THE PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION OF
REFORM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

1699-1839

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THESIS: THE PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION OF REFORM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1699-1839

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the development of reform within the Ottoman Empire between 1699 and 1839 and the consequences it brought. This theme is charted through an examination of the factors that led the empire to embark upon successive reform efforts and how each new effort moved the evolution of reform forward. The effect on Ottoman society, while not necessarily an intended target for reform, affords a further method of documenting the changes brought on by introduction of new methods and ideas. The difficulties experienced by the Ottomans in introducing western and secular ideas had fundamental effects on their empire and these bear relevance to the difficulties that western culture presents to modern Islamic states.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1839 the *Hati-Sherif* (re-ordering) proclamation embarked the five centuries old Ottoman Empire upon a program of modernization. This effort became known as the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876), and represented a fundamental social, political, and intellectual change as the Empire gravitated toward westernization. Its efforts helped to create a constitution in 1876, and influenced the progress toward the creation of a Turkish Republic in 1922. Prior to 1839 the Ottoman Empire had been viewed as traditional and backward by Europeans, who only a couple of centuries earlier had feared its dominance. The change in attitude of Europeans toward the Ottoman Empire began in the aftermath of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, after which the Europeans began to expand their commercial and political interests. For the Ottomans themselves the period between 1699 and 1839 represents a crucial period. It was a time when their perceptions began to change toward Europe, and to the condition of their Empire. This period contains the first concerted attempts to adopt western methods within the framework of an Islamic state and society. The pre-*Tanzimat* reformers, while regarded as traditional and therefore restricted in the scope of the reforms they undertook, provided the crucial foundations from which to embark upon the *Tanzimat*. In studying the reforms from the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) to the *Hati-Sherif* (1839) the growing move toward the west can be discerned and the influence on the *Tanzimat* era determined.
This study will examine the development of western orientated reform in the Ottoman Empire between 1699 and 1839. It will discuss the practice, perception, and growing intensity of each successive effort. In Chapter Two the developments prior to 1699 will be examined to show how they influenced a once invincible power to accept western methods and teachings. The three principal areas in which this can be found are in the socio-political developments within the empire, the growing contacts with Europe in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the rising perception of decline among Ottoman writers and intellectuals. This study does not aim to pinpoint the beginning of this decline, which in various opinions ranges from the mid-sixteenth to late-nineteenth centuries. What is possible to track is the growing awareness of Ottomans to the changes caused by the events before 1700 through the writings of these intellectuals. Initially, writings chronicle the problems of the Empire, but develop into suggestions for improvement. By examining this development against the backdrop of the events experienced by the Empire between 1566 and 1700, the move toward adopting western influenced reform can be discerned.

Chapters Three through Five of this study concentrate on the practice and perception of Ottoman reform through the changes experienced between 1700 and 1839. It is best encapsulated in three specific eras: The Tulip Period (1718-1730), The New Order (1789-1807), and the rule of Mahmud II (1808-1839). The Tulip Period marks the first concerted effort to learn from western methods and teachers, albeit in a limited way. In following the progression of reform from the Tulip period through the New Order, and on into the rule of Mahmud II, the increasing intensity of each subsequent effort becomes
evident. This change in intensity is reflected in a gradual shift in the goals of reform, from restoration in the eighteenth century, to progressive change by the nineteenth century. Running parallel with this is the change in the perception of Ottomans toward reform and how it should relate to and benefit society. Initially it is seen as something of a short-term expedient that was intended to have limited effect on the social and political atmosphere of the Empire. By the nineteenth century this perception had changed; reforms were seen not in the singular context, but as something that should interact with other reforms in order to bring change and benefits to both the Empire, and the society it represented. To understand how these changes came about, the direction of reform after 1700 has to be seen in several contexts: the reaction among the total populace toward reform, the impact on the social and economic development, and how changes in European perceptions toward the Empire effected the relationship between the two. It is in these areas that the reasons for the failure of reform efforts to take hold are found.
CHAPTER II

TULIP BULBS: THE MOVE TOWARD REFORM

For the Ottomans to consider applying western methods to the problems they faced required a change both in their fortunes and in their attitude toward Europe. There were three principal areas in which developments conspired to bring this about. The first of these was a disruption to the traditional social order and the resultant political instability. The traditional structure of Ottoman government featured the Sultan as Padishah, ruling by his own will, leading the forces of Islam and the Empire into battle against the infidel, and serving all Muslims as the Caliph. In these endeavors the Grand Vizier and the Seyhul-Islam (Grand Mufti) supported him. The latter was drawn from the membership of the religious class known as the Ulema. The Grand Vizier was responsible for civil and military affairs while the Seyhul-Islam fulfilled a consultative and interpretive role based on the Islamic law, the Shar’ia. The remaining part of Ottoman society, the awamm, or lower classes, contained within it raaya comprised of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects (Berkes 10-11). The demands of the expanding empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had facilitated the rise of strong and arbitrary rulers, who after 1453 centralized power in the position of Sultan. This developed until the death of Suleiman I, the Lawgiver (1520-1566). The success of the Empire had produced a domain too large to be governed by an individual Sultan. Of the twenty-six Sultans who followed Suleiman I, only two were reputed to have possessed similar energy and wisdom (Pitcher 110). The raising of revenue saw a change from the timar
system, with its links to military service, to a new tax farming system that added to the
drift toward de-centralization in the late sixteenth century (Goffman 115). Changes
within the Sultan’s court saw a further dilution of power away from the personage of the
Sultan, despite continued portrayal in public as the supreme leader. Part of this change
was due to the increasing influence over the Sultans by members of the harem.
Traditionally Sultans had served as governors of provinces before ascending to the
throne, learning the skills they could utilize when they became Sultan. This was gradually
replaced by the ‘cage system’ that confined princes to the palaces of the Sultan until they
came to rule. Not only did this result in a less experienced ruler, it provided the Harem
and Chief Eunuch with an avenue of influence by which to have their favorites appointed
by the Sultan to office (Quataert 33). Between 1566 and 1623 the Ottoman Empire
suffered a succession of weak Sultans, which in turn created a string of short tenured
Grand Viziers dependent upon the patronage of groups such as the Harem and the
Janissaries.

The weakening of the Sultan’s position was reflected in the weakening of quality
and influence exercised by the Grand Vizier. Suleiman I’s last Grand Vizier, Sokullu,
managed to sustain his legacy until 1578 when he was ousted by fractious politics of the
court (Kinross 276-77). With no effective Sultan or Grand Vizier in place, the Ottoman
Empire experienced political turmoil of various intensities for the next half-century as
specific groups developed and competed for power. In addition to the influence of the
power brokers at court, elements outside the ruling class grew in influence. The
Janissaries from the late sixteenth century began to exercise political power that would
persist until the early nineteenth century. Originally an elite military unit with no social connections, the changes to their recruitment and restrictions created a growth in their number that translated into the development of socio-political interests for the first time. During the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the numbers of the Janissaries swelled, bringing to their number many in search of the privileges, but not duty. The Janissaries quickly exercised their power, competing with factions at court for influence over the Sultan. This even extended to the choice of Sultan in 1622 (Pallis 35-36). From 1603 to 1623 the Ottoman Empire’s hierarchal structure experienced fundamental changes, most notably the change in the law of succession, permitting further control of the process by the divisive factions inside the Empire. This legal degradation was surpassed on the personal level with the murder of Osman II in 1622. The lack of direction, and anarchy over the previous half century was one of the main factors in creating a perception of weakness or decline among Ottoman intellectuals.

The decline into chaotic governance was not constant and the Empire experienced periods of relative stability, helping to sustain the empire at critical junctures. Both the position of Sultan and Grand Vizier were revived for periods during the seventeenth century with beneficial results for the Empire. These instances provide examples of Ottoman reform in the traditional Ottoman sense without western ideas. Murad IV (1623-1640), although ruthless in his methods, did restore order and prevent further disintegration. In all branches of the state he executed individuals that stood in his way, including the Grand Vizier Rejeb Pasha and the Seyhul-Islam. Central authority in the provinces was restored at the expense of the local notables or ayans who had exercised
semi-autonomous rule. Murad IV led military expeditions in the tradition of the great Sultans, even recapturing territory from Persia. His rule exhibits one of the aspects of traditional reform in restoring strong leadership. Through fear, he established stability and control of the provinces, increased state revenues and moved toward reforms in the army, judiciary, and feudal system of landholding (Kinross 310). By bringing under control the institutions of the state Murad could then concentrate on reforms. This crucial requirement would be absent in the reform periods of the eighteenth century, as institutions remained powerful and tolerated the existence of reforms as long as it suited them. Murad IV’s rule and the changes he embarked upon also had the flaw of being dependent upon his own mortality. Upon his death in 1640 the Empire once again reverted to chaos, assisted by the insanity of Murad IV’s successor Ibrahim I (1640-1648). The period between 1640 and 1656 saw the Empire revert to the chaos and regicide of the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Paul Rycaut, visiting the Empire in the 1660s describes this cycle of conspiracy that resulted in the regicide of Ibrahim I in 1648 and murder of his mother, and power broker, the Sultan Valide in 1651 (Rycaut 11-24).

The Koprulu family began the transformation of the position of Grand Vizier in 1656 and brought stability back to the Empire. Mehmed Koprulu would use a similar approach to that Murad IV’s. More calculated and political, Mehmed and his successors improved the efficiency of the administration, and revived the sixteenth century military ambitions of the Empire. The Koprulus remained in office long enough for their reforms to have an impact and restore some discipline and prestige to the Empire. The absence of
similarly strong-minded successors would be a debilitating factor in efforts to sustain eighteenth century reforms. The military revival embarked upon by Ahmed Kopru (1661-1676) represented one of the precepts of Ottoman reform, that of returning the empire to its medieval greatness. The two later Kopru’s, Mustafa Zade (1689-1691) and Hussein (1699-1702) both attempted reforms but through the death in battle of Mustapha and the retirement of Hussein, their reforms did not progress far.

Hussein presided over the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 and then embarked upon reform of the administration, finances, military, law, and a program of public building and welfare (Kinross 365). The brevity of Hussein’s term of office notwithstanding, his proposals were important in pointing the way toward the future. It was a realization of how far reform would have to go to achieve meaningful results, many of which would not even be attempted until the nineteenth century. The imposition of military defeat facilitated feelings of doubt, and at times crises, for which reform was the proposed remedy. The reform was still within the framework of restoring the divine state, within the strictures of Islamic law. It was not viewed as a way to change and improve the Empire. The reforms of Murad IV and the Koprus had the principal aim of establishing their power base. Their methods did not include application of western knowledge. The use of western knowledge in specific cases was permissible, but the teaching of it was not. Knowledge was bought rather than studied (Lewis 39). The translation of information was severely restricted, with exceptions for western diseases, such as syphilis (Lewis 39). The limited efforts of Murad IV and the Koprus did establish the
precedence of using reform, but are on their own insufficient to encourage a move toward applying western methods to them.

Perception of Decline

The period between 1566-1718 saw the development of a debate among writers on the decline and how to remedy it. Whether the decline was factual is still debated (Faroughi 413). Nonetheless there was an evolving practice of historical writing that was problematic: by the tenets of Islam both laws and the state were divine and could not be improved upon (Wheatcroft 69-70). This made it advantageous to couch the locus of decline within the faults and qualities of the individuals in the positions of power, rather than within the state itself. Islamic history had examples of earlier writers who had addressed issues through historical writings, most notably Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) and his analogy of the state as a living entity. Toward the end of the sixteenth century and the advent of the Islamic millennium (1590-1591) writers renewed their interest in the history of Islam and the empire. The desire to document the course of Islam and of the Empire itself resulted in the present empire of Murad III (1574-1597) being compared to the days of conquest and growth up to 1566. Although the pre-1566 Empire was by no means infallible, the perception at the time was that the Empire of the 1590s in the wake of the political turmoil, and quality of leadership, had regressed from the achievements of the ‘Golden Age’. (Fleischer 306).

One of the most influential of these writers was Mustapha Ali (1541-1600) (Faroughi 272). Ali concentrated on the changes that he had witnessed throughout his career as a bureaucrat in the Ottoman government. Much of Ali’s work was concerned
with the career paths of Ottoman officials, and the recent decline in respect for the traditional boundaries of those paths. This led to administrative officials holding military office, and vice versa. Ali argued that the crossing of career lines weakened the quality and integrity of the bureaucracy, and thus the Empire itself. Regardless of the arguments of Ali, his *Essence of History* suggested a starting point for the decline. The execution by Suleiman I of his son and principal heir Mustapha in 1553, Ali saw as providing a catalyst for the misfortunes experienced by the Empire over the next forty years or so. (Fleischer 258-9). Ali does not introduce specific reform ideas, but chiefly identifies the problems of the Empire, which can be remedied through restoration in the quality and virtue of individuals in the bureaucracy. From Ali’s writings, Ottoman intellectuals could debate the health of the Empire and keep alive the perception of decline. The political turmoil of the time, not withstanding, the Empire was still sufficiently established and insular that debate was limited to a few intellectuals. Europe at this time was still too preoccupied with its religious wars to take advantage of this turmoil. Even with Ali’s pessimistic portrayal of the Ottoman administration, a sense of faith in the future of the Empire, and of Islam, persisted and would be reflected in future reform efforts (Reid 179). The absence of a printing press prevented any widespread distribution of Ali’s and others ideas. Subsequent events involving the arrival of Murad IV in 1623 seem to have vindicated Ali and others opinions of re-establishing strength in the Sultan and cleaning out the bureaucracy.

By the mid-seventeenth century writers and commentators were addressing the problems of the state through both political writing and literature. Katib Celebi (1606-
1657), who principally produced maps that brought knowledge of the outside world to the Empire, formulated a list of recommendations on how to address the decline of the Empire. The analyses of the Empire’s problems were divided into three points: the peasants of Anatolia, the military budget and the deficit of the previous hundred years. Katib suggested ways to right the ship, including the need for a strong leader, a dictator if necessary, to ensure the reforms (Thomas 73). Like Ali and Ibn Khaldun before him, Katib compared the state to a living body. Both a strong leader and fiscal reform were needed to ensure that the Empire recapture its world position and fulfill its Islamic social duties. Another writer, Evilya Celebi, provided examples on the condition of the government by chronicling the career of his benefactor Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588-1662), including his term as Grand Vizier (1650-1651). Evilya Celebi, although using a different style than the historical writers, provided an insight into the problems with the running of the Empire. The Grand Vizier is shown as dependent upon the patronage of the harem and janissary aghas (Celebi 65). The fragility of attempts to improve efficiency in areas such as the provisioning of the military are shown to be in the hands of non-Muslims and subject to the corruptness of the Vizier’s own ministers. The delicacy of the situation and the weakness of the Empire is shown by the mistake of the Grand Vizier in calling some non-Muslims the people of Muhammad, thus threatening the supply of provisions for the front line troops (Celebi 77-83). The writings of Evila point to lack of central control and to how the state was held hostage by corrupt officials and elements who may have had loyalties elsewhere.
The creation of the position of Court Historian in 1700 is evidence of the legitimacy that historical writers had built up since Ali’s time. The career and writings of Naima as court historian existed in part due to the patronage of the last Kopruhu Grand Vizier, Hussein (1699-1702). Despite his debt to the administration he still produced important critical works on the health of the Empire. Remaining true to the style of Ibn Khaldun, Naima identified the Empire at its fourth stage (out of five) of existence (Thomas 77-80). He advanced the leadership of his benefactor as being necessary for the stability of the Empire (Thomas 94-95). Hussein, as mentioned, did embark upon reforms, but soon was exhausted by the opposition (Kinross 368). Naima advanced the Dus-tru’l-amel, or ‘Guide to Practice’ as a practical method of reforming the Empire (Thomas 73-76). The influence of Katib Efendi’s analysis of decline is evident here, and in turn would be developed to the next step by Naima. His position as official historian allowed Naima to advance the need for reform through his five principals. These principals match closely with the reform ambitions of Hussein Kopruhu and covered balancing the budget, timely payment of state salaries, military re-organization, rural development and loyalty to the Sultan (Thomas 88). Naima’s five points would be reflected in the efforts of later reforms, although in some cases it would be a century before they were attempted or achieved.

The beginning of Ahmed III’s reign coincides with Naima’s writing, in which Ahmed’s leadership is advanced. This helps to locate the chronological order of how writings on reform developed toward the possibility of learning from the west. Naima’s position would have afforded his works and ideas the opportunity to be read by Ahmed
III. The possibility of suggesting western innovations was handicapped by his limited knowledge of Europe, which was little advanced from the time of the crusades. He would therefore view European intentions and behavior in that context, and not as a source for recommended reform (Thomas 83). Despite the absence of a worldview, Naima, like the aforementioned writers, served to create, expand, guide and formalize the debate on imperial decline. Fiscal and military reforms were carried out at this juncture, resulting in early success at Pruth in 1711, giving confidence to the Ottoman establishment. The defeat at Passarowitz in 1717 reopened the debate on reform and the possibility of emulating western technology and tactics was first advanced. A story published at the time places a soldier from each side discussing the reasons for the Empire’s failure. The principal conclusion of the story is the need for the Ottomans to improve their military on European lines (Berkes 30). By the beginning of the eighteenth century the development of historical writing had moved from analysis by Ali to the specific proposals by Katib Efendi and Naima. Such ideas had achieved a growing acceptance in official state circles despite the outward show of confidence and faith in the Empire that still prevailed.

Encounters with Europe

The century following the death of Suleiman I saw the Ottomans ignore much of the advances in technology and commerce experienced in Europe. This only became evident to the Ottomans through their defeat on the battlefield by the Europeans at St Gothard in 1664, Vienna in 1683, and the resulting humiliation of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Defeats such as at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 were only the beginning of the
change in relationship between the Muslim Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. Despite this maritime defeat the Ottomans still regarded their armies as superior to those of the Europeans. Evidence of European success and the changes in the relationship with the Ottomans are evident in the style of peace treaty the Ottomans increasingly accepted. The traditional approach of the Ottomans toward their European rivals had been to resolve disputes through military action, and then to impose their terms on the defeated foe. In accordance with Islamic theology the treaty was designed to last for a period of time before hostilities were renewed. This was based on their belief, that as protectors of Islam, they had a duty to be perpetually at war with the infidel. The Treaty of Zstivorek with the Hapsburg empire in 1606 marks the first time that the Ottomans were on equal terms with the other side in a peace treaty, and in which the Ottomans did not dictate the terms (Kinross 319-320). Despite this early sign it would not be until the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) that the Ottomans realized the growing disadvantages they faced with the Europeans. One element of the treaties influencing the move toward adopting western methods was the exchanging of diplomatic missions. The Ottomans considered embassies as short-lived and ceremonial, but they did provide information on western society.

Commercial relations with Europe achieved a greater level of development and interaction up to 1700. In the sixteenth century Europe began to develop worldwide trading interests, through the franchising of trading companies such as the Dutch East India Company. The increased commercial activity brought European merchants into contact with Ottoman lands, resulting in the development of individual capitulation treaties allowing nationals of European states to trade inside those lands. The
capitulations when initiated in the sixteenth century were restrictive and granted from a position of power by the Ottomans. Less than a century after the capture of Constantinople in 1453, the Treaty between the Ottomans and France regarding trading rights served as the basis upon which future capitulations would be based and expanded (Hurewitz 1-5). The Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1535 was granted during the reign of Sultan Suleiman I (1520-66). Following the French treaty, other European states began to show an emerging interest in the economic potential of the Near East. The example of the English Levant Company shows how the limited commercial concessions of the sixteenth century were expanded with each renewal of the treaty until 1675, when the capitulations became permanent. The treaty was updated six times between 1603 and 1675 (Hurewitz 34-41). This treaty and others parallel the growing power of Europe that had occurred since the late sixteenth century, but would not be evident to the Ottomans until their defeat at Vienna in 1683. The example of the Levant Company is indicative of the underdevelopment of diplomatic relations. Instead of the British government appointing its ambassador to the Empire, the company held this duty as part of its treaty privileges up to 1825. The Ottomans considered the treaty of commerce as sufficient to serve the needs of diplomatic relations. In the seventeenth century they viewed the presence of foreign trading interests, not economically but politically. They reasoned that these nationals would be followed by the rest of their compatriots in becoming Ottoman subjects as the empire expanded (Goffman 196).

Trade and manufacturing was largely domestic in the Ottoman Empire’s and the presence of European merchants and goods was minimal until the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries (McGowan 639). Despite this, the capitulations serve two important tasks in relationship to the Tulip Period. They provided the first official exchange on a long-term basis between Europe and the Empire. The Europeans brought manufactured goods and exported Ottoman raw materials, while in certain locales, such as Aleppo and Izmir, increasing contact between Europeans and Ottomans outside of the ruling elite occurred (Farouqhi 481-2). Unlike the peace treaties, the capitulations, by their very design, provided continued contact. The Ottomans lack of interest in using the reciprocal concessions they were entitled to, due in part to a predominantly domestic economy, gave the Europeans an early advantage economically (Goffman 229). This would expand to include influence over the non-Muslim populations and political influence over the Empire itself by the nineteenth century.

Economic and fiscal reform practiced by the Ottomans did include the adoption of western ideas that predated those of the Tulip Period. In 1695 the Empire attempted to reform its finances using a three-tier personal tax system similar to a recently introduced system in France. The new system would not replace but supplement the existing system over the next century (McGowan 713). Further examples of economic experimentation appeared as early as 1703 with the establishment of textile looms in an attempt to counter the increasing amount of imports from Europe. The existence of new methods alongside the old established systems points to how reform in general would be practiced in the eighteenth century, whereby it would be aimed at co-existing alongside rather than replacing the existing system. Despite the limited relations with Europe, encounters and
changes in the geo-political balance did help to focus some Ottoman minds on European success and the need to keep pace with it.

Travelers' Tales

In spite of the limits on official contact, knowledge of the outside world did arrive through informal means. Evliya Celebi, in addition to writing on the political events in the empire, wrote on his journey to and experiences in the Hapsburg Empire in his Book of Travels. Unlike many European accounts of travels within the Ottoman Empire, Celebi, despite viewing the Hapsburgs as infidels, found things to admire in their culture and industry, proposing them for adoption (Faroqhi 88-89). The ethnological makeup of the Empire included various nationalities, including those in the vassal states on the Ottoman borders. An important figure in bridging the cultural gap between Ottoman and European worlds was Prince Demitrius Cantemir (1673-1723) of the vassal state of Moldavia. The Ottomans took hostages from its vassal states back to Istanbul to ensure loyalty. Cantemir provided a way for powerful and interested Ottomans, including a Grand Vizier, to become acquainted with European culture and ways (Faroqhi 85). The attitude of Ottoman officials toward Christian proselytizers within the domains of the Empire was to allow them to travel and communicate with non-Muslim subjects to a certain extent. Individuals such as Robert Frampton who resided in the Empire between 1645 and 1657 assimilated easily into Ottoman society (Goffman 210). It is individuals such as these who brought information to the Empire of European developments and abilities. Europeans who initially became slaves within the Empire brought knowledge of the outside world, often returning to their homeland. Equally, Ottomans who were
captured and taken to Europe, eventually returned and brought with them information. Osman Aga of Temsvar (Timisoara) published his accounts in *The Life and Adventures of Osman Aga*, which dealt with his captivity in Austria (Farouqhi 86). One of the most notable of such Ottomans, given the subject matter he wrote on, was an Egyptian Janissary named Suleyman. Upon returning to the Ottoman domain Suleyman wrote on his observations in France. His account includes both the artistic and the military accomplishments in the France of the Sun King (Louis XIV, 1643-1715) (Farouqhi 87). The relevance of his subject matter is that the mission of Mehmed Efendi’s embassy to France in 1720-1 was to observe French military and industrial abilities.
CHAPTER III

TULIPS BLOOM: THE TULIP PERIOD 1718-1730

The defeat at Passarowitz in 1717 reinforced the Ottomans’ perception of the crises they faced after Karlowitz. The need to rebuild their military led to the increasing use of diplomatic missions to maintain a policy of peace, albeit temporary, in the minds of the Ottomans (Naff 88). A secondary purpose of the diplomatic missions they sent was to learn of the military and industrial developments in Europe, the most influential of these being the embassy of Mehmed Efendi to France in 1720-1721. Efendi’s report extended beyond that required of the mission to include observations on social practices and national identity in France. This report sparked among the ruling elite an attempt to emulate the grandeur of Versailles, both structurally and socially. Out of this developed a consumer craze known as the *Lale Devri*, or Tulip Period. In part this was expressed through festivals featuring the tulip. Beyond the public façade a more fundamental shift in government policy occurred. The consumer craze provided a cover for the adoption of western style and methods that lasted long after the Tulips wilted. The aim of reform was to restore, rather than change, the Empire. The most notable developments within this framework were in diplomacy, military reform, use of a printing press, and in a revival of Ottoman literature. Through these efforts Ottomans began to change the way they viewed themselves and the outside world, developing into interest for what was worldly (or modern), as opposed to traditional.
Government and Diplomacy

The character of the government during the Tulip Period is represented in the personality and actions of the Sultan and his Grand Vizier. Despite the reforms, the structure of government remained unchanged with only a slight shift in the balance of power back to the Sultan and Grand Vizier. The failure of Mustapha II’s attempt to centralize power along with Hussein Koprulu’s reforms at the beginning of the century resulted in his overthrow in favor of Ahmed III (Shaw 226-228). This may have played a part in the absence of meaningful administrative reform, as little was suggested through fear of causing a reaction from the conservative elites. The Tulip Period was used by the Sultan and Grand Vizier to add weight to their role, divert attention from events elsewhere, pursue a policy of peace, and maintain their stake in the balance of power at court. The plethora of Tulip festivals helped to give the appearance of the Sultan leading the way (Quataert 44). Traditionally, festivals had been used by the Sultan to connect with his subjects and maintain his image. From the late sixteenth century on they gained in importance as the Sultan lost power politically to the various factions within the ruling elite (Quataert 92-3). Despite the public image of an active Sultan as the energy of the Tulip Period, the government remained hostage to the demands of the vested interests at court and of the local notables in the provinces (Quataert 46).

The restoration of prestige to the Sultan was the result of the machinations of his last Grand Vizier, Damad Ibrahim Pasa (1718-1730) (Wheatcroft 79). He held office by the skilful manipulation of the Tulip craze and the opportunities it provided to distract
Ahmed III and the rest of the ruling elite (Shay 17). The Venetian baili Emo, described Ibrahim’s style of rule in October 1721:

He has the capacity to make use of an opportunity (...) he has the art and industry to defend himself. He is also most attentive to cater to the humor of the populace by freeing himself from the discontented without the spectacle of blood, by permitting all that was formally forbidden, and by scattering beneficences with liberality (...) (157).

These tactics represent the traditional Ottoman method of rule whereby factions are either played off against each other, or distracted by the manipulating events. The craze for building mosques, schools, fountains, palaces and kiosks among the ruling elite allowed Ibrahim Pasa to avoid significant challenges to his authority. This was similar to the situation in France where members of the aristocracy were controlled through the obligation to compete for social stature. (Quataert 44).

Ibrahim was left free to conduct the business of government in secret rather than convening a divan (Imperial council) (Shay 19). The maintenance of peace was pursued to buy time for recovery and to protect Ibrahim’s personal fortune (Shay 17-18). In the short term, the authority of his office, and the continuing of the Tulip Period were ensured for a few years. The adoption of artistic, architectural, and technological aspects of the west copied the form but not the substance of what had developed in Europe. In adopting the military and scientific knowledge of Europe, the Ottomans failed to comprehend the need for parallel development in socially, politically, and economically. Such development had been achieved in Europe since the fifteenth century (Cassals 63).
In the long term the legacy was one of failing to deal with the real political problems of the Empire.

Part of the Ottoman practice of western style reform was to learn from the diplomatic missions they sent to various European capitals. These embassies would bring back information and methods that could be adapted to fit the empire’s needs. This led to a perception that the Empire could then catch up with the west. A reasonable period of peace was required to achieve this, perpetuating the need for continued diplomacy. The most important of these, and a catalyst for much of the Tulip Period, was the embassy of Mehmed Efendi to France in 1720-1. The embassies had little direct influence on the domestic politics of the Empire, which suited the aims of the ruling elite. They supported reforms on the technological, industrial and military front, but resisted any attempts to reform the inner political system of the Empire. A modern state run by a monarchy was what the Ottomans sought, and they found it in France. The French example presented the least threat to their interests, in a sense it even legitimized their method of government. Although the embassies of the Tulip Period were not permanent, they paved the way for more missions to Europe and eventually permanent ones later in the century. The increased use of diplomacy after 1718 was an acknowledgement of their position of weakness versus Europe and the need to develop allies (Naft’90).

The collapse of the Safavid Empire, of Persia, in 1722 aptly demonstrated the Ottomans new approach and use of diplomacy to realize it. Traditionally this would have allowed the Ottomans to take advantage and seize territory along its common border with Persia. The presence of Russia in the region meant that any annexation of territory would
bring them into possible conflict with Russia. From the east came advancing Afghan tribes threatening both Persia and the eastern provinces of the Empire. This brought back the unpleasant memories of Tamerlane 300 years earlier (Kinross 77-79). The presence of the Hapsburg Empire on the European frontier meant that yet another party could take advantage of Ottoman entanglement in Persia. The desire to avoid conflict with European foes led to the signing of a treaty in 1724 between Russia and the Empire (Hurewitz 65-69). The importance of this treaty is that it not only shows the Empire’s increasing use of diplomacy, but its willingness to abandon traditional principles to do so. In Article Four of the treaty the Ottomans agree to a common defense with the Russians against Persia. This was the first instance of the Ottomans agreeing to ally with a Christian state against a Muslim state, thereby diluting the role of the Sultan as Caliph, the protector of all Muslims. The treaty between Russia and the Empire provided a solution to the dilemma, but at a fundamental cost.

In the realm of diplomacy, the Ottomans were ill prepared, seeking advice from Europeans on foreign affairs. The lack of representation abroad resulted in insufficient knowledge and the need for European assistance and information (Naff 96-7). This weakness was due in part to the temporary nature of their diplomatic missions in the early eighteenth century. The already present European embassies to the Sublime Porte became an additional source to the Ottomans of information and of means to further diplomatic avenues. The attitude toward these European ambassadors was uneven, due to the continued belief in the moral superiority of Islam and the Empire. This was reflected in the ceremonial requirements made of an ambassador who wished to receive an audience
with the Sultan or Grand Vizier. Considerable gifts were required, and a waiting period often resulted for various reasons, such as festivals (Cassals 62-69). In addition to this, the importance of some states over others led to preference being exercised. The proximity of Austria led to their ambassador receiving an audience with the Sultan while the French ambassador Villeneuve in 1729 was ignored and made to wait for an audience. (Shay 152). Even at this early stage the failure to gain an alliance with a leading western state points to the fate of the Empire in the centuries to come, as a useful buffer state to block the designs of competing European empires. The change in direction from the use of force to the use of diplomacy is one of the fundamental changes in Ottoman policy and in its psyche.

Military Reform

The principal area in which the Ottomans introduced western innovations was in the military. The military, excluding the Janissaries, was deemed a necessary target for reform given the defeats of the previous half-century. In the past the military had adopted technology from outside the Empire, such as the cannon and musket. Despite the change to a bureaucratic form of government, and a policy of peace, the personality of the Empire was still heavily influenced by the old military traditions and pride. Military reform, therefore, was the principal reasoning for the experimentation of the Tulip period. It was deemed permissible, as it would restore the military to a par with its European rivals. The aforementioned document describing a discussion between two soldiers, one Christian, one Muslim, of reasons for the defeat of the Muslims, contains the very
essence of the reform dilemma. This document lays out the blueprint of the Ottoman approach to reform within the traditional model (Berkes 30-1).

Although reforms failed to deal with the Janissaries, the merits of such action were not lost on influential Ottomans. Beyond the modern weaponry and tactics that were introduced to the likes of the artillery corps, precedents were set which would have implications in the civilian as well as military sphere. Assistance of individuals from Europe, acting independently, helped to bring modern tactics to military units chosen for reform. Suggestions included not only adoption of tactics and weapons, but improvements in the supply of the army (Berkes 48). Their advice was one of the long-term effects of the Tulip Period, bringing modern methods to the Ottoman military and increasing the interaction with Europeans. For the first time Muslims were allowed to be taught by non-Muslims (Lewis 43-44). Principal among these was the Comte De-Bonneval who helped reorganize elements of the military, bringing them up to par with their European counterparts. The formation of a school of engineering was achieved in 1734, and would operate to a varying degree throughout the century until its rejuvenation and expansion in the late eighteenth century (Shaw 251). Early success of military reforms was evident with victory over Austria in the late 1730's (Kinross 388-9). As a primary recipient of western style reforms, the military would play an important part in disseminating western methods into Ottoman society. Exposure to western methods and ideals created a small but growing cadre of reform-minded officials who would fill both the military and administrative arms of the government, helping to maintain the perception of reform as a viable government policy (Naff 90). The short-term objective of
restoring the military to a force capable of taking on the Europeans was achieved in the minds of many Ottomans with the reclaiming of territory from Austria. With this in place support for further reform waned and was left to stagnate during a long period of peace (Naff 89).

Technology and Innovation

The success of the Ottomans in introducing technology to the Empire outside of the military was limited but did result in one accomplishment that would play a recurring role in reforms up to and beyond 1839. The printing press had been operated in non-Muslim communities for short periods from the late sixteenth century. Muslims were restricted in such matters by the power of the ulema and their monopoly on the production of religious texts that kept information, both secular and religious, from contaminating the realm of the divine state and the empire’s Muslim population. During the Tulip Period the interest in an Ottoman printing press came about as a result of a revival in the art of poetry and a development in the Turkish language. Mehmed Efendi’s embassy to France included many visits to libraries, and French accounts suggest he may have proposed the idea of a printing press upon his return to Istanbul (Gocek 60).

Further encouragement came from the efforts of Ibrahim Muteferrika to secure permission for the press by stating that it would benefit all Muslims through the dissemination of knowledge (Gocek 113). The press would make available European texts from which to learn science and technology. The interest in publishing was aided by the encouragement of literature by Damad Ibrahim Pasa, who as early as 1717 organized translation groups to produce Turkish language versions of Arabic, Persian and European
books. From this beginning the revival of Ottoman literature progressed and the official language began to change from Persian to Ottoman Turkish (Shaw 235). Ibrahim Muteferika (1670?-1745) was granted permission by fetva to operate a printing press in 1726. The fetva assured religious scribes that no religious books would be printed, thus preserving both their income and control of religious debate (Gocek 113). The first books included a dictionary, a geographical work and in 1731 the Rational Basis for the Politics of Nations (1731). This dealt with the weakness of the Ottoman system and described the various political models in operation, including democracy (Berkes 42-3). The translation of Arabic, Persian and European works brought with it exposure to secular ideas, presenting a challenge to the Ulema's desire for the Empire to maintain its Islamic integrity. The printing press survived the overthrow of Ahmed III and the opposition from conservatives to produce many texts. It survived in some form until the 1760s and would be revived during the New Order of Selim III (1789-1807). The same technology would still be used to produce the first Ottoman newspaper in the 1830s. The presence and example of the press is one of the most important legacies of the Tulip Period. The books it produced brought new ideas that developed the awareness of worldliness (Berkes 26).

Cultural Reform

The acceptance of western ideas and fashions instigated changes in Ottoman cultural life. In architecture a building boom resulted from the desire to build competitively. The style and use of space within the buildings began to change, reflecting influences from Europe. In architecture the Sa'dabad was purposefully built to host the
Tulip festivals, and was inspired by the grandeur of Fontainebleau and Versailles (Gocek 75). The *Sa'dabad* helped to initiate a change in the way Ottomans used space by becoming a public gathering space. (Gocek 79). More subtle influences of European architecture were introduced from the Tulip Period onward in mosques, palaces, fountains and kiosks resulting in an Ottoman baroque style. Art and the patronage of it changed from state-sponsored to personal (Carswell 328). Western style would be maintained throughout the eighteenth century through its incorporation into existing styles. The Nuruosmaniye Mosque (1755) is an example of this (Farouqhi 230). The Tulip festivals not only brought changes to architecture but to the relationship between the elite and the masses. The social impact of reform will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six.

The last twelve years of Ahmed III’s sultanate, (1718-30) generally mark the Tulip Period. Mahmud I (1730-1754), and his successors throughout the eighteenth century, emulated Ahmed III’s precedent of introducing western elements to the traditional structure of Ottoman society. This is evident in Mahmud I’s continued support for the printing press and improvements in military education. The spirit of the Tulip Period can be argued to have continued up to the 1760s, but grew lack-luster after the 1730s as the new generation of reformers lost the optimism of earlier reformers like Ibrahim Muteferika. Later reformers, such as Grand Vizier Ragib Pasa (1757-1763), were aware of the limits of reform within the framework of traditional society (Berkes 53). Military victory over Austria in 1739 achieved what the Ottomans perceived reform’s principal use to be, the revival of the Empire’s military capability. What the Ottomans failed to
comprehend as a result of their pursuit of diplomacy and military security was how to adapt to the extended peace that it brought. The Tulip Period and subsequent reform efforts were aimed not only at catching up with Europe but at maintaining the level of influence and presence into Europe, which Daniel Goffman argues reached its furthest extent at the end of the seventeenth century (224-225). From this juncture on, despite the attempts to learn and adopt from the west, the empire failed to keep pace as an equal power, becoming the ‘sick man of Europe’ and vulnerable to the power struggles of the nineteenth century. The perception of reform after the Tulip Period remained one of restoration over reinvention. But despite its limited physical effect, the Tulip Period did create a more cerebral legacy that would sustain its ideas and influence future reformers.
CHAPTER IV

NEW ORDER: REFORM UNDER SELIM III (1789-1807)

Ottomans regarded reform as having served its purpose with the victory over Austria. Reform continued, but without the enthusiastic spirit of the Tulip Period and efforts gradually stagnated (Berkes 53). The most notable attempt was during the reign of Abdul Hamid I (1774-1789), when reforms were undertaken in response to the war with Russia (1768-1774), and focused on the military, including the revival of the School of Engineering and founding of a naval equivalent in 1776 (Berkes 59). Baron De Tott followed in the footsteps of Comte De Bonneval, modernizing the artillery and mortar corps (Shaw 251). Reform was cut short by war and the machinations of the conservative opposition. This was demonstrated by the ousting of Grand Vizier Halil Hamid (1782-1785) who had proposed extending reforms to include the Janissaries and obsolete timar system (Shaw 256-257). The successor to Abdul Hamid I brought a new level of enthusiasm to reform. Selim III (1789-1807) was a proponent of traditional reform, but through correspondence with Louis XVI (1774-89) showed his favor for the use of western methods (Shaw 71). Selim would approach reform in a more organized and purposeful manner than had been evident in the Tulip Period. The period became known as the New Order and provided the basis for developments in the pre-Tanzimat nineteenth century.
Government

The New Order delivered significant change in the way the government approached the practice of reform, and how far it would extend it. From the outset of Selim’s rule a new consultative council was formed which operated outside of the Imperial council and tackled the issues of reform. The council began the process of transformation from the arbitrary rule of the Sultan, to the abrogation of the Sultan’s powers in the *Hati-Sherif* (Shaw 73). Many members originated from within Selim’s entourage or were younger men of merit. They shared with Selim the belief in applying aspects of western success to the problems they identified. Their efforts would mold the direction and character of the “New Order” reforms (Shaw 87). Whereas the Tulip Period reforms had been uneven and applied with little planning, the existence of the council points to a more ordered and purposeful approach to reform and by extension that of the crises they perceived. Selim III displayed greater interest as a reformer than Ahmed III had, but in time would tire of reform due to the multiple stresses of war, provincial unrest and conservative opposition (Shaw 368). In spite of this, his efforts moved the Empire on toward a more modern form of government. At the same time it reinforced the precedent of the Sultan leading the way in the reform efforts (Shaw 180-181).

Much as they were the strength and source of many of the reforms, the members of the special council also exhibited the continuing weakness of applying reform from within the traditional institutional framework. Each individual, while being loyal to the idea of the Empire and the need for changes in order to restore it, also had his own interests to look out for. This weighted the reform proposals toward application in the
same areas that had been focused on during the Tulip Period. Only limited suggestions in the areas that would directly affect their own interests were suggested. The Sultan purposefully included in the council members who were reformers, moderates and conservatives. This was in order to play each faction off against each other; thus allowing him to control the group through the traditional methods of Ottoman politics (Shaw 89). While most of the members protected their own interest and proposed only piecemeal and vague ideas, one member did believe in reform outside of the accepted military areas. Tatarjik zade Abudallah Efendi, a judge and a member of the ulema, submitted proposals for changes in both military and civilian aspects of the empire, including his own profession. The need to end corruption, bribery and nepotism while establishing a closer relationship between the Sultan and his people were the main theories of his report (Shaw 93-95). Reformers believed that implementing reform by firman or decree was sufficient for it to be accepted and applied. In this belief they were wrong. Bureaucrats easily bypassed the reforms of their respective departments due to the lack of physical enforcement. In the case of the Treasury, opportunities for corruption increased (Shaw 174). The lack of physical enforcement of reform created a situation whereby two systems existed alongside each other. This weakened the momentum and effectiveness of reforms (Wheatcroft 101-102).

The reforms of the New Order were more extensive than in the Tulip Period, but followed the same pattern as those earlier reforms. It is evident from this that the same misunderstanding of western military and economic advances related to the developments within society, politics and education (Shaw 167). Beyond the formation of the special
council the efforts were at best peripheral and difficult to implement. The only truly reforming action in the area of government was the reduction in the number of individuals holding the position of Vizier. This reflected the reality of positions available in an Empire that had lost territory (Shaw 168-9). Reform of the bureaucracy included the elimination of corrupting practices as well as an attempt to improve the quality of scribes and the elimination of the corrupting practices. Some of the reforms still lacked an effective plan of implementation, allowing in the case of the Treasury new opportunities for corruption and theft. Stanford Shaw in *Between Old and New* describes this:

> Although it operated in a much more modern fashion, using European accounting principles (...) the resulting duplication of effort and overlapping of authority (...) created new confusion and inefficiencies ...

(174).

The authority of the Empire in the provinces had weakened in favor of the local notables who had gained increasing autonomy throughout the eighteenth century. By the 1790s the central government could only hope to maintain their loyalty through appointment to official positions such as governor. Reform in this area was aimed at strengthening the legitimacy and commitment of governors in those provinces by extending their terms of office. Selim III lacked the power to impose changes as the government was still divided into the factions of the traditional institutions, each with the power to instill revolt, if necessary, against the reformers.

Diplomacy was one area in which reform achieved meaningful results, progressing onward from what had been achieved during the Tulip Period. The establishment of
permanent legations to various European capitals from 1793 provided a means with which to gain fresh information and act as a delaying tool by which to prevent, or better prepare for war. In establishing permanent legations, the first in London, the Empire by 1800 had come to accept the fundamental changes in the balance of power since the seventeenth century and had moved to a more westward looking Empire. This was aptly demonstrated by the French invasion of Egypt in 1798. It was the first time since the Crusades that a Christian force had set foot in the Islamic Middle East. The effect of this on the Empire was to embark it upon a system of using alliances to protect its domains from more advanced nations. The alliances that developed in response to Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt did not last long. It marked the beginning of the next phase in their relations with the European powers. By the end of the eighteenth century the Empire had developed from occasional participation in diplomatic relations to a situation where their late start illustrated their inexperience in an area of operation that had become crucial to the Empire’s survival (Naff 103).

Military Reform

Unable to modernize the Janissaries, the reformers built upon the successes shown by the Comte de-Bonneval and Baron De-Tott endeavoring to create a new and modern army. The issue of the Janissaries and their need for improvement could thereby be avoided. The *Nizam-i Jedid* (New Army) was created to provide the Empire with a loyal and efficient modern army. The modernizations to the artillery and mortar corps under previous Sultans were continued, and military education was revived and expanded (Shaw 146). Regulatory reform was proposed but could only get so far before attracting
scrutiny from the Sipahis and Janissaries (Shaw 119-120). The scope of military reform was extended to include the Navy, achieving a more lasting result due to the lack of opposition from groups that had interests tied up with the Army. Improvements in shipbuilding provided modern ships of the line, while new regulations and recruitment laws provided for more suitable crews after the dubious nature of previous recruits (Shaw 152). A Naval medical service was also established and set the precedent for later developments in medicine, both civilian and military. The improvements in the Navy, while only on a small scale when compared to the Army, do point to what could be achieved with effective reform (Shaw 166). While the reformers achieved momentary success in modernizing the parts of the military, the strength of the established corps meant that reforms adorned the periphery, rather than the heart of the military, and could not revive a corrupted body.

Cultural Developments

The New Order facilitated a revival in the cultural exchange between Europe and the Empire. Europeans were subject to fewer restrictions than in the Tulip Period, allowing for a greater social interaction. This was reflected in a clothing craze and interest in aspects of European culture (Shaw 194). Many of these were introduced through Selim III’s court, just as Ahmed III had done before. Within the harem and palace, elements of European style and society were present. From French dancing masters to furniture, the palace portrayed Selim III’s interest in favor of things European (Freely 217-218). Restoration of parts of the palace grounds in a western style recalled the Tulip gardens of Ahmed III, even extending to holding a Tulip fete (Freely 220-226).
By Selim III’s time, European architects were commissioned to do work. This included work for Selim III’s sister (Farouqhi 232-233). The growing interest, acceptance and presence of European affectations are evidenced here and through their inclusion in the civic projects of the Sultan and his family. Adoption of European fashion shows an increasingly different attitude toward the infidel enemy, in part to emulate and in part out of intellectual curiosity (Farouqhi 240). Western style gardens and Tulip fetes were not the only legacy of the Tulip Period to be revived. The Muteferrika press reopened and began to publish tracts on military and other matters. It was supplemented in 1795 by a new press for the publication of military and scientific journals. The resumption and expansion of the Ottoman printing press helped to reinvigorate the diffusion of western ideas and literature by publishing in Turkish (Shaw 184-185).

It is in the areas of diplomacy, cultural exchange and the diffusion of ideas that the New Order, like the Tulip Period before it, achieved the most lasting effect, whether intended or not. If their beliefs were not vindicated by these developments, events in Egypt showed up both the weakness of the old ways and possibilities of the new methods. Even with the overthrow of Selim III and his reformers, those who had benefited from the expansion of ideas and education would carry on the legacy of reform. The French invasion of Egypt presented the Ottomans with a new geo-political reality. The French removed the antiquated Ottoman bureaucracy and replaced it with modern practices, the very thing the Ottoman reformers were unable to do out of fear of repercussions, and from their continued belief in the traditional order of the Empire. This beginning would be built on by Muhammad Ali and provide an example to the rest of the Empire. While
ostensibly under Ottoman control, the Egypt of Muhammad Ali became more and more independent and embarked upon its own program of modernization, both militarily and economically (Safran 30-33). This de-facto independent rule of Egypt would serve as an example to the Empire as to just what the possibilities were when reform extended to the abolition of obsolete institutions. The realities brought by the Napoleonic wars to the Empire restricted the possibilities of attempting such reforms in the wider Empire. The influence of the French invasion compounded this as it led to provincial uprisings and nationalism from Arabia to Serbia, the latter achieving de-facto independence in 1805 (Shaw 327).

The New Order represents not only the end of traditional reform but also the awakening of the modernization era. The overthrow of Selim III failed to purge the administration of individuals in favor of reform, many of them educated in the new technical schools, and aware of the need to keep pace with Europe to survive. This awareness included a growing recognition not just of the Ottoman deficit in military and science, but the need to change rather than restore the Empire. The use of European methods by the Ottomans was, at the beginning, intended to be a temporary expediency to facilitate recovery from drastic defeats. By 1807 western methods had become established in the Empire as an element in Ottoman reform attempts. The example of what could be achieved with more radical application of them was present in Egypt, and only a strong and capable Sultan was required to realize them in the rest of the empire. The power of the conservatives at the time necessitated that any efforts be delayed until the political climate was more favorable. One attempt was made to clarify on paper the
nature and responsibilities of each constituent part of the Ottoman government, including the Sultan. The terms of the *itifak* (alliance) were not favorable to the Janissaries, who did not wish to have their role defined and their loyalty controlled. As a result of this and other resistance from the local notables the document was quashed and remained on paper (Berkes 90-92). The document set an important precedent in attempting to define the role of institutions in government and as a sign of future developments.
CHAPTER V

SIGNS OF PROGRESS: THE REFORMS OF MAHMUD II (1808-1839)

The spirit of reform was not left to wither after the New Order, as had been the case in the years following the Tulip Period, but was kept alive by the plans of the new Sultan, Mahmud II (1808-1839). Mahmud II, while being a proponent of reform, relied on a traditional leadership style to secure his position before embarking on the widespread changes he envisioned. The need to restore the central authority of the Empire would help to re-establish the Sultan's rule and persona as the Padishah. Early reforms were undertaken in areas that even conservatives acknowledged needed them. The Artillery corps and Navy were modernized and strengthened, providing in time a sufficient force to support both Empire, and the political designs of Mahmud II (McCarthy 14). By 1826 Mahmud II could confidently propose the founding of a new army that would challenge the Janissaries. His proposals were framed in a way acceptable to the Ulema, such as western techniques taught by Muslims, rather than westerners (Kinross 456). The Janissaries were required to reduce their number by transferring some of their own to the new army corps. Prepared for a Janissary revolt, Mahmud II and his troops quickly destroyed the Janissaries by ambush and then laying siege to their barracks (Kinross 457). With this, a psychological barrier that prevented needed changes to the institutions of the state was removed.

What is evident within this period is a change in the consciousness toward reform and the role of government itself. While the position of Sultan was restored to its former strength, the aim of reform was to go beyond this. Traditionally the government had left
the social affairs and development to customs, traditions and the laws of the *Shar'ia* (Berkes 133). Until 1826 the government's main concern was the maintenance of the social hierarchy, rather than the advancement of society. The government that emerged after 1826 would find itself promoting such advancements through education, equality and economic development. It was reasoned that in doing this the Empire could face modern challenges to its existence. New institutions would be created to deal with the affairs of state in a way that was relevant to the modern world. Traditional institutions that remained were marginalized or their power redistributed in order to present the least threat to Mahmud II's arbitrary rule. A sense of anti-traditionalism characterized the reformers' attempts from this point on, giving it more energy than the traditionally restricted reformers of the Tulip and New Order periods (DeKay 333). The change in the perception of reform came from the events during the first twenty-five years of Mahmud II's rule, that both altered the size of the Empire and created a situation whereby it was reliant upon outside help to put down nationalist risings and threats to its territory (Sicker 110-115). Implementing these reforms involved the need to convince the populace that change would be in their interest. Reform was portrayed as being inclusive of the lower classes, and bringing meaningful change to society. By transforming the image of the Sultan through his interaction with the lower classes and public appearances in the style of a western politician, Mahmud II gained the support of the people. In doing so, he bypassed the need to appeal solely to members of the traditional elites for support and legitimization. (Berkes 94).
Legal and Government Reform

With the military firmly under his power Mahmud addressed the administrative weaknesses of the Empire. Mahmud II's administrative reforms had two aims; one was traditional while the other was modern. Changes in the power and scope of political office were implemented. The office of Seyhul-Islam had its responsibilities confined to religious matters, losing its consultative and interpretive role. The restriction of the Ulema to presiding over religious affairs only cleared the way for the new reform agenda to be introduced without running into strong legal opposition based on the Shar'ia. This development shows the extent of the change of attitude toward government from one that was based on religious precepts and strictures, to one based on reason and a flexibility toward the problems it faced (Berkes 133). The office of Grand Vizier was temporarily abolished, then reconstituted with a vastly different portfolio. The former duties of that office were divided amongst the newly created Foreign, Civil Affairs and Finance Ministries (Kinross 460-461). The new government consisted of other ministries, which would meet in the manner of a Privy Council and submit reports. This represents an expansion of the consultative cabinet idea of the New Order, and bears resemblance to the British cabinet system, with the Grand Vizier, for a time, being called Prime Minister. The first Ottoman newspaper even included descriptions of the British political system (Berkes 127). The similarity may be due to the increasing presence and influence of Britain, represented by Stratford Canning. Britain in the 1830s was the most modern nation on earth and had replaced France as the example looked to by the Ottomans.
Indicative of this new approach is the example of two government departments, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Board of Useful Affairs.

The creation of specific departments marks the next step in the formalization of Ottoman reform, which until then had located many responsibilities and this influence in one office. The early developments in diplomacy during the Tulip Period followed by the permanent embassies of Selim III helped to influence the creation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1835. The ministry had both international and domestic roles, thus giving it a greater scope in presenting its reports and decisions on policy. These areas of responsibility, and the formulation of policies regarding them, meant that the post of foreign minister would hold increasing power and influence in the government, enjoying the same level of importance as the Grand Vizier. Many held both offices during their careers (Hale 18-19). The creation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflected both the need for an organized approach to Ottoman diplomatic policy and the growing influence of European powers. It is reflective of the situation that the Empire faced, and its recognition of that fact. The rise of nationalist movements in parts of the Empire, combined with the advance of Muhammad Ali’s Egypt and the threat of Russia, encouraged greater attempts to form alliances, thus necessitating the need for a formal diplomatic policy. The Board of Useful Affairs was charged with examining the new developments in Europe and determining how they could be applied to the changing circumstances of the empire. The portfolio of the Board covered education, commerce, agriculture and industry. Within its areas of responsibility, its recommendations became the model for adapting both the Empires approach to western reform and the very concept
of government and its responsibilities. Reports by Ottomans returning from Europe reinforce the idea of the need to implement reform in more than just one area. Mustapha Sami (d 1855) wrote of how Europe maintained this development through investment in all aspects of society while preserving the past (Berkes 129). This is evidence among the Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals of the spirit of anti-traditionalism, and the awareness that the government had to be pro-active in maintaining the development of system wide reform.

Military and Education

The expansion of military education not only brought knowledge of modern tactics but introduced into the Empire as a whole ideas and practices far advanced from what had been achieved or even proposed in the eighteenth century. Many of the new practices introduced went against traditional beliefs and the law of the old state. The early medical reforms of the New Order were by the 1820s being emulated and expanded upon. By the 1830s medical schools were founded and authorized by the Sultan in public ceremonies (Berkes 112-113). Equally significant as the opening of the medical schools was the introduction of modern techniques such as dissection of human cadavers. The Empire’s medical knowledge had been based on the works of Galen and restricted by the precepts set down in the Shar’ia. In Mahmud II’s dedication speech at the opening of the medical school, the nature and direction of reform was portrayed (Berkes 113). Modern medical methods replaced what essentially had been a medieval system, and brought European methods to the Empire for the first time. Recruitment was open to all male Ottoman subjects regardless of faith. Such an approach would be evident in the decrees of the
Tanzimat. This gave the reform both a scientific and social role, and mirrors the understanding of the need to remove the traditional restrictions on reform to best achieve its goals. The medical and other schools of higher education provided the state with a means to draw students away from the traditional teachings of the religious schools and toward a modern outlook, in a way that legislation was unable to achieve at the elementary level (Berkes 110).

Education

The success of the military schools fostered attempts by Mahmud II to extend it into civilian schools. The principal providers of civilian education, the medres and religious schools, operated within the millets that constituted Ottoman society. The curriculum was predominantly traditional, religious, and opposed to introducing western knowledge that became available. This resulted in the graduates being produced with little idea of the outside world, or even their own Empire (Davison 166). State-operated education was advanced by Mahmud II to provide an educated populace, supportive of a modern state that could meet the challenges the Empire faced. Additionally, it would free another aspect of the government from the influence of the ulama (Berkes 107). By advancing education among the civil population the reformers hoped to involve the lower classes directly in reform. Pupils were to be representative of all the Empire’s social, religious, and ethnic groups. Models of instruction such as William Lancaster’s monitorial system were considered for adoption. Lancastrian schools were founded inside the Empire as private concerns (Berkes 102-104). The issue of religious instruction within state sponsored equivalents helped to slow such developments until the 1920s.
The aforementioned Board of Useful Affairs in one of its reports identified the parameters in which the education policy of the empire had to be implemented to achieve full effectiveness. Contained within the report are the arguments of traditionalism versus modernism, and religious instruction versus scientific instruction. The report on education concluded:

... the Board has found that nothing can be done without the acquisition of science and that the means of acquiring science and remedying education lie in giving a new order to the schools (Berkes 105).

While their recommendations would not be fully heeded, and ran into the continuing opposition from the traditional educationalists of the millet system, the essence of the report evinces the change in the perception of reform as it relates to the role government within Ottoman society. The report was lost in the bureaucracy of government and the dilemma of religious instruction within the new state schools was not overcome. Resistance from the millets to such interaction continued after Mahmud II’s death and helped to slow the modernization of education. During the years up to the demise of the empire in 1922 the religious schools successfully retained their hold on education at elementary level (Berkes 106).

Innovations and Culture

The drive to formulate an Ottoman identity over the existing preferences for religious and ethnic identities included the revival of literature and language. The Translation Bureau, formed in 1821, would develop beyond its original translation duties into an institution where Ottomans could be exposed to foreign languages, ideas, and
culture. From this institution came the future statesman of the latter part of Mahmud II's reign and of the Tanzimat. Renewed exposure to the ideas of the west, created the need for an additional printing press using the same technology as the Mutiferrika press. The printing press would not only publish books on science and politics but also the first Ottoman newspaper. The inspiration for this came, again, from Muhammad Ali in Egypt who began publishing one in 1828 (Berkes 126). Newspapers had been present in the Empire to a limited extent, through the French Gazette Francaise de Constantinople in 1795, and a business newspaper in Izmir in 1824. The paper the Takvim-ı Vekayi (Calendar of Events) debuted in 1831 by subscription only and represented official government support for the idea of newspapers and dissemination of knowledge. It is justified as a continuation of the tradition of imperial historiography (Lewis 51). The paper provided a platform for the advancement of reform and western ideas in Ottoman society. It contained reports on institutions unheard of in the Empire, such as the British Parliament (Berkes 127). Mahmud II actively supported it, including contributing articles that portrayed him as a supporter of western innovations (Temperley 26). The Vekayi was an indicator to Ottoman society of the direction that Sultan and the reformers intended to take. It also provided a means for the development of the Turkish language and the later alphabet reform efforts. The newspaper allows for comparison with the Tulip Period, and how far reform had affected the empire. The original fetva of 1727 authorizing Mutiferrika's press expressly forbade the printing and sale of religious books. By 1832 advertisements of religious books for sale were appearing in the newspaper.
Among those Ottomans who increasingly traveled to Europe as dignitaries, further support for the adoption of western ideas emerged. Two of the most prominent were the aforementioned Mustapha Sami (d 1855), and Sidek Rifat (1807-56). Their writings provide an insight not only into the way the west was perceived as being the source of modern improvements, but how those reforms had been implemented in the west. Sami wrote:

> From all this it is clear that such a degree of orderliness reached by the Europeans in every work and action, and the indispensability of skill and knowledge in them, are due solely to the diffusion of the sciences and the arts (12-13).

Where Sami writes on the need for government to invest in technology and skill in order to make most of the reforms, Sadik Rifat advanced an actual change of a far different kind. Whether intentionally or not he advanced the idea of political reform that would be realized during the Tanzimat. The two major moves he proposed were an end to the arbitrary power of the Sultan and the development of a government with the same aims as those in Europe (Berkes 131). The writings of Mustapha Sami and Sadik Rifat display further, the extent to which the Ottoman Empire had developed in its approach to the western world. Mehmed Efendi had reported on France but had not suggested any course of action in 1721. Mutiferrika had published a treatise of the different forms of government, including democracy, but with no recommendations. By the 1830’s, Ottoman reformers were not merely comparing the respective socio-political systems, but
also making recommendations for a change in the powers of the Sultan as the next logical step in the westernization or modernization.

In comparing the Tulip Period with Mahmud II’s reform a century later it can be seen that the latter reforms were in response to a variety of geo-political events that created a sense of urgency supporting the need for a change through reform. The Tulip Period aimed to buy time and modernize with limited disruption to the traditional order. It followed a period between Karlowitz in 1699 and Passarowitz in 1718 that featured two wars, with one victory. The reign of Mamud II was filled with multiple internal and external threats as territory was lost and Istanbul itself was threatened. These successive crises helped to strip the Ottomans of deference for doing things the traditional way. The modern military of Egypt under Muhammad Ali, gave an example to the Ottomans on the possibilities of reform with modern means. Ali at various times had threatened the very sovereignty of the Sultan and the Empire due to his superior military techniques and tactics. (Berkes 92). Mahmud II differs from both Ahmed III and Selim III in that he broke through the barrier that had protected the archaic institutions of government from the scrutiny of reform. While this placed him with the modernizers, he retained aspects of the traditional reformer in that his actions served to solidify his power base. While the transformation is evidence of progress, it also exhibits weaknesses in the Ottoman development of reform. Unlike in Europe the source of the transition from traditional to modern government originated from the Sultan and traditional authority in a move to maintain their control of the Empire (Berkes 133).
CHAPTER VI

REACTION AND EFFECT

Beyond the intended effects of reform, its development and its consequences can be considered in the reaction among conservative elements, on a socio-economic level, and in the attitudes of Europeans towards the Empire. Whereas reform was not necessarily concentrated in these areas, its presence did have an effect in both a positive and negative way. The exclusivity of reform in the eighteenth century meant that the lower classes had no direct or deliberate experience of the efforts. Their perception came through the opinions of the Ulema and most notably the Janissaries, giving these groups considerable legitimacy in their reaction. The Ulema represented the main body of opposition to reform within the ruling class, while the Janissaries occupied not just a military role, but also one with social influence through having a presence at court, membership in the merchant guilds, and social links to the lower Muslim classes. Through this position the Janissaries were able to stimulate support from a much broader social base than the reformers of the ruling elite. The character, and strength of the conservative reaction can be determined through the study of these two constituent parts. Relations between the Ulema and Janissaries in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century explain their success against reform in the eighteenth century, and their failure in the nineteenth.
Ulema

The reaction of the Ulema to the advent of western-influenced reform created a dichotomy within its ranks. The general reaction was one of opposition to reform on religious grounds. Included in this generalization however, individual members of the *ulema* played an important role in supporting limited reform efforts and accepting a European presence (Heyd 49). This added legitimacy to the efforts of reformers. The *ulema* consisted of ‘low’ and ‘high’ classes. Some ‘high’ *ulema* held government positions and were exposed to the arguments of reform, and in some cases were convinced of the merits in the context of a short-term solution. The remaining ‘high’ *ulema* along with the impoverished ‘low’ *ulema* consistently opposed reform on the grounds of faith and the threats it posed to their own career paths within the traditional hierarchy. The translation of Arabic, Persian and European works brought with it exposure to secular ideas, challenging the *ulema*’s desire for the Empire to maintain its Islamic integrity. While the opposition to western and secular ideas remained strong among the *ulema*, the support of some helped to legitimize the efforts, at least in the short term. Within Selim III’s consultative council were members of the *ulema* who not only supported the reforms but advanced constructive proposals (Shaw 89-90). The change in the attitude of individual *ulema* reflected various factors based on social class, decline in personal power, and the continuing ascendancy of Europe. The divisions within the *Ulema* were adequately developed, allowing Mahmud II to divide them by placating the concerns of some. In addition to dividing the *ulema* it broke up their loose alliance with the Janissaries.
By the early nineteenth century the higher Ulema, aware of their weakening position, moved toward support and participation in reform. This separated them from the lower ulema, which continued their opposition to reform as their career prospects dimmed with the advent of modernization (Heyd 39). The internal corruption of the ulema that administered the pious foundations, added to the discontent among the impoverished medres students, due in part to the privileges enjoyed by the higher ulema (Heyd 35). Western secular ideas and reforms also were perceived to threaten the students prospects due to their concentration on religious knowledge while the new government needed those proficient in the new ideas of the west. The support for Mahmud II's reform extended to individual ulema overseeing specific reform efforts and advancing new approaches to science. Publication of a book on anatomy by Sani-zade Mehmed Ata-ullah in 1820 ignored religious objection by publishing images of the human body. The new army medical school founded in 1827 eventually overcame opposition to dissection and was administered by a member of the ulema. Another prominent member of the ulema, Molla Mehmed Es'ad, ran the first Ottoman newspaper in the 1830s. Support was sought by the reformers in the form of writings and orders to defend innovations against criticism (Heyd 31-32). Further support for reform came from the dervish orders, as a change occurred in the relative strengths of individual orders. The Melevi were a more moderate order and their members began to occupy the office of Seyhul-Islam from the 1790s onwards. Prior to this the Bekitas, with their close links to the Janissaries, had been the pre-eminent order. With the changes in the balance of power among the dervish orders the outlook of the influential ulema toward reform became
more pragmatic. This facilitated the inclusion of *ulema* in the administration of the new institutions that the reform developed in the 1830s.

Despite the successes of Mahmud II’s approach, the remaining conservative *ulema* managed to slow reform in certain areas. One example of this success was prohibition of visors on military caps on the grounds that a Muslim would be unable to touch the ground with his forehead in prayer (Dekay 226). The *Ulema* themselves secured an exemption from Mahmud II’s abolition of the clothing laws, and with it social barriers. They retained the right to wear the turbans and robes that depicted their learned status. Other issues occupied the *ulema’s* consciousness, ideas such as that the world was round and that disease could be prevented or at least controlled by scientific methods. Despite their reservations the *ulema* were powerless to stop the introduction of quarantine in the 1830s (Berkes 121). The use of portraits of the Sultan, while disapproved of by the *Ulema* resulted, not the ending this practice but in the *ulema* absenting themselves from those events and thus limiting their influence upon them (Heyd 34).

The Janissaries

The Janissaries’ reaction to reform was born out of their elite status within society, opposition to the new methods in the discipline of warfare, and the desire to pursue their commercial interests rather than military duties. Modern techniques from the west were viewed as an affront to the customs and traditions they represented. They fought as individuals and rejected the organization and regimented discipline practiced by western armies. Their successive defeats from the late seventeenth century onward did not alter this attitude among their number (Wheatcroft 89). Reform threatened their position on
two fronts. Incorporating infidel ways would dilute their prestige as divine warriors defending Islam. If the Janissaries became more capable it would necessitate more and more military duties, and less time for lucrative domestic activities (Wheatcroft 100-101).

Their alliance with the *ulema* was strengthened by their links to the *Bekitas* dervish order, giving them a core of zealous anti-western members. The weakening of the influence of the *Bekitas* in favor of the *Melivis* weakened the Janissaries ability to call upon the ulema when reform threatened traditional interests. Despite their opposition to reform they still on occasion displayed great bravery and loyalty as late as 1788 (Wheatcroft 88-89). Properly implemented reforms in other military units provided for comparison against the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Janissaries. The overthrow of Selim III in 1807 was the last display of the alliance between Janissaries and *Ulema*. Incidents such as the killing of a member of the *ulema* by the Janissaries sparked off pitched battles between the students of the *medreses* and Janissaries (Wheatcroft 93). In relations with the lower classes, in which the Janissaries had come to represent their interests politically, the Janissaries of the early nineteenth century had worn away any respect they had from the people, to a situation which they instilled fear and resentment. When they rebelled in 1826, they lacked the allies they traditionally had and were soon destroyed by Mahmud II’s modern army and navy (Kinross 456-457).

**Economic Impact**

The economic impact of reform was for the most part indirect and unintended. It helped to weaken the Empire commercially when compared against Europe. The Ottoman economy remained throughout the eighteenth century primarily domestic;
therefore the concern over the small but growing presence of European commercial interests remained minor (McGowan 724). The need for economic development was evident to the Ottomans, but they had a poor understanding of how socio-economic factors related to reform (Berkes 134). The result of this naivety is evident in that there was no action taken toward reforming or repealing the capitulation rights of European nations. The continuation of this system helped the Europeans control the export economy and hinder the attempts to foster Ottoman identity. Industrial development was subsequently hindered by the advantages in trade afforded to Europe through the capitulatory system. Attempts to develop manufacturing were sabotaged by European ambassadors who wished to preserve their technical advantage in production (Gocek 107). Selim III attempted to increase taxation of foreign merchants and restricted the practice of Ottomans receiving tax exemption by virtue of their links to Europeans. In moving against the capitulations, Selim III instigated the next phase of European penetration of the empire whereby they exercised political influence to protect their interests when they were threatened by reform.

Attempts during Mahmud II’s reign to develop industrially met with similar obstacles. The presence of internal conflict and nationalism had added to it the presence and commercial influence of foreign commercial interests through the continued operations of the capitulations. This restricted the development of an Ottoman middle class that would have added support to reform through the advancement of their commercial interests, as had been the case in Europe over the previous two centuries (Berkes 134). Only Russia before and Japan after the 1830s attempted to adapt their
societies to modern western practices in a similar way, with varying success. The awareness of the need for economic development to be concomitant with social, educational and political reform was present in the writings of the aforementioned Mustafa Sami (Berkes 129). Politically the presence of Europe was far more divisive to the aims of rejuvenating the empire. Able to prevent any modification to the favorable terms they enjoyed under the capitulations, the Europeans, while supporting the general idea of Ottoman reform, maintained and protected the privileges they enjoyed under the capitulations. In 1838 the extent of change in the capitulation relationship is evident in the Treaty of Balta Liman between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. The treaty and subsequent ones with France (1838) and the Netherlands (1840) reaffirmed the capitulation rights (Hurewitz 265-266), and favored those nations in the determination of custom tariff levels. The treaties weakened the Empire’s ability to raise revenue when required and maintain jurisdiction over its subjects (Kutukoglu 60).

Social Impact

Just as belief in the military supremacy persisted after it no longer was a fact, belief in the traditional social order continued up to the nineteenth century. Reforms implemented in the eighteenth century did not aim to re-energize and improve society; rather they existed to preserve the old way. Only with the change in attitude toward the role of the government as a force for change and improvement within society, did reform have an effect. The awaam, or lower classes, during the Tulip Period perceived evidence of the reforms indirectly through their experience of being excluded from the Tulip festivals, the imposition of peacetime taxes to fund festivals, and the avarice of the elite.
At the same time, as a matter of comparison, the lower classes suffered the brunt of the food shortages and epidemics that frequently occurred. The Sultan and Grand Vizier did placate the masses through the throwing of money to discontented mobs and continued the custom of sponsoring the sons of the poor to be circumcised during the circumcision of the Sultan’s own child (Quataert 93). Despite this a new division between Sultan and subject developed that could be readily manipulated by the conservatives in their efforts to stall reform. The increased interest in the west did not translate to increased communication between Europeans present in the Empire and Ottoman Muslims. The government was wary of the Europeans presence and their movements were charted and restricted (Gocek 118). The practice of the capitulation treaties along with the new approach to Europeans in the eighteenth century did facilitate increased contact between the Europeans and non-Muslims, providing new opportunities and a sense of social mobility amongst these groups. Greeks for example provided translators as diplomacy grew, and sent their sons to western universities (Gocek 122). The minorities readily assimilated to European ways, while the granting of tax exemption weakened both the states revenue and political control of groups within its borders. The greater interaction with the west did not create this situation, but assisted it through the more receptive attitude to the presence of Europeans and their ideas. The degradation of Ottoman control over some of their minorities would continue and develop into nationalism, loss of territory, and the development of a middle class that were loyal to their own ethnic groups rather than to the commercial development of the Ottoman Empire as a means to strengthen its world position.
The Tulip Period witnessed the first new clothing laws since the sixteenth century. The laws were used by the Sultan to demarcate the boundaries within society, and legitimize his leadership (Quaerrectart 142). European fashions were evident at the grand balls and festivals hosted by members of the ruling elite, although the Europeans who were officially retained by the Ottomans had to adorn Ottoman clothing. Another aspect of society that was rejuvenated during this period was the re-opening of coffee houses, which Murad IV had closed down in fear that they provided a place for enemies to conspire. This allowed for gatherings and the debate on reform and other topics. It also reflects the consumerism of the age, in providing a commodity for consumption in a public venue. Traditional festivals continued, such as the circumcision festival as described by Giovanni Emo (Shay 21-22). In these festivals the local artisans were commissioned to build floats by the Sultan and members of the ruling elite. In addition to providing a welcome source of income, it provided a public identity for the craftsman. The festivals acted as a way to legitimize the role of the Sultan in the empire. The development of Tulip festivals differed in nature from the other festivals and excluded all but the ruling elite. This included the guilds, and by extension the Janissaries. Despite seeming to support the idea of western reform and liberalization of society the Tulip festivals served as examples of conspicuous greed and discrimination exercised at the expense of the state and people. Suraiya Farouqi’s study of festivals in Subjects of the Sultan notes the difference between the new festivals and the older ones:

...the nature of the festivals celebrated in the Sa’adabad may well also have been of significance. These were neither palace ceremonies of the old
style, nor public rejoicings in the manner of the circumcision festival of 1720, but rather private festivities, confined to the sultan’s circle of favorites and princesses. Possibly this new form of festival was regarded as far more offensive by the artisans and soldiery of Istanbul (182).

Such developments helped to further the gap between Sultan and subject.

The problems facing an Empire that had lost territory placed increasing strain on society. Reform did not address these issues, and the celebration of the Tulip exacerbated the growing discontent. Little changed in the social problems facing the Empire after 1718. Riots broke out in the Cairo in 1722 and 1729 (Shay 24-25). Plague continued to visit the Empire frequently, with methods of control such as quarantine and variolation absent (Wortley-Montague 151-153). The migration of rural population toward urban centers placed increasing pressure on the government, which issued orders to prevent the migration but to little avail (Olsen 70-1). The misappropriation of assistance tax revenues by Damad Ibrahim Pasha led to further deceiving of the populace (Shay 27). In alienating the general populace the seeds of revolt were sown. The disregard for social problems among reformers was compounded by the growing weakness of the pious foundations that had traditionally supported the lower classes in education and health. Subject to increasing corruption by virtue of their protections under Islamic law, the pious foundations were immune from taxes and thus provided a place where the elite could accumulate their fortunes and fund their own political and social ambitions. Attempts to increase revenue, such as rent increases met with similar Islamic legal protections employed by the tradesmen who rented foundation property. This in turn affected social
mobility as the trade guilds became more restrictive in their recruiting (Farouqhi 229-230). With a lack of revenue the foundations, at time used by their administrators corruptly, could not provide support to society in the way that they had before the eighteenth century.

During the New Order the same lack of improvement in social conditions persisted, with many decrees, such as clothing laws, repatriation orders of migrants and the closing of coffee houses and taverns aimed more at control than reform (Shaw 77-78). The ruling elite did not understand that reform would fail unless all benefited. The significance of the French Revolution was lost on the Ottomans, who framed the overthrow of the ancien regime within the context and reasoning of their own historical experience. It was seen as an internal affair for Europe, and not a threat to the Empire. Royalists and Republicans from France were present in the empire and made their differences public (Shaw 194-5). The continued application and control of reform within the ruling class meant that the lower social classes were manipulated by the machinations of the conservative Janissaries and Ulema with only token improvements, such as the supply of grain and coffee to the population of Istanbul (Shaw 175-176).

Mahmud II’s reforms had a deliberate social purpose, or at least a social aspect that was incorporated into the overall improvement of the empire. The importance of education and equality within it would, if successful, establish the pre-eminence of an Ottoman identity over the traditional identity based on religious or ethnic group. The perception of what constituted equality was on a par with the western nations that they looked to for example. The change in approach toward the government’s social role
benefited from the lack of a viable traditional alternative such as the pious foundations, which had by the 1830s declined through corruption and revenue reduction. While many of Mahmud II's proposals remained on paper; the very fact that they existed displays the sea change in both the aim of reform and the perception of the states responsibility to its people. It marks the transition from reform to restore past glories to reform to modernize it. The efforts to forge a new identity were impeded by the familiarity of the traditional socio-religious boundaries of the Empire and the rise and success of nationalist movements. The elimination of dress codes, while aimed at providing a sense of Ottoman identity, also marks the progression toward a secular society (Berkes 125). Although the Ulema could continue to wear traditional clothes depicting status, in general Mahmud wished to introduce western clothing into both military and civilian aspects of the empire. The effect of this was more evident in the urban centers. Rural populations continued to observe traditional sartorial boundaries. With the old boundaries and guidelines gone many Ottomans were left without the familiarity of the old system and its well-defined millets. While this was intended to forge closer links between the various ethnic groups and foster an atmosphere for equality, the confusion among a population used to centuries of social restrictions was difficult to overcome and slowed the acceptance of the new ways (Berkes 123-4).

The Europeans

In adjudging the European reaction to Ottoman reform efforts, two reactions became evident. Europeans encouraged political, military, and social reforms. They opposed economic ones. European interests began with the need to protect European
cloth manufacturing during the Tulip period and led them to sabotage Ottoman attempts at manufacturing their own (Gocek 107). The capitulations were reinforced by actions such as the French gaining the equivalent of most favored nation status in 1740. By the 1790s the benefits that the capitulations brought to European interests, and their ability to grant tax exemption to a growing number of Ottoman subjects, were protected through their growing political influence. This was again demonstrated in the 1830s in the protection of favorable tariffs, resulting in treaties such as Balta Liman in 1838 with Britain. Reform in eventually achieving success and weakening internal opposition facilitated the atmosphere for contact with the Europeans. As this contact grew the Europeans became more aware of the weakness of the Empire, and the opportunities to benefit from it. This began with their defeat by Russia in 1774, continuing into the Nineteenth Century with British moves in southern Arabia and French annexation of Algeria of 1830. Reform itself became shaped and directed by outside forces. This began to shape not only the direction of the Empire through alliances, but the very extent and nature of reform toward socio-political ends and away from economic and industrial development. The European influence from the early nineteenth century onward was as harmful as the Ottoman conservative reaction of the eighteenth century. In protecting their own commercial interests, the Europeans emulated the role of Ottoman conservatives in reform, seeking to control for their own ends.

The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833) between Russia and the empire demonstrates the complexities facing the Ottomans and the increasing lack of control it had over its own situation. The treaty caused considerable concern in the British government in two
areas. It threatened both their commercial interests in the near east as an important and independent source of raw materials. The shortest route to India, the most important colony of the British Empire, went through Ottoman territory (Bailey 61). Britain’s interest in the empire transformed from the mainly commercial concerns of the Levant Company, to the political and commercial interests revolving around India and the need for new markets for surplus industrial production. Russian activity in Central Asia and Persia was considered by the British as not just an attempt to expand southward and secure a warm water port, but also as a move toward India. Should Russia gain passage through the Bosphorus they could threaten the supply routes to India, necessitating reliance on the less than expeditious route via the Cape of Good Hope. Although the Suez Canal would not exist until 1869, the idea of such a route was proposed and considered in the 1830s (Bailey 65).

Britain reacted to the Treaty of Unkia Skelessi and established links with Mahmud II through their ambassador Stratford Canning. Mahmud was encouraged to develop his plans and move toward modernization, which would result in the decrees of the Rose Garden. In taking a more involved approach from the 1830s onwards the British replaced France as the example to which the Ottomans looked for western ideas. In the late nineteenth century they in turn would be succeeded by Bismarck’s newly unified Germany.

The British realized that the Ottoman Empire’s existence was important commercially and geo-politically. Its continued existence would prevent further Russian expansion and necessitate that the Tsar’s forces be maintained in the region instead of in
Central Asia where they could threaten British India (Bailey 61-64). Numerous attempts to disseminate the fear of Russia approaching India included the efforts of private individuals in the *Vixen* affair and the intrigues over Circassia (Hopkirk 157-161).

Similar concerns and intrigue would occupy all the European powers over the rest of the nineteenth century, resulting in war in the Crimea and the increasing view of Europeans that the Empire was the ‘sick man of Europe’.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The Ottoman Empire from the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century experienced numerous events that gradually instilled an awareness of its declining fortunes. The Ottoman attempts at reform from 1718 to 1839 reflect the growing realization of the Empire’s decline. The practice of reform in the eighteenth century was as a temporary expedient to restore certain areas in which the decline was most evident. The perception of reform in the eighteenth century was that it could be applied to specific areas of the Empire without disrupting the society and politics of the empire. Reform was primarily focused in the military and closely related areas. Diplomacy was used by the Ottomans to buy time and gain direct knowledge of European military and technological practices. During the Tulip period, this practice achieved its official aims but also instigated a cultural interaction that had an unintended and much greater effect on the Empire. The diffusion of knowledge made possible by the printing press and put to practical use in the military schools helped to build a new sense of the Empire’s relation to the world. This sustained the momentum of reform after the 1730s. By the time of the New Order, an organized approach to reform had emerged from the haphazard Tulip Period, yet reform followed the same course of concentration on the military and related areas. Reformers were still reluctant to initiate societal reform, but precedents were set that would be built upon by Mahmud II. Mahmud II combined strong leadership with the lessons of the eighteenth century to initiate ambitious changes in how reform was applied
and for what purpose. With this change, the relationship between reform and social
development was better understood. An effort to combine scientific knowledge brought
by reform within the foundation of state secular education was one result. Reforms were
not universally accepted and faced continued obstacles to their implementation. Reform
did however move the Ottoman Empire toward modernization.

The impact of reform on the Empire was gradual and it is in this context that it
failed to sustain the Empire in the long run; it merely helped to prolong its survival.
Limiting of early reform to the ruling class prevented popular support from developing
and allowed the forces of reaction to manipulate the masses toward fulfilling their own
agendas. In the area of economic and social development, reform had little effect prior to
Mahmud II. The opposition of the conservatives to meaningful political and social reform
was emulated by the growing influence and disruption of Europe in the efforts of the
Ottomans to develop industrially and reform the capitulatory system. The weakening of
the conservative opposition in the nineteenth century allowed for a greater effort toward
reform, but saw the replacement of traditional interests with European political and
economic interests. The influence that European states wielded had advanced
considerably since the 1720s when the Empire was still regarded as an important power.
By the 1830s Europeans viewed the Empire as the ‘sick man of Europe’: no longer a
player, but a pawn in the balance of power. Through the capitulations and growing
contacts with the west, the empire had seen the development of nationalism and the
subsequent loss of territory and population. The need to maintain the Empire was
important to various European powers wishing to contain Russia. The commercial treaty
of Balta Lima in 1838 is indicative of the influence that Europe had developed in a century over the Empire, able to influence revenue, control of its people and politics. The slow progress of reform meant that by the 1830s the Empire had lost much of its independence of action and was increasingly reliant on the protection of others and subject to the manipulation of the same. The legacy of reform, although failing the empire, helped to pave the way for the creation of modern Turkey.

The Ottoman Empire and its attempts at reform provide a perspective from which the problems of the modern Islamic world can be studied. Iran’s ayatollahs, Saudi Arabia’s mullahs, and Pakistan’s soldiers all reflect forces that were present in the Ottoman Empire that opposed to its reform. The difficulties of introducing modern western ideas and culture into an Islamic state are echoed in the unintended consequences and subsequent reactions experienced by the Ottoman Empire in attempting to introduce limited western influences to the Empire. This is but one of the reasons for the present day difficulties in relations between Islamic states and the west, a full list being beyond the scope of this thesis. The initial attempts at interaction between the Ottoman Empire and Europe provide in microcosm an illustration of the problems encountered today based on religious, social, political, historical and cultural grounds.
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