

# Reforms in 18th century in middle east essay

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After the struggle and destruction of sultanates in Muslim empires by the Mamluks in the early 19th century, reformists started to rise into power with a dream of reconstructing their specific empires and sultanates. One of the most remembered reformists were the European educated Mahmud II and Abidulmecid I of the Ottoman Empire. Some of their reforms are discussed below.

Having acquired western education on modernization, Mahmud II had a dream of modernizing the Ottoman Empire. The first reform witnessed was the introduction of modern administration in which provinces were governed as administrative blocs which then reported to the head of the empire. This mode of governance aimed at enhancing security and combating all security threats. This was done to ensure that the shrinking size of the Ottoman Empire due to the rising European powers stopped.

Another great achievement and reform brought about by these two leaders was the enactment of the imperial statute of 1839. This document was very essential for the reforms since it included a lot of reform principles to be implemented in the new organization of the empire causing the whole empire to be a much civilized place. Some of these principles include:

1. Organized administration system which will ensure security to all the empire borders and the people of the empire.
2. Introduction of an organized financial system similar to that of the French.
3. Introduction of a common currency which the document referred to as Ottoman paper.
4. Introduction of post offices in the empire.
5. Abolition of slave trade and introduction of human rights enforcement

agency.

#### 6. Introduction of healthcare ministry.

In total, the paper outlined more than 20 principles which were all geared towards making the empire a new modernized and civilized place to live.

Under Sultan Abidulmecid I, the major reform was the rose chamber which looked into the taxation system and bureaucracy of the system. It abolished tax farming and changed the rats for salaried taxation. This chamber also aimed at treating all the citizens of the empire as equal individuals unlike the earlier governance which allowed non-Muslims to be treated as second-hand individuals who could be exploited by anybody.

After conquering the Mamluk system, Muhammad Ali embarked on reforming Egypt creating a concrete base to the modern Egypt. His reforms were witnessed mostly in the political, economic and social sphere.

Muhammad's main goal was to establish a modern European style empire in Egypt. To achieve this, he had to embark on: re-organizing the whole Egyptian society, streamlining the economy of the empire, creating professional bureaucracy and training a modern military to take care of security.

The first thing that he did was streamlining the revenue system in Egypt. To achieve this he raised tax farming to all the farm owners in Egypt.

Comparing this to the Ottoman reformers, they did the opposite. Increasing this tax resulted in monopoly trade and the wage pay of the peasant workers in the farms increased.

His second major reform and achievement was industrial innovation drive.

This led to establishment of a weapons' industry but the industrial era was

not confined to military only. This led to a basic reform in the whole Egyptian society. This resulted in an economy which had a lot of revenue and incomes as well as development projects.

His third major reform was in the military training. Due to some external pressure and his training in the military, Muhammad established a training program which professionalized the army in the European style. This ensured that his territory was well guarded.

There are several similarities that are outright evident in the two reformist styles. The first common issue was professionalization of the security system. It appears that the reformists had a good taste for European military organization thus professionalized their armies to the same levels.

The other common reform was westernization. Closely examining the two reform empires, westernization aspects like military organization, formal governance mode and recognition of revenue systems were very pronounced.

In conclusion, these reformists had one aspect which made them act in some opposing styles and the common styles. Muhammad acted out of a dream to expand and modernize his empire while the Ottoman sultans acted so as to safeguard their territory from invasion by the western powers stopping shrinkage of the empire.