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WHITE INK



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Libya under the Ottoman rule

Since the beginning of the 16th century, Libya has suffered greatly due to the international conflict over it. This is in addition to the weak political formations, that led to Spain's success in colonizing Tripoli, in 1515, and setting it to be their headquarters for naval operations, taking place in the Mediterranean Sea. Still, what made it worse is Spain's withdrawal for the sake of saint John in Malta- this is to refer to the crusades and their bloody history. Here, the people of Libya began their fight against them, and, as always expected from the Ottomans, they, making use of the ongoing conditions and the religious feelings, conquered Libya in 1551.

Although the beginning of the Ottomans' rule was characterized with relative stability, things, quickly, deteriorated for many reasons. And perhaps the main reason behind this is the poor administrative system, that is, the Ottoman Empire resorted to, frequently, changing its governors in Tripoli, fearing that one of them would settle in power, and the subsequent attempt for independence might follow.

This continuous change of rulers resulted in the weakness of their administration and the increase in the influence of the military, especially the Janissaries among them, until they became tyrannical in the affairs of the country, and the rulers were forced to appease them and free their hands in the affairs of the country.

A second factor that also emerged to play a dangerous role in running the country, the pirates. This is due to the geographical nature of Libya. It enjoys long coastlines over the Mediterranean, hence, the emergence of pirates, who turned the coasts of Libya into their headquarters, through which they attack European ships, and impose royalties on European countries to have their ships pass safely. Following, the rulers sought to share the income with the pirates, hence, the increase in their influence, especially with the rapid change of governors and their political and administrative weakness.

Thus, it is possible to draw a bleak picture of the situation in Ottoman Libya, from the weakness of the rulers and their inability to manage the country, the large number of strife and internal unrest as a result of the increasing influence of the soldiers and their interference in matters of governance, their oppression over the people, to the role of pirates and their control over the coasts and seas. All of this led to the increase in the influence of local fanaticism, the weakness of the central authority, and the resulting insecurity and instability political and economic.

Contemporary Libyan sources are full of many incidents about bad conditions and deteriorating conditions. For example, it is said about Jaafar Pasha that: "He was weak-willed, and powerless in opinion and resourcefulness, so the soldiers overcame him and the country was in turmoil, and there were many revolutionaries, prostitution and corruption.

The Libyan historian, Ahmed Al-Naib Al-Ansari, describes, in his book Al-Manhal Al-Athb, the period of the rule of Governor Suleiman Tay, saying: "He returned, with his bad conduct, and oppressed the people and released the hand of the soldiers and permitted them in this year 1022 to plunder the village of Tajoura. They invaded and destroyed it and gave its people the bad torment. They looted all their money and all their livestock."

This deterioration led to the rise of the Karamanli dynasty, a Turkish family who settled in Tripoli, to rule Libya and this helped to give some calm at the beginning of the Karamanli dynasty's rule of Tripoli. But things, quickly, deteriorated, especially with the internal conflict between members of the Karamanli dynasty, and the desire of the Ottoman Empire to restore the central, direct rule of Libya. This led to the people's revolt against the Karamanli rule as a result of the increase of unjust taxes on them, hence, reaching Bey of Tunis to help him suppress the revolts of the people.

To this stage the affairs of Libya reached under the rule of the Ottoman governors and even the Karamanli dynasty that ruled Libya in the name of the Ottoman Empire.