

OTTOMAN OFFICIAL DISCOURSE AND  
ITS REFLECTIONS DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR

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Fatma Özyigit Coşkuner

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Ottoman Official Discourse and  
Its Reflections during the Crimean War

The thesis of Fatma Özyiğit Coşkuner  
has been approved by:

Prof. Dr. Selim Deringil  
(Thesis Advisor)

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Prof. Dr. Edhem Eldem

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Assoc. Prof. Vangelis Kechriotis

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## Thesis Abstract

Fatma Özyiğit Coşkuner, “Ottoman Official Discourse and Its Reflections during the Crimean War”

From a number of aspects the Crimean War was a turning point for the Ottoman Empire. During this war the greatest powers in Europe went into action with the Ottomans and with the Paris Peace Treaty at the end of the war the Ottoman Empire was included in the Concert of Europe. This situation had effects on the creation of the Ottoman official statements as well as on the propaganda that was carried out during the war. Relying on European support, the Ottoman Empire tried to bring Russia’s aggressive attitude to the fore while demonstrating its own peaceful attitude to the Europeans. This situation is closely connected to the concept of international law in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Ottoman Empire, which was trying to justify itself according to international law, used every opportunity to bring to the fore Russia’s unjustified attacks on her soil.

The Crimean War can be seen as a battle in which, for the Russians, the peak of Orthodoxy was reached. The Russians used Orthodoxy both in official statements and in popular culture, and this war was perceived as a victory of Orthodoxy over Islam. The Ottomans, although an Islamic empire, were very careful in the way they used the Islamic components, due to the fact that their allies and an important section of their own citizens were non-Muslim. While this situation had an effect on Ottoman official statements, it also opened the way to a variety of relationships between the state and the people. Thus, slowly the first structures of a popular culture in the Ottomans had begun to form.

## Tez Özeti

Fatma Özyiğit Coşkuner, “Kırım Savaşı Sırasında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Resmi Söylemi ve Yansımaları”

Kırım Savaşı Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda birçok açıdan bir dönüm noktası sayılabilecek özelliklere sahiptir. Bu savaşta Avrupa’nın büyük güçleri Osmanlı ile birlikte hareket etmişler ve savaş sonunda imzalanan Paris Barış Antlaşması ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu dönemin Avrupa Birliği’ne (*Concert of Europe*) dahil edilmiştir. Bu durumun Osmanlı’nın resmi söyleminin oluşmasında ve savaş süresince yürütülen propaganda üzerinde etkileri olmuştur. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Avrupa’nın da desteğini arkasına alarak düşmanı Rusya’yı tasvir ederken Rusların saldırgan tavırlarını ön plana çıkartmış kendisinin ne kadar barışçıl bir tavır sergilediğini de Avrupalı devletlerin gözünde ispatlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu durum on dokuzuncu yüzyılın uluslararası hukuk kavramıyla da oldukça ilgilidir. Uluslararası hukuk önünde kendisini ispatlamaya çalışan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Rusya’nın haksız saldırganlığını her fırsatta ön plana çıkarmıştır.

Kırım Savaşı Ruslar için Ortodoksluğun zirve noktasına ulaştığı bir savaş olarak yorumlanabilir. Ruslar gerek resmi söylemlerinde ve gerek popüler kültürlerinde Ortodoksluğu kullanmışlar ve bu savaşı da Ortodoksluğun İslamiyet üzerindeki zaferi olarak aktarmışlardır. Bir İslam imparatorluğu olan Osmanlı ise müttefiklerinin ve kendi tebaasının önemli bir kısmının gayr-i Müslim olmasından dolayı İslami unsurları oldukça dikkatli bir şekilde kullanmıştır. Bu durum da Osmanlı’nın resmi söyleminde etkili olurken devlet ve halk arasında çeşitli ilişkilerin yol açılmasına neden olmuştur. Böylece yavaş da olsa Osmanlı’da popüler bir kültürün il izleri ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır.

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However much I were to thank my grandmother Necla Uçan, who raised me, it is not enough; she is no longer with us, but I have dedicated my thesis to her memory. My grandmother passed away when I was still working on this thesis and despite the sadness of her illness what I miss most was her continued vitality and conscious effort to always be there to improve and her luminous trust in me to be “history professor.” The contributions made by my beloved mother, who raised me, Zübeyde Görken, and my step-father Yaman Görken, are also as great. It could be completely impossible for me to have pursued my master’s studies without the love and support of my mother and my step-father. My sister Güneş Özyiğit has encouraged me, giving me love and support whenever and wherever needed. My aunt Deniz Özen has a great share in any success here. She always supported me whenever I needed. If it had not been for them, I would not be where I am today. For this reason I would like to thank my family a thousand times for the understanding and patience they showed me while I was living with them. I hope that they are happy with the result, too.

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*Dedicated to my grandmother*  
*Necla Uçan*



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## PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the official discourse of the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War and its repercussions. The investigation is conducted on the basis of the topics that constituted this discourse.

In the introductory part, I have made a general evaluation of the Crimean War and elaborated on its diplomatic aspects. The pre-war diplomatic relationships and the Treaty of Paris, which was signed after the war, are also included in this chapter in order to give an idea about the historical context of the inquiry. Following this section, I have analyzed the concepts of official discourse and war propaganda, the most important constituent part of the formation of official discourse during the Crimean War. Lastly, I have examined theories of nationalism, which is an important aspect of war propaganda, and examined how it can be applied to the cases of Russia and Ottoman Empire.

In the first chapter, *Mutual Perceptions of the Enemy*, I have focused on the perception of the enemy from the points of view of the Ottoman and Russian states. Here, I have taken into consideration the reflections of the perception of the enemy on the propaganda activities that were being conducted by both states against each other during the war. In this section, my main resources were the state's official correspondences in the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry and two newspapers of the period. The lack of resources like visual materials and memoirs from the Ottoman State during this period hindered further analyses of the discourse with reference to these aspects. In my analyses of Russia, I used the *lubki* culture, which became an instrument of propaganda for the Russian state. In addition to this, I have

given some examples from writers and painters of the period and have used the concepts of intellectual perception and political perception together.

In the second chapter, *Mutual Perceptions of the Alliance and Allied Power*, I have investigated the Ottoman perception of the alliance and the allied powers. The role of the so-called Eastern Question within the diplomatic framework which fostered the Crimean War and the place of the Ottoman Empire in this phenomenon is also analyzed in this chapter. To this end, for the most part the memoirs of soldiers have been used and evaluated in order to understand how the Europeans perceived the Ottomans. As stated in this chapter, such an analysis reflects the popular perception in Europe rather than the image of the Ottoman Empire in the official discourse of European states. Furthermore, I have included discussions of the discontent which arose in Istanbul as a result of the behavior (or rather, the bad behavior) of the allied soldiers. I believe this is important in order to understand the reflections of the official discourse which the Ottoman State was trying to establish over the subjects of the empire.

The third chapter is about the perception of the non-Muslim subjects within the Ottoman official discourse. The 1856 Imperial Decree and the rights which this decree granted to non-Muslim subjects constitute the basis of this chapter. This chapter also includes evaluations about the role the European states played in the promulgation of this decree, how the Ottoman State justified these reforms and the disturbances that these reforms fostered among Muslim subjects.

In the concluding chapter, I have summarized the findings of the thesis. In this chapter, arguing that all propaganda activities during wars are aimed a particular target group, I have tried to demonstrate the groups which the Ottoman State targeted for its propaganda activities that formed the official discourse of the period

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### The Origins and the Diplomacy of the Crimean War

Examination of the circumstances that created the Crimean War has proved to be one of the thorniest problems of modern historiography.

While since the time of Peter the Great there had been an emphasis on Russian ambitions to stretch down to the open seas, as well as the “Greek Project”, which dated from Catherine the Great, the strategies that Russia developed in this mindset managed to gain enough significance to ignite a war only within the conjuncture of the nineteenth century, as it now conflicted with the interests of the European powers and the Ottomans.

The most common belief regarding the cause of the Crimean War is that it was fought in defense of the Ottoman Empire, that it was a war to defend the status-quo and that it was pitched against Russian encroachment.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that Russia had actively sought to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in 1828 and again in 1833, Europe by 1852 had come around to the view that while Russia was able to save the Ottomans, it was intent upon their destruction. Now the Ottomans enthusiastically sought to promote the identification of Ottoman independence with European safety.

The apparent reason for the Crimean War was that while accepting French demands concerning the Catholics within the territories of the Empire, the Ottomans rejected the Russian claims to establishing a protectorate over the Orthodox

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<sup>1</sup> John Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straits Question, 1844 – 1865* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1965); David Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London and New York: Longman, 1993); Werner Eugen Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855 – 57: The Story of a Peace Settlement* (Macmillan, 1963); Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War? A Cautionary Tale* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985); Winfried Baumgart, *The Crimean War: 1853-1856* (London: Arnold Publishers, 1999); Hugh Small, *The Crimean War: Queen Victoria's War with the Russian Tsars* (England: Tempus Publishing, 2007).

population. As many scholars have noted,<sup>2</sup> this refusal to grant capitulatory rights to Russia, despite having granted the same rights to France, played an important role in the Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia, which in turn eventually resulted in the Crimean War. The Ottoman State protested against the Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia before the representatives of European powers. This intervention was perceived to be a declaration of war and the necessary precautions were immediately taken; in October 1853 Sultan Abdülmecid declared war on Russia.

In the Battle of Sinop, in November 1853, the Russians defeated the Ottomans, thus violating the neutrality of the Black Sea. Due to their concern for maintaining the neutrality of the Straits and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the British and French joined the war with the Ottomans as allies. This situation transformed the Crimean War, which had originally erupted as a Russo-Ottoman war, into a European war.

On the other hand, the economic incentives here are difficult to ignore. As a result of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty of 1833<sup>3</sup> Russia gained the right to a protectorate over the Ottoman Empire; as a result, Anglo-Russian hostility reached its peak. After this time, Great Britain proclaimed the integrity of the Ottoman Empire to be of vital interest. In the aftermath of the commercial Treaty of Balta Limanı (1838), which

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<sup>2</sup> John Shelton Curtiss, *Russia's Crimean War* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979); Albert Seaton, *The Crimean War: A Russian Chronicle* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977); R.L.V. French Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: L. Cooper, 1971); Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War: The Truth Behind the Myth* (London: Pimlico, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Actually, as a result of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) Russia acquired its first direct access to the Black Sea. Thus, the Russian Empire was to have freedom of navigation for her ships on the Black Sea, which had been closed to all non-Ottoman vessels since the end of the sixteenth century, and Russia was now able to send her merchant ships freely through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. For more information, see: Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu 1774-1923 Uluslararası İlişkiler Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, translated by İdil Eser, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001), pp. 129-163; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements 1806 – 1914* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

was the British response to the Hünkâr İskelesi, the Ottoman State became an open market for British entrepreneurs. The determination of the British to maintain their rights under the guise of “protecting Ottoman territorial integrity” brought Britain into direct confrontation with Russia. The anti-Russian propaganda, which had been developing in Britain for a long time, exploded with the “disaster of Sinop.” But, this reaction by Britain to Russia was quite unjustified, as the battle was a perfectly legitimate military operation. Why did Great Britain react so violently against Russia? The answer is simple: Russia had begun to threaten the strong British position in the region. “Since the 1830’s and the days of the Hünkâr İskelesi, a strong “Russophobia” had built up in Britain, kindled by Russia’s southward expansion towards the Straits and Persia.”<sup>4</sup>

#### The “Unending” Diplomacy of the Crimean War

The controversy between Russia and the Ottomans continued right up until the declaration of war and there was an emphasis on the fact that the Ottoman Empire would never yield to Russian demands. Thus, the Ottomans were portrayed to be more peace-oriented than Russia. Moreover, most news published in the Ottoman press and government correspondence emphasized that the great European powers disapproved of the aggressive attitude of Russia and had sided with the Ottomans. During the long-term diplomatic period that preceded the war, the Ottoman State attributed the war to the Russian occupation and their “unacceptable demands”, thus formulating its official discourse from this angle. In addition, the Russian claims to rights over the non-Muslim population (first Slavs and then Armenians) of the Ottoman Empire played a significant role in the state defense.

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<sup>4</sup> R.L.V. Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: L. Cooper, 1971), p. 8.

## The Results of the War: The Paris Peace Treaty

The Crimean War changed the balance of power in Europe, weakening Russia, strengthening the imperiled Ottoman Empire for 20 years and leaving France the greatest military force in Europe, with Britain as the greatest naval power.<sup>5</sup>

The Paris Peace Treaty began in 1856 with the participation of Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Sardinia, and Austria and Prussia. The articles of the Paris Treaty, which was signed at the end of the only war during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Ottomans won against Russia, were in fact not greatly in favor of the Ottoman Empire. The return of Sevastopol to Russia and the transformation of the Black Sea into a neutral zone put the Ottoman State on equal footing with Russia, even though they had been the victor. However, the same treaty recognized the Ottoman State as a European power and assigned the protection of its territorial integrity to the European states.

While the Paris Treaty granted Ottoman territorial integrity, it also implied that the European states had extended rights within the Ottoman borders. However, this was the price that the Ottomans had to pay to penetrate the European “geography.” On the other hand, as Britain and France augmented their influence within the Ottoman borders, those who embraced British or French policies within the empire also started to crystallize; this became more evident through the foreign ambassadors who visited Istanbul. The European recognition of the Ottoman State became official when Sultan Abdülmecid was presented Napoleon’s *légion d’honneur* by Ambassador Thouvenel on December 28, 1855. The issuing of the *Garter* medal to the same sultan via the British ambassador in 1856 is a clear

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<sup>5</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacy of the Crimean War*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), p. 1.

indication of the British and French settlement of accounts over Ottoman territories. Edhem Eldem<sup>6</sup> compares this situation of Sultan Abdülmecid as the sacrifice of a few pawns by the chess player who wants to acquire a better position on the chess board (a gambit); he also underlines the “periodic” nature of this acceptance.

From the Ottoman perspective, the Crimean War gave the Empire a chance to survive. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire, however, was guaranteed by the British and French intervention in the war. Also, the most important aspect of the war that should be underlined was the change of the Ottoman self-perception; now the Ottomans began to feel a part of the European line of alliances. As mentioned above, the Ottoman Empire was received as an equal member into the Concert of Europe and was put under the collective guarantee of the European great powers. But, this did not save the Empire from outside interference - in fact, it now became much more frequent and marked than before 1853. However, this constant interference in turn neutralized the European influence. The sultan and the governors became very successful in their policy, that is, “the Balancing Act.” This was one of the most important reasons for the long survival of the Ottoman Empire, which lasted until the First World War. But, this policy did not prevent the collapse or partition of the Empire, rather only postponing the inevitable. That is, along with this acceptance of the Paris treaty the Ottoman Empire was reformed and accepted as one of the European states. Now in order to find peaceful solutions to misunderstandings between the Ottoman Empire and the states who had signed the treaty the other states were brought to the fore. France, Austria and Britain had signed a separate treaty among themselves that considered the infringement of any of the articles found in the newly signed treaty or any threat to the “Independence and Integrity of the Ottoman

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<sup>6</sup> Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations*, (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), pp. 208–210.



State” as a *casus belli*. The innovation brought about by the Paris Treaty for the Ottoman Empire was that the patronage that Russia had wanted to shoulder was now to be jointly taken on by the Europeans.

For Russia, the Crimean War marked a radical change in foreign policy. This war symbolized the conservative, pre-reform, and relatively stable Russia of the 1850’s (before emancipation and sustained industrialization). Defeat in war had taught the new tsar, Alexander II, that reforms had to be introduced,<sup>7</sup> but these would be reforms that would not undermine his autocratic power. Thus, the ground for the abolition of serfdom was prepared and this reform was implemented as a necessary prerequisite of a military reform. Foreign capital was attracted in order to build a railway network that would lead to the development of industry and make the army, the most important pillar of the autocratic system, more mobile.<sup>8</sup> Russian policy after 1856 was therefore focused on the development of the social and economic resources of the country.

When evaluated in the context of international relations, it would not be overly naive to claim that between the Paris Treaty and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78 a temporary stability was maintained in the Near East. This stability was disturbed by the Russo-Ottoman War and the 1878 Berlin Treaty; the Eastern Question, which had so long plagued the region, was removed from the European agenda for the next forty years.<sup>9</sup> In the period between the Crimean War and the 1877-78 War, the Ottoman Empire defined Russia as its primary enemy; the comfort

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<sup>7</sup> For Russian modernization and reform periods, please see, W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 88; Simon Dixon, *The Modernization of Russia: 1676-1825* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); W.E. Mosse *Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia* (London; New York: IB Tauris, 1992.)

<sup>8</sup> Hans Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernization and Revolution* (London, New York: Longman Press, 1983)

<sup>9</sup> William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000* (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 29.

of being protected by the European states was quite effective in the policies devised against Russia in the course of the 1877-78 War.

### The Concept of Official Discourse and the Wartime Propaganda

Discourse is rooted in desire, the desire to communicate with another.

Discourse can be defined as a narrative style that consists of characteristic definitions of concepts and expression of views, that is, as an approach style that states a particular idea. M. Foucault wrote that the importance of discourse is that it produces significant expressions at different historical periods and that its rules and implementation are obscured.<sup>10</sup> According to Foucault, the discourse constructs the subject and defines and produces our information about the subject. It determines how a subject will be talked about and what conclusions will be drawn. For Foucault, discourse produces the style of the information, subject, object and behavior within every period; differences are apparent between each historical period. When we examine the official Ottoman State discourse during the Crimean War, we can see, as Foucault has stated, that it produces styles of information, subject (the State itself), object (the enemy Russia, the allies and the non-Muslim population) and behavior. Here I have examined how the official discourse was received, perceived and presented. While doing this, I have compared the perception of other states with the perception of the Ottoman States, which in my opinion enriches the Ottoman case that in this matter was premature. Moreover, I have emphasized here how the concept of nationalism and the discourse of national feelings were formed and how they had the greatest effect in the formation of war propaganda discourse. Therefore, a brief summary of war propaganda and the national aspirations that formed the basis

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<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2002)

of such propaganda is given, and I have tried to establish these concepts within the context of Russia and the Ottomans; as will be seen, the concept of national aspirations during the Crimean War was newly taking shape in the Ottoman Empire.

War propaganda has been variously defined. It is a stimulus to action in one's own cause with the objective of victory. Propaganda is the creation of a state of mind that is favorable to the particular national cause that is being promoted. It is also the means of converting masses of people to desired view points. In his work *Propaganda Technique in the World War* Harold Lasswell says: "It refers solely to the control of opinion by significant symbols or, to speak more concretely and less accurately, by stories, rumours, reports, pictures and other forms of social communication."<sup>11</sup> All national wartime propaganda endeavors to mobilize domestic, allied, and neutral opinion in support of the country's cause and conversely to demoralize the enemy.

Within each embattled nation, words were seen as powerful movers of men and women; words became mobilizers of the national spirit, calls to courage, to sacrifice and, finally, to simple endurance.<sup>12</sup> The first effective channels for mass propaganda developed during the nineteenth century with the onset of mass literacy and the proliferation of the printed word. During this century, conservatism in printing was gradually broken down.

The definite purposes of war-time propaganda in every belligerent country were to maintain the morale of the armed forces of the state, to create a favorable opinion at home, to diminish the morale of the enemy, and to favorably influence neutral opinion concerning the reason, justification and necessity of the conflict. In

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<sup>11</sup> Harold Dwight Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Knopf, 1927), p. 239.

<sup>12</sup> Ralph Haswell Lutz, "Studies of War Propaganda, 1914 – 33," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 5 (December 1933), pp. 496 – 498.

other words, “the purpose of all war propaganda issued by the belligerent party was to increase the national fighting zeal and to set out the just causes and humanitarian aims of the belligerent.”<sup>13</sup>

The control of domestic opinion was a fundamental requirement of war propaganda, because a favorable public opinion is a prerequisite for the successful prosecution of war; war is waged not only on land, but also on moral fronts. Organized propaganda which appeals to political union can successfully wage a war of defense, redressing wrongs, punishing outrages, reflecting glory on the armed forces, and satisfying historic national aspirations.

Nationalist philosophy and official propaganda constitute one important source, indeed the primary one, for nationalism. Here, I will briefly summarize theories of nationalism, and discuss how these theories can be applied to the Ottoman State and Russia.

I want to focus on the three main ways in which the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman state have been defined by the Ottoman official discourse: The Ottoman State vs. the West, the Ottomans as the creator and preservers of a unique multi-ethnic community, and finally, the Ottomans as the ruler over Islamic communities. When comparing the Ottomans with Russia we can say that the first two characteristics are the same. However, in the third part, as a general approach, we must replace the Islamic communities with the Eastern Slavs. Throughout the Crimean War the three sections of the official discourse of the Ottoman State underwent evolution with the participation of the allies in the war. The propaganda carried out during the war and the official discourse changed the shape and created different reflections.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 497.

One can roughly distinguish three approaches to nationalism, a doctrine that holds that “humanity is divided into nations, loyalty to nations overrides all other loyalties, the source of all political power lies within the collectivity of the nation, and, finally, that nations are fully realized only in sovereign states.”<sup>14</sup> The first is the primordial approach, which traces the history of a nation back over many centuries. The second is the modernist, which dates the formation of nations to the late eighteenth century at the earliest and sees them as the product of the political, cultural and economic transformation of European societies after the French Revolution. The third is post-modernist, which focuses on the deconstruction of nationalism as a particular form of narrative. Today, among academics the perception of nationalism as a modern phenomenon prevails.<sup>15</sup>

Anthony Smith attempted to define a pre-modern ethnic community – *ethnie* – in relation to the modern nation. According to Smith, *ethnie* is a “named human population with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.”<sup>16</sup> If we examine the Russian Empire, we can see that a powerful concept of Russian *ethnie* was formed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Members of the Russian ethnic community were united by their adherence to Orthodox Christianity. This concept of ethnicity continued during the Crimean War and taking up the duty of patronage of all Orthodox Christians, Russia transformed this concept into a discourse, legitimizing itself on this *ethnie*. It would not be correct to say that such an ethnicity was formed in the Ottomans. The Ottomans wanted to develop the Islamic faith in response to the Russian Orthodox component, however, due to the large number of non-Muslim subjects and the later

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<sup>14</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past, Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Vera Tolz, *Inventing Russia* (Great Britain: Hachette Livre, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 32.

alliance with Christian states, it would not have been right to use the Islamic faith here.

Moreover, it is during the Time of Troubles (1598 – 1613) that we find that first references to the notion of the betrayal of the motherland in Russia.<sup>17</sup> In earlier periods, one can find references to the betrayal of the tsar or the Orthodox faith. This notion of the separation of the state and the ruler, which is rooted in the seventeenth century, began to be cultivated by Peter the Great in the following century, with the addition of the word patriot, that is, a person who loves the motherland, to the vocabulary. Meanwhile, during the seventeenth century, the state itself acquired its modern name, *Rossiiia*, rather than the Moscow tsardom or the Moscow state.<sup>18</sup> If we are to examine the Ottoman example, it would not be right to discuss the existence of patriotism, even during the Crimean War. The Ottoman Empire was an empire that was connected to the sultan and the soldiers sacrificed their lives for the sultan, not for the land. The empire was the Ottoman Empire; as this was an empire that emerged from the Ottoman dynasty, the lifeline of the empire was the sultan and his descendants.

Scholars agree that in contrast to *ethnies*, nations are marked by economic unity and common legal rights. Membership of a community known as a nation is formalized by citizenship; most nations have or strive to have a common polity – that is, a state. The legitimacy of the latter rests with the sovereign people, not with a royal dynasty. The subjective characteristics of a nation are particularly important – its members, without knowing each other personally, must believe that they belong to one and the same community. Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation as “an

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (England: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 184.

<sup>18</sup> *Mirovoznienie i samosoznanie russkogo obshestva (XI – XX vv)* (Moscow: Institut Rossiiskoi Istorii, RAN, 1994), pp. 22-27.

imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”<sup>19</sup> encapsulates it all. Most scholars agree that such an idea of nation first emerged in the late eighteenth century and swept across Europe as result of a triple revolution: socio-economic (the advent of capitalism), military – administrative (universal military conscription and bureaucracy) and cultural-educational (publishing in the vernacular and mass secular education).<sup>20</sup> In Western Europe, fairly strong states already existed, and therefore all their inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin, were proclaimed citizens, members of territorial or civic nations. In the East (Russia, and the Ottoman Empire), the different peoples were subjects of monarchs ruling land-based empires.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, nation-building took a different route – a perception of a common ethnic origin became the key factor defining the membership of communities that had been newly imagined as nations. This situation was true for Russia, and a discourse was developed around the concept of “being Russian”; however, within the Ottoman Empire, as ethnicity was so varied, one would have to wait at least another half a century for a certain ethnicity to develop around the community.

The modernist view of nationalism (such as Ernest Gellner, John Breuilly, Eric Hobsbawm and others)<sup>22</sup> stresses that nation-building can proceed only under certain political, social and economic conditions, which are defined as modernizations (the transformation of a traditional agrarian society with a dominant

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<sup>19</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1991), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 149.

<sup>21</sup> Tolz, *Inventing the Nation*, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); John Breuilly *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

peasant population into an industrial, urbanized society).<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the fact that these two empires underwent late modernization and underwent the process in their own particular way prevented the transformation of the existing ethnicity into a national state.

In conclusion, every war and the propaganda that is used to support it, in some way, is an area that uses nationalism, earlier constructions as well as reusing definitions and making new definitions. It would be a bit pretentious to exert that during the Crimean War there was modern nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. When we examine the components that formed the official discourse of the state, we find an attempt to draw an Ottoman image that embraced all subjects rather than an ethnic nationalism; in fact there were attempts to consolidate this all-embracing image, which had come through the centuries. During the Crimean war the Ottoman State preferred to present itself as constantly tolerant and the victim of Russia's aggressive policies; it used this stance to try to gain the support of the European states and to justify itself in public opinion. The Ottoman State, which interpreted Russia's protectorate over the Orthodox people as direct intervention in internal affairs, considered the sending of Russian troops to carry this out as a cause for war. In fact, perhaps the Crimean War formed a turning point for the Ottoman state in nationalism and the propaganda that was carried out in connection with this, as in

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<sup>23</sup> For excellent summaries of these authors' views, see their contributions to Gopal Balakrishnan, *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 98 – 174. Instead of the dominance of modernist approaches (E. Gellner, E. Hobsbawm, J. Breuille and others) the new alternative school of thought is beginning to take shape. One of the important leaders of this approach is Adrian Hastings who explains the aim of the Bible as a mirror for the nation. According to Hastings, by the fourteenth century the word "nation" was already being used in virtually the same sense as a post-nineteenth century nationalists would have used. Hastings, rather than condemning the language of communication as the sole source of nationalism, highlights the actual content of the message as an equal source for the birth of nationalism and in this sense the Bible served as mirror for emerging nations and nationalism. In this matter, he underlines how religious texts of the medieval period were instrumental in defining nation. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood. Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)



other wars in later years the policies and propaganda of the Ottoman State were to change; rather than a stance that embraced all subjects it would adopt a more Islamist, and later a more Turkish approach.

## CHAPTER 2: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENEMY

When we examine wars, particularly those of the nineteenth century, we see that in every war the propaganda used to justify the war promotes the concept of “the enemy” and redefines the concept of “nationalism”. The word *propaganda*, which has a negative connotation today, was actually first used in the seventeenth century<sup>24</sup> to mean the communication of certain ideas to a particular, well-defined group of people; only later, in time of war was this term perceived as an effectual and powerful weapon. As Leonard W. Doob states, if we consider the fact that the concept of the “enemy” plays an important role in constructing, promoting and keeping alive the notion of nationalism,<sup>25</sup> then accentuating the enemy in propaganda becomes one of the most important elements in warfare. Propaganda therefore has a twofold purpose, for while it boosts the soldiers will to fight, it also paves the way for greater popular support. Since the beginning of the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire based its propaganda on presenting Russia as a relentless aggressor that refused to negotiate. This portrayal of Russia also served to justify the Ottoman position and was used throughout the war.

The various proposals made by Russia, through Prince Menshikov, were presented as mere covers to disguise the Russian intention of seizing Ottoman territory and realizing their imperial goals. Viewed from this perspective, Russia’s claim over the Orthodox population living within Ottoman territory, in other words, the Russian attempt to invade Ottoman territory to protect its interests, was in fact considered and defined as an “uncompromising “attitude. This attitude was the most

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<sup>24</sup> Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: The Political Image in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1997), p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard W. Doob, *Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 256.

important trump card used by the Ottomans to justify themselves and to demand support from the allied nations.

At this point, it would be helpful to review the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca again and to share the latest comments written about this matter. Russia argued that it had certain rights in the Ottoman Empire in accordance with this treaty, and many historians state that these rights were a direct result of the treaty. However, recently the debate over this issue has sprung up again. In his article, ‘Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility: The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca Reconsidered’, Roderic H. Davison discusses this issue in detail and states that Articles 7 and 14 of the treaty could be interpreted differently.<sup>26</sup> The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was written in three official languages, Russian, Turkish and Italian. In the work by Jason Hurewitz *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, the seventh article of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty is given as follows:

The Sublime Porte promises to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches, it also allows the Ministers of the Imperial Court of Russia in every circumstance to make, upon all occasions, representations, as well in favour of the new church Constantinople, of which mention will be made in Article XIV, as on behalf of its officiating ministers, promising to take such representations into due consideration, as being made by a confidential functionary of a neighboring and sincerely friendly power.<sup>27</sup>

An examination of this seventh article clearly indicates that: The Ottoman Empire did actually agree to protection being given to the Christian population living in the Ottoman territory; the protection mentioned was to be provided by the Ottoman State itself. In other words, the Ottoman State was to protect the traditions

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<sup>26</sup> Roderic H. Davison, “Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered” in Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774 – 1923, the Impact of the West* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record: 1535 – 1914* (New York, New Jersey, Canada, London: D. Van Nostrand Company, INC. 1956), pp. 56 – 57.

of the Christian religion and their church and Russian delegates were given the right to examine both the churches and their sacristans.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is clear that this clause does not give the Russians the right to start acting as the protector of the Orthodox population that was living in the Ottoman Empire or to make official requests in the name of the Church. Davison defines this state of affairs as a ‘figment of (the Russians’) imagination’ and sees this interpretation as a ‘falsification of the document’.<sup>29</sup>

This state of affairs clearly proves that the Russians used the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty in the diplomatic arena rather successfully. Based on this, the Russians acquired the right to make official requests on behalf of the servants of the church, as well as making similar official requests for the Christian population in Wallachia and Moldavia, thus acting like the protector of the entire Orthodox population that was living under the Ottoman reign. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire was perfectly justified in basing its official discourse on the injustice of the Russians and in following the same policy to gain the support of European countries. Nevertheless, it should be noted that while the Ottomans formed its discourse by protesting against this transgression, due to diplomatic weakness, they allowed this misinterpretation and its application on their territory.

The authority of Russia to make official applications before the Ottoman government is connected with the construction of a church as mentioned in Article 14, which reads as follows:

After the manner of the other Powers, permission is given to the High Court of Russia, in addition to the chapel built in the Minister’s Residence, to erect in one of the quarters of

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<sup>28</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, volume 6, page, 1068, “Küçük Kaynarca”. In the article “Küçük Kaynarca”, it is also stated that the Ottoman Empire will protect the Church and the Russians are only entitled to carry out inspections.

<sup>29</sup> Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774 – 1923, the Impact of the West*, p. 34.

Galata, in the street called Bey Oglu, a public church of the Greek ritual, which shall always be under the protection of the Ministers of that Empire, and secured from all coercion and outrage.<sup>30</sup>

As can be understood from this text, the church that was to be opened was not an ordinary Greek-Orthodox church, rather it would be a Russian church that operated in accordance with Greek procedures. In other words, Russia would construct a church under the supervision of its delegate. It would be misleading to conclude from this passage that Russia was entitled to make applications on behalf of the Greek-Orthodox churches or the Greek Orthodox population living in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>31</sup>

As set forth in the two articles mentioned above, the Sublime Porte provided certain rights to Russia. These rights can be divided into three main headings, particularly in terms of its right to act on behalf of the Christian public. These headings are: the construction of a Russian-Greek church in Istanbul, making diplomatic applications on behalf of such a church and the persons serving in it, and making similar applications on behalf of the people living in Wallachia and Moldavia. However, it is obvious that these conditions did not permit Russia to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottomans. Although these rights created an excuse for broader applications, as well as for protection or intervention, it is clear that they did not constitute an established basis for broader requests. The policy that from 1775 had been maintained by Catherine the Great regarding the Treaty of

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<sup>30</sup> J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, p. 58.

<sup>31</sup> Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774 – 1923, the Impact of the West*, p. 36.

Küçük Kaynarca reached its peak in 1853 and triggered the Crimean War. The war began with the invasion of Wallachia and Moldavia by Russia.<sup>32</sup>

Russia's inequitable invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia under the pretense of protecting the rights of the Orthodox population living there was frequently emphasized in the Ottoman official discourse and used as propaganda to demonstrate the wrongdoings of Russia and to underline the Ottoman's own reconciliatory attitude. In the newspapers of the period (*Takvîm-i Vekâyi* and *Cerîde-i Havâdis*)<sup>33</sup> frequently printed statements, such as: "As known by all, the proposal made by the Russian State would be contrary to the law of state and the future of sultanate, due to its claims of protectorate over the Christian sect, and therefore cannot be accepted as a whole..."<sup>34</sup> With similar declarations, the Ottomans made it clear that it was impossible to accept Russia's claim on Ottoman territory under the pretence of religion. In forming its official discourse, the Ottoman Empire denounced Russia as an aggressor of its sovereign area and an enemy, and in fact, this was how it was perceived.

In the letter he wrote to Prince Gorchakov, Ömer Pasha, the Ottoman commander in chief, clearly stated that such an action should be prevented, that is the Ottoman State had decided to prevent the sending of soldiers to

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<sup>32</sup> Davison mentions Catherine's manifest in his article. The manifest reads as follows: "Our orthodoxy is henceforth under Our Imperial guardianship in the places upspringing, protected from all oppression and violence" Manifesto of March 17, 1775 in *PSZ*, Series I, vol. 20, no. 14274, pp. 80-81 in Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774 – 1923, the Impact of the West*, p. 37. This manifest is also included in some other books regarding Catherine the Great. For example: Isabel de Madariaga, *Россия В Эпоху Екамерина Великой* (Москва: Новое Лимерамурное Обозрение, 2002), p. 353.

<sup>33</sup> *Takvîm-i Vekâyi* was first published on November 1, 1831. Headed up by Mahmud II, this newspaper was the official paper of the state and it served the primary function of informing the public about statesmen and intellectuals. This newspaper was followed by what is known as the first private or semi-official newspaper, *Cerîde-i Havâdis*, which was published on 3 July 1840 with the initiative of a British citizen doing trade in Istanbul, William Churchill.

<sup>34</sup> *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*, issue: 494, Muharrem, year: 1270. The original texts of the quotations can be found in the footnotes throughout the thesis. "Cümleye ma'lûm olduđu üzere imtiyâzât-i mezhebiyye maddesinden dolayı Rusya devleti tarafından der-miyân olunan teklifâtın tamamıyla kabulü hukuk-i hükümet ve istiklâl-i saltanat-i seniyyeme dokunacağından..."

Wallachia and Moldavia. However, if still such an action were to take place, it the Ottomans would not be the responsible party. The letter continues with the following sentences: the ships that were brought by force to the other side by the wind or currents would be not held accountable and this would not cause a problem. It is clear that the Ottoman State was warning Russia and expressing that Russia would be responsible for the outcome of its military actions.<sup>35</sup> In another document it is stated that as the Russians had sent their soldiers to the aforementioned places, this was to be considered to mark the outbreak of war; as a consequence, the Ottomans had the right to keep its own troops on the alert and ready for an imminent declaration of war by the Russians.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the tsar attempted to show himself as being in the right and he also tried to prevent any likely Anglo-French support. The following statements by Tsar to Prince Menshikov, who was at the head of the army at that time, were included in a letter: “We still do not know if the British and French fleets have entered the Bosphorus; but in any case, who is afraid of them? I will tell the French and British tomorrow that I will consider the appearance of their ships in the Black Sea to be an action taken against us and will act against them as we act against the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>37</sup> As can be understood from this letter, the tsar had enough confidence in his own forces to stand up against Britain and France, as well as against an Ottoman Empire that was being supported by these countries. Naturally, this confidence was supported by the people around the tsar. In a letter written by

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<sup>35</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 21252 – 1–4, 17 Şevval 1269. “...Bu misillü bir harekete mümâna‘at olunması nezd-i Devlet-i Aliyye’de mukarrer olmakla vuku‘u takdirinde mes’uliyeti bu tarafa râci‘ olmayacağını zât-ı asilânelerinin dahi itiraf edeceklerinde şübhe olmadığı beyânıyla ihtirâmât-ı fâikamın i‘tâ-yı te‘minâtına ibtidâr kılınmıştır... Farazâ suların veyahud rüzgârın zoruyla zaruri beri yakalara düşen sefinelerin bir nev‘ ma‘zûriyeti olacağından buralarının dahi gözedilmesi münasib olacağı...”

<sup>36</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 60/59, 12 Ramazan, 1269. “...Mahâl-i mezkureye asker sevk etmekten muradi mukaddeme-i harb demek olduğundan tabak isar ali-yi vekalet-penahileri üzere Devlet-i Aliyye’nin dahi ihtiyata riayeten kuvve-i askeriyesini müheyya etmesini hakk-ı derkar bulunduğundan...”

<sup>37</sup> The tsar to Menshikov, 9/21st of October, 1853, in A. I. Anisimov, *Reskripy I Pis'ma Imperatora Nikolaia I k'Kniazii Menshikov uza vremia Sevastopol'skoi Oborony, izdal* (St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 18.

Paskevich, the commander in chief before the General Gorchakov, not only is the confidence that the Russians felt expressed, but there are optimistic predictions that France and Britain would not participate in the war. In this letter, dated June 29, 1853, at a time when Russia was still negotiating demands, Paskevich suggests to Gorchakov that he should expel the Ottomans from wherever he finds them and prepare for crossing to Gicov. He also wrote that the Russian army should advance to Varna as rapidly as possible and destroy the Ottoman army there. These suggestions show Paskevich's confidence in the neutrality of the European powers. In his letter to Gorchakov in July 1853, when the European powers were still trying to convince the Porte to accept Russian demands, Paskevich writes that despite the rise in the religious frenzy and national pride of the Ottomans, which were the result of the Russian occupation of the principalities, it was highly unlikely that the European powers would allow a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>38</sup> Having been encouraged by the peace efforts of the European powers, Paskevich goes on to write that with some reinforcements the Russians could start an offensive against the Ottoman Empire and finish it in the Balkans within three weeks.<sup>39</sup> When this situation is taken into consideration, it can be seen that the Russians did not think that Britain and France would enter the war as Ottoman allies. As many scholars have argued, the tsar maintained his demands and decision because of "his exaggerated sense of pride and honor, his need to save face and his insistence on exacting grim retribution for real or fancied humiliations to himself and his court."<sup>40</sup> It has also been argued that the tsar also maintained his position on the Ottoman

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<sup>38</sup> Paskevich to Gorchakov, July 14/26, 1853, in "Paskevich's Letters to Mikhail Dimitrievich Gorchakov, June 29, 1853," *Russkaia Starina*, v. 15, no. I, p. 174.

<sup>39</sup> Paskevich to Gorchakov, 15/27 August 1853.

<sup>40</sup> Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War? A Cautionary Tale* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985), p. 15.



Empire because of his ‘fatal optimism’<sup>41</sup> that God would help him and Russia as they were fighting for a righteous and holy cause.

It is apparent that it was mandatory for the Ottomans to be armed for battle in case of violations of the border, as the Russians had left them no other choice.

However, even though the army was ready for battle, the Ottomans still claimed to have good intentions and to be ready to find a peaceful solution. For example, the Russian chief interpreter, Monsieur Edgar Duplier, recounted at the ministries how pleased he was that, even though diplomatic relations had been cut off, the Russian consuls and their subjects were still being treated well. Thus, the Ottoman Empire displayed before all the other nations its justified position and a pro-peace attitude.<sup>42</sup>

Likewise, there is a letter from the Russian consul in Erzurum in which the consul affirms his satisfaction that the Russian citizens residing in the Ottoman territory were not being mistreated.<sup>43</sup> In the same letter it is also clearly indicated that the Ottoman Empire had issued an edict stating that Russian officials and merchants be treated well, despite the severing of communications with the Russian ambassador in Istanbul. Similar statements were often printed in the two newspapers of the period. The accusations made by the Ottoman Empire in its official discourse were not meant to be public knowledge. In fact, the public was warned on many occasions not to confuse the Russian soldiers, the enemy, with the Russian citizens who were living in the Ottoman territory; they were by no means to mistreat the citizens. Even before the declaration of war, the State Hydraulic works had cut off the water to the Russian

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<sup>41</sup> Albert Seaton, *The Crimean War: A Russian Chronicle* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1977), p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 21290, 7 Zi’l-hicce, 1269. “...Devlet-i Aliyye’nin sair mahallerinde bulunan Rusya konsolosları ve tebaası haklarında cereyan eden muamelât-ı dil-nüvâzi ve himayetskârîden memnun ve müteşekkir olduklarını ifade sırasında...”

<sup>43</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 1189/1 – 5, 26 Ramazan, 1269. “...Rusya Devlet-i fahîmesinin Deraliyye’de mukim sefâreti tarafından kat’-ı muhabere-i devlet-i müşârunileyhâ me’mur ve tüccar tebaasına evvelkinden ziyade riayet ve hürmet ve sıyânet olunması bâbında emr u ferman- isabet-unvan-ı cenâb-ı tacdârî sezâvâr buyurulmuş ve ol vechile her bir mahal me’murlarına...”

Embassy in Büyükdere and had had it redirected to other regions. Subsequently, an official order was given instructing the State Hydraulic works to redirect the water to the embassy.<sup>44</sup> There are several documents and news articles concerned with this subject. The Ottoman Empire was keen to prove to the European nations that the Russian citizens living on their land were not being mistreated.

During the diplomatic preliminaries and at the beginning of the war the Ottoman Empire avoided using harsh or insulting language, rather using declarations that focused on the nature of the war and on the unjust aggression by the Russians. When we look at the Russian aspect of the question, we see exactly the opposite attitude. From the very beginning of the war, the Russian popular culture, which was directed by government ideology, aimed to create a stereotypical enemy, and in this context they portrayed the Ottomans as “feeble”, “cowardly”, and “simple tools of the strong nations”.

One of the official representations of the enemy image by the Ottomans was that Russia was constantly interfering with the local administration in regions where a Slavic population was living under Ottoman control, and thus creating “corruption and disturbances”. In certain instances, Austria supported the Russians. There are many documents with reports about “various disruptive incidents in Montenegro in which Russian interference is suspected”. In one of those, there is a report that Austria and Russia had been meddling in the interior affairs of Montenegro, causing malice and disturbance; the chief of the Montenegro people, Ladika had been granted the title of prince by the Russian State and this title was to be ratified by the Austrian State. Ladika had rebelled against the legitimate government in Montenegro (the Ottoman State) and was expanding into neighbouring territory, as well as using

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<sup>44</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 50/69, 19 Muharrem, 1269.

weapons for malicious purposes. At the end of this statement it is expressed that no state has the right or authority to interfere in the internal affairs of another state without the latter's approval.<sup>45</sup> Thus Russia, in addition to its aggressive attitude, took on a sneaky and insidious character.

The attitude of the Ottoman State, which avoided using insulting language, began to change after the declaration of war. The newspapers of the period frequently printed stories about the heroic deeds and bravery of the Ottoman armies, as well as the desolate and wretched condition of the Russian soldiers, thus creating an image of the enemy as unsuccessful and miserable. In a state where caricatures and popular culture was nonexistent, there were only newspaper accounts which contained information like: "Except for nine wounded soldiers, not one soldier from the imperial army of the mighty sultan received a scratch, while the Russians lost about hundred and fifty soldiers."<sup>46</sup> Detailed news about the front was also given in the newspapers, and here the miserable state of the Russian army and the number of Russian soldiers killed were also reported. In each news item, the superiority of the Ottoman army over the Russians was emphasized:

The Ardahan Commander Hüseyin Bey started the battle, in which, with God's grace, he was victorious. The Russian army was devastated; fifty Kazak cavaliers were killed, four soldiers were captured. From this battle, thank God, the soldiers of Islam emerged without a scratch, except that each soldier had a small bayonet bruise.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 52/72, 29 Safer, 1269. "...Karadağ nam mahal ahalisinin reisleri bulunan Ladika'ya Rusya devleti cânibinden Prens unvânıyla mu'amele olunduğu ve yakında Avusturya Devleti tarafından dahi bu elkâb tasdik olunacağı ve mersûm Ladika hükümet-i meşrû'a aleyhine 'adem-i itâ'at ve husûmetini ve idâresinde bulunan mevâkî'in tevsîh hülyâsıyla hemcivâr olan arazi hakkında niyât-ı fâsidesini esliha isti'mâliyle i'lân ettiğine...Bir devletin rey ve irâdesi munzam olmaksızın kendi irâde-yi dâhiliyesine karışmaya diğerk bir devletin asla hakk ve selâhiyeti olmadığı dakikası teslim olunduğu halde..."

<sup>46</sup> *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*, issue: 497, Şevval, year: 1270. "...dokuz nefer yaralıdan başka cünûd-ı nusret-nümûd-ı hazret-i şahaneden kimsenin burnu bile kanamayarak Rusya askerinin yüz elli nefer kadar telefâtı oldu..."

<sup>47</sup> *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*, issue: 498, Rebû'1-evvel, year: 1270. "...Ardahan müdürü Hüseyin Bey muhârebeye kıyâm ederek avn-ı ilâhî muzaffer olmuş ve Rusya askeri mülhezim ve perişân olarak elli

The implication that while neither the Ottomans nor the allied soldiers received even a scratch, the Russian soldiers were badly defeated was intended to demonstrate what a cowardly and “clumsy” lot the Russians were. In addition to the accounts of losses that the Russian army had suffered, there were rumours that the Russian soldiers had “fled” the battlefield. The use of the expression “fled” served the purpose of implying that the Russian soldiers were “cowards.” “...although they tried to land troops on the island, arriving in numerous boats, the soldiers that were based on the island repulsed them by spraying them with bullets; not only could they not approach the island, many of them perished; the rest fled back to where they had come from...”<sup>48</sup> Similar reports appeared regularly in the newspapers. There is an important point in these reports that should be noted: the Ottoman Empire uses the term “soldiers of Islam.” Although this term is not strange when reporting about battles in which only Ottoman soldiers were involved, it does not seem logical to classify soldiers by religion when discussing battles in which French and English armies also participated.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period when the notion of international law was coming into being and it had begun to appear in the discourses of nations. In an empire in which many juridical changes took place after the reforms of 1839, it was crucial for the Ottoman Empire to legitimize its actions and declarations from the point of view of international law. Regarding the Russian invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia as legitimate grounds for war coincides with this state of affairs. The

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kadar Kazak atlısının itlâfıyla beraber dört nefer esir alınmış ve lehü'l-hamd bu muhârebede dahi asâkir-i İslamiyeden kimsenin burnu bile kanamayıp fakat bir neferin sağ elinde cüzice süngü yarası bulunmuş idüğü...”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. “...bir hayli kayıklar ile adaya asker çıkarmak istemiş ise de adada bulunan asâkir tüfenk tanelerini yağdırmalarıyla Rusya askerini adaya yanaştırmadıklarından mâadâ pek çoğunu itlâf ederek geldikleri kayıklar ile yine öte tarafa savuşup...”

Ottomans gained the support of international law by assuming the status of a reconciliatory state that had been unjustly attacked, while Russia was viewed as an aggressor who had disregarded international law. The Ottomans were, in fact, successful in this matter.

The Russian tsar, Nicholas I, wrote a declaration in which he stated his reasons for entering the war:

All our efforts, which have been expended due to reasons and causes that have forced us to request the granting of immutable securities by the Ottoman State in connection with the religious rights of the Orthodox Church and to convince the Sublime State to carry out what is fair and right with friendly compulsion, as well as being carried out with the aim of complying with existing treaties, have proven to be in vain. For this reason our soldiers have been forced to remain in Wallachia and Moldavia. Although we had been hopeful that the Ottoman State would make a decision to declare that it had been in the wrong and to acknowledge our justified requests, the situation has not turned out as we had hoped. The leading states of Europe have expended great energy in trying to convince the Ottoman State to forgo its blind beliefs, but all in vain. Now we have no other recourse but to take up arms and turn to God, and with great belief strive to attain an apology for the denigration and insults inflicted on us by the Ottoman State in response to our clear and legitimate efforts to protect the Orthodox sect, the belief of the Russian people, in the Eastern countries, and to force the Ottoman state to comply with the existing treaties and our moderate requests.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 50/81 –2, 20 Ekim, 1853. “...Ortodoks kilisesinin hukuk-ı mukaddesi hakkında taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliyye’den bazı te’minât-ı nâ-mütegayyire istemeğe bizi mecbur etmiş olan esbâbı ve gerek Saltanat-ı Seniyyeyi vasıta-i ilzâmiye-i dostâne ile dâire-i insaf ve hakkâniyete celb etmek ve muâhedât-ı mevcudeye riayet olunmak kazıyyelerine bezl ve sarf olunan ikdâmâtımızın cümlesi semeresiz kaldığını ve bu cihetle askerimizi Memleketeyn’e sevk ve idhal eylemeye bi’z-zarûr lüzum görmüş olduğumuzu... Devlet-i Aliyye kendi haksızlıklarını itiraf ederek metâlib-i muhikkânemizin ihkâk olunması hususuna karar verir me’ûl ve ümidinde olmuş isek de fakat keyfiyet intizârımızı gibi zuhur etmeyip hatta Devlet-i Aliyye’yi inda-ı a’miyânesinden vazgeçirmek için de Avrupa’nın başlıca devletleri dahi abes yere sarf-ı mesâi etmişlerdir... Artık Devlet-i Aliyye’yi muâhedât-ı mevcudeye riayet eylemeye icbâr etmek ve bizim gâyetle mu’tedil olan metâlibimize ve Rus milletinin mu’tekidi olan Ortodoks mezhebinin memâlik-i Şarkiyede hıfz u sıyâneti için derkâr olan himem-i meşrû’amıza mukabil Saltanat-ı Seniyye tarafından vuku’ bulan tahkirâtın tarzıyesini istihsâl eylemek üzere kemâl-i emniyet-i kalbiye ile avn-i Bârî’ye istinaden silâha davranmaktan gayrı çaremiz kalmamıştır...”

On the other hand, in the official declarations of the Ottoman Empire, Russia is presented as “aggressive” and “unjustly invasive”, and as a nation with which it is impossible to be reconciled or to resolve issues, while the Ottoman Empire itself is “peace-loving.” The Ottoman Empire promptly responded to the tsar’s declaration about Ottoman – Russian relations, which were getting tenser and tenser:

The efforts of the Majestic Russian Empire for the people of the sect as the majority of its own subjects are based on neither the truth nor authority. In the name of the honour of the Empire and the integrity of the state, France, Austria, England and Prussia have advised us to reciprocate... Thus, in response to this situation, the Sultan has decided to declare war and to act, although the Russian emperor has sole responsibility for this situation ... However, the Russian statement that the leading European States have tried to convince the Ottoman State to forgo its blind belief in vain is totally unfounded. Although at the end of the aforementioned statement it is said that Russia has taken up arms in order to force the Ottoman State to comply with existing treaties, which articles of the treaty have been violated is not stated.<sup>50</sup>

The above document clearly demonstrates how the Ottoman Empire emphasized the fact that it was ready to negotiate, but that Russia had no intention of conciliating, thus openly refuting the Tsar’s declaration.

In this section, apart from the general facts mentioned above, there are two important elements on which I would like to focus. First of all, it is imperative to

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<sup>50</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 50/81 –1, Ekim, 1853. “...Haşmetli Rusya İmparatoru’nun kendi tebaasından ekserisinin mu’tekîdi olan bir mezheb hakkında himem-i vâkı’ası bir sebab-i sahîh ve müessire mebnî değîl ise de Fransa ve Avusturya ve İngiltere ve Prusya Devletleri ma’mafîh buna namus-ı celîl-i Saltanat-ı Seniyye ve tamamîyet-i hukuk-ı aliye muvâfîk suretde te’minât i’tâsıyla mukabele buyrulmasını taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliyye’ye nasihat eylemişlerdir... İşte ahvâl-i meşrûha üzerine zât-ı şevket-simât-ı hazret-i mülûkane ilân-ı harb buyurmağa karar verip hükümdâr-ı müşârünileyh hazretleri bu bâbda bütün mes’uliyeti üzerine alarak hareket buyurmuş ise de ancak Rusya’nın beyânnâmesinde ifade olunduğu misillü yani Devlet-i Aliyye’yi inad-ı a’miyânesinden vazgeçirmek için Avrupa’nın başlıca devletleri dahî abes yere sarf-ı mesâi etmişlerdir diye beyân olunması sahîh değîldir... Kladi ki beyânnâme-i mezkûrenin âhirinde Rusya Devleti harbe davet olunmuş olduğundan Saltanat-ı Seniyye’yi muâhedât-ı mevcudeye riayet eylemeye icbâr etmek için artık Rusya’ya silâha davranmaktan başka çare kalmadığı irâd olunmuş ise de fakat muâhedâtın hangi maddeleri taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliyye’den nakz olunmuş olduğu beyân kılınmamıştır...”

clarify how and to what degree Christianity is mentioned when defining the enemy. From this point of view, how and to what degree can an empire and the monarch who represents the empire merge the Ottoman identity with Muslim identity under an Islamic Synthesis and to what extent can it figure in the official discourse? The Russians constantly used the concept of “the Russian soul” and Christianity together and regarded being an Orthodox Christian as an integral part of being Russian. The Crimean war, in particular, can be considered to be the peak of Orthodoxy. The Russians created a new identity around Orthodoxy and the Muslim Ottomans took on the role of outsiders. Upon an examination of the Russo-French war of 1812, it is possible to say that images concerned with Orthodoxy were more marginal. However, when we look at the period of the Crimean War, Orthodoxy has taken up a more central position. If we look at the structures of the period, it is clear that the source of bravery and the idea of the ‘Russian soul’ stemmed from Orthodoxy; this was a means of contrasting the Russian religion with that of Russia’s most insidious foe. While Orthodoxy was used to express the Russian soul, it was also used to denigrate the Ottomans. That is, during the Crimean War, the victory of Orthodoxy over Islam played an important role in determining the course of Orthodoxy. A memorandum written by the tsar to Menshikov can be used as evidence as to how much Christianity had been placed in a central position. The Tsar asked Menshikov to tell the soldiers not to worry about the enemy advance, and maintained, “God will protect us, for we are fighting for Christianity and Christ against his enemies and the Apostates of Christianity.”<sup>51</sup> Here, while the tsar describes the Russians as true Christians, he refers to the British and French as “Apostates of Christianity” who were fighting against Christ. The Ottomans are in the position of being “infidels.”

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<sup>51</sup> Modest Ivanovich Bogdonovich, *Vostochnaia Voina 1853 – 56 godov* , vol. II, (St. Petersburg, 1856), pp. 12-13.

When we look at popular culture, this attitude makes itself felt in works, with the expression of the idea that this war was being undertaken to defend the brothers of the Russians, the Orthodox Slavs. In a chapbook by Karl Flemming, a conversation that takes place between a Russian grandfather and his grandson describes the Crimean War to be a consequence of the continuous oppression of the Orthodox by the Muslims: “These Muslims, who do not believe in our Saviour or the Holy Spirit, have silently and secretly oppressed our brothers in the east for a long time. But with these vigilant and watchful eyes, our merciful Tsar has intervened for the oppressed Christians, asking the enemy why they are committing brutality.”<sup>52</sup> In contrast to his portrayal of the Ottomans as brutal oppressors, Flemming depicts the Russians as the protectors of the Orthodox. In other words, he argues that to be Orthodox or to be a protector of Orthodoxy is one of the elements of Russian national identity. In addition to being an Orthodox Christian, to love the tsar and to fight for the motherland are other characteristics of Russianness. In a poem by Tatarinov, soldiers go to the front to kill the Ottomans because they love their tsar and motherland:

It is time to kill the Turk  
 We go happily  
 And we will find the enemy  
 We are all brothers,  
 Father-Tsar and Mother-Russia!  
 With the glory of the centuries  
 We come again  
 Every one us is a brave-young warrior  
 Let our beloved Father – the Tsar – be pleased with us.<sup>53</sup>

We have to wait until the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War for the Ottomans to form a concept of the motherland that is reflected in their literature. As we mention

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<sup>52</sup> K. Flemming, *Razskazshikh o Turkakh, Anglichanakh, i Frantsuzakh* (Moskva, 1855).

<sup>53</sup> Petra Tatatarinova, “Pesn’ Russkikh soldat’ pri vustuplenii v pokhod protiv Turok,” in *Russkii Patriot ili Voina s Turkami I Anglo-Frantsuzami* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1854)



below, when Namık Kemal wrote *Vatan Yâhut Silistre* he did so to inform the readers and the elite of the period what the motherland was and how sublime an emotion patriotism was.

In fact, it would not be correct to use Christianity as a general attribute for this period, as Russia, more specifically, had an Orthodox Christian populace and was creating a political crisis to secure the rights of the Orthodox population living under Ottoman rule, not Christians in general. For example, Russians frequently referred to Muslims as infidels. But in fact, from the Russian point of view, the French and the English did not hold the same beliefs as they. However, when the Russians defined the French, they excluded the concept of religion; this is an interesting point worth noting. Although one of the apparent reasons for the Crimean War was the problem of the religious establishments, when we consider the works from the period of conflict between Catholic France and Orthodox Russia, we see that only the Ottomans were denoted as infidels, or as being of another religion. The Russian use of Orthodoxy as a weapon against Catholic France, Protestant England and the Muslim Ottoman Empire was a result of logical propaganda. Although only the Ottomans were denoted as infidels, the Russian Empire, under which all the powers of Orthodoxy were merged, used this weapon against all three enemies.

When the Ottoman case is examined, it would be both correct and incorrect to talk about an “Islamic faith” approach similar to the Russian concept. For example, the phrase “Giaour Moscovy” (*Moskof Gâvuru*) was used to refer to the Russians. This word *Moskof* has two meanings<sup>54</sup>; the first means Russian, while the second means a cruel or merciless person. The Ottoman Empire combined the two definitions and used the word Russian as a synonym for a cruel, merciless person,

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<sup>54</sup> *Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük* (2005), s.v. “Moskof.”

and the word *Giaour* to denote non-Muslims, particularly the Christian population. Thus, it is a fact that the term *Giaour Moscovy* was used as a derogatory phrase. The adjectives “cruel” and “merciless” were found compatible with the Russians and the fact that they were not Muslims was an additional factor. Actually, being *Giaour*, which means without faith, was a part of their cruelty and mercilessness. Therefore being *Giaour* intensified their cruelty. However, there is another question that needs to be considered: how can an empire which has such a large non-Muslim population include the Islamic faith in its official discourse and define its enemy with the same expression? It should also be noted that after the Tanzîmât Edict the Ottoman Empire prohibited the term *giaour* to be used for its non-Muslim population; although it was prohibited, the Ottomans used this phrase while defining their enemy and combined the attribute of being non-Muslim with the cruelty of the Russian people in the word *moskof*.

If we examine the Russian point of view, for a tzardom whose imperial goal was to be the patron of all the Orthodox believers, how tolerable would it be to see its Orthodox “brothers” living under Islamic reign? Here of course, it is important to establish what the concept of religion denotes. In his book *Genealogies of Religion*, Talal Asad<sup>55</sup> writes that the concept of religion is not something that is static and that interpreting the perception of religion in the past in the light of concepts from the present would be misleading. According to Asad, the concept of religion was transformed greatly with the Enlightenment and that, especially in the discourse of the modernized nations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it took on a new meaning of “secularism”, thus becoming part of their lives. And with the Enlightenment, disparaging people because of their religion ceased. As far as the Ottoman Empire is

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<sup>55</sup> Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (New York: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993)

concerned, during this period, although the concept of religion was used often and with care, it was actually more than just superficial. As I will examine this subject in detail in the section entitled *The Perception of Non-Muslim Population*, while the Ottomans despised the Russians, calling them *Giaour Moscovy*, they excluded their own people and the nations to which they were allied from the *Giaour* category. Even though it is difficult to give positive proof of this distinction, news items appearing in two newspapers of the period state that none of the people who are living in Ottoman territory fall into the category of *gâvur*, and that there is even a punishment for referring to such people by this name; this presents evidence as to how the *gâvur* were perceived by the Ottoman State. Indeed, even though with the *Tanzîmât* it was forbidden by law to refer to non-Muslims as *gâvur*, the Ottoman State frequently used the term *gâvur* throughout the Crimean War to distinguish between the non-Muslim population living in their territory and the allied forces which came to assist them; they also tried to impose this upon the people. In a war that on the surface started because of issues of religious establishments, on the one hand, we can see a Russia which had prospered with religious nationalism, while on the other we can see the Ottoman Empire which had been weakened by its own discourses of religion and nationalism. On the Russian side, popular prints from the Crimean War depict a visual stereotype of the Ottomans as savage infidels. The Ottomans, on the other hand, preferred to define the Russians as violent and ravenous beasts. While in Russian propaganda there were often inscriptions such as “Russian flags on Ottoman mosques”, in the Ottoman newspapers of the period there were no statements of churches being attacked, or priests being killed. It would have been highly unwise for the Ottomans to base their propaganda on a denigration of

Christianity in their official discourse, as the support of the allies was of crucial importance.

The second point I would like to underline is the concept of “being an Ottoman”; along with this concept, we must consider the “Ottoman spirit” and to what degree these concepts were felt. When we look at Russia, we can see a strong feeling of “Russianness”. The soldiers on the front, the commanders who commanded the troops and the tsar himself all had a strong feeling of Russianness. They were proud of being Russian and that pride was their greatest support in the war. This is the starting point of the concept of “us” and “others”. The feeling of belonging to a nation generated heroic fighting and in these heroically fought battles the definition of the enemy served like a mirror; the one side reflected the “self” and the other side reflected “the enemy” or the “others”, whose image is fed with hate. In fact, these two concepts, which are reflections in the same mirror, become expressions that trigger one another. The first condition of being “us” is to have the “other”. However, in the Ottoman Empire there is no strong concept of “being an Ottoman”. The question of why still remains unanswered. Was it truly non-existent? It may be possible that the Crimean War was the turning point which instigated such emotions. There is a distinct Ottoman awareness 23 years after the Crimean War, that is, in the Ottoman – Russian war of 1877-78. Many of the concepts that changed in the space of time between the two wars were the result of the Crimean War. One of the best examples of this is the work, *Vatan Yâhut Silistre*, written by Namık Kemal, an important author of the Ottoman period.<sup>56</sup> It is thought that Namık Kemal wrote this work in 1873. Two wars form the backdrop to the events in the novel. The first of these is the 1827-28 Ottoman-Russian War, and the second is the Crimean War,

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<sup>56</sup> Namık Kemal, *Vatan Yâhut Silistre* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969)

during the Siege of Silistre. Before this date, particularly during the Crimean War, there were no other literary works or other works that were directly accessible to the common man which had been written about patriotism. In fact, the author himself was worried because he had created a concept of patriotism which might not be understood by the common man, and as a result he published an article entitled “Vatan” (Motherland) in the newspaper *İbret*, where he was the head writer. In this article, which was written with the intention of giving information about patriotism to the audiences who were watching Kemal’s drama, there is a detailed discussion of the importance of patriotism and descriptions about how the sacredness of the love of the motherland; the concept of patriotism was only just being formed at this time in the Ottoman State. Therefore, we can state that the Crimean War was a turning point in the culture of Ottoman patriotism.

In comparison, in Russia the wartime culture and notion of the perception of enemies in the Ottoman Empire was quite undeveloped. A strong definition of “enemy” did not appear distinctly or effectively in the Ottoman’s official discourse because an intellectual class, similar to the Russian intellectuals, was slow to develop in the Ottoman Empire. Naturally, there were certain patterns and descriptions; I have tried to relay these above. However, when compared to Russia, it becomes evident that the latter was far more masterful in molding the enemy into a stereotype than the Ottoman Empire. The principal reason for this is obviously the fact that the Russians had the means to communicate war propaganda all the way down to the peasants and that there was good proportion of literacy among the peasantry, enabling them to read written texts.<sup>57</sup> Actually, as most of the communications were

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<sup>57</sup> Here, to suggest that the level of literacy among Russian peasants was high would be incorrect. Rather, the literacy level was higher in the Russian village than it was in the Ottoman village. Historians state that post-emancipation there was an increase in the literacy level of Russian citizens.

illustrated, no reading skills were required. Wartime caricatures were one of the indispensable components of Russian propaganda. Images, known as *lubok*,<sup>58</sup> not only played an important role in Russian visual culture, but with the input of nationalism, constituted one of the most valuable propaganda vehicles as well. These popular prints can be best described as lively illustrations similar to posters or European broadsides with short texts, usually at the bottom of the picture. As was true in Europe, this was a period in Russia when states used popular images to provoke nationalistic sentiments and to connect with their people. Every month the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski* (Notes of the Fatherland) included a section entitled “Petersburg Notes”. In every edition, the author would record major events, as well as current debates, and events that occurred in Russia’s capital. With war raging in April 1855, everyone in Petersburg seemed to be discussing the defence of Sevastopol. That month’s “Petersburg Notes” observed that everyone was talking about the heroism of the Russian troops and the events of the war in general. Although many residents received news of the war from various journals, the author of “Petersburg Notes” also mentioned another source for news – the *lubok*. “The number of pictures devoted to wartime matters – a production of Moscow lithography – increases every day.”<sup>59</sup>

However, in the Ottoman Empire, it was not until the Balkan wars that images and caricatures became widespread. As a result, during the Crimean War we

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For further analysis, please see, Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to read: literacy and Popular Literature, 1861 – 1917* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 4 – 17, Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861 - 1914* (Los Angeles, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 20 – 26.

<sup>58</sup> *Lubok* is a Russian term that refers to a variety of Russian folk art, such as prints in woodcut, and which is characterized by simple graphics and narratives deriving from the oral or written folklore; this form of art played an important role in Russian wartime culture. For detailed information, see: Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity 1812-1945* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> “Peterburgskie Zametki,” *Otechestvennye zapiski* (April 1855), p. 164.

do not encounter any visual images in the Ottoman sources. There were two newspapers that were being published in the Ottoman State at that time. Unlike Russia, the number of newspapers and journals was not very high and there was no visual material. Naturally, this is not enough on its own to claim that there was no popular culture in the Ottomans. True, the Ottomans did not have a widespread culture in either the visual and literary sense, but it would not be incorrect to state that the *hutbe* and *vaaz*, components of the Ottoman-Islamic tradition, were being used as a means of war propaganda that could directly be communicated to the people. The *hutbe* is a sermon that is delivered on Fridays and religious festival days in the mosques; it is used to instruct the listeners in matters of religion. The *vaaz* is delivered by preachers in mosques, masjids and similar places, and is a religious lecture that generally has an advisory nature. If we take into account the fact that the Ottomans were a Muslim nation, then we can state that the percentage of people who went to the mosques was quite high. Therefore, even though there might not have been written or graphic material in distant villages or towns, it can be assumed that there were lectures about the war and soldiers delivered in the mosques. After the Crimean War we can see that these lectures began to take on a more and more patriotic nature, and that patriotism became an existing emotion. As stated above, Namık Kemal's *Vatan Yâhut Silistre* is an indication of the rise in this feeling of patriotism among the elite and then the people.

When we examine Russian *luboks* that were printed during the Crimean War or the written material of the period, we can see that the concept of the enemy was divided into two categories: on one side “greedy” England and France, whose imperial discourse included colonialism, and on the other was the “savage” and “backward” Ottoman. As mentioned above, the Crimean War had a religious

characteristic for the Russians. They accentuated religious motives and Orthodoxy in their propaganda, which was based on the issue of the religious establishments and the protection of the rights of Orthodox citizens living in Ottoman territory.

With the creation of the official ideology of the Russian Empire, the aim of the war became the protection of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox “brothers”. The reason behind this is obvious. For Russia, who was fighting with the Muslim Ottomans and the non-Orthodox English and French, Orthodoxy was a merger component. When one takes into account that such publications increased following the participation of England and France in the war, it is clear that Russia shaped its war propaganda in accordance with the perceived threats.<sup>60</sup> When one examines the pictures that were published during the French-Russian War of 1812 (this war is referred as the 1<sup>st</sup> Patriotic War in Russian literature, while the Great Patriotic War is the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War), it is clear that the themes used in this war were also used in the Crimean War. However, the most significant difference between these two wars is the use of Orthodoxy in the national identity of Russia.<sup>61</sup> As explained above, it is very logical for an empire that is fighting not only with Muslims, but also with Catholics and Protestants, to use Orthodoxy as their merger component. At the same time, when the official ideology of Nicholas I, the tsar of the period, is reviewed, it can be seen that Orthodoxy, together with the Russian nationalism and the monarchy, composed one of the most significant components of their ideology.<sup>62</sup>

In the *luboks*, the themes depicted were the Ottomans endeavours to take over the churches and the violent killing of priests, as well as the Russian struggle to save

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<sup>60</sup> Kezban Acar, *Resimlerle Rusya, Savaşlar ve Türkler* (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity 1812-1945*, p. 64.

<sup>62</sup> Nicholas Valentin Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825 – 1855* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), p. 15.



the churches, which were the greatest visual symbols of their religion. One of the most significant *luboks* in which Orthodoxy was revealed as a symbol is the picture “The Praiseworthy Deed of Ensign Kudriavtsev”.<sup>63</sup> The icons of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are in the background, an Orthodox priest is lying on the floor of a church which has been invaded by the Ottomans; all of these factors emphasize Orthodoxy. The Ottomans were invading the most sacred Russian place; the church; but, as we can see in the *lubok*, the Russian uniformed soldiers were also fighting against the Ottomans to protect their church and religion, risking their very lives. Accordingly, there was great propaganda that addressed religious feelings. In these pictures, the sole enemy was not the Ottoman. In the *lubok* “The Victory of Father Savinov” the Russian enemies are fighting with the English soldiers and Savinov, the Orthodox priest, is sanctifying the soldiers with a crucifix while supporting them.<sup>64</sup>

From the Ottoman aspect, as I mentioned before, there is a contradiction. Even though there is no apparent attack using the religion, the expression “*Giaour Moscovy*” shows contempt. Of course, the Ottomans were proud of being Muslim and believed that God was on their side in the wars. It should be kept in mind that there was a considerably large population of non-Muslims who were living under their rule. Furthermore, their allies were Christian. So, if God was on their side in the wars because they were Muslims, whose side was He on when their Christian allies won? This is the reason why the concept of religion was not so accentuated as the Russian’s in the official discourse of the Ottoman Empire.

Alongside the use of religion in the Russian discourse, the Ottomans were also depicted as a feeble and spineless enemy. This is not surprising. There are many

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<sup>63</sup> Figure 1 – “The Praiseworthy Deed of Ensign Kudriavtsev.” These pictures can be found in the Appendixes.

<sup>64</sup> Figure 2 – “The Victory of Father Savinov.”

*luboks* which mention the war between the “Courageous Russians” and the “Cowardly Turks.” In the figure “The Capture of the Turkish Fortress Kars on 16 November 1855”,<sup>65</sup> the courage of the Russians is evident. The Russian commander, progressing towards the Castle on his horse, represents the victory won against the Ottomans, while the kneeling Ottoman generals represent defeat. The discipline of the Russian army and the disorganization of the Ottoman army are also emphasized. In the *lubok* “The Haste of a Turk, Burdened with Three *Bunchuk* to Inform the Sultan of the Conquest of Kars by Russian Troops”,<sup>66</sup> the Turkish general tries to flee the battle field when he learns that the Ottomans have been defeated. The general is fleeing the city and the three *bunchuks* of the title suggest that he is taking the spoils with him. It is not clear what goods are being carried by the general not and it is possible that he is running away with the bunchuks. Once again, there is an emphasis of the brave Russians who captured Kars on the one hand, contrasted with the “cowardly” Ottoman generals who abandoned the city.

In Ottoman newspapers and diplomatic documents there are innumerable articles about what cowards the Russians were and how badly they were being defeated and killed in the battles; sometimes it is mentioned that they were so terrified they even abandoned the battlefield. Likewise, in creating the image of the Ottomans, Russians made use of Orientalism; the Ottoman pashas were portrayed as gutless ignoramuses who wore exotic outfits on black horses while the Russian soldiers were depicted as fearless, courageous patriots in impressive uniforms galloping on white horses, capturing the Ottoman pashas. These images all shared one basic idea: the cowardly and gutless Ottomans, who shrank from warfare, could

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<sup>65</sup> Figure 3 – “The Capture of the Turkish Fortress Kars on 16 November 1855.”

<sup>66</sup> Figure 4 – “The Haste of a Turk, Burdened with Three *Bunchuk* to Inform the Sultan of the Conquest of Kars by Russian Troops.”

never prove to be as courageous as the noble-spirited Russian soldiers. Even if the Russians were defeated, the honour of being Russian and of having fought courageously for Russia was enough for the Russian soldier. This was particularly emphasized when the war started to turn to the disadvantage of the Russians. Defeated soldiers who were losing their comrades needed to find some sort of strength to rely on and the Russian state aimed at creating patriotic feelings and providing them with a motherland.

At this point, Russian Orientalism should be briefly explained: The “imperial borderland” is a phrase that is used with respect to the imperial policies that had been developed since the era of Peter the Great. The Russian Empire, with its capital in Moscow, created practices for the empire and applied these practices for both the borderlands and the capital. As Moscow and St. Petersburg remained at the centre, the expansion maintained around the borderland phrase was directed both to the west (Poland) and to the east (Tatar and the Muslim communities). The book *Russia's Orient*, prepared by Daniel Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, mentions the borderland phrase and the difference adopted between actions to the East and the West. It is also pointed out in the book that the East and the West were not regions simply separated on a map: “Some Russians discussed in this book even used oriental imagery to express their distaste for political or cultural aspects of their own people and state, placed outside the civilized West.”<sup>67</sup> This point of view suggests that Russia had a special place within the Western countries. Much as with attitude to the West, Russia did not denigrate the East by using the phrase “borderland”; however, when the eastern part of Russia is considered, it can be seen that there were problems with the Muslim communities and certain imperial policies were being used to solve these

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<sup>67</sup> Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, ed., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700 – 1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. xviii.

problems. This situation overlaps the expectations of the Russians regarding the victory of Orthodoxy over Islam as a result of the Crimean War. The efforts to convert the population living in the eastern regions of the Empire to Christianity may be the same as the expressions made during the Crimean War regarding the supremacy of Orthodoxy.

It would also be useful to discuss the governing methods of the Russians in the east and the intersection of Russian Orientalism with Orientalist theories: There are different opinions regarding if the definition of Orientalism, as set out by Edward Said in his book “Orientalism”,<sup>68</sup> can be applied to the Russian Empire.<sup>69</sup> The Russian historian Nathaniel Knight, who claims that Russian Orientalism was practiced differently than that of England and France, discusses Orientalism in his article in accordance with the methods of Grigor’ev, a governor serving in Orenburg, and provides detailed information regarding Russian Orientalism. As Knight puts it, “it has become nearly impossible to speak or write about orientalism solely as the body of western scholarship on Asia without also evoking images of a specific type of imperial discourse that functions to create and marginalize the degraded ‘other’.”<sup>70</sup> The application of the paradigms of Said to Russia reveals the following situation: There is a West, an East, and a Russian Empire. Russia is both the creator and the

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<sup>68</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

<sup>69</sup> In her article “Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia”, Vera Tolz summarizes the opinions regarding the issue as follows: “Adeeb Khalid, a historian of Central Asia, and Nathaniel Knight, a historian of Russia, offer different answers to the question they pose about the complicity of specialists in Oriental studies in Russian imperialism. Whereas Khalid argues in the full relevance of Said’s arguments to Russia, Knight thinks that Russia’s involvement with the Orient was profoundly different from those of Britain and France, whose experiences are analyzed by Said.” According to Knight the opinions of Said should be applied to the Russian Empire, but had not been in historical studies regarding the Russian Empire. Vera Tolz, “Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia” *The Historical Journal* 48 (2005), p. 130.

<sup>70</sup> Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851 – 1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 59, no:1 (Spring 2000), p. 75.

object of existing Orientalism.<sup>71</sup> It is the creator of Orientalism, as it has sovereignty, in other words, imperial domination, over the eastern borderlands and as Said puts it, Russia applied a combination of knowledge and power in its management methods. To quote Said: “knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.”<sup>72</sup> When one takes into account that power and knowledge complement one another, it can be seen that the Russians used this combination when managing the Eastern population: “if we know how Asiatics think, his reasoning went, then we know how to govern them.”<sup>73</sup>

Knight claims that the concept of Orientalism in Russia is different from that in France and England. One of the main reasons for this claim is that when studying the East, Russia was forced to study herself. Whilst there is an exotic “other” for English and French Orientalism, the eastern territories were part of the Russian Empire. According to Knight, Orientalism had two main functions in Russia: (i) creating new phrases within the Empire, by studying the history, language and culture of the communities that were connected with Russia, and (ii) making efforts to offset Western cultural domination by dispersing knowledge regarding the Eastern civilizations. By doing this, the Russian Empire created a discipline of which it could feel proud next to the greatest achievements of its Western counterparts.<sup>74</sup> Russia created this discipline; in other words, it introduced its own national definition and claims against the cultural hegemony of the West by being interested in the “other”

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>72</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p. 36.

<sup>73</sup> Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851 – 1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire,” p. 75.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 79 – 80.

in the East. To a certain extent, this situation was transformed into a practice of “imperial domination”.

Said describes Russian Orientalism as follows: Russia created new narratives to support its sovereignty and growth. Accordingly, it collected the cultures and histories of the Eastern communities. In other words, in this way the history of Eastern culture was appropriated and thus Russian Orientalism was created.<sup>75</sup> Several studies have been conducted in this interpretation of Russian Orientalism; 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian historians claim that the non-Russian community was absorbed “without pain” and included in the Empire during this expansion.

Western Orientalism, as depicted by Said, is established on an essentialized, unified conception of the Orient and its habitants. Orientalism sweeps away the need for distinctions and focuses on the production of a core of knowledge that consists of factual statements which are universally applicable to the Orient as a whole. For Russians, however, it was not quite so easy to dispense with the particular. As has often been pointed out, in Russia the oriental ‘other’ was not necessarily an unknown creature set apart by thousands of miles and vast oceans. In Russia, the ‘other’ was all around – in ethnic enclaves that penetrated deep into the heartland of the Russian settlement, in scattered settlements and in vast stretches of borderland where ethnic groups met and interacted over the course of centuries. In such a setting, the knowledge that one ‘other’ differed from the other “others” had fundamental significance. However, Russian Orientalism drew on and perpetuated cultural stereotypes, as the term Asiatic’ illustrates.<sup>76</sup>

Russian Orientalism is a separate and independent subject, but the main points of Russian Orientalism can be briefly discussed to examine the policies they

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<sup>75</sup> Said, , *Orientalism*, pp. 76 – 88.

<sup>76</sup> Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851 – 1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire,” p. 97.

adopted against the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War. The Russians did not create a discourse by viewing a community that was far away or exotic, as Western Orientalism did; rather they took a different approach and created a view that regarded the Ottomans in a way similar to Western Orientalism; as set forth above, Russia was both the creator and the subject within its own borders. On the one hand, it considers the Eastern cultures from an oriental point of view, while, on the other hand, desired to establish an imperial domain using its own culture and knowledge of the East. However, Russia denigrated the Ottomans (with the effects of the war), showing them as an exotic, unknown people suffering from sexual confusion; this aspect composes the other side of Russian Orientalism. The Islamic and Christian dispute must also be included here. The stereotypes of Islam by the Russian Empire ensured that Islam became reminiscent of fanatics and violence. At the same time Islam was, in particular, the most significant source in clarifying what the point of resistance was in the Caucasus against the Russian power. When the Russians depicted the Ottomans, they used Islam together with what they termed the despotism and violence that had been inflicted on the Christian population, thus developing their own expressions by defending the Orthodox public.

Humiliation and denigrating depictions can be seen for the most part in the *luboks*, but certain painters of the period used the Crimean War as well in their pictures. Certain pictures by Vasiliy Timm, the Russian painter, which were published regularly during the war, are good examples of this. In Timm's album one can find mostly depictions of the battlefield and the city, as well as soldiers, studies of prisoners of war and depictions of wounded soldiers. When one reviews these albums, indications of Orientalism can be seen in some works: For example, in the picture entitled: "Turks taken into military service", Timm depicts the young

Ottoman men who are taken into military service with their hands tied behind their backs. This is more like a depiction of soldiers who have been captured. The Ottoman army is depicted as a prisoner camp that is far removed from military discipline. This is one of the most significant elements used in the denigration of the Ottomans.<sup>77</sup>

Alexey Bogolyubov and Ivan Aivasovsky, famous of the period, painted several pictures concerned with the Crimean War. One of the most important subjects that they painted was the “Battle of Sinop”. This event is recorded in history as the “Raid of Sinop”, and during this attack the Ottoman ships were destroyed by the Russian navy. Following this event, the allied countries decided to enter the war. Thus, it is natural that the Russian painters depicted the Battle of Sinop and it acts a sample of their victory propaganda. A burnt and destroyed Ottoman navy legitimizes the war and consolidates the trust of the public in the tsar and the rulers.<sup>78</sup> Of these paintings, the one signed by Aivasovsky was made in 1853, that is, immediately after the Battle of Sinop. In this situation, the depiction of this victory seems totally natural and it can be said that it was used as a means of propaganda. Bogolyubov’s work was made in 1860, that is, 4 years after the war. Even though it is not possible to attribute this painting as propaganda made during the war, due to its late date, it is possible that the artist was trying to rectify the image of the tsar in the people’s eyes with the depiction of a victory.

In addition, Sevastopol had a special place in Russian wartime culture. Russian soldiers who had fought bravely to defend Sevastopol became a myth, and

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<sup>77</sup> Candan Badem, “Rus ve Sovyet Tarih Yazımında Kırım Savaşı ” *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 155 (November, 2006), p. 19. Figure 5 – “Turks who were taken into military service”

<sup>78</sup> Ivan Aivasovsky, *Sinop: The Night after the Battle of November 18, 1853*, oil on canvas, 1853, Central Navy Museum, St. Petersburg and Alexey Bogolyubov, *Battle of Sinop*, oil on canvas, 1860, Central Navy Museum, St. Petersburg. The pictures can be found in the Appendixes.



even though the Crimean War was being fought in Anatolian territory, the Russians identified the Crimean War with the city of Sevastopol. This city had been declared to be the “city of victory” and played an important part in creating a national identity for the Russians. The city, which had only come under Russian control during the eighteenth century, became a “city of glory” after 1855, and entered the pantheon of names associated with Russian national identity, such as Borodino<sup>79</sup> Much like Borodino, however dubious the claims, the battle of Sevastopol was celebrated as a victory because Russian heroism had saved the homeland from foreign invasion. Part of this myth included the veneration of the heroes of Sevastopol, such as the images celebrating individual acts of Russian heroism.<sup>80</sup>

For example, the significance of the city is depicted in a *lubok* called “Sevastopol”.<sup>81</sup> The city is shown as being quiet and calm, in contrary to the real state of disorder and panic. The image of the city is defined as the background and four enemy ships are waiting to destroy the city. On the left side, the Russian soldiers with their uniforms stand in perfect order, while on the right side are the Orthodox priests with their icons and other religious symbols. There is a crowd standing behind the priests. The priests are praying or delivering a sermon. Once again, Orthodoxy is being used as a uniting element. By the turn of the twentieth century, Sevastopol had become “one of the most venerated places of the Russian Empire”; the addition of

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<sup>79</sup> Serhii Plokhy, “The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35/3 (July 2000): 369-83.

<sup>80</sup> Plokhy cites the raising of monuments to heroes, such as Admmiral Nakhimov and other Russian commanders who were killed during the siege in 1856, as further evidence of the veneration of Sevastopol. See, Plokhy, “City of Glory,” p. 375.

<sup>81</sup> Figure 6 - “Sevastopol”

new monuments to the city and the opening of a museum dedicated to the Defense of Sevastopol in 1890 is further examples of the enrichment of the myth.<sup>82</sup>

The fall of Sevastopol led to the appearance of another expression in Russia. Russia perceived Britain, France and even the Ottoman State as being aggressive and greedy imperialists who were not content with the territory they had. In addition, Russia was depicted as a grand empire that was content to remain within her borders. A poem written after the fall of Sevastopol in 1855 stressed that, unlike the content Russians, the British and French, and even the Ottomans, were seeking the resources of other countries, and therefore were greedy and expansionist:

Three enemies, the British, Turkish and the French  
While celebrating their victories and alliance,  
And considering themselves as equals  
Gathered to go to Rein, Oka  
To China, Tataria,  
To Algerian Arabia!  
They do not know how to stay at home  
And to dream of all that which is foreign.<sup>83</sup>

Together with the *lubok* pictures, the writers of the period described the Crimean War. Tolstoy, one of the greatest Russian writers and one who had certain connections with the Slavophiles, defined this battle as “patriotic”. Tolstoy himself wrote a letter to Prince Gorchakov, stating that he wanted to participate in the war. Upon receiving a positive reply from Gorchakov Tolstoy joined the army. At first, he suggested producing a journal for the soldiers here; however, this was not accepted.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> For an insightful account of how the Crimea became a part of the “Russian consciousness” soon after its annexation, see Andrei Zorin, “ Krym v istorii russkogo samosoznaniia,” *Novoe Literaturnoe obozrenie* 31/3 (1998): 123-43.

<sup>83</sup> *Anglo – Frantsuzskii Desant v Krymu*. 2 Sentiabria, 1854.

<sup>84</sup> Tolstoy and other soldiers wanted to produce a journal called *The War Leaflet*. This journal would provide news from the fronts, lists of decorations and court-martials, stories of soldiers’ lives and biographies, as well as military songs and some articles on the art of war. According to what Tolstoy’s comrades said, he believed that this journal would spread patriotic feelings throughout the army. Even though Gorchakov approved of this idea, it was turned down because Nicholas I was opposed to

This situation did not dent Tolstoy's desire to spread bravery and heroism among the soldiers and he started to write stories about the battle. Sevastopol Sketches was written in the middle of the battle. Unlike the *luboks*, Tolstoy produced a more realistic propaganda, as it was written from within the battle. *Luboks* were placed within the book of Sevastopol Sketches; Tolstoy saw these *luboks* as government propaganda and this belief, popularized by writers such as Tolstoy, serves as a window to further understand one of functions of wartime images.<sup>85</sup> In his book *Sevastopol Sketches* Tolstoy recounts the war like a war correspondent and turns the city into a place of legends. He describes the city as one of the most important components of Russian patriotism. In "*Sevastopol in December*," Tolstoy wrote: "the thought that you too are in Sevastopol produces its unfailing effect of imbuing your soul with a sense of pride and courage and of making the blood course faster in your veins."<sup>86</sup> He emphasized the impossibility of Sevastopol falling to enemy forces. To accentuate this, he further described how Russian soldiers, upon the command of their captain, did not hesitate to give their lives for Sevastopol, for the Motherland:

We will die! Hurrah! – Only now the stories of those days cease to be a beautiful historic legend and become a reality, a fact. You will suddenly have a clear and vivid awareness that those men you have just seen are the very same heroes who in those difficult days did not allow their spirits to sing but rather felt them rise as they joyfully prepared to die, not for the town but for their native land.<sup>87</sup>

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independent publications. For more on this venture, see: N.N. Gusev *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1828 po 1855 god* (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademi nauk SSSR, 1954), pp: 495-99.

<sup>85</sup> Norris, p. 55. The war changed Tolstoy's thinking about patriotism and helped to shape his negative attitude toward any form of government propaganda, but it also renewed the author's belief in the Russian spirit.

<sup>86</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *Sevastopol Sketches*, "Sevastopol in December," translated with an introduction and notes by David McDuff (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 42. Tolstoy wrote about his experiences during the war in this book; it was written in 1855.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

By reemphasizing the heroism of the soldiers, Tolstoy created the myth of Sevastopol. He wrote that the people of St. Petersburg had been thinking about the heroic soldiers in Sevastopol and described being in this town as an “extraordinary experience.”

We can see what an important place Sevastopol occupied in Russian official history in the medals that were produced after the battle. Generally, in Russian medals and decorations, love of the motherland combined with patriotism is clearly illustrated.<sup>88</sup> The Sevastopol medal has a distinctive place among the Russian medals and decorations awarded during the Crimean War. Since the defence of Sevastopol occupies such an important place in Russian patriotic culture, it is completely natural that there would be a medal consecrated to the defence of this city. There are three Sevastopol medals. The first one is the Sevastopol Defence Medal; on one side are the monographs of Tsar Alexander II and Tsar Nicholas I, the latter having died during the war. On the other side are engraved the dates 1854 – 1855. This medal was given to the soldiers who defended Sevastopol by Alexander II.<sup>89</sup> The Sevastopol Cross was created by Alexander III in 1890. On one side the number, ‘349’ is engraved. This code indicates the 349 days that the Sevastopol siege

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<sup>88</sup> If we are to examine this matter in a little detail, Old Russian orders were regarded as supreme distinctions awarded for gallantry in battle and outstanding services to the Motherland. In Russian patriotic feelings, being an Orthodox also manifested in great admiration for the tsar. The Order of St. Catherine, which was first created in 1714, was redesigned in 1856. The cross is made up of diamonds and its centre is a gold oval medallion with a painted image of St. Catherine holding a large cross and a palm branch in her hands. (The diamonds were used in the newer design. Originally, this order was designed for the wife of Peter the Great, Tsarina Catherine, and was later awarded to ladies of the court for charitable works; grand duchesses were presented with the order at baptism and princesses received it when they came of age.) The letters ‘DSFR’, standing for “Domine, salvum fac Regem” (God save the Tsar) are engraved across the cross. The badge of the Order of St. Catherine 1<sup>st</sup> class was worn with a bow that had the motto “For Love and Homeland” embroidered on it. Robert Werlich, *Russian Orders, Decorations and Medals including those of Imperial Russia, the Provisional Government, the Civil War and the Soviet Union* (Washington: Quaker Press, 1981), pp. 4-5; The Moscow Kremlin, *Old Russian Orders* (Moscow: The Moscow Kremlin State Historical and Cultural Museum, 1995), pp. 12-15.

<sup>89</sup> Werlich, *Russian Orders, Decorations and Medals including those of Imperial Russia, the Provisional Government, the Civil War and the Soviet Union*, p. 49.

lasted, thus referring to the “great” Russian defence.<sup>90</sup> On the other side is engraved ‘1854 – 1855 Sevastopol’. The third medal is the Sevastopol Medal, which was minted by Tsar Nicholas II to commemorate the fiftieth year of the Sevastopol defence. Taking into consideration the fact that a medal was created for Sevastopol fifty years later, it is safe to assert that Sevastopol was a milestone in Russian war mythology.

However, for the Ottomans there were no mythic cities. Although the seizure of Kars by the Russians was an important event, neither the Ottoman newspapers or the intellectuals turned the defence of this city into a legend, as had been done with Sevastopol. In the Ottomans there was a folk-song known among the people as the Sevastopol March. There are a few different versions of the march, but the best known version is given below:

The ships are lying in front of Sevastopol  
They fire off cannons and bring down the heavens  
The *kırklar*, *yediler* are our helpers  
But let the sultan give us permission  
If he doesn't give permission, pour us into the sea  
The ruined minaret in front of Sevastopol  
Those who we call enemies won't come to the faith  
The saints come to our aid  
But, let the sultan give us permission  
If he doesn't give permission, pour us into the sea.<sup>91</sup>

No information about whether or not this march was written during the war or not has been found, but it is a good example of the popular culture that had begun to develop among the people. However, in the Siege of Sevastopol Ottoman soldiers did not combat with the Russians; rather it was the British and the French. That is,

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<sup>90</sup> The Moscow Kremlin, *Old Russian Orders*, p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> “Sivastopol önünde yatan gemiler - Atar da nizam topunu yer gök iniler - Yardımcıdır bize kırklar yediler - Aman da padişahım izin ver bize - İzin de vermez isen dök bizi denize - Sivastopol önünde yıkık minare - Düşman dediğin de gelmez imane - Erenler geliyor bize imdada - Aman da padişahım izin ver bize - İzin de vermez isen dök bizi denize” available from [http:// www.itusozluk.com](http://www.itusozluk.com); Internet.

the Ottoman soldiers did not remain in Sevastopol long enough to plead with their sultan. When the words of the song are examined, one can see that the nations which had come to the aid of the Ottomans are mentioned. This shows the impact that the state propaganda for the alliance and the allies had on the people. At the same time, the reference to a ruined minaret in front of Sevastopol depicts the aggression on the part of the Russians against Muslim mosques and Islam. No matter how reserved the Ottomans were in their reaction to the Russian concept of Orthodoxy, when one examines examples from popular culture we can see that they too used religious feelings. Naturally, the fact that a Sevastopol March appeared, when this was a front to which the Ottomans sent almost no soldiers, could be the result of the creation of Sevastopol as a myth by both sides. In fact, this situation could suggest the possibility that this march appeared after the war or in another Ottoman-Russian conflict. As using past victories to whip up military morale is a method that is always used and the Crimean was a war in which the Ottomans were victorious, with the Sevastopol front being one of the important fronts, this battle could have been used in general terms, without paying too much attention to detail, as a means of motivation. Otherwise, it would not be logical that a march about Sevastopol should reach us today when the Defense of Kars, which was so much more important, remains unsung.

Of course, this situation does not mean that the Ottomans did not produce medals for the defence of cities. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a clear increase in the manufacture of both war medals and souvenir medals, and with the Crimean War, there was an upsurge of medal production. Sevastopol, Silistre and Kars medals, which were minted towards the end of 1855, contained certain characteristics of the Crimean War. Edhem Eldem provides valuable information about this subject in his

book *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders Medals and Decorations*.<sup>92</sup> In a document dated 1855 there is a text written<sup>93</sup> to the Ministry of Finance about the preparation of the Sevastopol, Silistire and Kars medals. While the Silistire and Kars medals had similar features (the seal of the sultan on one side and the fortress and city on the other), the Sevastopol medal was distinctly different, with a smaller seal and the name of the city and the date on one side, with a composition showing the Russian flag under the wheel of a cannon, an anchor and in the background French, Ottoman and English flags on the other. This medal, which had Sevastopol written in Latin letters, supports the assumption that the series was designed for the allied soldiers. The fact that this medal had a different design from the other two attests the importance of the Sevastopol defence myth in Russia. The fall or liberation of Sevastopol – depending on which side you are looking from – had great importance for Russia and this medal, which aimed to humiliate the Russians by showing their flag being crushed beneath the wheels of cannon, was visual proof of their defeat. The explanation for the difference in the composition from the other two is quite clear: while Ottoman soldiers defended the cities of Silistire and Kars, the Ottoman forces did not participate so much in the fight for Sevastopol. In fact, the battle and defence of Sevastopol, which from the view point of Russian patriotism was almost a holy city, was not fought against the eternal enemy, the Ottomans, but against the allied countries, in particular, France. This in itself is ironic. While the Ottomans belittled the Russians on their medals, which they had designed primarily

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<sup>92</sup> Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders Medals and Decorations* (Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), pp. 203 – 204. The pictures of medals are available in Appendix Part.

<sup>93</sup> The information found in this document, in which details are given about what metals were to be used in minting the medals and how many medals were to be minted is worth examining. The medals were to be minted in silver and the numbers of pieces demanded of each kind are as follows: Sevastopol: 25,000; Silistire: 13,862 and Kars: 20,000. However, of the 25,000 silver Sevastopol medals that were planned to be minted, the only ones that can be found today were minted in gold. Therefore, it is clear that fundamental changes were made in the original plans.

for the allied soldiers by using the Russian holy city and flag, the Russians based their entire literature of the Sevastopol myth on belittling the Ottomans even though the Ottoman soldiers had not fought in the battle.

On the other hand, the fact that the Sevastopol medal was minted in gold even though it was meant to be given to the lower ranks of soldiers of the allied armies, also constitutes a contradiction. Edhem Eldem<sup>94</sup> explains this with the addition of Sardinian flag on the Crimean medal, which had almost the same features as the Sevastopol medal; this seems quite logical. The Sardinian flag, which did not appear or which someone forgot to place on the Sevastopol medal, found its way on the back of the Crimean medal. With this fact, the question of whether the Sevastopol medal was ever actually awarded arises. In other words, “The Crimean medal may have been the final and corrected version of a faulty medal.”<sup>95</sup> However, the answer to this question has not been discovered.

When Russian wartime culture is examined, one sees that the state accentuated patriotic feelings and included them in its official discourse. A Turk-Ottoman stereotypical enemy was created and this enemy image continued to be used, even after the war. The enemy image became more explicit, particularly during the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russia war.

There is another important point worth mentioning; while the *luboks* constituted a vital element of the popular culture and create patriotism, even if it was one of defeat, they also criticized the state and even the Tsar. In many instances, the *luboks* went so far as to accuse them of failure. This is actually a very crucial step, because whilst the *luboks* instilled patriotism and redefined Orthodoxy as an integral part of the national identity, they also initiated the opportunity to view these two

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<sup>94</sup> Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders Medals and Decorations*, p. 204.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.



concepts from a new perspective. In other words, Russian wartime propaganda was not merely an annunciation of the battle and stories of bravery from the point of view of the state. However, the Ottomans did not have such a popular culture, therefore official discourses of the state are the only source for research.

To sum up, the Ottoman Empire based its entire discourse on protesting against the unjustified invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia and legitimizing the Crimean War. Although from the very beginning, the invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia was enough reason for the Ottomans to declare war, they waited to receive the counsel of the European countries. During this waiting period they tried to gain the support of the European countries with their “restrained” attitude. But later, when the people started putting pressure on them, the Ottoman Empire declared war. The Ottoman archives are full of letters warning Russia that war was imminent unless it retreated from Ottoman territory. From this point of view, the intention of the Ottoman Empire was to proclaim their righteousness both to their own subjects and to Europe and consequently, when creating an image of the enemy, they chose to concentrate on Russia’s “aggressive” approach.

### CHAPTER 3: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE ALLIANCE

On 28 March 1854, England and France declared war against Russia; one year later the Kingdom of Sardinia followed suit, thus joining the ranks of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>96</sup> The fact that the great European states were assisting the Ottomans and that they stood side by side with the Ottoman State in this war with Russia was of vital importance to the State. Without the help of Britain or France there would have been no possibility of the Ottomans emerging from this battle as victor. Thus, the perception of the Ottoman State of the allies and this alliance in official statements proceeded in two parallel branches. The first of these followed a line that praised the alliance and the soldiers of the allied states to the public, due to the recognition of the importance of this alliance for the outcome of the war. The second was concerned with the legitimization of the Ottoman State in the public eye. In particular, for a state that was trying to prove itself in the arena of international law, one can interpret the fact that the Great Powers of Europe entered into a war with the Ottomans as another kind of victory.

When we examine the diplomatic relations that developed in the pre-war period, we can see that the submissions of Prince Menshikov, which were found to be objectionable by the Ottoman Empire, were also not accepted by European countries. The sublime rights of the Ottoman State had been recognized by Europe and it was clearly stated that Russia was ignoring these rights. There are numerous documents among the diplomatic correspondence that contain sentences like the following: “As the submissions, which have been made with the ulterior motive of destroying the Sublime State, have not been accepted...it has been clearly expressed

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<sup>96</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 5284 – 2, 3, Receb, 1270.

that all sides accept that the Ottoman Empire is in the right...<sup>97</sup> When the matter is examined from this angle, it appears as if the European countries were aiming to protect the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. At this point, it is imperative that we examine the Eastern Question.<sup>98</sup> This international issue can be defined as “the diplomatic expression of the comprehension of the international problems involved in the decay of the Ottoman Empire, dating from the Greek struggle for independence in the 1820’s, and its supposed impending dissolution.”<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, the inability of the Ottomans to maintain their territorial integrity in the imperial scramble prompted the Eastern Question. Most books that address the Eastern Question and the Crimean War state that the diplomatic circumstances which brought about the Crimean War had emerged as a result of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty of 1833, which was signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>100</sup> This treaty appointed Russia as the guarantor of the Ottoman State and exacerbated the already existing tension between Russia and Britain that was related to the Eastern Question.

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<sup>97</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 21220 – 2, 8, Ramazan, 1269. “Devlet-i Aliyye’yi mahv edercesine meydana koydukları teklifâtı hoş görünmemiş olduğundan... Saltanat-ı Seniyye’nin hakk-ı âlisi her tarafda tasdik ve itiraf olunmakta olduğunu mutazammın...”

<sup>98</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Crimean War is referred to as the Eastern War (*Vostochnaya Voyna*) in 19th century Russian literature. However, such an appellation is not accurate, as the war was not only fought in the East, but also along the shores of the Danube, the Baltic Sea and in the Crimean Peninsula. However, the Russians were trying to connect this war with the Eastern Question and this is why they called it the Eastern War, rather than the Crimean War. For instance, please see, Andrey Medardoviç Zayonçkovskiy, *Vostochnaya Voyna 1853 – 1856 gg v svyazi s sovremennoy ey političeskoj obstanovkoj*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (St. Petersburg: Poligon, 2002)

<sup>99</sup> David M. Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London; New York: Longman, 1994), p. 40.

<sup>100</sup> For examples of this topic, see: Marian Kent, (ed.) *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, London: Frank Cass, 1996; Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations*, (London: Macmillan, 1996); Winfried Baumgart, *The Crimean War: 1853-56*, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1999); R.L.V. Ffrench Blake, *The Crimean War*, (London: L. Cooper, 1971); Barbara Jelavich, *Russia’s Balkan Entanglements: 1806-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); David Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War*, (London; New York: Longman, 1993); John Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straits Question, 1844-1856*, (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1965).

As Reşat Kasaba elaborates in his book entitled *Dünya, İmparatorluk ve Toplum: Osmanlı Yazıları*, protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottoman State had become one of the main pillars of British global projects, dating from the 1840s until the mid-1870s. In fact, the British commitments were of such a degree that they went so far as to ignite a small-scale European war in the Crimea in order to negate Russian claims over the Mediterranean.<sup>101</sup> The 1838 Balta Limanı Treaty, which established free trade between the Ottoman Empire and Britain, was of a twofold importance; not only can this treaty be accepted as a turning point in Ottoman foreign relations, it also constitutes an important case illuminating British foreign policy in the Near East.

To a great extent, the literature on the Eastern Question that has been unquestionably accepted by scholars excludes the Ottoman reality. From this perspective, Britain, France and Russia are regarded as the main actors, and the Ottoman Empire, despite its direct connection to the Eastern Question, is attributed a minor role. Moreover, the internal dynamics, official and local discourses of the Ottoman Empire have no place in this literature. Viewed from this angle, it is clear that the historians who have worked on the matter of the Eastern Question were not greatly interested in the Ottoman reality. Yet, at this time, the Ottoman Empire was trying to eliminate the problems that had been presented by this question at the very heart of the geography in which the Eastern Question was formed. If we are to delineate the geography of the Eastern Question, we can do so under three main headings: The first is the unrest experienced within the borders of the Ottoman Empire itself, which was accompanied by the direct interference of the Great Powers in this problem. This process, which started as early as the Greek Independence War

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<sup>101</sup> Reşat Kasaba, *Dünya, İmparatorluk ve Toplum: Osmanlı Yazıları*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), p. 37.

in 1829, continued until the time of the First Mohammed Ali Pasha Revolt in 1830-32, the Second Mohammed Ali Pasha Crisis from 1848 to 1851, and the 1850 Montenegro Revolt. The second heading is Ottoman interstate battles. The destruction of the Ottoman navy by the Russians during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1827-28, which is known as the Navarin Disaster, is included in this group. The Crimean War, the only battle from the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Russians which ended in Ottoman victory, should be included in this group. The third section is the alliances held with the Great Powers of Europe (the 1833 Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the 1838 Balta Limanı Treaty between Britain and the Ottoman Empire and Crimean War Alliance against Russia). The interrelated nature of these three groups makes the fact that the Eastern Question was about the Ottoman Empire abundantly clear. That is, the events that we call the Eastern Problem were actually events that occurred within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and which took place in Ottoman territory. If we are to provide some details, acting alone in 1826, Russia made some territorial gains from the Ottoman Empire in the treaty of Akkerman, and the continuation of Greek insurrection into its sixth year provided further opportunities for Russian gains. Britain formed an entente with Russia in order to prevent the latter from meddling in the affair. Then France was brought into the entente and the three powers established relations with the Greeks, declaring an armistice; if the armistice was not accepted, it was agreed that the combatants would be forced to agree, “without ... taking any part in the hostilities between the Two Parties”. Forcing an armistice upon the Porte made military action very likely and the result was the destruction of the Ottoman and Egyptian fleets at Navarino by the Russians in 1827.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> For an analysis of alliances and all of the nineteenth century Russo-Ottoman wars, see William B.

Like the war at Navarino and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828, the crises in Syria grew out of the Greek War of Independence. Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt demanded Syria as a reward for his assistance against the Greeks and, when the Sultan refused him, he simply seized Syria. The Porte's calls on the United Kingdom and France for assistance were in vain. "There were no ships available"<sup>103</sup> was the reply, and the United Kingdom refused to sign an alliance. In desperation, the sultan asked the tsar for aid. The result was that Russia, unable to conquer Constantinople in war, entered the city in co-operation with the Ottoman Empire and left with an eight-year mutual defence agreement. Unlike many other alliances, the Treaty of the Hünkâr İskelesi kept non-contiguous powers separated.

The Second Mohammed Ali Pasha Crisis arose out of the First. The Ottomans' attempts to reclaim Syria met with military disaster. In spite of defeat on land and the desertion of his entire fleet, the sultan insisted that Mohammed Ali abandon this territory. France supported Mohammed Ali, while Russia supported the sultan. France could not reach Russia as the Straits were in Ottoman hands and Russia had little capacity to operate in the eastern Mediterranean. The United Kingdom did have the necessary naval capacity and did not miss the opportunity to replace Russian influence in Constantinople, or to stifle French influence on the Syrian and Suez land bridges to India. With the expiry of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty and the agreement at the Straits Convention of 1841, the "ancient rule" of the Ottomans was returned and Russia's interest in a partition of the "Sick Man's" domain was revived. To this end, Russia sought to prepare the way with an entente

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Moul "European Great Power 'Pacta de Contrahendo' and Interstate Imperial War, 1815-1939: Suggestions of Pattern," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 16 (March 1983), pp. 81-102; "Balances of Power and European Great Power War, 1815-1939: A Suggestion and Some Evidence," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 18 (September 1985), pp. 481-528.

<sup>103</sup> C.J. Bartlett, *Great Britain and the Sea Power 1815 – 1853* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 89.

with the United Kingdom, which was the new protector of the Ottoman Empire; the latter entered into an entente in order to restrain Russia. However, the consequence of the entente was to encourage Russia, as the Porte suffered further domestic disorders and interstate difficulties. The French also frightened the Porte with threats of bombardment during a round of the Russo-French conflict over holy places, which had the same result. Thus, in 1853, not only was there a reason, but there was also an opportunity for Russia to what appeared to be a more and more “ramshackle” empire and unlike in 1828, the Russo-Ottoman War expanded into a war between the Great Powers. Both France and Britain became implicated in the defence of the Ottoman Empire against Russia.<sup>104</sup>

As we have briefly tried to summarize above, it is very important to perceive the events that created the Eastern Problem as a whole. Only then can we understand that the Ottoman Empire was right in the middle of the territory that formed this problem. As was mentioned in the Preface, the one of the aims of this thesis is to analyze the Ottoman situation by interpreting the internal dynamics. That is, not one of the statements of the Eastern Question given above were official Ottoman statements, or it was not expressed when forming this statement where it was positioning itself was nor how this would be explained to the people. The aim of this thesis is to try to elucidate these official statements during the Crimean War. In this respect, the perception of the alliance and the Allied Powers is also important, as, while the Ottoman Empire included the Allied Powers and the alliance in its official discourse, in its local discourse it used their “benevolent” acts to strengthen the validity of its stance against the Russian aggressor. The Ottoman State based the fact that the European Great Powers were siding with it on it being in the right and this

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<sup>104</sup> For further analysis of Ottoman politics, see Ann Pottinger Saab, *The Origins of the Crimean Alliance* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977).

right was internalized in statements about the centuries of Russian hostility. That is the fact that the Great States were siding with the Ottomans was one of the most important weapons used by the Ottomans in the legitimization of their cause.

The Ottoman Empire notified the European consulates of the underlying reasons for declaring war on Russia via a statement. The wording used in this statement also reveals the official discourse of the State. In brief, the statement contains the following ideas: The Ottoman Empire has declared war, but totally as a last resort; through their aggressive conduct the Russians have left them no other choice.

Due to the refusal by the Russian State to accept the changes that have been made, there are new incentives for the Ottoman State to accept the aforementioned draft in its original form. The Ottoman State's hands are tied in this matter and it is now forced to go to war. Although the state has always approved of the friendly caveats which the Great Powers, with whom they were allied, have made, this situation has made it obligatory for them to express the underlying reasons as to why the advice of the Great Powers cannot be duly acted upon.<sup>105</sup>

In this way, the Ottoman Empire was trying to legitimize its actions and establish that it was in the right. It is also for this reason that the following statement was penned to the European consulates. "The Ottoman Empire cannot, under any circumstances, agree to the sending of Russian military troops to the front and the use of the question of the Holy Places as a pretext for its ruthless aims." Furthermore, all European countries were of the same opinion. Thus, the way for war was paved;

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<sup>105</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 903/2-37-39, 29 Zilkade, 1269. "...icra olunan tağyirâtın Rusya Devleti cânibinden kabul olunmaması cihetiyle müsvedde-i mebhûsenin hey'et-i asliyesiyle taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliyye'den kabulü hakkında yine teşvikât vuku' bulup Saltanat-ı Seniyye ise bu bâbda bir imkânsızlık halinde bulunarak çaresiz ihtiyâr-ı harb etmeğe mecbur olduğundan bu hâlin ve gerek müttefikleri bulunan düvel-i fâhîmenin ihtarât-ı hayrhâhânelerini daima takdir etmişken bu defa nesâyih-i vâkı'alarına tamamıyla tevfik-i hareket edemediğinden esbâb-ı sahîhasını beyân etmekteği vazifesinden addeylemiştir."



however, the articles of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty proved unfortunate excuses for the conduct of Russia:

Surely, this degree of insistence on a matter which includes not only the privileges of the Eastern Church, but the protection of that which has been granted by the Ottoman State (and these privileges), is one to which no state would agree to permit another to control or intervene in; this is a matter which should be left to the honor of the state and is surely a vehicle to declare a state of war. The sending of a large number of soldiers to the states of Wallachia and Moldavia on the grounds that they will help to maintain security there until the desired aim has been attained can only be regarded as a breach of the agreement and *casus belli* by the Sublime State. The other states are in agreement on this matter.<sup>106</sup>

The statement continues as follows: “Have any acts such as the destruction of Christian churches or the prohibition of Christian religious ceremonies, in contravention of the clear and actual articles of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty occurred?”<sup>107</sup> As cited in the chapter *Mutual Perceptions of the Enemy*, Russia acted arbitrarily in the interpretation of certain articles of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty and, by taking advantage of international conjuncture and the articles of the Treaty repeatedly cornered the Ottomans. When the Ottomans made efforts to get the European countries on side, Russia did not hesitate to emphatically use this to their own ends. Furthermore, after invading Wallachia and Moldavia, Russia did not pull

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<sup>106</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 903/2 – 37,39 29 Zilkade, 1269. “...Rum kilisesinin imtiyazâtı gibi Devlet-i Aliyye'nin kendi tarafından verilip muhafazasını dahi namus-ı hükûmetine ta'alluk etdirildiği ve hiçbir devletin nezâret ve müdahalesine razı olamayacağı bir husus hakkında bu rütbe ısrar göstermek muharebeye vesile aramak değil midir ve müteâkiben tahsil-i metâlîbe kadar elde medâr-ı emniyet olmak şâyî'asıyla Eflak ve Boğdan eyaletlerine asâkir-i külliye idhal olunması Devlet-i Aliyye nazarında nakz-ı ahd ve mücib-i harb addolunduğu gibi sair devletler tarafından dahi bu hâle başka nazarla bakılmamış olduğundan muharebe sebebiyetinin Rusya Devleti tarafında bulunduğu hiç kimsenin şüphesi var mıdır?”

<sup>107</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 903/2 – 37,39 29 Zilkade, 1269. “...yoksa Kaynarca Muâhedesi'nin hük-m-i sahîh ve sarîhi olan vaade mugâyir Hıristiyan kiliselerini yıkmak veyahud Hıristiyanları icrâ-yı âyinden men' etmek gibi bazı keyfiyetler mi vuku' bulmuşdur?”

back its troops, despite the fact that Ömer Pasha officially submitted a proposal to this end to Prince Gorchakov. War was now inevitable.

France and England went to war on the side of the Ottomans; however, they imposed the pre-condition that the Ottoman State should not make a unilateral peace. The Ottoman ambassador in London, Mr. Kostaki Musurus, stated that if the Ottomans failed to accept this condition it would be received with great displeasure by England.<sup>108</sup> Actually, the conclusion here is crystal clear: Whilst the Ottoman Empire had developed a discourse to justify its own stance, as it was being supported by the European powers, the European countries agreed to assist the Ottoman Empire only with the imposition of certain conditions. In fact, the Europeans never trusted the Ottomans, in the diplomatic sense of the word. That is, there was no reciprocal similarity in perception. The Ottoman perception of the European powers and the European perception of the Ottomans - which harbored considerably conflicting elements - will be examined more closely in this chapter.

A few days after the Alliance the treaty that had been concluded was summarized and covered in the media; the general public was informed about the main points of the treaty, which for the most part consisted of the following ideas:

1. If the British and French armies were to arrive at locations deemed appropriate by the Ottoman Empire, they would be given all due respect.
2. If the Russian state were to submit a proposal to any of the Allied states, the State that had received such a proposal would immediately notify the other party states.
3. If a treaty were to be concluded, England and France would relinquish all fortresses and locations, both on land and sea, to the Ottoman state.
4. The British and French armies would take actions to support the Ottomans. The Ottoman officers were to help the allied soldiers in every way possible. However, the allied states should also act in keeping with the laws and

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<sup>108</sup> BOA, HR. TO, 52-55, 23 Cemaziyülevvel, 1270.

customs of the Ottoman Empire. In joint efforts, the approval of the Ottomans was paramount and final.  
5. The approval of the *Dersaadet* had been granted.<sup>109</sup>

It is clear that the Ottoman State was determined that it be perceived as an equal to the allied states. By publicizing this attitude to the general public, the state was aiming to exalt its position in the public eye. With the Paris Treaty signed at the end of the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire had already been included in the Concert of Europe; this event changed the perception of the Empire until the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78. However, it should be borne in mind that the European states demanded expenses from the Ottoman Empire for sending soldiers to the fronts that had been opened by the Ottomans. Only when they were guaranteed that all their necessities and expenses would be covered by the Ottomans did the Europeans send reinforcement troops to the front.<sup>110</sup>

From the beginning of the war the Ottoman State was trying to legitimize its own position. A great deal of correspondence can be found in the Ottoman archives, all of which expresses roughly the same general idea: ‘We are right. It is Russia that is legally wrong and who is the aggressor.’ As pointed out in the chapter entitled *Mutual Perceptions of the Enemy*, it is natural that this concept became rooted in the official discourse of an empire that was trying to legitimize itself in the context of international law. When demarcating the allied forces, the Ottomans were determined not only to emphasize the fact that these forces were standing by the Ottoman Empire because they (the Ottomans) were right; they also stressed this in the public opinion. The following expressions can be found in the chapter concerned

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<sup>109</sup> *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*, issue: 506, Şevval, year: 1270

<sup>110</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 5320/1-4, 23 Rebiyülevvel, 1271.

with the submission of articles published in the European press about the Russian communiqué of the conflict with the Ottoman Empire:

...In a manifesto published by the Russian State, it is claimed that the Russian troops were mobilized to Wallachia and Moldavia in response to France and Britain sending naval fleets to Beşik. In response to this situation the French State has made it clear that the Ottoman State is justified in this matter and that the Russians are in the wrong.<sup>111</sup>

Here the term “imperial law” is extremely important. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire was defending itself before the European states based on the superiority of law and this was the perspective used by the allied states. The Ottomans also engaged in various lobbying activities in order to express and reinforce its righteousness before the allied nations.

The confidential correspondence dispatched to the Ottoman ambassador in London, which instructed the ambassador to make an impression on the British public opinion, bears the following phrases:

...No matter how favorable public opinion in Britain is, it would be useful in this matter to force the British ministers (the cabinet) (via the vehicle of public opinion) to strengthen this even further. In this matter, confidential correspondence has been sent to the ambassador Mr. Kostaki Musurus, so that he can take the necessary precautions to ensure that nothing about this matter be leaked, so that he will hold as many meetings with the ministers as he can and that some brochures, in support of the Ottoman State, be sent to the ministers; talks have been held with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Commander in Chief...<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>BOA, HR. MKT, 61-35, 12 Şevval, 1269. “...devlet-i müşârunileyhânın [Rusya'nın] Eflak ve Boğdan câniblerine sevk-i asker etmesi Fransa ve İngiltere donanmalarının Beşik pişgâhına gönderilmesinden neş'et eylediği zikrolunan manifestin bir fıkrasında derpiş olunduğundan bunun üzerine Fransa Devleti tarafından dahi Saltanat-ı Seniyye'nin hukuk-ı seniyyesini tasrih ve beyân ve Rusyalının haksızlığını irâd ve ilân zımında kaleme alınıp...”

<sup>112</sup>BOA, HR. SYS, 903/2 - 26, 4 Zilkade, 1269. “İngiltere’de efkâr-ı umûmiye Devlet-i Aliyye’ye her ne kadar müsaid ise de onu bir kat daha kuvvetlendirip onun vesatıyla dahi İngiltere vükelasını mecburiyet hâlinde bulundurmamak mesele-i hazıraya faydalı olacağından ve hiçbir tarafa renk ve serrişte vermeyerek bu bâbda icrâ-yı tedâbîr-i mukteziyyeye sefir Kostaki Bey muktedir olabileceğinden miting tabir olunan meclisler teşekkül ettirmek ve Devlet-i Aliye lehinde vükelâya adres namıyla

As is clear from this confidential document, the Ottomans thought its allies were standing by it; indeed it was so sure of this that it could voice this idea in its internal correspondence. The state was ready to engage in propaganda to fortify its position in the eyes of the British people and to spend money to that end.

An alliance with European countries, in particular England and France, was extremely important for the Ottoman Empire, because it meant that the Ottomans would receive frontline support from these states, as well as being given detailed coverage in the press and state correspondence. It was frequently emphasized that the allied states were fighting as bravely as the Ottoman soldiers and that they were defending the homeland against Russia.

It is possible to give numerous examples of how the allied soldiers were fighting heroically. In the press, in particular, there were frequent accounts of bravery and heroism and news from the front. The Ottoman State tried to formulate positive propaganda for the allied nations with such news items. The fact that the presence of the allied soldiers in Istanbul upset the Muslim inhabitants was an additional factor in the aforementioned propaganda campaign. The Ottoman authorities were trying to create a good opinion of the allies among the public.

However, the disturbances caused by the allied soldiers were great and rather frequent. Because of the war, a large number of soldiers had been dispatched to the Ottoman territories, most by sea. Foreign soldiers first came to a place near Gallipoli, and then they moved towards Istanbul, where they rested for some time before being finally sent to the front. In addition, Istanbul served as a pre-dispatch rallying point, owing to the fact that there were soldiers coming from other territories in the

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ma'rûf kağıdlar göndertmek ve bazı usule teşebbüs eylemesi zımında sefir-i mümâileyhe tahrirât-ı hafiyeye gönderilmesi ve mümâileyhin iktizâ eder ise bu uğurda biraz da akçe sarf etmesine ruhsat verilmesi Hariciye Nezâreti ve zât-ı âlî-i seraskerî ile bi'lmünasebe tezekkür olunmuş... ”

Ottoman Empire, such as Egypt and Tunisia. The occurrence of some social problems in certain areas due to the influx of such a large number of people was only to be expected, and should be considered as normal. Here, this matter and the reaction it created will be examined with various examples. For instance, French soldiers, often lost their way as they moved out of the Davutpaşa Quarters on their way to the security center which they had established in Galata, and, as they were confused about which way to proceed, they would go into various neighborhoods, causing some trouble and disturbances there. Therefore, the routes through which the soldiers were to pass were marked out and it was decided to put up warning signposts alongside those roads, as well as signposts with Turkish inscriptions as well.<sup>113</sup> We frequently come across the names of allied soldiers in records of adverse incidents during their stay in Istanbul. For example, on 25 December 1854 a soldier from a group of drunken French soldiers was wandering about the streets of Galata; he attacked a group of security officers (*zaptiye*) with a stick in his hand, but missed his mark. The *zaptiye* commandant Rüstem Ağa intervened and prevented the *zaptiye* from responding to the drunken soldier's actions.<sup>114</sup> There are other documents in Galata concerning incidents that were caused by French troops.

Such incidents not only occurred between Ottomans and French soldiers; for example, there was an incident involving a fight between some Frenchmen and Egyptian soldiers; the Egyptian soldiers, who were en route to Kasımpaşa, started quarrelling with the French when they arrived in the fountain square in Galata. A French soldier forcefully took hold of an Egyptian soldier and slammed him into the wheel of a cart, while reaching for his own gun. Meanwhile, two other Egyptians,

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<sup>113</sup> BOA, İ.MMS, 141, 26 Cemaziyelahir, 1271.

<sup>114</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 1351/12, 5 Rebiülahir, 1271.

who had seen the incident while passing by, drew their swords and attacked the French, forcing them to flee.<sup>115</sup>

A great and bloody incident that occurred between the French and Tunisian soldiers who had come to Istanbul because of the war broke out inside the *Dar'ülfünûn* building, which had been allocated to the French for treating the wounded from the front. This incident between the French and Tunisians and the attitude the Ottoman government adopted are worth recounting in detail:

On 4 October 1855, a quarrel started between a few Tunisian soldiers and a fire-fighter French corporal; this quarrel quickly turned into a fight. In addition, an artilleryman called Ali took the aforementioned French corporal by his beard and provoked him.<sup>116</sup>

The incident grew and there was a brutal fight between the Tunisian soldiers and the French. In fact, it was reported that a couple of health officers were killed. As the incident became more serious, the French commander General Larchey was notified and the general ordered troops to the scene of the incident. Subsequently, “oil was poured on troubled waters”; however, the incident did not come to an end without injuries. *Journal de Constantinople* reported the event, stating that the Ottoman generals had also come to the scene of the incident, except for the commander of the army, Rıza Pasha, who could not get there as he had learned about it too late.<sup>117</sup> It was also highlighted that the Ottoman people had helped the allied soldiers and that they had used their common sense during the fight: An officer from the Private Treasury of the Ottoman Sultan, Yusuf Efendi, let a French commander into his house, thus saving him from being killed. The Sublime Porte rewarded Yusuf

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<sup>115</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 1354/49, 20 Rebiyülevvel, 1272.

<sup>116</sup> BOA, A.MKT. MVL, 79/48, 29 Receb, 1272.

<sup>117</sup> *Journal de Constantinople*, 8 November, 1855

Efendi with a Mecidiye decoration for this action.<sup>118</sup> There was an investigation about the incident and the necessary precautions were taken. The Ottoman Minister of the *Zaptiye* also expressed his deepest regrets over the incident to the French authorities.<sup>119</sup> The commission in charge carried out an investigation and severe punishments were imposed on the three Tunisian soldiers who were thought to have caused the incident.<sup>120</sup> This situation, which is indicative of a few major points, can be summarized as follows: In keeping with the defense that the Ottoman Empire had formulated against the unjust invasion of Russia from the beginning of the war, and in that it was trying to elicit support from the European states, the Empire intended to sustain its image as one that had adopted a just line before the European states. Both the *Takvîm-i Vekâyi* and *Cerîde-i Havâdis* newspapers carried reports and articles that had the obvious mission of continuously persuading the public to treat the soldiers well and show them understanding. The fact that the French newspaper *Journal de Constantinople* immediately responded to the incident seems to have alerted the Ottomans; their sending pashas and ministers to the scene must have stemmed from this distress – all of which is quite understandable. A commission was immediately established and the offenders were punished; as mentioned above, the Ottoman officer who protected the French soldier was rewarded with a Mecidiye decoration. As already stated, the Ottoman State made considerable efforts to display its ‘peaceful’ attitude to the allied states. In particular, when some issues of *Journal de Constantinople* are examined, we can find extremely harsh accusations against the Ottoman *zaptiye* forces. At the same time, the Ottomans were sustaining their ‘traditionally tolerant’ image against the allies.

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<sup>118</sup> BOA, Buyuruldu-ı Sami Defteri, 779, pg. 94, 16 Rebiyülevvel, 1272.

<sup>119</sup> *Journal de Constantinople*, 8 November, 1855

<sup>120</sup> BOA, A. MKT.MVL, 170/101, 172/34, 15 Rebiyülahir, 1272.



Although the Ottoman tried to act as go-between, there are documents that record the offense and harm of the public by the behavior displayed by foreign soldiers. There are also documents that record a number of events, ranging from soldiers stealing fodder to soldiers leaving restaurants without paying after having “stuffed themselves”.<sup>121</sup> Thus, we can see that at times the foreign soldiers were seriously at odds with the public. Another issue that should be noted is that such news received no media coverage in the press at the time. As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the news in the press was full of the success stories of the allied soldiers on the front lines. Appeals such as ‘*treat the soldiers who have helped us so much well*’ were frequently made. Therefore, provoking the public against the soldiers was out of the question.

There were frequent conflicts between the public and the Ottoman government. As the result of initiatives taken by General Larchey, who was looking for houses to accommodate the French doctors working at the *Dar’ülfinân* hospital, which had been allocated to the French, two houses were found nearby; however, the landlords were reluctant to let their houses to foreign doctors. Although these inhabitants submitted their case, relating their distress and filing complaints before the authorities, their wishes were ignored and the houses were let to the French doctors.<sup>122</sup> The Ottoman Empire made serious efforts to prevent the already tense bilateral relations from growing into a diplomatic crisis. The book by the British admiral Sir Adolphus Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War: A Narrative of Historical*

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<sup>121</sup> BOA, HR.SYS, 1352/76, 15 Ramazan, 1271. There are many other incidents like this. The owner of a coffee shop called Hurşit in Istanbul filed a complaint saying that French soldiers had damaged his shop. BOA, HR.SYS, 1352/83, 22 Ramazan, 1271. Another instance has two French soldiers from Gülhane hospital, which was allocated to the French, pounding on the door of the house of a man called Hacı Ali Bey with the handles of their swords. BOA, HR.SYS, 1354/53, 29 Rebiyülevvel, 1272.

<sup>122</sup> BOA, İ.DH, 20833, 29 Ramazan, 1271.

*Events* examines the subject seriously; Slade even wrote that the most important issue that occupied the minds of the Ottoman people was the immediate withdrawal of allied soldiers, as they made it feel as if Istanbul had been invaded.<sup>123</sup>

At a time when there were great fluctuations in the population, due to the war, the occurrence of such incidents in Istanbul was not something that should be thought of as peculiar. The infrastructural weaknesses of the city and the municipal services, as well as matters of safety and security, were all on the agenda. We can see that these incidents did not cause any great social disturbances, but rather remained as small, isolated problems, despite being significant in terms of frequency.

On the other hand, how the European states perceived the Ottomans is not parallel with the Ottoman's own perception. England and France were afraid that the Ottomans would resolve their dispute with Russia; the reason they went into the war with the Ottomans was to prevent this from occurring. The Ottomans understood that this was the state of affairs,<sup>124</sup> yet they preferred to regard the alliance as an endorsement of their just cause by the European countries and to present it as such to their public. The fact is that England, France and Sardinia did not go to war to save the Ottoman Empire or to protect the Ottomans. The war was inevitable due to the expansionist policies of Russia. Viewed from this perspective, it would be naive to believe that the European countries became involved merely to save the Ottoman Empire; rather, the truth of the matter is that the Europeans perceived the Ottomans as corrupt, weak, and indifferent to emerging situations, as well as being polygamists, and in general, underdeveloped. However, it should not be forgotten that the Europeans followed an orientalist approach. As a result of this same orientalist approach the Ottomans were regarded solely as dionysiac pashas, strutting

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<sup>123</sup> Adolphus Slade, *Türkiye ve Kırım Harbi*, trans. A. Rıza Seyfi, (İstanbul, 1943), p. 131.

<sup>124</sup> BOA, HR. MKT, 68-22, 9 Rebiyülevvel, 1270

about among their harems. In this chapter, extracts from the diaries of English and French soldiers or commissioned officers will be given, as well as excerpts from those who were directly connected to the war. This will give us a viewpoint that is reinforced with internal dynamics without moving too far from the orientalist perspective.

In general, the British and French soldiers had no respect for the Ottoman soldiers, not even for their commanders. Ömer Pasha was an exception to the rule. Virtually everyone, even the Russians, had respect for the grand army commander Ömer Pasha. The diary of one of the British commissioned officers contains the following expressions about the ‘fat’ ignorant Ottoman pashas.

The correct form is this, - you walk into [the] room; the pasha gets up, sallams (greet) and shakes hands; you then sit down upon the divan, and he again bows to you, and you return it. The Pasha then claps his hands, and attendants appear with long pipes, with beautiful amber mouthpieces, already lighted, which they give to each person. The Pasha again claps his hands, re-enter attendants with small cups of coffee and sherbet for each of the company, - you smoke and drink coffee in silence for a short time till a sudden thought seems to strike the Pasha, and he asks you if you are well, to which knotty question you return a favorable answer, and the conversation becomes general. The Pasha of course exhibits an incredible amount of ignorance on every common subject, and takes everything you say for granted. After you have smoked yourself into a white heat, bow, and retire; and the same scene, pipes, coffee, conversation, and ignorance, takes place at the next house you visit. They (the Ottomans) are far behind the natives of India, both in civilization and intellect, and are a very debauched, good-for-nothing set.<sup>125</sup>

Another example occurred at a ball given by French and British commissioned officers and diplomats, five British diplomats and their wives attended the ball where the ladies were dancing with all of the officers alternately. Seeing this,

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<sup>125</sup> Atwell Lake, *Kars and Our Captivity in Russia: With Letters from Gen. Sir W. F. Williams; Major Teesdale, and the Late Captain Thompson* (London: Richard Bentley, 1856), pp. 35-36

the Ottoman pashas thought the ladies to be of easy virtue; when the British diplomat heard this, he stated how wrong the Ottomans were.<sup>126</sup> In addition, *The Times* correspondent Billy Russell records examples of the miserable physical appearances of the Ottoman army:

...The much-derided Turks looked the part in their drab dark blue uniforms with no flashes of color, their gray woolen socks pulled well up their calves, and their crude sheepskin sandals looking decidedly unmilitary. The rank stench of sweat-soaked men that came from their ranks did nothing to enhance the impression they made. Yet observers noted that they marched well and that the steel of their weapons was highly polished.<sup>127</sup>

In addition, there is an emphasis on the religious beliefs of the Ottomans. There is an implied irony about how they would not eat pork nor drink rum at the front, even when they were about to starve. Furthermore, there is some striking information concerning the situation at the hospital that had been allocated to the Ottomans. In his book, the British war correspondent N. A. Woods wrote that the Ottomans were using the location where the Russian captives had been held. After all the Russian prisoners had died of cholera, this location was given over to the Ottomans. An Ottoman physician with a good command of English sums up the situation with the following expressions: “The deadly fetid air which issued from this charnel-house made me involuntarily shrink back from the door with loathing.”<sup>128</sup> This is why hundreds of wounded soldiers lost their lives in miserable conditions.

As mentioned above, Ömer Pasha, who is not included in these negative descriptions about the Ottomans, is commemorated with respect. Ömer Pasha’s defense of Kars against Russian soldiers is described as heroic and was admired by

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<sup>126</sup> E.C Grenville Murray, *Pictures from the Battlefields* (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1855), p. 127.

<sup>127</sup> W.H. Russell, *The British Expedition to the Crimea* (London: G. Routledge, 1858), p. 187.

<sup>128</sup> Nicholas Augustus Woods, *The past campaign: A sketch of the war in the East, from the departure of Lord Raglan to the capture of Sevastopol* (London Longman, 1855), p. 229.

the allied nations. They thought that the Ottomans would be able to attain successful results with a regular army if it was led by a good commander.

In all the chronicles of the period, the drunkenness and sexual perverseness of the Ottoman soldiers are the main complaints. And yet, as Robert Edgerton writes in his work, called *Death or Glory: the Legacy of the Crimean War*, “the role of the Ottomans has been neglected and the war ended, Turkey carried on as before, its soldiers, both dead and alive, seemingly forgotten.”<sup>129</sup> When the war ended, there were no monuments erected for the Ottoman soldiers who had fought and died, nor were the survivors ever thanked. Instead, Sultan Abdülmecid held a grand ball to honor the foreign commissioned officers, diplomats and their wives.<sup>130</sup>

As summarized above, it is safe to affirm that a stereotype of the Ottomans had been created. Yet, it should also be emphasized that the quotations above belong to the soldiers, commissioned officers and war correspondents of the allied nations. That is, these are not official British and French discourses. If we take into account the fact that the literacy rates were very low in the Ottoman Empire, even amongst the commissioned officers, it is clear that a comparable study could not have been carried out from Ottoman sources.

Finally, the issue of foreign loans is important in reflecting how the allied nations perceived the Ottomans and is worth mentioning at this point. With the Crimean War, the Ottoman treasury, which was already in a bad way, became even

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<sup>129</sup> Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacies of the Crimean War*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 165-166.

<sup>130</sup> Lady Hornby mentioned this ball and who great it was. She said she was impressed by the sultan, describing him as a person who was very different from the pashas around him, touchingly good – hearted, simple and melancholic. Abdülmecid gave importance to co-operation with the European nations and after having entered the Concert of Europe via the Paris Accord, he made changes to the official discourse of the State in keeping with this fact. Lady (Emelia Bthyna) Hornby, *Kırım Savaşı Sirasında İstanbul*, trans. Kerem Işık, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007), p. 193.

worse off, with the additional burden of a debt of 11,200,000 pounds sterling.<sup>131</sup>

Throughout that period, whilst the Ottoman State took out internal loans by receiving short-term advances from the bankers in Galata, or at times issuing banknotes and securities (stock shares), for the first time it was also compelled to resort to attaining foreign loans. Eliciting foreign loans was never easy, because Ottoman foreign credit was rather low, due to the debts from 1852.<sup>132</sup>

It is a serious misfortune that war broke out after negative economic conditions and that the Ottoman treasury, being in dire straits, was forced to go into debt; however, despite this, one aspect that can be considered as positive is that the war was being carried out with the two most important actors in the indebted markets, that is France and Britain. However, this situation was not enough to gain the confidence of the markets, and the first requests for loans were unanswered. Namık Pasha and the ambassador to London, Musurus Pasha, who were trying to attain loans from both the British and French public and the parliaments, clearly stated the lack of confidence in this matter. The British and French governments, without going into details, undersigned the loans and after long discussions about the income that would be shown as the security for the loan, the loans were granted. What I would

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<sup>131</sup> A. Du Velay, *Türkiye Maliye Tarihi*, (Ankara, 1978), p. 82.

<sup>132</sup> To sum up, the Ottoman government was in a bad way as it had failed to settle its debts; these had corresponding values for the policies of the *Dersaadet Bankası*, which had remitted policies to the European markets. In response to this, government initiatives were taken to elicit foreign loans with the mediation of the bank managers. Finally, such loans were received in return for an agreement that they would be paid for, including indemnification, by means of charity and monetary aids; thus, they were seen as being harmful to the Ottoman image. 20 million francs of the 55 million franc loan was collected at the first stage without awaiting the approval of the sultan and delivered to Baltazzi of the managers of the *Dersaadet Bankası*; however, as Sultan Abdülmecid did not approve of this loan this problem remained undecided for a long time, preoccupying both the internal and the foreign public opinion. As a result of this debt, which was paid off along with compensation amounting to 2,200,000 collected from donations from statesmen, a negative impression was made and Ottoman requests for loans to the European market were not warmly received. For detail information, please see, Şevket K. Akar, Hüseyin Al, *Osmanlı Dış Borçları ve Gözetim Komisyonları, 1854 – 1855* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2003).

like to emphasize here is the inspection committees.<sup>133</sup> Before the process of the loans had been completed, inspection committees were established to observe whether the loans given by the British and French governments, both in 1854 and 1855, were being used for their original purpose that is for expenditures for the war. For the 1855 loan, any expenditure over 6,000 lira had to be approved of by the committee, on which one member from France, Britain and the Ottoman State sat.<sup>134</sup> This situation not only makes clear the distrust felt for the Ottomans, but also had a denigrating effect for the Ottoman government. At the same time, the Ottoman government was able to prevent some situations from arising, due to the warning nature of the committee.

To sum up, since the Ottoman government well understood what the allied states meant for the Empire in this war; it constituted its own official discourse, that is, getting England and France to help, and at the end of the war declared that these soldiers had fought side by side with equal bravery. It was vitally important for the Ottomans that the two Great Powers had stood with it against Russia. Thus, the Ottoman government, which was positioned within the Eastern Question, was an ally with the Great Powers of Europe, even if only symbolically, and in fact, at the end of the battle it was accepted as part of Europe in the seventh article of the Treaty of Paris. Of course, this acceptance can be interpreted in favor of the Ottomans, but many of the articles of the treaty were not in the favor of the Ottoman government and from one aspect, “The Ottomans were more an object than a real player in the

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<sup>133</sup> Akar, Al, *Osmanlı Dış Borçları ve Gözetim Komisyonları, 1854 – 1855*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

system, and day by day it became apparent that the Great States had opened the door to being able to interfere in the Empire.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Edhem Eldem, “War and Symbolism: Otoman Medals and Decorations During the Crimean War” in *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150inci Yılı* (İstanbul: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2006), p. 30.



#### CHAPTER 4: THE NON-MUSLIM POPULATION IN OTTOMAN DISCOURSE

The process of nation formation in the Ottoman State, first among the Christians and then among the Muslims in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was conditioned to an important extent by the socio-ethnic structure and the religious identity that had been engendered by the *millet* system<sup>136</sup>. The *millet* system was mainly an end result of the endeavors of the Ottoman State to rule the various religious-ethnic elements living within the domain of the empire. This system, on the one hand, maintained a religious, cultural and ethnic continuity within the *millets*, while, on the other hand, incorporating these *millets* into the Ottoman political and economic system. The *millet* system was a socio-cultural and communal framework based firstly on religion, and secondly on ethnicity, which usually entailed linguistic differences. It emphasized the universality of faith and superseded ethnic and linguistic diversities without destroying them. The policies of the Ottoman government profoundly affected the social and economic life of the community without altering its cultural or religious life.<sup>137</sup>

In this chapter, we will not go into the details of the *millet* system. The focal point will be the perception of the non-Muslim subjects, particularly in such critical periods as during the war, within the official discourse of an empire that was built upon the *millet* system.

There are two crucial intersecting and complementary points that are related to the perception of non-Muslim subjects in the Ottomans during the period of the Crimean War. The first point is Russia's long struggle for taking on the role as the

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<sup>136</sup> Kemal Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York, London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), p. 141.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

protector of the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman Empire. They even managed to manipulate the articles of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca with great diplomatic success and to utilize these in order to claim that this right had been delegated to Russia. At this point, being the protector of the non-Muslim subjects of the empire and maintaining this role appeared to be a condition for the Ottomans to maintain their own rights and freedom. The second point was the desire of the great powers of Europe, who were fighting on the side of the Ottomans, to forcing the empire to engage in an extensive reform process for the non-Muslim elements.

Even though a series of reform movements had already been initiated in the Ottoman Empire by the *Tanzîmât*, the execution of these reforms was sped up in order to maintain the alliance of the great powers during the Crimean War. The Reform Edict that was promulgated by the end of the war also verifies this argument. By eliminating the inequalities and basic divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims, and by providing the latter with religious, political and juristic rights the Edict signified a break in Ottoman political history in terms of the constitutional process. The abolishment of the *jizya*, which was the most significant symbol of inequality between Muslims and non-Muslims, enabled the realization of the egalitarian reforms that had been planned in the Reform Edict.

Before the Crimean War, the European states played roles as moderators, sending diplomatic notes to both the Ottoman State and Russia during the Vienna Meeting. At the beginning, the note that was sent to the Ottoman Empire read as follows: “Just as the Russian tsars in every age were effectively concerned about the protection of the immunity and privileges of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman sultans never hesitated from repeatedly acknowledging this immunity or privileges in official treaties; this was an old and

insistent gesture of their goodwill towards their Christian subjects.” However, the Ottoman State declared that they would accept this text only in the following form: “Just as the Russian tsars in every age were effectively concerned about the Greek Orthodox Church, the Ottoman sultans never hesitated to be concerned about the protection of the immunity and privileges of this church and belief, repeatedly acknowledging this immunity and privilege with official treaties as an old and insistent gesture of their goodwill towards their Christian subjects.” The difference between these two texts is apparent: The protection of the rights and privileges of the Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire is the duty and responsibility of the Ottoman State. Russia can only be in effect be concerned about these subjects. Nevertheless, engaging in an action to protect their rights - an action which could be interpreted as direct intervention in the internal affairs of another state - was not the duty of Russia. However, Russia did not accept this revision in the text and, in response the Ottoman State declared war on Russia.<sup>138</sup> An intervention of another country in the affairs of a *millet* living on their land was regarded as a cause for war.

Non-Muslim subjects and the reform movements carried out in connection with them were crucial for the Ottomans in gaining the alliance of the powerful states of Europe, especially Britain and France, in this war. In other words, the alliance of the great powers and the reform movements launched to this end appear as an important factor that shaped the official discourse of the Ottoman Empire. Among these reforms, the promulgation of a penal code covering all subjects in 1834, the abolition of the death penalty in the case of conversion from Islam (*irtidât*) in 1844<sup>139</sup> and the approval of a new penal code, based on the French system, in 1850

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<sup>138</sup> Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az Gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), p. 360.

<sup>139</sup> Selim Deringil debates the issue of conversion in the Late Ottoman Empire and asks the following question: “After 1856 did the Ottomans systematically try to avoid the execution of apostates because

are all significant examples of this. The pressure applied by the allied states was unquestionably a determinant in the promulgation of certain measures that ensured equality between Muslims and Christians in juridical and military issues as a part of the administrative reforms that began in 1854 and 1855. Considering the significance of this alliance for the Ottoman Empire, the realization of these reforms appears to be almost an obligation for the Ottomans. Thus, when evaluating the Ottoman mentality we must not ignore this obligation. The Ottoman State was trying to justify their decisions, on the one hand, by enhancing this alliance with Britain and France against Russia, and on the other, by carrying out these reforms and constructing a tolerant and inclusive image in the public eye. In addition, the Ottoman State warned the Muslims to avoid mistreating non-Muslim subjects. Statements which denounce ‘the discrimination of any Ottoman subject for his religious faith or sect with the excuse of the state of war’ in the newspapers and official correspondence of the period can be regarded as proof of this attitude. Here ‘non-Muslim subjects’ refers to both people living under Ottoman rule and the citizens of the allied states that were inhabiting the Ottoman land:

Everybody is praying for the success of the Ottoman State. We know that. This is a battle against a state which wanted to threaten the laws and the sovereignty of the Ottoman State without any just cause. Therefore, there is no negative effect on the fellowship felt between the Ottoman State and the allies. There will be no difference in commercial activities

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they were wary of the reaction of the Great Powers? Or was there an increasingly prevalent notion that ‘this was not the done thing anymore’? Later, when discussing that the official position remained the same, Deringil says the following: “The official position was always the same: the state would not tolerate the use of force or any sort of compulsion in the matter of conversion to Islam, and the legal execution of apostates from Islam was not allowed.” The abolition of execution for apostasy was among the articles of the Reform Edict. It is clear that the great European states had applied pressure in this matter. However, as mentioned by Deringil, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Ottoman, in any case, would eventually have abolished the death penalty. Thus, this situation, which included efforts for reform in order to strengthen the Ottomans’ hand in the Treaty of Paris, could have resulted from an effort to please the Europeans. However, this is a matter that is hard to settle definitively and which is still open to debate. Selim Deringil, “Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 42 (July 2000), pp. 551-556.

and travel. The honor and life of both the subjects of the fellow states and the non-Muslim subjects will be protected. This is required by the Shari'a. Holding the subjects who have the same religious belief with that of the Russian state responsible for this battle is also unacceptable for both this reason and according to the Shari'a. The rights which were previously given to Orthodox subjects are established and intact. Therefore, their need for additional protection by Russia is out of the question. In fact, this would be harmful for this sect. There is no dispute between any of the subjects. There is no reason for such a dispute and there will be no reason. I repeat again, those who misbehave in this issue will be severely punished.<sup>140</sup>

As can be seen in this document, Ottoman State adopted a protective attitude towards all its subjects. In addition, it interpreted the intervention of Russia to protect its subjects as an assault on its imperial rights and denounced Russia before other states; more importantly, the Ottoman State declared that there was no necessity for such a protection, since it was able to perform this duty successfully. In order to support this claim, correspondence concerned with the demands of non-Muslim subjects to be allowed to serve in the Ottoman army that occurred in documents of the period was emphasized. The following statements were written in a document concerning the demands of Armenians from Manisa and İzmir to fight along with the

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<sup>140</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 903/2 - 80, 10 Muharrem 1270. "...muzafferiyet-i Devlet-i Aliyyem da'avât-ı hayriyesine cümlelerin iştigâl ve muvâzabet eylemeleri hususunu tenbih ve ifhâm ile beraber çünkü bu muharebe hiçbir hak ve sebebi olmadığı halde Devlet-i Aliyyemin hukuk ıve istiklâline dokunmak istemiş olan bir devlet hakkında olup bundan dolayı Saltanat-ı Seniyyemin sair düvel-i Mütêhâbbe ile olan muamelât-ı dostî ve müvâlâtına kat'â tegayyür gelmediğine binâen gerek onların ticaret ve seyahat ile Memâlik-i Mahrûsemde bulunan tüccar ve tebaası ve gerek edyân-ı muhtelifede bulunup can ve ırz ve malları şer'an kendi can ve ırz ve malımız gibi olan tebaa ve reâyâ-yı şâhânem haklarında bir taraftan zerre kadar taarruz ve sû-i muamele vuku'a getirilmeyerek ahkâm-ı münîfe-i şeriat-i mutahhara iktizâsınca her hâlde mazhar-ı adalet ve emniyet ve rahat olmaları ve'l-hasil mukaddemâ dahi ilân olunduğu üzere Rusya Devletiyle münasebet-i mezhebiyesi olan tebaa-i Devlet-i Aliyyem devlet-i müşârünileyhânın hareket-i ma'lûmesinden dolayı mes'ul tutulmak şer'an ve aklen asla câiz olmadığı ve onun davâsı ancak kendi nüfuz ve menâfi'î için olarak tebaa-i merkûmenin ecdâd-ı i'zâmım taraflarından ihsan buyurlmuş olan imtiyazât-ı mezhebiyeleri nice yüz seneden beri himayet-i mahsusa-i Devlet-i Aliyyemde kesb-i takarrur ve tevessü etmiş olduğundan...Buraları dahi herkese etrafiyla anlatılarak ol bâbda kimesne tarafından hilâf-ı rızâ-yı hümâyûnum hâl ve hareket zuhura gelmemesine fevka'l-gâye ikdâm u gayret ve cehl ü gaflete veyahud ağrâz-ı zâtiyeye mebnî tenbihât-ı meşru'a-i meşrûhanın mugâyiri tavır ve hareketde bulunanlar olur ise şediden mes'ul ve mu'âteb olacakları mukaddemce meclis-i umumî kararı iktizâsından olarak...

Ottoman soldiers in the war: "... There are some Armenians and Greeks who want to join army. They have declared their loyalty and devotion to the sultan and have expressed that the sultan has never withheld his mercy, which emanates from his nature, from them."<sup>141</sup> The Ottoman State was trying to display its amicable nature and its ability to govern by announcing such news to the Muslim people by publishing them in official newspapers; it was also hoped that any possible antagonism that may arise would be alleviated in this way. Another example is the reports about the altruistic activities of non-Muslims, such as reports about donations made by the Muslims, Greeks, Armenians and Catholics in Trabzon to help the soldiers in Batum: "The transportation of the money which was coming from Istanbul is becoming difficult. The state was unable to pay the wages of the soldiers. In order to send 250,000 *kuruş*, donations were collected from the people. There was no obligation. They made these donations with great pleasure."<sup>142</sup> In this document there are lists of donators from every village and household. In addition, we are informed that these lists were also published in the influential newspaper of the period, *Cerîde-i Havâdis*. By publishing news about the willingness of non-Muslims to make donations and join the Ottoman army, the Ottoman State was trying to avoid social unrest and to present itself to other states as a just government which had the affection of all its subjects.

After the invasion of Moldavia and Wallachia by the Russians in July 3, 1853, the Ottoman ambassador in London, Musurus Pasha, contacted the minister of foreign affairs, Lord Clarendon; the latter stated that the support of the British during the war would depend on the initiation of radical reforms for the Christians living in

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<sup>141</sup> BOA, HR. SYS, 1346/52, 27 Safer 1270.

<sup>142</sup> BOA, 18184, 24 Receb 1270.

the Ottoman Empire.<sup>143</sup> Even though this attitude was very similar to what the Ottomans were arguing with the Russians about - i.e. the act of intervening in internal affairs - Britain's support was crucial. Following the bombardment of Sinop, which was a turning point of the Crimean War, a treaty of alliance with France and Britain was signed; this guaranteed their support for protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. According to this treaty, the Ottomans would secure the equality of all subjects before the law, without discriminating between any faith or sect, they would provide the Christian subjects with the right to give testimony in court, establish mixed courts and the abolish the *jizya*.<sup>144</sup> This treaty satisfied the Europeans and fostered a positive attitude towards the Ottomans in the public opinion. Again, in 1854, the British ambassador Stanford Canning succeeded in the enactment of a regulation that allowed Christians to give testimony in certain murder cases, thus playing a major role in the annihilation of another distinction between *millets*. Furthermore, secular magistrate courts were established in which the members would be assigned by the governors in such a way that biases against Christians in mixed criminal cases would be eliminated.<sup>145</sup>

After the war, during the Treaty of Paris, the great powers of Europe continued to press for the enactment of further regulations for non-Muslim subjects after the war. For instance, in a meeting with the Ottoman ambassador, Kostaki Pasha, in January 24, 1856, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Clarendon, mentioned the approaching peace talks and demanded the acceleration of the

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<sup>143</sup> Fuat Andıç, Süphan Andıç, *Kırım Savaşı Ali Paşa ve Paris Antlaşması* (İstanbul: Eren yayınları, 2002), pp. 24–25.

<sup>144</sup> In fact, the *jizya* was not to be totally abolished. The plan was to change its name to *iâne-i askeriyye* (military assistance). Following these discussions, certain regulations were promulgated that declared that the name of the *jizya* would be changed to *iâne-i askeriyye* and that non-Muslims would also be able to serve in the Ottoman army. This decision was published in the official newspaper of the state, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, in May 15, 1855.

<sup>145</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856 – 1876* (New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 68.

promulgation of certain regulations in order to forestall Russia's pressure for the acceptance of the fourth article as it had been declared in the Vienna meetings. To this end, he demanded some "explicit" regulations; these regulations should not be postponed for more elaborate discussions and should be formulated immediately, even if imperfectly or synoptically, in order to avoid giving Russia the opportunity to bring them onto the agenda.<sup>146</sup>

Apparently, Britain and France pressed for these reforms in order to reduce the influence of the Russians on the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman Empire. Orthodox Greeks, the most influential and largest non-Muslim people in terms of population, was distanced from the influence of Russia by the endeavors of the French and British ambassadors for these reforms.<sup>147</sup>

The peace talks in Paris were conducted at a great pace. The reason for this was quite clear: There was essentially a race between these negotiations and the concomitant congress that was also being held in Paris at that time; the representatives of these meetings were trying to accelerate the negotiations about the conditions of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire without allowing the Russians time to intervene in the negotiations.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> BOA, İ. HR. 6537-1,2, 24 Cemaziyelahir, 1272. "...Saltanat-ı Seniyye'nin işbu iki meseleye dair tertib buyuracağı nizamnâmenin mükemmel olması için te'hir olunmasından ve mükâleme meclisinde mübâhasâta sebep vermesinden ise nâkıs ve mücmel olarak serî'an ve kat'iyen karargîr olması daha ziyade arzu olunan mevâddan olduğunu hâk-i pâ-yı âlî-i nezâret-penâhilerine ihtar etmekliğimi beyân eyledi."

<sup>147</sup> Nora Şeni, *Marie ve Marie, Konstantiniyede Bir Mevsim, 1856 – 1858*, trans. Ş. Tekeli, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p. 33. The reaction of the Phanar Greek Patriarchate was a major concern at this point. According to Benedetti, the head of political affairs at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the reaction of the Phanar should have been kept to a minimum. Kallimaki, who was renowned for his close relationships with the religious functionaries of the Phanar, was invited to the peace talks in Paris for this reason. Thouvenel described the suitability of Kallimaki for this task in the following words: "He is an intelligent man and he can help us to understand the subtle peculiarities of the Phanar and the Patriarchate. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that it will not be difficult to make this reform." (Thouvenel'den Beneditti'ye, Pera, 10 Ocak 1856, *same place*.)

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.



Even though the Ottoman State was engaged in reform movements in order to guarantee the rights and liberties of non-Muslim subjects, the decision makers avoided such equalities that would jeopardize the primacy of Islam, which was still regarded as the guardian of Ottoman rule. On the other hand, the reforms were to be initiated immediately. The first thing that needed to be done was extensive modifications to the juridical system, which was the major indicator of the distinctions between subjects. Accordingly, the major issues of discussion were the separation of the judiciary from the administration, the establishment of mixed courts in which everyone would be subject to the same laws, the modification of the structure and tasks of the provincial councils (*Mecâlis-i İdare-i Vilâyât*), which were working according to the arbitrary decisions of the governors, and the abolition of the authority of governors to assign the members of these councils and to increase the participation of the people in this selection process. Permitting all subjects to take part in the civil service and the establishment of schools for training people for such positions were other issues on the agenda.

In conclusion, the Imperial Decree appears as a series of reform movements initiated as a result of pressures applied by other states. Enabling people to adapt to these fundamental changes and avoiding public reaction were important priorities for a state that had been a victor in a war. Emphasizing that the decree had been ratified under the initiative of the sultan and adding an article to the Treaty of Paris which stated that this document could not be used in justification for any intervention by a foreign state can be understood to be an endeavor on the part of the Ottomans to preserve their honor.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856 – 1876*, pp. 69-70.

As can be understood from the above-mentioned evaluations, the 1856 Decree can be interpreted as the direct consequence of the concessions the Ottomans made to gain an alliance with the great powers in the war against Russia and to be included in the family of European states; the latter had not been satisfied with the privileges that had been provided to the non-Muslim subjects in the 1839 Decree.<sup>150</sup>

However, it was difficult for the average Muslim to become accustomed to these reforms. Ahmet Cevdet's story in his *Tezâkir*<sup>151</sup> about the prayers which were habitually held after imperial decrees provides important clues about such difficulties: The officers of the Ministry of Judicial Prayers (*Deâvî Nezâreti*), who were appointed as (*duacı*) pray leaders and whose duty it was to pray after the announcement of decrees, were mostly illiterate man. In order to avoid any negative consequences, the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âlî*) initiated a customary regulation that appointed some one more skilled in this task. However, during the ratification of the 1856 Edict, the orator of the Osmaniye Mosque was responsible for this task. Considering that this Edict was concerned about the rights of non-Muslims, Fuad Pasha regarded the leading of a prayer to be inappropriate and ordered that such a practice not take place with this ceremony. However, having no information about this decision, the sheikh ul-Islam asked for the orator and after hearing that he was not present at the ceremony, he called Arif Efendi to lead the prayer: "... Arif Efendi came to the podium, through the metropolitans and priests, and conducted the familiar prayer: Oh the One who changes all conditions and circumstances! Change

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<sup>150</sup> BOA, İ.HR. 5875/1. "It was his duty to remind the promises of the Gülhane Rescript to the Sublime Porte and to put the social matters that had not yet been dealt with into discussion in a more explicit manner. As a matter of fact, following the start of peace negotiations with Russia after the end of the Crimean War, the cabinets of Paris, London and Vienna assumed this mission." in Edouard Philippe Engelhard, *Tanzimat ve Türkiye*, trans. Ali Reşad, (Istanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 1999), p. 111.

<sup>151</sup> This book was a collection of the Ottoman political events (a form of official chronicle) that was written by Ahmed Cevdet Pasha.

our circumstances in the most beneficial way for us! Dear God, show mercy on the Muslims! Protect the Muslims! Forgive the Muslims! Dear God, curse the enemies of the Muslims!”<sup>152</sup> What happened then is described by Ahmet Cevdet as follows:

“The clerics were severely offended by this prayer and a moment of chill emerged in the assembly. Serasker Rüşdü Pasha expressed his reaction in a quiet conversation with his friends, using the following words: “The disappointment which I felt at this prayer, which was conducted after the announcement of the decree, was equal to the disappointment that a man would feel when he accidentally pours ink instead of sand over the petition on which he has worked until nine o’clock at night.”<sup>153</sup>

Officially described as a document which “contains the beneficial administrative reforms concerning the privileges of non-Muslim subjects of the state,”<sup>154</sup> the 1856 Decree once again promised the assurance of life, property and the honor of the public, the provision of equal rights to everyone before the law, and the abolishment of corruption and the institution of iltizâm. Here, an important point that needs to be underlined is the employment of the concept of “citizenship” in the introductory part of the document as the formative bond between the subjects of the empire; this concept is repeated throughout the text. This might be interpreted as a first step towards the modern form of the concept of *millet*. Nevertheless, the continuation of the conventional *millet* organization after the reform presents an implicit duality. The boundaries between *millets* remained in position, even though the situation was more ambiguous. Full equality was still something that awaited the future.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ahmed Paşa, *Tezâkir*, vol. I, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1953), p. 69

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>154</sup> BOA, A.MKT.UM. 228/16.

<sup>155</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856 – 1876*, p. 71.

Defining itself as the messenger of the inception of a new age, this decree emphasizes the equality among the subjects of the empire and describes in detail how the rights of non-Muslims would be secured. With this decree, a radical step had been taken to establish equality by rectifying the social and juridical conditions for non-Muslims and to grant them “privileges with a benevolence that had never been seen or heard of before.”

When the contents of the Imperial Decree are evaluated, it can be seen that most of the rights that were granted to non-Muslims with this decree were only a reiteration of the permission that had been given to them in previous periods in a new form; this was solely with the intention of pleasing the Europeans. On the other hand, in order to find a balance between the pressure put by the European states and any reaction that may arise among domestic public opinion some articles were expressed in an ambiguous manner that would allow diverse interpretations.

The most criticized aspect of the decree was that even though it was initially introduced as a document concerned with faith, in the final draft political rights were included. According to Ahmed Cevdet, the reason for the inclusion of such possibly objectionable articles was Lord Canning. He claims that Lord Canning was resentful of the existing government because Reşid Pasha had been dismissed and because of the increasing influence of Mehmet Ali Pasha.<sup>156</sup>

Among the most widely disputed articles in the decree was that which granted equal political rights to both Muslims and non-Muslims, even though the latter were exempt from military duty. Although military duty was at first something granted by the state, with the inclusion of this clause into the treaty it now became an obligation.

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<sup>156</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, c. I, p. 74.

The decree denotes a breaking point in the constitutional process that was progressing towards the rule of law, particularly because the rights granted to non-Muslims in this document. According to this, non-Muslims now had the right to employment in all public offices and also had political rights, such as being represented in provincial assemblies and the Supreme Council of Judicial Regulations (*Meclis-i Vala-i Ahkam-ı Adliye*). Thus, the decree signifies the abolishment of all fundamental principles and traditions that had shaped the Ottoman State until that time.<sup>157</sup>

In fact, the response of the Muslims towards the decree indicates that they had grasped the new situation and understood the difference from how society had been organized. In response to the elimination of the religious distinctions from the judiciary, most of the notables in Islam stated that: “Today we have lost our holy national law, for whose attainment our ancestors sacrificed their lives. Once the Islamic community was the dominant *millet*; now this priority has been taken from us. Today is the day to cry and mourn for the notables of Islam.”<sup>158</sup>

The 1856 Decree can be seen to be a document that covers all issues of discussion which had been brought onto the agenda by the allies much earlier. Having been avoided by the Ottomans until the Crimean War, the demands of the allies (the abolition of *jizya*, new regulations about the conversion from Islam, the granting of rights to non-Muslims to give testimony in court, and further religious and political liberties) were silently included into the Decree under the pressure of the increasing presence of the allied armies in Ottoman land during the war. It may sound like a conspiracy theory, but it is possible to say that by avoiding making any clear declaration about their position concerning the diplomatic and military

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<sup>157</sup> Kemal Karpat, “Etnik Kimlik ve Ulus Devletlerin Oluşumu,” *Osmanlı*, vol. II, p. 22.

<sup>158</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, c. I, p. 68.

pressures of Russia on the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France appear to have used their previously unfulfilled demands as a means for blackmailing the Ottomans.

The Treaty of Paris, which was signed after the Crimean War, was a decisive turning point for the Ottoman Empire. With the seventh article of the treaty, the Ottoman State officially became a part of the union of European countries and the territorial integrity of the empire was guaranteed by the *düvel-i muazzama* (Britain, France and Russia). This was crucial in terms of both international law and the transformation in the self-perception of the Ottomans. The details about the Treaty of Paris have been elaborated on above. An important point to underline here is that with this treaty, the European states increased their opportunity to be involved in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Edhem Eldem interprets this concession as the price that the Ottomans had to pay as a consequence of their willingness to be a part of the European family.<sup>159</sup>

France honored this concession by awarding the Ottoman Empire the medal of *Legion d'honneur*; thus, the positive attitude of the Europeans towards the Ottomans was demonstrated. The weekly magazine *L'Illustration* reported on the award ceremony in detail and this is recorded in Eldem's book. There are a few points in this text that deserve special attention. In his speech on the occasion, the French ambassador described the meaning of this medal in the following words:

...This demonstration, of which I am the proudly honored agent, also derives from another thought, and borrows from the present circumstances a special meaning: it is a new pledge to the memorable alliance which places from now on the destiny of the Ottoman Empire under the guarantee of European law, as well as under the protection of the very civilization, of which Your Majesty, supported by His ministers in the accomplishment of the work on the success

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<sup>159</sup> Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders Medals and Decorations* (Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), p. 208.

of which depends the glory of His reign, has announced His wish to spread the moral and material benefits to all the peoples under His scepter.<sup>160</sup>

In this text, the expression “all the people under his reign” is crucial. As mentioned above, the reform decree, which was promulgated after the Crimean War, started a new period in the Ottoman Empire and this period occupies a very important place in the long history of reform movements in the Ottoman Empire. The purpose of the reform decree was to endow every person in the empire with equal rights before the law, notwithstanding their religious faith, by giving them Ottoman citizenship. Therefore, the depiction of the sovereign as the one who provided all people living in his domain with material and moral support in this speech signifies the first step towards the joining the European community. The reply of the Ottoman sultan confirms that the Ottomans comprehended the symbolic significance of this medal:

... I am all the more pleased by this sign of His Majesty's attention that this is the first foreign decoration that I receive, and I am also pleased to receive it from the hands of an ambassador as distinguished as you. I firmly hope that my ceaseless efforts towards the happiness of all my subjects shall be crowned with the hoped success and that my Empire, henceforth a member of the great family of Europe, will prove to the entire universe that is worthy of a prominent place in the concert of civilized nations. Turkey will never forget the generous sacrifices which its noble allies have imposed on themselves to bring about this fortunate and grand result...<sup>161</sup>

Sultan Abdülmecid also emphasized the fact that he would protect the rights of his non-Muslim subjects and treat everybody equally, for he realized that this was the price he had to pay in order to be a part of the European community. As Eldem

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 209.

notes, even though he comprehended the meaning of such terms as civilization, mission and equality, which were underscored by the French Emperor, Napoléon III, Sultan Abdülmecid did not accentuate them, rather preferring to emphasize the acceptance of the Ottomans by the European community and the newly-gained international status of the empire.

Thus, the official discourse about the non-Muslim subjects was formed on the bases of two parallel processes. As a consequence of Russia's claims for the Orthodox subjects of the empire, which were based on some of the articles of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, the Ottoman's started to consider government policies concerned with the living conditions of non-Muslim subjects. At first, the Ottoman's tried to demonstrate the benevolent character of their rule. During the war, these claims turned into concrete reforms in an effort order to secure an alliance with the great powers of Europe. It can also be argued that Britain used this issue as a means for threatening the Ottoman State. During this period, the Ottoman State tried to explain the situation and justify these reforms to the public. While warning Muslims against treating non-Muslim people badly, the Ottomans also were trying to justify themselves in the international arena by employing a relatively imperial discourse that emphasized the protective and inclusive character of the state. By the end of the war there had been extensive transformations. Trying to gain an advantageous position in the Treaty of Paris, the Ottomans were engaged in a series of reform movements and tried to prove their role as the guardian of all people living in the empire. They also tried to alleviate the unrest among the Muslim population, though they had little success in suppressing the increasing discontentment.



## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The official discourse of a state is built upon the political activities which that country engages in within its boundaries. The official discourse may even determine the territories of that very state. The Crimean War was a turning point for the formation of the official discourse in the Ottoman State. It is difficult to say that in the Ottoman Empire before the Crimean War there were coherent official discourses that were built upon propaganda conducted during the periods of war. However, because of the Crimean War and the concomitant international conjuncture, the Ottomans felt the need to express themselves, to comprehend their enemies and legitimize their activities - these are all elements that are usually regarded as constituent parts of official discourse. On the other hand, as Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton argue in their *Propaganda: Politic Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*,<sup>162</sup> propaganda reflects the emotions and ideas of not only the one who builds and manipulates it, but also the target group who perceives and responds to it. Therefore, while analyzing the official discourse of the Ottoman State, we should investigate not only the symbols and images upon which this discourse was built, but also the perception of the target group. This is why I have chosen to analyze the Ottoman official discourse on the basis of three topics.

The first topic is about how the Ottomans perceived their enemies and how they formed the concepts of “us” and “other”. There are two main target groups which influenced the image of Russia for the Ottomans. The first target group was the European states. The Ottoman propaganda against Russia comprises certain elements by which the Ottomans tried to legitimize themselves in the international

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<sup>162</sup> Bertrand Taithe, “Rhetoric, Propaganda and Memory: Framing the Franco-Prussian War,” *Propaganda: Politic Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*, ed. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton (Phoenix Mill, Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 3.

public opinion and to justify themselves to the European states. The second target group was their own people. In order to compensate for the negative effects of the state of war, the courage of the Ottoman soldiers was expressed over and over again and the Russians were represented as a country which had no just cause for its belligerent activities and as one whose army was made up of cowardly soldiers. However, this process was conducted in a more “professional” manner on the side of Russia. The *lubki*, which were used particularly during the period of the war, were employed by the government as a tool for othering, deformation, manipulation and disinformation. In the Ottomans, on the other hand, painting and caricature became widespread only as late as the Balkan Wars. It is difficult to find caricatures in the Ottoman press, even during the 1877-1878 Ottoman Russian War. Therefore, the Ottomans could only influence the public opinion by using the single official newspaper of the empire, *Takvîm-i Vekâyi*. Considering that this was an official newspaper, there was scarcely a popular culture that could have directly influenced the public, unlike the case in Russia. The *lubki* provided the Russian people with a tool for defining themselves via the stigmatization of the other. The *lubki* were also extensively used as an instrument of propaganda in the other wars in which Russia took part, including World War I. The Ottoman image in the Russian discourse, which was transmitted from generation to generation, played an important role in the formation of the Russian identity. In time, “the propaganda which intends to convince people to kill, to be killed and to support their countries by emphasizing only one of the many interpretations of the events during the period of war”<sup>163</sup> starts to produce its own lies and reproduce the war by deepening these lies. Therefore, the Russian *lubki* became a mere instrument of propaganda for the power. There is no

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 203.

clear information about the extent to which *lubki* illustrations could reach at people and how they responded to it during the Crimean War. In her *From Serf to Russian Soldier*, Elisa Kimerling argues that the Russian people were not eager to support the war and that some of them even tried to do whatever they could in order to avoid military duty.<sup>164</sup> No matter the extent to which people supported the war, it can be argued that the contents, symbols and styles of the *lubok* during the Crimean War were repeated in later periods, particularly during the 1877-1878 Ottoman Russian War, in which *lubki* were extensively used as an instrument of manipulation; in this way they for generations the *lubki* played a decisive role in the formation of the Ottoman-Turkish identity in Russia. During this period, a particular image of the Russians that would be repeated throughout the generations must also have emerged in Ottoman society. Considering the long years of the state of war between these two empires, on both sides the enemy was eventually stereotyped in a derisive way. On the Ottoman side, the expression *Moskof Gâvuru* is an example of this situation. The Ottoman State had created the “cold-blooded, ruthless, grim and vulgar” image of Russians and this image was perpetuated for generations. However, the lack of popular culture and tradition of writing memoirs in Ottoman society in this period diminishes our opportunity to make further comparisons.

Paintings of the wars, on the other hand, should be separated from the *lubki* in terms of their messages, creators and target groups. Produced by the artists of the period, in what can be defined as a “realist” style, these works of art were hardly instruments of propaganda, for they were produced mainly to reinterpret the reality of the war in a humanist perspective.

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<sup>164</sup> Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997)

The second topic that has been investigated in this study is about how the Ottomans and the allied states perceived each other. Here, there is a duality in the Ottoman discourse. On the one hand, the Ottomans tried to reinforce the legitimacy of their reaction against Russia by maintaining an alliance with European states. On the other hand, they employed an ambiguous language while trying to explain to their Muslim subjects the reason why they were forging alliances with Christian states (i.e. the “infidels”). This situation triggered a division within the empire. While carrying out propaganda about the Russians by employing derisive terms about their religion, like *gâvur* (infidel), the Ottomans were trying to justify their alliances with other non-Muslim states at the same time. Thus, the newspapers of this period were full of warnings that the soldiers of the allied countries and those of Russia should not be confused, and there were statements about how the first were fighting alongside the Ottoman soldiers and sacrificing their lives. These measures were necessary because of the unrest that had arisen as a result of the seemingly petty criminal activities in which the allied soldiers were involved in Istanbul. The Ottoman State tried to mollify the people and to prove that it was also concerned about these events, rewarding those who provided assistance in such cases. However, the allies’ perception of the Ottomans illustrates a completely different reality. In Western literature on the Crimean War<sup>165</sup> the Ottomans are mostly mentioned only as a geographic reference and described as a primitive, backward state that could not put together an organized army. In this literature, the Crimean War was described as an effort by Britain and France to prevent the conventional policies of Russia. Here,

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<sup>165</sup> For this issue, please see, Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacy of the Crimean War*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1999); Hugh Small, *The Crimean War: Queen Victoria’s War with the Russian Tsars* (England: Tempus Publishing, 2007).

the Ottomans were only the frame of reference upon which the struggle between these countries took place.

The third topic is about the perception of non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman official discourse. Even though there seem to be two target groups here, in fact, there was only one. The Ottomans tried to prevent the intervention of the other states in their internal affairs by presenting themselves as a tolerant state which embraced its subjects (this had later fostered the idea of Ottomanism, which opened the way towards the First Constitutional Era), and by so doing, legitimizing themselves in the eyes of Europe. In other words, the target group here was the European states. On the other hand, they were trying to alleviate the discontent which had arisen among the Muslim subjects because of the reform movements.

Although there are valuable studies about the diplomatic aspects of the Crimean War, these studies do not focus on the official discourse of the Ottoman State, the self-perception of the Ottomans, or the propaganda activities in the empire. I believe that this study will clarify these issues. In this study, I have tried to evaluate the Ottoman discourse by subdividing the subject into certain topics and adding the propaganda activities that were conducted during the period of war. The end result shows that these three topics that constitute the discourse are complementary. The Ottoman State developed a discourse based upon three main subjects: First, the Ottomans tried to legitimize itself in international public opinion by creating an aggressive image of Russia. The second and third justification, which complement one another, were that the Ottomans tried to forge an alliance with Europe through diplomatic strategies while, at the same time, trying to present themselves as an all-embracing, “powerful” state by initiating a series of reforms. A further question that should be investigated is the extent to which the Ottomans had a national identity or

to which nationalism was included in the propaganda activities during the war. Therefore, I have compared Russia and Ottoman Empire in terms of the formation of national identity. I believe that the comparison between the Ottoman Empire and Russia may provide us with the means for understanding the methods they used while building their national identities. In my opinion, this is another aspect that increases the significance of the Crimean War. Towards the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War important transformations occurred in the organization of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent defeats in the Balkans marked the inception of the period of Turkish nationalism.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A CHRONOLOGY OF THE CRIMEAN WAR

*1853*

- March 2 Prince Menshikov arrives in Istanbul with demand on Porte.
- May 21 Prince Menshikov leaves Istanbul, breaking off relations.
- May 31 Russian ultimatum to the Ottoman Empire.
- June 8 British fleet approaches to Dardanelles.
- July 2 Russian army crosses the Pruth Rive into Moldovia.
- October 5 Ottoman Empire declares war on Russia.
- October 28 Ottoman army crosses the Danube.
- October 30 British fleet enters the Bosphorus.
- November 4 Russians defeated by the Ottomans at Oltenitza.
- November 30 Ottoman naval squadron destroyed at Sinop.

*1854*

- January 4 Allied fleets entered the Black Sea
- January 5 Ottomans win battle of Citate.
- January 8 Russians invade Dobruja.
- February 10 British peace deputation sees the Tsar.
- March 19 French troops sail for the Ottoman Empire.
- March 28 France and Great Britain declare war on Russia.
- April 5 British troops arrive at Gallipoli.
- April 14 Russians besiege Silistre.
- April 18 Ottoman victory at Rahova.

- April 20 Austria and Prussia declare their neutrality.
- April 22 The bombardment of Odessa.
- May 28 Embarkation of Allied force for Varna.
- June 23 Russians abandon the siege of Silistre.
- July 7 Russians defeated at Giurgevo.
- July 28 Russians withdraw across Pruth.
- September 5 Allies embark at Varna for Crimea.
- September 14 Allies land unopposed at Calamita Bay, north of Sevastopol.
- September 20 Battle of Alma.
- September 26 British arrive at Balaclava.
- October 17 First bombardment of Sevastopol.
- October 25 Battle of Balaclava.
- November 5 Battle of Inkerman
- Florence Nightingale arrives at Scutari.

*1855*

- January 26 The Kingdom of Sardinia – Piedmont join the Allies.
- February 24 French attack on Sevastopol fails.
- March 2 Death of Tsar Nicholas I, succession of Alexander II, who recalls  
Menshikov
- March 15 Vienna conference opens.
- April 9 Second bombardment of Sevastopol.
- April 26 Vienna conference closes without result.
- May 23 Expedition to Kertch sails again.
- May 25 Kertch and Yenikale captured.
- May 26 Allied naval forces enter the Sea of Azov.

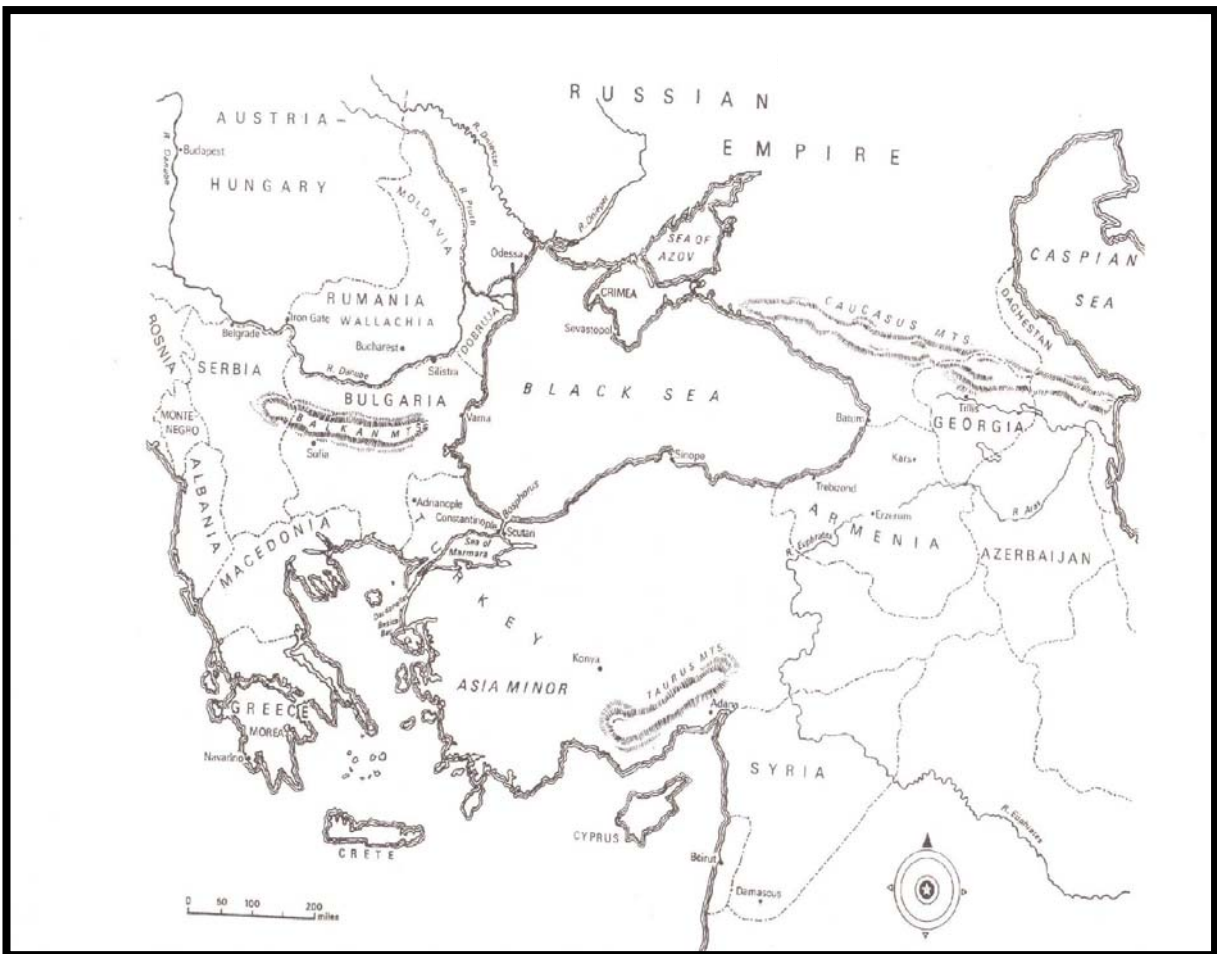


- June 6 Bombardment of Sevastopol.
- June 16 First Russian attack at Kars.
- July 14 Conference at which Ottoman commander Ömer Pasha asks permission to withdraw his troops and concentrate on Asia Minor.
- September 6 Ömer Pasha leaves for Asia Minor.
- September 8 At Sevastopol, the attack on the Malakoff by the French is successful.
- September 9 The Russians evacuate the South side of Sevastopol.
- September 29 Russian attack at Kars defeated. Ömer Pasha's troops embark for Asia Minor.
- October 3 Ömer Pasha's army lands at Schum Kaleh, south of Caucasus Mountains, with an expedition for relief of Kars.
- November 6 Ömer Pasha defeats the Russians at the River Ingur, south of the Caucasus Mountains.
- November 26 Russians accept surrender of the Ottoman forces at Kars.

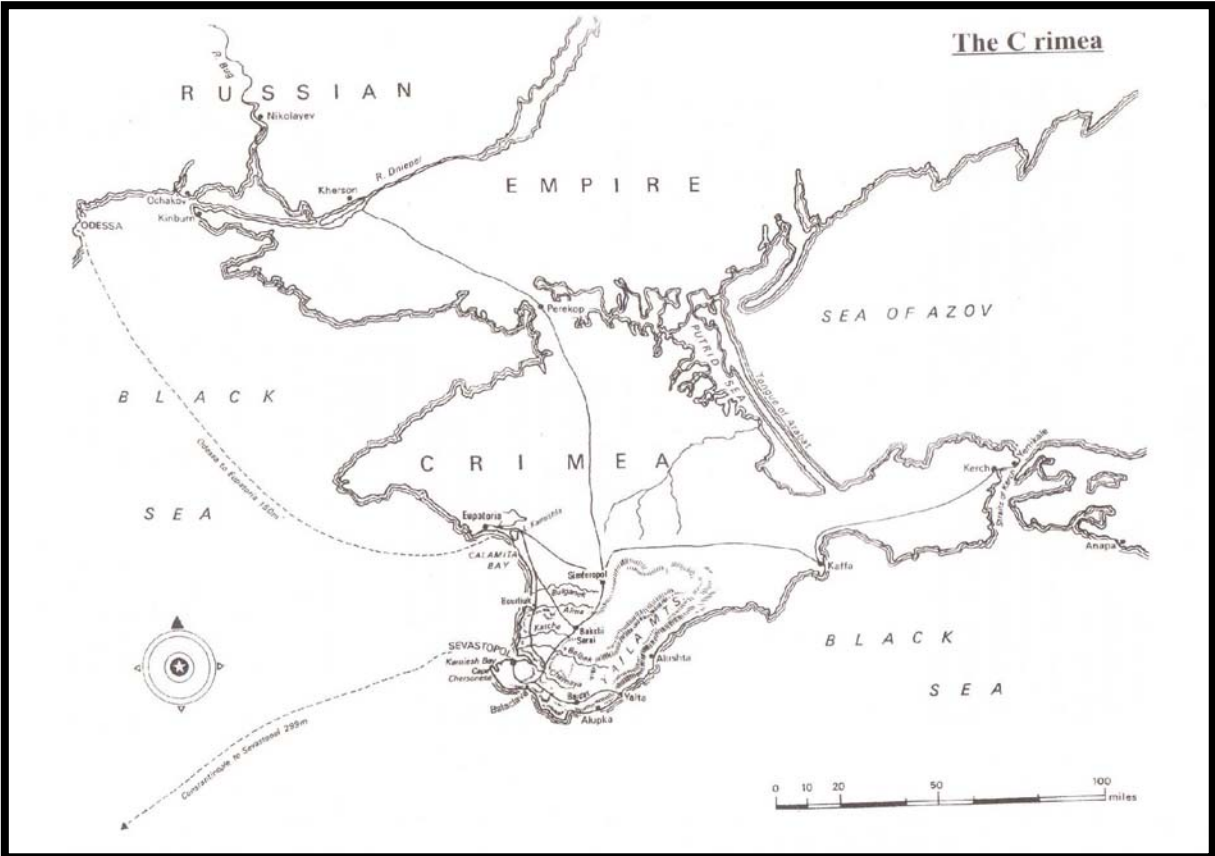
*1856*

- January 16 Tsar Alexander II accepts the Austrian demands.
- January 29 Russian guns bombard Sevastopol.
- February 25 The Paris Peace Conference opens.
- February 29 The Armistice is signed.
- March 30 The Treaty of Paris is signed.
- July 28 Florence Nightingale's departure from Istanbul.

APPENDIX B  
MAPS



Map 1 – “The Black Sea Theatre of War.”  
Reprinted from R.L.V. French Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: L. Cooper, 1971)



Map 1 – “The Crimea.”  
Reprinted from R.L.V. French Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: L. Cooper, 1971)

APPENDIX C  
LUBKI



Figure 1 – “The Praiseworthy Deed of Ensign Kudriavtsev.”  
Reprinted from Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images, Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and the National Identity 1812 – 1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006)

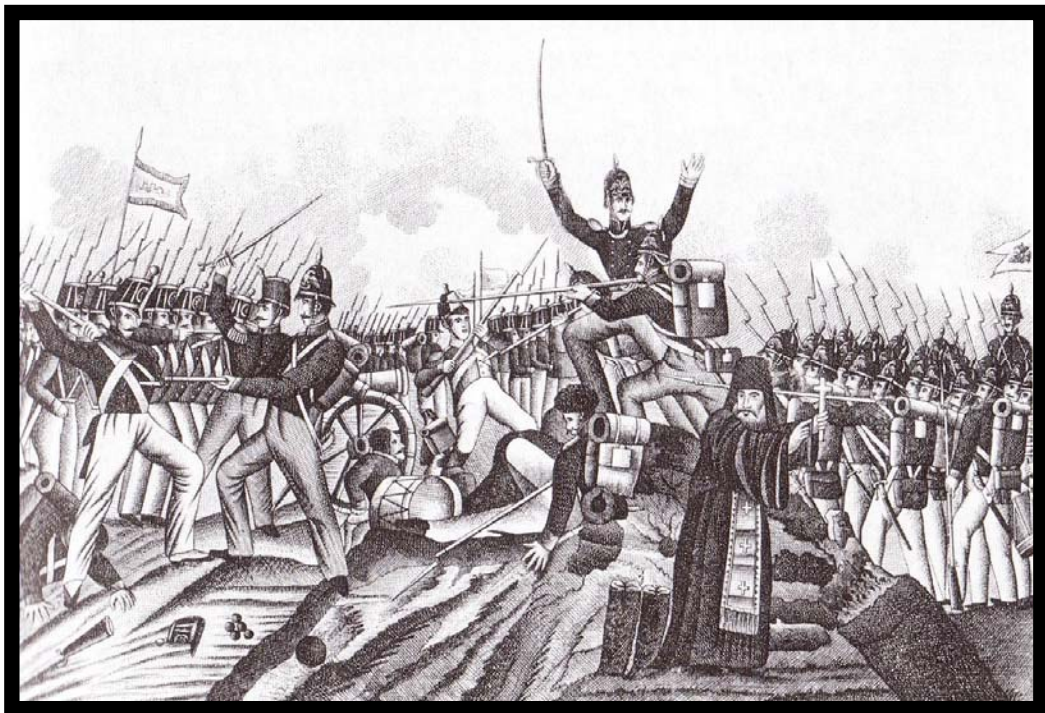


Figure 2 – “The Victory of Father Savinov.”  
Reprinted from Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images, Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and the National Identity 1812 – 1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006)



Figure 3 – “The Capture of the Turkish Fortress Kars on 16 November 1855.”  
 Reprinted from The State Museum of the Political History, St. Petersburg [GMPI]



Figure 4 – “The Haste of a Turk, Burdened with Three *Bunchuk* to Inform the Sultan of the Conquest of Kars by Russian Troops.”  
Reprinted from The State Museum of the Political History, St. Petersburg [GMPI]

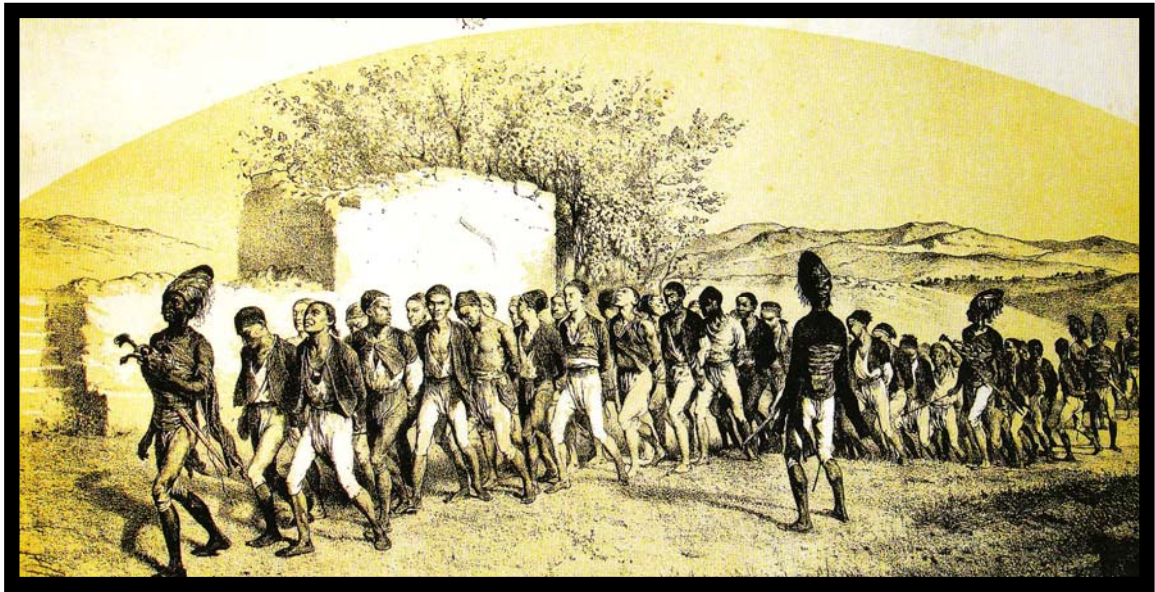


Figure 5 – “Turks who were taken into military service.”  
Reprinted from Candan Badem, “Rus ve Sovyet Tarih Yazımında Kırım Savaşı ” *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 155 (November, 2006), 19.



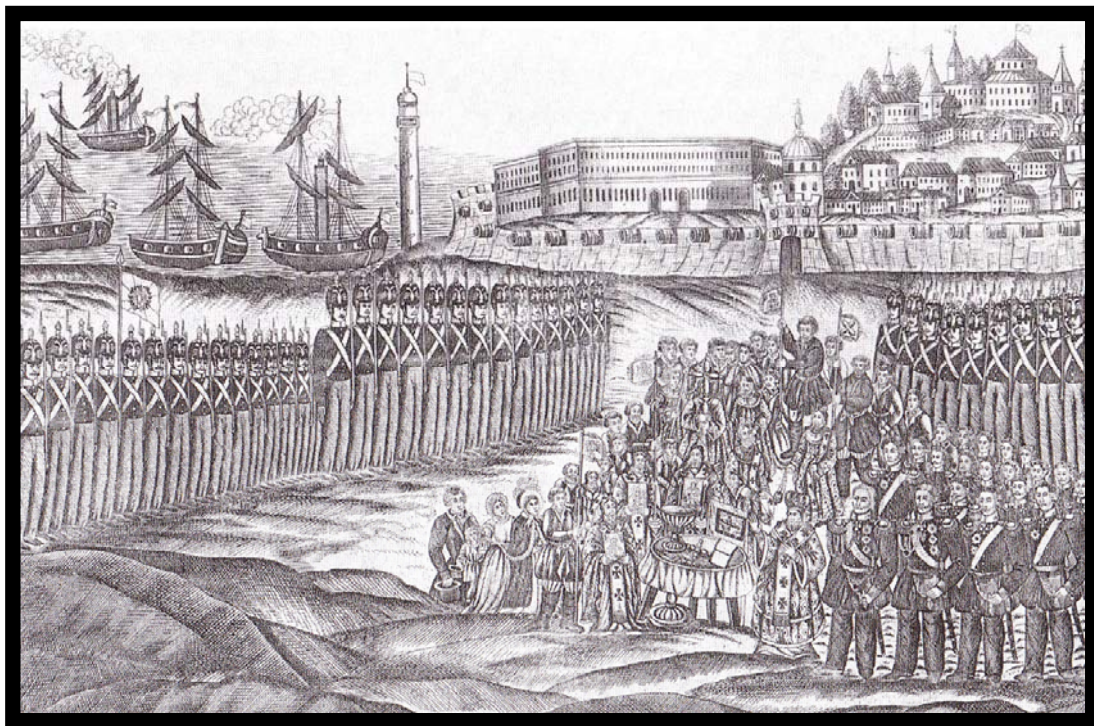


Figure 6 – “Sevastopol.”  
Reprinted from Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images, Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and the National Identity 1812 – 1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006)



Figure 7 – Alexey Bogolyubov “Battle of Sinop,” oil on canvas, 1860.  
Reprinted from the Central Navy Museum, St. Petersburg [TVMM]



Figure 8 – Ivan Aivasovky “Sinop: The Night after the Battle of November 18, 1853”, oil on canvas, 1853.  
Reprinted from the Central Navy Museum, St. Petersburg [TVMM]

APPENDIX D  
OTTOMAN AND RUSSIAN CRIMEAN WAR MEDALS



Figure 9 – Medal for Silistre, 1854, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 212.



Figure 10 – Medal for Kars, 1855, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 213.



Figure 10 – Medal for Sevastopol, 1855, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 213.



Figure 11 –Crimean War Medal, *French Version*, 1855, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 214.



Figure 12 –Crimean War Medal, *British Version*, 1855, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 215.





Figure 13 –Crimean War Medal, *Sardinian version*, 1855, issued in 1856.  
Reprinted from Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), p. 214.



Figure 14 – Russian Crimean War Medal, issued in 1856. The obverse has the joined monograms of tsar Nicholas I and Alexander II under crowns. On the top side of the Medal is all Seeing Eye. On the bottom, below the monogram, are the dates 1853 – 54 – 55 – 56. The Reverse has the Inscription: “We have set our hopes in thee o Lord let us never be ashamed.”

Reprinted from Robert Werlich, *Russian Orders, Decorations and Medals including those of Imperial Russia, the Provisional Government, the Civil War and the Soviet Union*, (Washington: Quaker Press, 1981), p. 49.



Figure 15 – Russian Medal for Defence of Sevastopol, issued in 1855. The obverse has the combined monograms of tsars Nicholas I and Alexander II under Imperial Crowns. The reverse has the all seeing eye above the inscription, “From September 13, 1854, to August 28, 1855.” Around the circumference is the inscription, “For the defence of Sevastopol.” Reprinted from Robert Werlich, *Russian Orders, Decorations and Medals including those of Imperial Russia, the Provisional Government, the Civil War and the Soviet Union*, (Washington: Quaker Press, 1981), p. 48.



Figure 16 – Russian Cross in Memory of the Crimean War, issued in 1856. Obverse center portrays the all seeing eye with rays, below this are crowned combined monograms of tsars Nicholas I and Alexander II. On the bottom circumference are the dates 1853 – 54 – 55 – 56. Reverse has the inscription, “We have put our trust in thee o Lord and we will never be ashamed.”

Reprinted from Robert Werlich, *Russian Orders, Decorations and Medals including those of Imperial Russia, the Provisional Government, the Civil War and the Soviet Union*, (Washington: Quaker Press, 1981), p. 48.



Figure 18 – Russian Cross in Memory of the Defence of Sevastopol, issued in 1856. On one side the number, “349” is engraved. This code indicates the 349 days that the Sevastopol siege lasted.

Reprinted from The Moscow Kremlin. *Old Russian Orders* (Moscow: The Moscow Kremlin State Historical and Cultural Museum, 1995), p. 32.

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