CHAPTER I

THE DECLINE OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE BEGINNING OF REFORMS
The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest and most influential empires in world history. With time it became the third greatest Muslim empire/caliphate after the Umayyad and the Abbasid. It extended over three continents – Asia, Europe and Africa. Standing at the crossroads of the European West and the Asian East, the Ottoman Empire played a very significant role in world history. Looking at the world map of the early sixteenth century, we find three great Muslim empires: the Mughal Empire in India, the Safavid Empire in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Compared to the other two, the Ottoman Empire was strong, expansive, glorious and long-lived (survived for more than six centuries until its destruction in the twentieth century).

Three major military achievements elevated the Ottoman state to a world power:

(i) The conquest of Constantinople (now Istanbul) -- the symbolic centre of eastern Christendom -- in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II (1451-81), providing the Ottomans with a strong strategic base to control the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The Ottomans had a strong modern navy supported by armed forces (the Sipahi cavalry and the Janissary infantry) which were known for their discipline, morale and professionalism and were well equipped with modernized artillery and elite infantry.

(ii) The successful Ottoman military campaigns towards the east during the reign of Sultan Selim I (1512-20) and the conquest of Azerbaijan, northern Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt. In subsequent decades, Ottoman
supremacy was extended to Arabia, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Yemen and the states of East Africa as far as Morocco.

(iii) The European military campaigns of Sultan Suleyman I (the Magnificent) who ruled the Ottoman Empire for 46 years (1520-66) longer than any other sultan, and led his army on thirteen campaigns to the frontiers of his domain. Ottomans conquered Belgrade, Rhodes, Budapest and most of Hungary. He even laid siege, though unsuccessfully, of the capital of Habsburg Empire, Vienna. At the time of Suleyman’s death in 1566, the Ottoman Empire was a major European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Persian Gulf power.

The sixteenth century was the century of expansion of the Ottoman Empire and historians consider the period 1453 to 1566 as its Golden Age. The seventeenth century was the century of preservation and the eighteenth century was the century of defeats. Although the Ottoman navy was defeated by a coalition of Western states at Lepanto in 1571—only five years after Suleyman’s death—the Ottoman navy was able to re-establish its naval presence by taking Cyprus from Venice later in the same year. Not only the sultans, the grand viziers too (e.g., the Koprulu family which provided at least five talented grand viziers during 1656 to 1716) took measures to arrest the decline. The gradual decline was arrested and lost territories regained but lost again and these ups and downs continued for a very long time.

Determined to capture Vienna, the Ottoman army led by Kara Mustafa, a grand vizier of Koprulu dynasty, made a second siege of Vienna in
1683 but were defeated ending in the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz which granted Austria the provinces of Hungary and Transylvania and marked for the first time in history that the Ottoman Empire actually relinquished territory. Russians kept pushing into Ottoman territory in order to capture the Black Sea power. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Ottomans achieved many successes, including the defeat of Peter the Great at the Prut River in 1711. This might have made the Ottomans self-complacent. In 1690's, Ottomans were simultaneously at war with Austria and Russia and they were defeated on both fronts, culminating in the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca (1774). The treaty was an enormous blow to the Ottomans. Besides annexing European territories ruled by Ottomans, it granted the Russians extensive commercial privileges in the Black Sea, a diplomatic presence in Istanbul, and the protection of the Orthodox Christian faith on Turkish soil. These provisions could have enabled Russia to be the protector of the Greek Orthodox millet within the Ottoman Empire. These unfortunate developments clearly showed that the Ottoman armed forces and its naval power had lost the technological advantages which they once possessed. Modernization of the Ottoman military was the urgent need for survival. The Ottoman Empire had perhaps over-extended its power—a mistake which those in power sometimes make. The Empire having extended to three continents and having a very long coastline created problems of external defence and internal cohesion. It was not able to properly maintain the great disciplined armies and could no longer finance them. Once the terror of Europe as the Ottoman forces steadily advanced towards Vienna, the Empire
started going down after its Golden Age (1453-1566) and eventually collapsed with World War I, enabling the European colonial powers to carve it up leaving only that small portion which is now the Republic of Turkey.

Before going into the causes of decline, we may first have a cursory look at the developments taking place in Europe at that time which gave Europe a position of strength. An eminent scholar has nicely analysed these developments by observing that during the period sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, Europe experienced the thrust towards modernization, ushering in: (a) the scientific and philosophical revolution, (b) the cultural and theological revolution, (c) the political and democratic revolution, and (d) the technological and industrial revolution. The industrial revolution brought with it revolution in technology, production processes, the generation of energy, transport, the markets, agricultural revolution, urbanization and all round commercial expansion. The Ottomans allowed penetration of European commerce into their empire which had a crippling effect on the native craft industries, shifted the balance of trade against Ottomans and made them dependent on European traders. The grant of capitulations to various European countries not only gave them commercial privileges but made the residents of those countries subject to the jurisdiction of their country’s law (not the Ottoman law) and they could claim a right of hearing in a consular court. All this gave a relative superiority to the West.

The eighteenth century defeats on battleground placed Turkey on the defensive; a general decay was apparent; loss of military glory had resulted in
loss of political importance; and loss of power had demoralized the nation. Intellectual life had been affected too. It appeared as if Ottomans have lost their absorptive and expansionist power. It was Tsar Nicholas I of Russia who in 1833 described the Ottoman Empire as “the Sick Man of Europe.”

What led to this unfortunate state of affairs? Internal decay preceded military defeats. The Ottoman historians date the decline of the Ottoman Empire from the death of Suleyman the Magnificent. As they noticed the first signs of breakdown in the Ottoman institutional structure, e.g., the decay of the sipahi class\textsuperscript{5} some writers would push back the date to Suleyman’s own reign.\textsuperscript{6}

According to a Turkish proverb, “The fish stinks from the head.” It began at the top. The Ottoman society was extremely traditional with a legitimized hierarchy comprising the Sultan, the Ulema, the army, and the administrative elite at the top. Occupational groups like peasants, craftsmen and tradesmen formed the lower stratum of the society. That society had a totalitarian and centralized state which controlled the whole socio-economic and cultural-political life from above. In such a set-up of society, decay at the top will disintegrate the entire system.

The seventeen sultans after Suleyman who ruled for more than two centuries (Appendix-I gives the list of Ottoman sultans and Appendix-II highlights the chronology of important events during the reign of each of the sultans) were not all of high calibre to effectively administer such a vast and complex empire as the Ottomans held. Until 1600, succession depended on merit and when the practice of fratricide was discontinued in favour of
seclusion, the princes raised in palaces were recluse with no military and administrative training. The great ghazi spirit with which the early sultans themselves led the armies was on the wane. During the reign of weak sultans, the grand viziers and army commanders sometimes arrogated to themselves wide powers without being authorized by the Sultan. Starting with Hurrem Sultana (Roxelana), wife of Suleyman, palace control of government, mainly by mothers of sultans and heirs presumptive, increased, giving rise to bribery, favouritism and corruption causing intrigues in public offices. Merit which was the hallmark of Ottoman administration was under eclipse.

Another cause of the decline of the Ottoman Empire was that the original purity of Islam had been forgotten and many new ideas and practices had crept into it. Moral standards had also gone down at least in big cities and the ruling group. The need for reform was felt in order to restore to Islam to its original purity. How the Umayyad caliph, Umar II ibn Abdul Aziz (717-20) bailed out the ummah in very difficult situations was to be emulated instead of just external expansion. For Umar II, it was more important to return to the original principles of Islam and restore the internal unity of Ummah and he was successful.

The janissary, which at one time was the pride of Ottoman military, and its most efficient unit, now became corrupt, unruly and rebellious. When Osman II wanted to control their excesses, he was deposed and then executed by them. This weakened the military, the Ottoman economy, and the system of government. The series of defeats suffered by Ottomans, particularly from
Russians, clearly showed that the janissaries were of little use in the defence of the Empire.

The *timur* (feudal-like system of government) was also affected by the internal degeneration. To meet the needs of an expanding empire, the timur system was converted to a tax-based system of farm units, requiring administrators to send a portion of their tax revenues to Istanbul. Local administrators treated land as their private property, siphoned tax money, and removed any incentive for the peasant population to produce. The effects were not only economically disastrous, but this weakening of the centralised government also encouraged local bandit raids and peasant revolts, consequences which the government was ill-equipped to afford.

The situation was the same in all the institutions of the ruling class. Most members of the *Kapikulu* corps and the feudal *sipahis* married, left the barracks, became merchants, artisans or estate owners, and abandoned military training altogether, and kept their corps memberships only for the revenues or privileges they received in return. They sent inferior substitutes when called to duty.

Overpopulation was also a factor for the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The problems of overpopulation resulted mainly from radical increases in the birth rate and declines in the death rates, a result most likely of the era of peace and security that the Ottoman Empire had brought and a decline in the frequency of the plague.⁸
Moreover, the economy of the Empire declined. The financing of the wars was a great drain on the state exchequer and resulted in general inflation. The villages were depopulated in favour of cities and towns, where there were not enough jobs for everyone. The guilds, which formed the backbone of the Ottoman craft industry, had become so entrenched and less enterprising that they could no longer compete in the international market.

“Economic decline had pushed the fiscal administrative-military institutions, basic to Ottoman rule, out of gear. This was reflected in internal and external failures: military, economic, etc. the statesmen of that century were sucked into the vortex at each attempt to make reforms. The eighteenth century was to face the task of deciding at which point the screws could be broken and turned into a linear path towards a new order.”

The decline of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the economic field, and the rise of the West was due to the thrust of modernisation, bringing about a new consciousness in the ruling class, which began to think in terms of “reforms on western model”.

The process of westernisation had started in the eighteenth century in a modest way. Scholars of Ottoman history generally take the view that the military failures evident from the Treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) which confirmed Western military superiority made the Ottomans look West-wards. The grand vizir Nevsehirli Ibrahim Paşa (1718-30) also favoured
this tendency. A memorandum emphasizing the need to catch up with the European military progress was submitted to Sultan Ahmed III (1703-30). The year 1718 is, from this perspective, taken as the beginning of westernisation.\footnote{11} Many observers especially students were sent to Europe by the Ottoman Sultans to know about the nature and method of material progress there and to find out solutions to the existing Ottoman problems. As early as 1720, Mehmet Faizi, known as Yirmisekiz Celebi or Celebi Mehmet was sent to Europe by the Sultan to seek and adopt whatever was of utility to the Turks.\footnote{12} His son, who accompanied, Celebi, got permission from Sheik - ul - Islam for Ibrahim Muteferrika to set up the first printing press in the Empire to produce books in Turkish and the seventeen books that he published were mostly related to scientific and military subjects.\footnote{13} This initiative had a significant impact on the cultural and social life of the Ottomans. Subsequently the French revolution had a decisive impact on the Turkish intellectuals and affected to a greater or lesser degree every layer of that Muslim society.\footnote{14}

The above discussion clearly brings out that it is wrong to believe that the ruling class faced the internal decline without making any efforts to amend the situation. There were reformers and reforms at crucial times during the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries, though many of them were under the illusion that the Ottoman system was far superior to any thing that the infidels might develop - an attitude that had considerable justification only when first evolved in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. According to this idea, the reason for Ottoman decline was a failure to apply the techniques and forms of organizations that had achieved success at
the peak of the Ottoman power, normally equated with the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent. To the traditionalist reformers of the 17th and 18th centuries, then, reforms could be achieved by making the system work as it had previously, by eliminating those who squandered public money and property, ending bribery and corruption, making appointments only according to merit, reforming and revitalizing the traditional military corps, and throwing out all those who refused to perform the duties required of them. For example, Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640) and grand vezir Mehmed Koprulu (1656-61) were mainly concerned with eliminating corruption and other social and economic evils. These reformers were often ruthless in their methods, but to a surprising extent they were successful, restoring things sufficiently well for the Empire to recover from the worst effects of disorganisation, but these reforms alone were not enough. The Ottoman Empire had to match the increasing superiority of the West brought by the thrust of modernisation, particularly in scientific and technological fields. This they had to borrow from the West to effectively oppose the West.

The long years of war had so badly drained the Empire of its resources and the loss of territories long considered integral parts of the Empire had so much demoralized the people that any efforts to save the Empire seemed impossible. However, for the first time a few Ottomans began to see that reform was possible if only the Empire could discover what Europe had done to achieve its new supremacy and incorporate what was the best into the Ottoman system. Reformers now began to accept the possibility that might be
used to strengthen and preserve the traditional ways, particularly new forms of military organisation and weapons. Traditionalistic reform, therefore, became a combination of old and new style of modern reform during the nineteenth century. Even this limited change was to develop only hesitantly and gradually in response to new challenges and in the face of continued opposition from those who felt that any “innovations” would only weaken the entire Ottoman structure. Therefore, reforms had their ups and downs during the eighteenth century; temporary successes usually led to disaster for the reformers, but enough traces remained to provide models and experience for those who followed.

The Reforms of Amca Zade Huseyin Paşa:

The Ottoman history of the second half of the seventeenth century is dominated by the name of Koprulu. The appointment of Koprulu Mehmed Paşa as grand vazier in 1656 marked the beginning of a period during which many members of his family were to hold this office.

Amca Zade Huseyin Paşa (1644-1702), son of Mehmed Koprulu’s eldest brother, served as grand vizier from 1697 to 1702 during the period following the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Amca Zade Huseyin Paşa sought to meet the needs of the common people as well as those of the army and government by emphasising economic and financial solutions. The excise taxes on tobacco and coffee – which had been doubled and then doubled again during the war to provide the treasury with ready cash – were substantially reduced along with impositions on essentials such as oil and soap. Efforts again
were made to restore the value of coinage by replacing the debased wartime issues with coins of full value. Tax arrears owed to the treasury for all special wartime impositions were excused without penalty, and the impositions themselves were abolished, while the traditional taxes were geared more to the ability to pay. The concessions were given to induce cultivators to return to their fields and merchants to their trades. Efforts were made to develop factories to compete with European manufactured imports that had devastated the traditional Ottoman craft industries.

Huseyin Paşa also took steps to make the Ottoman army effective and reliable. Members of the army no longer performing their duties were dismissed and replaced by those who were required to remain under discipline and training at all times. The previous practice of taking artisans into the corps to serve on a part-time basis was abolished.

Efforts were also made to revive the Ottoman Navy. The fleet was divided into squadrons, each under a derya-bey (bey of the sea), who had to supervise the captains and their ships and ensure that each man was paid and trained and that each ship had sufficient ammunitions and supplies. A general staff, between the grand admiral and his captains, was created, including three main assistants of the grand admiral, the Kapudane (rear Admiral), the Patrona, (Vice-Admiral), and the Riyale (Staff Admiral). All vacancies filled according to ability and experience. A special artillery corps was also established to end the navy’s dependence on the Kapikulu Artillery and enable it to develop a service more responsive to its own needs.\textsuperscript{18}
The Reforms of Halil Hamit:

Halil Hamit was a Turkish Muslim whose experience was shaped largely by long years of service in the Scribal Institution, particularly in the office of the Reis-ul-Kuttap, in-charge of the Sultan’s correspondence and governments. He gained a wider view of the Ottoman system only after 1781, when he was appointed lieutenant (Kethuda) of the Grand Vizir. He was grand vizir from 1782 to 1785.

During the conflict with Russia over Crimea, Halil Hamit attempted to strengthen the existing Ottoman forces against the war that he thought would follow. Soldiers were mobilized and sent with supplies and ammunition to the major border forts, which were repaired and, in a few instances, entirely reconstructed under his supervision. Systematic efforts were made to establish standing reserves of supplies and men at major rear-guard posts at Edirne, Sofia, and Isakçi to provide reinforcements to whichever front first met the enemy attack and to enable the army to regroup in case the enemy broke through front line positions.

Halil Hamit attempted to end the old-new dualism by coordinating the two groups and giving the older corps the organisation, discipline, and weapons associated with the new corps and schools. De Tott’s Rapid – Fire Artillery corps was revived and enlarged along with the mathematics school with the help of French technicians. French technicians largely appointed in the Engineering school. French fortification experts modernised the major frontier forts, published Turkish translations of French textbooks and built a
fortification school that became the basis for the later Army Engineering School.

Efforts were also made to restore the traditional institutions. Inspectors were sent to the provinces to force the timar holders to live on their lands, train, and come to the army when called. Those of their officers found to be committing violations or concealing vacancies were subjected to instant execution. Members of the Janissary corps refusing to accept training and discipline were dismissed. Children of members were not allowed to enrol in the corps unless they were found to have particular ability and interest in the service. Halil Hamit dismissed as many as two-thirds of the men listed on the Janissary rolls, raising the salaries of the balance to make them cooperate in modernising the corps. He also established groups of Janissaries and sipahis to be trained in the new weapons and tactics of the European-style infantry and artillery.

Halil Hamit devoted considerable attention to the Empire’s economic problems. Though orders to restore the value of the currency and to control prices were traditional, he encouraged the revival of Ottoman craft industries, which had been overwhelmed by European competition during the previous century. The cloth-manufacturing guilds were encouraged to increase production in order to meet the current need. Ibrahim Mutaferrika’s old printing press, which had long since fallen into disuse, resumed printing, and treasury funds were used to begin publication with the official chronicles of
Suphi and Izzit, who described the development of the empire in the two decades after the Patrona Revolt.

On 27th April, 1785, Halil Hamit was dismissed and soon after executed by order of the Sultan. Without his encouragement and stimulus the impetus for reform was lost. In 1787 the French technicians were withdrawn from Ottoman reformation. 22

The New Reforms of Selim III, 1789-1807:

Reform in Turkey was a complex phenomenon as solution to the old problems created new problems but the process brought the Empire close to contemporary European society and culture. Sultan Selim III was the first ruler of Turkey who conceived that without reforms the Empire could not regain its lost vigour. He therefore introduced a series of reforms that were far-reaching and were considered radical. He separated the administrative and military functions in the army and established new hierarchies. He also established military drills under foreign advice and tried to reduce the number of Janissaries. This ruler realised that the Janissaries were too slow and reluctant to accept the reforms and he created a new corps, known as ‘New Order’ (Nizam- i - Jadid), gave them the latest weapons, and employed teachers for them from France and England. He separated the new corps from the rest of the army both in command and financing. Reforms along the same lines were instituted in the navy and artillery. He modernised the existing cannon foundries. He also established land and naval engineering schools.
The reforms of Sultan Selim III, even though radical for the army, did not encompass the social, economic and governmental sectors of the Empire. He was very much impressed by the Austrian and French military movements. He tried to make the old institutions work better and more honestly. He discouraged nepotism and established a hiring system based on ability.²³

Sultan Selim III was the first ruler who tried to transform the Empire, along western line. He realised the necessity of making more comprehensive reforms. Modernization, it was felt, would require a thoroughgoing examination of the basic traditional institutions themselves. It came to be realised that a policy of innovation could not be carried out while the traditional system remained entirely intact, and that it would necessitate some alterations in those institutions that were the main obstacle to change.

In addition to external challenges the new phase of reform was stimulated by certain economic and political trends which were products of the silent and indirect impact of the West. They were:

i) The increasing impoverishment of the people, and the increasing financial difficulties of the government.

ii) The rise of strong local lords to challenge the central authority, and

iii) Uprisings followed by movements for independence among the non-Muslim peoples.

In-spite of stately intentions, Sultan Salim III was a man lacking in determination. From this personal weakness emerged something which we
might call an innovation: his habit of organising councils and committees to
discuss the affairs of the state, in which he invited his advisors to submit
projects of reform and insisted on having them express their opinions in
absolute freedom.

Under Sultan Selim's regime, the scope of reform was widened to
include the following points of view:

i) That the problem of rehabilitation was not merely a matter of military
reforms but also a matter of civil reform;

ii) That a comprehensive reform plan should be devised by deliberation and
universal consent;

iii) That economic recovery should occupy a major place in the reforms.

Above all, most of the reports were concerned with military reforms. On
this major topic the opinions were divided into the following three groups:  

i) That the Janissaries and other military orders must be restored to their
original forms;

ii) That the reforms were not possible in the older military institutions and
in their out fashioned methods and, therefore they must be abolished and
replaced by new methods;  

iii) Those new and modern methods should be introduced under the pretext
of restoring them to their original forms.

A majority of advisors were in favour of continuing the training of new
military forces and gradually converting the entire military organisation to the
type of those new forces. Nearly all agreed on the absolute necessity of inviting more European military officers as trainers the majority of them French and English. Translations from European works on military science were also mentioned in some of the reports as one of the urgent needs.

Most of the reports contained details about the needs of the various branches of the military forces, such as artillery, arms equipment, topography and map-making, ship-building and arsenals, etc.

A second major topic handled in many of the reports was the problem of reforming the timars and other beneficiaries. However, there were no new and far-reaching proposals regarding the solution of the difficulties. As many repeated the necessity of enforcing the law (previously passed under Halil Hamit) to reform the timar system, a modified form of the same law was prepared later following the suggestions given in the reports. Many of the reports emphasised the point that the beneficiaries fallen vacant should not be sold or farmed; their revenues should be collected directly by the Imperial Mint.

The third major point discussed was the need for reforming the currency. The idea suggested was that of liquidating the debased currency and restoring the real value of coins. Yet Selim, under the economic pressure of the Russian war, had to resort to the old policy and issued debased money. Although this had secured some additional income to the treasury, it led ultimately to further economic difficulties.
In a close agreement in the discussion it was resolved that the West should be taken as the source and model of anything to be introduced.\textsuperscript{26}

It has its own significance and importance as the traditional (old) institutions and systems were gradually decaying under various reforms giving rise to new forms which were quasi-modern in their character and, in many cases, were a prelude to the European cultural dominance over the Ottoman Empire.

**The Turning point in Ottoman Reformation:**

The emergence in the early eighteenth century of the idea that it would be necessary to reform the existing organisation by introducing new methods marked a turning point\textsuperscript{27} in Ottoman reformation.

The period of progressive reforms following the Treaty of Kaynarca was ended by a conservative reaction and another war with Russia in 1787. This war, in which (with the outbreak of the French Revolution) Turkey was entirely isolated,\textsuperscript{28} and this situation compelled the Turks to reflect upon their weaknesses and backwardness.

Sultan Selim III was the first Sultan to attempt to transform his empire along western lines rather then to try to go back to the good old days of Suleyman the Magnificent, (1520-1566). He attempted and planned a large-scale westernization in the administration, military, judiciary and commerce, which were considered the initial stages of the process of modernization in the Empire. Sultan Selim III failed because of the opposition of military and
religious vested interests, the janissaries, and the Ulema. His successor, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), was more successful in destroying the Janissaries completely, which reflected a significant victory for the modernist intelligentsia against the conservative religious forces. Sultan Mahmud II did not transform his Empire, but he did clear the grounds for later reformers by removing two great obstacles to change -- the Janissaries and the provincial lords.

Military Reforms:

Sultan Selim III was a true Ottoman reformer of the eighteenth century, who devoted most of his attention and energy to the military. Selim and his reform cadre were able to proceed with the task of carrying out those proposals they chose to accept. Orders were issued to reform all the existing military corps, including the Janissaries. The basic principle of organizational reform was the separation of the administrative and military functions in each corps, with a separate supervisors being appointed to handle the commanders, the Agas (high officials) were left with military duties. New organisations were established to assure the maximum ability of each corps. Officials and men were subjected to examinations, and those found lacking in ability and honesty were replaced. Efforts were made to assure that appointments were made only according to ability, but promotions were made on seniority basis. The barracks of the corps were enlarged and modernised. All members were required to do exercises regularly.

In addition to the general reforms applied to all the corps, there also were specific ones for the special needs of each. Efforts were made to issue
new rotational system: one of each ten sipahis from the same district was sent home to administer the holdings of the others, while the rest stayed in the field, at advance bases along the frontiers, or in the service of the provincial governors. The provincial governors were ordered to train youths from their own followers or attendants to provide replacements as and when needed. Sons of the members were allowed to enter the corps only if they had ability. Efforts were made to issue new European-type rifles and ammunition to the janissaries, with each regiment being given eight trained riflemen to provide leadership and instruction in their use. Their barracks were rebuilt and enlarged, and their officers were won over with special gifts and tax farms.

Reforms were far more successful in the older Artillery (Topcu), Mortar (Humbaraci), Mine-Laying (Lagimci), and Cannon-Wagon (Top Arabaci) corps already influenced by the work of de Tott and others. They were completely reorganised and put under the command of able young Ottoman officers trained by de Tott, assisted by French advisors brought in after 1794. Discipline was restored; the men were not allowed to marry and had to remain in their barracks; and more money was provided to attract the best youths into the service.

Sultan Selim III developed and established an entirely new force or new army, called Nizam-i-Jadid (New order), entirely separate and independent of the Janissary system. The force was organised, trained, and clothed in the European style, with European tactics, discipline, and weapons applied under the direction of experts brought from France, England and Germany. To
finance the corps, an independent treasury was created, the *Irad-i-Jadid* (New Revenue), with funds from new sources like lands brought into cultivation. The new institution was created to supply revenues not previously collected by the treasury, leaving the latter intact and unreformed.

By the end of Selim’s reign, then, the *Nizam-i-Jadid* army had a large number of men armed with new weapons and trained and commanded by European officers, and they were praised for their efficiency by almost all the Europeans who saw them. Together with the reformed Artillery Corps it should have provided the Sultan with an efficient military force, able to meet the enemy on equal terms.\(^3\)

**Economic Reforms:**

In the eighteenth century, many outstanding innovations in the thinking underlying the reports were the major place given to economic measures. Some of the measures considered will clear this as well as the inadequacy of the means chosen.\(^4\)

Much of the financial troubles had come from the treasury’s traditional systems, with specified revenues assigned to particular expenditures and promissory notes issued to care for additional obligations, to be paid from the first available revenues. There was no overall budget, and the result was periodic financial chaos. Selim responded to the problem, not by trying to establish a budgetary system but simple by making the old system work.\(^5\)
The idea of getting foreign loans as a relief for the financial crisis was raised for the first time. However, receiving a loan from a European country met with opposition on the ground that it would be degrading for a Muslim government. Some advised arranging a loan from a Muslim country, but there was found none able to lend. Secret negotiations with the representatives of the Netherlands met with no success. There remained, then the three traditional fiscal methods: confiscation of the property; compulsory donation; and the debasement (*rais*) of the coinage; however, these did not change the conditions consistently, but only led to inflation and the devaluation of the money paid by the government.

The prohibition of export of precious metals and stones and the exploitation of mines were recommended by the reports in connection with the financial crisis.

Many of them advised to concentrate on the trade because trade was the main source of the Economic development. Efforts were made to create a Turkish merchant marine. Among the Muslims, those who had money should invest in the merchant marine; they should buy ships and establish companies.

None of the measures taken in accordance with the recommendations of the reports produced any tangible economic reform; they only implied the birth of consciousness that the lack of a modern national economy lay at the root of the troubles.\(^{34}\)

Selim’s most important economic successes came in his efforts to regulate the provision of grain, coffee, and other food to the cities, thus partly
counteracting inflation, though these continued to be endemic to the end of his reign.\textsuperscript{35}

**Technical Reforms:**

Technical reforms were introduced into the Empire to provide the Sultan's armies with modern weapons. The cannon foundries and rifle works were modernised by officers brought from France and England.

Technical schools were established to train young ottomans in the services and techniques of the West. Selim was much slow in expanding technical schools because he concentrated on the military reforms particularly the *Nizam-i-Jadid* (New Order). In 1795 Sultan Selim established the new *Muhendishane-i-Berri-i-Humayun* (Land Engineering School), to train army officers in the theoretical and practical aspects of artillery, fortification, mine lying, and engineering. All graduates who did not stay to teach or assist were assured of positions as officers in the cannon, Mortar, and Mine laying corps, and all the officers of these corps, in turn, were required to go to the school at regular intervals for refresher courses. As far as can be made out, none of its foreign teachers or Turkish graduates were allowed to serve with the janissaries, but they did take most of the posts of the *Nizam-i-Jadid* army and the Artillery and associated corps, providing a nucleus of well trained, modern and reforming officers to help Sultan Selim and his successors in their efforts.\textsuperscript{36}
Navy (Naval) Reforms:

Gazi Hassan was able to build 22 modern ships of the line by Selim’s accession, though he was much less successful in creating a cadre for able officers and men. Also he provided the plan and cadre for further reforms undertaken by Selim’s boyhood companion Kucuk Husain Paşa, who was grand admiral through most of the Sultan’s period between March 11, 1792 and January 7, 1803. Several laws were passed and enforced to attract and retain able officers, with promotions based on ability, and promotion maintained to assure that the best men would rise to the top. Inspectors were sent out to prevent the captains from diverting the food, equipment, and money assigned to their ships to their own profit. High salaries, regular training, and a system of discipline and control were adopted to encourage the development of sailors into a professional and permanent force. The Imperial Naval Arsenal (Tersane) was enlarged under the direction of French naval architects. New provincial arsenals were opened. The old ships were modernised, and many modern ships were built according to the latest standards of naval architecture. The naval school at Haskoy was enlarged and modernised; lessons in geometry and arithmetic now accompanied by more practical subjects in seamanship and navigation were made compulsory; and a separate division was created to provide training in naval architecture, geography, and cartography.

A superintendent was appointed by the government, for the naval affairs (umur - u - bahriye - naziri), he was also in-charge of an Admiralty department with its own treasury (Tersane Haznesi). Under him separate
military and administrative departments were organised, with the grand admiral in-charge of naval organisation, arrangement, equipment, training and military command as well as the assignment, promotion and demotion of men and the maintenance and administration of ships; the director of the naval treasury was responsible for all matters regarding provisions, supplies, and weapons of the arsenal. A separate naval medical service was established, and doctors and surgeons were assigned to take care of people of each ship. European medical books were translated into Turkish; instruments and books were purchased from Europe; and each of the medical students was required to gain practical experience by serving, which were very useful for the treatment of infectious diseases, particularly the plague. Thus as part of the process, the navy was modernised, and developed.  

**Administrative and Social Reforms:**

Most of Selim’s reforms were only partly successful. There were no general efforts at governmental or social modernization, only piecemeal attempts were made to meet the old problems in the old ways. Government officials always had been relatively independent in their posts and were allowed to spend as much as they wanted without either administrative or financial supervision. Selim responded to the problem, by reorganising the scribal service into an expanded administrative department of the grand Vezir, called *Bab-i-Āsafi*, subjecting the scribes to new standards of honesty and efficiency, and dismissing those unable or unwilling to comply. Bribery was considerably eliminated; scribes were appointed and promoted once again.
according to ability; and the reis-ul-kuttap, now administrative assistant to the grand Vazir, was put in charge of making the system work. Selim’s only other important administrative reform involved a reduction of the number of Ottomans holding the rank of Vezir. Efforts were made to reduce the appointment gifts given to the Sultan by Ottomans appointed to administrative positions in the hope that they in turn would no longer be forced to demand and accept bribes and extra legally taxed to recoup the expense of obtaining and maintaining their positions.

Sultan Selim’s social reforms were not innovative. The urban and rural problems were met with regulations attempting to suppress their most serious results. Rural labour that came from the countryside was forced to return to their homes, whether or not there were land and jobs waiting for them there. An order was issued from authority, closing hotels, taverns, and coffeehouses to prevent transients from finding lodging and food in the cities, and also forcing them to leave. Increased tension among different religious groups, largely consequent on the economic difficulties of the time, were “solved” with regulations requiring persons to wear only the traditional clothing allowed to them according to their class and rank, assuming that if everyone knew the position and place of every other person, there would be fewer conflicts.

Educational Reforms:

As in every other field, Selim’s measures in education were expansions upon the developments of the preceding period.
In 1769 the school of Engineering (Muhendishane) was established for training engineers and officers. This school expanded in 1792 and in 1795 under Sultan Selim III. Most of the teaching in this school was done by Turks. Foreign help was provided chiefly by Frenchmen, and also few English and Swedish names among those listed as teachers, in the school. Two foreign languages, Arabic and French, one representing the Islamic sciences and the other new European science, were compulsory for all students.

Selim III took a direct interest in the books and liberty. He donated some instruments and a number of books on mathematical sciences. He encouraged the translation of books from French; one was a work by Vauban, the French engineer of fortifications that were considered impenetrable in Louis XIV’s time.

It was at this time that books in Western languages came into use. The engineering school had an attached library. Most of its holdings were in French. Dictionaries and works on mathematics and military sciences predominated. It is reported that there was also a set of the French Encyclopaedia.

In 1793, permanent embassies were established at the leading European capitals (London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Madrid). Ambassadors were instructed to study both the military situation in the countries to which they were assigned and the administration and civil organization. To each were to be assigned a few young men to learn the language of the country and other knowledge useful to the state.
Meanwhile, some of those educated in the new schools, or in contact with European life, began to write on scientific subjects in French and Turkish.

Selim sent young Turks to Europe with his ambassadors, ordering them to learn European languages and get acquainted with European institutions.

Selim seems to have been heedless (careless) of the psychological disturbances created among the people by his innovations. There are indications that his ambitions were wider than his achievements. According to Leangles, "that beside his desire to have a modernised army Selim intended to crush the resistance of the Ulama, and that he wanted to restrict the authority of the Seykh ul – Islam in order to be an independent enlightened monarch, and finally, that he wished to benefit from the developments which the Europeans had achieved in sciences and arts. After Selim’s downfall, Mahmud II, carried reforms of far-reaching consequences in the empire."

The Modern Reforms of Mahmud II (1808-1839):

The new era of modern Turkish reforms was started in the last decade of the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839). He was one of the more effective and forceful rulers in the Ottoman Empire. As already discussed above, janissaries had become a serious threat to the empire. Faced with a series of defeats, mainly from Russians, the janissaries were of little use in the defence
of the empire. They had become so powerful, corrupt, and violent that they
deposed and elevated sultans at their will, beheaded grand vaziers, and opposed
every attempt at reforms. Mahmud prepared the ground before he took the vital
step of eliminating them. He formed a new artillery group trained by German
military advisors with modern weapons and then he issued a decree abolishing
the corps.\textsuperscript{41} Thus we can say that where Sultan Selim III failed because of the
opposition of the janissaries, the Ulema and other vested interests, his
successor, Sultan Mahmud II, was more successful in destroying the janissaries
completely and reducing the hold of ulema by bypassing them which reflected
a significant victory for the modernist intelligentsia against the conservative
religious forces.\textsuperscript{42} Mahmud did pay some attention to education of the new
bureaucrats and towards the end of his reign he set up another "higher "school
for educating officials, in which French and other secular subjects were taught.
He developed two other channels to gain knowledge of French and some other
western learning: re-established permanent embassies in Europe which were
closed after the death of Selim III enabling young ottomans serving abroad to
have opportunities of western learning and the establishment of a new
translation bureau to handle increasing diplomatic correspondence. Sultan
Mahmud II, did not transform his empire, but through this historic event, he
opened the way for other reforms in Turkey.\textsuperscript{43} Thus we see that his work was
extended and at least partially completed during the Tanzimat reform period,
which encompassed the reigns of his sons Sultan Abdul Majid (1839-1861),
and Sultan Abdul Aziz (1861-1876). This era of reforms in the history of the
Ottoman Empire came to be known as the period of Tanzimat, which forms part of the next chapter.
Notes and References:


7. *Ibid.*, p. 55, also Finkel Caroline, *op.cit.*, supra note 1, ch.6 and also other chapters.


11. Robert H. Davison, *op. cit.*, supra note 6.at p. 68


13. Robert H. Davison, supra note 6 at p. 69


16. Caroline Finkel, *op. cit.*, supra note 1 at p 253 & chapter 9


Murat I, began to organize a new military force composed of “slaves of the Porte”. These men came to the ruler as his pencik, or one-fifth share, of booty captured from the enemy. When these youths came to the sultan, they were educated in Turkish and Arabic language and they also knew about Islam and other characteristics of the Ottomans. Then they were given military training and organized as infantry called Yeni Ceri (New Force) or Janissary corps or as cavalry, called Sipahis; *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Shaw and Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-50.

Shaw and Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 257.


Shaw and Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-262.

Berkes, *op. cit.*, p. 74

Shaw and Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

Shaw and Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 265.


Foreigners (French, English, Swedish, and Germans, etc.) were channels of Westernization. Western culture (including the artefacts, life-style, language,
etc.) flew through them in the Ottoman Empire bringing Turkey under western influence. This influence which was weak in the beginning enveloped the Turkish nation following the degeneration and subsequent disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The situation under Mustafa Kemal Paşa became a little peculiar. On the other hand, he was a staunch promoter of the Turkish culture and language, so much so that he attempted to convert the religious books (in Arabic) and the Islamic prayers into Turkish language and, on the other hand he intended to modernise various institutions and life style of Turkey, thus bringing in westernisation alias western influence in disguise of modernisation.

40 Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-81; Armajani, *op. cit.*, p. 162

41 Armajani, *op. cit.*, p. 162

42 Karpat, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11

43 Armajani, *op. cit.*, p. 162