

## Biographical notes.

TDV İSAM  
Kütüphanesi Arşivi  
No: TB. 295-1

I was born in the little town named (Moustapha Pasha) on the Maritza River in Eastern Thrace, the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1869. Now my birthplace is called (Tzaribrod) since its annexion to Bulgaria (1913). My father (Mohammed Tewfik) was nominated governor of that district just three months before I was born there.

My father was the only son of a chieftain belonging to the well known clan of the (Guagues = northern albanians). He was a professional warrior, who had come from Dibra (his birthplace on the northern Albania) to be settled in (Toom'a), now a well known thermal town in Bulgaria. He was known to the Turkish authorities by the name and surname of (Ahmed Doormoosh Bæ-luk Bashee = Ahm. Door. the chief of the section or gang). When he was forty years old he had married in (Toom'a), a turkish-macedonian girl (Shareefa) by name, belonging to a good and wealthy family; after one year my father was born to them in that town. But my grand father was most often and for months absent from home running after dreadful adventures and the family life was not happy at all. At last my grand father was killed treacherously one night when returning home, leaving his only son (my father) an orphan of four years old. His mother (Shareefa) was then a woman of twenty three only; but although absolutely illiterate as all the women were indeed at that time, <sup>she</sup> had great qualities in intellectual and sentimental as well; besides that she was praising high the value of education and learning. Our family begins - in my consideration - from this intelligent and excellent turkish woman. She was quite decided to make of her only son a gentleman and a learned one as she used to say to my father. She on

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took care for the education of her ~~only~~ child, sent him to Constantinople when he was sixteen. My father had been graduated from <sup>(one of those)</sup> old medieval Universities of Sultan Mohammed (the conqueror), <sup>and had been</sup> received there <sup>a</sup> Doctor of philosophy, theology and Canon law. Then, <sup>went to</sup> the (administrative college <sup>and</sup> studied during three years, <sup>the</sup> social political and economical sciences, according to the modern system; <sup>he</sup> got a diploma bestowing upon him the right of being in service as an employee of the government.

My father married, when he was thirty six a circassian girl of eighteen, belonging to the tribe of (Shapseeth) of pure caucasie stock. He had two sons of this woman, both born in Thrace. I am the elder. ~~My father took care for my primary education at home and sent me to the grammar school in Byziribed when I was four years old yet.~~

I do not attach any particular importance to the question of race. I believe that our racial inheritance is of a very low and common - or rather primitive - character which is reflected in our temperament only. This is our (*peché originel*). Our intellectual capacities, our emotive nature are unsolved ontogenic riddles yet; <sup>this is</sup> an embryogenic mystery. As

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to our morality, it depends very much - if not entirely - on social conditions. So, I am the offspring of three races, which have no ethnological connection between <sup>each</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>other</sup> - as far as I know; <sup>I am, such</sup> a combination of elements, which could not possibly be worse. I presume that what I have probably inherited of my rude bedouin ancestors, is particularly the combativeness, the inflexibility, and the moral endurance which characterize my temperament. I have <sup>also</sup> some nomadic virtues: the love of absolute independence as to sacrifice everything for it; self-determination and a kind of instinctive (*esprit de révolte*) against every kind of authority. These are rather vices, for I have suffered during all my life because of them. I am only happy <sup>for having got an</sup> ~~my~~ education which has been integral, comprehensive and quite exceptional for a boy born sixty two year ago in a dark corner of Turkey.

My father cared personally for my primary education at home, but sent me <sup>also</sup> to the grammar school of Tzaribrod when I was scarcely four years old. He was teaching me every day.

I understand from some official documents now in my possession, that the majority of the population in Tzaribrod at that time was Bulgarian, and Macedonia was ablaze through

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the activity of the secret revolutionary Committees. I am glad to say my father was an upright and honest administrator. I possess a document signed by the Bulgarians proving very fairly what I say. He had forwarded an official report about the real situation and had disturbed the sleep of the indolent central authorities for prompting fundamental reforms. He was destituted from his functions in August 1876, and we had to return to Constantinople; ~~which~~ I had to see for the first time in my life. the illustrious Capital

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This was a punishment for the insolent attitude of my father towards the authorities, but the consecutive events proved that it was <sup>rather</sup> a blessing. We lived in a little wooden house in (Scutari) on the asiatic side of the Bosphorus until April 1879 ~~and then~~ <sup>we were</sup> during the Euro-Russian war in Constantinople with my family. I had to see the general excitation of joy after the declaration of war. the deposition of the haughty Sultan Aziz, his suicide (or assassination in the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1876); then the ~~the~~ proclamation of Sultan Moorad V (in the 30<sup>th</sup> May) and his deposition by the decree of the Sheikh ul Islam for cause of insanity just <sup>in</sup> ~~and~~ the proclamation of the famous Sultan Abdul Hamid immediately after, to the throne of Othman. after 99 days. I was there

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I was in Constantinople in the opening of the first Parliament under Midhat Pasha the great political reformer and its close (since dice!) by Sultan Hamid; all these wonderful changes and events happening in one year or so. Naturally I was a little boy at that time getting all these important news from my father at home. But I have seen with my own eyes something, an awful scene of human ~~very~~ misery, which makes me feel an undescribable thrill, and a horrible cold shudder whenever I remember it:

It was after the decisive victory of General Gourko, when the Roumelian refugees (all mohammedans turks!) rushed to Constantinople in the most terrible disaster and pitiful state. My father was very sad, nevertheless he ~~used to go~~ <sup>used to go often</sup> ~~going~~ to the station of Stamboul to see the miserable people coming from Macedonia; he was anxious for some of his friends I suppose. As soon as I have learned from him the situation of the immigrants when he was relating to my mother what he had seen lately, I insisted in accompanying him the next day to Constantinople. He would n't take me with him. I was a very nervous and sensible boy thrilling with emotion, very delicate in appearance but quite energetic and restless. At last we went together to Constantinople on day in November 1877. I saw an undescribable misery among the crowd of refugees. Many young women having given birth to unfortunate creatures on the way, had thrown their babies <sup>out</sup> on the snow when coming; and they were

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~~was~~ agonizing now or dead already from the very fierce winter starvation and infection, in the ~~the~~ ~~dirty~~ dirty wagons. Some officials were carrying the dead somewhere far away. Some other people used to distribute food and soup particularly. I have learned later on from my father that the famous Baron Hirsch was the philanthropist who had distributed food at that time.

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We came home late. This first awful impression <sup>has been</sup> ~~was~~ a terrible shock for me. I was very bad all the night. I remember my poor father weeping and saying always, that it was unjust and yet it was not possible perhaps to prevent such calamities easily.

From that awfully memorable day in my life until now I have at the very bottom of my soul a deep horror for war and for all its - so called - military glories.

After the war was over, my father had - as a matter of course - lost all his properties in his native ~~the~~ town. Bulgaria ~~had~~ had won her independence. The turkish government was - as it has always been through bad administration and chronic wars - in bankruptcy. We have got only the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  percent of the value of the paper-money we had in our hands. We were not rich at all. Fortunately the jewish community in our locality had before one year (1876) proposed ~~to~~ my father to give lessons in turkish and arabic

(7) in (Sion School), one of the institutions of the (Alliance Isra-  
elite). He had accepted the proposition and I was already a  
student in the preparatory department were I ~~was~~ learning  
French and judæo-Spanish; the language spoken by the Jews  
in Turkey. So I began my education in a Jewish school first.

This was perhaps the happiest circumstance in my life;  
it has had certainly a decisive effect on my liberal and cos-  
mopolitan education. The Jews were kind to me always and  
I expressed my gratitude towards them in every occasion.

I have spent three years in (Sion School). Then my fa-  
ther ~~was~~ has been appointed Attorney-general (procureur-general)  
to Izmid in Nicomedia. We left Constantinople again and went  
there; but as soon as we were established, we all got a per-  
nicious malaria fever, which was a general calamity in that  
fertile country. My mother died from liver trouble and other  
complications after nine months (20<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1881). She was about  
twenty six. I remember she was a beautiful <sup>woman</sup> with her harmonious  
proportions, slender body, her luxurious hairs and her greenish eyes.  
We had to leave Izmid two days after her burial returning to  
Constantinople in a pitiful state. We had medical care during one  
year nearly. My father has been obliged to marry a Circassian  
girl again. She was one of the slave girls of the Palace. Her

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name was (Nærgues Ada = the elegant Narcissus). She had a good education: knew to speak french and to play flute, but unfortunately she was insane, suffering since some years - it seems from delirium of persecution.

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My father was transferred to Gallipoli; we sailed there in april 1881, altogether. Gallipoli pleased me very much, with its delicious seashores and vineyards and ~~the~~ gardens. But I could n't stay long there. I was sent to the Lyceum of Galata - Sarai, in the Capital ~~at~~ the beginnings of september 1881, and admitted as a boarder. Another brother was born during my absence.

The College life with his strict discipline and formalities was disgusting me, though I proved to be a good hearted and affectionate boy very much curious to learn every thing. But I gave a serious trouble to the administration with my revolted attitude. Nearly every week I had a punishment preventing me from getting out to enjoy my week-ends. But punishments had always upon my temperament the contrary effect: instead of making a better man of me, it was making worse. The sentiment of Justice was - and is still - in my heard the most vivid emotion; ~~and an unconditioned satisfaction~~ it required unconditioned satisfaction. The stupid system of our colleges relying upon formal punishments instead of psychological knowlege, made of me a very irritable and untreatable boy. If duly treated, I could have been a good man useful to all, for I was very sincere, honest

9 and above all quite an affectionate boy, whose ~~all~~ salient virtue was gratitude. But no one in the administration could understand me. At last I was expelled for fifteen days from the Lyceum. This used to be a punishment for my incorrigible (rebelliousness). I left the college in the autumn of 1882, feeling very happy to have got my liberty at last. I would never return back. I sailed at once for Gallipoli, to my beloved sandy seashores, for which I had written some twelve year later a long poem in Romantic style; a poem which is to be found until to day in every Turkish Anthology.

My father seemed not to be very much astonished to see me at home again so

Entente). It was, naturally, dissolved during the war.

The reciprocal antipathy - which had given birth to a deep animosity between the two rival parties - was rather temperamental; but it was due partly to the conflagrating nature of two irreconcilable theories of government set forth at that time, and vehemently defended by each party respectively.

I must be allowed to give in few words a clear idea of these conflicting basal opinions, because such a digression will bring unto light - I am sure - the very peculiar political circumstances which gave birth to <sup>the</sup> Turkish nationalism of to day.

The (unionists) had at the beginnings, all the chances to establish in Turkey a new ~~era~~ <sup>era</sup> of true civilization and prosperity, for they were animated with the best intention to carry on until the end their prospect and patriotic enterprise successfully. They had a clear cut and definite Ideal which seemed very near at hand to be reached and realized. They were endowed with a strong temperament and gifted with some male virtues and a moral energy required for fighting successfully on behalf of an Ideal. But they failed, and failed miserably in the fulfilment of this patriotic mission for two principal reasons: the one is that the character of the Committee was typically despotic; more awfully autocratic - perhaps - than that of the ill tempered, hypochondriac Sultan Hamid. The second reason - according to my humble opinion <sup>was</sup> something as an unavoidable fatality. I must explain fairly what I mean to say:

The constitutional reform ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> certainly felt and conceived as

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an imperious necessity by the turkish patriots in a critical moment when the leading powers were trying in (Reval) to come to a definitive agreement in order to find out a plausible solution for that secular and troublesome (question d'Orient). The reform undertaken suddenly by the young turks, was the spasmodic reflex of the European attitude towards the precarious turkish situation. It was not — I mean to say — the fair expression of the national Will, or any aspiration occasioned by some irresistible economical or social exigencies as it ought ~~to be~~ to be. It was <sup>rather</sup> proposed by some awful ~~external~~ external circumstances, and imposed upon the turkish nation by a handful intellectuals who were perplexed with the (problem), and had taken the firm resolution to solve it by a supreme patriotic effort. They were not ~~trained~~ trained and prepared by a <sup>previous</sup> experience, for the accomplishment of such a difficult task on one hand, and on the other, the turkish nation was not yet awakened ~~as to be able~~ as to be able to see how unconsciously he was slumbering on the edge of a fearful precipice.

It is obvious that in such a supreme moment and discouraging situation, it was impossible to attempt at any serious reform without recurring to the blind material force, I mean the soldier. Nearly all the population manifested a joy — it is true — during the first days of the proclamation of the Constitution so spasmodically, but when they became <sup>more and more</sup> conscious of the fact that such a tremendous change will naturally and consecutively affect the personal or the class interests, ~~lots~~ lots of ~~them~~ people had got a deep resentment against

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the promoters of this kind of reform; and later on some perplexing ~~reactions~~ reactionary uprisings happened - as all the world knows - which attests the truth of ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> considerations of mine. (\*)

Well! this intempestive reform, precipitated by the course of some irresistible <sup>political</sup> circumstances, obliged the reformers to beg help and assistance from an army already demoralized by the ill treatment and the stupid suspicion of a maniac Sultan suffering from psychic diseases.

This is the real cause of the extraordinary and perhaps the most paradoxal fact, that Turkey had a constitution to be constantly backed by a martial law (born at the same time with it!) and doomed to be defended (à la baillourette). The Turkish nation had a parliament without the right of a fair election; this is the very reason also why in Turkey every reform - no matter the sincerity and the good intention of the reformers - culminates in military dictatorship always.

That is exactly what happened with the unionists, and it seems that this was the continuity of the latest period of the Turkish history: the period of the (Renaissance) in Turkey, so characteristic with

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(\*) I have among my papers here in New York a remarkable official document, perhaps unique in its kind. It is a petition written in arabic and presented to the first ottoman Parliament - when I was sitting there as a unionist deputy - it was presented I say, as a vehement protestation against the law, we were decided to promulgate for the sake of putting an end to the trade of the circassian girls. The petition was forwarded from Anatolia and signed by some prominent mohammedan clericals and some slave traders. These people say, in the way of argumentation, that such a prohibitive law ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> in flagrant contradiction with religion, which tolerates such a commerce; and with the facts also, because they ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> always selling girls to the Palace and the old

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its reiterate attempts at fundamental reforms. Sultan Selim the III (a contemporary monarch with Napoleon the 1<sup>st</sup> and perhaps the most enlightened turk of his time!) was fiercely assassinated in his Palace by the reactionary camarilla for having proposed to reform the administration. Sultan Mahmoud II, his successor had been able to realize some useful changes, but only after having destroyed the pernicious old army: (the janissaries!). He had massacred eighty thousand people at least. After him the wise statesman (Reshid Pasha) had suggested to (Sultan Mejid) the famous ~~Edict~~ decree about the (Tanzimat - general reformation) bestowing upon every citizen equal rights before the law. [this was something as a Magna Charta, including the christians and the jews also]. Then under the reign of the Superb Sultan Aziz, the famous liberal vizier Midhat Pasha fomented a revolution on behalf of a constitutional reform and succeeded - with the help of the military chiefs - in overthrowing the Sultan who was later on assassinated as I presume.

All this tormented history bears witness that all the reforms were conceived by men of the highest rank in Turkey and were confronted with a resistance coming from the lower strata.

(16) the old Byzantium. <sup>they</sup> were in prison since four days. I went to seek refuge in the house of an armenian comrade of mine and was hidden there for forty three days. The inquiry could not prove any serious attempt to overthrow the Sultan; <sup>as the spies pretended the case to be</sup> our friends were left free. I appeared also after some days. But I learned that my father was dead the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1899, and I had some letters from Gallipoli. I felt very sad, <sup>for I have found a letter of him adressed to me and left unanswered.</sup> I wanted to go immediately home. I got some money from my friends and went to Gallipoli after a week. tried to settle the family questions; remained there until may and returned to Constantinople with some money. My friends insisted very much for my studying in the medical faculty in order to get my living through a liberal profession. So I did; and was recieved-after a successful examination-to the civil faculty of medicine; but I had a vivid sentiment of revenge against the despotic administration of Abdul Hamid, and a disgust for his army of spies. I was condemned henceforward to all kind of hardships and to live a very tormented life.

The first year I have got the first prize of Anatomy but I was rather a poet-philosopher fed up with the revolutionary ideas of 1789 and with the german materialism. <sup>We</sup>  
<sup>of Lud. Büchner, Karl Vogt and Co.</sup>

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had now a general association of students. I used to deliver there some fulminant ~~speeches~~ <sup>speeches</sup> against the actual order of things) <sup>emphasizing</sup> ~~and~~ the <sup>constitutional regime in politics and the</sup> naturalistic view in philosophy. I was writing also many letters. One day I delivered a speech on the best form of government to an audience of university students belonging to the faculty of medicine and law. <sup>I praised high the republic.</sup> I was then a very healthy youth a well known athlete also. After two days I was arrested by four secret police agents in the house of ~~the~~ İsmail Kemal Bey <sup>(later on the albanian deputy in the turkish chamber 1909)</sup> where I was living since one year. My library was also sequestered. Nazim Pasha - a very intelligent and honest man - was at that time the ~~the~~ powerful minister of police trusted by Abdul Hamid. He imprisoned me in a small room besides his own for one week and treated me very kindly. then I was left free, <sup>-he told me-</sup> because it was proved that I was not guilty. then I insisted for the severe punishment of the spy who had denounced me; <sup>unjustly</sup> but in vain. I was furious. I decided to crush down a spy, any one, in the street, and I have terribly beaten one of those man, near the government house before an amazed crowd. Nobody dared to arrest me.

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I went then to the ministry of Police, wanted to see the minister; he had not received me pretesting that he was very busy. I wrote him a very insolent letter relating all what I have done and said at last: (now I am really guilty for having insulted your government and I will never protest if you jail me immediately.) then he received me, apparently with anger, but he was hardly keeping his countenance for he would roar with laughter. He told me that I did wrong, and ordered the police officers to put me somewhere in the ~~dungeon~~ dungeon with the criminals for six months at least. Yet I was imprisoned in a special little room for one week only. But I was of course expelled again from the medical faculty. Nazim Pasha thought of this particular incident and sent a letter to Marshal Zeki Pasha, the superintendant of all the Colleges in Turkey, to receive me again to the College; I was received at once, and continued my studies until I was duly graduated