

The Impact of the Ottoman's Modernization on the Status of the Ulema

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Abstract

The history of the Ottoman Empire could be of particular importance to researchers. This importance firstly goes back to the arrival of modernity in Islamic lands, which the Ottoman Empire faced as the last heir of Islamic empires, and secondly, refers to the understanding of modernity and its requirements which were able to appear in modern Turkey after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. While some of the ulema were opposed to any reforms that had a Western and non-Islamic source, some others were hoped to regain the former power of the empire and consequently improve their position. In order to find new ways and support their ideas, the Ottoman's ulema revised Ijtihad. However, it had no effect other than to impose new meanings on old concepts. As a result of chaos on thoughts, a group of late Ottoman intellectual realized the irreconcilability of the Islamic thought tradition with modern Western civilization and in order to establish modern institutions, they destroyed the legitimate and traditional resources. As the bearers of these resources, the ulema were expelled from the new structure under construction, and after numerous struggles, they supported the new government. By using the historical study method and books and library resources, this article tries to examine the impact of Ottoman modernization on the ulema's situation.

Keywords: Modernization; Ottoman Empire; Ulema; Turkey.

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