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HISTORY OF TURKISH SOCIETY

Today, we have a considerable amount of information about the history and societies of the world. Moreover, this information is systemised in respect to certain theories. That is, we possess necessary guiding tools for our researches and studies related to our subjects. Of course, these information are open for debate and we also need to think over these subjects.

In order to provide a healthy medium for discussions, the information and theories in hand should be tested for the Turkish history. It is obligatory first to search the level of validity of these data for the Turkish history. Thus, we can obtain a new commentary about the Turkish history. Besides, this is the only way to know the laws of Turkish history and to reveal its peculiar rules, if there is any.

Social definitions and laws should first of all explain the developments and changes occur in the society. Actually the real purpose of these definitions and laws is to fulfill the desired changes in the society. To be able to reach the desired goals, establishing correct correlation between social events is absolutely necessary. Here, the social definitions and laws teach us these correct correlation. It is not at all surprising that Sociology emerged as a science in the West in a period during which Western societies were engaged in great turmoil and revolutions. This is the main subject of sociology. Periods during which such excitations and reformations occur in the society, provide the best conditions for sociology to emerge and develop. When observed closely, it can be seen that significant sociological trends choose these transformations as their main study subject. Today, because of the effects of the Western sociology, main subjects of sociology are about the transformation of feudalism into capitalism and what happens after capitalisation.

The main source of sociology until today has always been the Western history. However, when we consider the social history of Turkey, the first thing we realise is the contradictions between the Turkish social history and the Western models. In general, the intersections of Dark Ages-slavery, Middle Ages-Feudalism, and New Age-Capitalism which are peculiar to the Western societies, cannot be seen in the Eastern social history. In this case, we should start by defining important transformations occurred in the Turkish history.

The two important changes occurred in the Turkish history are the Turkicization of Anatolia and Westernisation of Ottomans. In the event of Turkicization of Anatolia,

we will enter from one civilisation environment into another one. We will change our habitat without changing our identity. Whereas, in the event of Westernisation of Ottomans, we will change our identity without changing our habitat this time. However, here also, there is a transition from one civilisation environment into another civilisation environment. As can be seen, there are two similar and two different important aspects of these two events. There is not another event as important as these two. One can suggest as the important matter for sociology, the concept of Ottoman Empire. It is undoubtedly true that the establishment and development of Ottoman Empire takes up an extremely important part in the Turkish history. Whereas, we can still arrange our research plan of Turkish social history around these two events. And this plan will also involve the Ottoman Empire. The Plan is comprised of five parts as;

- a) Turkish civilisation in the Middle Asia,
- b) Turkicization of Anatolia,
- c) Ottoman Identity,
- d) Westernisation of Ottomans,
- e) Today's Turkey.

The plan simply consists of pre-transformation and post-transformation periods.

When we closely examine the Turkish history, we see that it divides first into two main parts as the Middle Asian Turkish History and Anatolian Turkish History. At present, instead of the Middle Asian civilisation, the Middle Eastern civilisation is under concern. Although we changed our civilisation environment, we have established a Turkish state in the Middle East. We gained our identity which we protected until today, first in the Mid-Asia. When we changed our civilisation environment, we faced in the Middle East with questions of what we will keep as heritage and what we will not.

To consider the Turkish history in two main parts makes us to think over the relationship between the two periods. This issue gains another dimension especially with the establishment of the Republic. The Republic order is established first of all over the denial of the Ottoman Empire. The With its ideology, the Republic does not carry any other meaning in our history. As it is widely known that the Republic is defined as the transformation into a contemporary nation-State from multi-national, dark age order of an Empire. In short, all definition efforts of the Republic try to place the Republic in a good position in our history and at the same time, completely disregard the Ottoman period. All history theses prepared in the first years of the Republic are mainly upon the migrations from the Mid-Asia. With the same theses, by changing the name of Hittites into Etis, they tried to Turkicise these cultures. Thus, the Ottoman period would be able to be omitted and a kind of connection could be formed between the local people of Anatolia and Middle-Asian Turks and without any need to Ottomans, an historical base could be founded for the new nation-state. Seeing that such a close relationship can be formed with Hittites, the oldest civilisation of Anatolia, and thinking that why not the same can be applied to old Greek civilisation, some Western-admirer writers rolled up their sleeves to write even that we are the real inheritor of the Greek civilisation and from way back its beginning, they based our history upon Western development path²⁷.

These ideas will of course lead us to some mistakes. The greatest of all these mistakes was to support the theory of Eastern societies to be stagnant. Supporters of this theory has made up a story about Anatolian villagers are still using today, the same ox carts used by the Hittites 2000 years ago. Knowingly or unknowingly, these stories mean supporting the Western colonialist approach. According to this, Eastern societies cannot achieve anything on their own. They can be a subject to the history only after their interaction with the West. In this respect, even if a relationship is formed between the old great civilisations²⁸, only the Republican term during which the Western values are completely unconditionally adopted, will be exposed as the only historical stage.

The best solution for this confusion was offered by Ziya Gokalp. Ziya Gokalp has correlated the Republican period with the Mid-Asian Turkish society more rationally. According to Gokalp, in Anatolia, there was a Mid-Asian Turkishness which also carried on during the Ottoman time. When a correlation was formed between the Mid-Asia Turkishness and Anatolia, on one hand the Republic has been praised, and on the other, the necessary relation was provided through the continuation of the Mid-Asian Turkishness. Through this type of logic, Ziya Gokalp has been able to find an answer to the question of how they could deny their Ottomanship, by his theory of *culture and civilisation*.

Roughly explaining, according to Gokalp the civilisation is the entire advancement of technical, informational and developmental improvements and it is international. Because of its internationality, through various means, it can pass from one society to the other, without damaging the identities of nations. In this case, when we say that Ottomanship was a civilisation, the problem is solved immediately. According to Gokalp, Ottomanship is even a foreign-origin civilisation. It is nothing else than the Islamic version of Byzantine. As it does not have any role for the determination of our identity, there is no need for us to protect or conserve it since it comes from Roman-Byzantine origin. Again, according to the same sociologist of ours, the Eastern civilisation is nothing else than the Eastern Roman civilisation. Consequently, we cannot understand that whether the Byzantine is the Christianized Eastern civilisation²⁹, or the Ottomanship is the Islamic type of Byzantine.

As it can be seen from this theory, it means that the origin of all the civilisations one of which we have to select, is Romans or the West. In this case, there is nothing wrong for us to exit from one civilisation and enter into another both of which are Western-origin. Besides, the internationality of civilisations eliminates completely the difficulties that we may encounter during our Westernisation.

On the other hand the culture is the total amount of values that constitute the whole identity of the society. Public carries these values intrinsically. Thus, they brought up a so-called Ottoman-Turkish conflict. According to this thought identities of societies are completely traditional. In reality, the theory of *culture and civilisation* has been developed by Western writers in order to support the interests of the West. According to this, Eastern nations are obliged to follow the Western civilisation, but they will never be a Westerner. With this theory, the Western civilisation would be able to cover and guide the whole world on one hand, and on the other hand, they would be able to own all of the old civilisations. Whereas the East is only an ethnological interest field for them.

Ziya Gokalp's approach to Mid-Asian Turkish history is not much different. He applied the same approach of Durkheim towards the Australian natives, towards the Mid-Asian Turks. He used this as a tool to depict the theory about Turkish history being formed by the West. After Ziya Gokalp, the effect of this trend continued to have an important place in Turkish sociology for a long time, initially with the contributions of Tekin Alp³⁰.

Due to the Ottoman Empire being an Islamic civilisation and in relation to that it contained a multinational (religion-based nation) citizens, made the secularisation policy a part of the denial of the Ottomans. Not foreseeing these consequences, Gokalp, Halil Nimetullah Ozturk³¹ and many of their followers were bitterly criticized because of this. Apart from the change of habitat, another important change in the Turkicization of Anatolia was the Turks submission into Islamic faith when they came into a new land in the Middle East. From this point, there seems to be a contradiction between the Mid-Asian Turkishness and Islam³².

All these theories obtain a support from one characteristic of Ottoman Empire. The differentiation between the rulers and the producers has been one of the main principles of administrative perception of Ottomans. This characteristic of Ottomans, instead of being explained within the structure of Ottoman State and in its own conditions, has been subject to various fabrications and comments. This characteristic is tried to be explained by defining the state as the civilisation institution which dominates over the hidden culture of the public, or by claiming that the State and the public are two contradicting entities that have completely separate origins. All these attempts were merely judgments of those who try to confirm a hypothesis that was put forward about Ottomans. All our efforts of attaining a special identity³³ by even denying our Ottomanship, were not for gaining our own conceit, but on the contrary, for combining with the West. All these efforts were to prove that there is no problem for the Turks to combine with the West, as no problem occurred when Turks combined with Ottoman culture which was also strange for them.

Since this issue was multi-dimensional, it caused an initiation for many debates in Turkish sociology. First of all these debates was about Byzantine. The claim of "Byzantine to be a reflection of Ottoman Empire, just with a different faith" complies with the theory of American historian Gibbons. However, putting forward his claim to reach a completely different conclusion, Gibbons tries to prove with this theory that nomad Turks did not contribute anything to the world's civilisation. Defining Turkishness with only cultural products and specify Ottoman culture as a product of foreign civilisation has brought some dangers which caused reactions among the Turkish thinkers. In response to this claim, Fuad Koprulu wrote his famous article. Koprulu disproved the effects of Byzantine upon Ottoman institutions and asserted that all these institutions are Mid-Asian Turkic origin or were brought by Turks into Anatolia adopted before from other Eastern civilisations. However, getting against Ziya Gokalp, while Koprulu was trying to answer back the claims of Ziya Gokalp, he was on the other hand, to prove the Mid-Asian Turkish effects over the Anatolian Turks, supporting Gokalp's ideas by claiming that there are shamanist effects over

Anatolian tariqas³⁴ (religious sects).

In Turkish sociology, there are also attempts to combine these two different ideas. In order to disprove the claims of Gibbons, Mehmet Ali Sevki Bey tells that Ottoman Empire was established by Mid-Asian Turks when they were heading towards the West and it was an empire completely identical to those Turkic states established in the Mid-Asia. Thus, by coming to the Middle East and settling in Anatolia did not really make a great change in their history.³⁵

According to another definition, developments of societies mean that the basic institutions of societies reform and change in various conditions and the development involves all these succeeding reformations.³⁶ In this case, Ottomanship is nothing else than the new formation of Mid-Asian Turkishness which changed according to new conditions. There may be not any contradiction of Ottoman-Turkish in both of the ideas, however, for Turks to form themselves according to new conditions like the "Westernisation" (not Westernisation) will not be much different in essence when they first came to Anatolia.

1 – TURKICISATION OF ANATOLIA

There are diverse thoughts also about the Mid-Asian Turkishness. Thoughts about the Anatolian Turkish civilisation bound our perspectives to first period Turkish history. That is why, it is useful first to continue examining the matter of the Turkicisation of Anatolia and later extract the necessary results.

The first significant subject about the Turkish history is the Turkic civilisation in the Mid-Asia. This part of Turkish history is itself a separate concept of history and sociology. However, we should examine the Turkish history in Mid-Asia in a different way to that of the Western historians. Western historians conducted *Orientalist* or *Turcology* researches including this period of history. Whereas, such studies in the West are carried out for reasons other than the general history and social researches. As the Middle Asian Turkish history is regarded as a separate research field, some people wanted to support such studies with some exotic literature. The Western historians on the other hand, thinking their own interests, regard the fields of *turcology* and *orientalism* as different historical phenomenon completely separate from the Western history which they call it "the general history". In this respect, naturally our viewpoint of the matter will also be different from theirs. We examine the Middle Asian Turkish history not because it is a special interest field, but because it constitutes an important part in the Turkish history.

The most closely related matter to the Middle Asian Turkish history is the Turkicisation of Anatolia. There are a few questions to be answered about this subject in our history. What did change in Anatolia after the Turkicisation? What did we bring to Anatolia from the Middle Asia? How did the values that we had brought survive in Middle Eastern conditions?

We will try to clarify the issues related to the Turkicisation of Anatolia and will obtain some results about the subject. When a proper correlation with the Turkicisation of Anatolia is not established, in a very rough and simple generalization, they link that

period of time straightly with today's life style and try to revive today the same practices which were followed in the Middle Asian history.

Before we start our discussion, it would be useful to remember the facts we know about the Middle Asian Turkic societies. Middle Asian societies were comprised of nomadic people. They have been able to establish great empires, though unstable and short-lived, in their history. When they started to interact with the sedentary civilisations, they rapidly³⁷ lost their specific identities after being intermingled with the local people.

These specific characteristics of Middle Asian Turkish societies are chosen in order to especially emphasize the changes occurred in Anatolia³⁸. Turks in Anatolia established a great and also stable and one of the longest lived empires of the world's history. As it can be seen from that the only independent Turkish state emerged from the dominating area of Ottoman Empire, Turks have preserved their identities in Anatolia. And again, the establishment of a seven centuries lasted World Empire proves that Turks established a settled life-style in Anatolia.

There are diverse ideas and explanations about the Turkicisation of Anatolia. Since there are certain difficulties about the issue, providing an unanimity between different thoughts is prevented. According to one thought, since it is similar to the natural plains of the Middle Asia, Turks did not have any difficulty adopting their lives to Anatolian conditions³⁹. Therefore, living in a similar natural habitat with the same life-style as before, Turks in Anatolia have been able to preserve their identities.. This thought complies with the theories of sociologists like Mehmet Ali Sevki Bey. As it is certain that Turks established stable, sedentary life-style when they came to Anatolia, it is debatable to say that they continued living in similar conditions and because of this they preserved their identities. To reply to this, some of our historians choose a short-cut and claim that Turks were already living sedentarily in Middle-Asia. We are not intending to give the details of these arguments, but when this claim is regarded as true, this time other matters about Turks having an extraordinary story in the history of Middle Asia and their place within the Middle Asian history appear and those who claim this, do not explain these matters. We would like to mention about another subject. Iran, being the mediator between the Middle-Asia and Anatolia, has never been a Turkish land, although it had been many times attacked and raided by Turkish forces and once a Turkic state⁴⁰ had been established over the lands of Iran. If the case for Turkicisation was true everywhere, the same should have been also applied to Iran⁴¹ which had very similar conditions to Anatolia. On the contrary however, we see that Turks, as in the example of Shah Ismail, detached themselves completely from Anatolia and have been assimilated and changed their identities⁴². A similar result to what happened⁴² when Turks intermingled with other civilisation, happened also in Iran and in a very short time, they were "Persianised".

In respect to Turkicisation of Anatolia, native Anatolians also comprise a matter of subject. When Anatolia was Turcised, what happened to the native people of Anatolia? According to one theory, Turks have been able to easily settled on areas which were destroyed and deserted after the severe, mutual raids of Byzantine and Arabs⁴³. However, this theory is rejected by Speros Vyronis Jr. Byzantine was still a

strong Empire during the time when Turks started to settle in Anatolia and Anatolia was the only source of the Empire. Speros Vryonis Jr. argues that Anatolia was not so deserted and destroyed as it is thought. However, accepting this argument does not help us to solve the problem and still the question of what happened to the native people of Anatolia remains unanswered. Gibbons claims that the local Rum (Greek Anatolian) people converted to Islam and actively played a role for the formation of a new race called Ottomans. Hence, he thinks that Ottoman Empire and civilisation was the product of native Rums. This idea has been denied by Turkish writers, especially by Fuad Koprulu and Omer Lutfi Barkan⁴⁴.

For Turks to intermingle with the local people of lands that they settle can only be explained by their cultural closeness⁴⁵ to those people. Therefore, When Turks came to the Middle East, they Persianised in Iran, but, because they could not merge with Christian Byzantine, and there they had to keep their own identity. This is also only a theory. Because, for Attila and his soldiers to be vanished without leaving any trace in the middle of Europe, can only be explained by expressing that they were completely Westernised and commingled with the Western societies⁴⁶. The example of Attila and his army rebuts the theory mentioned above.

In short, we can state that nomad societies merge and meld into the local societies living in sedentary civilisation areas. There is only one exceptional example of this in Turkish history: Anatolia.

Islam is shown as the reason for this sole exceptional example. Since Islam spread first among Bedouins who were nomads themselves and it is a religion which stimulates the spirit of struggle, it helped Turks to protect their own nomadic identity and combatant spirit and prevented them to melt away among sedentary societies. Whereas, this explanation does not provide us any ground to serve as an excuse for the Iran Seljukids compared to Anatolian Seljukids.

We know that there were Turks in Anatolia even before 1071, the War of Malazgirt, which is the date accepted as the beginning of Turkicisation and Conquest of Anatolia. These groups of Turks were commingled with Byzantine for a long time⁴⁷. Before the War of Malazgirt, there was certainly a Turkish settlement in Anatolia, but it was far from being a state. This Turkish existence in Anatolia became obvious only after the consequences caused by the War of Malazgirt.

Another interesting event in the Turkish history is the example depicted by Memlukids who settled in Egypt. Memluks were also Turks. They entered Egypt as conquerers. They captured the state administration and exhibited the best examples of statesmanship. Moreover, they were very careful not to mingle into the local people of Egypt. They used their own language as the official language of the state and established laws instead of the sharia. However, despite all these achievements, in contrary to Anatolian Turks, they left the scene of history without leaving any trace behind.

Whereas Anatolian Turks did not take pains to protect their own language, but they accepted the lands they settled as their own country. The position of Anatolia gives us important clue for explaining this situation. However, as Turks who joined to

Byzantine before 1071 shows that this is not a sufficient explanation, either. In this case, the history and position of Anatolia can only explain the characteristics of Turkishness and the event of Turks' settlement in Anatolia and the Turkicisation of Anatolia. That is, none of these matters on their own are sufficient for a satisfactory explanation.

Turks first joined the Islamic civilisation in the Middle East, then passed to Anatolia. Of course they changed their identities during this period of time. Iran was the region where Muslim Turks established their first states. Turks who settled in this land became Persian in time. Baghdad was the second most attractive city for Turks. However, here also there is no Turkicisation occurred. In this respect, the matter of Anatolia is even more abstruse. In the process of Turkicisation of Anatolia, did Turks, after being assimilated, adopted another identity in Anatolia, or is it a work of Turks who came to the Middle East and passed directly to Anatolia without having any chance to change themselves?

As there was no nationalism perspective then similar to that is seen today, what did being a Turk mean at that period of time? Roughly it meant to stay as a nomad, in other words not to settle in any civilised regions of the Middle East and thus not being able to establish a sedentary life style.

When Turks entered Islam, they straight-away left their original identities. There are many strong evidences for this claim. The most striking of these evidences is the case of Mustafa Sencer when he defended the Eastern border of Islam against Turks, his own race and he lost his life in one these wars. We see similar events when Turks spread towards China and India. Turks who merged into the sedentary civilisations, adopted the cultural identity of the local people and have been able to fight against their own race for defending their new countries. However, in the Middle East, those who burdened the duty of defending their new country could not resist against the successive attacks coming from the Mid-Asia. This way, a great number of Turks that was well above the absorption limit of the Arab and Persian world, entered into the Middle East. Those who were within the limit of absorption were either Arabised or Persianised. Those who were over the limit stayed outside of any foreign social community and therefore could not leave their original characteristics and adopt a new identity. In this case, conflicts occurred between these Turkish communities and the Middle Eastern civilisations were because of attempts of Turks to take a place in the Islamic world were left unanswered. As a result of these fights, Turks have been exiled towards Anatolia. The Turkish army, on the way towards Egypt, another wealth center of Middle East, has encountered with the army of Byzantine Empire and entered an inevitable war with them in Malazgirt. They never intended to capture Anatolia, however when they won the victory over Byzantine in the War of Malazgirt, they changed their direction towards Anatolia.

Because of these reasons, it is not easy to accept the view asserts that Turks adopted Anatolia as their country because it is the extension of their motherland. If they were seeking a land with similar natural conditions, they would not leave their own lands. At the beginning, Turks did not come into Anatolia obligatorily, on the contrary they came willingly. Perhaps one can claim that Turks had to leave Mid-Asia because of turmoil caused by Mongolians. However, Turkicisation of Anatolia was not fully designated.

Some characteristics of Anatolia provided Turks to preserve their own identities and remained as a strong member of Islamic world. Anatolia was the Eastmost front of Roman Empire that had not been occupied by Muslims. When Turks conquered Anatolia, their role of providing unification of the East ended. This success of Turks was not a consequence of the well planned policy of Middle Eastern authorities. They were deliberately sent upon Byzantine by the Middle Eastern states so that Turks who were constituting a threat against the richness of the Middle East would be able to be dispelled from the region. They were expecting that Turkish forces would be dissolved before the Byzantine.

Whereas Turks, completely on their own, defeated Byzantine which was a serious threat for the East, and provided the eastern security and political unity of Islamic world. On the other hand, some developments within the Byzantine eased the Turks capturing Anatolia. Anatolia was always regarded of a minor importance by Byzantine, because of the increasing trends of the West skipping Byzantine for establishing relations directly with the East. Anatolia has gained its real historical importance and role under the rule of Turkish states. That is why Turkicisation of Anatolia seems like a spontaneously occurred development.

Straight after Turks' settlement in Anatolia the Crusades started through which Turks attained a great importance among the Islamic world. Turks have been the defenders and protectors of whole Islamic world before the Crusaders.

In Anatolia, Turks constituted a new Islamic policy with only their own power and facilities. Only this can explain how Turks protected their own nature and at the same time join the Islamic world⁴⁸. Turks in Anatolia established a new policy away from traditional powers and protected their original characteristics. Whereas, Turks who stayed away from Anatolia and could not join to this policy, could not preserve their own characteristics, either.

The Turkicisation of Anatolia is the result of Turks creating a superior policy during the very wide conflict between two powers. This policy gained its real form during Ottoman rule. As Ottomanship was the result of Turkicisation of Anatolia, Turkicisation of Anatolia could also be seen as its best form during the Ottoman rule. Because of this, it is impossible to grasp whole aspects of Turkicisation of Anatolia when Ottoman Empire is not taken into consideration.

2 – OTTOMAN TURKISHNESS

Ottoman Empire has a very special and significant place in the whole Turkish history. All new developments and progresses occurred after Turks came into Anatolia could reach a concrete outcome only by the Ottoman Empire. Otherwise, all those efforts and events would be for nothing. The new era started with the Turkicisation of Anatolia attained its real meaning with the Ottoman Empire.

Constituting an important part of Turkish history, the Ottoman Empire is still a significant research matter of today. Although studies upon the Ottoman Empire increase day by day, their contents are very limited and many of them unfortunately conducted not by scientific, but by political intentions which are either full with

immoderate praises or heedless condemnations⁵⁰.

It is difficult to analyze Ottoman Empire with classical methods. There are various institutions and events in the Ottoman history which cancel out efforts spent for classical analysis of the empire. Here, we will briefly mention about these difficulties and discuss how we can cope with them.

The most striking and prime characteristic of Ottoman Empire is that the politics, concerning with very deep matters, has never been the mere reflection of economics. This comprises the source of difficulty examining the Ottoman Empire. That is why we should clarify first this matter. In Ottoman Empire, despite the economical separations and irregularities, the centralist administration has always been politically strong and multipotent. If the thought of politics being the subject area of economical powers and orders is accepted true, we cannot explain the independence of political rule of Ottoman Empire from the economic factors.

There is another issue about the Ottoman Empire related to the same matter. Interestingly, politically the most effective and the most important regions of the Ottoman Empire, are economically the poorest and the weakest regions⁵¹. The Empire was also following a policies which caused huge amounts of wealth for the Imperial Treasury. Where then, was all this wealth coming from?⁵² Is it at all possible to claim an imperialism which means extreme exploitation of sources of rich regions and neglectfulness of the needs of these regions, for Ottoman Empire?

However, to be able to talk about an imperialism, there should be certain decision-making administrative organs at the center and highly developed institutions that run the exploitation. There is not a situation as such in the Ottoman Empire⁵³.

Wealth maker countries of the Middle East acquired some characteristics peculiar to themselves. These countries had some military weaknesses. Military services were performed by foreign mercenary soldiers in the producer countries of the Middle East. This generally granted opportunities for these soldiers to acquire good positions within the political power. In this respect, the Egyptian history and Memlukid dynasty are full of interesting examples of this fact.

In the Middle East, because of the East-West conflicts, some warrior, military states were established in strategical regions. These states closed the military gap of the East against West and in return, they demanded the political administration of the East and shares from the profits of the producer countries. First examples of these states were the Assyria and later Iran.

Can we talk about imperialism or economical exploitation for these military states of the Middle East? These states were definitely contributing a lot to the production increase in the region by providing the peace of the region and preventing the pressures of hostile powers, and for these services they were demanding their shares from the profits. They did not exert any other economical intervention. In the 19th century, without showing any serious appropriation, and even though it was known that the Empire will not be able to pay back, Ottoman

Empire borrowed great loans from the West. As we cannot say that the Ottoman Empire did not exploit the West, for the previous example, we cannot allege either that Middle Eastern military states exploited the East. Can we regard Ottoman Empire as the last and most perfect example of these Middle Eastern military states? As it is known, during its establishment, there were great effects of Iran traditions upon this state⁵⁴. They also claimed that it was affected by the Byzantine⁵⁵.

For a long time, Iran has played the role of confronting the spreading West before the East. It represented the defense system of the East both militarily and ideologically. Byzantine, on the other hand, was the last mainstay against the *invasions of barbarians* (so they call) before the West and was playing the role of defending the West. Though they were conflicting, this similarity of roles reflected upon various attributes of both sides, so we can find many similarities between Iran and Byzantine. For a long time historians enjoyed comparing the palaces and ceremonies of the two empires. Especially Paul Wittek expressed very significant views about this issue.

For centuries, kings of Persian Empire were titled⁵⁷ as the "King of the Kings"⁵⁶. About this subject, the letter written by Sulaiman the Magnificent to Francois I is very interesting. It seems that Sultan Sulaiman adopted very similar titles to those Iranian Kings were bearing. What did ShehinShah or King of the kings really mean? This title indicates the existence of other kings under the rule of the great King or the presence of statesmen who have authorities similar to kings within the empire. However, this situation was making these statesmen partly bounded to Persia political-wise, but they were keeping their thrown by their economical independence. That is, in return to be able to stay independent before Persia, they accepted to pay an amount of protection money for the security service performed by Persia. Similarly, an Ottoman Sultan is also a kind of Sultan of Sultans. The representatives of nations under the rule of Ottoman Sultan were assigning ambassadors in the presence of the Sultan who were equal to ambassadors of foreign governments. After the conquer of Istanbul, Sultan Mohammed the Conquerer requested the Orthodox church or the Greek nation to assign a representative in the Palace and from that day on, Fener Patriarchate kept its free position within the state.

Due to the East-West conflicts, Byzantine and Persia fell into a vicious circle of fights and struggles against each other. As they could not produce a radical solution for the controversy between them, they were only able to achieve some slight border alignments only after spending great amounts of expenditures. Just at this time, Arabs appeared on the scene. Arabs gave a different perspective to the former East-West conflict with their Islamic views and they achieved a political and ideological unity in the East. And they expanded their borders much further from Persia.

In a short time, Arabs defeated Persians, invigorated the old manufacturing regions of the East like Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, since the economical and political centers of Arabs were intersecting with each other⁵⁸, this caused politics to fall behind the economics and to be disgraced. At the end, the Arab Khilafa rules, similar to old Eastern civilisations, confronted with military deficiency and they started to have recourse to the military services of foreign mercenary soldiers⁵⁹. After that, political and economical authority of Arabs started to be dissipated.

Ottoman Empire has been a subject for the same kind of dissipation. Whereas the Ottoman Sultan, on the contrary to Arabic Khalifs, preferred to keep the military and political power under his own rule. Until the Act of Kucuk Kaynarca which was made in 1774, none of the Ottoman Sultans used the title of Khalifa in their official letters. This attitude of Ottoman Sultans provided Turks to gain a military and political respect before Arabic Khilafa.

Weakened Persia on one hand, and on the other the political and military impotence of Arab Khilafa prepared a suitable ground for a new military state to be born in the Middle East. After all these consequences, Ottoman Empire appeared on the stage of history. Ottoman Empire was never simply a copy or reviving of the Persian state. Ottoman Empire was the performer of a very old Eastern tradition that stretches from Assyrians to Arabs. The reason of seeing more Persian effects upon the its establishment of Ottoman Empire was due to their reactionary attitude which seem to be on the side of Persia, but against Arabs. Even Arabs themselves always tried to form close relationships with Persia whenever they had a conflict among themselves⁶⁰. *Ottoman Empire was completely brand new Eastern authority which acquired original attributes at the opposite of the Christian West and although maintaining the old tradition, it was a state that achieved a great advancement within this tradition.*

Now we can discuss about the subject more closely and mention various matters in detail. We must first state that Ottoman Empire was based on two independent organisations. These were the military and religious organisations⁶². The human resource for administrative ranks of the military institution was met by training (devshirma) the children of foreign, non-Muslim families most of whom were Western. In other words, no member of Eastern societies had the privilege of being chosen for the political and military power.

Therefore, by means of the devshirme institution which chooses the most competent and intelligent boys of non-Muslims for the high ranks of the army, a new generation called the *Ottomans* were being created⁶³. In time Ottoman Empire took whole of the authority of the East under its rule. Since marriage was not allowed for many members of it, this Ottoman race had to reformed in every generation.

Again, it is a definite rule that none of the positions in the military and the governmental organisation could be inherited from father to son. With great compensations, they gave ultimate care not to establish high-born, extremely privileged families and the power of people who are serving in high military and political positions was not originating from their family lineage, but from the level of their loyalty to the Ottoman Palace administration⁶⁴. In the eyes of the manufacturer public, their loyalty to the Ottoman dynasty was also the most significant proof of loyalty to the traditional Eastern policies⁶⁵.

This loyalty to the traditional Eastern policy was subject to the control of the religious institutions. Meanwhile, one must remember that the religious institutions in Ottoman Empire had a much broader and more different meaning than the religious institutions in the West. Religious institutions within the Ottoman Empire should be taken into

consideration together with the *nation system* of the Empire. In reality, the organisation of Islam within the Empire was similar to that of Orthodox or Armenian nations under the rule of Ottoman Empire. Only, Muslims had slightly more privileges. It is these privileges push us to think that Islam, being a partner to the authority, exerted governmental powers over the Empire. Whereas, Islam's religious organisation within the Empire was limited to only its own formal duties. As it was necessary for being born as an Orthodox to be able to be assigned to a high religious post within the Orthodox organisation, it was also necessary to be a born-Muslim to be appointed to a post within the Islamic religious organisation and they were both left completely free in their own affairs. In short, they were equal otherwise to all other non-Muslim nations. On the other hand, as an influential political power, the Ottoman Empire took on the responsibility of defending the East, in other words Islam, and constituted a firm balance between the East and the West. This was mainly being seen in the *fatwas* (rulings on a point of Islamic law that is given by the recognized high Islamic authority) given according to rules of the Islamic Law for the political decisions. This situation was making Islam's religious organisation or the Muslim subjects differentiate from others. In payment for this, the State held the authority of observing over the Ummat-al Islam (Muslim nation) for the reason of protecting the order in Islamic world and by founding its policies according to Islamic Fatwa organisation, it did not allow the authority to be divided.

In order to prevent all rivalry against its own authority, the Ottoman Empire has given utmost care to protect the whole of its dominating powers. In respect to this, Ottoman Empire that was based upon Devshirmas who were far away from representing any Eastern interest group, requested its policy protecting the political and financial interests of the East, to be supported by the Eastern manufacturing powers.

All thoughts mentioned above are all conjectures which are needed to be proved by various researches. First of all, it should be evidenced that Muslim nations occupied a privileged, but not a different position among the other subjects of the Empire. Also we should be able to demonstrate that the State was representing the political power in the East without being identified with the economical powers, was preventing the whole existence of the East except their general interests, and was holding all military posts under its dominion.

Samples of Ottoman budgets were published by Omer Lutfi Barkan. Using this source, it is possible to search the incomes and expenses of the Empire and to determine the share of the Eastern producer countries among the incomes⁶⁶.

Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the countries under the rule of the Empire should be explained in detail. It is seen that Egypt, being subject to a different and a special arrangement, was given an economical independence; and in response to this, Egypt has contributed greatly to the wealth of the Empire.

When the institutions of the Empire and the commercial life in the Empire are examined closely, it can be seen that relations between economy and politics depict some special features in Ottoman Empire. Although these two institutions are independent from each other, the politics has always been responsible for preparing the necessary conditions for the economical development and economy (manufacturers) has been responsible for providing the financial support needed for

performing the governmental duties.

3 - WESTERNERISATION OF OTTOMANS

Since the Westernerisation of Ottomans can be clarified by views put forward about the Ottoman Empire, it is the most outstanding matter of our history and the vital point of all sociological debates. It is vital, because if this issue is crystallised, our relations with the West will be determined in a more reasoned manner.

There are many questions about this subject awaiting to be answered. Was the Westernerisation of Ottomans only a stage within the natural development of the Empire? Or was it a deviation completely out of its natural course? Even if it would be a deviation, what was the harm or benefit of this stage to the community? Besides, we have to spend effort not to transform our opinions into ethical judgments and must not limit ourselves with such evaluations. We should be able to explain our verdicts factually.

Today, as to say "*our attempt of Westernerisation has been successful*" does not mean anything, to say that "*the Westernerisation has been harmful, because it is in contrast to our traditions*" does not mean anything, either. We must recall that Turks have always been changing their identities and sides, throughout their history. Turks proved themselves how much competent they are in adopting new environments and civilisations. Therefore, if we reckon that Westernerisation has been unsuccessful, we should look for other factors to explain the reasons of this failure. Another point to remember when discussing the subject is that the Westernerisation was started by the Ottomans themselves with the intention of solving the problems of the Empire. Even if we are completely against the Westernerisation process, we should avoid from making simple comments and regard the issue as a betrayal of the Ottoman governors. At least at the beginning, before the pressure and impact of the West was felt upon the Empire, we had selected the path towards Westernerisation with our own consent. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, it encountered with various troubles and difficulties and these difficulties pushed us towards the Westernerisation. In other words, solutions to our problems could not be found within the frame of traditional Ottoman system anymore. In this case, we should examine the matter in correlation with problems that the Empire confronted in its last years. Naturally, this requires us to explain briefly the history of the matter. Besides, historical explanations about the Westernerisation also include the forms of examinations and interpretations.

For example, if our relations with the West are limited to the superiority of Western techniques and the adaptation of these techniques by Ottomans, the matter can be started with Ibrahim Muteferrika (who first brought and used the printing machine in Turkey) and the coming of printing machine to Turkey will be considered as the beginning of our Westernerisation process. Thus, the West will be introduced as a different culture, a new way of life and the possessor of technical superiority. It will be said that Ottomans remained in old traditional patterns while West improved themselves in various fields⁶⁷. And the problem will be taken as the development of the West while we stayed out of it⁶⁸. In this respect, Paris Seyahatnamesi (Travel-notes of Paris) of Mohammed Celebi XXVIII has special significance. Such writings are regarded as records depicting the interest of the Ottomans to the advancement achieved by the West completely outside themselves⁶⁹.

In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, it was many times defeated by the West. These defeats can at least be regarded as the military superiority of the West. However, this military superiority has been considered merely as the technical supremacy of the West free from political causes. As a result of admitting the military superiority of the West, the first Westernerisation, or as it used to be called earlier, renovation, was conducted in the field of military service. The first Western-model schools were military schools. The first renovations to be conducted in the military

field shows that the superiority of the West started first with military defeats. Westernisation trend was not restricted in certain subjects, hence army forces which were similar to those in the West were tried to be formed. Selim III established the army of Nizam-i Cedid⁷⁰ for this purpose. Because of these attempts of him, Selim III is known as the initiator of the Westernisation in our history. Selim III is the Sultan

at the time of the French Revolution. Because of this coincidence, there are claims about Ottoman Empire to be affected by the thoughts provoked by the French Revolution and as a natural result of this effect, a renovation trend began in Ottoman Empire and by this the role of Selim III in the Westernisation trend has been tried to be explained.

Of course, the effect of the French Revolution over the Ottoman Empire cannot be denied. French Revolution generated a new direction and a new form for the world. Naturally the Ottoman Empire, as a World Empire practicing a global policy, could not remain outside of these events. For example, the *nationalist* movements in Balkans were the result of the French Revolution.

There are two significant events about the initiation of Westernisation by Selim III. First, before he ascended throne, Selim III, as the heir apparent of Ottoman Empire, had established friendly relations and corresponded with the French royalty. Second, Napoleon Bonaparte once wanted to join the Ottoman army and later he operated a military expedition to Egypt. Napoleon did not apply to the Ottoman army to offer his services as a mercenary soldier, but he was following a certain policy. When he was given the opportunity, he acted in the direction of this policy and designed the military campaign to Egypt.

Meaning of these two events is that the Ottoman Empire was becoming more important for the Western politics. Napoleon's interest upon the Ottoman Empire was related to this fact. And it can be thought that, being aware of this increasing importance, Selim III tried to establish private relations with Western royals, in a way which was never practiced before by any Ottoman heir or Sultan.

After Selim III, for a very short time Mustafa III, following him Mahmud II and later Abdulmecid were enthroned. Both Mahmud II and Sultan Abdulmecid continued attempts of Westernisation. The Janissary corps were abolished during the reign of Mahmud II and the whole Ottoman army was reformed according to Western models. Abdulmecid on the other hand, holds a special place in our Westernisation history. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire was engaged in the War of Crimea. During this war, first time ever in our history, we moved militarily in alliance with the West. Though we agreed with Russians against Egypt during the rule of Mahmud II, this event has been explained as a policy of "a drowning man will clutch at a straw". During the War of Crimea, first time in its history, the Ottoman army fought together with Christian army⁷¹, against another Western State⁷².

Moreover, during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecid the Hatt-i Humayun was read in Gulhane Park in Istanbul which was the initiator of a limited Monarchy. There are diverse thoughts about the Tanzimat (new administrative regulations). First of these thoughts is that the Tanzimat was the first attempt to promulgate a Western type of law. On the basis of this thought, Hilmi Ziya Ulken mentioned about a cultural duality

experienced in our country after the Tanzimat and stated that this law was claiming the possibility of unity between the traditional values of the society and Western concepts and values. Thus, it is claimed that the Westernisation attempts which were started and had to be started remained at a certain degree⁷³.

After the Tanzimat, Western admirer grand viziers started to be assigned to these positions. Characteristics of these viziers were not only related to their tendency towards the Western culture and Western techniques, but they were advocates of certain countries in the West. Grand Reshit Pasha who started the Tanzimat, was known with his admiration towards England. Anymore, Nedim Pasha was such a Russian adorer that he was called Nedimoff, and Kamil Pasha was such an English admirer that he was called English Nedim Pasha.

During all these developments however, Ottoman Empire lost its biggest trump in his hand. After the adventure of Mohammed Ali Pasha, Ottoman dominance over Egypt ended. Whereas, Egypt was constituting the most significant place for the role given to Ottoman Empire by the West. It was not without any reason that Napoleon started his attempts towards the East with Egypt campaign. The biggest sign however, showing that Egypt was no more under the rule of Ottomans, was the construction of the Suez Canal. The West was so daring in using Suez Canal that they did not have any hesitation to form a new direction for their Eastern policies. Ottoman Empire anymore, in parallel to its loss of power, was regarded as the "sick man".

After this, the main problem in our country was not to take a part within the Western policy, but was to straighten up the Ottoman Empire. And it was thought that this would be possible only by reshaping the Ottoman Empire into a Western state model. These thoughts initiated the attempts of establishing Constitutional Monarchy (Mashrutiyet). They tried to form a Western type of community in Turkey. Actually, it is debatable whether the transferring efforts of Western institutions into Turkey were sincerely for the advancement of Turkish public, or for the intention of proving that we are a trustworthy alliance of the West. There were claims that our position in making agreements with the West has changed with the declaration of the First Constitutional Monarchy⁷⁴.

Despite all troubles it confronted, the Ottoman Empire joined the First World War. In the West, Germany emerged as a country which was not contented with the balance of powers in the world at the time. Within this conflict appeared in the West, the Ottoman Empire, not yet lost all its control over the Eastern world, found an opportunity to take a side and joined the war as an ally to Germany.

Not only for us, but for all sides, the results of the First World War were the opposite to what was expected. As a result of the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia retreated from all agreements of which it was a party. Russia was not in a situation to be able to control the Turkish communities in its colonial countries. England, the victor of the War, was having difficulties to keep control over its Eastern colonies. All these developments rendered Turkey a new significance. Anatolia, a land which has the potential of leading all other Turkish and Muslim nations, prefers to cooperate with the West instead. Proving that they can establish smooth relations with the West has been the main duty of Anatolian Turkish Muslims. In respect to this, the main policy of the new Turkish Republic has been the realisation of complete Westernisation.

Claims about the all attempts of Westernerisation during the Ottoman period has been completed all with the Republic are not untrue. Really many aspects of Westernerisation were fulfilled during the Republic term.

After mentioning the history of Westernerisation trend in our country, now we will briefly mention about some notable events happened during this process. Let us first touch on the entering of the printing machine to our country. It is very difficult to directly relate the printing machine to the West. Because, this machine was first used by the Eastern civilisations⁷⁵. Moreover, the number of hand-written books in the Ottoman Empire was much more than the number of books in any Western country. The entry of the printing machine into the Empire can only be regarded from the point of view that the knowledge thus spread out of the traditional palace surroundings. Here however, it must not be forgotten that most of the books of Ottomans were about State affairs.

As mentioned earlier, in the Ottoman period, there have been attempts of establishing army according to Western models intention of which was to gain success in wars engaged with the West. However, the guidance for the establishment of this army was performed by the West itself. Most of the military trainers were Western citizens. First we have to ask ourselves how can West help us to gain success in fighting against the West. Moreover, after all these reformations, victories won against the West did not seem to be rising, and also Ottoman Empire was mostly engaged in war with its own states. In wars involving the West, the Ottoman army generally took part as an alliance of the Western armies. The Ottoman army fought in Crimea in alliance with England and France, and in the First World War fought together with German troops. As it can be seen from these examples, to prepare an army against the West was not under consideration. That is why, it is not surprising that the administration of the army was assigned to Western military officers.

In this respect, we can mainly define the reformation trends as cooperation with the West and efforts of seeking allies in the West. In this case, a cultural duality⁷⁶ would definitely appear in our country from the Tanzimat onwards.

As we mentioned above, the Ottoman Empire has chosen the path of Westernerisation in order to find solutions to some of its problems. What were these problems? Can the Westernerisation of Ottomans be regarded merely as an effort of keeping pace with the Western civilisation? As we mentioned earlier, the historical role of the Ottoman Empire was to protect and defend the Eastern civilisations. It was also situated on the most appropriate position for this role. Ottoman Empire could control all parts of the Middle East from Anatolia and was having many advantages of directing the relations between the East and the West. It is not a coincidence for the Ottoman Empire to be the most magnificent example of the Eastern Empires. The West sought new solutions against the raising successes of the Ottoman Empire and by following routes around the Empire, they managed to skip the Ottoman Empire for reaching the East. After this, new East-West relations were established not involving the Ottoman Empire. Because of this, Ottomans gave up surrounding Vienna thinking that it would not render them any achievement. And this was the end of Ottoman Empire's expansion.

Ottomans were not unaware of the West and their developments. The very wide spread intelligence service of Sultan Mohammed the Conquerer was very famous in the history. On the other hand, maps of Piri Reis are the first maps of continent of America. Yavuz Sultan Selim demanded to see the world map while he was in Egypt. On the contrary to other sultans who moved towards the West, Yavuz Sultan Selim turned towards the East and conducted an expedition to Egypt. This surely was not because of a mere stubbornness of Yavuz Sultan Selim.

All these developments generated a new type of Ottoman-war relationship. Being open to plunderers, the East could no more support the world order of Ottoman Empire. On the other side, Ottomans could not produce a new Eastern policy that could encounter the new conditions. It resisted for many years, but at the end, it had to approach the West.

We did not use the word Westernisation or occidentalisation. We deliberately used the word "Westernisation". In this respect, of course the alphabet and clothes reforms should have put into practice first. Surely in this process, not the Westernisation of the public, but of the State was considered. Because the State itself is the administrator of the new policy. If an army changes sides, first the uniforms of the soldiers change. No doubt why the public was compelled first to change their clothes.

27 These ones have at least a superiority of simplifying the matter over those who claim that Turkish history had some specific features at the beginning, but now those differences are eliminated.

28 Hittites, Greeks and even Sumarians.

29 This idea also has believers.

30 Look "Turkish Spirit"

31 Look "Turkicization, Secularisation, contemporaneousness".

32 So-called contradiction of ummah-nation (ummah=community of faithful Muslims)

33 As known in public.

34 Out of Ottoman aspect of religion.

35 The same thoughts were later defended by sociologist Nurettin Kosemihal (Look: Foreword to M.A.S. And Türkiye'nin Düzeni Üzerine).

36 Fuad Koprulu's article is interesting from the point of its research of the roots of Ottoman institutions.

37 Only in a generation time.

38 For a broader view, look: "Asya Tarihinde Su Boyu Ovaları ve Bozkir Uygarlıkları".

39 Rene Grousset.

40 Great Seljukids.

- 41 When a natural route is taken from Mid-Asia to Anatolia.
- 42 Yavuz has written his "Divan" in Persian, and Shah Ismail wrote in Turkish. Those who used Turkish as the main language were casted out from the Turkish world and politics.
- 43 Zeki Velidi Togan.
- 44 Apart from these theories, there is also an allegation which is clearly proved to be wrong that Turks killed the native people of Anatolia. The vast number of Christian minorities and recruiting institution for non-Muslims all prove that this theory is completely false. These theories are set forth for intentions of slandering Turks.
- 45 Because the Turks and those settled communities were both Eastern nations.
- 46 Attila's army is the victorious army. They could not be all killed.
- 47 Or they protected themselves in another way which is also debatable.
- 48 This is also a kind of identity change.
- 49 Conflict between the East and the West.
- 50 In social science, we do not believe an abstract scientific view which is far from political and practical concerns. We mean with those praises and condemnations that we do not gain any factual and firm knowledge.
- 51 For example, Anatolia and Balkans.
- 52 As the source is not the places from where the empire is ruled.
- 53 In the last century of the Empire, it suffered from deficit of income.
- 54 Fuad Koprulu.
- 55 Ziya Gokalp ve Tekin Alp.
- 56 Sehinsah.
- 57 Look: "Sehname".
- 58 Khilafa centers were situated in those manufacturing areas.
- 59 And at the same time, they applied to the services of Turks.
- 60 Like Hz. Ali or Abbasids against Amawids.
- 61 A continuous family dynasty, absence of closed classes, opportunity of promoting to even the highest state positions for every member from the every rank of the society.
- 62 Look views of Lybyer about this subject.
- 63 Look views of Gibbons and criticisms against him.
- 64 Kapikulu (Royal Servanthood)
- 65 This is the reason why royal servants have always been devoted to the Ottoman Royals even though they sometimes rebelled.
66. We also need to explain in detail the protection money (harac) in Ottomans.
67. According to the same statements, these are the main subjects.
68. Of course how we remained outside of this development should also be explained.
69. However, interestingly both the Seyahatname of Mehmed Celebi XXVIII and the Sefaretname (Memories of the Ottoman Ambassador) of Halet Efendi are quite away from expressing any admiration towards the Western superiority.
70. It means "New Order".
71. English and French armies.
72. Russia.
73. This process has been criticized by all our sociologists. This point comprises one of the main critique subjects of Sabahattin Bey. Ziya Gokalp was also against this duality. He was asserting that as there cannot be a person with two religions, there cannot be a society with dual culture.
74. The declaration of the First Constitutional Monarchy coincides with the Tersane

conference which was held in the same days.

75.China.

76.The contradiction of applying a Western policy within an Eastern society.