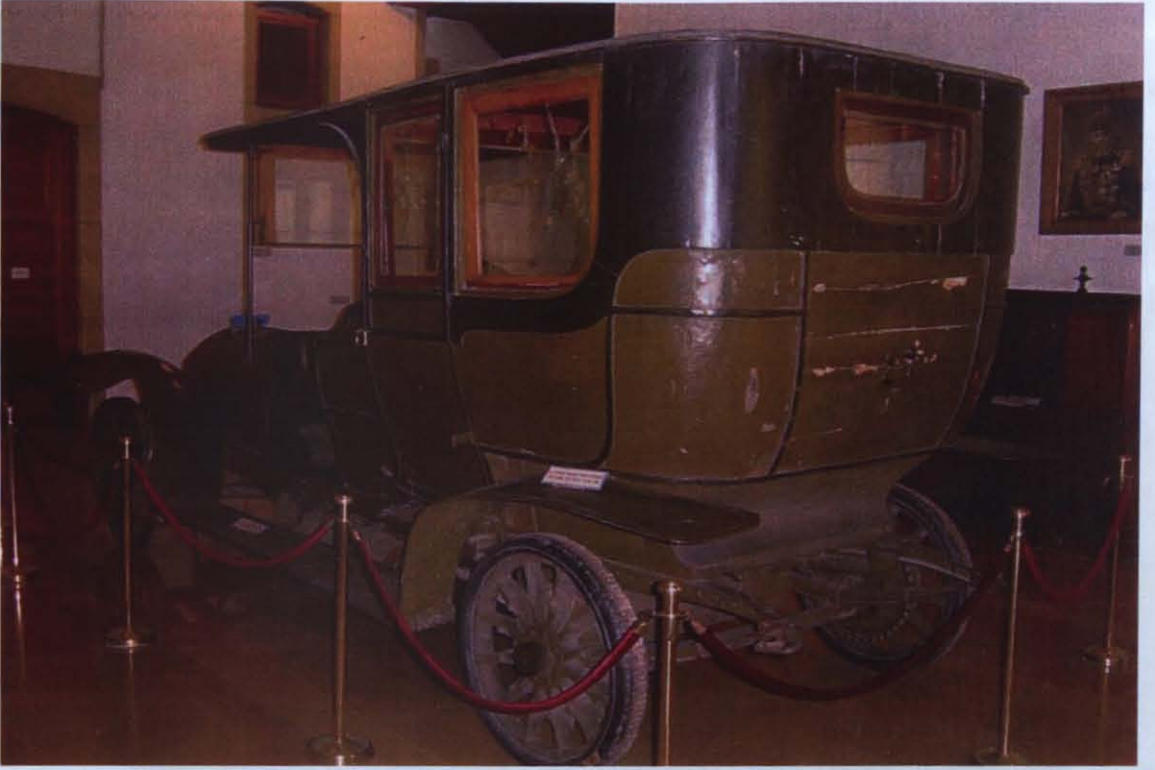


A caricature by Salih Ermez depicting the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in Beyazıt Square

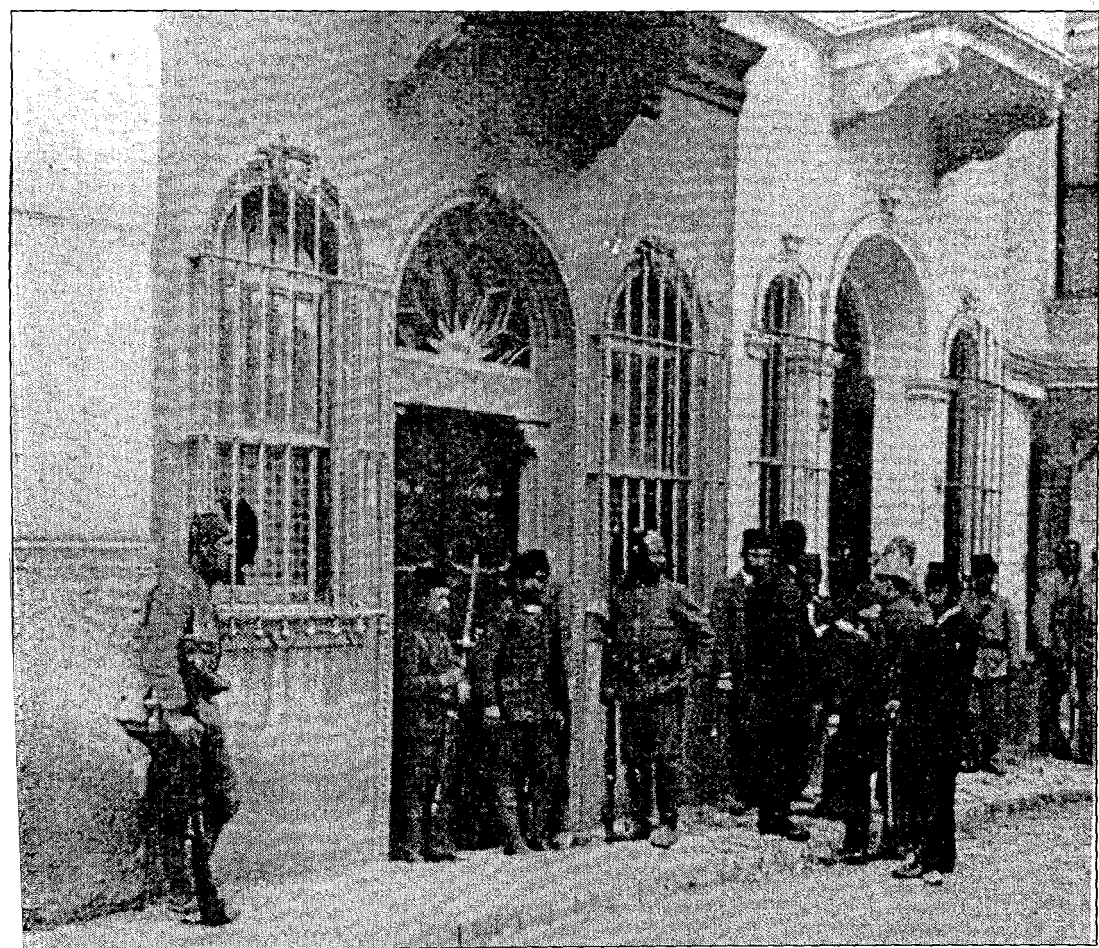
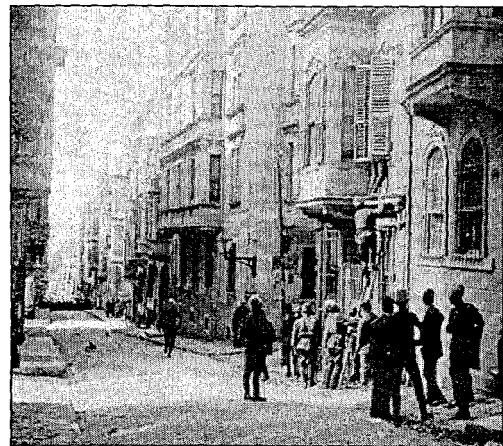


Mahmud Şevket Paşa's automobile, now in Harbiye Military Museum

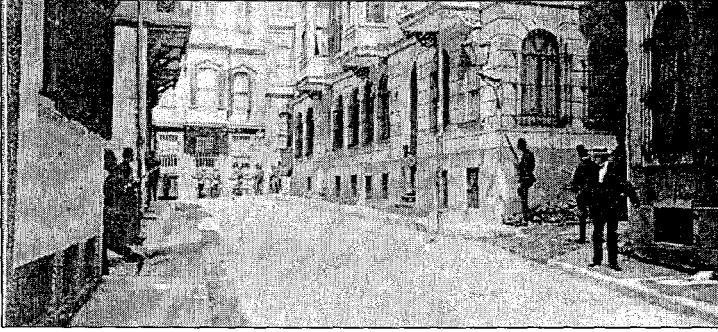
Mahmud Şevket Paşa's automobile, now in Harbiye Military Museum



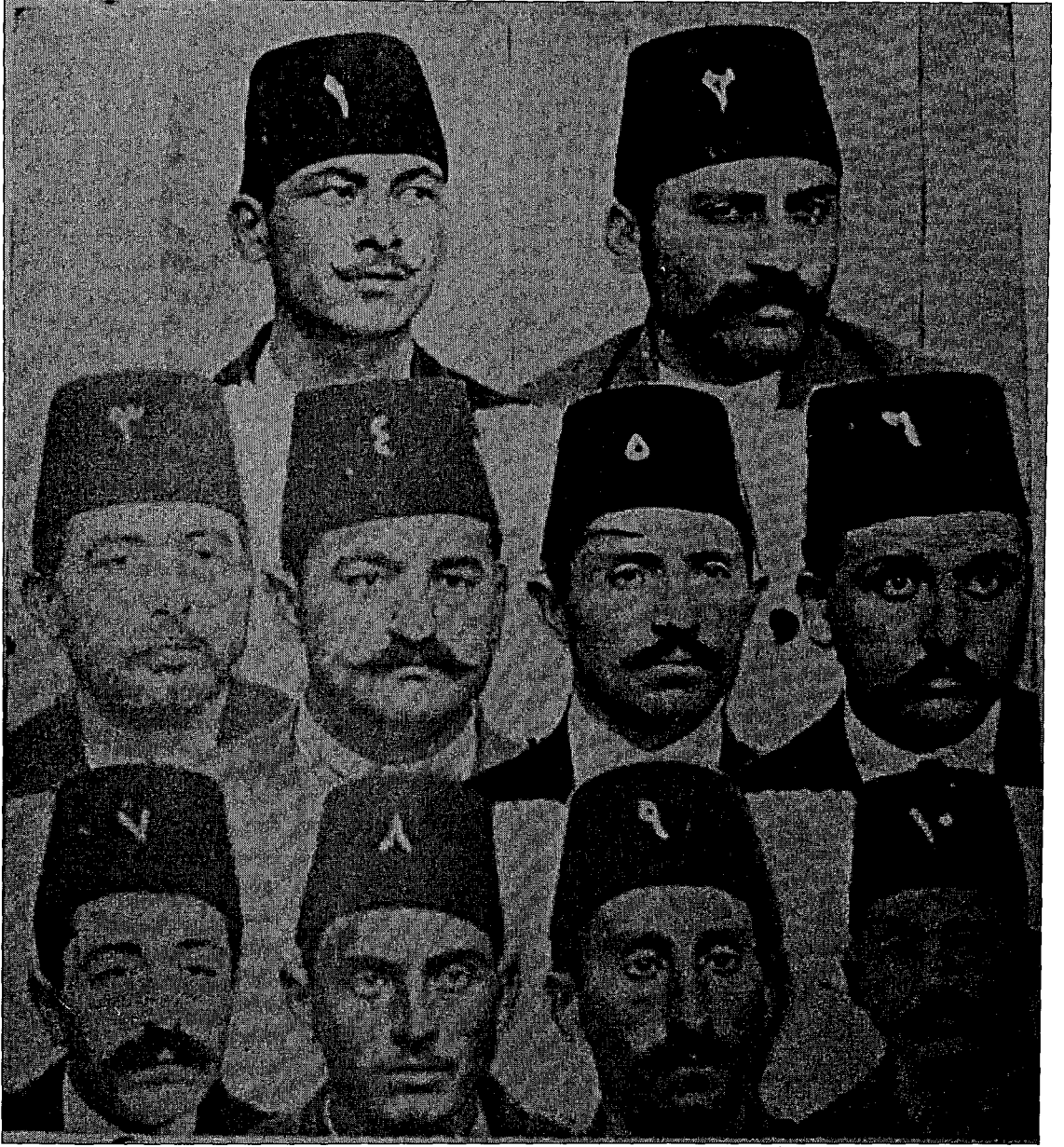
Mahmud Şevket Paşa's automobile, now in Harbiye Military Museum



Pictures from Pire Mehmed Sokağı skirmish

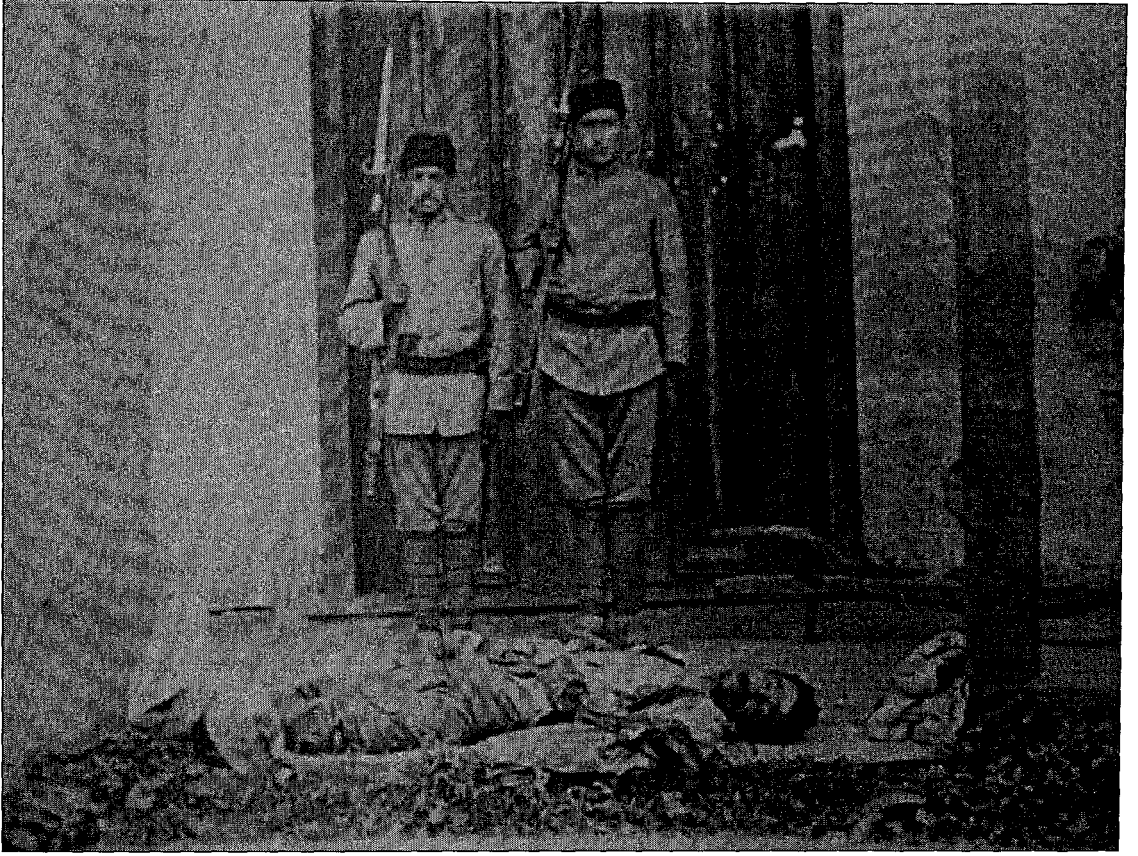


Pictures from Pire Mehmed Sokağı skirmish

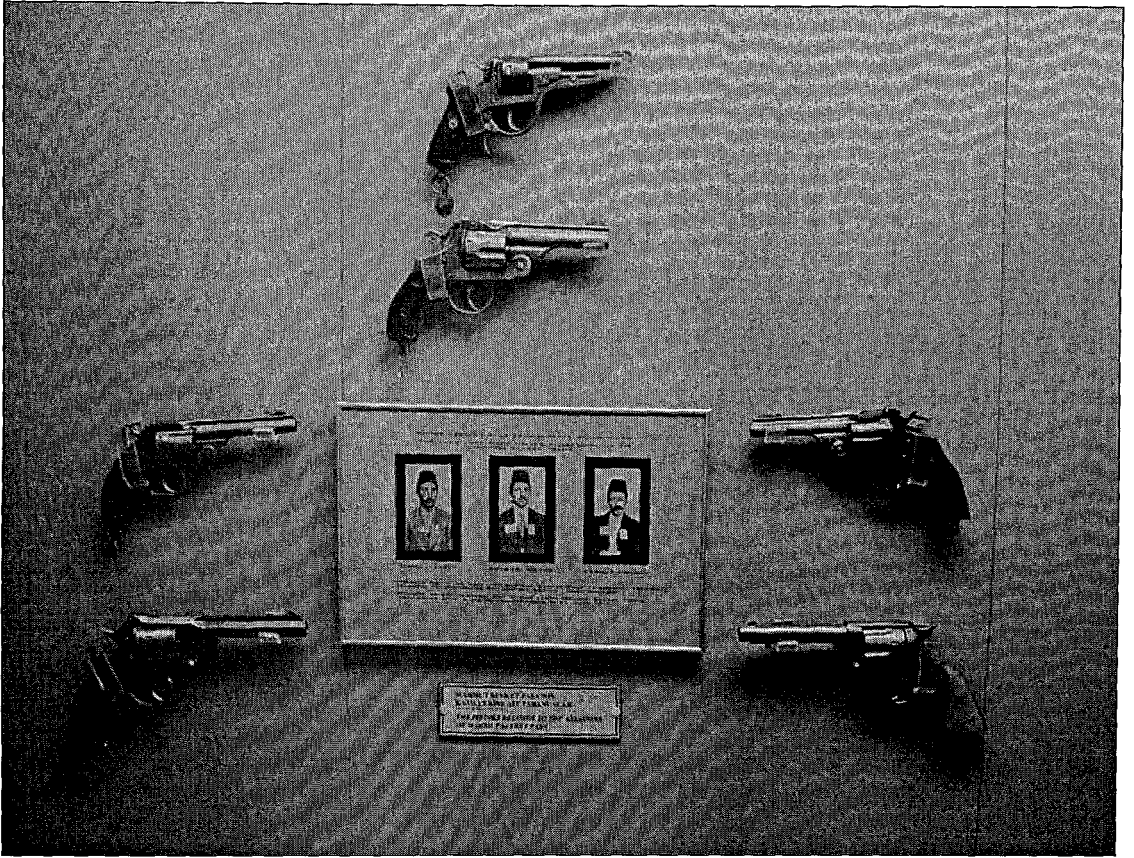


Pictures of the assassins from left to right:

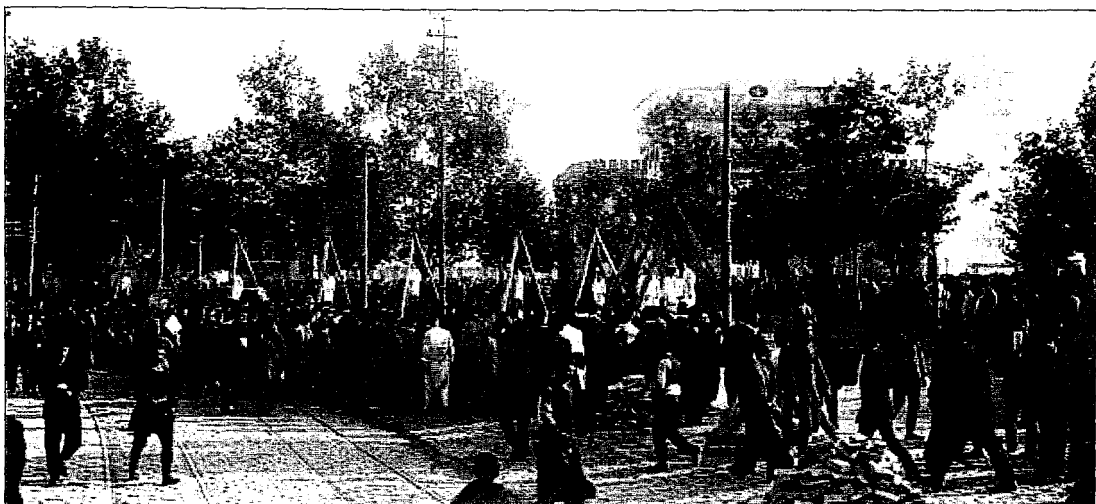
1. Gendarme Kemal, 2. Abdullah Safa, 3. Muhib Bey, 4. Ziya's brother Hakkı, 5. Captain Çerkes Kazım, 6. Bahriyeli Şevki, 7. Lieutenant Mehmed Ali, 8. Cevad, 9. Topal Tevfik, 10. Ziya



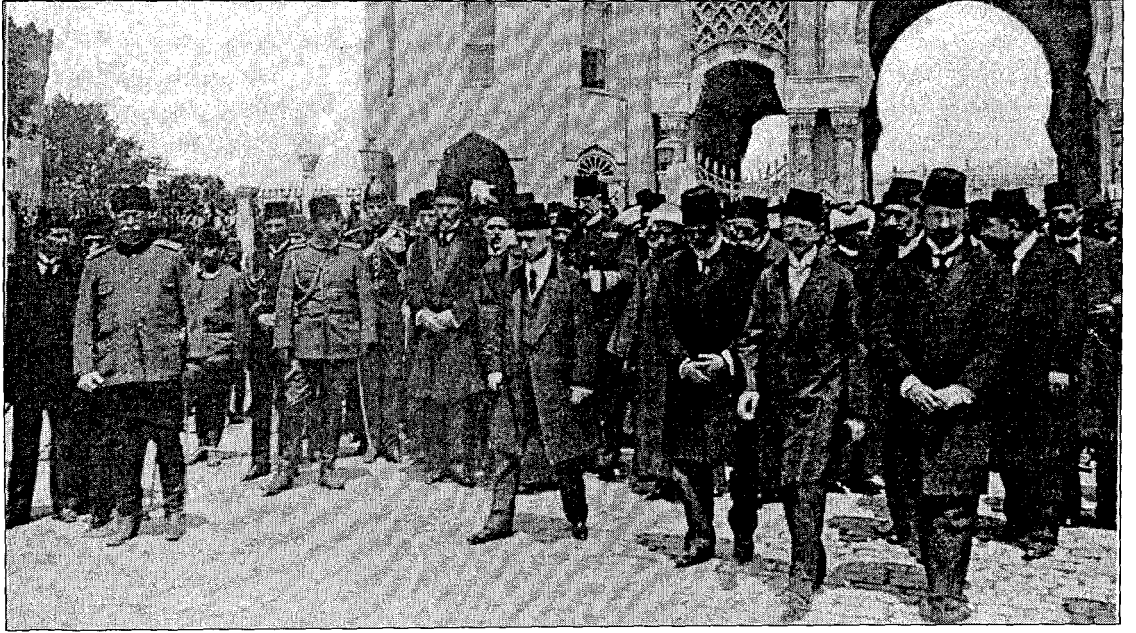
The dead body of Mehmed, who was shot down in Sapanca Forest



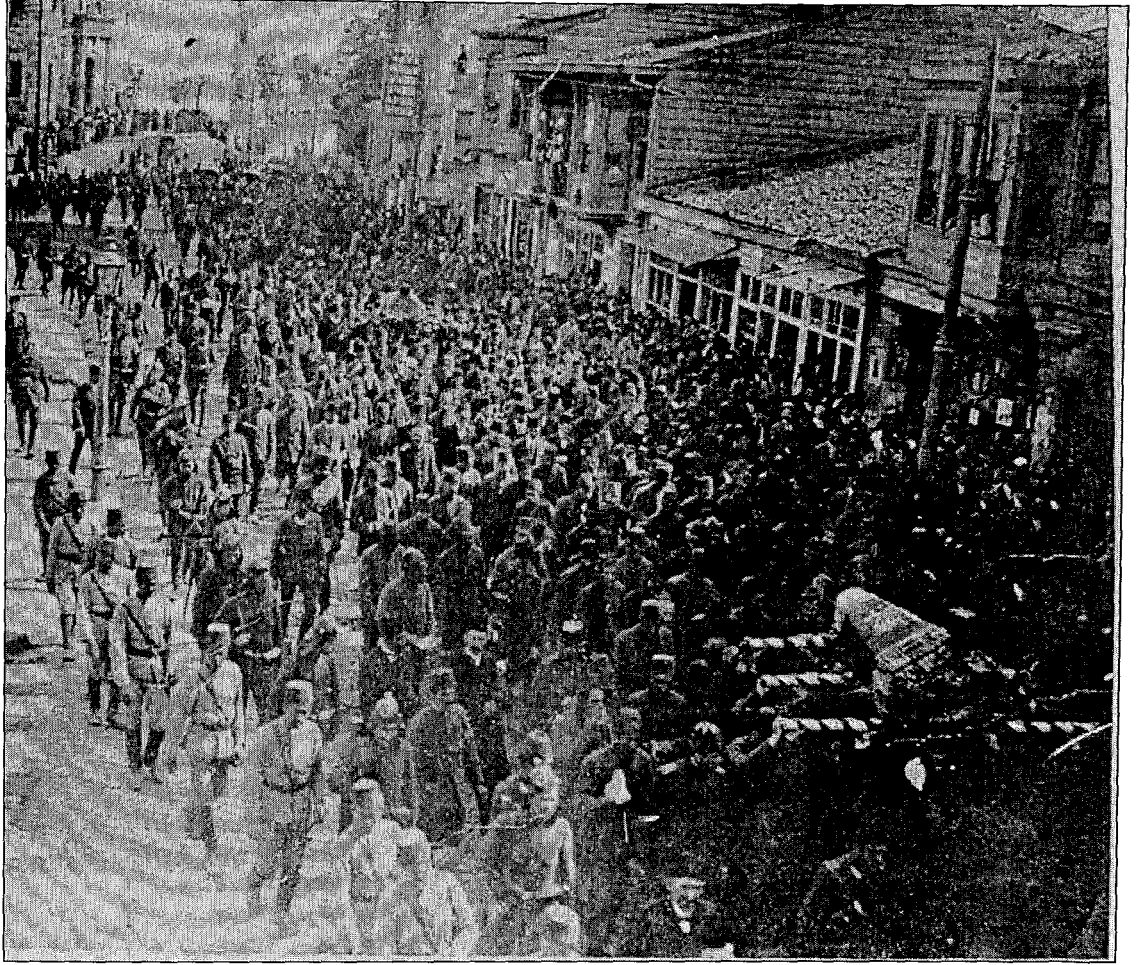
Some of the pistols used in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa



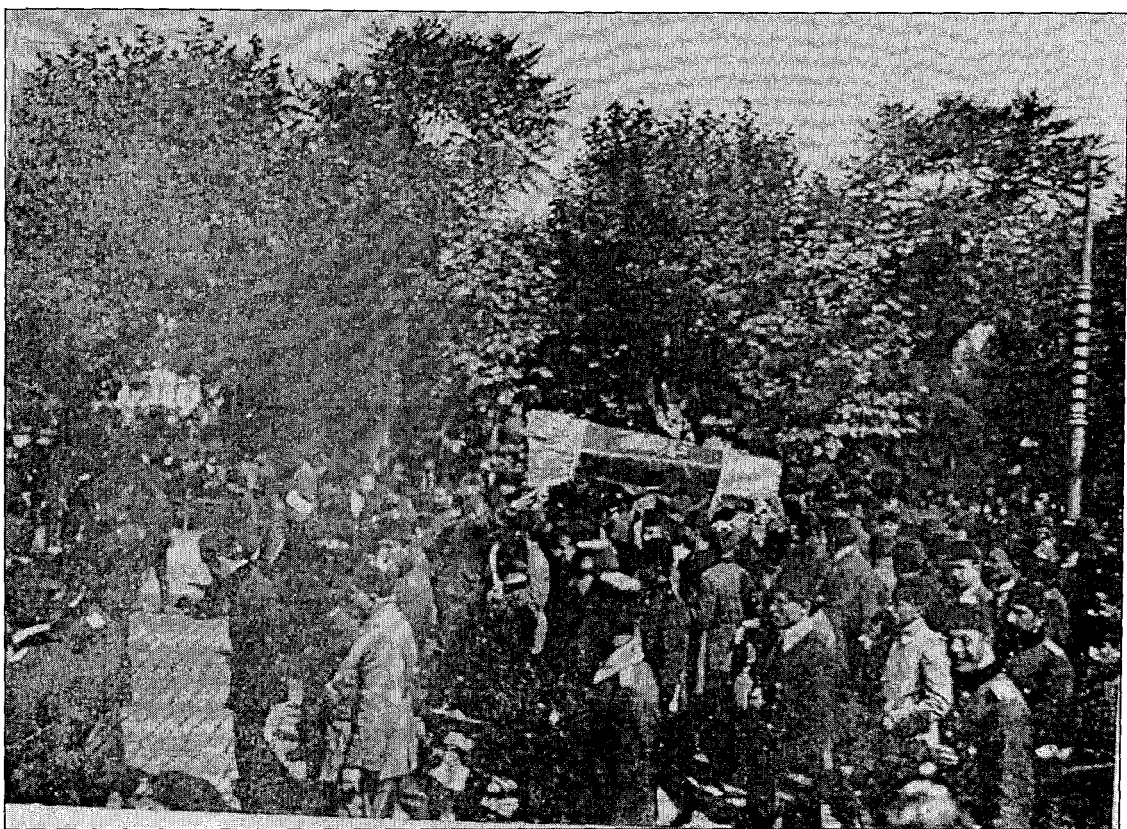
Executions of the assassins in Beyazid Square



The Funeral of Mahmûd Şevket Paşa



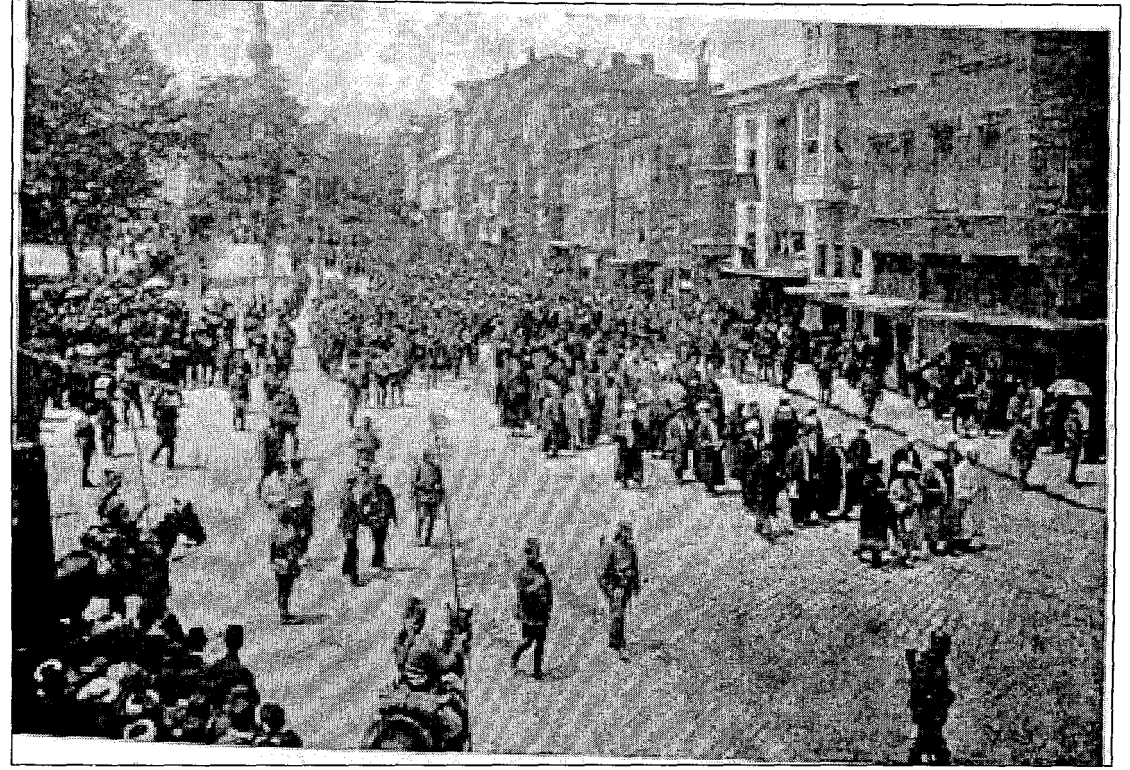
The Funeral of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Lieutenant İbrahim Bey



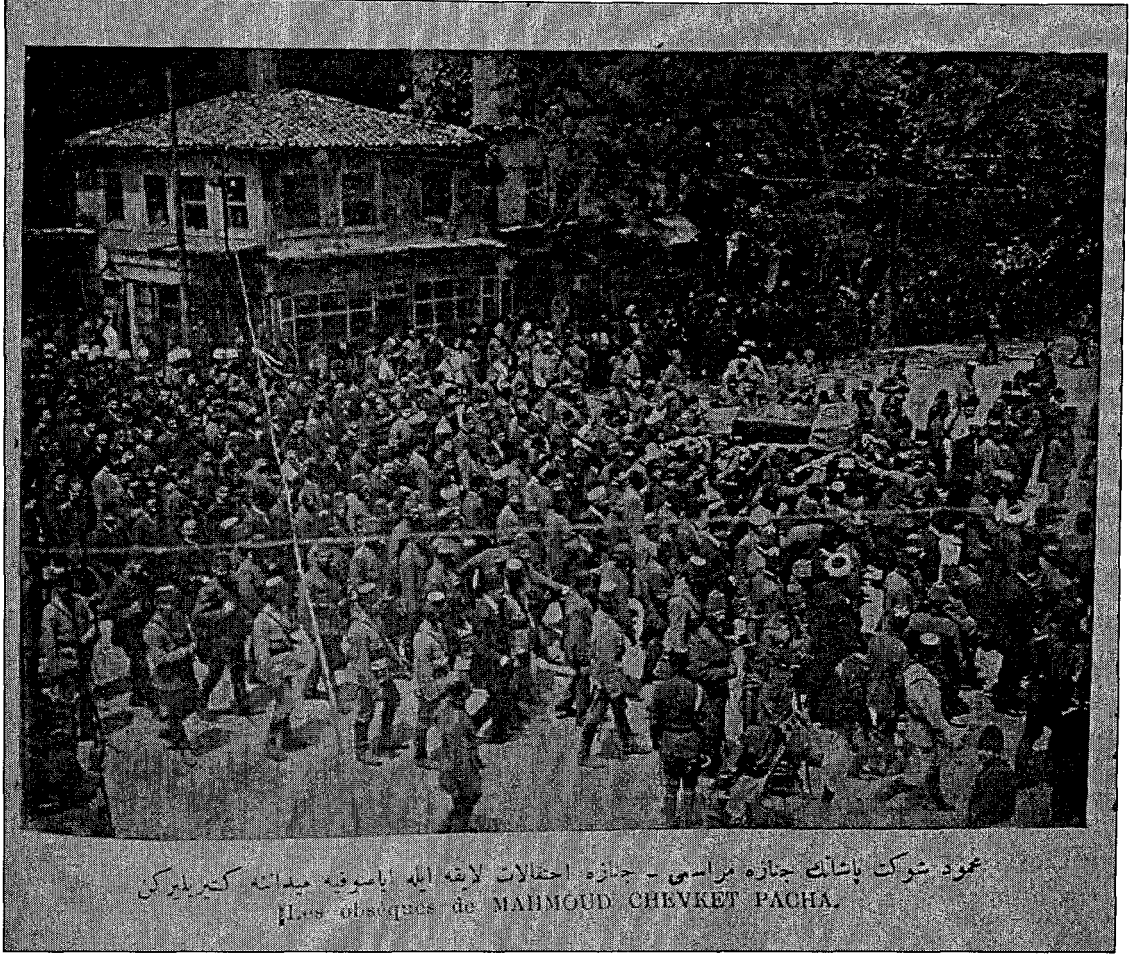
The Funeral



The Funeral of Mahmud Şevket Paşa

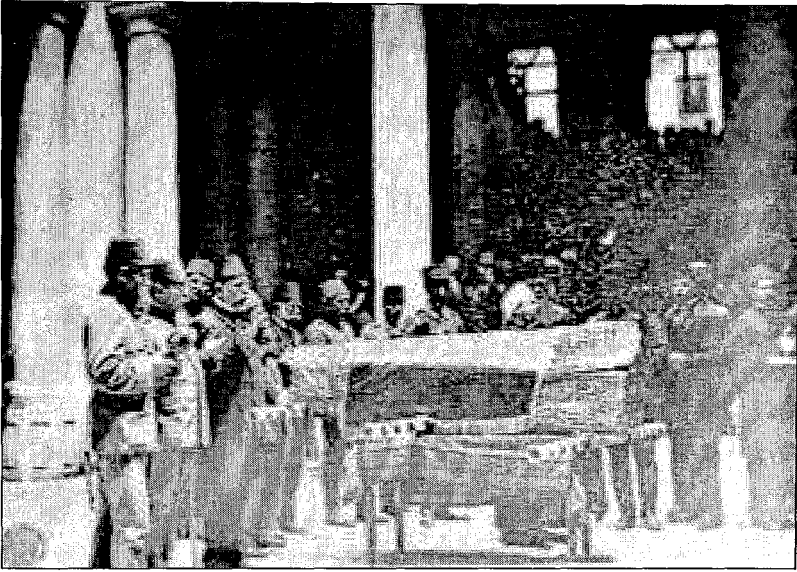


The Funeral of Mahmud Şevket Paşa



عمود شوکت پاشا کے جنازہ مراسم - جنازہ احتفالات لاقہ ایلہ اباصوفیہ میدانہ کنستبلیرکی
Hlas obseques de MAHMOUD CHEVKET PACHA.

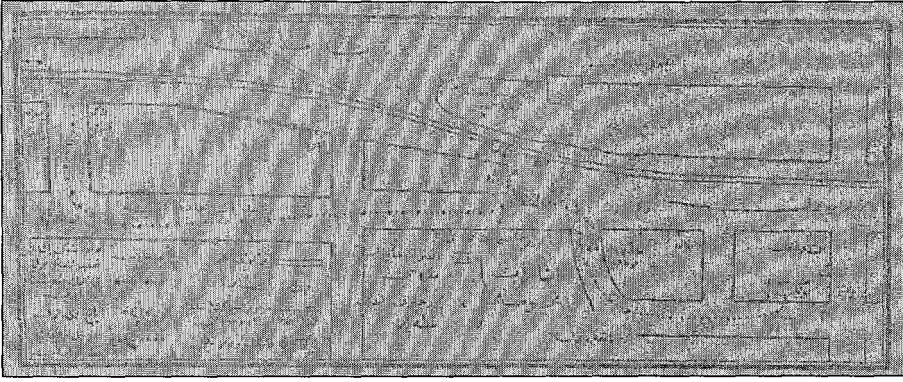
The Funeral of Mahmud Şevket Paşa on the way to Saint Sophia Square



The coffin of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in Saint Sophia Mosque

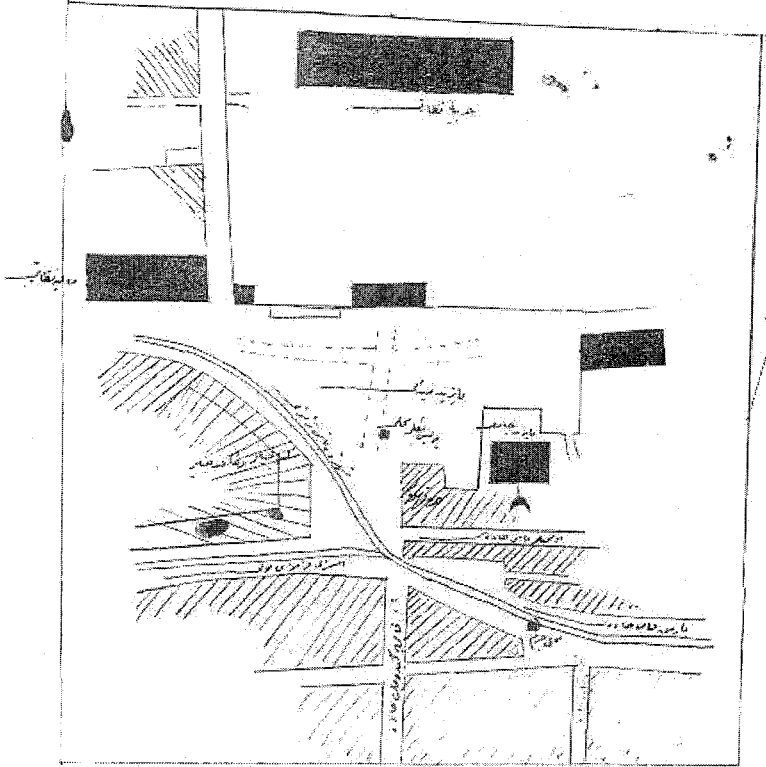


Ministry of War

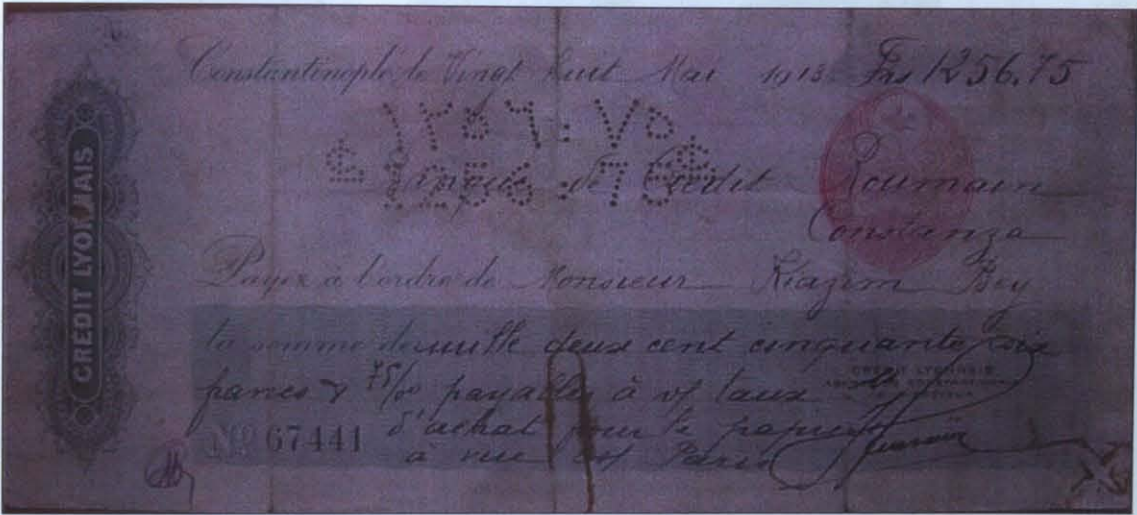


The Sketch of Mahmud Şevket Paşa Assassination published by *Tanin*

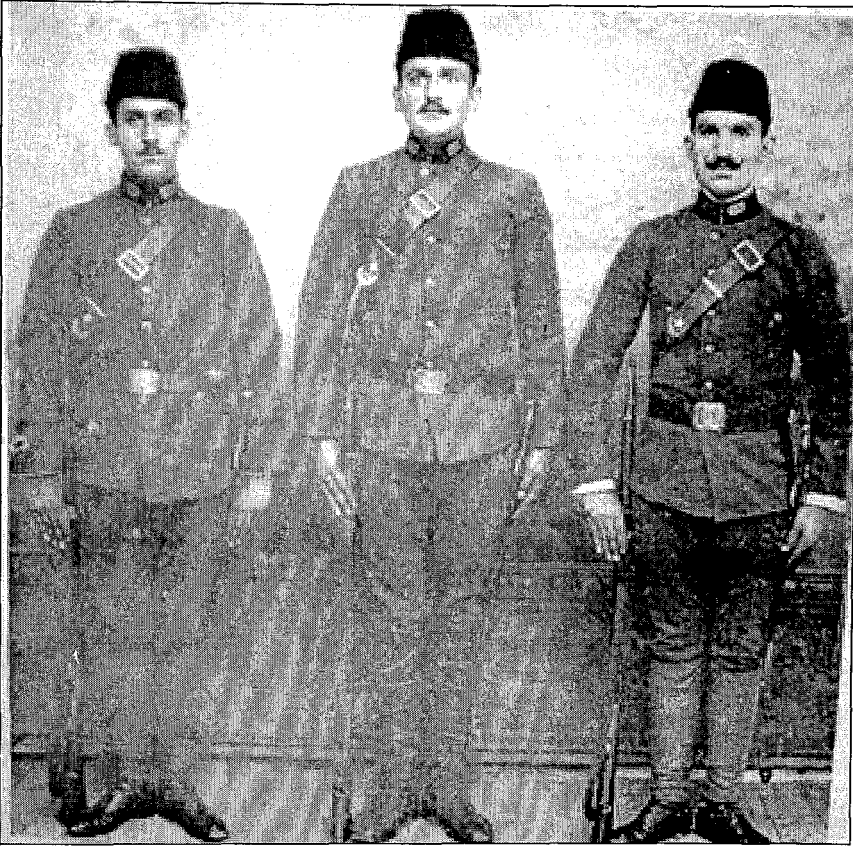
ایستاد اولیاء
محرمات
بجز از افغانی
علاء



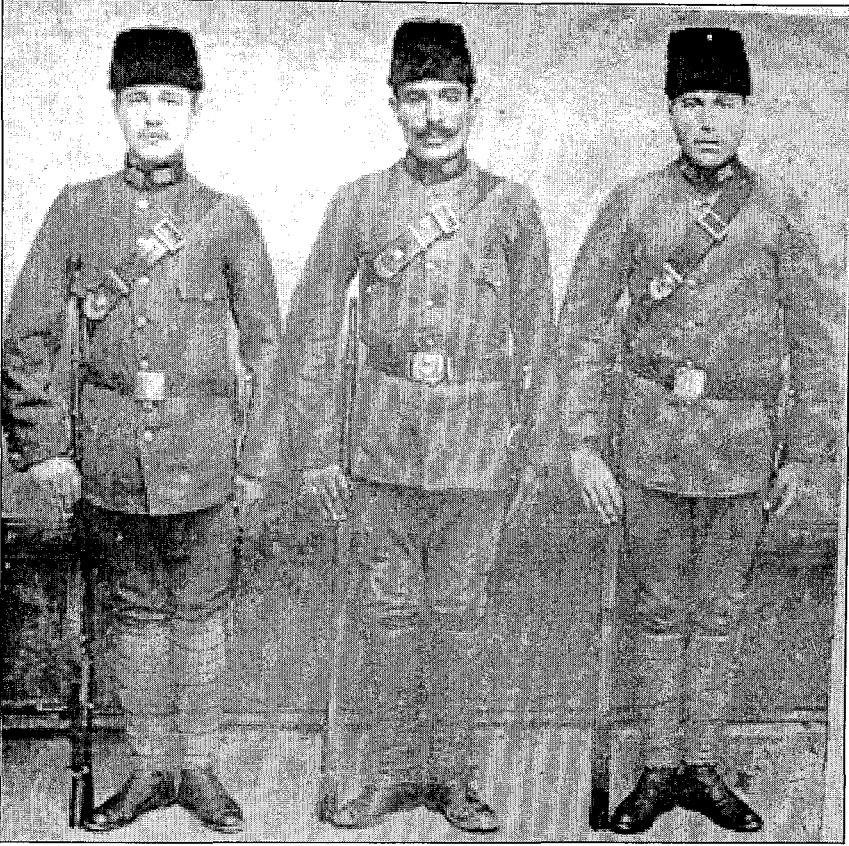
Sketch of the Mahmud Şevket Paşa Assassination prepared by the
İstanbul Police Department



The check which was hidden by Mehmed Ali underneath the wooden flooring of his prison cell



Some of the officers who took part in the skirmishes at the Pire Mehmed Sokağı



Some of the officers who took part in the skirmishes at the Pire Mehmed Sokağı



One of the officers who took part in the skirmishes at the Pire Mehmed Sokağı