

The French Revolution’s Gift to the Ottomans: The Newspaper *The Emergence of Turkish Media*

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Abstract

The beginning of the history of journalism in the Ottoman Empire is generally accepted to have occurred with the publication of Takvim-i Vekayi, a journal of official character, in 1831. Actually, the first mass communication medium which can be called a newspaper is “Takvim”. However, like social events, social phenomena do not emerge instantly either. They are always a preparatory stage involved. From this point of view, it is noted that actually Takvim was also the continuation link of a fairly long chain of events by Ottomans. We can in fact mention two important turning points experienced by the Ottomans prior to the emergence of this official gazette. Our study aims to reassess the emergence of journalism in the Ottoman Empire together with these aforementioned preliminary periods. Thus, in this manner, we hope that it will be possible to trace both the sort of conception the ultimate purpose with which Takvim-i Vekayi was published and how the foundations of private journalism were cast thereafter, with a much broader perspective.

Key words: French Revolution, Embassy Bulletins, İzmir [Smyrna] Journals, Turkish journals, Mahmoud the Second, Takvîm-i Vekâyi, Le Moniteur Ottoman

I. Preliminary Stages

I.1. Stage One: Embassy Bulletins

Three French bulletins are worth mentioning as the first examples of mass media aimed at public communication within the borders of Ottoman Empire. Of course, the first one is *Le Bulletin de Nouvelles* published from September 1795 to March 1796 and second, is *La Gazette Française de Constantinople* published from May 1796 to May 1797 and third is *Mercure Oriental* which could last for only three months from May 1797 to July 1797.

These publications printed at a printing house established by French Embassy in İstanbul for the private purposes can be initially regarded as related with the history of the French press rather than the history of the Turkish press. This view would not be so mistaken because their language is French. Moreover, their target readers are not the Turks but the French. They have been published in order to transmit French Revolution and its ideas to the French who were living abroad and integrate them with the existing new Republican regime as well. Thus, the French people living within the Ottoman Empire would be able to be informed on the developments new laws and concepts in their country, without delay¹.

However, upon a more detailed analysis, it is clearly noted that these three publications can not be considered as pages that solely belong to the history of French press. Certainly, they did have the political objectives, but it is really dubious that they only had the French in mind. It would be a kind of naivety to envisage that the French Embassy who had two printing presses shipped to Istanbul, via Marseilles, and had special type characters cast by undertaken such a large expenditure “in order to serve the interests of the Revolution’s republic most suitable and introduce the convention bulletin and its laws,” would exclude the Ottoman peoples from the scope of the Embassy’s propaganda attacks. Nevertheless, at its initial years, French Revolution, was not be considered an major event by the European states and, but it was rather perceived as a civil war.

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¹ For the more information related with the this period journals: L. Lagarde, “Note Sur Les Journaux français de Constantinople à l’époque Révolutionnaire”, *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXXVI, Paris, 1948, s. 271-276.

While some of these countries had become shyly happy, hoping that the France would suffer damage and become weakened as a result of this war, some had considered the developments which had begun with the trial and the beheading of Louis XVI and continued with the desire to spread throughout Europe, as threat to their own political order based on the principles of “divine rights”. Naturally, they sided against France because all European monarchies, except Great Britain, were founded on the the principle of “divine order”.

It is for this reason that the administrators of new France felt a need to explain themselves. And what they did in Istanbul was to express themselves to the Ottoman intellectuals rather than French citizens who lived in Turkey. In any case, the French Ambassador, Verninac Saint-Moaur² of this period who established the printing house with four typesetters, a machine operator and a manager had disclosed his intentions in a letter which he sent to Paris:

‘In order to compensatsate for the considerably high expenses of the printing house, it is necessary to give information regarding the French Republic to both French people in Istanbul and indicate the benefits of revolution concerning Europe to Turks. For this purpose, I have decided to issue a 6-8 page newspaper to be issued bi-weekly and especially news arrived from France. I sent one copy to the Turkish government’³.

The statement in Verninac letter “to indicate to Turks the benefits concerning European interests clearly shows that the purpose of this publication is not limited with the French people. Actually, the French have been established the cultural influence over Ottoman State. Just before the Revolution, in 1786, the French Ambassador Choiseul le Gauffier had established a printing house which printed with Arabic character in embassy.

More concrete indicator of the French desre to popularize their revolution is, in fact, that Verninac’s desire to have the subject periodical published in Turkish and distribute it in Istanbul. Actually, the required type character couldn’t be found and Turkish printing couldn’t be realized, but Verninac didn’t give up from this attempt. Since 1795 July the documents of *Bulletins des Victories de la Republique* have been distributed by French Embassy (Groc 1984: 57). After Verninac’s coming back to his hometown in March 7, 1796, the maintaning of the publications with different names such as “La Gazetta Française de Constantinople” and *Mercure Oriental* shows that the publication of these journals and bullteins were a state policy implementing for this reason. Nevertheless, these steps have been taken for the sake of journalism in Istanbul could not be resumed as a result of the invasion of Egypt by the France. Anyway, this step was an initial point over the Ottoman lands.

Thus journalism became the first gift of French Revolution for the Ottomans.

1.1.1. Being the Publications in French

It is not possible to imagine this beginning in XVIII. century as a temporal activity, moreover, the results, concepts, and mottos of French Revolution has been penetrated into the frontiers of Istanbul. As Verninac argues meticulously, every copy of these journals had been sent into the Turkish government. Doubtlessly, because of being these documents and bulletins in French, the number of readers became limited bu it doesn’t mean that everybody stayed insensitive against them.

Actually Selim III who had acceded to the throne during the outbreak of French Revolution directed his attention over the west and initiated a sincere movement in order to restructure the state into this direction. It is widely known that he was writing and imitating the French King Louis XVI even Selim III was a inheritor of the throne and constituting a new equipment who concerns with Europe (Zürcher 1999: 37).

On the other hand, the most important target group of the French newspaper may be the non-muslim minoritites within the Ottoman Empire. French language was the common language of the minorities living in the Empire. This language has been taught both in newly established Ottoman schools and the Greek and Armenian education institutions. The non-muslim minorities with high level literacy was open to opinions which is spreadig post-Revolution period. The minorities were remarkable for French people during the period when they attempts to keep and develop their cultural hegemony over the Ottoman Empire.

² Related with the visit and activities of Verninac please look up: İsmail Soysal, **Fransız İhtilali ve Türk – Fransız Diploması Münasebetleri (1789-1802)**, Ank. , TTK, 1987, s. 134-145.

³ For this letter, Hasan Refik Ertuğ, **Basın ve Yayın Hareketleri Tarihi**, I. cilt, İst. , 1970, s. 135.

On the one hand, some French ambassadors who have some secret and special missions attempted to provide the support of Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, they tried to distort the sensitive balance within the Empire and lead the Empire to join battle with the Russians.

1.1.2. The Seeds of Nationalism

The most prominent influence of the French Revolution had been witnessed on the literate members of the Christian community in the Empire. The first reflecting, following and witnessing people were Serbians who had direct and continuous contact with the Central Europe by means of export relations with Greeks and Austria and their commercial with almost all European harbours. Interestingly, the first one of the mottos for French Revolution, liberty, equality, fraternity, became famous and found favour among these communities. Nevertheless, they perceived the liberty not as the equality in citizenship rights but nationalism in order to provide the national independence (Zürcher 1999: 47). Nationalism entered into the Empire as a result of expanding attempts of the Revolution, firstly expanded in Balkan peninsula and enlarged in waves and started the disentangling process of the Empire.

1.1.3. The Newspaper Perception in Ottoman Ruling Elite

In spite of the direct and indirect reflections of publishing the newspaper, why Ottoman rulers did not desire to own a newspaper as an effective instrument? The first thing to bear in mind is that it is not realized the leading power of these developments arose from foreign countries and with evil-minded orientations. Moreover, bulletins with little pages were ignored and underestimated.

However these anticipations were to what extent prudent? Some delimitations and restrictions against this kind of newspapers (Yazıcı 1999: 8-11) displayed that Ottoman bureaucrats had awareness on this issue. Unfortunately, this awareness appeared as prohibition but not manifested as to publish a newspaper. The reason behind can be searched within the internal politics. That is, Selim III was very conscious about the importance of western institutions and amendments of the existing institutions within the extent of modernization, reformation and westernization. Nevertheless, Nizam-ı Cedid (New Order) was not actually accomplished and almost all projects pertaining with the westernization had been removed. Even if Selim III was not executed, we would not have to wait for a quarter century.

Though different factors can be considered in this delay. Before anything else, press is the child of printing house sector. Even though Turkish printing, the existence of the minority printing was backdated⁴, came into the life of the Ottoman Empire retarded for many reasons. It is very simple reality is that if you are deprived from the printing techniques, you can not publish a newspaper.

Much more important than this was the lower level of literacy in the Empire in comparing with the minorities because the minorities had the community institutions and churches with their primary and secondary schools. The state had very little authority and political pressures over the minorities. However, the minorities even in located in remote regions could have an opportunity to follow the political affairs of the world by means of their private institutions. It is really remarkable the economic preponderance of the minorities as well as their hegemony of social organization. Commercial life and agricultural activities were under the control of minorities, the economic preponderance provided to have more right to speak for minorities in urban life. The mentioned superiority gave way to own such printing houses which can print book, newspaper, magazine and journal in their own languages for the minorities (Ertuğ 85: 67).

On the other hand, another essential reason in delay of the printing house in the Ottoman Empire was that the Empire was introduced with the capitalism and capitalist mentality in very late time process. It is widely known that the development of press and printing was directly relevant with the improvement of capitalism (Alemdar 199: 66).

⁴ Jewish printing houses within the Empire were established in the end of XV. century, Armenian ones in XVI. century, Greek ones in XVII. century and for a short time, these printing houses pervaded within the many regions of Turkey.

1.2. Second Stage: İzmir (Smyrna) Newspapers

The publishing of newspaper activities in İzmir, as second stage of Turkish newspaper publishing history (Groc 1985: 57), clearly approves the newspaper-economy relations and how capital could produce the newspaper. In this case, the quality of publishing had been really improved and the development lines and trajectories of the internal and external news had been described. Moreover the periodic publishing had been achieved in İzmir because this city was quicksilver and productive Aegean commercial center.

The French people also played very important and even primary role in İzmir journalism. These newspapers had been published by French intellectuals and in French⁵. France had very widespread trading volume at the end of XVIII. century. The historical origins of these investments depends upon the relations established between Kanuni Süleyman and François I and Concordat of Capitulations in 1536. At the eve of the Revolution, France had more than eighty commercial institutions within the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire. The French subjects were living as an autonomous community thanks to privileges recognized by the Concordat of Capitulations within the borders of the Empire and they had consulates in İstanbul, İzmir (Smyrna), Selanik (Salonica), Mora (Morea), Hanya (Crete Island), Rhodes, Cyprus, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Saida and Alexandria. Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Port) behaved against French people and institutions friendly, tolerant, indulgent, and protective (Soysal 1987: 41).

The breakup of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 led to the commercial improvement in Mediterranean Sea, in line with these developments, İzmir was increasingly improved and created a commercial groups which had social networks with the other busy ports of the Mediterranean. Therefore, the necessity of communication increased because various foreign merchants, especially concentrated within the circle of French trademan, in İzmir at the beginning of the XIX. century. As well as these developments there was some trade bodies related with various professions created by French merchants, even they had a chamber of commerce. The changing, waving and transformation initiated with the French Revolution attached them to the place where they lived. The people who supported the new regime had some questions and ambiguities in their minds on the one hand, some people strongly prefers the kingdom instead of republican regime and expected to turn into the past history.

1.2.1. Le Smyrnéen-Le Spectateur Oriental

A French merchant, Charles Tricon, in January 1824 started to publish a newspaper with the name *Le Smyrénéen* in French with the aim of giving information about the existing situation of the French Revolution for both opponents and supporters, monitoring the business world, controlling the parameters which may influence the trade and commercial affairs, carrying the effects of the Revolution into the borders of the Empire. For a while, the publication of this newspaper had some difficulties in respect of its financing and turning into the periodic publishing and, ultimately, it passed into the hands of another French merchant, Monsieur Roux.

At that time, even though the Ottoman Empire tried to suppress, the rebellion in Morea was increasingly spread because janissaries were reluctant to struggle (Karal 1988: 115). The Greek rebels turned the merchant marines into the battleships defied and resisted against the Turkish fleets. The attacks committed by the pirates gave damage to the Mediterranean trade.

Le Smyrénéen strongly supported the Greek rebellion under the management of its new owner. This management of journalism which is contrary to the Turkish benefit in any Turkey's city didn't escape from the attention of the Turkish rulers and reisül-küttab (foreign minister of the period) invited to the French ambassador and expressed his disturbance and trouble. As a result of the ambassador notice, the publishing of the newspaper had been stopped and ultimately Monsieur Roux handed the newspaper on Monsieur Didier because of the financial problem arising from the political pressure and the reactions taken by different milieu on October 1824.

Periodic monthly newspaper *Le Smyrénéen* taken hold by Didier drastically changed and associated with the Monsieur Vigoureux as very prominent pressman of İzmir and changed its name as "Le Spectateur Oriental". Newly established newspaper became a monthly periodical published on Saturdays. This newspaper had been appreciated with its new policy.

⁵ For detail information about the bulletins of French Embassy and İzmir newspapers: Ali Budak, *Batılılaşma ve Türk Edebiyatı Lale Devri'nden Tanzimat'a Yenileşme, İst. , Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınevi, 2008, s. 235-254.*

For instance, it didn't support the Greek rebellion even condemned the attacks against the merchant marines in Mediterranean. Such that it achieved to take the pulse of both French minority and French speaking Turks as its target groups (Lagarde 1950: 102-144) and became the voice of foreigners trading with the French people and was adopted, admired and approved by different segments of society.

Nevertheless, the interests of the French government was contrary to the those of French merchants because France was supporting the Greek independence struggle together with Britain and Russia who envisage that an independent Greek was suitable their policy implementation towards the Ottoman Empire.

Under these circumstances the positioning of *Le Spectateur Oriental* for the favour of the Ottoman Empire and her transforming into the defender of the Ottoman Empire was really remarkable, striking and worthy of commendation. As a matter of fact, İstanbul Ambassador of Britain, Stratford, severely protested the policy of this French newspaper which was contrary to the existing official positioning of Britain before the Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Port). Nevertheless, this baseless and authoritative behaviour of British Ambassador annoyed the managers of the *Le Spectateur Oriental* didn't take steps backward and condemned this unprincipled and immoral attitude and expressed that they will keep their policy of defending the rightful and legitimate claim of Turkish people. On the other hand, the Ambassador complained the disobeying French journalists to French Consulate in İzmir demanded the apologize. As a result of this reaction, French newspaper promulgated a short apology and excuse which couldn't satisfy the Ambassador who derided to punish the managers. Ultimately, *Le Spectateur Oriental* was closed down by French Consulate until they could find an editorial writer who would obey and behave in accordance with the ambitions of the Consulate and write in accordance with the directives of Britain and French Consulates.

Didier, when he applied for reopening his newspaper, the concerned chairs recommended him not persist such a kind of activities related with the publications. In response to this reaction, he promised to publish for moderate and convenient journalism. At that time, the Ambassador and İzmir Consul have been changed. However Didier did not change his political line and critical direction of journalism. *Le Spectateur Oriental* held on publishing to the detriment of the policies and governmental authorities of the French, Britain and Sardunia, possibly, as a result of spreading the liberal climate arisen from the French Revolution penetrated the French people living both within the inside of the Empire and abroad and protecting the interests of the audience⁶. In turn, as an opponent factor against the *Le Spectateur Oriental* we witness the French Ambassador. The Ambassador desired to stop the publishing of the newspaper targeting him and the rulers of the friend and allied countries, threatened to apply more effective sanctions (Gerçek 1931: 22) and accomplished a result. Didier was bound to step back and gave way to his national advocate Alexandre Blacque.

1.2.2. A Solid Journalist: Alexandre Blacque

Even though he had educated in France, Alexandre Blacque is familiar with the commercial and publishing realm in İzmir. He was working as the commercial representative and publishing articles in newspapers for a while. He obtained the trust of French businessman as well he approved his friendship with Turkish people by having his congenial relations. Blacque had aware that the Ottoman Empire was under the pressure and at danger. He tried to find plausible ways of solutions for the crises in his newspaper and he was appreciated by both people and diplomats (Baratta 1840: 44). Yet he presented broader and realistic point of view.

“Blacque supported the Turkish Revolution which was precipitated by Mahmut II, in his words, and saluted and heralded the revolution as a universal step in line with the French Revolution and defended that Turkish people should take their place among the European states. The defence made by a European against the Europeans became more effective and even Sultan translated these writings and the articles of this author of İzmir found very famous place in European press” (Koloğlu 2006: 29). As a matter of fact, Alexandre Blacque rejected the Greek independence not only to protect the interests of the Ottoman Empire but also to preserve the interests of the France in East.

⁶ For more information for İzmir newspapers look for: Hasan Refik Ertuğ, **Basın ve Yayın Hareketleri Tarihi**, I. Cilt, İst. , 1970, s. 135- 143. Ayrıca, Hasan Refik Ertuğ, “Türkiye’de Yabancı Dilde Basına Genel Bakış”, **Türkiye’de Yabancı Dilde Basın**, 16-18 Mayıs 1984, İst., İÜ Yayını, 1985., s. 80-85, Gerard Groc, “Türkiye’de Fransızca Basın”, **Türkiye’de Yabancı Dilde Basın**, 16-17-18 Mayıs 1984, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yay. , 1985, s. 57-59.

According to him, the policy implemented for the sake of Greek independence will give damage for Britain but just will be only Russia as the unique the winner of the game. Even the other merchant was sharing the same opinion with Blacque. Even Count A. Capo d'Istrias (Capo d'Ystria), newly selected President of Greek in April 23, 1827, by the attacks of Blacque. In previous times, Britain and France pretended to support the Ottoman Empire, but in fact they were trying to find a suitable ground to make an agreement. As a result of coming pressures coming from Russia, French Ambassador by means of the Consul warned Blacque to moderate his publications (August 23, 1827). The owners of *Le Spectateur Oriental*, A. Blacque and Vigoureux, responded the Consul as notification to the Embassy:

“Let French Embassy inform us what they think about the problem, we will not have a controversy with the Embassy’s point of view in our publications”.

As estimated, the Embassy couldn’t give the demanded directions. The newspaper would go on in previous line strongly and it would be closed for a month by the France consulate because of an article as an opposition of the Britain and Russia on October 11, 1827.

This situation couldn’t stop Blacque and Vigoureux. They issued the bulletins including the economic news in order to serve the merchant readers as well as protesting the pressures and censor implemented in various grounds for the period when the “*Le Spectateur Oriental*” was closed. After its opening on November 16, 1827, *Le Spectateur Oriental* maintained its attitude towards the Ottoman Empire as a supporter. As the activities of the looter Greeks who are not punished for the harms to İzmir commercial life continues, the raid Navarin has been realized. Even though there wouldn’t be state of war, the relations with Russia, Britain and France who sink the Turkish ships were broken off and tightened. The Ambassadors were withdrawn on December 8, 1827 reciprocally. While the French Ambassador returned into his hometown, he accepted A. Blacque who is visiting him as the representative of the French people who is settling around İzmir and the neighbouring districts by using the Ship’s stoping by Urla Harbour but ignored his warnings about the persistently worsening situations of French minority in İzmir and their futuristic positions which he wrote this interview in his newspaper on December 22, 1827. After his leaving, French Consulate has been closed on December 23, 1827 and the mission of protecting the rights of French minority has been undertaken by the Netherland Consulate.

Le Spectateur Oriental persisted in continuing its publication line. The loneliness of French minority, after French Ambassador left, closing the Consulate was dramatically reflected on the 300th issue of the newspaper. In this issue, it was stated that “the France policy following the Russian and Britain wake collapsed and weakened by ignoring her citizens”. According to the newspaper, “Turkish state protected the unprotected French with the affection of father.” Whereas, “France caught up with this calamity without any reason and violate the sincere relations for nothing. This imprudential policy anyhow will be condemned and French public opinion will comprehend the severity of the situation and search its responsables”.

1.2.3. The Failure of Sublime Port (Bab-ı Ali)

Later although *Le Spectateur Oriental* persisted its publication line, the economic loss experienced by the Ottoman Empire against the explosion arisen from the capitulations was overwhelming. It was unexpected situation for any sovereign government to be silent against a foreign ambassador or consular interfere with the publishing policy of a foreign newspaper that is published within its own border. Moreover, despite his nefarious interventions, betrayals and the fact that he stopped the publication of “*Le Spectateur Oriental*”, M. Castenia, an officier of the French Embassy, didn’t feel the need to leave the Empire and persisted in continuing his mission as the consulate of the Netherlands. Under the authority of M. Castenia, the publishing house of *Le Spectateur Oriental* was raided, the letters were withdrawn, Blacque was arrested and later released on bail paid by the Commercial Agency and Vigoureux escaped and took action against M. Castenia and claimed.

1.2.4. Le Courier de Smyrne:

On the January of 1828, it was accomplished to publish a new newspaper “*Le Courier de Smyrne*” instead of *Le Spectateur Oriental* pretending as if everything was going well. The newspaper is again weekly and its target reader was again French minority living in the Ottoman Empire. As the third newspaper published in İzmir and in French language, its policy was following the same trajectory with the previous one.

For instance, although Blacque used a much more moderate wording against the foreign countries, he also didn't avoid constantly criticizing the Greek President Count A. Capo d'Istrias who was an instrument of Greek interests. Russia who was disturbed by these publications moved and protested the newspaper before Sublime Port (Bab-ı Ali). Under these pressures, Ömer Lütfi Efendi, İzmir Mütesellim, ordered to investigate the complains and invited Blacque and appreciated him because of his invaluable contributions and services for the sake of Turkish interests. Nevertheless, Russia wasn't satisfied by this event and Ömer Lütfi Efendi, İzmir Mütesellim, invited Blacque again and recommended him "to implement a policy which did not distort the Eastern policy of France and moderate wording which is convenient with the sensitivities of French and Russian Ambassies". Nevertheless, Russian Ambassador M. De Ribopier insisted on punishing the owner of the newspaper and getting it closed. In response, Ömer Lütfi Efendi, İzmir Mütesellim, recommended the Ambassador to appeal to the French Ambassador and as a result of these negotiations, Ömer Lütfi Efendi, İzmir Mütesellim, was obliged to issue a notification which stated that the newspaper will be closed if it insisted on opposing the Russian, Britain and France alliance on August 31, 1828.

Blacque was aware that the Sublime Port supported and protected him and his newspaper but he also knew that he couldn't maintain the defending Turkey against Europe for a long time. In spite of this reality, the issuing of the newspaper would go on until June 1829 regularly. After this period, Blacque gave up publishing by himself⁷. Just because Mahmud II who was estimated to follow and observe the goings-on in Istanbul became part of the efforts of publishing newspaper.

1.3. The Third Stage: Turkish Newspapers

In evaluating the İzmir journalism, it should be pointed out that this experience had two important results for the Turkish press.

First, it is understood that the newspapers could undertake the role of a strong bridge regarding the relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. This situation is binding for two sides. Europeans were evaluating the Ottomans who were less familiar with Europeans by means of the resources of the news coming from the outside world and under these information they were trying to direct their destinies as foreigners. In a letter which was sent by Blacque to French Ambassador with date February 3, 1831 that he was mentioning about his own newspaper as a unique communication channel to reflect the impartial views about the Ottomans who couldn't have any their own newspaper yet. Therefore, the newspaper was a great chance for the Europeans who couldn't have an opportunity who were deprived from investigating the approval of the accuracy of the news. Thanks to that opportunity they could have an opportunity to follow the goings-on in Turkey with reliable ways and means. As a matter of fact, Blacque wrote to the French Ambassador as above:

"The people who saw the Greece could have a possibility to consider whether I'm deceiving the Europe about the real situation of this country and I'm exaggerating about their commitments about the Ottoman Empire [.....]. In that case, could Russia blame me about attempting to struggle with?"

Blacque emphasized that his newspaper became the means of self-expression for the Ottoman Empire and completed his letter with these words:

"Lastly, I desired to leave the unique body to voice towards the foreign public opinion to this Empire"(Lagarde 1950: 128-129).

The second result is that İzmir newspapers led to the emergence of the Turkish press in real terms. The attempts of Blacque and his friends were appreciated by the Sultan. There was the High Will of the Sultan underlying the response of Ömer Lütfi Efendi, İzmir Mütesellim, was obliged to issue a notification which stated that the newspaper but protected by the insinuated of the High Majestical Will of the Sultan.

⁷ For details about İzmir newspapers: L. Lagarde, "Note Sur Le Journaux Français de Smyrne a L'époque de Mahmud II", *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, 1950, s. 103-144. Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, *a.g.e.*, s. 220-30, Hasan Refik Ertuğ, *Basın ve Yayın Hareketleri Tarihi*, I. Cilt, İst., 1970, s. 135- 143. Ayrıca, Hasan Refik Ertuğ, "Türkiye'de Yabancı Dilde Basına Genel Bakış", *Türkiye'de Yabancı Dilde Basın*, 16-18 Mayıs 1984, İst., İÜ Yayını, 1985, s. 80-85.

As a matter of fact, Sultan Mahmud understood the repercussions and influences of these newspapers due to the hastiness of the Ambassadors and extraordinary attempts of the Russian, French and British diplomats to prevent the publishing of the newspapers. Sultan was impressed by the struggles campaigned by Blacque to remove the European stereotypes and prejudices against the Ottoman Turks especially by means of *Le Courier de Smyrne* and *Le Spectateur Oriental*. The clever Sultan decided to use this effective weapon and instrument. He invited Blacque to the Palace from İzmir and ordered him to publish a newspaper in French called as *Le Moniteur Ottoman* whose all expenditure would be met by the State. The printing house of A. Blacque who accepted the offer was bought and transferred into the capital city⁸, on the other hand, the necessary preparations have been initiated for the first Turkish newspaper. A high salary has been allocated for Blacque and granted a seaside residence for his family to settle in Kadıköy (Ahmet Lütfi 1990: 27).

II. Turkish Newspapers

II.1. The First Newspaper: Takvim-i Vekayi

Takvim-i Vekayi was the a ring of the reformation process when Ottoman Empire initiated the rapid reception of the western institutions and the shaping of his organization of the state in accordance with the European one under the leadership of Mahmud II. In this context, this newspaper has an important place towards these attempts and *Takvim-i Vekayi* was one part of the restoration of the previous institutions⁹. Meanwhile on the one side, Greek newspapers were published in the region of rebel, on the other hand, in Egypt where was very problematic and far region of the Ottoman Empire, the newspapers were published entitled as *Vekayi-i Misriyye* which its half is Arabic and the rest is Turkish since December 3, 1828 and, interestingly, used as a contrary to the Empire, intrinsically and doubtlessly, Sultan was inspired by this newspaper.

As we mentioned above, the intrinsic factor in publishing *Takvim-i Vekayi* was İzmir newspapers. Essentially, it can be easily understood that this journal has been published just immediately after 5 days Blacque's invitation with the name *Le Moniteur Ottoman* in French.

Mahmud II stated in hatt-ı humayun (imperial manuscript) pertaining with the publishing decision that that was his ambition for along time and ultimately time is over to do this and emphasized that "it does not violate the şer-i şerif (religious rules and orders)"¹⁰. This statement which attempted to publish a newspaper depended upon the religious reasons was a shield to protect against the criticism and stigmatization as "infidel invent" and "infidel-like job" and use the important place of the religion within the different segments of societies.

II.1.1. An Effective Instrument of Government

The publication of the *Takvim-i Vekayi* means its invention and using as an instrument of modernization. Mahmud II is a modernist leader who desires to change and transform the social structure towards the western direction. He has many things to say, teach and explain and for this reason he needs the newspaper. As a matter of fact, he plans to keep the politics of centralization and reformation which is started within the period of Selim III. Especially he tried to implement the same policy in his applications from Vak'ay-ı Hayriye to the end of his ruling. Mahmud II grasped that the increasing of the authority over the subjects would only be possible with rational use of opportunities and instruments of communication. In an imperial script (hattı humayun) dated 1832. It was determined that it is vitally important target to develop and enlarge the services of communication, without any discrimination, including all segments of society, under the state monopoly¹¹. Yet a national Greek state established over the Ottoman lands, Egypt as an important province was on the brink of separating, Algeria has been lost blatantly, the fleet was destroyed, the military structure was completely abolished and substituting army couldn't fill the gap.

⁸ Meanwhile the privilege of the "Courier de Smyrne" was sold and new owner changed its name as "Journal de Smyrne" which was published for a long time period.

⁹ Nesimi Yazıcı, "İlk Türkçe Gazetemiz Takvim-i Vekayi ile İlgili Bazı Düşünceler", **V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi-Tebliğler**, (Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi, İstanbul, 21-25 Ağustos 1989), Ank. , TTK, 1990, s. 216.

¹⁰ For detailed information: **Lutfi Tarihi**, c. III, Dersaadet, 1292, s. 156-157.

¹¹ For detailed information about this topic: Nesimi Yazıcı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Haberleşme Kurumu", **150. Yılında Tanzimat**, Yay. Haz. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, Ank. , TTK, 1992, s. 139-210.

Under these circumstances, Mahmud II attempted to grasp the released reins of the government and sought the supports from abroad and at home. He observed the significance of written propaganda during the invasion of Egypt by the France and Greek insurrection and learned how to use the İzmir newspapers as a new way and type of international politics and explored the public opinion. He followed that how these newspapers shape the public opinion with their limited possibility and low circulation. Doubtlessly, for a Sultan, it is not important to take notice of thinking of populace. Nevertheless, during the second quarter of the XIX. century, the world drastically changed as well as regimes and politics transformed.

His exploration of the importance of public opinion and evaluation him in accordance with the public choice led him to investigate his legitimacy. He dissimilarly went on trips in the country to see the “life of populace” and make himself “popular, available and visible” to provide the approval of the people and the end of the alienation between the governing and governed with his food choice and clothing¹². It is a kind of search for legitimacy, mutual understanding, conformity and consensus between the state and society.

II.1.2. The Mission and Target Reader of *Takvim-i Vekayi*

Takvim-i Vekayi which its name has been denominated by personally Sultan¹³ as a newspaper aims to convey the self view and consideration of the state under the monitoring of state chronicler (vakanüvis) Esad Efendi with his group meticulously prepared and presented into the reader. Here the “reader” means civil servants and decreasing number of literate subjects. In any case, in this stage, the Sultan aims firstly the class of civil servants and they will initiate a wave of change and a public opinion with broad base would be constituted.

Similarly, it would be necessary to establish dialog with the European states. Likewise he would try to reach as the second target group to Europeans by means of *Le Moniteur Ottoman* in French. On the one hand, the stereotype and perception of Europeans that Turkish people are barbarian would be removed and informed that restructuring of the Ottoman Empire as a modern country by these publications.

According to this approach, *Takvim-i Vekayi* and *Le Moniteur Ottoman* carries importance as instruments to transport the messages of the state to inside and outside rather than having the properties of any newspaper¹⁴.

Both Turkish and French publishing of newspapers shows that Ottoman government stick heart and soul for this job which reflects the attempts of reformation by documents to inside and outside as a unique official resource for people. By the *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, French was becoming the language of communication with the outside world and *Le Moniteur Ottoman* was a harbinger of the French press in Ottoman Empire intrinsically (Groc 1984: 61).

In this context, it is necessary to point out two results. The first one is that Sultan used a modern instrument for modern and contemporary values. The second one is that he felt himself to be obliged to express what he did and he will do for the sake of reformation to first to his subjects and second to Europeans. In other words, he felt himself responsible especially for the Ottoman society. This kind of responsibility felt by any Sultan to his subjects was the first time in the history. Definitely, the reason why the Sultan gained this sensitivity was the implementation of the series of radical reformations which attempted to change the existing trajectory of the populace. Certainly, it is not possible to realize these reformations with great extent without popular support. Yet their own perceptions and types of life would be changed totally. Depending upon this effort, The first copy published in Turkish in accordance with the ethnic structure of the Ottoman society on November 1, 1831 and since November 5 in French *Le Moniteur Ottoman* and since January 5, 1832 in Greek and since January 13 in Armenian language and on April of the same year respectively followed by Arabic and Persian copies (Yazıcı 1999: 12). In line with the attention and care the newspaper with five thousand circulation was elaborated and by means of the postal delivery system operated by the state it was spread and adopted but it was suffered by irregularity.

¹² For more information: Abdülkadir Özcan, "II. Mahmud'un Memleket Gezileri", **Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan** içinde, İst. , 1991 s. 361-379.

¹³ For more information: **Lutfi Tarihi**, c. III, s. 157.

¹⁴ For detailed information: Gerard Groc, “Türkiye’de Fransızca Basın”, **Türkiye’de Yabancı Dilde Basın**, 16-17-18 Mayıs 1984, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yay., 1985, s. 60. Ayrıca, Robert Mantran, “Prelude Aux Tanzimat: Presse et Enseignement, Deux Domaines de Reforme de Mahmud II”, **Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu**, Ank. , 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989, TTK, 1994, s. 53

The reason of irregularity was its publication with different content in accordance with its target group. It means that the newspaper with different languages were not the a word-for-word translation. It was prepared peculiar for each community with different context and content¹⁵. Nevertheless, *Le Moniteur Ottoman* was distinguished in respect of both its regular and elaborated publishing and its focusing on all European public opinion rather than addressing to the components of the Empire. For these reasons, *Le Moniteur Ottoman* became possessed very special place and prestige as a media organ which Mahmud II established with political reasons¹⁶.

II.2. The First Private Newspaper: *Ceride-i Havadis*

After the Tanzimat (the political reforms made in Ottoman State in 1839), a new and more important turning point in the life of Turkish press had been initiated.

Even though they were not well-organized, in this period, numerous newspapers, magazines began their publishing life. Besides, local journalism was also developed in line with the division of the country into the provinces and the regulations in local governments¹⁷. Turkish journalism was diversified as result of the political developments initiated during and after the Young Ottomans Movement. Similarly, the press and media realm in a foreign language, first examples of which were in French was progressed both regarding quality and quantity.

Even though after the declaration of Tanzimat (the political reforms made in Ottoman State in 1839), *Takvim-i Vekayi* had been revised and widen the staff and published in Armenian, Greek and Arabic copies, it is not open to debate that new newspaper of the new period was *Ceride-i Havadis*. It was the second Turkish newspaper published by William Churchill on July 31, 1840 within the today's border of Turkey.

Despite all the efforts of Tanzimat (the political reforms made in Ottoman State in 1839) leaders who implemented strong and insistant policies towards the changing direction in understanding the concept project of civilization, *Takvim-i Vekayi* couldn't achieve to reach the expected circulation anyhow¹⁸. In this period of time, the Tanzimat leaders were in need of announcing the realized reforms and innovations both outside and at home. Just then on May of 1840, William Churchill, a reporter and correspondent of some British journals in Istanbul, who led some political crisis between Britain Embassy and the Sublime Port because he wounded a child, applied in order to publish a newspaper. In his letter of application or petition, as if he read the minds of the Tanzimat rulers, he pointed out the importance of the announcement of what needs to be done for the sake of reformation. Otherwise, "the activities whose reasons are not known creates the hostility"¹⁹.

Churchill's petition after being negotiated in the Assembly of Consultancy (Meclis-i Meşveret), presented into Abdülmecit on May 22, 1840 and the necessary allowance had been provided. All expenditure would belong to Churchill as a non-official newspaper in comparison with the *Takvim-i Vekayi*. On the other hand, he would receive a salary 5000 Ottoman kuruş from the State Treasury as a donation.

II.2.1. The State Support for *Ceride-i Havadis*

The historians of the press evaluated the *Ceride-i Havadis* as a semi-official newspaper by regarding the donation given to this newspaper by the state. This argument had been recorded by *Tercüman-ı Ahval* in its classification of newspapers in their official declaration and it is argued that: "As a semi-official newspaper, all incomes and profits of *Ceride-i Havadis* was belong to his owner, Churchill is Muslim, and he was given salary by the state.

¹⁵ Orhan Koloğlu referred this view on Prof. Dr. Mustafa Nihat Özön. Please refer to **Takvîm-i Vekâyi , Türk Basınında 150 Yıl (1831-1981)**, Ank. , s. 34.

¹⁶ For more information: Ali Budak, Batılılaşma ve Türk Edebiyatı Lale Devri'nden Tanzimat'a Yenileşme, İst. , Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınevi, 2008, s. 356-374.

¹⁷ For the local press in the Ottoman Empire: M. Bülent Varlık, "Osmanlı Dönemi Türkçe Yerel Basını Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler", **Osmanlı Basın Yaşamı Sempozyumu, (6-7 Aralık 1999)**, Ank. , GÜ İletişim Fakültesi Yay., s. 97- 107.

¹⁸ For the official documents to determine related with "Takvim-i Vekayi" during the Tanzimat period: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Ministry Ottoman Archives], Dosyalama Usulüne Göre İradeler Tasnifi, Dosya nr. 76. Söz konusu belgeler Nesimi Yacıcı tarafından değerlendirilmiştir, bkz. Nesimi Yazıcı, **Takvîm-i Vekâyi (Belgeler)**, Ank. , 1983, s. 33-37, 95-121. As a matter of fact, Yazıcı between 51-65. pages gives information about the copies of *Takvîm-i Vekâyi* 'in other languages.

¹⁹ Başbakanlık Arşivi [Ministry Ottoman Archives] , **İrade**, Dahiliyye, 741. Aktaran; Nesimi Yazıcı, **Tanzimat Dönemi Basını**, (Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989), Ank. , TTK Basımevi, 1994, s. 58.

As it is known, the non-official newspapers couldn't have an opportunity to be supported financially by the state"²⁰.

Churchill, "received his 5000 kuruş salary allocated to him as for three years regularly as promised during the time when *Ceride-i Havadis* firstly published". At the end of this period, the donation had been cut off. Nevertheless, it never become popular and its circulation was 150 readers a day and later he declared that he couldn't have the economic power to keep its publication. As a result of this petition made to Foreign ministry, the state again supported financially to publish on 1844, but this time with 2500 kuruş²¹ for many years²².

Definitely, the relations of this newspaper with the state was not consisted of the financial support but the government was directly involved in its publication policy likewise *Takvim-i Vekayi*. Even after the publication, *Ceride-i Havadis* must be presented to the Ministry of *Takvim-i Vekayi* in accordance with the principles determined in imperial script which officially allow the publishing. It is a kind of pre-censorship aiming to make the newspaper express the state views completely and prevent and exclude or sort out the news which are contrary to the governmental policy. It is apparently striking that the Tanzimat rulers were supporting a British national financially as well as giving privilege (Yazıcı 1994: 61).

II.2.2. The First Journalist Elites:

Intrinsically, *Ceride-i Havadis* obtained a perception relevant with the function of the newspaper in any modern state for Turkish reader. Especially, Crimean War, between 1853 October to 1856 February, became an occasion of both a professional experience and means of acquisition. The owner of newspaper, Churchill, went into the fronts as a war correspondent and the news sent by front had been published in newspapers and incremented the circulation and its prestige. So much so that the war news attracted the populace' attention that the newspaper supplements sold like hot cakes (Ebüzziya Tefik 1990: 77) and its income and profit multiply increased (Nüzhet 1986: 43).

Since very early times of publishing and its first issue, *Ceride* had an approach which was very close to the populace and even it mentioned about the tariffs and arrival and departure times of the ships from Istanbul to attract the attention of the ordinary people in addition to some useful information made the daily life more easy.

At the beginning, the authors of *Ceride-i Havadis* used sententious style and wording like the official gazette but later they changed their minds and mentalities by replacing and preferring the unsophisticated expression. In this way, they achieved to touch with the feelings of ordinary people. Exactly, the type of expression for Turkish journalism has been emerged in the columns of this newspaper. Beside the news, the newspaper which published some series of articles and stories became an apprenticeship ground and platform²³ many Ottoman man of letters and journalists and intellectuals such as Münif Pasha and Şinasi (Lewis 1984: 46).

By following the main trajectory of *Takvim-i Vekayi*, *Ceride-i Havadis* published in Armenian and Arabic versions with the support of the Sublime Port (Bab-ı Ali) (Mustafa Nihat 1928: 46-47). Nevertheless, it couldn't increase the number of readers after twenty years of publication life inspite of all the efforts to reach all segments of the society within the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire. After this failure, it was possible to publish a Turkish newspaper by a Turkish journalist the first time in the history.

II.3. *Tercüman-ı Ahval - Tasvir-i Efkâr*

The first issue of the *Tercüman-ı Ahval* has been published on October 22, 1860²⁴.

²⁰ 10 Cemazii'l-âhîr 1277, nr. 10. [December 10, 1277 religious calendar, no. 10]

²¹ [Ministry Ottoman Archives] Başbakanlık Arşivi, **İrade**, Dahiliye, 4734. Aktaran; Nesimi Yazıcı, **Tanzimat Dönemi Basım**, Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989, Ank., TTK Basımevi, 1994, s. 60-61.

²² Related with *Ceride-i Havadis* refer: Ebüzziya Tefik, **Salnâme-i Hadîka**, İst., 1290.

Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, **Türk Gazeteciliği (1831-1931)**, İst., 1931, s. 35-38.

²³ For more information about Münif Pasha please refer: Ali Budak, **Batılılaşma Sürecinde Çok Yönlü Bir Osmanlı Aydını : Münif Paşa**, İst., Kitabevi, 2004.

²⁴ About the publication of *Tercümân-ı Ahvâl*, the documents determined in their places in Archives but partly published by Server İskit. **Hususi İlk Türkçe Gazetemiz Tercüman-ı Ahval ve Ağâh Efendi**, Ank., 1937, s. 17-18. Söz konusu belgelerin Başbakanlık Arşivi'ndeki asıllarını Nesimi Yazıcı bulmuştur: İrade, Meclis-i Mahsus, 822. Bkz. Nesimi Yazıcı,

Tercüman-ı Ahval which was published by Agah Efendi and supported by Şinasi until 24th issue had a very prestigious place in Turkish journalism in some respects. First of all, it is the first independent newspaper published after an official and a semi-official newspapers. As a matter of fact, it is not only a newspaper for news but also published opinions and thoughts. Finally, it was technically so advanced that neither *Takvim-i Vekayi* nor *Ceride-i Havadis* could be compared with it.

For a year later, *Tasvir-i Efkar*²⁵ was published by İbrahim Şinasi Efendi who was left from the *Tercüman-ı Ahval* on 27-28 June of 1862 was more sophisticated from the rest and created an intellectual circle of young people. *Tasvir-i Efkar* served as a place for creating the opinion and became the leading actor playing an enlightening and illuminating role for prospective newspapers.

The leading actor playing an enlightening and illuminating role in magazine publication was *Mecmua-i Fünun* [Magazin for Sciences] as Turkish periodical published on June 1862 just immediately before *Tasvir* by Cemiyet-i İlmiyye-i Osmaniyye (Ottoman Scientific Community)²⁶.

Tanzimat Dönemi Basını, (Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989), Ank. , TTK Basımevi, 1994, s. 67.

²⁵ For the publication of *Tasvir-i Efkar* Başbakanlık Arşivi [Ministry Ottoman Archives], İrade, Meclis-i Vâlâ, Aktaran: Nesimi Yazıcı, **Tanzimat Dönemi Basını**, (Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989), Ank. , TTK Basımevi, 1994, s. 68.

²⁶ For details of [Magazin for Sciences] and [Ottoman Scientific Community] Budak, **Ibid**: pp. 171-279.

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