



A Book Review 'German Influence in The Ottoman Empire'

Remzi Levent Zanbak

Ministry of National Education, Kocaeli/Türkiye

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.4.423.36167>

ABSTRACT

In this study, the book named "German Influence in The Ottoman Empire" was analyzed. It consists of Introduction and four main sections. In the introduction part, the situation of Europe and the world in the second half of the 19th century has been examined. In this period, the efforts of German colonialism to gain effectiveness are explained among countries such as England and France, which completed the industrialization process early and ended the conflicts between them and shared the world. In the first part, from the 1878 Berlin Congress to the German Emperor II in 1898. The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany in the period up to Wilhem's visit to Istanbul is explained in the context of historical documents. In the second part, it is explained how German influence spread in the military field in the Ottoman Empire, accompanied by archival documents. In the third part, he describes the construction process of the Baghdad Railway and what happened in the process. In the fourth chapter, the problem of minorities in the Ottoman Empire and the approaches of Germany in the process are explained. Since the aim of the study is to reveal the main idea and important points of each article, the content analysis method was used.

Keywords: Culture, Turkish Culture, Instruction, Epics

The author's work, German Influence in the Ottoman Empire, which was published in the 17th edition in 2018, was first published in 1981. The book, which deals with the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the German Empire at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, consists of a short foreword and presentation, followed by an introduction, four main chapters, conclusions, epilogue appendices and bibliography. İlber Ortaylı's associate professorship thesis. The relations between Germany, which the author describes as the architect of the semi-colonial system, with the Ottoman Empire, which was somewhere between the collapse and the disintegration process, in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, reveals its influence in the Ottoman Empire with all its dimensions. In addition to the reasons that brought the Ottoman Empire closer to Germany, or rather pushed it, the German influence experienced in this process is discussed in every aspect. The political, financial, diplomatic, military and cultural dimensions of this situation are discussed. The work, which impresses even with its bibliography, is a rare work in that it was written objectively because it is also a doctoral thesis. We see that the methodological target was not very common for that period.

In the introductory part of the book (pp: 15-41) the situation of Europe and the world in the second half of the 19th century was examined. In this period, the efforts of German colonialism to gain effectiveness are explained among countries such as England and France, which completed the industrialization process early and ended the conflicts between them and shared the world. In the same way, the German foreign policy, which changed around the ideal of establishing a world empire after Prince Bismarck, who clashed with Emperor Wilhelm II and resigned in the young German Empire, is described. With the expression "Germany's opening the era of establishing economic political influence without weapons and army is described. In the light of archival documents, Germany was the largest industrial country in Europe in 1910; We understand that the policy of establishing a controlling economic influence took the stage with Germany in world history.

Part 1 (p:41-89); From the 1878 Berlin Congress to the German Emperor II in 1898. The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany in the period up to Wilhem's visit to Istanbul is explained in the context of historical documents. First of all, the financial situation of the Ottoman Empire in this period is explained with numbers and tables, and the necessity of relying on one of the imperial powers is explained because the Ottoman Empire was late in the industrialization process. In this period, we see that the idea of getting closer to Germany predominated because the ambitions of states such as England and Italy to break up the Ottoman Empire were seen in the Sublime Porte. The author states this; Archival documents reveal that "the reason why the rulers of the Ottoman Empire, who suffered a heavy blow after the Berlin Congress and came to a turning point in history, felt close to Germany among the great powers, is the change in the foreign policy principles of the European elders and their spheres of influence in a way that would put an end to the Ottoman Empire's chance to survive". In this period, Germany's commercial penetration of the Ottoman Empire was thanks to the delegations to help reform in the army and civil organizations and the Baghdad Railway. The book unequivocally reveals that not only the sultan of the period, Abdulhamit II, but also the intellectuals who wanted reform and the Young Turks were also pro-Germany.

Chapter 2 (p:91-111); In this section, it is explained how German influence spread in the military field in the Ottoman Empire, accompanied by archival documents. As a result of the heavy defeat in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, III. Since the reign of Selim, the main aim of the reforms, the "rehabilitation of the army", has been brought up to date again. In this section, where the reform of the army, which was tried to be carried out by the officers brought from Germany for the improvement of the army and the Ottoman officers sent to Germany for training, is explained, the reasons for

the failure of these efforts to achieve the desired level are revealed by the author. Again, in this section, it is stated that the German officers who came for the reform works of the army have what kind of privilege they have, that the German officers who come to the army are not actually officers with great skills in their field, that they earn a high salary and a fast rank in the Ottoman army, and that the status of the incoming officers in the German Army continues as per the agreements made. They received the rank they received in the Ottoman Army in the German Army; We see that the desired development in the reformation of the army could not be experienced due to the fact that the incoming officers did not have great qualifications and the resistance they experienced in the Ottoman Army against change. In the same way, we see that Turkish officers who went to Germany for training did not get good results from this practice, either due to the lack of selection of qualified officers and the fact that it was enough to show the splendor of the German army rather than real training. We understand from the numerical data detailed in the book that the Ottoman Empire became an open market for the German arms industry under the influence of its military officers. In this period, we see that rifles imitating martinis could be made in Tophane, gunpowder was produced in Baruthane, while this should have been improved, the authorities of the period were content with the invasion of German weapons. And as a result, we can say that after the 1912 Balkan defeat, the number of German experts and officers in the army increased and the Ottoman Empire entered the great war under German command.

Chapter 3 (pp: 111-148) describes the Baghdad Railway construction process and what happened in the process. The emergence of the railway project that will extend to Baghdad-Basra, which emerged in order to invest in these regions of the Germans, who wanted to benefit from the riches of Anatolia and especially Mesopotamia, which was outside the areas of the Ottoman Empire shared by the British and French companies, is described. In this section, both the agreements between the Ottoman and German companies and the transportation struggles of England, France and other states on the Ottoman lands are explained. As far as we understand from the archive documents shared by the author, we see that the amount of agricultural products increased in the places where the line passes, the company is made around the railway in facilities such as hospitals and agricultural stations, the income of tithes increased by 2 times in the places where the railway passes, the security of the regions is ensured, therefore, the living standards in those regions have increased. However, it is a pity that the main purpose of the countries dealing with the railway in the Ottoman Empire was not the welfare of the people and sustainable transportation, the railways built in pieces because they tried not to touch the areas left to each other's plunder, did not present a integrity, therefore the increase in welfare in the region was short-lived because it did not provide uninterrupted transportation. has been.

Chapter 4 (pp: 149-170) In this chapter, the problem of minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Germany's approaches are explained. We see that the Pan-Islamism policy that the Ottomans embraced in this period was also supported by Germany. Unlike England and France, Germany does not have any actions promoting nationalism on minorities; We see that the political interests of Germany, whose main aim was to open the fertile lands of the Ottoman country to the Germans, are compatible with the policy of Pan-Islamism. This is among the reasons for supporting Germany and increasing German influence in terms of both state administration and Ottoman intellectuals. In this section, Germany's colonization efforts in Palestine since the beginning of the 20th century are explained in the presence of archival documents. We see German and Eastern European Jews resentfully settled in Palestine in the hope that the Germans speak only German and spread German culture. We understand that the seeds of the current Palestinian problem were planted at that time.

If we make a general summary, I can say that this work of the author is one of the rare works that will constitute a source for the field in terms of the use of a large number of foreign archive sources both at the time it was written and today. When we finish this work, we can clearly understand that the rapprochement between Germany and the Ottoman Empire was actually an obligation necessitated by the circumstances. Since the Ottoman Empire missed the industrial revolution and could not make the necessary reforms at that time, it was unable to pay the salaries of even the civil servants who were behind the modern world financially. We see that the Ottoman Empire, which needed modernization both economically and in all areas such as the military and civil service, had to enter into an alliance with Germany because of the threats of imperialist states such as England, France and Italy, which could provide this, to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, due to the conditions existing in the second half of the 19th century and the already determined spheres of influence of the great states, as Germany, which completed its union late, entered the industrial societies with a delay. We see that it needs the Ottoman Empire as the only area that is closest to itself in the divided world and where it can infiltrate without seeing too many obstacles. The best summary of this situation is that BECKER, one of the founders of pan-germanism, said, "We are heading to Turkey due to our geographical location and market needs of our industry. Every European country has its own living space in the backward Orient. England in Egypt; France in Tunisia; in Tripoli, Italy; Austria has rights in Bosnia and Russia in the Land and indirectly in the Balkans. We had no place, now our living space is Turkey." is in your words.

This book, which fascinates even the bibliographies, is a must-read for knowing the recent history of Turkey-Germany relations. The book, which has a fluent, gripping and easy-to-understand style, is a book that will be read with pleasure even by those who are not professionally interested in history, although some chapters contain numerical information.

References

Ortaylı, İ (2018). German Influence in The Ottoman Empire. 17th. Printing, 215 page. Kronik Publication: İstanbul ISBN :978-975-2430-37-