Brief History of an English-Language Journal in the Ottoman Empire: The Levant Herald and Constantinople Messenger (1859-1878)

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Toronto

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Abstract

*The Levant Herald* (1856-1914) was one of the English-language newspapers published in Constantinople by British subjects. Given the length of its lifecycle, which exceeded half a century, *The Levant Herald* was one of the longest lasting newspapers issued during the entire Ottoman period. Although it was published in Ottoman territory, it also circulated in Europe and Britain. Due to this, the newspaper had a somewhat international character. Throughout its lifecycle, it faced many suspensions, closures, and bans, and it suffered from regular political pressure. The proprietors of the newspaper changed several times during its lifecycle and due the regular threat of closure, it had to be issued under different names. The names that the newspaper used were as follows: *The Levant Herald, The Constantinople Messenger, The Eastern Express, The Levant Herald & Eastern Express.*
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Ottoman Turkish names, terms and titles are transliterated according to the *Redhouse Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük*, 16. Baskı (İstanbul: SEV Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık, 1997). Also, for the sake of simplicity, all dates have been converted to the Gregorian calendar.

The abbreviations below have been used in the text:

A. MKT. MHM — Sadaret Mektubi Mühimmâ Kalemi Evrakî (Important Correspondence, The Sublime Porte)
BEO — Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Evrakî (Document Bureau of the Sublime Porte)
BEO. AYN.d — Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Ayniyat Defterleri (Register of Grand-Vizierial Correspondence, The Sublime Porte)
BOA — Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Istanbul)
DH.MKT — Dahiliye Nezâreti Mektubî Kalemi (Correspondence of the Interior Ministry)
FO — British Foreign Office
HO — British Home Office
HR. TO — Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası Evrakî (Documents of the Correspondence and Translation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
İ. DH — İrade Dahiliye (Decree of the Interior Ministry, the Sublime Porte)
NA — The National Archives of the United Kingdom, London
Y. EE — Yıldız Esas Evrakî (Basic Documents, Yıldız Palace)
Y. PRK. AZJ — Yıldız Perakende Evrakî Arzuhal Jurnal (Petitions and Spy Reports, Yıldız Palace)
Y. PRK. TKM — Yıldız Perakende Evrakî Tahrîrât-ı Ecnebiye ve Mabeyn Mütereçimliği (Documents of the Correspondence and Translation Bureau of Yıldız Palace)
Y.A. HUS — Yıldız Sadaret Hususî Maruzatî Evrakî (Prime Minister’s Special Reports, Yıldız Palace)
Y.MTV — Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzatî Evrakî (Various Miscellaneous Reports, Yıldız Palace)
Y.PRK. HR —Yıldız Perakende Evrakî Hariciye Nezareti Maruzatî (Decrees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Y.PRK.BŞK — Yıldız Perakende Evrakî Başkitabet Dairesi Maruzatî (Reports of the Chief Secretary Office, Yıldız Palace)
Introduction

The Ottoman Empire entered into a process of total transformation with the Edict of Gülhane, also known as Tanzimat, meaning reorganization. This period was different from the previous efforts at imperial restoration that the Ottomans had been experienced since the end of the so-called the classical age of Mehmed II, about four hundred years previous. This time, what was changing in the Empire was the process of change itself. The traditional institutions of the Empire gradually came to be replaced by new ones, modelled along European lines. This process was not simply adaptation of European institutions. Rather it was complex transformation evolved into the different forms and set in a different framework. In fact, the Empire was undertaking this transformation in an unsteady intellectual atmosphere.¹ The conditions of the new world into which the Ottoman Empire was entering, and in which the first seeds of the globalization were planted, were one of the main factors that enforced the Empire to begin this transformation process.²

It is with this transformative period that the Ottomans started to integrate their administrative and social institutions with modern European approaches, which they had previously encountered both on the battlefield and in the commercial arena. This transformative period was officially started with Tanzimat in 1839 and was continued by the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856. The Congress of Paris, held in the same year, recognized the Ottoman Empire as a European state. The military relations between Europe and the Ottomans had already become closer during the Crimean War and this rapprochement had introduced itself even earlier in the commercial field, following the 1838 Treaty of Baltalimani with Britain.³

¹ İlber Ortaylı, İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1983), p. 11-12.
² M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 4; Ortaylı, p. 11-12.
³ Şükrü Hanoğlu, Late Ottoman Empire, p. 81-82, 85; İlber Ortaylı, En Uzun Yüzyılı, p. 131.
In the Age of Discovery, Europeans had begun exploring the world by sea in search of trading partners, new goods, and new trade routes that would allow them to increase their commercial activities and expand into diverse markets. With trade flows increasingly favoring Europe, the Ottoman Empire began to grant commercial privileges and capitulations to the European states in order to, at least to some extent, alter the flow of commerce back towards the Ottoman lands. By the time of the Treaty of Baltalimani, British and European merchants as well as investors had turned increasingly towards the Ottoman Empire in search of new markets, and were poised to reap the fruits of their new commercial privileges and the capitulation regime. The Europeans’ economic and political benefits in the Ottoman lands accelerated diplomatic competition between them. Through its participation in this balance of powers, the Empire remained relatively influential in diplomatic arena, despite not being capable of contributing to the broader flow of commercial activity on equal terms with the other parties. This trade deficit ultimately proved too great for the Empire to handle, and triggered a collapse that reduced the state revenues, ruined the treasury, and deteriorated the Ottoman economy in general. This crisis atmosphere, and the increasing backward trend of the Ottoman economy, allowed the Europeans acquire even further privileges and obtain new grants.

The influx of new companies and merchants to the Ottoman lands paved the way for various new investments such as railways, telegrams, banks and insurance companies, to name a few. To a certain extent, all of these new investments introduced new technological developments to the Ottoman state and society and promoted modernization trends that the Ottoman authorities had embarked upon starting with the infrastructural reform of the Tanzimat and related projects thereafter. The trade vessels anchored at the ports demanded transportation and storage facilities to transfer the loads they carried. The sailors and merchants requested qualified accommodations,

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7 Şükrü Hanioğlu, Late Ottoman Empire, p. 22; François Georgeon, Sultan Abdülhamid, p. 209.
as well as health and municipal services, when they stopped over in Ottoman ports. The Ottoman state was expected to offer such modern demands, and when it failed to do so, the Europeans undertook these investments, though in return they obtained new privileges.\(^8\)

European merchants not only made investments but also introduced new goods and products to the Ottomans. These products, when released to the Ottoman market, affected the life style of the people, not to mention the social dynamics. Amongst such products, the sewing machine, the heating stove and gas lamps quickly became highly sought-after.\(^9\) All these developments spurred on the emergence of new communities and subcultures, which desired the imagined European life style, with its latest fashions and products. In short, the traditional oriental living patterns previously dominant in the Ottoman society were increasingly giving way to the imitation or adaptation of European norms.\(^10\) This new westernized aesthetic and pattern of consumption, which developed as an alternative to the traditional lifestyles of Ottoman society, began to emerge after the *Tanzimat*. European culture, lifestyle and products aroused the interest of Ottoman society, and subculture groups that emulated this novel mode of living emerged. This interest in and desire for European products and manners, and the adoption of Western fashions, was summed up in the phrase *Alla Franca*.\(^11\)


\(^11\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 100, 141.
The European merchants and investors who targeted Ottoman markets initially settled in the Empire’s port cities, such as Smyrna, Thessaloniki, and Beirut. However, it soon became clear that they needed to expand their business and enlarge their field of activities in order to get a higher profit margin. This meant that they had to penetrate the Ottoman market further. For this reason, the development of a network to circulate certain information and news, which would assist them in reinforcing their position, as well as help them present their investments and products to the public, became necessary. This crucial need of the merchants is in fact the essential reason why several newspapers and periodicals appeared one after another in the Ottoman Empire.\footnote{Donald Quataert, “Introduction,” p. 10-14; Alemdar, İstanbül, 1875-1964, p. 6-7; Hamza Çakır, Osmanlı Basınında Reklam (1828–1864) (Ankara: Elit Reklamcılık, 1997), p. 34-40.} It is not a coincidence that the first newspapers were published in Smyrna, one of the main Ottoman ports to Europe, and that almost all of them were in the European languages. The first newspapers in the Ottoman lands generally focused on commercial and financial news, but as the time passed, they developed a richer content portfolio with a wider range of topics. These, more in-depth newspapers, were improved in this way to achieve different socio-political goals, and reach a larger public audience.\footnote{Gérard Groc and İbrahim Çağlar, La Presse Française de Turquie de 1795 à nos Jours: Histoire et Catalogue (İstanbul: ISIS Yayımcılık, 1985), p. 5-9.}

These early newspapers and periodical were followed by newer ones that had different purposes and targeted diverse groups, other than only merchants and investors. Among those, there were state-sponsored official newspapers and semi-official ones, as well as local or regional, national newspapers each of which had diverse objectives based on their own target audience. These objectives can broadly be listed as follows: the establishment of ties between the subjects and the state, political opposition, propaganda, national development, social development, modernization, economy, trade, advertisement, competition, culture, arts, and so on. Whatever their original purpose was, all of these newspapers and periodicals played a role in the emergence and development of the Ottoman press and significantly contributed to the formation and direction of
public opinion in the Ottoman lands. In the course of time, the Ottoman press blossomed and self-consciously took on a role for itself as mediator between the public and the government.\textsuperscript{14}

The Ottoman press was as cosmopolitan and multicultural as the empire itself. As a result, the publications exhibited diverse qualifications, characteristics, and features, and fell into many different categories. We can divide these publications into three categories, based on their language; these are the Turkish press, the non-Turkish press and the foreign-language press. The first group contained such Turkish language publications as \textit{Takvim-i Vekâyi}, the state's official press organ. The second group consisted of non-Turkish language publications, which used any of the languages other than Turkish that were spoken by the Empire’s own subjects, such as Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian and Greek. Finally, French, English, Spanish and Italian and other foreign-language publications constituted the last group. Since, in general, almost all of these foreign-language papers were produced in European languages, we can also name this group the European-language press. These varied publications each targeted different reader profiles. For example, the foreign-language press was mainly addressed to the European communities, or Levantines, who were settled in the Ottoman lands for business purposes. The subject of this study, \textit{The Levant Herald}, as its name suggests falls into the third category.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{The Levant Herald} (1856-1914) was one of the long-lasting newspapers issued under Ottoman rule. From this perspective, it witnessed the Empire’s last decades. Today, browsing through the pages of this newspaper provides readers an opportunity to travel back in history and observe past events on a daily basis. In this regard, \textit{The Levant Herald} contains significantly valuable information for every aspect of social studies, and especially for historians. In order to utilize this information appropriately, the history of the newspaper itself must be studied in detail to provide


researchers with some ideas and familiarity regarding the source. Therefore, it is of great importance to know how the newspaper functioned, the nature of its staff and its readers, and to grasp political, economic and cultural context in which it existed. In this study, The Levant Herald is examined from the perspectives mentioned above. It strives to shed light on the foundation and history of the newspaper, understand the socio-economic and political conditions of the time, and focus on its owners and their relations with the political authorities.

The long lifecycle of the newspaper has forced us to narrow down this study to a particular period. Thus, our study concentrates on the first two proprietors of the paper, James Carlile McCoan and Edgar Whitaker, and on the activities of The Levant Herald during their ownership from 1859 to 1878. As a result, the early years of the newspaper and the newspaper’s position in the Ottoman press of the time will be analyzed.

This study also aims to offer biographical information on the proprietors, who have not been covered in enough detail in the literature so far. It also hopes to contribute to the history of Ottoman press, using the Levantine Anglophone press as an example. In addition to looking at the history of the newspaper and the major figures associated with it, the study sheds light on the social and cultural transformations during the Tanzimat, as well as on another aspect of Ottoman-British relations. In this study, almost all the available issues of The Levant Herald were examined. Most of these issues are located in the following libraries and archives in microfilm format: the British Library, the Library of Congress, the Center for Research Libraries, the Ottoman Bank Archives and the Research Centre and National Library of Turkey. All the collected microfilms of The Levant Herald were carefully scanned, converted into a digital format and all assembled together in order to study them efficiently. During this study, the press of contemporaneous Britain was also taken into consideration, since the owners and often the readership of The Levant Herald were British subjects, and the newspaper circulated not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in Europe and Britain. Hence, it was a necessity to go back to the British press from time to time. If there were certain areas which The Levant Herald and Ottoman press remained silent, it was preferred to return to the British press to obtain more information. Besides this, archival documents retrieved from The Ottoman Archives and The National Archives have also been used in this study. Finally, a number of published document collections, diaries, memoirs, PhD dissertations, articles, and books were consulted.
Chapter 1
Foreign-Language Press in The Ottoman Empire

1.1 The Birth of the Foreign-Language Press in The Ottoman Empire

The earliest example of periodicals in history were newsletters. Newsletters, which were generally commercial in content, became more common towards the end of the Middle Ages. As the medium of periodicals proliferated, the content expanded to include information about the distant geographies, and the news that was considered important was written, still by hand, into the pages of the periodical. They sold their writings in the form of letters, brochures, communiqués and bulletins. With the invention of the printing press, not only did the number of periodicals increase but also their content was diversified. News about commercial and social life, advertisements, inventions and discoveries were all covered in the periodicals. The first periodicals were published in Italy in 1563. Italy was then followed by Switzerland (1600), Sweden (1600), France (1605), Austria (1610), England (1622), Spain (1626), Russia (1703), the USA (1804), Greece (1821), Ottoman Empire (1825) and Romania (1828). 16

The pioneering periodicals issued in the Ottoman Empire were bulletins of European origin that aimed to spread the revolutionary ideas of the French Revolution or were opposed to these ideas. The first one in this category was Bulletin de Nouvelles, which was issued in French in 1795, thirty-six years before the Takvim-i Vekâyi, the first official newspaper of the Ottoman State. Bulletin de Nouvelles was printed in Constantinople and continued until March 1796. It was the organ of the French embassy in the Ottoman Empire. It was published twice a month and covered six to eight pages. The main purpose of the bulletin was to popularize Revolutionary ideas, promote the spread of republicanism and support the young French Republic. 17

In September 1796, Le Mercure Oriental was launched. It was also in French, but this time the purpose was to stand against the Revolution. This newspaper, which was intermittently published


17 Gérard Groc and İbrahim Çağlar, p. 6.
until July 1897, supported Royalist ideas and produced publications against the French Revolution and its army. It also shared anti-revolutionary news published all around Europe. In the meantime, the European newspapers that were against the republican ideas of the French Revolution reached the Ottoman Empire and they were regularly distributed via the embassies. For instance, an anti-revolutionist newspaper that was published in French in Frankfurt was distributed by the Austrian embassy.\(^\text{18}\)

The more European merchants operated in the Ottoman lands, the more they needed reliable news reports. These merchants, who were mainly settled in port cities, needed news to be able to operate efficiently in their field of activity. This need gave rise to the emergence of newspapers one after another. Once the Trade Convention of Baltalimanı was signed in 1838, many newspapers were launched. Following the first trial runs in the Ottoman capital, some other newspapers began to be published in Smyrna, and again in French.\(^\text{19}\) Starting from the 1820s, *Le Smyrnéen* (1824), *Le Spectateur Oriental* (1821-1827) and *Courrier de Smyrne* (1828-1830) were released into the market. They were later followed by *Echo de l'Orient* (1838-1845), *Impartial de Smyrne* (1841-1912), *Arshaluys Araratian* (1840) in Smyrna, and *Journal de Constantinople* (1846-1866), *Presse Orient* (1849-1854) and *Courrier d'Orient* (1854) in Constantinople. All of these newspapers adopted a publication policy in favor of Levantine merchants in the Ottoman lands, and they generally published news about commercial, economical, political and legal developments.\(^\text{20}\)

In 1831, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, the official newspaper of the Ottoman Empire was launched. William Churchill, of British origin, issued the first private newspaper in Turkish.\(^\text{21}\) In fact, this newspaper


\(^{19}\) Korkmaz Alemdar, *İ stanbul*, p. 4-5.


was semi-official since it directly received the Ottoman government’s subsidy from its beginning. In the same year, Alexandre Blacque launched Le Moniteur Ottoman in Constantinople. Previously, Blacque used to publish Spectateur de L’Orient in Smyrna, but as the newspaper adopted a pro-Ottoman attitude during the Greek War of Independence and criticized the policies of French government regarding the Revolt, it was closed on December 31, 1827 by the French consulate on the basis of capitulations. Subsequently, Blacque started to publish Le Courrier de Smyrne with the support of the Ottoman government. Yet, this time the newspaper drew the reaction of the Russian ambassador. Heiden, the admiral who had commanded a squadron of the Russian navy in the Battle of Navarino, claimed that Courrier de Smyrne was publishing libel about himself and threatened that if the newspaper continued, he would make them pay for their disrespect at his earliest opportunity. As a result of the diplomatic efforts of the French and Russian ambassadors at the Sublime Porte, Blacque was forced to sell his newspaper. The newspaper was soon renamed Journal de Smyrne (1833-1915), and Blacque went to Constantinople upon the invitation of Sultan Mahmud II later on in 1831. He then issued the semi-official newspaper Le Moniteur Ottoman with the Ottoman government’s support.

With the arrival of the telegraph and railways to the Ottoman territories and the spread of steamboats, the ushering in of a new age of rapid communication was underway. Constantinople was connected to European capitals through the telegraph during the Crimean War in 1856. News agencies like Reuters or Havas sped up the flow of foreign news. Newspapers were the leading distributors of the information received by telegraph. In 1841, there was a total of two newspapers in Constantinople, whereas in contrast, there was one in Naples, four in Athens and

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24 Hıfızı Topuz, 100 Soruda Türk Basın Tarihi, p. 33.

more than a dozen periodicals operating in Malta. In the same time span, there were twenty-six in Calcutta, fourteen in Bombay, eight in Sydney, three in Melbourne. As for Africa, there were twelve journals operating for the entire continent.\(^{26}\)

The number of newspapers in the Ottoman Empire started to rise in the course of the Crimean War. By 1853, all over the Empire, from the Danube provinces to Belgrade and from Smyrna to Beirut, there were between thirty to forty periodicals, which were published in French, Italian, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, Arabic and other languages.\(^{27}\) In addition to Takvim-i Vekâyi and Ceride-i Havâdis, which were published in Turkish, other languages in Constantinople produced periodicals geared towards their own communities: Le Journal de Constantinople, Echo de l’Orient, Le Courrier de Constantinople, Le Commerce de Constantinople, La Gazette Médicale d’Orient in French; L’Omnibus, L’Indicatore Bizantino, L’Albun Bizantino, Giurisprudenza Bizantina in Italian; Telegraphos tou Bosphorou in Greek; Haisdan in Armenian; Novina Bulgarska in Bulgarian. In Smyrna, there was Impartial de Smyrne in French, Amaltheave Journal de Smyrne in Greek, Archalonis in Armenian and Chaka-Misrah in Hebrew.\(^{28}\) These newspapers focused on diverse fields from science to commerce, as well as law and politics. Ottoman press became increasingly settled and influential in the twenty-five years following its foundation.

Through the spread of lithography press in the Empire, the number of newspapers steadily increased.\(^{29}\) Three years later, in 1856, towards the end of the Crimean War, the following newspapers were already in operation: Mecma-i Havadis and Akbar-i Constantine in Turkish with Armenian letters; Anatoli in Turkish with Greek letters; Ceride-i Devriye in Turkish; Macis, Avedaper, Arsdjid Arevelian, Ardzvi Vaspurakan in Armenian; Le Commerce de Constantinople -


Presse d’Orient in French; El Maladero la Fuente de Cienci in Spanish; and Hor-Israel with Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino) in Hebrew alphabet, Tzarigradski Vestik in Bulgarian.\(^{30}\)

By the end of 1857, this list had been enlarged by Byzantis (previously Telegraphos tou Bosphorou) in Greek, Mirat al-Ahval in Arabic, Ceride-i Ticaret in Turkish, French, Armenian and Greek, and Le Musée de la Presse d'Orient and L'Echo de la Mode in French. Published by the British subjects, The Levant Herald was launched to print regularly in the end of 1857. Most of these newspapers were bilingual and had at least columns in French, which was then the language of trade and diplomacy.\(^{31}\) A newspaper issued in London published an article about the periodicals in Constantinople and wrote: “Although Constantinople is not a city where people read a lot, it has got many more newspapers and magazines than some Europeans cities such as Naples, Rome, Lisbon, Florence, Copenhagen and St. Petersburg, which all boast of their cultural life and arts.” It was also stated that even though the newspapers were sometimes censored, they were generally as free as the ones in London and New York, and the censorship had little impact on them.\(^{32}\)

Although the number of newspapers was increasing in the Ottoman lands, this does not mean that reading was a popular phenomenon. It should be clarified that the press was just in its developing stages, and, in general, most people continued to rely on more traditional ways of gaining information: these included rumors, gossip, recitation and other means of oral communication, rather than the reading of newspapers. Nevertheless, in many places in the Ottoman Empire, it was common for newspapers to be read aloud in public, so that even the illiterate would be informed

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\(^{32}\) "Our Weekly Gossip," The Athenaeum, Sep 8, 1855, p. 1032; La France à Constantinople ou Présence Française Dans la Capitale Ottomane, p. 40-43.
about the latest news. This usually took place in social spaces such as coffeehouses, barber shops, tobacco shops and kıraathanes, or reading rooms. These places were usually male-dominated spaces, and political debate and discussion would often follow the recitation of the news. In this way, men who visited such places would have a chance to engage with the articles, keep in touch with the contemporary events, and participate in communal discourse.  

Nevertheless, it should be stated that the foreign-language newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire played a very significant role in the Ottoman-European integration. These publications acted as a bridge between the two worlds. Via telegraph agencies, news spread internationally, and it was possible for the Ottomans to gauge European reaction to their policies in almost real-time. Thus, the news coming directly from the Ottoman lands contributed to the international newsfeed. The political, economic and financial issues handled by these newspapers also drew the attention of politicians, investors and merchants who had a direct relationship with the Ottomans. The news about the latest Ottoman regulations, borrowings, tenders and stocks occupied the economy pages of these newspapers. In fact, the political and administrative issues treated in these newspapers were even discussed in European parliaments, and deputies would directly quote from these publications in their parliamentary speeches. Therefore, the target group of these newspapers was not only the Ottomans, but also the broader European public opinion. These newspapers paid for advertisements in the national newspapers of Europe, and applied a different tariff of fares for overseas subscription in order to boost their sales and increase the number of their readers. Thus, these newspapers were not only Ottoman, but were, in fact, international.

What made all these newspapers important was the fact that they presented the developments in detail and gave both national and international news. For instance, if a paper contained news about the port of Smyrna, it was also possible for this to be juxtaposed with news about London, Paris, or Rome. They published the price movements from leading European stock exchange markets such as that of London, Paris and Frankfurt, and in this way, they contributed to the development of Ottoman trade, stock exchange and finance. They conveyed news about many issues which the

Turkish-language press or other papers would fail to notice or could not write. For example, no Turkish-language newspaper reported the news of the Ciragan Incident in 1878, while *The Eastern Express* did not hesitate to share the news, albeit using very cautious language. Many learned about the event from *The Eastern Express*. These newspapers also brought in European fashions and trends to the Ottomans, while representing the Ottoman geography in Europe. They established an interactional relationship between the European and Ottoman culture by covering both important global and local issues. Foreign-language press could focus on all important issues and create a relatively dynamic public opinion. Turkish press also benefited from their publication in different ways. For example, they quoted the news made by foreign-language press or communicated this or that news in order to refute it.

### 1.2 The Foreign-Language Press and Press Regulations in The Ottoman Empire

From the start of the Ottoman press, almost, the government had begun to provide financial aid to prominent newspapers. Providing these subsidies was intended to gain their support for government policies, or at least buy a kind of neutrality and a refuge from criticism. If the newspapers want to maintain their subsidies, they had to take an editorial stance on the side of the state. Although often these newspapers were sympathetic to opposition groups, they were forced to remain silent on their activities, or else face losing their financial support. Until 1857, the Ottoman state had put no regulations into force regarding the publishing of periodicals, newspapers, and magazines. Instead, the government preferred to exercise economic control over periodicals, through the usage of these subsidies.\(^{34}\) However, as the government came to adopt stringent censorship – particularly during the later years of the Hamidian period – it became more and more difficult for the press to sustain itself on its own sales and income; as such, the press became increasingly dependent upon the state’s financial aids. This dependence, naturally, encouraged progressively more sycophantic behavior on the part of the press: expressing overwhelming

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\(^{34}\) Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 102.
support for the government, the sultan, and the policies of the state often became the only one preventing a paper from sliding into bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{35}

The subsidies, referred to as gifts, favors, gratuities, aid or benefaction were not officially accepted as a regular payment by the Ottoman state.\textsuperscript{36} Although these subsidies were not officially announced or accepted on regular basis, this was what happened \textit{de facto}. These ‘gifts’ were in fact scheduled payments which were issued from different, specifically allocated funds, based on the funds’ monthly and annual balance. In fact, the government issued a significant amount of payment to the newspapers and each payment corresponded to different budget items. Which newspaper would monthly get how much from the fund was all clarified at the beginning. Which budget item or fund would be used for these extra money transfers was also made clear at the very beginning.\textsuperscript{37} For instance, payments to \textit{The Levant Herald} came from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1887 and 1893, but after 1893, it was the sultan’s treasury that undertook this payment. In 1899, management of the newspaper’s subsidy was returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{38} When the payment was late, the owners of the newspapers did not wait to demand their payments. They doubtless assumed that such a payment was a regular subsidy allocated to them and expected the government to pay it to them on a regular basis, as if it was their salary.\textsuperscript{39} The payment was, indeed, made on monthly basis like a salary, and there was sometimes even an increase in the payments over time. There were also times when the publishers demanded that the payment for a few months be issued in advance.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{36} BOA. BEO. 2504/187730-03 Hariciye to Sadaret, December 14, 1904; BEO. 2524/189229-02 Hariciye to Sadaret, March 9, 1905; BEO, 2253/168901-1 Sadaret to Maliye, November 14, 1903.

\textsuperscript{37} BOA. BEO. 2524/189229-05 Hariciye to Sadaret, March 31, 1905; DH.MKT. 1384/57 Dahiliyet to Sadaret, November 4, 1886.

\textsuperscript{38} BOA. BEO. 2524/189229-2 Hariciye to Sadaret, March 6, 1905.

\textsuperscript{39} BOA. BEO. 2211/165776 Sadaret to Maliye, November 2, 1903.

\textsuperscript{40} BOA. İ.DH. 1229/096201-1 Sadaret to Dahiliye, May, 19,1891.
On the other hand, due to censorship, the newspapers often declined to publish sensational or popular news that would boost their sales. This, naturally, shrank the newspapers’ clientele. As their advertisement income was also limited, they could not obtain a desired level of income out of their sales. This was a big problem for newspapers like *The Levant Herald*, which aimed to address not only the Ottoman world but also the Near East and continental Europe. Giving into censorship would not only hinder their sales but also decrease their income and lower their prestige, because they would be labeled as the press organ of the government. It is probably because of such reasons that *The Levant Herald* had a rather inconsistent policy. For example, there were times when the newspaper preferred to solely publish pro-government news, whereas there were the other times that it published news against the government at the cost of increasing government pressure and penalties. Newspaper owners were forced to make a calculation between the value of government support, and the economic hardship caused by heavy censorship. Indeed, as the owner of *The Levant Herald*, Edgar Whitaker once said: “My sales decreased because of the censorship. I am deprived of any opportunity to make quality news. I cannot even write about epidemics like cholera. I cannot make my readers reach the news they deserve. The decrease in the number of my customers causes my newspaper to make loss every single day.” Whitaker complained about similar things in another petition sent to the Prime Ministry. He stated that the censorship decreased the number of his customers and the newspaper was sometimes suspended from publishing under the pressure of heavy penalties. He indicated that all of this caused him trouble and dragged him into debt. Highlighting that he was in a big trouble, Whitaker mentioned the previous government subsidies and demanded in the same petition that three-years payment be issued to his newspaper in advance. Whitaker’s statements and petition prove that the newspaper owners did not regard the government’s payment as a simple aid. To them, such financial aid might have been a nominal price paid for the censorship, difficult publishing conditions, pressure and investigations, which they had to face.

After all, any failure in receiving these payments would endanger the existence of these newspapers. Without financial aid, the newspapers would not have been able to continue

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41 BOA. Y.PRK.BŞK. 21/5-1 Edgar Whitaker to Mabeyn, April 14, 1891; Y.A.HUS. 234/23; Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2007), p. 86.
publishing. The fact that imposed censorship over the press in the Empire does not mean that it was sought to suppress or overwhelm it. In contrast, it was clearly seen the press’s major potential to influence society and shape public opinion, and its role as a medium through reform projects throughout the Empire could be promoted.\textsuperscript{42} After all, any failure in receiving these payments would endanger the existence of these newspapers. Without financial aid, the newspapers would not have been able to continue publishing. At the same time, there was an effort on the Ottoman authorities to reform and Westernize the Empire. Under such circumstances, no government would give up control of the press, and periodicals, for it would mean ceding a valuable future tool to influence public opinion, both in Europe and among the increasingly literate populace of the Empire. The existence of newspapers and periodicals was essential in the reform process. Besides this, there was a desire on the part of the state to encourage a multilingual press, because this was seen as a requirement of ruling a multiethnic empire. In accordance with the values of the \textit{Tanzimat} and \textit{Islahat} Edicts, the state guaranteed certain rights and freedoms to the Empire’s various peoples, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in the hope of preventing further secessionist movements and avoiding European intervention. The promotion of a multilingual press was seen as a valuable symbol of the Empire’s tolerance and egalitarianism, in the face of regular foreign criticism of, and threats against, the Ottoman state. Thus, the government paid money to a variety of different newspapers which were published in several languages, and which were aimed at different ethnicities. However, it was also clear that the government wanted all of these newspapers to follow the state’s policy line. In brief, the government paid the newspapers, the publishers and authors, so that they would be dependent, not upon the quality of their writing, but their closeness to government policy.\textsuperscript{43}

The Porte supposed that its financial aid would help the newspapers maintain themselves. Otherwise, they would have to close or carry their printing houses abroad. In such a case, there would be gaps in the coverage of Ottoman press and the state would lose almost all its chances to control the publishers since the ability of the Ottoman government to influence the press beyond the borders was limited. Ultimately, the risks of operating a press within the Empire were less than

\textsuperscript{42} Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p.166.

\textsuperscript{43} Şükrü Hanıoğlu, p. 94; İlber Ortaylı, p. 74-77; Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p.165-166.
those of allowing the papers, over which the state could only exert limited authority, to take control of the Ottoman discourse, or to let Ottoman papers flee abroad. In such a situation, all the state could do was to declare such publications harmful and forbid them to enter the country, and strive to prevent their illegal circulations.\textsuperscript{44} Even if the Porte ban a periodical’s entrance in the Ottoman lands, it could still make its way in a sealed envelope or through the foreign carrier services which had nearly extraterritorial privileges in the Ottoman state.\textsuperscript{45} Therefore, most of the time, the state tended to act in moderation, since it did not desire its newspapers to carry their publishing houses abroad and continue their publishing life free from Ottoman control. In some cases, depending on the journal’s profile, the Ottoman authorities could negotiate with the publishers or proprietors and offer pay in exchange for ceasing their criticism against the Ottoman state.\textsuperscript{46} For example, in a petition in which Whitaker mentioned persistent censorship, his low income and the various economic losses he suffered, he demanded that the government issue his payment in bulk. He requested monetary aid to close his debt as a whole. If such aid would not be provided, he asked to be given permission to carry his publishing house abroad. In response to Whitaker’s demand, the Porte deemed it necessary to grant him some more monetary aid. It was concluded that if the newspaper was transferred abroad, this would lead to harmful consequences for the state itself. Yet, it was also mentioned that, on occasion, Whitaker did not avoid publishing harmful content against the government despite the aid he had been receiving over the years. As a result, Whitaker was asked to guarantee that he would publish no more content against the state.\textsuperscript{47}

After some experience, the publishers learned very well that their payments would be cut if they insisted on publishing unwanted content. The state made the publishers feel the pressure of its existence at every occasion. This feeling was even bitterer for the press that operated in European languages. It meant that the Ottoman state continued its strict control and it did not give rein to others no matter how many capitulations, legal privileges and diplomatic concessions it had

\textsuperscript{44} BOA. İ.DH. 1023/80672-3 Mabeyn to Dahiliye, January 26, 1887; Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{45} Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p. 165.

\textsuperscript{46} Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p. 165.

\textsuperscript{47} BOA. İ.DH. 1229/096201-1 Sadaret to Dahiliye, May, 19, 1891.
otherwise granted. In a way, the Ottoman state made it clear that it would continue auditing through its alternative methods. For example, a document retrieved from the Ottoman Archives reveals that in 1877 The Levant Herald was granted 100 Liras a month and La Turki was granted 85 Liras a month while Phare Du Bosphore and Vizantis were respectively paid 40 and 30 Liras a month. El-itidal, a newspaper in Arabic received 30 liras and Hilâl, which was issued in Plovdiv, was also paid 30 Liras. These payments were all cut in 1886 for various reasons. Indeed, a publication ban was then imposed on The Levant Herald and El-Itidal, as a result of which the payments were stopped.\textsuperscript{48}

The Porte ceased to provide subsidies to those newspapers whose publishing policy it found harmful or hazardous. In this way, the foreign-language newspapers, with which the state could not fully intervene legally or penally due to the protections inherent in the capitulations treaties, were instead controlled through economic pressure.\textsuperscript{49} When the publishers who were subject to such economic sanctions asked for their payments, they were reminded that their publication had published harmful or seditious content, and that if they wanted to receive their payments, they should promise or guarantee that they would no longer publish hazardous or harmful articles.\textsuperscript{50} Such was the case with The Levant Herald; after its suspension, Whitaker was forced to petition the state for permission to begin publishing again. This was only granted when he gave his assurances that he would not make any publication against the government.\textsuperscript{51}

Sometimes the state deliberately delayed the payments, particularly when wanted to accumulate the payments and issue them in installments. When the state did that, those newspapers that were waiting for their payments would not put themselves at risk by opposing to the government.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} BOA. DH.MKT. 1384/57 Dahiliyet to Sadaret, November 4, 1886; İ.DH. 1229/096201-1 Sadaret to Dahiliye, May, 19,1891; Milena Methodieva, Reform, Politics and Culture, p. 158.

\textsuperscript{49} BOA. DH.MKT. 1384/57-1 Dahiliyet to Sadaret, November 4, 1886.

\textsuperscript{50} BOA. İ.DH. 1229/096201-1 Sadaret to Dahiliye, May, 19,1891.

\textsuperscript{51} BOA. İ.DH. 986/77806-1 Mabeyn to Dahiliye, April 15, 1886.

\textsuperscript{52} BOA. BEO. 2524/189229-2 Hariciye to Sadaret, March 6, 1905; BEO. 2211/165776 Sadaret to Maliye, November 2, 1903.
all, the payments did not have an official status and were merely called “gifts” or “donations.” As an example, after Whitaker’s death, his heirs requested the payments that had already accumulated. However, they were informed that the payments were only a gift and a sign of benefaction, not a fee or salary. Therefore, they would not be paid any longer. The Porte found it unnecessary to grant this aid once the editor was dead.\textsuperscript{53} This control mechanism, which was mainly based on economic parameters, continued until the end of the empire. It particularly widely used during the reign of Abdulhamid II.

The control mechanism over the press also came to have different dimensions. For instance, a publication license was granted only with the stipulation that the draft version of the newspaper was approved before its printing. In other words, the publishers would submit one draft copy to the censorship committee and continue with publication only if the committee granted approval. For example, it was stipulated that, concerning a particular newspaper to be published on October 18, 1840, one copy be submitted to the censorship body before its publication.\textsuperscript{54} A communiqué regarding the foreign-language press was sent to the embassies concerned in June 1849. The message required the ambassadors to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance, regarding the publications that their subjects would make.\textsuperscript{55}

The foreign-language press was, in some situations, subject to the Ottoman government. In other situations, however, the newspapers were subject to their own respective embassies. It was because of this that, for example, \textit{Spectateur de L’Orient} was closed by the French Embassy, with the capitulation treaties as the legal basis.\textsuperscript{56} The Sublime Porte monitored both the foreign-language press as well as Turkish, non-Turkish language press. When it deemed necessary, it contacted the embassies for these presses, or directly warned the newspapers about their content. Although there was no formal regulation concerning publication and press, the foreign-language press faced

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} BOA. BEO. 2504/187730-3 Hariciye to Sadaret, January 14, 1905; BEO. 2253/168901-1 Hariciye to Sadaret, January 14, 1904.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Orhan Koloğlu, “Osmanlı Basını: İçeriği ve Rejimi,” p. 72; Fatmagül Demirel, \textit{Abdülhamid Döneminde}, p. 30.
\item \textsuperscript{55} İpek Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1913,” \textit{Turkish Studies Association Journal} 27 (2003): 17.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Fatmagül Demirel, \textit{Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür}, p. 30.
\end{itemize}
pressure from the Sublime Porte whenever they had publications advocating against the policies of the Ottoman government. During the Greek War of Independence, which began in 1821, Smyrneen adopted an attitude supporting the revolt, therefore, it faced pressure from the Ottoman government. The articles that defended the Greek revolt were quick to draw the attention of the Ottoman government, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the French embassy about the disturbance felt by the government. Eventually, the newspaper was forced to cease publication for a time in October, 1824, and was required to be renamed before it could be published again.

The Sublime Porte brought the first printing regulations into force on February 15, 1857. The purpose of this edict was to regulate the press, and to impose requirements in order to obtain a license to open a publishing house. However, in reality, it served as a censorship organ. According to this regulation, which was the first legal attempt to regulate the press, the license to open a publishing house would be given by the Ministry of Police only upon the permission of the Prime Ministry. The Prime Ministry would decide to grant permission after investigations were carried out by Ministry of Police and by the Council of Education, which operated under the larger Ministry of Education. Any kind of work to be published was subject to the permission of the Council of Education. If there was anyone who dared to publish books or periodicals with harmful content, these hazardous publications would be collected and suppressed by the Ministry of Police. The individual foreigner who wished to open a publishing house would also be subject to these regulations, and it was necessary to receive a license from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the provinces, however, where bureaucrats from the ministries were in shorter supply, the provincial governors would act instead as an intermediary to get the necessary permissions and licenses from

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58 Hasan Refik Ertuğ, p. 80-81; Groc and Çağlar, La Presse Française de Turquie, p. 170.

59 “Foreign Intelligence,” The Morning Post, October 30, 1824, p. 2.

60 İpek Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word,” p. 17-19.
the authorities concerned. Shortly after these regulations were promulgated, The Porte, issued a memorandum to make sure that the regulation was put into effect as quickly as possible. In this memorandum, it was particularly emphasized that people would not be allowed to publish newspapers or books simply as they wished, and that the publishing houses should be taken under control in line with the law.

Subsequent to the regulation on publishing houses, a regulation on copyrights was issued on March 3, 1857. Those who violated these regulations would be punished in accordance with Articles 137, 138 and 139 of the penal code. These stipulated that those who opened a publishing house without license and published periodicals would lose ownership their publishing house and be sentenced to a fine of 50 golden meçidiye coins. If publishing houses that had opened legally and obtained a license happened to make any publications against the actions of the state, these hazardous publications would immediately be confiscated and the publishing house concerned would be closed, either temporarily or permanently, based on the severity of the crime; furthermore, they would be sentenced to a fine of ten to fifty golden meçidiye coins. Journalists who produced publications that were against ethical and social norms would be arrested and imprisoned, as well.

These regulations were followed by a much larger one, the Press Regulation of 1864. This regulation, which was directly aimed at the press industry, was adapted from a similar law targeting the press prepared in 1852 in France, under the reign of Napoléon III. This law, which remained valid until the Second Constitutional Era, was taken as the main basis for the censorship conducted during the reign of Abdulhamid II. A famous French legal expert of the time, Anselme P. Batbie, said that while such censorship regime could be seen as a step back for France, the adoption of

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64 Fatmagül Demirel, Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür, p. 31.
same law actually was a step forward for Russia and the country of the sultan.\footnote{İlber Ortaylı, \textit{İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı}, p. 155.} This particular regulation caused an interesting discussion between the foreign-language press, Turkish-language press and the Sublime Porte. Turkish-language press had a positive attitude to the regulation. The newspaper \\textit{Ceride-i Havadis}, which was known for being close to the Ottoman government, wrote that this regulation made the Ottoman press freer than English and French presses.\footnote{“The Press Law,” \textit{The Levant Herald}, May 5, 1864, p. 2.} \textit{The Levant Herald}, on the other hand, had a more critical approach to these positive attitudes to the new regulation. \textit{The Levant Herald} shared an article entitled “The Press Law,” which had been previously published in \textit{Imperial de Smyrna}. This article criticized the new regulation, and claimed that it limited freedom of press. It was also stated in the same article that with the new regulations, journalists would be subject to personal pressure. It was pointed out that the newspaper and publishing house licenses that had already been received would be continued, but that the regulations resulting from the previous law would be cancelled. In other words, the new law would retrospectively cause publishers to lose certain rights. Besides this, the new law would be applicable to all the press members, foreign-language press, Turkish or non-Turkish language press and the rights that foreign-language press enjoyed from the capitulations would be ignored.\footnote{“The Press Law,” \textit{The Levant Herald}, May 5, 1864, p. 2.} \textit{The Levant Herald}’s criticism of the regulation immediately provoked a reaction from the government and some press organs. \textit{The Levant Herald} was forced to reply to these negative reactions, and underlined that they had no intention of shirking their responsibilities resulting from the newspaper, and that they had no wish to be exempt from the new laws. They explained that they were questioning the attitude of politicians to the arbitrary regulations of the government and that they had expressed their opinions legitimately. They further added that they still defended their original views.\footnote{“The Press Law,” \textit{The Levant Herald}, May 5, 1864, p. 2.}

Until 1883, the press was tracked by the Press Administration, the authority of which was expanded gradually. After 1883, the administration was divided into two sections due to the increasing work load, and a separate Administration of Foreign Press Affairs was established under
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of this office was to control the publications published in foreign languages, whether issued in the empire or sent in from abroad.\textsuperscript{70} The Sublime Porte wanted to expand these regulations to cover everyone in the empire, whether an Ottoman subject or not. However, the capitulations posed an obstacle against the enforcement of these regulations. Particularly, the juridical capitulations prevented the implementation of the articles concerned for foreign nationals. The Ottoman State claimed that the Ottoman courts should be authorized to intervene in the violations whether the violator was an Ottoman or not. The states that enjoyed the privileges granted by capitulations, however, did not recognize the jurisdiction of the Ottoman State on these foreign nationals. They did not accept that the Press Regulation would be applicable to the foreigners particularly in regards to its articles on discipline and punishment.\textsuperscript{71} In fact, capitulations did not specify who would judge the foreign nationals who committed crimes about press and publishing. This was a conflicting issue, and each party interpreted the situation in its own favor, justifying themselves using the capitulations treaties.\textsuperscript{72} It was thus only partially possible to apply the press regulation to the foreign nationals. For instance, it was possible for the Ottoman State to be able to impose penalties such as giving out warnings, cancelling the publishing licenses, forcing the stoppage of the publication, and handing down fines to foreign nationals. In fact, two newspapers which were published by a printing press owned by a foreign national were the first to be punished when the Press Regulation was put into effect. \textit{The Levant Herald}, an English-language newspaper and \textit{Dizilin Avarayri}, an Armenian-language newspaper, were both accused of publishing a reader’s letter which covered supposedly false information about the events in Crete. They both were fined and they had to pay 50 and 30 \textit{mecidiye} golden coins, respectively.\textsuperscript{73}

On the other hand, it was impossible to impose certain penalties on those foreign nationals who enjoyed the privileges granted by the capitulations. For example, it was not possible to confiscate

\textsuperscript{70} Fatmagül Demirel, \textit{Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür}, p. 48; İpek Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word,” p. 24


\textsuperscript{72} Bahadır Aydın, \textit{Kapitülasyonların Etkisi}, p. 188, 233.

\textsuperscript{73} BOA. A. MKT. MHM. 370/49-4, December 13, 1866.
their publishing houses, nor was it possible to imprison them. Above all, the Ottoman police force had only a limited prosecutorial authority in the areas that belonged to the foreign nationals. The Ottoman police could enter their dwellings only with the permission of the embassies and with the accompaniment of those responsible from there.\textsuperscript{74} The Sublime Porte informed the embassies concerned before such attempts. For example, on February 9, 1880, the Sublime Porte notified the British Embassy regarding its decision to suppress \textit{The Levant Herald} and seize its print works. Then, the Embassy informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about these developments via its interpreter, Sandison.\textsuperscript{75}

If the Ottomans acted otherwise, they would draw a reaction from the consulates. The consulates would strongly oppose the arrest of their nationals or their dwellings being entered. Furthermore, they would stand against the confiscation of their nationals’ publishing houses. The consulates justified these stances by referencing the terms of the capitulations, and such attempts would inevitably give rise to diplomatic problems. For example, in May 1878, \textit{The Levant Herald} was once accused of publishing an article against the sultan. The Ottoman police force conducted a raid on the office and confiscated all of the copies of the newspaper, as well as their printing machines. This caused a diplomatic crisis, and provoked a strong reaction in Europe against the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{76} Another similar event took place in 1880. A Muslim Ottoman subject and a Protestant British subject published an article criticizing some aspect of Islam. They were both arrested, and their possessions were confiscated. Upon hearing of this event, the government of Britain made a formal protest to the Ottoman State.\textsuperscript{77} The Administration of Press had envisaged that such problems would occur because of capitulations and demanded its authority be expanded. It noticed that foreign nationals were not subject to Ottoman courts, and proposed to close the newspapers issued by foreign nationals and instead transfer their licenses to the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{74} Bahadır Aydın, \textit{Kapitülasyonlar\'ın Etkisi}, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{75} BOA. Y.A. HUS. 164/71-1 Sadaret, February 8, 1880.

\textsuperscript{76} “The Press in Turkey,” \textit{The Daily New}, June 4, 1878, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{77} Bahadır Aydın, \textit{Kapitülasyonlar\'ın Etkisi}, p. 197-198.
subjects. This proposal was declined, and it was decided to establish a new administration. Thus, the Administration of Foreign Press Affairs was established, as mentioned previously.

Apart from this, if the foreign-language newspapers produced publications politically against their own countries of origin, they were in this case subject to the pressure of their own embassies. In such situations, the embassies would take actions in lieu of the Sublime Porte, and impose sanctions on the newspaper directly. This is how the French consulate closed *Le Spectateur Oriental*, which was published in Smyrna. The embassies themselves also took actions against the Turkish or non-Turkish press if they found it necessary. Even if the content was found merely provocative, rather than hostile, this was sufficient for them to complain about these newspapers to the Porte, and to request action be taken against them. The British Embassy made one such attempt because of an article on the idea of *Ittihad-i Islam*, or “solidarity of Islam”, that appeared in *Vakit* and *Tercüman-i Hakikat*, and which criticized western and British policies towards Islamic countries.

It could be assumed that the foreign-language press enjoyed legal impunity due to the capitulations, and that they established a close relationship with Ottoman officials primarily by writing articles upon the order of that state. It could also be said that the newspapers acted hypocritically, by fulfilling both the expectations of the opposition, which sought ways to avoid censorship, and by placating the demands of the administration. In fact, the situation was not as simple or straightforward as might be assumed. Maintaining positive relations with these two opposing parties at the same time was extraordinarily difficult, because, naturally, supporting the opposition would mean drawing the wrath of the Ottoman administrators, which could impose different penalties or sanctions. It was a fact that the capitulations enabled the foreign-language press to act more liberally and freely, but there were times when the benefits of the capitulations turned into

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obstacles. The foreign-language press members had to please not only their own countries and embassies, not to mention the Ottoman censors. They frequently faced warnings, fines and closure bans, which shows that it was hard to maintain this balancing act of relationships. A British newspaper, *The Standard*, published in London drew attention to this subject. It criticized the censorship and the condition of the foreign-language press in the Ottoman Empire; however, it also stated that the owners of the newspapers developed methods to cope with this situation. It was mentioned that they always considered the possibility of being punished in this or that way. Thus, they obtained more than one newspaper licenses under different names. So that if one was suspended they could continue the publication under the other names.\(^{82}\) It is not for certain if such methods were actually used, or were merely speculated about. In practice, *The Levant Herald*, *The Eastern Express* and *The Constantinople Messenger* were the same newspapers, simply from time to time operating under different names. This was also true of *Stanboul* and *Matin*. They replaced each other when one of them was suspended.\(^{83}\) For example, when *The Levant Herald* was closed, it continued its publication under the title of *The Constantinople Messenger*, but it still demanded a license to issue a newspaper under the title of *The Levant Herald*.\(^{84}\) Even when it was publishing issues under different names such as *The Eastern Express* or *The Constantinople Messenger*, it explicitly used the name *The Levant Herald* in its columns. The newspaper explained this situation as follows. “*The Levant Herald* is at present published under the title of *The Constantinople Messenger*… It is the oldest newspaper published in Constantinople.”\(^{85}\) When it used the title *The Eastern Express*, it additionally inserted in the middle of the title a specially designed logo contains the calligraphic writing of *The Levant Herald*.\(^{86}\) *The Cyprus Herald*, which was a British newspaper published in Limassol, Cyprus, brought this tough situation into question. The administrators of the newspaper claimed that as Britain had seized de facto control over the island

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84 BOA. İ.DH. 785/63775-19 Dahiliye to Hariciye, September 15, 1879.

85 *The Levant Herald*, July 13, 1881, p. 2.

86 *The Eastern Express*, Jan. 2, 1886, p.1
in 1878, they no longer had to respect Ottoman regulations. They demanded to be exempt from Ottoman laws and subject to British regulations. The British administrators of the island, however, made it clear that the press members should obey the original Ottoman regulations. In fact, according to the agreement between Britain and the Ottomans, only the island’s administration had been transferred to Britain, but the property rights to the island had been kept by the Ottomans. Under all of the aforementioned circumstances, very few newspapers could survive in the Empire. Out of the Twenty-Eight French newspapers publish in the empire in 1870s, for example, only three survived until 1880.88


Chapter 2
The Levant Herald

2.1 The Foundation of The Levant Herald

In late 1857, right after the Crimean War, the newspapers in Britain announced the foundation of a newspaper that would directly represent the principles of British journalism in Constantinople. The idea of issuing an English-language newspaper in that city had been on the agenda for a while, and it was decided to name this newspaper The Levant Herald. Ubicini, who touched on the activities of the early Ottoman press in his letters, Letters on Turkey, mentions that a newspaper with the same name was published in 1856 in Constantinople. In fact, The Levant Herald itself, in its “about” section, also gives its first publication date as 1856. Therefore, we can suppose that The Levant Herald was published for in a while in early 1856 and disappeared. In late 1858, the idea of establishing an English newspaper in Constantinople was brought back to the agenda. It was decided that the project was to be more seriously conducted this time, and that the old name, The Levant Herald, would be retained. It was also mentioned that the first issue of the newspaper would come out in 1859. In the words of its founders, the newspaper would defend British interests and ideas in the Ottoman lands.

The editorial board of The Levant Herald prepared a brochure, labelled a “prospectus,” to promote the newspaper which they were considering launching. The brochure offered a general introduction to the newspaper and revealed its objectives and intentions. It was also announced in this brochure that the first issue would be published on January 5, 1858. In fact, they were not able to keep to this schedule. The first issue of The Levant Herald published on January 5 but it was distributed on February 2, 1859 with the second issue. In its first page, it was mentioned that the first issue had to be published in a hurry due to the late delivery of the machines, which resulted from bad


91“Turkey,” The Daily News, November 27, 1858, p. 5; “Malta,” The Morning Post, December 27, 1858; p. 5.

weather conditions, and it was also mentioned that there were some difficulties in the typesetting. It was also stated the publishing license was received later than the expected date. According to *The Levant Herald*, all the conditions required to get the license were met, and the application file was duly submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry had guaranteed the newspaper that it would be issued in due time. Yet, the awaited license did still not come towards the end of the month, which caused the editorial board to take action. They had recourse to the British ambassador to accelerate the process. As a result of the ambassador’s efforts, the license was finally issued. On the same days, newspapers in Britain were praising the ambassador’s efforts that allowed *The Levant Herald* to receive its license.

*The Levant Herald* started its publication life on February 2, 1859, having already witnessed the difficulties of publishing in the Ottoman Empire, and the need for diplomatic and dignitarial connections. On the first day of its publication, it experienced the difficulties of operating in the Ottoman lands. It also the importance of influencing the Ottoman authorities via its diplomatic connections in order to be able to obtain favorable results. Thus, the newspaper, which was to be protected by the British embassy throughout its publication life, had to resort to the Embassy’s mediation even just to be able to publish its first issue.

This close relationship between the Embassy and the paper, even in its early stages, must have fostered the perception in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities that the newspaper was going to be a media organ for the Embassy. The proprietor of *The Levant Herald* was a British citizen and legally under the protection of the British Embassy within the framework of the capitulations. It is reasonable to think that the Ottoman authorities must have foreseen the extraordinary difficulties of keeping a periodical under control which operated within the framework of the capitulations. The existence of a newspaper with extraterritorial privileges must have been regarded extremely

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96 ”To Our Subscribers,” *The Levant Herald*, February 2, 1859, p. 12.
unfavorably by the Ottoman authorities. In this respect, it is understandable that the granting of the required publication license was delayed for a long time. However, after the direct intervention of the Embassy, the Ottoman authorities gave in and issued the license; the newspaper had, after all, fulfilled all of the requirements to obtain a license, and it was difficult for the Ottoman authorities keep slowing down this process in the face of the Embassy’s direct intervention.

In the mean the official authorities would not remain silent against the allegations that the license was delayed. The Sublime Porte sent a letter written in French to the newspaper and denied all the allegations. It was mentioned that the newspaper had recourse to the Ministry in December 1858 and the license was issued in due time. Upon this, *The Levant Herald* simply published the letter sent to itself. The only comment made in response to the letter was that the application file was submitted in 1857, not in December 1858 as mentioned in the letter. It was said sarcastically that those who wrote the letter might have made a typing mistake and written 8 instead of 7. However, this one year difference showed that the license was not issued in due time.97 It was with this event that *The Levant Herald* had its first polemic with the government.

It was with this event that *The Levant Herald* published its first polemic against the Ottoman authorities. Moreover, the fact that the Sublime Porte was quickly retort against the newspaper’s claims was an indication that it would take notice of even the slightest criticism against it, and would retaliate without delay. This reaction could be intended to strike caution in the rest of the Ottoman press, as well as serve as a warning for *The Levant Herald* in the future. However, as time would show, *The Levant Herald* did not pay much attention to such warnings.

The main office of *The Levant Herald* was in Beyoğlu, or Pera. In its very first years, the newspaper was being published in the “Societa Tipografica Italiana” and was distributed from this office. The first address of the newspaper was No. 2, Rue Douzio, Pera.98 Later on, the newspaper

97 *The Levant Herald*, February 16, 1859, p. 28.

98 This street can be seen in Charles Edward Goad’s map. Looking at Goad’s map, it is seen that Douzio street is called “Kaymakán Reşat Bey Sokak” today. It is behind the Sant Antonio di Padova church. Charles Edward Goad, *Plan d’assurance de Constantinople*, 1905, II, Péra & Galata 38, https://www.archives.saltresearch.org/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=458302&siro_library=GEN01 (Accessed in January 10, 2016).
moved to a new address on Grand Rue de Pera No 204, modern *Istiklal Caddesi*, and opened its own publishing house.\(^99\) The newspaper from then on always remained in Pera, although it changed its address a few more times. The neighborhood where the newspaper was headquartered, Galata, was at the time largely populated by non-Muslims. The foreign embassies were also located in the same area, and, as such, the chiefs of the foreign missions and many Levantine merchants took up residence there. Pera was one of the most cosmopolitan districts of Constantinople, and it was in many ways an open door to Europe. The dominant language in the neighborhood was French, and it was in Pera that the European lifestyle was the most popular. It was also possible to hear people speaking in many other European languages, or in the varied tongues of the Empire’s peoples, such as Greek, Armenian and Ladino. Considering its target group, it was no surprise that *The Levant Herald* had its office in Pera.\(^100\) In fact, the foreign-language newspapers that started to operate in Constantinople preferred Pera for their headquarters. As the time passed, this concentration became well-known, and the word “Pera Press” came to refer to all of the foreign-language press in the Empire. In response to this, the word “Babâli Press” was used to refer to the Turkish-language press since they, in contrast, were mostly located on Babâli street in Fatih.\(^101\)

*The Levant Herald* highlighted its leading features in all of its issues published during February 2, 1859. It was stated as follows: “The vast increase since the War [The Crimean War] in the number of British residents in Turkey [Ottoman Empire] and other parts of the Levant, has suggested the establishment of a Journal for their special use and benefit.” It was also added that “In this hope and with this conviction, it is proposed to establish *The Levant Herald*. Now that there are already


some half dozen of other European prints in existence in the country, we take to be no competitive connection whatever for without invidious disparagement of any one of the number.”\textsuperscript{102}

It was understood from the rest of the paper that \textit{The Levant Herald} took Giovanni Antonio Galignani, the famous Italian journalist as an exemplar for its editorial style. \textit{The Levant Herald} underlined that it would be based on the format and plan of the newspaper \textit{Galignani’s Messenger}, which was issued by Giovanni Antonio Galignani himself. \textit{Galignani’s Messenger} was one of the most popular English newspapers of the time. It was established in Paris and circulated all around Europe.\textsuperscript{103} In fact, while \textit{The Levant Herald} was describing its leading features, it was in a way summarizing the practices of \textit{Galignani’s Messenger}. Among such practices were giving a brief summary of the news in Europe and sharing articles published in the columns of some newspapers published in continental Europe and Britain.

It was mentioned in the text, in which \textit{The Levant Herald}’s leading features were detailed, that local correspondents were organized in every region of the country. The newspaper aimed to offer opportunities for local and foreign entrepreneurs in all remote regions around the entire Empire. Besides this, another objective of the newspaper was to provide information about the living conditions, desires and characters of diverse nations living under the sway of the sultan.\textsuperscript{104} The newspaper would treat political issues on the agenda. It was also committed to discussing local or foreign issues, and encouraging the government to carry out reforms and do all of these without any abuse or fear.\textsuperscript{105} One of the main objectives of the newspaper was to handle commercial, financial and economic issues and provide information about investment and enterprise opportunities. It also aimed to share the latest legal arrangements about all of these issues. Therefore, it published commercial reports, financial records, weekly analyses and transactions. The editorial board of the newspaper promised that they would publish codes of commerce, daily

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business requirements and the reports of Supreme Consular Courts. They also said that they would support the legal activities of the British Empire in the East, look out for benefits to British interests, and make any contribution necessary to improve the welfare of the sultan and his people. It was stated that the newspaper would have 8 pages on Wednesdays and it would be distributed via both the French post office and Ottoman postmen.  

Another article published on the following page detailed the principles and policies of the newspaper. This article explained where exactly *The Levant Herald* positioned itself politically, and what its mission and vision were. It wrote: “In London, our political creed would be only conservative or liberal: in Constantinople, it is British,” and continued, “We aspire to be to the whole community of Englishmen throughout Turkey [Ottoman] and the Levant.” Therefore, an Anglo-centric approach was clearly stated, however, the newspaper also emphasized that they were on the side and at the service of the Ottoman government, which was a British ally. The newspaper said that it was ready to support the Sublime Porte in any kind of reform and regeneration, whatever was required. This statement by the newspaper showed very clearly how the newspaper positioned itself in terms of the reforms and reorganizations, and revealed that the newspaper attached great importance to *Tanzimat* Reforms. The statement “We believe in the renaissance of Turkey” signaled the direction of the relations between the newspaper and the Ottoman government.  

The newspaper indicated that they wanted to build a friendship between the foreign communities in the Ottoman Empire. They underlined that they would remember the honorable profession of the pen and give priority to ethical concerns, respect and friendship in their relations with other press members.  

During its long-running publication life, there were times when *The Levant Herald* was perceived as the press organ of the British Embassy. Probably, this was due to the connections that the owner, James Carlile McCoan, had with the British Embassy. Indeed, before operating the paper, he used  

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to work for the Embassy, and when he was in trouble, he would use these diplomatic connections
to receive assistance. Yet, there is no concrete evidence that the newspaper was ever economically
supported by the British government. Nevertheless, in a letter which was sent to the British
Embassy in 1864 and described the situation of Christian missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, it
was stated that *The Levant Herald* was the press organ of the embassy. The British embassy
rejected this ascription, however, in another letter which was written in response to the above-
mentioned letter. Nevertheless, this characterization can be regarded as an indication of the
public perception of the newspaper. The fact that the proprietors of the newspaper were British
citizens, meant that they were operating with the protection of the British Embassy under the
framework of the capitulations. From this perspective, the newspaper was undoubtedly in close
contact with the Embassy, even more so than the natural link of common nationality would imply.

In addition to this social perception, the opinion of the Ottoman government regarding *The Levant
Herald* were not very different. The Porte saw *The Levant Herald* as a media organ of the British
Embassy. The Sublime Porte reasoned that *The Levant Herald* always sided with Britain
to editiorially, and that it was purely operating in favor of Britain's interests. Almost every time that
the government imposed a sanction upon the newspaper, the British embassy intervened, acting as
a mediator between the newspaper and the government. This was a clear indication of the support
of the British Ambassador for the newspaper. Even though the newspaper did not have an
economic relationship with the British government or the Embassy, it was obvious that the
newspaper and its publishers were protected by these institutions in the face of political difficulties.
The Ottoman government was forced to establish a relationship, in one form or another, with the
British Embassy when it attempted to impose sanctions on the newspaper. This relationship
sometimes reached a boiling point when tensions escalated between Britain and the Ottoman
Empire; *The Levant Herald*, then, always carried with it the potential of causing a diplomatic crisis.
Another example which gives us some idea about the relationship between the newspaper and the

109 NA. FO 424/27A, No. 68, Mr. Washburn to the Rev. H. Jones.
110 NA. FO 424/27A, No. 103, Sir H. Bulwer to Earl Russel; NA. FO 424/27A, No. 36, Mr. Layard to the Earl of
      Derby.
111 BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 26/65-1.
Embassy was the fact that Edgar Whitaker, the second proprietor of *The Levant Herald*, avoided making any comments about the newspaper’s relation with the embassy, though he agreed that the newspaper had published content in favor of Britain when McCoan was the owner. He claimed that ever since he took over the management of the newspaper, he had been following an editorial policy in favor of the Ottoman Empire. Although the petition contained the statement of a flattering nature, Whitaker admitted the newspaper’s British sided policy in the previous years.

*The Levant Herald* appeared to be an independent newspaper operating under European norms of journalism since its foundation, and it was never openly a directly organ of the Embassy in terms of its content. However, it was obvious to all that it was under the tutelage of the British Embassy when it came to relations with the Ottoman state, within the context of the national relationships protected under the capitulation treaties. *The Levant Herald*’s relationship with the Ottoman authorities was never stable. However, during the paper’s lifecycle it apparently enjoyed the protection of the British Embassy. Despite repeatedly receiving penalties, *The Levant Herald* persisted up until 1914, and was one of the longest running journals in the Ottoman Empire.

Although *The Levant Herald* defend British and European interests in the Ottoman lands an, this does negate the fact that the paper remained an important facet in developing and contributing to the general public’s opinions and in reflecting their experiences. Due to the lack of information regarding the newspaper’s circulation and the difficulty in assessing readers’ reactions, it is difficult to evaluate how *The Levant Herald* was generally perceived by the Ottoman public. Realistically, diverse groups had their own perspectives and opinions regarding the paper. But we can deduce that the paper was probably most read by Levantines and Europeans, as well as their local commercial partners which were generally the non-Muslims Ottomans, because they were the paper’s predominantly target audience.

Despite the paper publishing ads in several different languages such as Italian, Armenian, Greek, and so on, there was almost never an ad that appeared in Ottoman Turkish. Perhaps then, it can be assumed that *The Levant Herald* was probably less popular among the Muslims and Turkish speaking populations. It should also be said that because *The Levant Herald* itself was in English

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and French which language less commonly known among the Muslim groups compared to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, that the paper was probably inaccessible to most mono-lingual Muslims. However, it is possible that Ottoman Muslims were familiar with the news that appeared in *The Levent Herald*, not directly from the newspaper itself, but from other newspapers that would translate and share excerpts of foreign-language newspapers. These excerpts were most of the time accompanied by affirmative or negative comments or interoperations.

It would extremely useful for our purposes to be able to get a glimpse of the popular reaction stirred up by those articles published in *The Levent Herald*, and to understand how these excerpts and the paper’s content were interpreted its readers, and how reinterpreted by further audience. Unfortunately, there is no accessible information on this. However, we can assume that because it was often seen a "dissident" publication accompanied with the common perception of being a media organ of the British embassy, *The Levent Herald* was likely disparaged amongst the ordinary Muslim groups as a mouthpiece of the Britain and foreign powers. However, despite the paper’s negative image amongst Muslims, it was still considered a medium through which one could draw attention to local issues, due to its ability to criticize the authorities without the fear of excessive punitive consequences. Many reader’s letters published by *The Levent Herald* discussed issues related to local population, such as municipal problems, lack of security in the city, lack of health services or even local famines etc. and commenting on the shared problems of the time. In this respect, in comparison to the Turkish and non-Turkish language press, which had implemented self-censorship, *The Levent Herald* became the voice everyone in the Empire could write more openly about local problems. Nevertheless, amongst the writers of letters to *The Levant Herald*, there were not much Muslim figures. The paper received letters mostly from non-Muslim people, who could utilize the paper to publicize their complaints and seek restitution from the state, if only in the eyes of public opinion.

*The Levant Herald* thus acted as an intermediary between the non-Muslim public and the Ottoman state, and as a useful platform for public discontent. Ultimately, it gave priority to British and European interests although it wrote openly and fearlessly about the issues of the day, publicized social and political problems, and criticized the authorities without hesitation and in the face of regular censorship and repression. Hence, considering the legal situation of the nascent Ottoman press, the ability of *The Levant Herald*, as a foreign-language paper under diplomatic protection, to connect local readers to the latest news from within the Empire and abroad was invaluable for
the gradual emergence of an Ottoman journalistic ethos and the consolidation of a news-reading public.

As mentioned above, the other newspapers in the Ottoman press routinely published extracts and quoted passages from *The Levant Herald*. In these excerpts, the same sources were cited, though generally some comments were added, or the content of the original article was criticized. However, in any case, the Ottoman press carefully monitored *The Levant Herald*. This was mainly because the newspaper was collecting news from various sources through the international wire news agencies and its own network of correspondents, and offered a wide range of content. *The Levant Herald* regularly published articles on contemporary pressing issues that were of interest to everyone in the Ottoman lands, such as the Cretan events and the Armenian questions, or other struggles in various areas of the Empire. Another reason that the newspaper was followed by every periodical of the Ottoman press was that it gave explicit coverage to many subjects, without self-censorship. In this way, other newspapers that followed in the footsteps of *The Levant Herald* were able to observe which news content and opinions would be approved or punished by the notoriously capricious Ottoman censorship board before publishing them in their own papers. In this respect, *The Levant Herald* was an important news source for the Ottoman press.

On the other hand, the dissident press published by the Ottoman subjects in the Empire was not allowed. Those Ottomans who engaged in opposition activities via the press, were exiled and forced to publish their newspapers abroad. Because political exiles formed the core publishers of these papers, this press group is often referred to as the “Ottoman expatriate press.” These publications of the exile press were banned from entering Ottoman lands. Only a limited number of issues could make it past customs to the Empire, generally by illegal or clandestine means. Therefore, political opposition through the press was extremely limited. In this restricted environment, it is likely that *The Levant Herald* appealed to politically dissident groups, especially in the Hamidian period. The members of these groups were generally made up of well-educated Muslim and non-Muslim people of different ethnic and linguistic identities, but who shared a knowledge of European languages and expressed common demands such as the removal of

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censorship, freedom of thought, political reforms and liberty.\textsuperscript{114} Considering the oppositional stance assumed by \textit{The Levant Herald}, we can assume that \textit{The Levant Herald} was followed and taken seriously by these politically dissident circles. As a beacon for opposition activity in the Hamidian era, \textit{The Levant Herald} was an important catalyst for the major shifts in Ottoman political culture that would occur in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

\section*{2.2 Advertisements, Announcements and News in \textit{The Levant Herald}}

\textit{The Levant Herald} spared one full page for advertisements and announcements. Generally, the first and second pages were allocated to advertisements and announcements. There were also times when both pages were used for them. In both cases, advertisements would be visible at first sight. The space given over for advertisements shows that the newspaper put these interests at the forefront. Given that there was no private Turkish newspaper in the early year of \textit{The Levant Herald}, the fact that it used advertisements and announcements could be seen as a radical change. Yet, it should not be forgotten that \textit{The Levant Herald} circulated not only in the Empire but all around Europe. In fact, the newspaper made it clear from the very beginning that it would spare certain columns to advertisements and announcements in particular, and that these the advertisements would be multilingual, in English, French and Italian. It was hoped for that these pages would be accessible to all communities in the Levant.\textsuperscript{115} As a matter of fact, the newspaper started to give announcements of its publication internationally right after its foundation, in an attempt to increase its popularity. These announcements - including many in the British press - served to increase the number of readers, and were intended to boost subscription numbers. In a few weeks after such announcements were first published, the following introductory note was shared in the commercial pages of newspapers in Britain: “\textit{The Levant Herald}, an English Journal, published every Wednesday in Constantinople.” It was emphasized in this note that the newspaper accepted advertisements in English, French or Italian and different from other such newspapers in

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\textsuperscript{115} \textit{The Levant Herald}, February 9, 1859, p. 17.
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that it targeted readers from all walks of life. In another note, it was stated that *The Levant Herald*, which was published in Constantinople weekly, reached all ports from Marseilles to Britain. It was highlighted that the newspaper circulated in the Ottoman Empire, Danubian Principalities, Levant, Egypt and Mediterranean region. Following the advertisement and subscription tariff section, the contact information of its London office was shared. The addresses of the offices that dealt with subscription and advertisement demands were shared collectively in *The Levant Herald*. According to the issue dated October 28, 1860, the addresses of the agencies were as follows: In London, Messrs, Smith, Elder and Co., 63 Cornhill and Mr. G. Street 30, Cornhill, in Liverpool, Messrs, Lee and Nightengale, in Machester, Mr. Wheeler, Royal Exchange Arcade, in Malta, Messrs, T. Flack and Co., 19 Strade San Giovanni, in Alexandria Messers, Biggs and Co., in Smyria Mr. Castellian, Barbary Khan.

Economic indicators, technological advances, commercial relations with Europe, fashion and culture all were contained within the advertisements published in *The Levant Herald*. One example included announcements about steamboats and liners, which had come to encompass an increasing share of passenger transportation in the Mediterranean. These boats, which generally travelled in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, routinely placed advertisements in the newspaper. Such advertisements included information about the route these boats followed, ports they stopped at, and the prices they charged. In parallel with these developments in the sea, a vast expansion in railway networks was also underway. A method similar to the contemporary “build-operate-transfer” form of project financing system was used in railway construction, and railways were constructed by private companies. The companies that constructed the railways often sold the

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118 *The Levant Herald*, February 9, 1859, p. 20.

royalty rights of the railways in smaller shares. One of the most common advertisements in The Levant Herald was about the sales of these shares.¹²⁰

As water transportation improved and caravan routes were replaced by railways, time spent in transport greatly decreased. “Travelers” were gradually replaced by tourists. As a result, public houses and caravanserais became less necessary. European-style hotels began to come to the forefront in place of these older accommodation structures. The announcements of these enterprises, which were just about to penetrate Ottoman city life, were also published in this newspaper. These announcements, which were published even in the first issues of the newspaper, generally highlighted the service quality and comfort of these hotels and praised their position, view and staff. “King’s Arms”, “Hotel d'Europe” and “Hotel des Colonies” were among the most popular hotel names.¹²¹

The heating stove, which was becoming fashionable in Europe and was coming to replace older heating methods, was also a regular image in the newspaper. At that time, the heating stove was not very popular in Ottoman society and it was widely considered to be luxurious and expensive.¹²²

The heating stove was one of the products introduced through The Levant Herald. In some particular issues of the paper, large advertisements for the “American hot air stove” were printed. This advertisement was full of fancy stove pictures. It occupied nearly half of the page, and the slogan “the most approved construction and the latest and fashionable design” was prominently written. It reminded readers that cold winter days were coming, and also emphasized that the stove was exported from the United States.¹²³

¹²⁰ “The Ottoman Railway from Smyrna to Aidin,” The Levant Herald, August 3, 1859, p. 220.


In those days, Ottoman social life was also changing, and accordingly there were many private tutor announcements in *The Levant Herald*. The hiring of foreign private tutors was a result of the ongoing Ottoman efforts at Westernization. Demand triggered supply. In these announcements, those who had paid for the space summarized their résumé in a few sentences, in particular emphasizing that they could teach European languages like English, French and Italian and they could also teach their students to play musical instruments like the piano and violin. In such announcements, the contact info of the private tutors was not shared, and readers were instead asked to contact the newspaper to reach the private tutors if so desired.

Apart from this, the subject matter of advertisements and announcements also included real estate (houses for rent, workplace, farm and field), machinery (sewing machine, milling machine), goods, clothes, food, medicine, cosmetics, dentistry, books, magazines, companies, banks, jewelry stores and etc. The size of the advertisements depended on whether it included illustrations, and the amount of payment. Most of the time, these were simple text advertisements, but sometimes there were also drawings and slogans. There was no obituary section, but sometimes there were missing reports of lost pets.

In addition to these, in the years that *The Levant Herald* was established, the declarations of bankruptcy submitted to the Supreme Consular Court of Britain in Constantinople were also shared in the advertisement pages of the newspaper. These declarations were published in accordance with the United Kingdom Bankrupt Law Consolidation Act, dated 1849. Such declarations gave detailed information about the person who went bankrupt, his address and business. According to the capitulations, if the bankrupt person was a British subject, the liquidation of his debts and receivables would be handled by the related department of the embassy. Finally, the newspaper


also sometimes shared the official announcements that the British embassy wanted to communicate to British subjects.

It is obvious that one of the primary aims behind European enterprises placing advertisements in Ottoman newspapers, was to expand their consumer base and market share within the Near East. In this respect, it can be said that the promotion of these European products, through the Ottoman press, was intended to have an impact upon Ottoman patterns of consumption, and thus a wider impact on society as a whole. European merchants introduced a variety of new products and manufactured goods to the Ottoman realm, such as the sewing machine, heating stove, lamps and mechanical appliances, and so on.  

The increasing tendency of adopting the European lifestyle, which had become popular in the Ottoman Empire since the Tanzimat, also had an effect on the advertising approaches employed by these companies, and there was a transition from a bulletin format, which aimed mostly to inform, to an advertisement format, which made products appealing and encouraged consumption. These products were advertised in such a way that using them, or even having merely heard about them, offered the promise a kind of distinguishing oneself as a member of a more elite class, one familiar with European culture and fashion.  

The language used in these advertisements allows us to perform literary analysis; though it is difficult to determine the precise effect of these advertisements on Ottoman society as a whole, the preference for a certain kind of “classist” language implies that the symbols of Alla Franca consumerism had been adopted as prestigious cultural markers by a segment of society.  

The products advertised and promoted in The Levant Herald were new to Ottoman society. It can be said that it was initially the foreigners and Levantines living in the Ottoman territory, who had

130 Şükrü Hanioğlu, Late Ottoman History, p. 100, 105-106; Rahmi Deniz Özbay, “Osmanlı’ dan Cumhuriyet’e,” p. 27-29; Yavuz Köse, “Flooding the Ottoman Market,” p.222-225.
already possessed characteristics of a consumer society, which were the first audience for these advertisements. The products that were introduced to the Ottoman market changed, slowly but steadily, lifestyles within Ottoman society; a new group which emulated the European way of life emerged. People who adopted the European way of life were described as "Alla Franca" from that time on; a catchword for the Tanzimat Era, “Ala Franca” became a key concept that was closely linked to the notion of progress. These new products, promoted by advertisements, offered an alternative to the lifestyle that Ottoman society was accustomed to, and changed Ottoman social dynamics. European goods and their local imitations, as well as accessories and dresses, such as English style (İngilizkâri), or French style (Fransızkâri) came into prominence as products of choice. However, it is important to note that not everybody had access to the products promoted in such advertisements. First of all, the circulation of the newspaper throughout the country was very limited. In addition, it is known that the distribution of the products themselves was quite limited, in line with the scope of transportation infrastructure at the time. Nevertheless, we can place these advertisements as one of the instigators and accessories to the general cultural trend of Alla Franca in the latter half of the 19th century.

Newspaper advertisements were unknown to the Ottoman world prior to the emergence of periodicals. The Ottomans were, for the first time, introduced to advertisements as we know them today in newspapers published by foreign merchants. It was, in general, foreign-manufactured products that were promoted by these advertisements. In the case of The Levant Herald, the fact that the two front pages of the newspaper were reserved for advertisements can be considered as an indication of the newspaper’s intention to generate revenue, not just from subscriptions, but also from the sale of advertising space.

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133 Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman History*, p. 100, 105-106; Donald Quataert, “Introduction,” 9-10; Rahmi Deniz Özbay, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e,” p. 28.

134 Yiannis Ioannou, “Advertisements in the Greek and Ottoman-Turkish Press in Cyprus, 1900-1931,” p. 91-93.

135 Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman History*, p. 27.

The Levant Herald itself also place advertisements in European papers, in the hopes of drawing more subscribers and advertiser interest. In this, the paper was trying to attract the attention of those companies that sent goods and products to the East, and tried to give the impression that The Levant Herald could be a profitable means by which to promote their products. Despite the Ottoman unfamiliarity with the medium of print advertisements, The Levant Herald likely felt comfortable enough to rely upon advertising for a large portion of its revenue. This must have a lot to do with the fact that the newspaper was also in circulation in Europe, and in large Levantine cities. The Ottoman market had already become a competitive field for European companies by the second half of the 19th century. Given the potential of the Ottoman market, it was reasonable for the newspaper, over time, aspire to sustain itself largely with advertisement revenues.\textsuperscript{137}

Unfortunately, we do not have available information about the amount of advertising revenues that The Levant Herald received, or its real financial provision. Nevertheless, when Edgar Whitaker sent a petition for redress to the Sublime Porte complaining about the practice of heavy censorship, he also did not neglect to mention that it reduced the sales of the newspaper resulting in a decline in advertisement revenue. Therefore, it is possible to draw a conclusion from this petition, that advertisements were considered an important revenue source for The Levant Herald.

In 1859, when the first issues of The Levant Herald were published, the advertisement fee was set at 2 pennies per line. This fee was updated later on. For example, in 1869, it rose to 6 pennies per line and this price remained the same for several years.\textsuperscript{138} If the advertisements and promotions once shared in the newspaper were repeated, there was a 10% discount. There was also a discount for the permanent use of a fixed portion of advertising space.\textsuperscript{139}

At the beginning, as mentioned previously, The Levant Herald was published in the publishing house of “Societa Tipografica Italiana.” After a while, it established its own press and this

\textsuperscript{137} Hamza Çakır, Osmanli Basinda Reklam (1828–1864), p. 41–42.

\textsuperscript{138} The Levant Herald, February 9, 1859, p. 20; The Levant Herald (Daily), January 3, 1867, p. 1; The Levant Herald (Weekly), May 22, 1878, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{139} The Levant Herald, February 9, 1859, p. 1.
produced a notable effect on the advertisements. The announcements page emphasized this change and began as follows: “The proprietors of The Levant Herald having made varied and important improvements in the printing plants and staff of the paper, are now prepared to execute orders to any extent in the English, French, Italian, Greek, Armenian or Turkish languages.”¹⁴⁰ They stated that they had developed a more sophisticated technological infrastructure, and announced that they would now accept advertisements in several languages. This meant that their printing press was relatively advanced in terms of their equipment, although the fact that Arabo-Persian letter types equipment was quite expensive made it an uncertain investment.¹⁴¹ With this advancement, advertisements in Greek and Armenian, in addition to Latin-character European languages, appeared in the newspaper. However, there remained almost no advertisements in Ottoman Turkish. It could be said that the reason for this was that the newspaper targeted readers who spoke European languages. It could also be that the concept of advertising through newspapers had not yet caught on among Ottoman Turks, or that a more traditional commercial mentality prevailed among the city’s Muslim population. According to this mentality, advertising was a kind of “exposing oneself,” and this was considered shameful. Submission and seriousness were the expected behaviors in the Muslim groups and it was possibly believed that people would not trust or tolerate print advertisements.¹⁴²

The outer pages of The Levant Herald were saved for advertisements, while the interior pages were only focused on news. Although the name of the writer or correspondent was not mentioned in the texts, the source was certainly cited if the article was as extract from another press organ. If they received the news by telegram, they would state from which city the telegram was sent. Such practices were universally accepted in the world of press of the time, and The Levant Herald was in keeping with the then-latest journalistic standards.

The newspaper had regular correspondents in several of the largest cities of the Empire, such as Baghdad, Damascus, Smyrna, Sofia, Thessaloniki, and Trabzon, while it had irregular or volunteer

¹⁴⁰ The Levant Herald, November 2, 1859, p. 1.
¹⁴¹ Milena Methodieva, Reform, Politics and Culture, p. 142, 144.
correspondents in some other cities. The news received from them was published with a byline stating that it came from “our correspondent” or “our accidental correspondent.”

Additionally, the newspaper had dedicated space for letters to the editor. This was a common practice in the European press, which was later on adopted by the Ottoman press as well. The letters sent to the newspaper had multiple social, political and economic functions and they were a channel for petitions to the authorities. Judging from the open communications with its subscribers and the readers’ letters, The Levant Herald mostly received letters from non-Muslim groups and it enjoyed popularity among this community almost all parts of the Ottoman Empire but mostly from big cities, such as Sofia, Thessaloniki, Smyrna, Trabzon, Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, Baghdad etc.

These letters could be about any subject, such as discussing regional problems, lack of municipal services, security issues, culture and the arts, or, to some degree, political criticism. The authors were required to send their letters to the head office of the newspaper, pay for their own postage, and explicitly write their names and addresses. Such personal information was not to be shared with the public, but was rather for the newspaper itself, to guarantee the validity of the letter’s authorship. The name of the sender was generally omitted when the letter was published. However, upon the sender’s request, they sometimes added a pseudonym, or even their real name.

The newspaper declared that it undertook no responsibility for the content of the letters. Yet the Sublime Porte never took this declaration seriously. For instance, despite the newspaper’s statement, the Ottoman government held it personally responsible for the letters that it published, such as those that included political criticisms of the viceroy of Egypt, or the state’s reaction to the Ciragan Incident. In both cases The Levant Herald was subsequently closed. The section of the paper containing letters to the editor in fact was amongst the paper’s most notorious, and it caused the paper to face penalties more often than any other sections.

The Levant Herald benefited from its contact with other press organs in the production of its content. It followed both the European and Ottoman presses, and sometimes took excerpts from them. The excerpts from the European press generally contained breaking continental or global news, or their comments on the situation of the Ottoman Empire. As for the Ottoman press, The Levant Herald gave regard to both national and regional publications, in any of various lingual groups, whether it be Turkish, Arabic, Bulgarian, Armenian, or Greek. Particularly in regard to
economic or financial news, it followed the regional presses, including primarily state-sponsored local newspapers. At the national level, it quoted articles from the other newspapers, sometimes adding affirmative or negative comments, or sarcastic interpretations. Apparently, it did not hesitate to provoke an argument or engage in a polemic with other media outlets.

The news published in *The Levant Herald* generally fell into two categories: foreign news regarding Europe, the Near East and the rest of the world, and internal news concerning the Ottoman Empire and the Levant. The foreign news generally was sent from news agencies such as Reuters and Havas-Bullier. *The Levant Herald* shared such news in a brief segment entitled “Last Intelligence.” This news included topics such as natural disasters - earthquake, fire, mass deaths, floods, or accidents - or political developments, such as legislative activities, wars, and other diplomatic news such as congresses and peace treaties. The newspapers also published news reports concerning financial statistics, commercial developments, stock exchange data and fiscal reports. In short, it shared news about all kinds of political, economic and monetary developments.

The news regarding the Ottoman Empire was not particularly different from the news about foreign countries in terms of its content. Natural disasters, political developments and, of course, economic and commercial developments were all shared. The news about the Ottoman Empire could be categorized as either national or local news. If there was an uprising or crisis which affected the entire country, a larger article was produced under a special title. Any news associated with legislative and jurisdictional activities, or extraordinary events that took place in the Ottoman capital were given in broad detail. Generally, this type of news was shared in the section entitled “Notes of the Day.” Additionally, the newspaper contained articles regarding political, economic and legal developments as well as articles about the “Eastern Question.” These articles comprised another risky section, which often brought official sanctions upon the newspaper. Apart from these, *The Levant Herald* did not, of course, pass over crime and murder stories, as well as local interest, gossip and celebrity news.

The content of the magazine was not solely for serious subjects; in fact, *The Levant Herald* also included some gossip news from the Oriental world, which were often reprinted by the British press. As an example, the marriage agreement of Ismail Pasha, who was appointed as the commander of Ottoman forces in Sophia, was a major topic of discussion. According to the columns, the Pasha was enamored of the sister of a German lieutenant who had been assigned as
an instructor (talimdji) in the Ottoman army. The lady, however, agreed to marry him only if there was a marriage agreement. According to this agreement, if the parties divorced, the Pasha would pay her an indemnity of £2,000, and the couple’s male children would be raised in line with Muslim traditions, while the girls would be baptized into Christianity. The British newspapers called this a “sign of the times” and mentioned that this was an indicator of the liberal opinions that Turks had started to adopt.143 Similarly, The Levant Herald made news about a similar event based on a letter from Trabzon. The column was entitled “a Caucasian beauty.” In this passage, which was quickly shared by all British newspapers, a young girl was called a “young beauty”, “Caucasian gem” and “houri (angel).”144 All these passages demonstrated that the news appeared on The Levant Herald made a noticeable contribution to the international newsfeed.

The Levant Herald also published news about British high society as well. For instance, the newspaper informed its readers that the birthday of the Queen Victoria was celebrated in the British embassy in Constantinople with a grandiose party. It was stated that the party was well-attended, and that several ambassadors and pashas representing the Ottoman government were present.145 The opening of a monument erected in the British Martyrs’ Cemetery in Constantinople was also announced by the newspaper. The newspaper informed its readers that the monument that was being erected for Britain’s “hero soldiers” who had lost their lives in the Crimean War was finally completed. It was stated that the epitaph on the four sides of the monument was in English, French, Italian and Turkish.146


2.3 The Stylistic Features, Editions, Circulation and Price of *The Levant Herald*

*The Levant Herald* was published on both a daily and weekly basis. In the beginning, it was published weekly, until about mid-1858. Subsequently, when it was moved to its own publishing house, it became both a daily and a weekly. The daily edition was much thinner and provided fresh updates about recent developments. The daily edition covered less news than the weekly one, but the news in the daily edition was, in general, more detailed. The weekly edition instead often acted as a kind of summary of selected articles from the daily edition. These two editions targeted different groups. In fact, the newspaper clarified this point as follows “The daily edition of *The Levant Herald* has the character of a general newspaper, and is intended for readers in the East.” The newspaper went on to say that, “*The Levant Herald* weekly budget consists of sixteen to twenty-four pages. It contains only Eastern matters selected from the columns of the daily issue, and is a Levant newspaper specifically designated for readers not residing in the Levant.”

Regarding the weekly edition, the following points were emphasized: “*The Levant Herald*-Weekly Budget section contains from two to four pages of commercial information. Merchants engaged in trade with the Levant will find *The Levant Herald* a valuable and trustworthy record.” It continued, “*The Levant Herald* weekly budget contains provincial correspondence, reviews of the Turkish [Ottoman] press sketches of Eastern life and much extractable matters…” At the same time, the daily edition was not truly published every single day of the week. For instance, in 1861, *The Levant Herald-Daily Bulletin* was published on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and had four pages. The newspaper was bilingual, in English and French. By 1875, the weekly issue published on Wednesdays and it was totally in French, and had 8 pages. Presumably, the French version addressed a much larger audience compared to the English one, since the French press and French language audience were considerably more established in Constantinople,

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149 *The Levant Herald*, July 13, 1881, p. 2.
especially after the 1860s. The next year, however, in 1876, the weekly issue was changed to be totally in English.

The number of pages of the weekly edition changed from one year to another, but on average the weekly edition had between 12 to 14 pages. In 1859 there were 8 pages in the weekly edition. In 1860, there were 12 pages and in 1875, 1877 and 1878 there were 8 pages again. The weekly edition had 16 pages in 1883 and 14 pages in 1884 and 1886. It had 15 pages in 1885. The daily editions had 4 pages for long years. In 1878, it had 6 pages, and in 1875, 1877 and 1878 it had 8 pages. There were 4 or -sometimes- 5 columns in the first page. In the other pages, there were generally 3 columns, but sometimes 4 columns or 2 columns were also preferred. The page number in weekly edition did not start from one (1), but it followed the page number of the previous edition all the yearlong. In the weekly editions, the publication date was in only given in Gregorian calendar whereas the daily edition offered the same information according to three types of calendar that were applicable in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, this information was provided according to the Hijri calendar on the left, Gregorian calendar in the middle and Julian calendar on the right.

_The Levant Herald_ continued publishing until 1914. Therefore, it was one of the longest lasting newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire. The newspaper also presented itself in this way and in each issue mentioned that “it is the oldest newspaper published in Constantinople.” It also highlighted its long lifecycle as a sign of its reliability and profited from this as a means of promotion.

The proprietors of the newspaper altered several times throughout the years. Due the closures, it was issued under different names which is as follows: _The Levant Herald, The Constantinople Messenger, The Eastern Express, The Levant Herald & Eastern Express_. Although it was issued under different titles, it specifically put emphasis on its original name, _The Levant Herald_, and

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151 _The Levant Herald_, July 13, 1881 p. 2.
considered its founding year to be 1856, when the first paper under that name was produced. In doing so, the newspaper wanted to highlight its continuity. For example, when it was being published under the titles The Eastern Express or The Constantinople Messenger, it openly referred to the paper’s original title, The Levant Herald, in its columns. It did not avoid explaining the change in its title either: “The Levant Herald is at present published under the title of The Constantinople Messenger.” When it was published under the title The Eastern Express, a specially designed logo consists of the calligraphic writing of The Levant Herald, inserted in the middle of the title.

How did such changes affect its circulation and sales figures? We do not have solid data about the newspaper’s circulation. In this matter, The Levant Herald is no different from any of the other newspapers issued in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it is difficult to give a specific estimate about its print run. According to a reference, the circulation numbers for Le Moniteur Oriental and Stamboul were said to be about 4000, and for The Levant Herald it was said to be around 5200 but we cannot determine how reliable this figure is and the year to which it refers. The readers’ letters that were published in the newspaper give us some idea about the newspaper’s circulation. The letters were sent from Thessaloniki, Sofia, Adrianople, Trabzon, Crete, Alexandria and Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut Aleppo and show that the newspaper was sold throughout the empire and its periphery.

The price of the newspaper slightly increased throughout the years. The changes in the telegram tariff, transportation fees, news agency subscription fees and diverse other costs all increased seasonally, and contributed to the increase of the price of The Levant Herald. The newspaper applied different subscription prices to its annual, semi-annual and quarterly subscribers, and there were minor discounts in pricing based on the length of the subscription period. Subscription fees for the weekly and daily editions were different. If the readers wanted a subscription for both editions, they again had to pay a different amount. The postage fees were charged to the receiver.

152 The Levant Herald, July 13, 1881, p.2.


This, apparently, caused some confusion on the side of the readers, because the newspaper once published the following explanation: “As some misconception appears to have arisen amongst our provincial subscribers as to postage, we beg to intimate that in all cases this is to be borne by the subscriber; the advertised amount of subscription including nothing but the cost of the journal.” Where it is paid in advance by the Office the amount so disbursed will therefore be charged to the subscriber.”155 Sometimes, the subscription fee for international regions and the empire’s provinces was different, due to the addition of postage fees to the total sum. For example, in 1860, the annual subscription fee for the daily and weekly editions was as follows: in Constantinople £1.15.0; for Ports of the Black Sea £1.19.6; for the Principalities £1.19.6; Roumelia £2.4.0; Asia Minor (except Smyrna) £2.4.0; Smyrna £1.19.6; Syria £1.19.6; Egypt £1.19.6; Malta and Greece £1.19.6; and finally, Great Britain £1.19.6.156 The subscription fee of the newspaper changed throughout the years. These prices are listed in the table in the list of figures.

2.4 The Penalties and Closures Faced by The Levant Herald

It did not take long for The Levant Herald to receive its first warning after its foundation. The newspaper was given its first warning when it published an article against Musa Saffeti Pasha, who was the Minister of Finance. It reported that Saffeti Pasha had mismanaged state revenue, and that he had pursued extravagant financial policies. It was being implied that he was abusing his position and it raised the question of “whether he should be ordered to furnish accounts.” On the very same days, Henry Bulwer, the British Ambassador, met with the sultan and complained about the failure of Saffeti Pasha on financial issues.157

Right after, The Presse d’Orient was also punished with a warning, for relaying the same article from The Levant Herald. According to the press regime, three consecutive warnings would mean

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155 The Levant Herald, April 27, 1859, p. 108.

156 The Levant Herald, March 14, 1860, p. 538.

that the newspaper had to cease publishing for a limited period of time.\textsuperscript{158} Having given an official reprimand, the newspaper published a statement saying that they had received the news of their punishment with regret rather than frustration, and mentioned that such censorship would disappoint Europe, and Britain in particular. It was stated at the end of the same article that if they were not allowed to continue publishing, they would not refrain from making legitimate commentary, even if that meant the discontent of the official authorities. They also added that they would be pleased to do so even if they would have to face closure ban in the end.\textsuperscript{159} The Constantinople correspondent of \textit{The Daily Mail} criticized the warning given to \textit{The Levant Herald} and wrote that the attitude that the newspaper adopted after the warning would cause it to receive other warnings and punishments in the near future.\textsuperscript{160}

\textit{The Levant Herald} was suspended for a while towards the end of its first year. This punishment was given due to an article that the newspaper had published on September 28, 1859. The article was about a coup attempt against Sultan Abdulmecid.\textsuperscript{161} The purpose of this attempt, known as the \textit{Kuleli} Affair, was to dethrone the sultan and enthrone his brother, Abdulaziz. Some high-ranking officers, statesmen and members of the government were involved in the coup attempt.\textsuperscript{162} However, it was crushed before it was able to be staged. A publication ban was imposed upon the press, which prohibited the dissemination of the details of the investigation until it was finalized. Writing with a pro-government stance and without giving any details, \textit{The Levant Herald} was one of the very few newspapers which produced coverage of the coup attempt. The newspaper continued to publish news and articles about the subject in the following weeks, despite the fact that the investigation had not yet been concluded. Despite the publication ban, all of these articles

\textsuperscript{158} “Turkey and Serbia,” \textit{The Morning Chronicle}, March 21, 1859, p. 3.


\textsuperscript{160} “Turkey,” \textit{The Daily News}, March 12, 1859, p. 5.


and stories were published without any censorship. However, *Le Presse d’Orient*, a newspaper that was published in French, quoted in detail the articles and stories covered in *The Levant Herald*. This action put the censorship board into motion. The Ottoman authorities suspended the publication of both newspapers indefinitely. *The Levant Herald* claimed that the quoted parts in question were poor translations, and that they did not reflect the content of the original pieces. Indeed, the translated versions, contrary to the content of the original pieces, possessed a tone that almost seemed as if the authors were supporting the coup attempt. Therefore, they claimed that the punishment *The Levant Herald* received was fundamentally unfair. With the interference of the British embassy, the ban was eventually removed. However, the suppression of *Le Presse d’Orient* continued for some time later.

During its lifecycle, *The Levant Herald* was subject to several punishments such as suppression, suspension, closure or bans. These punishments were traced by the British press of the time. In fact, the newspaper regularly received support from the British press, in informing its readers in Britain that the publication would soon be suspended. Sometimes, an explanation was given concerning the situation that caused them to be punished. While often the paper criticized the punishments it received, at other times it made a show of its remorse and self-criticism. In general, *The Levant Herald* was penalized or reprimanded for its articles and analyses regarding the Ottoman debt, criticisms of Ottoman statesmen and prominent dignitaries, and exposes on government policies toward non-Muslim communities or its attitudes towards events in Crete, the Bulgarian uprisings, to do with the Empire’s Armenians and so on. It is an example that a petition regarding the events in Crete that the newspaper published, which resulted in its suspension. This petition, which was claimed to have been sent by the Bulgarian people to the sultan, stated that the Bulgarian’s loyalty to the present sovereign did not necessarily mean that they would not share in the pain of the other Ottoman Christians, who were from another ethnic origin. In brief, the petition put emphasis on the events in Crete and implied that Bulgarians supported their co-religionists’


fight in the island. This petition was published on January 9, 1867. When the article came to the government’s attention, which nevertheless took some time, the newspaper was suspended for a month. This punishment was justified on the basis of Article 27 of the press regulation. This statute was quite broad in its legal reasoning, and open for any desirable interpretation on the part of the government. It stated that “offences against the sovereign and the members of the Imperial family, and attack against the authority of the sultan, shall be punished by an imprisonment of from six month to three years or by a fine....”165

The editor of The Levant Herald defended his paper, arguing that it was unreasonable to punish the newspaper because of this article. He wrote that all they had done was to share a petition sent to the sultan. In his eyes, the petition in question had no offensive quality, and he defended the idea that the petition was a simply the expression of about a dozen Bulgarian subjects. For the editor, the claim that this petition was giving support to rebellious Christians, and was an act of treason by the entire Bulgarian nation, was utterly groundless.166

The Levant Herald’s articles about other countries and their ambassadors also resulted in the newspaper’s punishment. For example, an article they published about French politics drew the reaction of the French ambassador. Upon the reception of the French ambassador’s complaints to the Sublime Porte, the newspaper was forced to suspend its publication. The British ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, intervened in an attempt to get the punishment withdrawn, and discussed with the Prime Minister, Âli Pasha. Âli Pasha, unfortunately, told him that the French embassy was rather domineering and insisting upon this issue, and ultimately declined Bulwer’s demand. Thus, the suspension of The Levant Herald continued for some more time.167 The Russian embassy applied pressure to the newspaper as well. In May 1876, the Sublime Porte punished the newspaper and suspended its publication upon the complaint of the Russian ambassador.168 In 1891, the Russian ambassador Nelidov made another such complaint, causing the suspension of publication

168 "Suspension of a Newspaper," The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, May 17, 1876.
again. Such punishments were based on the accusation that the newspaper had “spoken irrelatively of the imperial family of a neighboring power.”

In May 1872, the newspaper was suspended for three months on charges of criticizing the Prime Minister, Mahmud Nedim Pasha. Following the deposition of Sultan Abdulaziz, the press was not allowed to write anything regarding the matter. However, some news about the incident apparated on *The Levant Herald*. This triggered the paper to receive a suspension from May 13 to July 1, 1876. In May 1877, it was again sentenced to a one-month suspension for the month of July, due to an article about the Minister of War, Redif Pasha. In 1881, the press was asked not to write about the developments that took place during the judgments of Yildiz court incident. However, *The Levant Herald*, which was at that time being issued under the title of *The Constantinople Messenger*, provided a summary of the judgments. As a result, it faced suspension once again. When suppression would be too heavy a punishment, the newspaper was instead simply given a warning. After three warnings, however, it would be suspended once more. *The Levant Herald* received such warnings in 1859 and 1860. The editor of the newspaper criticized the penalties and called them “bizarre” in an article that was published in the British press, and gave further information about the newspaper’s suspension. The editor critiqued the Sublime Porte for stultifying its own institutions: “This is the third time in four years that *The Levant Herald* has been suspended under precisely similar circumstances. The odd part of it is that in all these cases of suspension, the incriminated matter had been approved by the censors before it was published; but The Port is quite ready to stultify its own functionaries…”

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171 *The Levant Herald*, July 5, 1876, p. 164.


example, Stanboul and The Levant Herald both had to face suspension for sharing a few telegrams in their papers, without submitting them to the approval of the censorship committee first. It is possible that these telegrams were received only a very short time before the printing, and there was apparently no time to submit them to the censorship authority. Though they contained only some general news, both newspapers took risks by publishing these telegrams.

Nevertheless, the newspaper had some course of action available to them to protest the penalties inflicted upon them. When they wanted to object to any reprimands, they first took their case to the Supreme Consular Court within the consulate and requested that the penalties be overturned. Since the extent to which the press was subject to the capitulations was not clarified among foreign states, the Ottoman government applied its own verdict without waiting for the decision of the court in question. For example, when The Levant Herald was accused of publishing incorrect information about Crete, they submitted their case to the aforementioned court. The Ministry of Police, however, enforced its own decision before the court declared its verdict. Yet, in the end, the decision of the Supreme Consular Court was in favor of The Levant Herald.

In particular, the section in which the readers’ letters were published had some of the most disputed contents of The Levant Herald. For instance, after publishing a reader’s letter about the events in Crete, the newspaper was forced to suspend its work. In the letter, there was some dubious information about the events on the island. Similarly, a letter sent from Alexandria caused the newspaper to be suppressed for a month. This letter criticized the domestic and foreign policies and activities of the Viceroy of Egypt. In fact, it was the Viceroy himself that made appeals to the Sublime Port to take action, which after the newspaper was sentenced to suspension for a month. The most severe punishment the paper faced, where the paper’s publishing license was revoked, the printing house was seized, and the editor of the newspaper almost received a prison sentence, was all due to a reader’s letter. All these developments increased the tensions between Britain and


the Ottoman government. However, even after all these obstacles, the newspaper went on to issue under the title “The Constantinople Messenger.”

2.5 From The Levant Herald to Constantinople Messenger: The Incriminating Letter

The attempts in the early phase of Abdulhamid II’s long reign to restore his predecessor Murad V to the throne, including particularly that of Ali Suâvi, held an important place in the conceptualization of the Hamidian regime. The era’s tumultuous beginnings were highly influential in the development of Abdulhamid’s attitudes, as well as the intellectual, administrative and political history of the Ottoman state in general. In this respect, the interval period between war and peace, Ali Suâvi’s failed initiative and an incriminating letter associated with this event published by the The Levant Herald, played a major role and marked a turning point.

Two years before Ali Suâvi’s attempted coup, in early December 1876, there was an attempt made to abduct ex-Sultan Murad V from his confinement in Ciragan Palace. The intention of the kidnappers was to remove Murad from Constantinople and demonstrate to the public his fine mental condition, in the hope that it would gain support for his return to the throne. Nevertheless, the plan was foiled and some of the alleged perpetrators were arrested. Nevertheless, the extent of the collaborators in this incident was never sufficiently revealed.179

On May 20, 1878, a year after the ex-sultan’s deposition, another sensational event occurred; a riot that broke out in front of Ciragan Palace. The leader of the riot was Ali Suâvi, the late director of the Imperial College of Galatasaray and one of the former Young Ottomans. He was accompanied by a group of angry Muslim refugees from the Balkans; key frustration was the disastrous conduct and losses resulting from the Russo-Ottoman war, some implicated Abdulhamid II for consequences, so Murad V was their other choice. Briefly, the objective of this attack was

supposed to have been the release of Murad and his reinstatement to the throne.\textsuperscript{180} The affair ended in a fiasco in just under an hour. Ali Suâvi was slain with some forty or fifty of his followers by the Imperial troops, and those who survived were arrested and brought to trial.\textsuperscript{181}

This notorious incident went down in history as the Raid of Ciragan or Ciragan Incident, and it resulted in dismissals and sentences of internal exile amongst a number of statesmen and high-ranking bureaucrats.\textsuperscript{182} The Marshal of the Palace, Said Pasha, nicknamed \textit{İngiliz}, the Englishman, and who had earlier introduced Ali Suâvi to the sultan, was one of these prominent dignitaries to be blacklisted.\textsuperscript{183} Although the investigative reports of the incident in the Ottoman archives have an inclination to claim that the British Ambassador Lord Layard and his secretary, as well as freemasons, were behind Ali Suâvi, this kind of relationship would never be proven.\textsuperscript{184} The incident marked the beginning of the sultan’s tight hold on the administration of the Ottoman state. The deposed Sultan Murad V and his family were subsequently held under house arrest in the Malta Pavilion, on the top of the hill above Ciragan Palace.\textsuperscript{185} Receiving the news from agents, \textit{The New Zealand Herald} reported the affair thusly: “...Every attempt is made up to hush the matter up, though the conspiracy and the fire at the Sublime Porte together have produced great alarm in government circle. One of the immediate effects has been that the sultan has revived the Grand

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\textsuperscript{180} Milena Methodieva, \textit{Reform, Politics and Culture}, p. 18.
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\textsuperscript{181} Hüseyin Çelik, \textit{Ali Suâvi ve Dönemi} (İstanbul: İletişim, 1994), p. 291; Said Pasha, \textit{Jurnal} 1, p. 149-152. Being Marshal of the Palace, Said Pasha began to keep dairies entitled “Jurnal.” These manuscripts are 7 volumes in total and consist of the pasha’s political and personal experiences, as well as his observations in between 1876 and 1896. The facsimile copies of the first and second volumes can be found in Koç University library, Nesteren-Fuat Bayramoglu collection, or ISAM library in Istanbul with the call numbers: 128495 (vol. 1) and 128496 (vol. 2). See, Burhan Çaglar, \textit{İngiliz Said Paşa ve Günülgü (Jurnal)}, (İstanbul: Arı Sanat, 2010).
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\textsuperscript{184} BOA. Y. EE. 79/60, August 27, 1878; Y.EE. 14/7, May 26, 1878; BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 2/64, January 30, 1879; According to eye-witnesses, the British ambassador, Lord Layard and his secretary were seen around Ciragan Palace during the incident.
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Viziership in favour of Rushdi Pasha, and replaced Mahmud Damad at the War Office, but both have since been superseded by other puppets.”186

In the meantime, the Sublime Porte was in the process of determining who the Ottoman delegates would be in the upcoming Congress of Berlin, which was to be convened to revise the controversial terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, signed in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire’s defeat by Russia on March 3, 1878.187 Alarmed by the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and by the specter of Russian hegemony in eastern Anatolia, as well as the possibilities of Russian movement across Mesopotamia towards the Persian Gulf and beyond to India, Britain was intent on securing its own strategic interests before the Congress of Berlin began. Therefore, the decision was made, for military purposes, to acquire the island of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean, from which Britain could oversee the smooth flow of navigation through the Suez Canal, and prevent any future Russian incursions.188 In order to achieve this objective, a secret convention was imposed by Britain upon the sultan, entailing that Britain would ostensibly occupy and administer the island of Cyprus temporarily, but for an unspecified period and in the name of the sultan, in exchange for the guarantee of Asiatic Turkey against Russian encroachment and supporting the Ottomans during the Berlin Congress.189 The Cyprus convention was submitted by Layard, the British Ambassador of Constantinople, to the sultan via Ingiliz Said Pasha, who had already been persuaded of its advantages, and he soon became the aide de camp of the sultan during the secret negotiations.190

Following the Ciragan Incident, the media was put under strict censorship, and nothing was allowed to be said of the matter in the Turkish newspapers. Therefore, the news only appeared in

186 “The Suez Mail,” The New Zealand Herald, July 24, 1878, p. 3.


190 M.Celaleddin, Mir’ât-i Hakîkat, p. 507-508; Said Paşa, Jurnal 1, p. 148-149, 153, 158; BOA. Y.EE. 42/203.
the foreign-language press Anglo-French press in Constantinople. The Levant Herald reported the Ciragan Incident in its various issues. In accordance with the then-current political conjuncture, the journal accused Ali Suâvi as provocateur of the rebellion and identified him as seditious, mean-spirited, and as a factious intriguer, whose perfidious activity targeted the Ottoman nation and the state. Moreover, the news article made explicit reference to the “desperate” health condition of Murad V, and his mental illness was emphasized. Correspondingly, the legitimacy of his dethronement was promoted.

Upon the hearing of the allegations that the ex-sultan was insane, however, the foreign press resumed publishing inflammatory articles and news pieces describing how Murad V had in fact regained full possession of his mental faculties. By distributing this opinion, it was in effect implying the legality of Ali Suâvi’s actions, and the reinstatement of Murad V to the throne. The grounding for this claim was the belief that the ex-sultan Murad had recovered his reason and that Abdulhamid II was therefore a usurper, which meant he should return the throne its rightful owner. In one case, the newspaper Correspondence de l’Est announced that it would issue a brochure defining Murad V to be perfectly healthy, and exhibiting no sign of mental derangement; thus, it was his right that he should reclaim the throne. When, subsequently, the reporter of this

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193 “The Riot at Constantinople,” The Times, February 13, 1878, p. 5; “The ex-Sultan,” The Westport Times, July 31, 1877, p. 4; “The Truth about ex-Sultan Murad,” The Bruce Herald, January 31, 1896, p. 6; “Death of ex-Sultan Murad,” The Sydney Morning Herald, September 1, 1904, p. 5; The news in the Star regarding Murad’s health asserts as “a strong, additional confirmation has been received from Constantinople that ex-Sultan Murad has been great measure recovered. As those who are disconnected with the present regime favor his restoration to power, his recovery considerably complicated the internal situation.” “Europe,” The Star, July 19, 1877, p. 3.

newspaper arrived in Constantinople, he promised to not publish the brochure in exchange for money and favors.  

A few days later, the editor of The Levant Herald, Edgar Whitaker, received an extraordinary, anonymous letter from a reader asking for it to be published in the newspaper, with an accompanying death threat, should the paper refuse to publish it. The letter was in favor of Murad V, accusing the journal of distorting the facts about the Ciragan Incident and denouncing the present sultan as a usurper and imprudent.

Whitaker was thereupon directed to consult with his friend Ingiliz Said Pasha about the matter, and requested advice, to which Said Pasha responded by shrugging his shoulders and mumbling “you would publish it.” On the top of that, according to an espionage report in the Ottoman Archives, the British Ambassador who was claimed to hope for the reinstallation of Murad V to the Ciragan Palace was aware of the letter and encouraged Whitaker to print it. Although this report likely contained false information based upon nothing more than hearsay, it is significant in that it demonstrates the public perception of the event regarding the relationship between The Levant Herald and British Embassy, as well as helping to indicate the perception of the then current political situation among the public.

On Saturday, June 1, 1878, the editor of The Levant Herald published the letter with prefatory editorial remarks, offering to provide the police with the original copy. Nonetheless, the Sublime Porte declared the letter defamatory and seditious; the paper was immediately suppressed, and the police took possession of the printing house. Moreover, an attempt was made to bring Whitaker before a military court, but this was resisted by the British Consul General, Mr. Fawcett, on the

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199 BOA. Y.EE. 43/218.
grounds that the capitulations protected a British subject from such a summary method of procedure. Ultimately, he was ordered to leave the country within five days of the declaration; however, he took refuge in the British embassy in Constantinople and was entertained by Fawcett in his own house for a while. An extract from The Pall Mall Gazette illustrates the scene, stating: “Mr. Whitaker is at present living with Mr. Fawcett at Therapia, and the house is surrounded by spies and agents of the police in disguise.”

An edition of The Daily News, published in London on June 10, 1878, provides a semi-official and more in-depth description of the event as follows:

On Saturday afternoon, a stupid and seditious letter appeared in The Levant Herald, for which the paper was next day suppressed, and Mr. Whitaker, the editor, was ordered to leave the country within forty-eight hours. He has not, however, yet left. It is understood that, Mr. Layard is trying to obtain the revocation of this order. The letter in question says The Levant Herald, was sent anonymously. The editor professed his readiness to hand it over to the police... The letter is connected in public opinion with Ali Suâvi’s attempt. An examination is now going on into that attempt.

It is regrettable that the issue of The Levant Herald containing the letter is unavailable in our hands at present. Libraries and research centers such as the Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Center, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Atatürk Library, National Library of Turkey, the Center for Research Library, the Library of Congress, even the British Library, which holds the collection


201 “Turkey,” The Standard, June 10, 1878, p. 5.

of *The Levant Herald*, do not include this certain issue. Hence, it can probably be deduced that the issue was fully confiscated by the police.

Nevertheless, the foreign correspondents in Constantinople did not neglect to dispatch this incriminating letter by telegraph towards the foreign press, some of which published it entirely. *The Standard* in London and *The Argus* in Melbourne are two of these journals that received the contents of the letter by telegraph, and published the letter with *The Levant Herald*’s prefatory editorial notes as follows.\(^{203}\)

We have received the following seditious and malicious letter, the original of which is at the disposal of the Minister of Police, should his energetic Excellency deem it worth the trouble of an inquiry:

M. Le Directeur,- While the Ottoman nation bases all its hopes of salvation on England, and seeks by every possible means to throw off the yoke imposed upon it by a usurper, who, by his ignorance, his imprudence, and his boundless ambition, has reduced his country to the verge of destruction; and to replace on the throne him who alone enjoys the national confidence, and who may by his exceptional qualifications, which are recognised throughout Europe, regenerate his country and initiate its advance on the path of progress and liberty, we are astonished to find that the editor of *The Levant Herald* – a journal much esteemed at Constantinople – instead of conforming to the sentiments of justice and equity which ought to inspire him, instead of conforming to the great principle of publicity of ascertained truths, instead of sympathizing with unmerited misfortune, allows himself, on the contrary, to be misled by false information, and thus becomes the servile organ of the tyranny of those whose interest it is to suppress the truth for their own base purposes. It is surprising to find that a man who is held in general estimation, and who is endowed with good sense, should fall into such a trap, and should stoop to insert in his journal articles so contrary to the evident truth – that he should represent the health of Sultan Mourad as failing and his ultimate complete cure as

doubtful, when on the contrary, no one is ignorant that the ex-sultan is in the most perfect enjoyment of all his intellectual faculties. We pray then, M. Le Directeur, in the name of humanity, of justice, of truth, and of your own conscience, to correct all that you have recently written - to show yourself in future superior to such calumnious insinuations, and to become the exponent of the will of a united nation. Thus you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are fulfilling the duties of an honest man and of an impartial journalist. In the opposite event we cannot guarantee you against the unfortunate results of such blindness of conscience – By the mouth of the Ottoman nation.

The Standard reveals that the version of the letter that was published in the English-language newspapers was a translation. The original was written in French and it only appeared the French portion of The Levant Herald. In addition, The Argus emphasizes the frequent suppression of The Levant Herald by the Sublime Porte, and criticizes Whitaker for inviting suppression once more, since the publication of the letter would foreseeably cause it. Thus, from these journals, we are left with a question: “Why, then, did Whitaker invite suppression by publishing an anonymous letter, which was wholly disapproved?”

Turkish historian Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı asserts that the letter was sent by the grand master of the Prodoos Masonic Lodge Cleanthi Scalieri, who had many European connections, and to whom Murad V had smuggled a note stating: “If you do not save me from this place, Malta

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205 The Proodos (“Progress” in Greek) Masonic Lodge was founded in Pera in 1865, as an associate of the French lodge L’Union d’Orient “Grand Orient”. The lodge’s rituals were conducted in both Turkish and Greek. In 1872, a Constantinople-born Ottoman-Greek, Cleanthi Scalieri became Grand Master of the lodge, and on October 20 of that year Prince Murad was clandestinely inducted into the lodge, sponsored by his chamberlain Seyyid Bey. Murad rose through the ranks in the lodge which was named Envar-i Şarkiye, “Eastern Lights,” with its ritual conducted in Turkish, but the plan was never realized. Abdurrahman Erginsoy, Türkiye'de Masonluğun Doğuşu ve Gelişmesi (İstanbul: Erciyas Yayınları, 1996), p. 15-16. According to Şükrü Hanioğlu, Scalieri who played a significant role Prince Murad’s accession to the throne, purposed to have found a new Byzantium state would unite Turks and Greeks under an enlightened Ottoman sultan's sovereignty. M. Şükrü Hanioğlu The Young Turks in Opposition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 34-36.
Pavilion will be my grave.” Even though the newspapers reported that no one was satisfied with the idea that the letter published by *The Levant Herald* was genuinely received from a reader, it nevertheless had an effect on the present sultan, and Murad V was reinstalled in Ciragan Palace with his entourage. In fact, another attempt was staged a month later, under the leadership of the very same Cleanthi Scalieri, to rescue the ex-sultan from Ciragan Palace and allow him escape to Europe. However, this too resulted in failure.

Exposed by the pressure of the defeat and the Ciragan incident, the letter published by *The Levant Herald* soon created a political crisis in Constantinople, and strained the relationship between the sultan and the Sublime Porte. In the midst of this chaotic atmosphere, the Cyprus convention was signed on June 4, 1878, over the objections of some of the ministers, and under a virtual ultimatum of the British Ambassador. Afterwards, the grand vizier was removed and a government reshuffle took place, something which had already taken place seven times in the previous six months. Some of the most prominent dignitaries and palace employees were dismissed.

Edgar Whitaker remained at the house of British Consul General at Tarabia for some time. He was threatened with trial, imprisonment, and expulsion, and the police sought him daily in Constantinople and Pera. After pleading at length, he obtained an interview with the Prime Minister Safvet Pasha; he apparently gave a satisfactory explanation and received a pardon. Moreover, he attained permission to bring out a new paper, so long as he avoided inopportune

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207 İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “V. Murad’ı Tekrar Padişah Yapmak İsteyen,” p. 288; This was reported as: “Rushdi Pasha, the new Grand Vizier, has informed the ambassadors that the Sultan has ordered the ex-Sultan Murad to be reinstalled in the Tcheragan Palace, and all persons accused of participating in the Ali Suavi’s conspiracy to be set a liberty.” “The Eastern Crisis,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, June 2, 1878, p. 2.


remarks, entitled *The Constantinople Messenger*. The pardon stipulated that Whitaker would be forced to leave Constantinople for a few weeks, and that his new paper could begin publication after his departure. As his family was in France and he had hoped to see the ongoing exhibition in Paris, he left for France in good cheer.\(^{211}\) Concerning the situation, *The Daily News* wrote:

> The important political part of the question is the claim to have English subjects brought before a Turkish court-marital. Our Consul General has protested against such a claim as one that disregards and defies the express stipulations of our agreement with the Turkish authorities… The Sultan and the Pachas might be as barbarous as they pleased in their dealings with Turkish subjects, it was clearly impossible that English men could be surrendered to their ignorance, their rapacity and their arbitrary freaks… We have stood between the Turkish government and its responsibilities. We have taught the Porte the baleful lesson that its safety depends not on the loyalty of its people given in return for its justice and liberality…\(^{212}\)

The first issue of *The Constantinople Messenger* was published on July 24, 1878 with the same staff and in the same office of *The Levant Herald*. The daily edition of the journal was printed in English and French, and the weekly edition was printed only in English.

At this point, it should be remembered that one of the main focal points of the political opposition to the Hamidian regime were the Masonic lodges.\(^{213}\) If it is true that the letter published in the newspaper was sent, as alleged, by a Masonic lodge, then it is noteworthy that *The Levant Herald* was the newspaper of choice. This could be taken as a sign that opposition groups were among the audience that *The Levant Herald* appealed to. At this stage, the newspaper was regarded as a potent vehicle for dissident viewpoints, and was taken as the representative for various oppositional groups, ranging from the Young Ottomans to the Masonic lodges. These groups were generally


made up of well-educated people from the upper classes, and who were familiar with European languages. They had many demands in common, such as the removal of censorship, freedom of thought and other reforms.²¹⁴ By providing a platform for these groups, The Levant Herald contributed to the formation of the political opposition to the Hamidian regime in the late Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the content of the published letter was harshly critical of the newspaper. The newspaper must have, in a sense, stirred up the feelings of “betrayal” and disappointment in the eyes of politically dissident groups due to its coverage of the Cıragan Incident, when it used pro-government language and accused Ali Suâvi, who was one of the important figures of the political opposition, of being “seditious,” a “factious intriguer,” and “mean-spirited.” Of course, the newspaper could have decided not to publish the letter at all, and the proprietor of the newspaper could very well have taken different precautions against the death threats that came to him with the letter. However, the newspaper found a valuable use for these threats. By publishing the letter, The Levant Herald both displayed its “dissident” credentials to opposition circles, but also gave everyone a chance to see what kind of pressure and retaliation they faced when they took such a stance.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the British Empire and the Ottomans states were establishing a close political relationship during the same time period that the letter appeared in The Levant Herald. A political alliance was in the works in preparation for the Congress of Berlin, and both sides were in negotiations over the Cyprus convention. It is likely that the letter had a significant effect of the Ottoman government and the sultan himself, as it was staunchly in favor of the deposed Sultan Murad V. The publication of such a letter in a British paper may have been seen as a veiled threat. It is possible that this letter was one of the motivations for the sultan’s cabinet shuffle, which took place soon after, and in which prominent dignitaries were removed from the capital by appointing them to provincial governorships. The resulting atmosphere of tension strengthened Britain's hand, and gave it more leverage in its negotiations with the Ottoman

Empire. These political concerns may also have influenced *The Levant Herald*’s publication of the letter.

Through these developments, the Ottoman authorities experienced practically how dire diplomatic tensions could break out in the case of any direct intervention in those press organs subject to the capitulation laws. It should by now be clear that the newspaper was under the protection of the British authorities, which defended the newspaper staff when necessary. In addition, the ability of *The Levant Herald* to sway European public opinion regarding the Ottoman Empire became increasingly apparent. On the other hand, this situation also revealed how the foreign-language press have potential that could cause the deterioration of relations between the Empire and European states. It seems that the Ottoman government could not find any other option, in the end, but to resolve the situation on agreeable terms by pardoning Whitaker. He was provided by the government with a new publishing license, so that he could publish a different newspaper under a new name. However, the incident undoubtedly strengthened Abdulhamid’s belief in the necessity of censorship, and must have been one of the important turning points which marked the beginning of severe repression of the free press in the Hamidian era.
Chapter 3
The Names Behind *The Levant Herald*: The Proprietors

3.1 James Carlile McCoan

The proprietors of *The Levant Herald* changed a few times during the paper’s lifecycle. The first owner and founder, James Carlile McCoan was a lawyer, born in Dunlow, Tyrone County in North Ireland in 1829. His father, who was a farmer, was Clement McCoan of Charlemont, Armagh. His mother, Sarah McCoan was the daughter of James Carlile of Culrescoch, Moy. He was the only child of the family. He attended Dungannon School and Homerton College in London. In 1848, he was enrolled at University College, London. Although in 1851, he studied law at Middle Temple, he opted to work in the field of journalism instead of continuing as a lawyer. He was employed by *The Daily News* as a correspondent, and later became the war correspondent assigned to report on The Crimean War. At the time of his employment, The Crimean War was already underway (1853-1856) and Britain had entered the war as an ally of the Ottomans against Russia. The war paved the way for an increase in British interest and curiosity in regards to the Ottomans. Therefore, during the war, when he travelled to Georgia and Circassia, he spent a great deal of time just observing the lifestyle there. In the end, he moved to the Ottoman lands and began a new life in Constantinople.\(^{215}\)

When McCoan started to live in Constantinople, he found employment in the aforementioned Supreme Consular Court in Constantinople, that worked to provide legal recourse for cases brought forth by British citizens, and which was established thanks to the legal privileges granted by capitulations. McCoan worked there until 1864.\(^{216}\) In the meantime, his passion about journalism was never subdued, and it was during this period that he founded *The Levant Herald*, the first Anglophone newspaper in the Ottoman lands. He worked as its chief editor, and also undertook the publishing of articles. While the conditions that affected publishing were getting


\(^{216}\) “Obituary,” *The Times*, Jan 15, 1904, p. 4.
more and more challenging day by day, McCoan overcame the difficulties. The fines, suppression and suspension that the newspaper suffered from were all curtailed through McCoan’s connections and relations in the embassy.217

In addition to writing articles for The Levant Herald, McCoan also published the details of cases tried in the Supreme Consular Court as well as their verdicts. Meanwhile, he started to work with John Laffan Hanly, who was again an Irish journalist. Hanly had already gained experience as a correspondent in Britain before he came to Constantinople in 1868. After having worked for The Levant Herald for a period of time, he went on to establish his own newspapers, The Levant Times and The Shipping Gazette.218 As a result, McCoan and Hanly went their separate ways. Both newspapers were printed in Constantinople and covered the entire Ottoman territory, Near East and Europe. However, as the years passed, the old friends sued each other.219 In the trial, Hanly accused McCoan of using stolen quotes and plagiarizing news from his newspaper. The jury found McCoan guilty and decreed that he pay the fine and compensate Hanly for the damages. Apparently, this lawsuit was a turning point in McCoan's life. After some time, he decided to leave journalism. In 1870, McCoan sold The Levant Herald after its eleven years of publication. The buyer was Edgar Whitaker, a British gentleman who paid 6200 Liras for it, in cash.220

McCoan did not stay in Constantinople long after the sale and returned to Britain. However, he monetized his experience in Constantinople and travels to the East by writing articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics covering the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and the Middle East. Some of these writings were titled “Our new protectorate: Turkey in Asia: its Geography, Races, Resources, and Government”, “Egypt as it is” and “Egypt under Ismail.” McCoan also started showing interest in politics, and in 1880 he ran for the position of deputy for County Wicklow. This specific part of the region meant a lot to McCoan, who was passionate about the freedom of


Ireland. When he was in the Parliament, he frequently took the floor to express his opinions about the Ottoman Empire. For example, he was the one who brought up the Midhad Pasha’s case in the Parliament when he was accused of Sultan Abdulaziz death in the court summoned at Yıldız.\textsuperscript{221} McCoan worked as a deputy for a single term, but he was not elected in the next election. James Carlile McCoan died on January 13, 1904 in London.\textsuperscript{222} However the newspaper which he founded continued its lifecycle in Constantinople. In the meantime, Edgar Whitaker undertook the editing and publishing of the newspaper.

3.2 Edgar Whitaker

We do not have much information about the early years of Edgar Whitaker’s life, and about how he arrived in the Ottoman Empire. The schools he attended and his education were not mentioned in the sources that were available to us.

The 1841 Census of England demonstrates that Whitaker was from Frome, Somerset, England. He was the second child of Alfred Whitaker and Catherine Mary Woolbert. According to the census records, Whitaker was born on 26 September 1831. On March 5, 1835, the Bath Chronicle reported that he was baptized on the same day with his siblings Edward and Edith Rose in St. John the Baptist. Edgar moved to his uncle’s place at a young age. His uncle was an academician in The College of Oakington in Cambridgeshire. As Edgar himself puts it, he spent the most productive years of his academic life when was with his uncle. Edgar Whitaker’s father, Alfred Whitaker was a jurist. He wanted his son to study law and work in the judicial system just like himself. Accordingly, Edgar studied law for a while, however, he found later on that law did not appeal to him. Wanting a more adventurous profession, he signed up to work for Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company in 1849. Edgar moved to India for this new job and he worked for this company for a number of years. While the work suited his cosmopolitan temperament, the weather


\textsuperscript{222} G. Norgate and K. D. Reynolds, “McCoan, James Carlile (1829-104),” p. 135.
conditions and climate in India affected his health badly. After a certain while, he left his job and returned to Britain, where he stayed for a short period of time. Afterwards, in 1857, he decided to travel to the East again on a new mission. His work in India and his time in this country gave him some experience in the colonies. He also experienced living in a different country far from his homeland, and had an opportunity to learn about a different cultural environment. All of this new experience and knowledge guided him in his journey to the Near East.

This time, his destination was Smyrna, one of the most important port cities of the Ottoman Empire. In Smyrna, he was appointed as the manager of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. He played an active role in the establishment and development of this financial institution in this city. However, due to internal disputes within the bank administration, he left this job as well and returned to Britain, only to come to the Ottoman lands once again two years later. This time, he was appointed as the Vice-Consul at the British Consulate in Gallipoli. He worked as the Vice-Consul in Gallipoli from December 1859 until 1862, with the exception of April 1862, when he was acting as the main Consular official in the Dardanelles.223

Edgar Whitaker purchased ownership of *The Levant Herald* in 1872. He settled in Constantinople and started to work in publishing. Except for some business trips and touristic voyages, he would stay in Constantinople until the end of his life, and made publishing *The Levant Herald* his life’s work.

While Whitaker started publishing his own newspaper, he was still also working as the Constantinople correspondent of *The Times*, as well as working as a war correspondent for the periodical *Exodus*. He went to the battlefield as a war reporter during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78. He headed towards the Balkan front and went ahead until Shumen. He visited all the major battlefields in the Danube region. He was also present in this area during the Elana battles. In addition, when the opportunity presented itself, he was able to infiltrate the Russian lines as

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well. A few years later, during the 1885 Serbo-Bulgarian crisis, he went back to the battlefields again to work as a war reporter. This time, he moved together with the Bulgarian troops and shared the news he gathered with The Times. Whitaker continued working as the Constantinople correspondent of The Times until 1895. At the same time, he continued to contribute to other newspapers and magazines in Britain. He was also, in his spare time, a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica, including several articles about the East in general, and Ottoman history, geography and politics. He also wrote some passages for the biographies of Ottoman statesmen.

When Whitaker first came to the Ottoman Empire, he was 26 and single. Spending such a long period of time in the Empire, he eventually married there. Yet, we have limited knowledge about Whitaker’s marriage. We know that he married Alice Victoria Abbott, the daughter of Abbott brothers, who was counted among the most well-known Levantine families. It is possible that Whitaker met the Abbotts for the first time when he was working in Gallipoli and Dardanelles. In fact, he succeeded Richard J. Abbott, who was the Vice-Consular before him. It is known that Whitaker and J. Abbott worked simultaneously and exchanged positions. It is likely that he was frequently in touch with the Abbotts before his marriage. Whitaker’s wife, Alice, was the middle daughter of Richard Benjamin Abbott (1803-1858) and Helen Margaret Maltass (1807-?), who were settled in Smyrna. She was born in Smyrna on January 17, 1840. Whitaker and Alice Abbott got married in Constantinople in 1884, so they must have been middle-aged when they married. The couple had no natural children, but they adopted Evelyn Wanda Gorkiewicz, the granddaughter of Alice’s sister. Evelyn’s biological parents were Count Habdank Górkiewicz of Warsaw and Hélène Adèle Louise Helenco van Lennep. Alice Abbott was their grand aunt. Evelyn

came to Constantinople with the Whitakers and lived there for many years. She continued to use
the surname Whitaker until she married Sir Robin J. Paul in 1919.  

One curious trait of Whitaker, and one that informed much of his personal life, was his love of
music. Although his amateur interest in music never turned into a professional career, his passion
for music stayed with him until the end of his life. His friends said “He was a talented and
accomplished musician, both in theory and execution. He was the composer of a number of songs
and pianoforte pieces.” Whitaker pioneered the establishment of an orchestra in Constantinople.
In fact, he was among the founders of Orchestral Philharmonic Society, which was renamed later
the Societe Musicale de Constantinople. He helped to organize and maintain this orchestra, which
was established under the auspices of the British embassy. It is said that he tried hard to make the
Levantine and European community in the Ottoman capital develop a highbrow musical taste.  

Edgar Whitaker, as the owner and editor of The Levant Herald, never had a stable relationship
with the Palace and Sublime Porte. When he was the chief editor (1878-1903), The Levant Herald
faced suspension, suppression or fines several times. The news and articles published in the
newspaper and the Sublime Porte’s attitude to them sometimes caused diplomatic incidents. There
were times when such news put the Ottoman government in a difficult situation vis-a-vis the other

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225 Susan Heuck Allen, Finding the walls of Troy : Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann at Hisarlik, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1999), 27, 43, 70; Francis Yeats-Brown, Caught by the Turks, (London: Edwaard Arnold, 1919), 153-158, 173-177, 206; “Edgar Whitaker,”

http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:Edgar_Whitaker_%281%29 (Accessed in January 10, 2016); 


states. For example, once *The Levant Herald* published an article on the political problems of Eastern Rumelia. The Sublime Porte mentioned that this article would disturb the Russian government. They said because the newspaper was published in Constantinople, it would lead to a diplomatic incident between the Ottoman government and Russia. The state held Whitaker responsible for all of this headache, and demanded that Whitaker and his newspaper be cautious and monitor themselves.\(^ {228}\)

However, on occasion, Whitaker did publish pro-government news, and used supportive language about the Ottoman government. For example, the way that his paper described the Ciragan Incident, in the end, appealed to both the palace and the Sublime Porte. Articles in *The Levant Herald* about the Rumelia policy of Abdulmahid II were often supportive of the government position, as well.\(^ {229}\) Yet, it was probably not a coincidence that Whitaker's pro-government stance manifested itself more noticeably when the preferences of Britain coincided with those of the Ottoman government. Whitaker supported, for example, the Ottoman government’s policy towards Rumelia regarding the integration of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria. This development was also supported by Britain.\(^ {230}\) Moreover, it would not be wrong to assume that whenever Whitaker published pro-Ottoman government news and articles, he made use of the opportunity and tried to obtain financial assistance from the state.

Whitaker was, for the most part, able to resist the censorship and sanctions imposed by the Ottoman government, thanks to his political acumen and professionalism. When avoiding suspension required reconciliation and contrition, he was adept at that as well. In such circumstances, he wrote petitions to the palace that underlined his loyalty to the sultan. He highlighted that he was at their service, and he even agreed that the articles that caused the newspaper to be suspended or fined went beyond the limits of propriety and asked for forgiveness.\(^ {231}\)

\(^ {228}\) BOA. Y.A.HUS. 118/8-1 (Sadaret), February 6, 1886.

\(^ {229}\) BOA. Y. PRK: BŞK. 10/89-2 Whitaker to Mabeyn, July 16, 1886


\(^ {231}\) BOA. Y. EE. 82/29-1 Whitaker to Mabeyn, February 18, 1865.
petitions that there were people who were trying to set him and the palace at odds, and he was put in a difficult situation because of the slanders of his opponents.\textsuperscript{232} In some of his petitions, he mentioned these complaints and asked for a solution. Whitaker complained about the censorship particularly, often writing that it made the publishing of his paper untenable. The difficulty of submitting each edition of the paper to the censorship committee before publication was, specifically, the cause of much hardship. In one of the many petition he submitted to the Sublime Porte, he claimed that most of the world had removed such heavy censorship years ago, and that such practices harm journalism and journalists, not to mention, in the long run, the Ottoman state. He requested that the censorship be removed, and he added that if it was not, he would have to leave the Ottoman Empire and move abroad to do his job properly. He suggested that, if he left the country, his newspaper could be purchased by the state, and he recommended sarcastically that the state buy the newspaper and use it as their official gazette.\textsuperscript{233} The state, on the other hand, did not show any particular interest in publishing. Rather, the state wished to control and shape existing publications and publishers. Whitaker must have foreseen all of this, because he knew that the state needed newspapers, journalists and publications. He made such a remark not because he truly wished the state would buy his paper, but to highlight that the only solution, if the state desired a private press at all, would be to make the censorship practices less strict. Whitaker’s main point, essentially, was to underline the fact that he could not perform his profession properly due to the censorship, and that he could not make as much money as he expected to off of his newspaper. He was, of course, aware of the fact that just because he complained, the Ottoman government was probably not going to loosen those censorship practices it so tightly held onto. What he essentially required was to obtain financial support by expressing the damage that he had suffered due to the censorship.

There were, in fact, some instances where Whitaker acted in an openly defiant and even menacing manner in order to obtain concessions from the Sublime Porte. For example, he frequently mentioned the possibility that he would transfer his newspaper to Athens, Bucharest or somewhere

\textsuperscript{232} BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 11/32 Whitaker to Mabeyn, March 29, 1886.

\textsuperscript{233} BOA. HR. TO. 533/17-2 October 5, 1889; Y. PRK. TKM. 20/38-1 December 8, 1890.
This was, in a way, blackmail, for the Porte’s interest in keeping publishing houses within the Empire, and under imperial control, was well-known. In fact, the Sublime Porte preferred a kind of ‘soft control’, rather than overreaching and forcing publishers to move abroad, especially to hostile states such as Greece, Russia or Austria. With a relaxation of the heavy censorship, The Sublime Porte got what it wanted, by giving publishers such as Whitaker what they wanted. However, this was not always the case. There were many times when the Sublime Porte did not give any credit to such an outburst from an irate publisher. For example, Whitaker once wrote in a petition to the Sublime Porte that, if his demands were not met, he would migrate, first to London and then on to Greece. In response, the Sublime Porte merely said, “we advise you not to postpone your plans.” This time the Ottoman authorities reacted extraordinarily. The Ottoman government would completely lose its control over the newspaper if Whitaker moved The Levant Herald beyond the Ottoman borders and started publishing it abroad. If this happened, the Ottoman authorities would not have much at their disposal to prevent the publishing of the newspaper. Filing complaints to the embassies about the newspaper through diplomatic contacts was one option. This, however, did not always yield the expected result. Another option was to ban the entry of the newspaper into the country, but this was also not a very effective method. The newspaper could make it past Ottoman customs in sealed envelopes, or through foreign post offices, without being checked. However, it seems that the Sublime Port believed that, if it could not completely prevent the entry of the newspapers into the country, it could at least restrict their circulation, to some extent. The response Whitaker received from the Sublime Porte was probably not what he expected. We do not know how he reacted to this response, however, as he neither shut down his printing house nor moved the newspaper abroad. He stayed in Constantinople and continued to publish The Levant Herald.

234 BOA. Y.A. HUS. 164/71-1 Sadaret, 8 Şubat 1880; Y. PRK. AZJ. 11/32-2 Edgar Whitaker to Mabeyn, March 16, 1886.


236 BOA. İ.DH. 1023/80672-3 Mabeyn to Dahiliye, January 26, 1887.
As mentioned above, Whitaker did not hesitate to be contrary when he deemed it necessary. For example, he exhibited a rather defiant attitude when his newspaper was suspended due to the suspicion that it had violated Ottoman security laws. Whitaker criticized the treatment he was subject to, as well as the government’s policies. He had brochures printed, entitled “An Announcement to Istanbliots.” These brochures were in English and French. Though the distribution of these brochures violated the press code, and the despite steps by the Sublime Porte to suppress them, these brochures acted as a symbol of Whitaker’s defiance and independence. Thus, even when his official newspaper was suspended, Whitaker continued to have his voice heard through these booklets. Whitaker was certainly aware that he was protected by the provisions of the capitulations when he challenged the Porte in this manner. This was a situation that strengthened his legal position in the face of the Ottoman government's sanctions. He knew what the Ottoman authorities were legally capable of doing to him, just as he knew the limits of their authority. Therefore, the Sublime Porte found it in its best interests to deal with Whitaker’s resistance gently so as to avoid a diplomatic incident with Britain. Had Whitaker been without consular protection, he instead may have faced Ottoman penalties, (as often Young Ottomans did) – exile, or worse.

From the viewpoint of Whitaker himself, he was a loyal servant of the Ottoman state and palace. When the English ambassador talked about him, he made sure to mention that Whitaker was known to be rendering services that would be approved of by the palace. The Sublime Porte, however, disagreed. In the eyes of the Ottoman government, Whitaker worked to undermine the state and government, even though he had been receiving a subsidy for many years. The Porte believed that Whitaker supported Armenian independence, and was setting up obstacles against reform. The Porte also thought that Whitaker wrote in such a way as to leave a negative impression about the

237 BOA. Y. A. HUS. 164/53 April 24, 1880.
239 Şükrü Hanoğlu, Late Ottoman Empire, p103.
240 BOA. BOE. 2524/189229-3 The British Embassy at Constantinople to Sadaret, February 15, 1905.
Ottoman government. The Ottoman government had such a negative perception of Whitaker that they believed Whitaker made it a habit to violate the laws, and oppose to the Ottoman state.\textsuperscript{241}

For the Sublime Porte, Whitaker did not intend to address only an Ottoman audience. Though his paper primarily circulated throughout the Empire, it was undeniable that it also was read throughout the Near East and Europe, and targeted British opinion in particular. That Whitaker had worked as the Constantinople correspondent for the \textit{Times} made him seem like a critic of The Ottoman state in the eyes of the Sublime Porte. His writings, both in his own newspaper and in \textit{The Times}, caused disturbances. Despite his repeated protestations that he was solely at the service of the sultan and the Ottoman government, the Sublime Porte nevertheless requested that, in both \textit{The Levant Herald} and in the other foreign papers he wrote for that he not criticize, or even write about, the government.\textsuperscript{242}

The Sublime Porte followed the entirety of the major European press outlets, including \textit{The Times}, for the reasons mentioned above. It wanted to know who was writing about events in the Empire, and what exactly they were saying that could impact the image of the state. For this purpose, it regularly examined current articles and news, and \textit{The Levant Herald} and Whitaker himself were always at the forefront of their analysis. When Ottoman officials failed to identify the journalists or figures who dispatched critical news or articles abroad, they would contact the telegraph operators and control the copies of telegrams sent from the Ottoman newspapers, including \textit{The Levant Herald}. The state would then demand that the telegraph operators identify the original writer of the articles, as well as other information about the source.\textsuperscript{243} For example, \textit{The Times} once shared a particular article about the Ottoman government, and Ottoman officials subsequently started to investigate the source of the news. When it was understood that the news in question was not sent from Constantinople, they tried to find out whether or not the Serbian or Bulgarian telegraph lines were used to send the telegram. As a result of their investigation, they discovered

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} BOA. Y.A. HUS. 164/71-1 Sadaret, February 8, 1880; BEO. AYN.d 1268/102 Sadaret to Dahiliye, April 14, 1880; Y.A. HUS. 164/53 April 24, 1880.
\item \textsuperscript{242} BOA. Y.A. HUS. 118/8-1 (Sadaret), February 6, 1886; Y. PRK. AZJ. 11/32-2 Edgar Whitaker to Mabeyn, March 16, 1886.
\item \textsuperscript{243} BOA. Y.PRK. HR. 15/26-1 Hariciye, December 24, 1892.
\end{itemize}
that one of *The Levant Herald* correspondents had sent the news via Bulgarian lines.\(^{244}\) Similarly, after an article appeared in *The Times* regarding the private interactions of the ambassadors of the great powers in the Sublime Porte, the Ottoman government, which claimed that article was a fabrication, began to investigate where *The Times* had received its information. By tracing the path of the telegram, they discovered that the original source was Whitaker’s Beyoğlu office.\(^{245}\) Repeatedly finding Whitaker and *The Levant Herald* behind such stories, inevitably made them to lose their credibility in the eyes of the Ottoman government. On the other hand, the Sublime Porte was forced to face the fact that *The Levant Herald* had an effective connection with the European press and the international press network. The Porte had to come to terms with the effect – whether positive or negative – that *The Levant Herald* had on European public opinion concerning the Ottoman Empire. It is this realization that is likely behind the lenient attitude assumed, for the most part, by the Ottoman authorities towards Whitaker. The newspaper’s regular receipt of the government stipends, despite all of these complications, can also be seen as a sign of this realization.

Whitaker utilized various means to gather news: he accepted letters from readers in distant regions of the Empire, and he also had men around the Palace and Sublime Porte who could act as political correspondents. In an espionage report in the Prime Minister’s Ottoman Archives, it is written that Whitaker tried all means to discover confidential information in the Ottoman capital, and that he worked almost like a secret agent. It was stated in this report, the men that Whitaker had placed around the palace and Sublime Porte were used as evidence for his nefarious intent. The espionage officials sent out a warning to those responsible within the government, warning them against leaks, and they advised the men who worked in the Palace to be cautious and not to talk about even ordinary issues concerning the functioning of the palace.\(^{246}\) This statement likely contained some exaggerations but it is understood that Whitaker did, indeed, have his own intelligence network, which he had established on the basis of his personal relationships. He examined seriously any kind of information shared with him, in the hope that it would have some news value. Sometimes,

\(^{244}\) BOA. Y.PRK. HR. 15/26-1 Hariciye, December 24, 1892.

\(^{245}\) BOA. BEO. 1081/81011-1 Sadaret to Hariciye, February 15, 1898.

\(^{246}\) BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 26/65-1.
shared this news with the public through *The Levant Herald* and sometimes served them to the British press through telegram.

Edgar Whitaker passed away on August 24, 1903, in Constantinople after suffering an exhaustive illness. It was written in the press that his friends, as well as people from all of the nations in the Levant, were stricken with grief upon his death. In fact, he had caught an illness about one year before his death, and it was starting from May that his health had deteriorated. He died at the age of 72. Having spent the majority of his life in the East, it was decided to bury him in a modest ceremony, with the participation of his family, relatives and friends. He was buried in Haidar Pasha British Cemetery, the land of which had been donated to Queen Victoria by the sultan during the Crimean war. This land was, thus, both in the East where he spent most of his life, and recognized as British territory as well. *The Levant Herald* shared the news about Whitaker’s funeral as follows: “the crowd of mourners, and the heap of telegrams and letters of condolence addressed to the widow, bore ample testimony to the regret universally felt at the death of distinguished journalist.” In *The Levant Herald*, a short notice stated that, “On the occasion of the funeral of its late lamented editor of *The Levant Herald* will not be published tomorrow.”

He had continued to work as the proprietor and editor of *The Levant Herald* until the end of his life. He contributed to the newspaper with reviews and translations of the policies adopted in the Near East and Levant, in addition to his journalism. Some of his reviews and translations included *The Rhodope Enquiry: Reports and Protocols of the International Commission, instituted by the Congress of Berlin* (Constantinople: Printed at The Levant Herald Press, 1878); *Look to the Balkans!: a Translation* (Constantinople: The Levant Herald Office, 1876); *The Outlook in Asiatic Turkey* (London: P.S. King, 1880); *Russia's Work in Turkey a Revelation*, (London, E. Wilson, 1877).

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After Edgar Whitaker’s death, his heirs came together and wrote to the court in the British Embassy, to settle his affairs and liquidate his debts. At that time, the payments that the Ottoman government had been issuing to The Levant Herald became a subject of discussion. The government had delayed some of the payments, and these payments had naturally accumulated into a significant sum. His heirs requested the delivery of this sum from the government. However, to the Ottoman authorities, these payments were merely signs of their benefaction, and were not inheritable by his descendants. His heirs, on the other hand, all agreed that Whitaker deserved to receive this amount in return for his services. They approached the British embassy with this issue and asked the ambassador to find a solution to this problem. At that time, this inheritance issue had already been discussed with the consular court. The British ambassador was able to broach the subject with the sultan when they had a meeting some time later. As a result of the meeting, the sultan ordered that the accumulated payments be distributed amongst his heirs. Nevertheless, despite the sultan’s order, there was still a great deal of bureaucratic disagreement about whose responsibility it was to take care of the disbursement of this inheritance. From which state account would they fund the payment? Which ministry would undertake it? These issues began a debate among the Ottoman bureaucracy that that would not be solved for years. The Ministry of Finance claimed that they had no budget item that would correspond to such a payment. Likewise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that they could not be held responsible for this payment. The British ambassador, on the other hand, reiterated his demand by submitting multiple letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He continued to remind the Ottoman officials that this payment had to be issued, as per the sultan’s instructions, and warned that the suspension of the payments would cause further diplomatic trouble. Moreover, the settling of Whitaker’s other affairs could not continue in the Embassy’s court until the Ottoman subsidy was disbursed and accounted for; as such the court case of Whitaker’s inheritors dragged on for several years.

249 BOA. BEO. 2253/168901-1 Sadaret to Hariciye, January 14, 1904; BEO 2504/187730-3 Hariciye to Sadaret January 15, 1905.

250 BOA. BEO. 2540/190439-3 The British Embassy at Constantinople to Hariciye, April 6, 1905.

251 BOA. BEO. 2504/187730-3 Sadaret to Hariciye January 15, 1905.

252 BOA. BEO. 2504/187730-1 Sadaret to Hariciye March 9, 1905; BEO. 2504/187730-4 Sadaret to Hariciye, February 9, 1905; BEO. 2504/187730-1 Sadaret to Harciye February 7, 1905.
Whitaker’s wife suffered from these endless discussions, as she had wanted the inheritance issue resolved as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{253} After years of discussion, it was decided that the payments would be issued from the Customs Administration.

Whitaker’s death did not stop the publication of \textit{The Levant Herald}. He was succeeded by a man named C.P. Clifton. The newspaper discussed this transition by printing that, “Mr. C. P. Clifton has the honor to inform the subscribers of \textit{The Levant Herald} and the public in general that the sultan obtained in accordance with the desire of the late Edgar Whitaker and issued his lifetime, C. P. Clifton is recognized as the proprietor and responsible editor of \textit{The Levant Herald}.”\textsuperscript{254} The newspaper continued to thrive and experienced several more changes in its editorial and corporate boards; however, this period must be left for further study.

\textsuperscript{253} BOA. BEO. 2524/189229-3 The British Embassy at Constantinople to Sadaret, February 15, 1905; BEO. 2504/187730-3 Sadaret to Hariciye January 15, 1905.

\textsuperscript{254} \textit{The Levant Herald}, July 13, 1881, p. 2-5; \textit{La France à Constantinople ou Présence Française Dans la Capitale Ottomane}, p. 33.
Conclusion

The introduction of the printing press to the Ottoman Empire did not transform Ottoman cultural life until the emergence of periodicals after the *Tanzimat*. Although there had been non-official periodicals long before the *Tanzimat*, in languages other than Turkish, these had always been small community papers with limited circulation. Even foreign-language newspapers in the pre-*Tanzimat* era, such as the French bulletins, focused more on issues relating to foreigners or Levantines. In the *Tanzimat* era, however, many newspapers were officially launched and these had different purposes, as well as targeted diverse groups and much larger communities.\(^{255}\) These newspapers touched upon a far richer collection of topics, provided a wide range of information, and circulated in wider areas. It should be kept in mind, however, that these were still the early days of the press, and people generally continued their habitual, traditional ways of gaining information, such as through rumors, gossip, recitation and discussion in social spaces, coffeehouses, tobacco shops, barbers and so on. Thus, reading the newspapers was not a widespread phenomenon. The most common practice was to read the papers aloud in a public gathering place, so that illiterate people could also learn about the news.\(^ {256}\)

Initially, most of the Ottoman Turkish press consisted of journals published by the state. As private journals began to enter into the Ottoman press sphere, the authorities saw it necessary to impose stricter controls through censorship and other means. As time passed, the press began to face tight regulations and heavy censorship. Newspapers which ran afoul of the government were either suspended, forced into bankruptcy, or forced to take an editorial stance favoring the government in order to continue to receive financial aid. In the latter case, newspapers had to avoid trouble with the authorities, and had to publish positive commentaries on official policies. This situation turned the newspapers into a medium for government propaganda.\(^ {257}\) The Turkish-language and non-Turkish language press suffered the most from this situation, compared to the foreign-

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\(^{255}\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 38, 94,


\(^{257}\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 94.
language press, which had the protection of their diplomatic connections and the extraterritorial privileges.\footnote{Bahadır Aydın, Kapitülasyonların Etkisi, p. 187-188, 232-234.} For these papers, in general, the paper’s respective ambassadors could negotiate with the authorities on behalf of the press and cause official reprimands to be withdrawn.

*The Levant Herald* was one of the first foreign-language newspapers in the Ottoman Empire, starting its life-cycle in a period when the Ottoman press was just beginning to develop. Founded right after the Crimean War, *The Levant Herald* became one of the longest running newspapers in the Ottoman lands, lasting over half a century. As a foreign-language newspaper, it owed its long life to the capitulations, and the diplomatic connections of its proprietors. Unlike the Turkish-language and the non-Turkish-language press in the Ottoman Empire, it could seek recourse from the consular court of the British Embassy, in the case that it received penalty or fines. Through political guile and diplomatic skills, it was sometimes able to avoid excessive penalties.

This close contact between *The Levant Herald* and the British Embassy led the former to be perceived by the public as the embassy’s media organ. However, the embassy emphasized, at every opportunity, that it did not have such a relationship with the newspaper. As a matter of fact, *The Levant Herald* was in keeping with the European norms and standards of the time in terms of its content. In this respect, it would be unthinkable to claim that the newspaper was only a media organ of the British Embassy. The publications it made on behalf of the Embassy consisted only of some minor announcements in the form of small advertisements. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that *The Levant Herald* did, indeed, had some organic ties with the British Embassy. First of all, the newspaper clearly stated in its first issue that it would work in the interests of Britain in the East. The stances that the newspaper took in regards to political events and economic practices, as well as its editorial policy, reflected this statement. The fact that the owners of the newspaper were British subjects put it jurisdictionally under the tutelage of the British Embassy. The interventions of the Embassy in demanding the revocation of every official reprimand inflicted upon the newspaper by the Ottoman government is an indication of the support of the British government for the newspaper. This support, even if it was not financial, was a manifestation of its interest in protecting the newspaper and its publishers from political difficulties. The Ottoman government was, therefore, forced to establish a relationship, in one form or another, with the
British Embassy when it attempted to impose sanctions on the newspaper. The framework of this relationship depended on the political conditions of the time. For example, *The Levant Herald* was shut down by the Ottoman government a few times at the request of the French or Russian embassies due to some articles published against the policies of these countries. When the British Embassy requested that the Sublime Porte end this suspension, against the wishes of France or Russia, the Ottoman government was thus obliged to make a political choice. In general, the Sublime Porte refrained from imposing on the newspaper any penalties that would jeopardize the political relationship it had with Britain, and found it to be in its best interests to be as lenient as possible towards the newspaper. Especially during the Hamidian regime, the power of press was used by the state to cement public loyalty and to stifle opposition. The mechanism of censorship which solidified during this period was one of the strictest of its time. This heavy censorship produced a press entirely dedicated to the service of the regime.\(^{259}\) Despite this atmosphere, *The Levant Herald* continued to exist and often retained its identity as a dissenting voice. It gave coverage to the news that the other newspapers of the Ottoman press did not dare to write about.

The attitude of the Sublime Porte’s towards the editors of *The Levant Herald* was very flexible compared to its attitudes towards the other members of the Ottoman press. Other dissident writers often ended up in prison or were exiled, while their newspapers were permanently shut down – as an example, one can look at the publications of the Young Ottomans.\(^ {260}\) However, the situation was very different for the staff of *The Levant Herald*. Due to the capitulations, imposing heavy penalties such as exile and imprisonment on *The Levant Herald*’s proprietors was difficult. It can be observed that when punitive sanctions were imposed by the Sublime Porte on the newspaper, these penalties were often alleviated via petitions to the sultan declaring loyalty, asking for forgiveness and his amnesty. The state tried in vain to establish control over the newspaper through financial assistance and encouraging economic dependency. The many petitions sent by the proprietors of the newspaper to the Ottoman government and the sultan contain several examples which reveal the nature of this relationship. However, despite the financial aid provided by the state and the newspaper’s frequent promises of loyalty, *The Levant Herald* never deviated from its

\(^{259}\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 126.

\(^{260}\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 103.
dissident course throughout its publication life, and never abstained from publishing what it believed to be true. It is clear that the Porte nearly never impose heavy sanctions against *The Levant Herald* in order to assuage British and European public opinion. If they had in fact done so, the result would have been a diplomatic crisis. It seems as though the Ottoman government, when necessary, resorted instead to temporary reprimands, such as ceasing financial assistance to the newspaper, imposing temporary publication bans, and issuing monetary penalties. Despite the temporary nature of these penalties, they were harsh enough that the paper was forced to publish under many names: not only *The Levant Herald*, but also *The Constantinople Messenger*, *The Eastern Express*, and *The Levant Herald and Eastern Express*.

The proprietors of *The Levant Herald* changed several times. James Carlile McCoan, the first founder of the newspaper, established it in 1859, and eventually sold it to Edgar Whitaker in 1870 after eleven years of publication. The newspaper faced fewer publication bans during the McCoan era when compared to the Whitaker era. When the newspaper was founded, the number of pages was limited. It mostly contained economic news, while other issues were given less coverage. In those years, the Ottoman press regulations did not impose very heavy censorship upon the press and not often issue crippling penalties for dissenting articles. In the following years, the importance and influence of the press increased in Ottoman society, and the state thus strengthened its control over the press with the introduction of new laws.\(^{261}\) New penalties and sanctions were imposed on the press. Meanwhile, the number of pages of *The Levant Herald* increased, and some modifications were made to its content. With this new publication policy, political issues and critical news were given a broader coverage, but this, naturally, brought with it an increase in the number of penalties and publication bans it received. When Edgar Whitaker bought *The Levant Herald* from McCoan, the newspaper had already developed a notorious reputation in the eyes of the Porte. It is hard to say that Whitaker did anything much to change this perception. On the contrary, the newspaper faced even more sanctions during his tenure, and evolved into a more radical publication. During both the Cretan events and Bulgarian uprising, despite the government's policy mandating press silence on the matter, the newspaper published broad coverage about these events and presented detailed information on its pages. It even published

\(^{261}\) Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 95.
comprehensive reviews of the dethronement of Sultan Abdulaziz, and the court summoned at Yıldız regarding his death. Despite the heavy censorship put in place, the paper publicized the Ciragan Incident openly on its pages. It did not shy away from publishing political criticisms of the Ottoman administration or from criticizing social events and military activities. It also did not hesitate to enter into arguments with other newspapers. For all of these reasons, the paper was subjected to many official reprimands. Some of these sanctions were enforced as a result of appeals to the Ottoman government by other states which were disturbed by the content of the paper. As a result, *The Levant Herald* ended up having a controversial, conflicting and strife-ridden relationship with both the government and the pro-government press. This oppositional stance gave the paper’s detractors credence to claim it was working against the Ottoman government and operating against the state. From the perspective of the Ottoman state, the newspaper was a subversive publication ultimately working towards the British domination of the Near East.

*The Levant Herald* did not say anything new about the Ottoman reform process, or the nationalist uprisings taking place in the Ottoman state. It instead emphasized the importance of these reforms and highlighted how essential it was to implement them. In general, through the news that it covered and the selection of related events in particular, *The Levant Herald* was intended to remind the state of the commitments it had made. Despite claims that it was operating on behalf of British interests, when we look at the content of the newspaper, what we see is, generally, merely good journalism; that is, the newspaper was based on the principle of keeping the Ottoman public and the geographical area where the journal circulated abreast of current developments. Nevertheless, the paper overall did take an editorial stance defending British interests and the reforms demanded by the great powers, including Britain. In this respect, the newspaper was regarded as the spokesman for Britain and foreign powers. The paper’s attitude towards the national independence movements in the Balkans, or its support for the unification of the Bulgarian Principality with the province of Eastern Rumelia in the following years was, indeed, in accordance with regional British policy, and can be given as examples in this regard. Another example could be the support of the paper, at the beginning of Abdulhamid's reign, for Midhat Pasha, whose reforms were looked upon positively by Britain, and its opposition to his opponents, Damad Mahmud

262 BOA. Y.PRK. BŞK. 10/89-1 Whitaker to Mabeyn, July 16, 1886.
The newspaper also approached commercial issues from the perspective of furthering the British interests. After all, *The Levant Herald* was an advocate and beneficiary of the capitulations, and indeed it owed the reason of its existence to these regulations. In general, then, we can say that along with the paper’s other functions, it served to mediate between the Europeans and the Ottoman state in the European search for commercial and industrial investments in the Empire.

*The Levant Herald* was also regarded by newspapers in Britain as the representative of British journalism in the East. In the eyes of the Ottoman government, however, *The Levant Herald*’s practice of journalism set a bad example for the other members of the Ottoman press. Despite this, *The Levant Herald* was followed by the entirety of the Ottoman press corps, because it was the newspaper which was able to cover events the fastest and most freely in the Empire. Because of the capriciousness of Ottoman censorship, reading *The Levant Herald* was a means for other newspapers to see the limits of the what they could publish. *The Levant Herald* also collected news from many different sources, both domestically and internationally, due to its subscriptions to wire agencies and its own network of correspondents. The flow of news from the international wire agencies played an especially important role in the diversity of the paper’s coverage. Furthermore, because it had already passed the censorship board, it was both less costly and less risky for the other Ottoman newspapers to quote and publish translations of news and articles first published in *The Levant Herald*. In this respect, *The Levant Herald* was, in a sense, both a source and a pioneer for the Ottoman press.

*The Levant Herald* appeared at a time when no private Turkish newspaper was yet founded. From this point of view, it contributed to the flowering of the Ottoman press and to the development of journalism in the Ottoman lands. Although often described as a "dissident" publication, it played a pioneering role in spreading the recognition of journalism as a profession, the institutionalization of journalistic practice, the spread of periodicals and the formation of public opinion in the Ottoman Empire. From its own perspective, the “dissident” attitude of the newspaper was


264 Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 125.
essentially nothing more than the adoption of the basic practices and principles of journalistic integrity, including analyzing and interpreting state policy, and maintaining journalistic independence. Its firm stance on this end led to frequent clashes with the state, the government, and politicians, in a society in which a tradition of printed political criticism had not yet been established.

Although it was published in Constantinople, it circulated not only within the Ottoman Empire, but in continental Europe and Britain as well. Therefore, it was not only an Ottoman paper, but a member of the international press. It addressed both European merchants and businessmen, and their partners in the Ottoman lands. In Europe, it addressed investors, politicians, journalists and academicians who were interested in the Near East. One could find in its columns all of the political and social events, primarily commercial and financial, that happened in the Ottoman lands and in the Levant. In this respect, it served as a means of reflecting the Ottoman world to Europe. Thanks to The Levant Herald, Europe received news about the Ottoman state and its geography directly from the Ottoman lands itself, instead of hearing about it indirectly from second-hand sources.

On the other hand, The Levant Herald also contributed to the transformation of Ottoman society, through advertisements, bulletins, updates about the latest fashions and cultural news. The products promoted in these advertisements were mostly new to the Ottoman society; these advertisements ranged from clothes and finery to furniture, households, goods, and other accoutrements of modernity, which appealed to those who embraced or were willing to embrace a more “European” lifestyle. The audience for these advertisements was initially the foreigners and Levantines who had settled in the Ottoman Empire, and already had acquired, to some degree, the characteristics of a consumer society. The advertisements and bulletins in question also appealed to local people who were in contact with these groups, diffusing these new ideas throughout the broader mass of Ottoman society.265 Using these products that the newspaper had introduced, or even having just heard about them, familiarized the people with European culture and fashions, and offered them a possibility for class distinction. All of this encouraged the demand for the so-called Alla Franca – that is, European – lifestyle, through the adoption of the latest fashion and

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265 Şükrü Hanoğlu, Late Ottoman Empire, p. 27-29, 100; İlber Ortaylı, En Uzun Yüzyıl, p. 194.
products and—which had begun to appear in Ottoman society after the *Tanzimat*. In this respect, the newspaper offered an alternative to the traditional lifestyles of Ottoman society, and introduced new forms of consumption and western aesthetics.²⁶⁶ In that sense, *The Levant Herald* was one of many forces that opened a window within Ottoman society towards Europe, became instrumental in the transformation of the consumption patterns in Ottoman society. On the cultural level, *The Levant Herald* provided a multifaceted contribution to the process of Ottoman acculturation to European modes of living. In addition, it played a role in the integration of Europe and the Ottoman world.

*The Levant Herald*, though it had European origins, was born in the Ottoman Empire. This newspaper, published in Constantinople, circulated both in the Ottoman lands, in the Levant, and in Europe. Its audience was limited, but it through its societal importance reached even those segments of Ottoman society in which traditional methods of information acquisition such as recitation and oral discussion were still more prevalent. The newspaper was, in general, focused on addressing the information needs of the Empire’s Levantine merchants, investors and their domestic partners. However, the Ottoman press, both the Turkish-language and non-Turkish-language papers, also quoted directly from *The Levant Herald* and therefore, the discourse it promoted also circulated to the broader public through gathering places such as coffeehouses, barbershops and tobacco shops, and the issues it raised were brought up and discussed by different segments of the Ottoman public.

*The Levant Herald*, which was a British affiliate, published issues and opinions pursuant to the interests of Britain in the East, and defended the interests of European merchants and investors in the Ottoman lands. In this sense, it was one among many such papers. Yet the newspaper was in direct conflict with the Ottoman government on many occasions, which forced the newspaper to suspend publication several times in its long history. This, over time, earned *The Levant Herald* the reputation as a dissident newspaper, which made it an exemplary and pioneering figure of independent journalism for the nascent Ottoman press. Ultimately, it acted as a window which

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²⁶⁶ Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 100.
opened up the Ottoman world and Europe to each other, and formed an important contact point between these two cultures.
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The Daily Post (Liverpool)

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The Examiner (London)

The Graphic (London)

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The Mercury (Hobart)

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The Morning Post (London)
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Figures

Figure 1: The Former Office of *The Levant Herald* Today (Photo: Hikmet Göktaş)
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Figure 5: The Censor on Duty (Twain, 374)
Constantinople, le 3 juin 1902

Son Altesse
Said Pacha.
Grand Vezir

Monseigneur.

Je me vois dans la pénible nécessité de venir encore une fois importuner Votre Altesse au sujet du non-paiement de mon allocation qui ne compte pas moins de treize trimestres arriérés.
Constantinople Nov. 23, 1896

To His Highness
Kamil Pasha
Grand Vezir

My dear Sir,

I am deeply disturbed to learn that my papers have not yet been forwarded to the palace. I am afraid that your Highness is in some difficulty and to help you once for all within the government will or will not do what I request of them.

What I ask is for a grant of money in order to buy the house in the Grand Rue in Pera where the business of my paper is carried on.

I ask for this as a partial reparation (1) for having been disfrunt during eight of the budget granted to me as a permanent by the Government (2) for heavy losses inflicted on me during those years by losses of expenditure which in a few cases were patently excessive and in all the others cases wholly without justification (3) for losses caused by the system of currency introduced four years ago and applied to my paper which had existed for 50 years under a more rational order of things.

Further, I ask in order to enable the Government to enable me to continue my position must leave the country.

So long as I continue to reside in Turkey I cannot make any use of the flots which have accumulated in the last eighteen years. The utilization of them would make me many and powerful enemies so that my residence here would be no longer pleasant. My literary capital, to say, is therefore locked up so long as I continue to live in Turkey, while if I transfer my residence abroad I could utilize it, and as I have some standing in the literary world, could make money by it.

The sum I ask for to enable me to remain in Turkey is not large; indeed it is small compared with that of which the Government has
Figure 8: Petition from Edgar Whitaker to the Sultan, Abdulhamid II (BOA. İ.DH. 784/63727)
Figure 9: Edgar Whitaker’s Signature (BOA. İ.DH. 784/63727)
Figure 10: Whitaker’s Petition to the Sultan Abdulhamid II (BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 11/31)
Figure 11: Edgar Whitaker’s Handwriting in Ottoman Turkish (BOA. Y.PRK. AZJ 20/84)
À mon cher Sureya Pasha,

Je suis sorti ce matin pour aller présenter mes respects à Votre Excellence, mais ensuite, me rappelant que c’est aujourd’hui le premier jour du Ramazan, j’ai cru avoir ramené ma visite à un autre jour.

Si j’avais eu Votre Excellence aujourd’hui je lui aurais dit ce que le memorandum d’aujourd’hui exprime.

Je suis l’occasion d’aur renouveler, à Votre Excellence, l’expression de mon très respectueux dévouement.

Edgar Whitaker

Figure 12: Letter from Whitaker to Sureya Pasha (BOA. Y.PRK. BŞK. 21/15)
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## Appendix

### Subscription Fees of *The Levant Herald* 1859-1887

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