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A REVIEW ON THE OTTOMAN'S TANZIMAT REFORMS

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ABSTRACT

The Tanzimat period of the Ottoman State is vital importance because of its historic value to the empire. Thus, the period still continues to determine Turkey's today policy, military, education etc. According to some, the Tanzimat period occured by the coercion of the western states. With regard to others, they generally think that the Tanzimat period occured by the decision of state's itself. Western states' attitudes towards Ottomans' reforms was effective, generally, in a negative way, but not positive. It is clear that strong states generally prioritized their own benefits. As a result of such situation, reforms which Ottomans struggled to realize could be adopted neither by the reformers nor by the subjects of the empire, even though empire's sincere efforts to adapt to the modern age. However, in any case such a period occurred in the recent history of the Ottomans, and this period has produced/produced important results.

Keywords: Tanzimat period, Ottomans' reforms, western states, modern age, recent history of the Ottomans.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is said the Tanzimat reforms at time of various conversations without given examples related to it. It is mentioned the *reform* word, and subsequently is immediately passed to problems of today's Turkey. This condition and approach has been cause to overlook of sustained process. At this point is entered to play the difference between concepts *historic* and *historical*, because of *historic* refers to *kairos* what the flow of events and *historical* refers to *kronos* what the flow of time (Düzgün, 2014: 16). So, the review ground of problems is trapped in the *passed history*. Whereas, "it is impossible to explain the present by the present" (quo. in Davies, 1998: 708, from Le Roi Ladurie).

The importance of the Tanzimat period still exists and is related to many matters which are the military, economic, policy, culture etc. Many of the reviews which were written in Turkey is exhibits the rupture from the historical context of the issue. At the present time, the aim of this study is especially, to establish a connection between the historic mentality of Tanzimat period whose effects can be still observed and the problems of today's Turkey. I hope this study provides an understanding of the historical roots of our problems, once again.

In the first part of the study, the Ottomans mentality intended for reforms was examined. This attempt is important to understand the underlying reasons for the problems in various areas in Turkey nowadays. The following part includes the remarkable dimensions of decrees of 1839 and 1856, the most important two milestones of 19th century reforms. At the end of the first part of this study, several concrete examples on the reforms and their consequences were provided.

Those works were an essential guide to our study: Ortaylı's İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı, in the context of the general mentality of Ottomans during reforms, the Tanzimat and the social influence created by reforms in Findley's works, reforms' practise mistakes and not being supported by Europe in Davison's

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Reform (1856-1876), and in terms of world sociology, the condition of Ottoman Empire in Sezer and Eğribel's works were utilized in this study.

2. BASIC WORRIES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND THE STRUGGLES WHICH LED TO ESTABLISH THE RATIONALITY OF INNOVATION

In the 19th century, the main worry of the Ottoman State was to sustain its interior unity and to lose more land no longer (Davutoğlu, 2014: 52). The reforms of this period became necessary due to the new form of flow in history and the geographies that triggered these reforms were not far from the Ottoman Empire, "the last state proved the imperial peace" (Gencer, 2014: 162).

The Ottoman Empire initiated a period of innovations in a situation where its existence was more endangered than it was at any time of the 19th century and ended this period in the same dangerous way (Findley, 2011: 77-78). On the other hand, even though Ottoman State had relations with West in the old periods, mentioned interrelations had differentiated by 19th century² and the State was directed to cooperation with West in the areas of military and policy, "renouncing from east front-policy which it was attached" (Eğribel and Özcan, 2012: 44). Because of this, the term westernization came into literature and it went down in our history and historical researches, including all the State's efforts (Tunaya, 2010: 17) which were to rise to the level of modern countries. In fact, the origins of westernization in the Ottoman date back to the 18th century. However, mentioned origins were far from the theoretical necessities of westernization. Moreover, at beginning of the period which was a "mortal confrontation in the age of ideologies through the 19th century" there was a strong interior conflict. However, the reform decisions of Ottoman generally belong to the State itself (Ortaylı, 2005: 13-17, 24-25, 132; Sezer, 2012: 14-15; Yasamee, 1996: 8; Gencer, 2014: 256, 337).

Also, one of the factors that procreated hardship was an ambivalence which was brought by the political strain and caused by the influence of Europe and the protection requirement by its imperialist purposes. More importantly, "the feel of comparative predominance and rivalry" began instead of a classical dominance feel in the Ottoman State (Gencer, 2014: 39, 157, 297).3 Henceforth, the period which "would shake the Empire from its root" was prepared (Tanpınar, 2013: 177).

The innovation understanding in the Western mentality continued in another aspect as parallel with the historical adventure of the new. In the 19th century, the accidental and arcanum constituents of new appeared as various factors which were influential over the production of new, such as new ranks beginning to become clear with industrialization, wrapping of governmental organizations a different way than before, definitions of the ruler and ruled etc. Whilst the new was understood by the East as an arrangement which was not similar to the existing conditions, the Western mentality was following independent and elastic ideas (quo. in Yetim, 2012: 381, from R. I. Westwood and D. Low). Additionally, the nationalism movement was accelerating the collapse of states like Ottoman Empire as well as the innovations, because some bureaucrats of this kind of states couldn't adopt the new status of nations as a whole (Ortaylı, 2005: 55-57, 85). Meanwhile, there was not "the idea that holistic historic future out of the present" in the mentality of the Tanzimat reformers. It was the most important stage which desired innovations were made on account of their scheme (quo. in Gencer, 2014: 352, from Mardin, 1995: 61).

The first part of the Ottoman reforms' age in the near term deserved to be dubbed as a changeover or standstill (Gencer, 2014: 160). The following historical period from 1867 to 1871 would be the pinnacle of the Ottoman reforms (Georgeon, 2006: 40). There are those who say that the aforenamed period of the reforms as "Ottoman renaissance", including improvement struggles from the beginning of the 18th century, too (Sander, 2012: 195-196).

With the declaration of the Hatt-1 Hümayun in 1839 (the Decree of Gülhane) whose theoretician was Sadık Rifat Pasha and architect was Mustafa Resid Pasha, the tendency to turn to the Westward which had begun in the Tulip Period (1703-1730) in an informal way would have a legal identity (Okandan, 1949: 14). On

¹ Even though all these conditions, were perhaps the "most convenient time for beginning" in the historic perspective. And the beginning was not only the action form but also "a mood, way of working, manner and consciousness" (Said, 2009: 15).

² West launched differentiated relations with the rest of the world and so, many countries participated through international relations, also (Köktürk,

³ But author says in the page 39 of his book that it created a legitimacy crisis of reforms which were made and lacking figh (Islamic laws) because of the urgency of innovations, and so, partial success wasted because of mentioned crisis. These reforms lacked a fiqh ground but, if we look closely, there were madrasah (Muslim seminary) graduates like Ahmed Cevdet, Sadık Rifat, Şânizâde Atâullah, Kethüdazâde İshak Efendi among the reformers in the period, too. Apart from this, for instance, couldn't be Mecelle (Ottoman code of civil law) interpreted as a trying of a fiqh

the other side, the power of retinues of Grand Vizier started to expand as one part of this comittee was working in the rural area of the empire. This situation means that power sharing began in that period (Ortaylı, 2005: 87-90). Besides, the main cause which obliged the Ottoman State to change probably was the changes experienced in the interior dynamics of the state and in the society and in the way of relations of management more than Western influence (Uğur, 2012: 27; Özbek, 2011: 77). Some of the examples of alteration in inside dynamics of the state and the society were Rasathane-i Humayun Vak'ası in 1580 and Kadızadeli Movement in the 17th century. The main reason for movements of these kinds was to take support from the state (Tezcan, 2012: 174-194).⁴ So, the goal of the reforms was "a government reform which would be a bridge between administrators and the ruled", in a sense. At the same time, the mentality of the reform theory was including an orthogenetic frame that claimed to founded on its essence of anything. According to this approach, the values of Europe were already belonged to the Ottoman, just like Philippe de Mézière he did. According to the argument of Philippe de Mézière who was a Catholic missioner, he had suggested that the brinkmanship of Turks, actually belonged to Christians (quo. in Gencer, 2014: 348-349).⁵ Furthermore, the reforms were progressing on the way as a conservatism and opposition, as innovation and a proximity to Europe's discernment (Ortaylı, 2005: 109-115). Besides, local powers in the Balkan were continuing to resist the innovations related to the military service (Moreau, 2011: 421).

The origin of the problem about the mentality was extending to the period of Selim III. As previously mentioned, while were planning and practicing, the aforementioned holism had been overlooked. So, it was thought that it had a "unique key of development" that was innovative newnesses only the in areas such as military, education, economic etc. Whereas, it must be dealt together with all of the mentioned or unmentioned areas. This approach was incorrect just as Europe previously thought as "a unique key of development" that protected minorities in the Ottoman State (Davison, 2005: 5). Just the opposite, all of the institutions needed to be rejuvenescent in the same time (Tunaya, 2010: 20), because they were a "total of ideas and movements" (quo. in Tunaya, 2010: 55, from Duverger, 1958: 5, 10), that is, the changing matter was the matter that they influenced on each other, whether negative or positive.

The problem which was relevant to the theoretical ground would come into a condition that was to be solved in the modernization process which speeded after Hatt-1 Humayun in 1856 (Gencer, 2014: 380).

3. THE MEANING OF 1839 AND 1856 DECREES IN TERMS OF OTTOMANS

It can be said, that the decrees of 1839 and 1856 were acting on the ground of equality.⁷ Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunu was one of the phenomena of the mentioned equality, because the Kanun had established the citizenship on the nationality, not on the religion (Yerasimos, 2007: 202). Taking brave steps to the citizenship area was prologue in the matter of secularism for the future Turkey and, fundamentally and in a sense, the State was compelled to make innovations because the matter of age had come to a turning point which forced all the countries of the world to steer for the way of regeneration (Ortaylı, 2005: 91-96).

The response of Ottomans was the "politic and constitutional modernization" which was to be asserted in Hatt-1 Humayun of 1839 against the "civilization war" of Napoléon towards the Islamic world (Gencer, 2014: 107). Decree of 1839, as probably the "first and most audacious muniment of all east and Islamic world" (Koloğlu, 2004: 34) was the first stage of Ottoman's constitutional development due to the property gained by taking a part to provide main rights to be realized for its subjects through certain laws (Mumcu, 2012: 211).8

Through the Hatt-1 Humayun of 1856, the debt received from Europe at the time of Crimea War (1853-56) was paid (Ortaylı, 2005: 99, 113). Moreover, the Hatt-1 Humayun of 1856 was a technic document which was more than Hatt-1 Humayun of 1839, on the account of the following two terms were used for the first

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⁴ Halil İnalcık saw the movement as a triumph of bigotry and Heath Lowry deepened this opinion (Faroqhi, 2012: 92)

⁵ Berkes considered the limited of sovereign authority in the Decree of 1839 more than an arrangement in the terms of ruler-ruled (Berkes, 2008: 215). Additionally, as an interesting argument, Davison considered that the Ottomans were already a part of the West, even though they were estranged from the West since 16th century (Davison, 2004: 7-8, 82-84).

⁶ Koca Sekbanbaşı was the first person to state the same opinion in history (Tunaya, 2010: 52).

⁷ Findley says that the declaration of Decree of 1839 was not different than other Ottoman declarations by means of used of rights which they gained privileges more than the principle of equality. He explained the cause as non-Muslims were not subjected to the sharia (Findley, 2011: 92).

⁸ In another study, if a starting point to be sought for constitutional development, it was Sened-i İttifak in 1808 in the period of Mahmud II (Sander,

⁹ This war was the first battle which Ottomans accomplished to eliminate its enemies by means of using antinomies among Europe states (Davutoğlu, 2014: 67).

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time in a formal frame; *Ottomanship* and *citizenship* (Gencer, 2014: 216-217). Its content was more modern and noncontradictory than the Decree of 1839 (Yerasimos, 2007: 98).

In fact, the rights which were endowed in the 19th century to minorities were not unfavorable for its manners towards the subjects of Ottoman State. But it was not said that it was to be accepted immediately the given rights between the bureaucracy and the public (Ortaylı, 2005: 113, Davison, 1990: 115-117, Kaçmaz, 2012: 426-427). According to one view, to weaken the function of ulema which was "playing the role between the army and the public as a pendulum" even a legitimacy crisis was triggered (Gencer, 2014: 174).

Arrangements of the Tanzimat period did not create the expected effects at the rural regions of the empire. It reduced the strong status of old governors and the gentry but, this time, a class called *aşar mültezimi* occurred in the social life, as a rapacious and graceless class which was mediating of local trade and was excruciating (Ortaylı, 2005: 131). However, as a contrary example to the mentioned situation, only Christian people of Crete succeeded to obtain a lot of properties (Karal, 2011: VII, 19).

The importance of military schools which was opened in the Tanzimat period was quite high because they were "formal foundations" in the areas of veterinary medicine, surgery etc. Opening these kinds of schools was an indicator to overcome the opposition caused by Western science, at the same time (Ortaylı, 2005: 133-134).¹¹

4. THE APPROACH OF STRONG STATES TO THE OTTOMAN REFORMS AND VARIOUS TABLES OF REFORM STRUGGLES

In the reform period, France and Russia kept suggesting ways of reforms. France was generally standing on issues about equality and education. Russia's proposals aimed to scatter the Ottoman State (Davison, 2005: 244, Tunaya, 2010: 33). France was an example of finance, boards, justice institutions, and provincial organizations. Nonetheless, this exemplary representation was not about the "intellectual commitment and emulation", but it was about the overlapping sides between France centralism and Ottoman reforms (Ortaylı, 2005: 138). Another example of this issue of the reforming country was Metternich's Austria (quo. in Gencer, 2014: 343, from Mardin, 1996: 200). On the other side, in the 19th the *balance policy* was adopted by means of international diplomacy (Ortaylı, 2005: 111) which would keep the State alive more than 200 years after the disaster of 1683 in Vienna (Sander, 2012: 312).

The Tanzimat period which started with the declaration of Gülhane Hattı emerged in two ways to regulate the relations between the Sultan and his subjects. One of these was to make a new constitution which was convenient for the new understanding, and the other way was to make a series of laws. The path that was chosen was the latter. So, works of enactment which "the was essence of modernization" began (Berkes, 2008: 214-221).

The use of Julian calendar which was a mixture of Mohammedan and Gregorian calendars was promoted with the declaration of Gülhane Hattı (quo. in Tabakoğlu, 2012: 273, from Unat, 1974). It classified the promotions and ranks, and tried to make a clearer writing language. It established new departments for the works of the State. Some of established departments, for example, were Hazine-i Evrak (State Archive), Meclis-i Ali-i Tanzimat which was in charge of preparation of all laws and statute books, Divan-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye which was the basic of High Court compared to today, Şura-yı Devlet which was the basic of council compared to today, and Nizamiye (Nezamiyeh) Court etc. It is worth mentioning that Ottoman reforms created a contact between the Sharia and the juristic apprehensions of Europe "in the ground of both partnership and contrariness". So, the functionality of Sharia disappeared afterward (Abisaab, 2012: 211, Akyıldız, 1993: 175). Constructed Vilayet Meclisleri (councils of provinces) were able to convene until the beginning of the 1870s (Davison, 2005: 174). The function of the councils was limited to maintain an easy control of provincial frontiers. Moreover, the use of postage stamps expanded with the increase of

¹² See Genç, 2010: 7-46 for ideas which are relevant to the new world scheme of France and Russia, of Charles White who was an English journalist living three years in Constantinople.

¹⁰ See Davies, 1998: 765 for a similar opinion that peasants in Europe was not used to gains of modern reforms.11 See Sezer, 2012: 16-18 for a critique of scientific mentality of West and one fresh proposal in the name of science discernment.

¹³ So, Government offices which were opened filed by non-Muslims more than Muslims, even though it walked on eggshells against to high chair (Findley, 1994: 175-176). However, the mentioned condition, that is, the equality of Ottoman subjects was "policy keystone ideology of Ottomanism" (Quataert, 2005: 68).

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post offices. Statute books about the provinces were prepared. Apart from these, it enacted the codes of Ticaret-i Bahriye and Teşkilat-ı Mehakim (Mumcu, 2012: 207-228, Seyitdanlıoğlu, 2012: 255-270). 14

The Muhassillik (the tax collectorship in the provinces and sub-provinces) was tried, though it was unsuccessful. Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye and many schools which had a modern curriculum than the Encümen-i Daniş which was set off in 1851, were founded (Ortaylı, 2005: 141-179, 181-190). But the biggest misfortune of those attempts which directed the education, probably that foreign missioners stepped into the education, because of their experiences about the mentioned issue.

Published statute and law books in the Tanzimat period were far from the speed of organizational expansions (Findley, 1994: 170). Besides; Jewry, Armenians, and Greeks in the Ottoman Empire were reached with their own constitution. The contribution made to these minorities about the constitutional development would appear as "will be valid of 1876 Constitution throughout all the Ottoman country", afterward. Most successful one about the issued constitutions would be the Armenian constitution, because could minimize the dictatorship of the clergy class (Davison, 2005: 137-141, 154-158, 174). 15

Adopting the binary money system in 1844 created positive development, putting an end to the unique practices of adulteration in the Ottoman money system (Findley, 2011: 107). Unfortunately, this positive economic development was short-lived, especially because of future loans. On the other side, guilds which lost their privileges in the same term were shocked with another blow by centers of production which were starting to rise (Quataert, 2011: 98-99).

Practices of the innovations period were conclusions of the struggles which tried to reason and understand the necessities of the real world, to search solutions that could be suitable to these necessities, and it was not possible to accuse the reformers who were trying to achieve the aforementioned reforms, with treachery easily (Köktürk, 2013: 46), even though the reforms would cause to oppressiveness in the following years (Gencer, 2014: 350). The reformers were imitating the Western states, this attitude was probably an obligation to reach the level of the mentioned states which were more advanced than Ottomans (quo. in Gencer, 2014: 663, from Süavi, 1868). Furthermore, Ottoman State's existence was dependent on the arrangement of persistent relations networks throughout the world because the State was a world power (Sezer, 2012: 13-15).

innovation important (Ortaylı, 119) period indicates an stage 2005: modernization/centralization because the Ottoman government would reach the stratums of the public which couldn't be reached before (Deringil, 2002: 173), despite all of the hitches and all the critics of new Ottomans like Namık Kemal after the Decree of 1856 (Gencer, 2014: 636). The subjects of the empire both the Muslim and not the Muslim gained an confidence (İsmail Kemal, 1920: 133).

The steep progression stage of the Ottoman Empire continued in spite of Europe which put stones together with the capitulations before the empire (Davison, 2005: 275). Besides, "in a sense, the Tanzimat was fundamentally a movement in legislation" (Findley, 2008: 17). This stance, indeed, was convenient to make the reforms from bottom to the top, in terms of historical and socio-cultural background of Ottomans. "Innovation in the Ottoman was destined to follow an altimetric way" (Ayas, 2012: 207, Tunaya, 2010: 176-177).¹⁸

The Tanzimat period was "the most serious step of westernization of Ottoman Empire which came into a status establishing diplomacy" (Eğribel-Özcan, 2012: 46-48). Except that, the Tanzimat period brought a transformation to the image of civil-bureaucratic life, to the extent of modernist people resources, diffusing the elite ideas which carved the new ways of education on the social substratum (Findley, 1994: 186, Quataert, 2005: 54).

According to a suggestion, the main reason of all reforms was the international crises which happened and was happening, and their converter effect which was so powerful in the context of both policy intelligence

¹⁴ Something else which would contribute ideology of Ottomanism was Vilayet Nizamnâmeleri, by means of provinces to be sucked up more into the economic activities (Davison, 2005: 178). Apart from this, there was potential which as relation to Vilayet Nizamnâmeleri that Ottomans had a historical back-ground of the source of the idea of the statute book, on the contrary, which these statute books get inspired from France (Findley, 2011: 99). Furthermore, said regulations were arrangements which brought the innovation into the area of policy by way of election principle and local administration system. What is more, even in England had been made a radical election reform in 1832, just now (Tunaya, 2010: 35, 48).

¹⁵ On the other side, Armenians were a minority of Ottoman Empire who were the most beneficial from the reforms of Tanzimat (Berkes, 2008:

¹⁶ See Lewis, 2009: 195-206 for further information.

¹⁷ See Findley, 2012: 213-214 for further information.

¹⁸ See quo. in Yelkenci, 2010: 34, from Karpat, 2006: 446-447 for opposite opinion.

and individual mentality, it oriented the Ottoman culture to an alteration (Findley, 2011: 76). And the State was still trying to make reforms in the age which excluded from Europe and changed the orientation of their economic interests (Ayas 2012: 215), the State felt lonely more and more (Deringil, 2002: 23), and its existence was probably captured by "legitimation crises" (quo. in Deringil, 2002: 23, from Habermas, 1973).

5. CONCLUSION

The developments in many areas in the 19th century formed a basis for Ottoman reforms. These developments which were experienced after industrial revolution as the first car, train, telephone, radio etc. increased the possibilities and many policy principles such as equalty, liberty, and fraternity emerged after the French revolution. Not only Ottomans but also any state was at a point where they would not escape from this innovation trend. In terms of Ottomans whose main worry was only to save the day, but they couldn't adopt and make the reforms as required. This situation affected today's Turkey. According to the mentioned approach, dealing with matters, superficially overlooked the mentality of innovation which was derived from western science. Thus, the Tanzimat period which was hardly progressing neither for its time nor for the following years of Turkey could not make the expected effect, despite Ottomans' sincere efforts.

In a way, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to its frontiers in terms of Anatolia, provoked its minorities against the government, and was right about the problems that reforms could not be made successfully. Furthermore, it was impossible for Ottomans to renounce from the traditional supremacy feeling, at least until the first part of the 19th century. Of course, this feeling affected the Ottoman State in a negative aspect in the second part of the century.

It cannot be expected from the Ottoman mentality which shallowed by various conditions to adopt to the innovations in history. Besides, the nationalism movement was accelerating the collapse of states like Ottoman Empire as well as the innovations, because of some bureaucrats of this kind of state could not adopt the new status of nations as a whole.

Additionally, there was not "the idea that holistic historic future out of the present" in the mentality of the Tanzimat reformers. It was the most important stage which desired innovations were made on account of their scheme.

With all these, the "Renaissance period" which began in the 18th century was sustained through the reforms in the 19th century. The Hatt-1 Hümayuns of 1839 and 1856 determined the road maps of innovations which were thought to be made. Moreover, the Hatt-1 Hümayun of 1856 was a technic document which was more than Hatt-1 Hümayun of 1839, on the account of the following two terms were used for the first time in a formal frame; Ottomanship and citizenship.

Arrangements of the Tanzimat period did not create the expected effects at the rural regions of the Empire, also. It reduced the strong status of old governors and the gentry, but this time, a class called aşar mültezimi occurred in the social life, as a rapacious and graceless class which was mediating of local trade and was excruciating. However, as a contrary example to the mentioned situation, only Christian people of Crete succeeded in obtaining a lot of properties.

The period from 1867 to 1871 in which many statute books were enacted, probably was the pinnacle of the Ottoman reforms, like Teba-yı Ecnebiyenin Emlak-ı İstimlakine Dair Nizamname in 1867 (about property right of foreign national subjects), Ticaret-i Bahriye Deavi Kalemi Nizamnâmesi in 1867 (about sea trade), Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnâmesi in 1869 (about education), Telif ve Tercüme Nizamnâmesi in 1870 (about translation affairs), Posta Nizamnâmesi in 1871 (about post offices) etc.

In the reform period, France and Russia kept suggesting ways of reforms. France was generally standing on issues about equality and education. France was an example of finance, boards, justice institutions, and provincial organization. Nonetheless, this exemplary representation was not about the "intellectual commitment and emulation", but it was about the overlapping sides between France centralism and Ottoman reforms.

There was an interesting point in which the Ottomans repeated a mistake that Europe previously thought "as an unique key of development" that protected minorities in the Ottoman State, thinking that had "an unique key of development" that was innovative only the in areas such as military, education, economy etc. Second mistake was that Ottomans' orthogenetic manner towards Western mentality, and the values of Europe already belonged to the themselves. According to the argument of Philippe de Mézière who was a

Catholic missioner, he suggested that the brinkmanship of Turks, actually belonged to Christians. These kinds of approaches estranged the struggles which were to achieve what was called innovation and created hopelessness.

As a result, reforms' influence which could not be made as they were required can still be observed in Turkey today. The struggle for adapting to the new world and its mentality must be started once again in Turkey.

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