

A “COMPASSIONATE” EPISODE IN ANGLO-OTTOMAN HISTORY:  
BRITISH RELIEF TO ‘93 REFUGEES (1877-78)

A Master’s Thesis

by

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ANKARA

June 2010

*To Serra and Seva...*

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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
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by

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in

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

June 2010

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## **ABSTRACT**

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June 2010

This thesis aims to provide an indebt analysis of the British relief to the Ottoman Refugees of 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War ('93 Refugees). The course of the war resulted in an enormous exodus especially through the Balkans. Hundreds of thousands of Ottoman subjects had to flee towards the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire in destitute conditions. The official British foreign policy was determined as neutrality, however the British civilian initiative together with the diplomatic actors showed their support to the Ottomans through humanitarian relief. In August 1877, a campaign was initiated in London, The Turkish Compassionate Fund was established especially for the '93 Refugees and the other British organizations soon got involved in the relief of non-combatants. The British Ambassador to the Porte superintended the whole process and mobilised the diplomatic network under his command thus

philanthropy was used as a tool of diplomacy. The British endeavour to succour '93 Refugees was met with content by the Ottoman authorities and received the Sultan's appreciation.

This thesis reveals a rarely known episode of Anglo-Ottoman history far from the classical approaches of the diplomatic history of the period and handles the issue as a different dimension of the Anglo-Ottoman relations.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire, Britain, '93 War, Diplomacy, Exodus, '93 Refugees, Philanthropy.

## ÖZET

İNGİLİZ-OSMANLI TARİHİNDE “ŞEFKATLİ” BİR DÖNEM:  
'93 MUHACİRLERİNE İNGİLİZ YARDIMI (1877-78)

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Bu tez 1877-78 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı muhacirlerine ('93 Muhacirleri) yapılan İngiliz yardımının derinlemesine bir analizini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Savaşın gidişatı özellikle Balkanlar'da muazzam bir kitlesel göçe sebep oldu. Yüzbinlerce muhacir korkunç koşullarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun iç kısımlarına doğru kaçmak zorunda kaldı.. İngiliz resmi dış politikası tarafsızlık olarak belirlenmişti, buna rağmen sivil girişim diplomatik aktörlerle beraber Osmanlılara desteklerini insani yardım yoluyla gösterdiler. Ağustos 1877'de Londra'da bir kampanya başlatıldı, Sermaye-i Şefkat-i Osmaniyye '93 Muhacirlerine yardım için özel olarak kuruldu ve diğer İngiliz yardım örgütleri de kısa sürede savaşmayanların yardımına

müdahil oldular. Babıali'deki İngiliz Büyüelçisi bütün süreci yönetti ve emrindeki diplomatik ağı seferber etti, böylece hayırseverlik diplomasinin bir aracı olarak kullanıldı. İngilizlerin '93 Muhacirlerine yardım için bu çabası Osmanlı yetkililerince hoşnutlukla karşılandı ve Sultanın takdirini kazandı.

Bu tez İngiliz-Osmanlı Traihnin bu az bilinen bölümünü, dönemin klasik diplomatik tarih yaklaşımlarından uzak olarak ortaya çıkarıyor ve konuyu İngiliz-Osmanlı ilişkilerinin farklı bir boyutu olarak ele alıyor.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Britanya, '93 Harbi, Diplomasi, Göç, '93 Muhacirleri, Hayırseverlik.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*“Anadolu ve Rumeli ufkun iki ucunda iki ahşap konak gibi yanıyor; yangından çıkanların uçan saçlarıyla ufukta insanlar koşuyor: Doksan üç muhacirleri... Muhacir gideceği yer olmadan biteviye yürüyen hayalettir; adını bilmediği bir başka hayaletin ekmeğini yiyecektir.”*

*Mithat Cemal Kuntay, ÜÇ İSTANBUL<sup>1</sup>*

On April 24<sup>th</sup> 1877, Russian forces crossed the Pruth marking the beginning of one of the greatest human sufferings of the nineteenth century. St. Petersburg's declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire on the same day started a struggle that continued for almost eleven months. The course of the war combined with the methods of the advancing belligerent caused a great exodus. This led to the victimization of hundreds of thousands of civilians as fugitives, refugees, and later

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<sup>1</sup> Mithat Cemal Kuntay, *Üç İstanbul*, İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 1998, p. 1.

immigrants and this major influx found itself a substantial place in the historical literature as “*Doksanüç Muhacereti*”, or the ‘93 *Immigration*.<sup>2</sup>

In all of the phases of their flight, refugees were generally in destitute conditions and were indigent to any kind of assistance. The subject of this thesis is the general relief provided by the British people to the ‘93 *Refugees*, carried out by a number of agents through the medium of several British establishments. The main concern of this research is to present a comprehensive account of the British relief work that took place both during the ‘93 *War* and in its aftermath.

British relief to Ottoman refugees of the Russian War was a significant phenomenon since it occurred during a period of deteriorated Anglo-Ottoman relations. It was just a year after the “Bulgarian Horrors” agitation and there was a considerable degree of anti-Turkish sentiments among the British public. Consequently, despite national interests at stake, the British government could not afford to get into a war with Russia in order to prevent her expansion. Under such conditions a major relief campaign in London, entitled “*The Turkish Compassionate Fund*,” was particularly unexpected. On the other hand the Victorian understanding of philanthropy together with the sensitivity to humanitarian issues (concerning the crimes committed by the Bulgarians and Cossacks against the Muslim inhabitants of Rumelia) and the desire to tangibly express the individual anti-Russian political views of the British made such a campaign less surprising. In addition, the influence of certain individuals should be emphasised: a well known diplomat, then the British Ambassador to the Porte Henry Layard, accompanied by his benevolent

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<sup>2</sup> 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War corresponded to year 1293 of the Julian calendar, which is why the war is generally referred to in Turkish as the ‘93 *War*, or ‘93 *Harbi*. Thus, the exodus caused by the war is designated as ‘93 *Immigration*. The concepts related to this war expressed likewise through this study. e.g.: ‘93 *Influx*, ‘93 *Refugees*, ‘93 *Muhacirs*... etc.

Ambadress Enid Layard, played a central role in the process. He voluntarily undertook the duty of administrating the refugee relief and mobilized the consular network under his command for this duty. Moreover, his personal acquaintance with Baroness Burdett Coutts who was the most prominent Victorian philanthropist, provided him with the necessary financial means.

The main body of British relief of the '93 Refugees was *the Turkish Compassionate Fund*, but during the course of the War, other British Relief committees designed to aid the combatant in the Ottoman Empire, *the Stafford House Committee* and *the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War*, “unpremeditatedly” got involved in the assistance of non-combatants. Furthermore, the *Ladies Committee*, which was established under the auspices of Lady Layard, began its activities by supplying necessary materials to the other committees eventually almost turning into a sub-committee of the Compassionate Fund.

Through this process, involvement of the Ottoman authorities appears to have been extremely limited to the easing of the procedures for the British Relief agents and giving them the necessary assistance when requested. Sultan Abdulhamid II, availed himself of every opportunity to claim control by expressing his approval and gratitude, as well as awarding the contributors by issuing them with Imperial orders of various degrees.

The present study focuses particularly on the humanitarian zeal involved during and after the war, trying not to overshadow this episode of philanthropic history with rigid aspects of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy.

A correspondence from the Yıldız classification of Ottoman Archives<sup>3</sup> about rewarding of Lady Layard with a decoration by the Sultan “for her services for the relief of the muhacirs”<sup>4</sup> gave the hint for this study. However tracing the issue through secondary sources revealed the fact that the subject was only briefly referred to in the studies on the '93 Refugees.

Nedim İpek's *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri, 1877-1899* (1999) is the most comprehensive study on the subject of '93 Immigration in hand. İpek cursorily mentions the British relief in different parts of the study. He presents the Turkish Compassionate Fund as one of the immigrant commissions and refers to the activities of the Stafford House Committee under the title of the Compassionate Fund. A fundamental source for all studies on immigration related to the 1877-78 War is Bilal Şimşir's three volume work, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri* (1989). He published numerous facsimile documents, especially from the British National Archives and added a comprehensive introduction on immigration. Şimşir provides documents related to the British relief and gives useful information in his footnotes. Apart from a few other studies on immigration, the most important source about British relief in the Ottoman Empire is *the Balkan Volunteers* by Dorothy Anderson which was published in 1968. This book covers all of the philanthropic activities performed by the British in the Ottoman Balkans from 1876 to 1878, thus relief to '93 Refugees, including all the committees and the personalities involved. Anderson used extensively British sources; report books of the relief committees, manuscript collections, and some Foreign Office documents. However she used no reference system in order to enlighten the reader about the particular sources for information

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<sup>3</sup> The classification of the documents from the Yıldız Palace during the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1877).

<sup>4</sup> Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter B. O. A.), Y. PRK. EŞA. 1/31.

given in the work. These were the main studies that sparked my interest in the subject.

As for the primary sources of my research, the most significant ones are the report books of the relief committees themselves, published with the concerns of self-realization, soon after the cessation of their operations. *The Turkish Compassionate Fund: Its Origin, Working and Results*, compiled by H. Mainwaring Dunstan, published in 1883, consisted of the reports and accounts of this main institution of the British relief. Similarly, *Report and Record of the Operations of the Stafford House Committee for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Turkish Soldiers* published in 1879 and *Letters Relating to Operations of the Society in the Russo-Turkish War*, published in 1877 and 1878, consisting of records from the National Society (the British Red Cross), also proved to be of central importance for the present study. Recently published *Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880* and *the Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard* are the latest significant works which provide invaluable and first hand information on the subject.

As for the archival documents, Foreign Office Documents from the British National Archives, diplomatic correspondences under “Turkey”, The “Russo-Turkish war 1877-1878” collection of the British Red Cross Archives and Yıldız, Hariciye and İrade collections of the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives have been lengthily used during this study. Moreover, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Basiret* were among the main periodicals contemporaneous to the war and the relief efforts.

This study is composed of four chapters; in the first chapter the ternary background for British relief during the exodus, which were the Anglo-Ottoman Relations in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, '93 Refugees in general and the

Victorian philanthropy in the Ottoman Empire, are provided. The second chapter is on the relations between British diplomacy and the refugee relief during the 1877- 78 War. The third chapter focuses on the Turkish Compassionate Fund and the final chapter aims to cover the other British committees which contributed to this charitable work.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1. Political Developments and Anglo-Ottoman Relations in the Second Half of the 19th Century**

Aspects of Anglo-Ottoman relations in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been subject to a number of studies and a variety of publications. With all its dimensions and abundant historical sources, this period certainly needs and deserves further research. This chapter aims to draw a general portrait of the major developments that shaped the relations between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire from 1853 to 1877. In the early 1850s there were two allied empires fighting against Russia, the common enemy. About twenty five years later the Ottoman Empire was desolate, in a state of collapse, isolated by the non-belligerent ex-ally which was preserving its “conditional neutrality”.



### **2.1.1. A Landmark: The Crimean War 1853-1856**

The dynamics of the relations between the Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire in the 1870s are better understood by starting with the analysis of the Crimean War. As Stanford Shaw epitomized; “the Crimean War was basically a conflict between Russia on one side and Britain and France on the other to see who would dominate the Middle East politically and economically as the Ottomans declined.”<sup>1</sup>

The Crimean War was a landmark of the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire since Britain realised that Russian domination in the region would upset the European balance of power and harm fundamental British interests. Due to low customs duties, the Ottoman Empire was an ideal market for British goods as well as being a major source of raw materials. A dispute over the Holy Places under Ottoman control evolved into a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, which commenced with the Russian occupation of the Principalities. This led to the Ottomans retaliating without an official declaration of war and followed by the Russians sinking the Ottoman navy anchored in Sinop harbour. This event inflamed French and British public opinion resulting in both governments declaring war on Russia on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1854.<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain sided with the Ottomans and the French in order to constrain the Russian expansion which was hostile to her interests. Thus the Ottoman Empire fought as a power of the European alliance. Most of the battles took place in the Crimean peninsula, where the War took its name from, however the presence of the

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<sup>1</sup> Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire V.II*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 134. For the reasons and the course of the Crimean War, see; Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Mesail-i Mühimme-i Siyasiyye V.I*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw, p. 138.

British on Ottoman territory was tangible with the English garrison and the hospital in *Selimiye* Barracks in Üsküdar. That was the hospital in which the legendary philanthropic endeavour of Florence Nightingale and her colleagues took place.

The ending of the Crimean War saved the Ottoman Empire from major international losses and ensured the Porte with relative ability of movement domestically. In the following two decades after the end of the war was something to be depended on by the Ottomans. Britain designated its Eastern Policy to maintain the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity and this was jointly guaranteed by the signatories of the Peace of Paris on March 29<sup>th</sup> 1856.<sup>3</sup>

Both British money and blood were spent for Ottoman territorial integrity, thus, the post Crimean War period witnessed a significant increase in London's interest in Ottoman Reform. It was recognised by Britain that without ensuring satisfaction to the Christian subjects of the Empire there would be constant interference of the European powers in Ottoman domestic affairs.<sup>4</sup>

### **2.1.2. Bosnian Upheaval of 1875**

The post-Crimean War period offered a suitable environment for revolutionary activities due to the disarray of the earlier alliance system.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Balkan Peninsula was rather colourful with a variety of cultures, religions and languages living together. In this way the inheritance of the French Revolution along with ideologies of nationalism and liberty, spread into central

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<sup>3</sup> Shaw, p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question 1875-1878*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans V.I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 329.

Europe and Hungary and eventually effected its populations. The early upheavals in Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia and Morea which brought rights and privileges to their people, and Greece acquiring her independence in 1830, set a perfect example for the rest.<sup>6</sup>

About two decades after the Crimean War, the atmosphere in the Balkans once again started to tense up. In the meantime, Britain's policy continued to press for Ottoman reform to keep things as quiet as possible in the region, to avoid undue interference by the Powers in the Ottoman internal affairs and to stand up verbally for the treaties of Paris and London of 1856 and 1871.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, ever since the signing of the Paris Treaty the principal goal of Russian foreign policy had been to break its terms.<sup>8</sup> The first spark came from Bosnia and Herzegovina and uneasiness began among the Christian peasants. Subsequently in several small villages in Herzegovina an uprising erupted against large landholders, who demanded a full payment of taxes despite a bad harvest in 1874. In July 1875, independent incidents in Bosnia turned into a revolt and spread all around the province.<sup>9</sup>

A great change occurred in the Ottoman Cabinet and the administration carried out calm and agreeable policy through the Bosnian crisis. However, these developments could not prevent the problem from growing into a European issue.<sup>10</sup> The entire international manoeuvres of the great powers, namely of the *Three Emperors League*, were warily met by Britain. British Prime Minister Benjamin

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<sup>6</sup> Mithat Aydın, *Balkanlarda İsyân*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Millman, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Jelavich, p. 352.

<sup>9</sup> Shaw, p. 158.

<sup>10</sup> Aydın, *Balkanlarda İsyân*, p. 55.

Disraeli did not bless the attitude of annihilation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup> On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1875, *the Andrassy Note* was presented to the Porte by the Three Emperors League and certain reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina were demanded from the Ottomans. Though the Porte was comparably willing to meet the case, the situation was beyond its power with the Russian involvement. In due course Andrassy Note proved futile, which called forth another memorandum from Berlin on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1876 with similar requests.

The Bosnian uprising had shown the major difference between the manners of Russia and the other powers over the Ottoman Empire's territory.<sup>12</sup> London barely reacted to the Bosnian revolt and there was not a sufficient popular pressure to upset British pro-Ottoman policy.<sup>13</sup> Britain, while purchasing the Khedive's share of the Suez Company bonds, refused to join in the memorandum. It was not only to protest international interference in Ottoman internal affairs but also because she had not been involved in the preparation process of the note.<sup>14</sup>

### **2.1.3. The Triumph of Agitation: Bulgarian Crisis of 1876**

The foremost development in the 1870s that shaped the British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire was the Bulgarian Crisis of 1876. Notwithstanding the incident was an internal development of the Ottoman Empire, it did not only become a matter of British international affairs but also turned into a prominent item on the agenda of their domestic politics.

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu 1774-1923*, Istanbul: YKY, 2001, pp. 199-200.

<sup>12</sup> M. S. Anderson, p. 196.

<sup>13</sup> Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle, the Origins of the Humanitarian Intervention*, New York: Vintage Books, 2008, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> Shaw, p. 160.

After Bosnia and Herzegovina, the flame of revolt kindled in Bulgaria. The failure of previous attempts to rebel by the Bulgarians was followed by a new attempt commenced in the Balkan Mountains near Filibe (Philipopolis) and Tatar Pazarcik on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1876. Immediate consequences were massacres of large numbers of Muslim subjects, burned villages and seized Ottoman fortresses. Since the size of the regular army in the region was insufficient, the Ottoman government ordered irregulars, called *Başıbozüks*, to suppress the rebels. Circassians, who had been re-settled in the region after the Crimean War and had ongoing rivalries with the Orthodox population, also attended the suppression. The “counterattack” came within a week with very unpleasant results. The number of casualties in the historical studies differ remarkably, for instance according to Stanford J. Shaw no more than 4,000 Bulgarian Christians were killed,<sup>15</sup> nevertheless Anderson claims 60 villages were exterminated in which 12-15,000 Bulgarians were massacred.<sup>16</sup> The number climbs further up depending on the source.

This news immediately affected European public opinion, but in Britain it became an extreme phenomenon not only for their international relations but also for domestic politics. It was a new era for British press; “penny papers” were reaching the masses and thanks to telegraph technology they were full of recent news which arrived in blazing speed.<sup>17</sup> One of these, *Daily News*, the leading Liberal organ of the time, was the first to publicise the incidents.<sup>18</sup> This marked the beginning of a major rivalry between the conservative government and the liberal opposition.

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<sup>15</sup> Shaw, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson, 1968, p. 200.

<sup>17</sup> Bass, p. 256.

<sup>18</sup> R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, London: Frank Cass, 1971, p. 52.

The British public split into two; on one side were the supporters of the Disraeli government who were called “*Turcophile, home-Turks, philo-Turks or Russophobists*” and were readers of *The Daily Telegraph* or *Standard*, on the other side were proponents of the opposition under the leadership of Gladstone, regarded as “*Russophiles, Turcophobes or Muscovites*” and read *Daily News*.<sup>19</sup> The Government was harshly blamed by the opposition to be a collaborator of the Ottomans and popular opinion was extremely against the idea of a war with Russia.<sup>20</sup> Harsh and long debates took place in the House of Commons between the two parties. Liberals were using the subject as a tool to attack the conservative government, blaming them for concealing the “massacres” from the public, encouraging the Ottoman government through British foreign policy and by not putting pressure on it.<sup>21</sup> The British government made every effort to defend itself but generally proved very weak and its struggle was in vain. Prime Minister Disraeli eventually confessed “Her Majesty’s Government was ill served on that occasion”.<sup>22</sup>

***The Elliot Factor:*** Sir Henry Elliot was the British Ambassador to the Porte from 1867 to 1877. He was severely criticized in Britain for his pro-Ottoman attitude during the Bulgarian Crisis especially by the opposition in London and by the British community in Istanbul. He was accused of laxity, for being late to inform the British government about the developments and for deflecting information.<sup>23</sup> Elliot stood in a position hardly acceptable to British opinion. He believed there was a certain level of agitation and the unfortunate incidents that had occurred were a product of

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<sup>19</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> M. S. Anderson, p. 200.

<sup>21</sup> Aydın, *Balkanlarda İsyân*, p. 177.

<sup>22</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> Mithat Aydın, “Sir Henry G. Elliot’ın İstanbul Büyükelçiliği (1867–1877) Dönemindeki Bazı Büyük Siyasi Olaylara Bakışı”, *OTAM*, No. 18, p. 38.

incitation on both sides.<sup>24</sup> It appears that he was not purely innocent but on the other hand; “he was pro-Ottoman at a very inconvenient time”.<sup>25</sup> Arguments reached a level whereby Elliot’s post was re-considered and even the Prime Minister stated H. M. Ambassador lacked both energy and information.

Bulgarian atrocities became and stayed the major issue of domestic politics of Britain: “...Liberals and Conservatives in almost every town and borough of the Great Britain vied with each other in repudiating Turkey and all her works”. Moreover despite the phenomenon of “Bulgarian Horrors” which is accepted as a work of the Liberal leader William Ewart Gladstone, he actually remained quiet for the first two months.<sup>26</sup>

***Gladstone’s Pamphlet:*** In September 1876, Gladstone wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* explaining the happenings in Bulgaria.<sup>27</sup> It sold more than 200,000 copies and wiped out all sympathy towards the Ottomans.

The pamphlet was concluded on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1876 and published the following day.<sup>28</sup> Despite its precipitous preparation, it was intriguing and provocative enough to influence hundreds of thousands of people of this far away land. It was a well organized document of sixty four pages including an introduction and table of contents, easily readable in length and language. *The Bulgarian Horrors*, was a propaganda tool of exaggeration of the incidents, the author used a harsh language to

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<sup>24</sup> Aydın, Sir Henry G. Elliot, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> Millman, p. 161.

<sup>26</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 72.

<sup>27</sup> W. E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, London: John Murray, 1876.

<sup>28</sup> Gladstone, p. 64.

criticize the Ottomans. It described the Turkish race as a “tremendous incarnation of military power” and demanded Ottoman expulsion off its European provinces.<sup>29</sup> The pamphlet was dedicated to the famous former British Ambassador to the Porte, Stratford Canning, and his phrase “bag and baggage” was quoted by the author describing the way how the Turks should abandon the Balkans.

According to R. T. Shannon “It was one of the great semi-religious, semi-political agitations which aimed in the Nineteenth Century Britain at bringing the force of organized moral indignation to bear on the conduct of public affairs.”<sup>30</sup> It was decisively a successful political campaign. Numerous public meetings took place throughout England in order to protest the “Bulgarian horrors”.<sup>31</sup> In this manner, developments evolved into such a warning by Derby to Elliot:

Any sympathy previously felt in England towards Turkey has been completely destroyed by the lamentable occurrences in Bulgaria... and to such a pitch has indignation in all classes of English society risen... that in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey, H.M.G. would find it practically impossible to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup>

Kostaki Musurus Pasha, who had then been Ottoman Ambassador to London for twenty five years, realised the inefficiency of disclaiming the articles and news that appeared on the British press. Thus, in order to cope with the Bulgarian Horrors storm, he commenced a wide-ranging press campaign in England. He used the

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<sup>29</sup> “Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and Yuzbachis, their Kaimmakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope clear out province they have desolated and profaned. This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance, is the only reparation we can make to the memories of those heaps on heaps of dead; to the violated purity alike of matron, of maiden and of child; to the civilization which has been affronted and shamed; to the laws of God or, if you like, of Allah; to the moral sense of mankind at large.” Gladstone, pp. 61-62.

<sup>30</sup> R. T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963, p. xi.

<sup>31</sup> For illustration; Sacit Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik ve Emperyalizm Yüzyulında Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2007, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 62.



favourable papers, mainly the *Morning Post*, published articles, printed brochures and even books. Furthermore, the Pasha organized an anti-Russian meeting with the Polish refugees in London. He made use of his seniority among all the representatives in the British Capital to make effective speeches during official dinners.<sup>33</sup> Despite his eagerness, these initiatives probably had a very limited effect compared to the nationwide campaign of “Bulgarian Horrors” and could not prevent the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire to evolve into a non-protectionist form.

The British people felt the necessity to show their concern in a practical way such as donating money and clothes. The first reflection of their anti-Ottoman sentiments was a great increase in support for the humanitarian societies already engaged in Balkan relief.<sup>34</sup> It was a nice revelation of the usage of philanthropy as a method of expressing public beliefs and feelings. It is significant to see the state of affairs at the beginning in order to comprehend the importance of the following. The Bulgarian Crisis marked a major shift in British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire due to the radical change in public opinion.

#### **2.1.4. 1876: Ottoman- Serbia, Montenegro War**

Serbians had been supporting the Bosnian rebels since the beginning of the revolt and volunteers were joining the guerrillas across the border. In such short notice, pan-Slavism was inflamed in Serbia with the Russian influence causing the

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<sup>33</sup> Sinan Kunalp, “Bir Osmanlı Diplomatı Kostaki Musurus Paşa 1807-1891” *Belleten*, Vol.34, No. 133-136, 1970, pp. 434-435.

<sup>34</sup> Dorothy Anderson, pp. 8-9; Seton-Watson, p. 72.

autonomous Serbian government to attitudinize virulently against the Ottomans.<sup>35</sup> This was a period of atony due to internal developments in the Empire; double accession to the throne, the Çerkez Hasan Incident and the economic crisis which weakened the Ottomans inside and out.<sup>36</sup> The Serbs commenced by signing an alliance with Montenegro on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1876 then secretly declared war on the Ottomans on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The battles started on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1876. Montenegro followed suit next day, as Stanford Shaw simply cited: “thus began the first Balkan crisis”.<sup>37</sup>

The British confidently applied a policy of non-interference, with the major aim of preventing Russia or Austria of getting involved. Queen Victoria’s frigid reply to the Tsar’s appeal for cooperation for the Serbians condensed the British approach: “It may be, that the six great powers intervened a little prematurely in Turkish affairs, but the course of events has extricated them from a difficult position and allowed them to revert to the principle of non-intervention, the consequence of which is general neutrality, which will, I hope, be strictly observed by all.”<sup>38</sup> In his personal correspondences, British Prime Minister Disraeli bragged to the Queen that the Great Powers were forced to follow England with her policy; therefore a Serbian defeat was in the immediate future.<sup>39</sup> Russia declared her neutrality, but somehow the Serbian Army had a Russian general as commander and the Tsar failed to prohibit his subjects from voluntarily joining him and these were considered as a proof of bad faith by the British.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Though the Russian official policy declared to be neutrality, their Consul in Belgrade convinced the Serbian government to rely on active Russian help. Seton-Watson, p. 48; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, V. VIII*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> Karal, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Shaw, p. 165.

<sup>38</sup> Seton-Watson, pp. 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> Bass, p. 255.

<sup>40</sup> Seton-Watson, pp. 48-49.

Despite the relative success of Montenegrins on the Bosnian border, the Serbian Army was easily defeated by the Ottomans in a week-long battle. It was a Russian ultimatum that stopped the Ottoman armies from marching on Belgrade and made a ceasefire possible.<sup>41</sup>

Every European power, in one way or another, was interested in the Eastern Question in accordance with their national ambitions over the Ottoman territories. In order to preserve the balance of the League of Three Emperors, Prince Bismarck of Germany proposed a division which would satisfy both Austria, by giving it Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russia, who would take Bessarabia and dominate Rumania and Bulgaria. According to this plan France was to take Syria and Britain would acquire Egypt. Disraeli, bound hand and foot with the Bulgarian Horrors, opposed such an initiative. In order to avoid the increase in Russian and Austrian power Britain proposed an international conference in Istanbul.<sup>42</sup>

The proposal of the *Istanbul Conference* was eagerly accepted by the Porte since the alternative option, as exhibited by the British Foreign Secretary Earl of Derby, was an Ottoman-Russian War and total desolation of the Ottomans.<sup>43</sup> Initial meetings took place in the first weeks of December 1876 and the official opening was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1876, the date of the famous story of startled delegates with the cannon booming heralded the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution. Grand Vizier Mithat Pasha opposed all the proposals of the conference claiming most of them proved unnecessary with the proclamation, and preferred to take the risk of war over accepting the capitulations that would end the independence of the

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<sup>41</sup> M. S. Anderson, pp. 200-203. For further information on the source of the War see; Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa, *Mirat-ı Hakikat*, Istanbul: Berekat Yayınevi, 1983; Karal, pp. 14-24.

<sup>42</sup> Shaw, p. 173.

<sup>43</sup> Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Mesail-i Mühimme-i Siyasiyye, V.II*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1987, Zeyl (appendix).I, No. I.

Empire. His attitude should be considered together with the support of the British Ambassador Elliot, who was encouraged by Prime Minister Disraeli. The Istanbul Conference exhibited very clearly the polyvocal structure of the British eastern policy.<sup>44</sup> The Conference reached a futile end on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1877 hereby drew the Russo-Turkish War closer.

In March 1877, Ignatiev, the Russian Ambassador to the Porte, a leading Panslavist, visited the European capitals; London, Berlin, Paris and Vienna. As a result of negotiations *London Protocol* was signed among the powers. The pact was mainly demanding reform for the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in a weaker tone compared to the original Russian demands; nevertheless it was rejected by the Porte.<sup>45</sup> Two weeks after the rejection, on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1877, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire.

### **2.1.5. 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War**

Despite the wishes of the Russian statesmen to avoid it<sup>46</sup> and the British zeal to prevent it from happening, events that took place in the Balkans in the 1870s led to the break out of a major war on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1877. The 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War, '93 War as generally used in the literature, appeared as the most significant political development of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and with its course and consequences, it constitutes the core of this study.

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<sup>44</sup> M. S. Anderson, p. 207; Shaw, p. 179.

<sup>45</sup> Türkgeldi, Zeyl (appendix)No. IV (the Text of the Protocol), Zeyl. V, Zeyl. VI.

<sup>46</sup> "The Russian Statesmen had wished to avoid a war because of both their uncertainty over the reaction of the other powers and their lack of confidence in their own military capabilities." Jelavich, p. 356.

Stanford Shaw adequately epitomized the target of Russia in declaring war on the Ottomans:

The principal aim of the Russian campaign was to cross the Balkan Mountains and approach Istanbul and the Straits as rapidly as possible in the west while also moving into north-eastern Anatolia and taking Kars, Ardahan and Erzurum to force the Porte to accept the proposals it had rejected at the Istanbul Conference. Once the czar was in position to control Black Sea and push across Anatolia to Alexandretta, he would gain free access to the Mediterranean. The Slavic states of the Balkans would also be severed from Ottoman control and left under strong Russian influence, and the czar's position in the European alignment of states would thus be strengthened.<sup>47</sup>

In the early phases of the war, the Russian army smoothly crossed the Danube and strode through the Balkan Passes in the west; they captured Ardahan and Bayezid in the east. These developments caused great anxiety in the Ottoman Empire. But as the operations were held with further attention by the Ottomans, the course of the war was altered. Ahmed Muhtar Pasha succeeded in several battles in the Eastern Front. Moreover, despite three major attacks by the Russian army, Plevne (Pleven) could not be captured due to heroic defence of Osman Pasha. Consequently the Russian Tsar had to ask for reinforcements from the Prince of Wallachia and Moldova while Osman Pasha was receiving felicitating telegraphs from all around.<sup>48</sup>

As mentioned before, the campaign of "Bulgarian Horrors" caused a major change of British public opinion and policy towards the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain preferred non-belligerency in the conflict despite the diplomatic efforts. Henry Layard, the new British Ambassador to the Porte, disappointed the Sultan Abdulhamid II on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1877 by reminding him that the British warned the

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<sup>47</sup> Shaw, p. 183.

<sup>48</sup> Türkgeldi, p. 30.

Ottoman government in advance not to expect assistance from them, due to the events of the previous year.<sup>49</sup>

Queen Victoria of Great Britain held a conservative position; she supported the continuation of the Eastern policy as it was and had her concerns about the ambitions of Russia. She blamed Gladstone for causing the war by his Bulgarian campaign which assured Russia “it had a free hand”<sup>50</sup>. Her assertion was implicitly endorsed by the Tsar Alexander II, who said that he was reluctantly forced into war by his wife, pan-slavist diplomat Ignatiev and Gladstone.<sup>51</sup> When the debates over supporting the Ottoman Empire were vehement, the Queen expressed her beliefs as follows: “It is not the question of upholding Turkey; it is the question of Russian or British supremacy in the world!”<sup>52</sup> The British government announced the country’s position as “*conditional neutrality*” with a note by Foreign Secretary on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1877, meaning that Britain was going to preserve her non-belligerency as long as her national interests were safe and sound.<sup>53</sup>

The war was closely followed by the British public, especially through the constant reports of their war correspondents moving with the armies. Incidents that took place in the theatres of the war were used to increase newspaper sales.<sup>54</sup> The long endurance of Plevne had a very powerful influence on public opinion, they were impressed by Turkish zeal and realised the Ottoman Empire was standing strong, still

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<sup>49</sup> Sinan Kunalp, *The Queens Ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard’s Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009, p. 76.

<sup>50</sup> Bass, p. 298.

<sup>51</sup> Bass, p. 297.

<sup>52</sup> Bass, p. 298.

<sup>53</sup> The British interests that determined the “conditions” were juxtaposed by R. W. Seton-Watson in his book entitled *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question* as; “First came the necessity to keeping open ... the communication between Europe and the East by the Suez Canal... Secondly Britain could not witness with indifference the fate of Constantinople or the passing into the other hands than those of its present possessors...Thirdly the course of events might show that there were still other interests, as for instance on the Persian Gulf...” Seton-Watson, p. 163.

<sup>54</sup> Orhan Koloğlu, *Avrupa’nın Kıskacında Abdülhamit*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 32.

worthy to defend. Thus, the bitter taste of the Bulgarian atrocities lost strength.<sup>55</sup> From a contradictory point of view, like François Georgeon's, Ottoman resistance provided the British with the excuse not to intervene, the British fleet stayed anchored in Gallipoli.<sup>56</sup>

Eventually, the Russian army managed to occupy Kars and after five months of resistance Plevne surrendered on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1877 due to a shortage of supplies. Russians passed Shipka, took Sophia with all the Ottoman ammunition. Their army was marching through Edirne with the decisive target to reach the Ottoman capital. The impossibility to continue fighting was admitted by the Ottoman commanders thus the Porte applied to the Great Powers for joint mediation. None of the states agreed to do so, and Britain took no further steps to rescue the Ottomans, but only ordered the British Ambassador in Petersburg to intervene.<sup>57</sup>

In the course of the war, first the stories of heroic defences of the Ottoman armies and then the idea of strong Russian Empire controlling the Ottoman territory and dominating the world by taking Britain's place caused a major shift in British sentiments. The Sultan's effort to influence British public opinion through British press paid off.<sup>58</sup> Intervention had become a fervent subject of British domestic politics. Two gatherings held in Trafalgar Square in January, one opposing Russian aggression, the other opposing entry into a war against Russia, ended in confusion and violence with neither speaker heard.<sup>59</sup> The British holders of the Ottoman

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<sup>55</sup> M. S. Anderson, p. 212.

<sup>56</sup> François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2006, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup> Türkgeldi, p. 31.

<sup>58</sup> According to Koloğlu, Abdülhamid II was the first sultan who directly contacted foreign press. He tried to prevent publication of news and article unfavourable to the Ottomans and honoured journalists who wrote in favour. Kologlu, pp. 65-66.

<sup>59</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 187.

debentures began to feel anxious with the approaching collapse of the Empire.<sup>60</sup> Rising anti-Russian feelings among the Britons effected daily debates, and even became subject to songs. The most popular one, which inspired “jingoism”, had the following lyrics:

We don't want to fight,  
But by Jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships,  
We've got the men,  
And got the money too.  
We've fought the Bear before,  
And while we're Britons true,  
The Russians shall not have Constantinople.

When the news of cruelties committed by Russian soldiers, especially the Cossacks, arrived in London, it was probably ironic to see Gladstone calling the Disraeli Government to take necessary measures in favour of the Ottomans. He claimed perfect impartiality while saying “cruelty is worse in a Christian than in a Turk”.<sup>61</sup> Ambassador Layard stated in detail in his reports to the British Foreign Office that it was time for Britain to abandon its neutrality policy and intervene in order to prevent a peace settlement without English interference.<sup>62</sup> After the fall of Plevne and subsequently Edirne, a mob of “jingoes” smashed the windows of Gladstone’s house in London.<sup>63</sup> Thousands of refugees were fleeing before the Russian army as it marched towards Istanbul and British involvement in the war was still obscure.

Ottoman defeat had a major consequence which constituted the subject of this study. The sudden shrinking of the Empire, the march of the Russian army and the

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<sup>60</sup> Georgeon, p. 97.

<sup>61</sup> Bass, p. 300.

<sup>62</sup> Joan Haslip, *Abdülhamid II*, İstanbul: Fener Yayınları, 1998, p. 140.

<sup>63</sup> Bass, p. 302.



methods adopted by them, caused hundreds of thousands of Ottoman people whose hometowns were then under occupation to become fugitives and flee towards Istanbul. Russians succeeded in advancing as far as San Stefano, a village just outside the Ottoman capital and pitched a camp there. At this point the British fleet was ordered to sail from Besika Bay to Istanbul without Porte's consent "to protect the British lives".<sup>64</sup> Tzar Alexander II could not venture fighting with the British, thus the Russo- Turkish War ended.

Major events that influenced the British policy and public opinion towards the Ottoman Empire, and shaped the Anglo-Ottoman affairs in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century revealed these facts: First, the major alteration of the relations in this era never actually sourced from the dialogue between the two, but rather from internal developments of each country under the influence of the third parties. Secondly, individual/personal initiative caused great change of public opinion as well as policy making. Lastly, it is understood that the public opinion of Victorian England was very powerful and influential in the foreign policy making. As the following chapters will show, when the British public was not satisfied by the current political actions, they found a way to show their belief, sympathy, reaction or support. British philanthropy was used as the tool to express public tendencies and concerns.

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<sup>64</sup> Roderic H. Davison, "The Ottoman Empire and the Congress of Berlin", *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999, pp. 179-180.

## 2.2. '93 Refugees

The most significant humanitarian consequence of the '93 War was the sudden and enormous influx of the Ottoman subjects, mostly but not necessarily exclusively Muslims, who had been living in the regions subject to the Russian occupation. These people were not abandoning their hometowns due to the obscure political future. They were simply running away from the approaching divisions of the enemy and their ruthless companions in order to survive. Fortunate masses that managed to stay alive were lacking the most fundamental human necessities thus they became subjects of relief.

### 2.2.1. Usage of the Terminology

In the studies concerning *muhaceret* or mass migration, usage of the correct terms to express what is meant with the fulfilment of the intended equivalent is not a simple process. Ottoman officials used the word "*muhacir*" to describe the masses of people that had to "immigrate" due to the '93 War. They are generally referred to as "'93 Muhacirleri" or "'93 Göçmenleri" in the Turkish literature. *Muhacir* is more likely to correspond to the words "immigrant" or "émigré", meaning those who leave their original place of living and go somewhere else in the empire to settle. Studies of Ottoman history generally used this term "muhacir" no matter what stage of "move" they were in, thus this word simultaneously means fugitive, refugee and migrant in accordance with the context. There is another word which corresponds to these early phases: "*mülteci*". It meets the word refugee or fugitive and evokes "temporariness"

and “intention of returning”.<sup>65</sup> But contemporary usage of *mülteci*, though etymologically more appropriate, does not correspond to *muhacir*” with the historical meaning, it is rather used as it was, for political asylum seekers, thus would cause redundant confusion. It is even more difficult to find the correct English terminology, the English sources of the time referred to the people that are subject to this study as refugees, fugitives and rarely victims of war. However, they hardly used the words immigrant or migrant.<sup>66</sup> Passive actors of this narration were either fugitives or, more often, refugees. Hence ‘93 Refugees is the main term preferred to be used for this people in this study, on the grounds that this research zooms in on the immediate time slot of this unplanned influx, at people with the intention of soonest return. The word *muhacir* is also used with its general meaning of Muslim immigrant and *immigration/migration* and *influx* (muhaceret) to refer to the incident.

The main period of focus of this study is during and immediately after the ‘93 War. The subject of this study is the refugees who have not migrated to settle elsewhere. In other words, these people had very recently managed to escape and save their lives from the violence. They did not yet have a vision of re-settlement, and were only trying to survive and keep their families alive. Briefly this was the period of struggle for survival.

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<sup>66</sup> David Cameron Cuthell used the word emigrant when translating the *Muhacirin Komisyonu*; the Emigrant Commission, since the group of people this commission was constructed were emigrants, despite 93 Refugees were not outside comers at the moment, same Ottoman terminology is valid. David Cameron Cuthell Jr., *the Muhacirin Komisyonu*: “An Agent in the Transformation of Anatolia 1860-1866”, unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2005.

### 2.2.2. Causes of the Exodus

I have already presented a brief summary of 1877- 1878 Russo-Turkish War in the preceding pages. Russian armies marched southwards from two directions, both from the east through the Caucasus to Eastern Anatolia and from the west through the Balkans, to the *Payitaht*. The course of the war combined with the methods of the Russian army caused enormous masses of inflow.

It would be substantially inadequate to explain the '93 Migration by reference to the failure and retreat of the Ottoman Armies. This phenomenon can only be comprehended by its socio-political background and the pan-slavist intentions. In other words, Russia's aim was to found a large Bulgarian state in most of the Balkan territories and turn Istanbul into a no men's land. Consequently, despite emanating from both regions of fighting, the majority of '93 Refugees were expelled from the provinces of Danube and Edirne.<sup>67</sup>

Muslim inhabitants of the Balkans were assaulted by Cossack regiments and Bulgarian divisions that usually accompanied the Russian armies. Invaders burned numerous Muslim villages, murdered villagers without sparing women and children. They seized their arms and re-distributed them to Bulgarian irregulars, resulting massacres particularly of Circassians. These moments of terror caused great panic among the Muslims, they abandoned all their properties and fled to survive under miserable conditions. Jews of the region also shared the same fate. Waves of immigration blew across the Balkans.<sup>68</sup> Russians in a way achieved their goal to use

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<sup>67</sup> Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa, pp.392-393.(Vol. II, Part III, Chap.II); Kuneralp, Layard Memoirs, p. 140; also see p. 181 for detailed description of the course of the events ones a Muslim village was entered by Russians.

Muslim civilians to hamper the Ottoman army by causing turmoil. Convoys of Muslim refugees covered the roads, jumbled Ottoman brigades during the operations and occupied the train wagons. Russians did not need to worry about guerrilla fighting behind the fronts since no civilians were left and moreover the balance of population had already changed in favour of the Bulgarians.<sup>69</sup>

### 2.2.3. Structure of the Influx

A revision of the classification done by Nedim İpek according to different parameters places the '93 Refugees in the categories of "mass" and "compulsory" immigration.<sup>70</sup> The sources generally refer to refugees from regions close to the Eastern Front at the stage of being immigrants and so far the historical studies are generally interested in the settlement process.<sup>71</sup> Russian cruelties, especially exercised by the Cossacks in Ardahan, Çıldır, Göle, Kars and Bayezid caused the flight of masses.<sup>72</sup> After the San Stefano Treaty, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1878, Ardahan, Kars and Batum were surrendered to Russia, turning thousands of Muslims living in the region into *muhacirs*. Immigrants from the district of Kars were sent to Sivas, Malatya, Mauretülaziz and Ankara.<sup>73</sup> Muslims in Sohum fought with the Russians, burnt their own houses, fled to the coastline and were settled in the region between Trabzon and İzmit.<sup>74</sup> Immigrants from Batum were sent to different places of

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<sup>69</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Ölüm ve Sürgün*, İstanbul: İnkilap Kitabevi, 1998, p.71.

<sup>70</sup> Nedim İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, Trabzon: Serander, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>71</sup> Oktay Özel, "Muhacirler, Yerliler ve Gayrimüslimler: Osmanlı'nın Son Devrinde Orta Karadeniz'de Toplumsal Uyumun Sınırları Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 5 (2007); Oktay Özel, "Migration and Power Politics: On the Settlement of Georgian Immigrants in Turkey (1878-1908)", forthcoming in *MES* July 2010. I thank the author for letting me consulting the unpublished research.

<sup>72</sup> İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>73</sup> İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, pp. 57-58.

Anatolia but were especially concentrated in the Black Sea coast in the north.<sup>75</sup> Migration from the northern Caucasus was once again an issue after the peace treaty, the Circassian refugees in question during the war, despite the illusion, were not coming from the Caucasus. This was the secondary wave of immigration for this group; after the Crimean War, Ottoman officials had settled the expelled Circassians in the Balkans, particularly in the “Bulgarian territory”.<sup>76</sup> And with the 1877-78 War, they once again had to immigrate. The Russian government accused the Circassians of causing trans-border problems and disturbance and pushed the Ottoman government to remove them from the Balkans. From February to August 1878, the entire Circassian population of Balkans immigrated to Anatolia and the Arab Provinces.<sup>77</sup>

The population movement in the Balkan front was much more loaded and complex. As mentioned above, the ‘93 influx cannot be explained solely by the battles. For instance; the immigration at the beginning of the war had a precautionary feature.<sup>78</sup> The early phase showed no geographical pattern, different groups of refugees moving from one town to another, with a prediction of reaching a safer place whether it was closer to the capital or not. Inhabitants of the regions under threat first fled to big centres, than took refuge in the Ottoman military bases with the presumption of enjoying the available security and to be fed by the authorities. However, the unstoppable Russian advance caused a second phase of the move.<sup>79</sup> A great portion of refugees tried to reach the coastline in order to use the seaway to attain a safer centre or Istanbul or targeted a big town centre to use the railway. Some

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<sup>75</sup> İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, p. 61.

<sup>76</sup> See; Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997.

<sup>77</sup> Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009, p. 118.

<sup>78</sup> Sadık Pasha, the Governor of Danube Province, ordered the inhabitants of the Northern Dobruca to evacuate the region and recede back to Köstence line thus the evacuations began in the following month. İpek, *Rumeli’den Anadolu’ya Türk Göçleri*, p. 22.

<sup>79</sup> McCarthy, p. 87.

simply followed the only option available to save their lives, possibly headed towards a close and secure centre to take temporary refuge. When that town no longer proved safe, joined by the local Muslim families, they proceeded to another centre which seemed more secure at the time. Danger was not limited to the battlefield; Muslims did not only run away from the Russian army but also from miscellaneous atrocities committed all around the region by illegally armed Bulgarian civilians, the local militias. That is to say, imagining a vast group of refugees fleeing before the approaching army would be rather inadequate.<sup>80</sup> In many cases, the refugees camped at a spot where they were attacked thus the survivors had to change their locations.<sup>81</sup>

The fall of Plevne on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1877 can be taken as the turning point in the later phase of the flight. It gained a simpler appearance because the Russian army overcame the obstacles and reasons for clutter and began its rapid march towards Istanbul. Hence, the refugees who had previously arrived in Filibe, Eski Zağra or Edirne had to move further inwards to survive. This was also the period of railway crowds, since it was the fastest way to reach Istanbul.<sup>82</sup> Massive accumulation at the stations caused overload of carriages.

It would be erroneous to think that these refugee groups consisted of proper families. The number of men was very low compared to women and children since most of them had already been levied by the Ottomans authorities or killed by the Bulgarian or Cossack irregulars. That is to say old men, women and children

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<sup>80</sup> Bilal N. Şimşir, *Rumeliden Türk Göçleri, I,II &III*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989. It contains a vast number of documents that reported on various examples alike. Nedim İpek used this source as well as others, and drew a tidy picture under the title of “Immigration Movements”. İpek, *Rumeli’den Anadolu’ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 22-29.

<sup>81</sup> McCarthy, p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Kunalalp, *Layard memoirs*, p. 233.

constituted the refugee convoys.<sup>83</sup> Their composition made their situation even more vulnerable, small numbers of males meant that they lacked the ability to defend themselves on the way and the labour at the centres of arrival to earn a living. Despite the fact that a great majority of them were Muslims, there were also Jews and Christians driven out of their homes.<sup>84</sup> According to *The Times* of 25<sup>th</sup> August 1877, within the 10,150 deprived fugitives identified in Edirne by the British Committee 1,700 were Jews, 8,000 were Turks (the term was used for Ottoman Muslims).<sup>85</sup>

#### 2.2.4. The Volume of the '93 Refugees

“Unfeasible” shall be the correct word to describe the possibility of coming up with an absolute number of the '93 Refugees. According to Nedim İpek, more than one million Muslims had to immigrate from the Danube and Edirne Provinces.<sup>86</sup> In Karpát's *Ottoman Population*, the number of Muslims in Eastern Rumelia before the '93 War was estimated between 265,000 and 290,000 and after the war the estimated numbers diminished to 120,000 to 138,000.<sup>87</sup> It is rather relevant to assert regional numbers at a particular time since there exists reports and archival materials. Justin McCarthy prepared a table sourced mainly from the British consular's instant

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<sup>83</sup> “...A conductor rail said that: He brought about 3000 Muhacir from the neighbourhood of Kazanlık and left them to stations to be distributed to the villages all the way from Edirne to Çekmece, and there was no adult men among them, composed only of women and children...”, “Muhacirler”, Basiretçi Ali Efendi, *İstanbul Mektupları*, Nuri Sağlam (Haz.), İstanbul:Kitabevi, 2001, p. 602; Layard to Salisbury, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1878, Therapia, F. O. 424/72, (Confidential 3726), p. 56, No. 79 cited in Şimşir, I, p. 508.

<sup>84</sup> From Layard to Derby, 7<sup>th</sup> November 1877, Therapia, F.O. 78/ 2590, No. 1306; Report on Treatment of Jews at Kyzanlık by Bulgarians and Russians, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1877, F.O. 78/ 2593, No. 1436, Layard to Derby, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1877, Constantinople, F.O. 78/ 2775, No. 11.

<sup>85</sup> “War Victims”, *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1877, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> He also gave a table to show the number, which is quite disordered and irrational. İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>87</sup> Kemal Karpát, *Osmanlı Nüfusu, 1830-1914*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010, p. 137.



reports at different times. According to the data for March 1878, there were about 230,000 refugees in the region of Şumnu (Shumen) and Varna, 20,000 in Burgas, 100,000 in Rhodope Mountains, 50,000 in Gümülcüne (Komotini) and 200,000 in Istanbul. 60,000 is the number given for Edirne in April; the total reaching around 650,000<sup>88</sup>

***Istanbul:*** In the course of the move, some towns became centres of temporary settlement for the refugees, such as Varna, Şumnu, Edirne and most importantly Istanbul. The Ottoman capital, which was referred to as *Dersaadet*, the gate of felicity, became the terminus of the exodus. The refugees were using all three ways of transportation; land routes, railways and sea routes to reach the city.<sup>89</sup> After the evacuation of Edirne, not only the fugitives who had reached Edirne beforehand but also the inhabitants of the city and its neighbouring regions fled into Istanbul. It was believed that 300,000 people sought refuge in the City.

They came by land, trudging along the roads that led down from Roumelia to the city; they came by sea, ships weighed down with the burden of the crowds that had boarded at Varna and Bourgas, and they came by rail...They came in through mud and ice, with arabas of precious household possessions, pots and pans, a handmill and a rug; and when the bullocks and the horses died at harness, then they pushed and pulled the carts themselves, women and children, until in the end exhaustion proved too much, possessions were abandoned, and they too, joined with all the rest, crawling along the route to the city...<sup>90</sup>

From January 1878 an average of 10,000 refugees per day arrived in the capital, and their number climbed up to 200,000 several times.<sup>91</sup> They were lodged in

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<sup>88</sup> McCarthy, p. 87, 105.

<sup>89</sup> Kunalp, *Layard Memoirs*, pp. 233-235.

<sup>90</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 192.

<sup>91</sup> İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 56-57.

the public buildings, especially in the mosques. St. Sophia became the most symbolic structure to show the destitute situation of the refugees by sheltering 5,000 of them under its legendary dome.<sup>92</sup>

### 2.2.5. The relief efforts

Relieving the *muhacirs* was a cultural and religious obligation, a part of Ottoman-Islamic tradition.<sup>93</sup> '93 Refugees were not the first wave of immigrants in the history of the Empire, Ottoman administration had had to cope with several influxes since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Different branches of the administration, especially the *Şehremaneti*, the municipality, were used in order to manage the flows. In the late 1850s, after the Crimean war, migration proved to be an issue that required individual governmental institutions thus the first Ottoman Commission for the immigrants was established in January 1860.<sup>94</sup>

When the 1877-78 War broke out, a commission called *İdare-i Umumiyye-i Muhacirin*, the General Administration of Immigrants was initiated under the supervision of *Şehremaneti*. Its mission was to manage all the issues concerning the refugees, their control, sustenance and transportation, in accordance with its regulations (*Dersaadet Muhacirin İdaresi Talimatnamesi*). The Commission had five

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<sup>92</sup> A list of the mosques which sheltered the Muhacir is given in İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 60-62.

<sup>93</sup> "Malumdur ki hicret, dinen mucib-i saadet olup muhacire riayet dahi mukteza-yı İslamiyyettir", can be translated as; "It is known that migration is religious necessity of salvation and helping the immigrants is an Islamic obligation". "Muhacirler", *İstanbul Mektupları*, p. 221.

<sup>94</sup> Ahmet Cevat Eren, *Türkiye'de Göç ve Göçmen Meseleleri, Tanzimat Devri İlk Kurulan Göçmen Komisyonu, Çıkarılan Tüzükler*, İstanbul: Nurgök Matbaası, 1966, pp. 54-61; David Cameron Cuthell Jr., *the Muhacirin Komisyonu: "An Agent in the Transformation of Anatolia 1860-1866"*, unpublished PhD Thesis from Columbia University, 2005.

sub commissions with separate spheres of duty: Accountancy, settlement, transportation, health and the other offices.<sup>95</sup>

Another commission with a similar name, *Umum Muhacirin Komisyonu*, was founded in Yıldız Palace, under the presidency of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Being considerably sensitive about the matters concerning the refugees, the Sultan was generally involved in the decision making procedure and allocated many buildings of his imperial palace towards the shelter of the refugees in Istanbul. *Muhacirine Muavenet Cemiyyeti* was a committee established by the members of the parliament. After the dismissal of the parliament this committee began to work under the title of *İane-i Muhacirin Encümeni* and merged with the main body mentioned above, *İdare-i Umumiyye-i Muhacirin*.

The efforts of relieving the refugees were not limited to official initiatives. “There was scarcely a Turkish house, which in course of the winter months was not plied with refugees” noted Layard in his personal memoirs. All of the high ranking officials followed the example of the Sultan and opened the doors of their “handsome mansions” to destitute refugees.<sup>96</sup> In addition to governmental organizations, a civilian initiative with again a very similar title; “*Muhacirin İane Komisyonu*” was established by an Ottoman notable, Hacı Mehmed Tahir Efendi, to collect contributions from the public and hand them over to the main commission.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the ostensible organization, with the winter approaching Ottoman authorities were “paralyzed by the magnitude of the evil”. According to the British Ambassador they were far from having the necessary means and resources for the

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<sup>95</sup> İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 69-73.

<sup>96</sup> Kunalalp, *Layard Memoirs*, p. 184.

<sup>97</sup> İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, pp. 73-76.

assistance.<sup>98</sup> In terms of international contributions the most prominent one was “*Comité International de Secours aux Refugies des Provinces de L’Empire Ottoman*”, which was referred to as *the International Fund* in the British sources. In mid January 1878, the scene of destitute refugees pouring into the capital stimulated the leading foreign residents of Istanbul. Consuls and notables came together and decided to establish an international committee for the relief of refugees.<sup>99</sup> An appeal was published in the European press and the committee gathered more than 30,204,61 piaster (648,448 Francs) with the major contribution by Britain of 9,286.30. They succoured 36,700 refugees by distributing 3 million rations in total, establishing 9 hospitals and 14 bakeries.<sup>100</sup> The Committee ended its operations and announced its dissolution on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1879. Among all fourteen contributing states, the British contribution came into prominence, with almost one third of the final total.<sup>101</sup>

British philanthropy for the ’93 Refugees did not begin with or stay limited to the activities of the International Fund, it had a comparably long standing background. Britons used relief institutions previously established for the soldiers and more significantly, also founded a special committee for the ’93 Refugees. Refugees benefited from the British relief in numerous times and places, thus the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 became one bright episode of British philanthropic history.

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<sup>98</sup> Kunalalp, *Layard Memoirs*, p. 184.

<sup>99</sup> Şimşir, *II*, pp. 202-231.

<sup>100</sup> Şimşir, *II*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>101</sup> Nedim İpek had claimed one 75% of the contribution of the International Fund came from England, with reference to Fawcett’s despatch to Derby on 28 February 1878. İpek, *Rumeli’den Anadolu’ya Türk Göçleri*, p. 80. But the final report of the committee shows it was no more than one third of the total. For the table of final account see; Şimşir, *II*, p. 205. Consul General Fawcett might have exaggerated at the time or the percentages could have changed since committee continued its operations for more than a year. Fawcett had expressed his opinion on the issue in his letter “... we cannot expect such generosity to continue much longer...”

### 2.3. Victorian Philanthropy in the Ottoman Empire

Victorian understanding of philanthropy is a substantial base of this study of British relief for the '93 Refugees. According to F. K. Prochaska, "The standard definition of philanthropy or charity is love of one's fellow man, an inclination or action which promotes the well-being of others". A semantic distinction between philanthropy and charity is often made by the historians, and argued that the former has a broader humanitarian aim, free of religious moralizing, whereas the second is related to Christianity.<sup>102</sup> Philanthropy is an outcome of the enlightenment movement, it supported progress rather than alms giving.<sup>103</sup>

Nadir Özbek neatly revised the position of the historiography as follows:

In Ottoman history, subjects of philanthropy, charity and poor relief have remained untouched until very recently and this field is relatively well developed in European historiography. In the 1970s historians constructed the social control arguments, and charity, and poor-relief institutions were portrayed as mechanisms of surveillance. The new historiography pictured charity, philanthropy, and poor relief as a reciprocal relationship between the recipient and the donor.<sup>104</sup>

#### 2.3.1. Victorian Understanding and Application of Philanthropy

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is regarded as "the Age of Philanthropists"<sup>105</sup>. Philanthropy was an important feature of Victorian culture in Great Britain, very common and fashionable among all the classes. With the new approach of "money must now be collected not from the few but from the many" the formation of funds for charitable

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<sup>102</sup> F. K. Prochaska, "Philanthropy", *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Vol. 3*, F. M. L. Thompson (Ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 360.

<sup>103</sup> Nora Şeni, *Oryantalizm ve Hayırseverliğin İttifakı*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Poor Relief in the Late Ottoman Empire", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Fall 1999, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> Nora Şeni, p. 66, with reference to Catherine Durpat, *Le Temps de Philanthropes, V.I*, édition du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1993.

purposes became something the Britons were acquainted with.<sup>106</sup> By the 1890s, the total of the subscriptions received by the thousand most prominent London charities alone was £7,000,000. This quantity exceeded the budgets of several European nations and most of the British colonies. Furthermore, wide publication of similar data was obviously a source of national and imperial pride.<sup>107</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1877, *The Times* surveyed the appeal advertisements that appeared on its columns and stated that the British were generous to all calamities abroad. In times of crisis “it is to England that every nation in turn appeals in its hours of tribulation with a confident assurance that the appeal will be answered”. According to Anderson, it became a point of honour for the British nation.<sup>108</sup>

“No country on earth can lay claim to greater philanthropic tradition than Great Britain” claimed Prochaska and supported his argument with the following:

As befits a nation in which philanthropists are ubiquitous, enormous sums have been contributed, representing a massive redistribution of wealth... Some individuals have given away millions of pounds. A study of middle-class households in the 1890s established that on average they spent a larger share of their income on charity than on any item in their budget except food.<sup>109</sup>

“Women’s caring power” released with religious charities and organizations which were supported by upper-class women, including members of ruling dynasties and aristocrats.<sup>110</sup> Somehow, in the 1870s British philanthropy was not limited to

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<sup>106</sup> For instance, there was the Sunday Fund firstly set up in Birmingham for hospital charity in 1859 then in London in 1872, which raised money through special church collections. It was fashionable among the wealthier class. In addition to that, the Saturday Fund was established in 1874 which raised money from the working class. F. K. Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 78.

<sup>109</sup> With reference to “*Statistics of Middle-Class expenditure, British Library of Political and Economic Science, Pamphlet 1896*”, F. K. Prochaska, “Philanthropy”, pp. 357-358.

<sup>110</sup> Linda Clark, *Women and Achievement in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 127.

religious enthusiasm, it was a sign of high social standing.<sup>111</sup> The British relief movement toward the '93 Refugees is a story of Christians succouring Muslims. The fashion of philanthropic activities among the high society English women did not stay limited to the British Isles but reached abroad.

### **2.3.2. Emergence of British Relief in the Ottoman Empire**

Despite being the core of this study, relief to the '93 Refugees was not the first piece of philanthropic work performed by the British in the Ottoman Empire. The famous tale of Florence Nightingale was the opening scene; during the Crimean War, she and her team of volunteers came to the *Selimiye* Barracks in Üsküdar and achieved a great success in the voluntary nursing of the wounded soldiers.<sup>112</sup>

Two decades after that, in the mid 1870s, the Ottoman territory, especially the Balkans, once again became a theatre of British philanthropic activities. Dorothy Anderson's book entitled *the Balkan Volunteers* presented an in depth investigation of the relief operations carried out by the English in these years of major turmoil.<sup>113</sup> Regional uneasiness in the Balkans resulted in the British initiation of several relief committees before the Russo-Ottoman War. They took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro, and were generally concentrated on the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the "volunteers" were regarded as "turcophobists". The most prominent ones were the following:

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<sup>111</sup> F. K. Prochaska, *Philanthropy and the Hospitals of London*, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup>For further reading on Florence Nightingale see; Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986; Sue M. Goldie (Ed.), *"I have done my duty" : Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War, 1854-56*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987; Sue M. Goldie (Ed.), *Florence Nightingale : letters from the Crimea, 1854-1856*, New York: Mandolin, 1997.

<sup>113</sup> Dorothy Anderson, *the Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson, 1968.

The *Bosnian and Herzegovinian Fugitives and Orphans Relief Fund* was established by Miss Irby and her friends. They contributed to the education of Christian girls, and began in Sarajevo and continued into Slovenia. The *League in Aid of Christian Rayahs in Turkey* was founded by E. A. Freeman with a commission of sending money to the non-combatants in Ragusa (Dubrovnik). After the Bulgarian upheaval, a very well known fund was established by Viscountess Strangford,<sup>114</sup> one of the unique figures of benevolence, called the *Bulgarian Peasants Relief Fund*. Moreover, a *Central Relief Committee in Constantinople*, by influential European residents of the city, including Ambassador Elliot, was established to attend to the relief of Bulgarian villages around Filibe. During the Serbian-Ottoman War a National Aid Society, also known as the British Red Cross appeared on the scene. It established a *Turco-Serbian Relief Fund* to succour soldiers of both belligerent parties.<sup>115</sup>

*The Stafford House Committee* was established to aid the Ottoman soldiers by Duke of Sutherland during the armistice with Serbia. He felt the necessity to do so since the tension in the Balkans had not ceased and the Ottoman armies were in state of medical destitution. The presumption proved right and this committee then also became an intermediary of refugee relief.

During the '93 War, the British relieved the Ottoman soldiers through the mediums of the *National Society for aid to the Sick and Wounded in War* and the *Stafford House Committee*. Though these two had slight interaction with the refugees, a special establishment, *the Turkish Compassionate Fund*, was founded solely to relieve non-combatants and furthermore a *Ladies Committee* was

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<sup>114</sup> In her case, a continuation catches the eye since she diverted her relief activities and energy to Ottoman soldiers during the 93 War, established a hospital and an orphanage

<sup>115</sup> Dorothy Anderson, pp. 1-72.



established by Lady Layard and supported all of these committees well as having its own operations.

The British contributed significantly to the relief of '93 Refugees. In terms of finances, they sent 9,286.61 Ltq. (Turkish Lira) to the International Fund and 48,216.53 to the Turkish Compassionate Fund.<sup>116</sup> All of this money came from civilian contributors, without any governmental aid. Monetary subscription was not the only proof of British commitment; this study also exhibits the personal sacrifices of the relief agents due to miserable conditions.

R. T. Shannon, in his book *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, asserted “the moral sensibility of the high Victorian era” as one of the fundamental reasons behind the success of the Bulgarian Agitation campaign.<sup>117</sup> Despite the huge diversion in the consequences, his assertions are valid for the British public response to the sufferings of the '93 Refugees. Public opinion was significantly modified by moral sentiments and by the appeals of the philanthropists, like the agitators deriving their strength from “qualities peculiar to Nineteenth Century English civilization”. That was a golden age of the philanthropic public meeting.<sup>118</sup>

Shannon corroborated his argument by asserting two special aspects of the Victorian sensibility, which were eligible in the case of the cruelties of Russian/Bulgarian irregulars that caused the exodus: “the vision of progress” and “veiling and exaltation of sexuality”. By progress he meant a high level of civilization, seeing atrocities taking place in Europe as highly anachronistic. And by

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<sup>116</sup>Şimşir, V. II, p. 205; H. Mainwaring Dunstan, *The Compassionate Fund: An Account for Its Origin, Working and Results*, London: Remington and Co., 1883, appendix II.

<sup>117</sup> Shannon, pp. 23-37.

<sup>118</sup> Shannon, pp. 26, 29.

“sexuality” he referred to the sensitivity to the outrages on women, which was regarded as the “worst of all evils of war”.<sup>119</sup>

As the course of the war turned out to be more contentious, the number of the British volunteers increased. A flow of new adventurers, more correspondents, fresh parties of amateurs and most significantly medical men took place. If these newcomers were not Turcophiles they were motivated by a “simple and clear-cut sense of mission”.<sup>120</sup>

### **2.3.3. Benevolence as a Political Tool**

Foucauldians have argued that the Nineteenth-century expansion of such public institutions (charitable organizations) enabled both governments and social elites to wield “greater control over populations”. According to Prochaska “The ruling classes, in times of particular social tension, expressed a desire to subordinate the lower classes through charitable agencies.”<sup>121</sup> For Linda Clark, this mentality was taken overseas by the Europeans, to the colonies where they governed people from other cultures and races. “Yet many philanthropists and reformers genuinely believed” she added, “that their projects were essentially humanitarian and non-instruments of social control”.<sup>122</sup>

This highly accustomed practice of the British public was used as a tool to express their political position both in domestic and international politics during the Russo-Ottoman War. As illuminated earlier, the British people became considerably

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<sup>119</sup> Shannon, pp. 30-33.

<sup>120</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 123.

<sup>121</sup> Prochaska, “Philanthropy”, p. 370.

<sup>122</sup> Clark, p. 126.

involved in the course of the struggle and the charitable organizations gave them the opportunity to express their support tangibly by donating.

In these critical years of the Eastern Question, British philanthropy served as a tool to express political positions. Aid from the British Isles was available for combatants and non-combatants, Muslims and Christians, Russians, Serbians, Bulgarians and Turks.<sup>123</sup> There were numerous organizations established to support different groups of deprived people, or more than one simultaneously. These committees published their appeals usually in the same papers, often their ads appeared on the same pages, one under the other. In short; if you were an English man living in the 1878's London, you could simply send money to wounded Russian soldiers or to destitute Muslim fugitives. In the course of the '93 War, rising anti-Russian feelings enabled the funds to receive more generous subscriptions. Baroness Burdett-Coutts and Ambassador Layard's appeals diverted great attention. Briefly, the British wanted to relieve miserable innocent refugees.

Going back to the issue of socio-political control, the closest aspect which could be regarded as an effort in this sense was the long and detailed consular reports. Consuls wrote about the developments in their appointed districts. Eventually, if the region was subject to Russian advance, they wrote on the conditions of the fugitives. At the beginning of the war, while preparing a report a consul did not aim to organize charity but rather tried to fulfil his duties to inform his superiors about the developments in the area of his responsibility. But in the course of the events, these reports became important documents of public concern, diplomatic officials turned into fundamental agents of succour of refugees. On the

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<sup>123</sup> The committees could not legally aid the armies for arms since England was neutral but relieving wounded and sick soldiers was considered as humanitarian work.

other hand, there had also been cases or probation of a consular report on the refugees to become a political tool.<sup>124</sup> The place of the consular agents in the relief operation is examined in a separate chapter. What should shortly be stated here is that the British diplomatic agents used philanthropy in favour of their diplomatic connections, contributed a lot to the refugees, but never acted adversely to British interests.

Compared to the relief of the combatants, British aid to the refugees had much less of a political aim. But of course, while being extensively humanitarian, contributors had the idea of renovating the British image in the Ottoman Empire. For the case of the British volunteers, it was probable that most of them were either motivated by adventurous feelings<sup>125</sup> or pro-Turk or anti-Russian tendencies to come to serve in the Ottoman Empire. Once they were engaged in the business they were too busy saving lives to be concerned with politics.<sup>126</sup>

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the traditions of British philanthropy made it possible to relieve hundreds of thousands of despairing refugees, by the British committees, with their limited means and resources. Their intervention, especially with the *Turkish Compassionate Fund*, came on the stage at such crucial points of plight which enabled them to save a great deal. In the closing speech of the International Fund, the president openly expressed his impression as follows: “England, loyal to her ancient tradition, arrived firstly in this tournament of

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<sup>124</sup> Henry Layard complained in his personal memoirs that a very detailed and impressive report of Consul Blunt on the crimes committed by the Bulgarians was forwarded to the British Government and also became a Parliamentary Paper but was never publicized. Layard, *Memoirs*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>125</sup> See; Charles Ryan, *Plevne'de Bir Avusturalyalı*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Dororthy Anderson, p. 191.

benevolence and sent us the largest portion of the gathered.”<sup>127</sup> With all of its motives, British relief operations of the ‘93 Refugees is a little known historical episode, that will be studied in detail in the following chapters.

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<sup>127</sup> “L’Angleterre fidele a ses vileilles traditions, est arrive premiere dans ce tournoi de bienfaisance et nous a envoye la plus grande pars des sommes recueillies.” Şimşir, II, p. 212.

## CHAPTER III

### HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

#### 3.1. British Diplomacy and Relief to the Refugees of the 1877-78 War

The 1877- 78 Russo-Turkish War resulted in enormous losses of territory for the Ottoman Empire. It caused major financial difficulties and badly weakened the state in both domestic and international politics. The most important consequence for the subjects of the Empire was the great exodus from the Ottoman territories which were invaded (or to be invaded) by the Russians to the regions still under Ottoman rule. Tens of thousands of people fled, initially towards safer neighbouring regions but as they faced grater oppressions and hardship they had to move further towards the *Payitaht*, the Ottoman Capital.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, despite preserving its neutrality, Britain was highly involved in all the matters pertaining to the Russo-Turkish War. Developments were closely followed and the domestic issues were constantly reported to London, by various agents of the British consular network throughout the

Ottoman Empire. It is not surprising for Britain, which was a country with a remarkable commitment to humanitarian subjects, to develop interest in such a sudden influx of refugees and the extreme misery involved. Nevertheless, this humanitarian awareness was not expected to evolve into a major zeal of alleviation of the sufferings of large refugee populations who were mostly Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

British people had found themselves in the endeavour of succouring and relieving the Ottoman subjects, who were suddenly driven out onto the roads, outraged, looted and in many cases survived massacres. Leading British newspapers, such as *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* not only published articles on the course of the war but also on the humanitarian matters. There were news of massacres, streams of fugitives, hunger, epidemics as well as the news of the relief work carried out by British citizens and appeals for contributions to funds. However, this presentation by the media of “compassion” for the Turks did not fit with the earlier attitude that was reflected in the sale of 200,000 copies of Gladstone’s “Bulgarian Horrors” and the determination of not fighting against Russians for the benefit of “Barbarous Turks”. What was the motivation behind the British change of mind and how did this interest evolve into an in depth commitment?

The answer is threefold. First, as discussed in the previous chapter it was a philanthropic issue that befitted the High Victorian sensibility as well as the necessity to express the political standing of the British. Secondly, it was regarded as a tool of diplomacy and obtained its strength from the commitment of the most accredited British diplomat to the Porte, Austen Henry Layard and the involvement of the consular network under his command. Finally, there existed a concern over

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<sup>1</sup> “Never, probably, have so many imperative demands made upon the generosity of the British nation, and never has the cry for help met with a response so prompt and liberal...” *The Times*, 12 September, 1877, p. 9.

Muslim public opinion which had vital significance for British imperial interests. The last two of these factors shall be analyzed throughout this chapter.

Henry Layard's brief summary of his reasons for undertaking the duty of administrating the refugee relief, completely overlapped with the above mentioned factors:

The administration and distribution of 'The Turkish Compassionate Fund'<sup>2</sup> added not a little, as it may be imagined, to my already heavy official duties, but I undertook this work cheerfully, for it was one of humanity and moreover I was anxious to give as public a proof as possible that in England there was as much compassion for the misfortunes and sufferings of Musulmans as for those of the Christians. I believed that the impression thus produced upon the Mohammedans would at the same time be of no little advantage to our interests and influence especially amongst the Musulman populations of our Indian Empire who were known to have deep sympathy for their coreligionists in Turkey and to be greatly concerned in the issue of the war.<sup>3</sup>

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1877 Henry Layard, as well as other European representatives in the Ottoman capital, received from the Sultan, an album of photographs of wounded women and child refugees in Edirne. Layard forwarded it to London the following day with the following personal remarks attached:

His majesty wishes to afford proof of those atrocities to Europe, as he is inclined to think that they are not believed in, or, that having been committed by Christians upon Musulmans, they are not considered worthy of compassion or notice. It is unfortunate that His Majesty should have come to such an opinion.

I trust that it will be removed, at any rate as far as England is concerned by the humane and benevolent interest shown by Baroness Burdett Coutts and others, in these poor creatures"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "The Turkish Compassionate Fund" was the main British relief body initiated by Baroness Burdett Coutts for the '93 Refugees. It shall be examined in detail in Chapter III.

<sup>3</sup> Sinan Kunalp, *The Queens Ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> British National Archives, London, Foreign Office Documents (hereafter F. O.) F.O. 78/2583 No.987.



Layard's comments on the issue showed his personal apprehension of public opinion and can also be considered as a confirmation of the diplomatic usage of the relief work. Preparation of this album is certainly evidence of the Ottomans' intention to use the subject for diplomatic matters. In other words, Sultan Abdulhamid II presumably did not order this album in order to acquire aid for refugees, but rather he aimed to exploit the Achilles heel of recipients, "the Victorian moral sensibility", in order to convince the British government to stop the Russian advance. However, this did not necessarily mean that the Ottomans were against British relief, of which they were in desperate need.

### **3.2. Austen Henry Layard: the British Ambassador to the Porte (1877-1880)**

The British relief of the refugees of the Russo-Ottoman War was very much shaped and enriched in dimension thanks to the British Ambassador to the Porte (1877-1880), Henry Layard. The Ottoman Balkans was the main zone of concern for British philanthropy. Layard's personal acquaintances with the region dated years back. He had to gain the knowledge of the demographic and social realities of the region in 1842, during his first exploration of the Ottoman land as a young, adventurous Englishman, who was looking for a diplomatic duty to stay in this "country of wonders". Sir Stratford Canning, then the British Ambassador to the Porte, requested his service as an unofficial agent to the Ottoman provinces in Europe. Young Layard was to report to the Ambassador on the conditions and the

state of affairs.<sup>5</sup> After successfully completing his mission, Layard stayed in Istanbul, at the heart of the Ottoman politics and culture, for three more years, between 1842 and 1845.<sup>6</sup>

Acquaintance usually brings about personal commitment to countries that was the case with Layard, who obviously sympathised with the Ottoman Empire. He was known for his pro-Ottoman political attitudes in England, from 1851 to 1869. Additionally, he was one of the most active advocates of the Crimean War.<sup>7</sup> Hence, his appointment to the Porte, succeeding Elliot was interpreted as “an unfriendly move towards Russia” by the Russian Ambassador in London.<sup>8</sup>

“Layard was a humane man and condemned the Turks for the atrocities” said Gordon Waterfield, referring to Bulgarian incidents of 1876, “but he had been close to massacres and knew that in the state of semi-barbarism and fanaticism, which existed among both Christians and Muslims of the Ottoman Empire, they could hardly be avoided every now and again.” According to Layard, Gladstone was entirely ignorant of the East and his pamphlet had struck the heaviest of blows to the influence and interests of the British Empire.<sup>9</sup>

During the local developments in the Balkans between 1875 and 1877, Layard was the British ambassador to Spain. He wanted to express publicly his views on the Eastern Question, but due to the official position he was holding, was not allowed to do so. Hence, Layard sent some rough notes to the editor of *The Quarterly*

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<sup>5</sup> A. Henry Layard, *Autobiography and Letters from His Childhood until His Appointment as H.M. Ambassador to Madrid*, V. 2, London: John Murray, 1903, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Layard, *Autobiography*, pp. 21-151.

<sup>7</sup> R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, London: Frank Cass, 1971, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> Yuluğ Tekin Kurat, *Henry Layard'ın İstanbul Elçiliği, 1877-1880*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1968, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh*, London: John Murray, 1963, pp. 352-353.

*Review* in January 1877 and an anonymous article was published in the paper, however it was not hard to figure out who the prime mover was. According to Seton-Watson, this article deserved special attention not only because it was written by the exponent of the British Prime Minister of the time, Disraeli, but also the ablest and most reasoned contemporary statesmen of the *Turcophile* position. No other Englishman could have been found who possessed the same intimate knowledge of Turkish affairs.<sup>10</sup>

Keeping all these in mind, Disraeli's preference of a famous Turcophile for this crucial diplomatic post of the time, was not a coincidence. In addition to his desire to make use of Layard's profound knowledge of the country and politics of the region, the Prime Minister obviously preferred to make a friendly gesture to the Ottomans. Layard's response to Gladstone's call "to clear the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe"<sup>11</sup> was again very humane in a private letter; "you cannot drive three millions of Turks out of Europe into starvation and hopeless misery".<sup>12</sup> Thus, while evaluating Layard's sincere contribution to the relief effort, it shall be kept in mind that he was a man with a high level of personal attachment to the Ottoman Empire and with remarkable intelligence and foresight. However, his priorities were always the British national interests in the region as he mentioned in his article.<sup>13</sup>

It was of no concern to the Ottomans which political party was in power in England. To them, Layard represented a tradition which did not permit them dissolve. Even at the hardest times of major demands, when no help from London

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<sup>10</sup> Waterfield, p. 353; Seton-Watson, p. 204.

<sup>11</sup> R. T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963, pp. 109-110.

<sup>12</sup> Waterfield, p. 352.

<sup>13</sup> "... *We supported the Turks because they were there, and we had nothing to put in their stead which would be equally safe and advantageous for us or for the peace of Europe and the world...*" Seton-Watson, p. 204.

came, Layard somehow managed to preserve the ancient friendship of the “Ottoman Race” for his country.<sup>14</sup> Layard confessed that his position was an extremely difficult and delicate one during the 1877-78 War since he had much to ask for from the Ottoman government and nothing to offer in return.<sup>15</sup> At this crucial point, British philanthropy towards the innocent victims of war reinforced his position.

He went all out to work up a counter agitation against Russian and Bulgarian atrocities and denounce the shocking and heart-rending state of affairs under Russo-Bulgarian rule of the occupied regions.<sup>16</sup> He put a great amount of energy into organizing the relief of '93 Refugees. Layard's old friendship with Baroness Burdett-Coutts, the greatest philanthropist of Victorian England, was perhaps the only piece of good fortune these destitute victims of war had. His words were influential over the Baroness who established the Turkish Compassionate Fund by a major donation and initiated a public campaign.<sup>17</sup>

Sincere belief in the benefit of such actions must have been one of the reasons for the commitment of the Ambassador. He was the director and treasurer of the Compassionate Fund, he distributed the money and organized relief through consular agents, serving in different parts of the Empire under his command. He mobilised every means he had and cooperated with his wife Enid Layard. The Embassy in Tarabya became a workshop of preparing relief materials. The following eulogy found itself a place in the fundamental historical source of British relief of '93 Refugees:

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<sup>14</sup> H. Mainwaring Dunstan, *the Turkish Compassionate Fund: Its Origin, Working and Results*, London: Remington and Co., 1883, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>15</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 207.

<sup>16</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 287.

<sup>17</sup> Edna Healey, *Lady Unknown, the Life of Angela Burdett-Coutts*, London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1984, pp. 127, 186; Diana Orton, *Made of Gold, A Biography of Angela Burdett Coutts*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1980, pp. 219-222.

To Sir Henry Layard's supervision the success of the Fund was largely due. His deep sympathy with the suffering of the country coupled with a warm appreciation of the generous response of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts and the English people to his appeal ensured to the Fund from the first a foremost place in his attention. His intimate knowledge of the country and the people, and the sources of information and channels of administration which were always open to him supplied at once a satisfactory basis on which to work. His admirable judgement and administrative capacity, his watchfulness and untiring energy, were chiefly instrumental in maintaining that judicious disposition of its resources which secured from the smallest means the greatest good.<sup>18</sup>

Henry Layard self-contentment about this activities carried out during his post was revealed with his words, "unalloyed satisfaction".<sup>19</sup> The Layard factor in the accomplishment was significant. He did not only render the public opinion but also the political opinion in England. A vivid proof of that was a message by Queen Victoria to her Foreign Secretary Earl of Derby "Mr. Layard's account of the sufferings and misery of the poor Turks makes one's heart bleed, and makes one also blush to think we have allowed this".<sup>20</sup>

### **3.3. The Role of British Consular Network**

British relief operations for the '93 Refugees were achieved through the means and channels of diplomacy. Layard was the head of the organization, consuls, vice consuls and consular agents were his subordinates.

British diplomats from diverse parts of the Ottoman territories were constantly reporting to Layard on the state of affairs in their consular districts. Accounts were on military matters if the district was close to the fronts, if not,

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<sup>18</sup> Dunstan, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>19</sup> Kuneralp, *Layard Memoirs*.

<sup>20</sup> Waterfield, p. 395.

mainly on immigrants.<sup>21</sup> Giving accounts on the situation of refugees was not extraordinary for the English diplomatic tradition, since consuls frequently informed their superiors on the matters worth mentioning, however, in this case, reports were essential to determine the dimensions of the intended relief.<sup>22</sup>

Lord Derby stated outright that Britain was to support the Ottoman Empire in return for its “control mission” within its territories. Consequently the network of British consuls expanded significantly. The structure in the Ottoman territories was the second largest British diplomatic arrangement in the world. According to Kocabaşoğlu, British consuls had three fundamental duties; duties related to navigational matters and commercial relations, duties regarding the rights of British subjects and political duties. It would be a mistake to consider the consuls exclusively as information gatherers, they were interventionists when necessary.<sup>23</sup>

Consulate officials were not the only ones used as agents of information, the British Embassy availed itself of English doctors and newspaper correspondents who resided in the Ottoman territories.<sup>24</sup> The information gathering can be considered as a chain reaction; doctors, official or even unofficial English citizens would report to consuls or vice consuls, consuls reported to consul-generals but more often to the ambassador and the ambassador reported to the Foreign Office. The same chain was also in order in the case of ‘93 Refugees, for the distribution of funds as well as the transmission of relief.

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<sup>21</sup> For examples, see: Consul Reade from Rasgrad reporting Layard on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1877. F.O. 78/2586 Copy No. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Extract from the despatch of Layard to Derby, dated 9 October 1877, Istanbul; “As I was anxious to ascertain the condition of the northern districts of Roumelia invaded by the Russian forces, with a view to affording relief from Baroness Burdett Coutts’ “Compassionate Fund”, I asked Consul Blunt to be good enough to visit them. He has done so, and I have the honour to enclose some extracts from a report he has addressed to me...” F.O. 424/ 61, Confidential (3399), p.124, No. 182 cited in Şimşir, I, p. 213.

<sup>23</sup> Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, “XIX. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İngiliz Konsoloslarının Siyasal Etkinlikleri”, *Çağdaş Türk Diplomasisi: 200 Yıllık Süreç*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1999, pp. 179-184.

<sup>24</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> September 1877, Layard to Derby, F.O. 78/2586 No.1130.

In the case of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the funds and other means of assistance for refugees were provided by the British philanthropists. Apart from exceptional examples of special functionaries to the relief committees, British diplomats in the Ottoman Empire were the agents of refugee relief. Numerous revelations of that are present both in British and Ottoman archives. For instance, it was recorded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the November 1877 that about 9,275 refugees (7,500 Turks, 1,125 Christians and 650 Jews) were receiving help from local authorities<sup>25</sup> and the Adrianople (Edirne) British and Consular committees.<sup>26</sup> Consuls Blunt and Calvert with several other gentlemen were sent to the regions of Edirne, Filibe and Tatar Pazarcik to afford some relief to perishing refugees. Major de Winton assisted the members of the embassy with devotion and Mr. Master received thousands on their arrival at Istanbul station. Layard wrote to the Earl of Derby:

A panic has seized the population of Adrianople, Philipopoli, Tatar Bazardjik and other towns. The railway stations are invaded by vast crowds, who attempt to enter the trains, and overpower the officials, who are unable to keep them back. The scenes described to me by W. Blunt, W. Calvert and several gentlemen whom I have sent to effort some relief to this suffering and perishing multitude, from Lady Burdett Coutts Compassionate Fund, are perfectly heartrending.<sup>27</sup>

When Layard informed London on the withdrawal of British Consul Zohrab from Erzurum, he emphasised the fact that he had been a great help for the British surgeons who were serving there.<sup>28</sup> On the very same week, Consul Blunt sent a detailed report on the hospitals and treatment of British doctors of Stafford House

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<sup>25</sup>“Municipality” is the term used in the document.

<sup>26</sup> Consul Dupuis to Layard, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1877, Adrianople, F.O.78/2590 Copy No. 67

<sup>27</sup> F.O. 424/ 66, Confidential (3508), pp. 95-96, No.190 cited in Şimşir, *I*, pp. 273-275; Layard to Derby, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople F.O. 78/2776, No.70.

<sup>28</sup> “*Mr. Zohrab has given much valuable aid to the English Surgeons who have been sent to Erzeroum to attend the Turkish hospital for the sick and wounded soldiers and that he has shown great zeal and disinterestedness in the cause of humanity in general, and during the trying times in which he has remained at his post.*” From Layard to Lord Derby, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1877, Constantinople, FO78/2593 No.1462

Committee by the Ottoman military authorities in Edirne. This report, which was an excellent display of the information system, also included a chart that showed the names of the active hospitals in that town. Furthermore, there were numbers indicating the incoming and outgoing patients. He even gave an elaborate description of the English Hospital.<sup>29</sup> Ottoman officials reported the related governmental offices on British consuls “pleasant services” and expressed their gratitude.<sup>30</sup>

Consular despatches on '93 Refugees kept flowing from all around the Empire to the Embassy in Istanbul throughout and after the war. Consul Baker was notifying Layard on embarkation and departure of 2,300 Circassian refugees from Salonika, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1878.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Consul Watkins in Larnaca was informing the Embassy on the arrival of Circassian refugees and consequent uneasiness of the inhabitants of Cyprus.<sup>32</sup>

Despite exceptionally arduous conditions, consuls seemed very committed to their duty of information gathering as well as distributing the relief. Consul Brophy, who had been travelling on horseback from Burgaz to Edirne, was asking for aid from the embassy for the thousands of fugitives hiding in the mountains around Alagünü, if possible by the medium of the Compassionate Fund.<sup>33</sup> The most practical and beneficial methods were sought by the agents as they were distributing relief to the refugees. Moreover, the Ottoman efforts were despised by the British, due to the

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<sup>29</sup> Consul Blunt to Layard, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1877, Adrianople, F.O. 78/2593, No. 1464, Enclosure No. 134.

<sup>30</sup>“*Ruscuk İngiltere Konsolosunun muhacirin-i Osmaniyeye gösterdiği hüsn-i hizmet*” B.O.A. HR. TO. 254/47; (Acknowledgements for services of Consul Reade at Roustchuk), From Safvet Pasha to Henry Layard, F.O. 424/75, Confidential (3799), p. 373, No. 589/1 & B.O.A. HR. SYS. 112/64 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 648; (Rewarding of Henry Fawcett) B.O.A. İ. HR. 275/16746; (Colonel Blunt’s acquisition of an imperial order of t third degree for the services he rendered for the relief of the refugees) B.O.A. Y.A. RES 1/49.

<sup>31</sup> Consul Barker to Layard, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1878, Salonica, F.O. 78/ 2781 No. 318, Closure No. 17

<sup>32</sup> Consul Watkins to Layard, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1878, Larnaca, F.O. 78/ 2781 No. 333.

<sup>33</sup>“*State of Turkish Population Between Bourgas and Adrianople*”, From Brophy to Layard, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1878, Adrianople, F.O. 78/2783, No. 395, p.9.



lack of a proper organizational scheme. In contrast, they endeavoured to settle within a frame of systematic structure. Henry Layard, as the head of operations, issued enquiries to the agents of relief in different districts in order to come up with the most convenient methods.<sup>34</sup>

Major de Winton, a British officer, presented a scheme for the south Balkans, to achieve the most efficient results. His suggestions were briefly the following: First, dividing the district into three sub-regions and determine for each a separate centre of relief. Secondly, using a ticket system for all of the relief to be given and lastly, preparing detailed lists to rank people according to their level of deprivation.<sup>35</sup> Winton's example revealed the fact that British agents of relief did not only obey the coming orders but also contemplated on matters to achieve the utmost benefit.

Different groups of Ottoman subjects often appealed to British consuls for protection and requested intervention in their situation. Similar incidents occurred especially after the ceasefire with Russia in 1878, around the time of international congress for the dispute settlements. Muslims of the Ottoman Balkans demanded British representation not only in front of European powers, but sometimes also in the face of the Porte.<sup>36</sup>

In most of the cases, the operations of the consular agents were limited to relieving the most deprived refugees, without any ambitions other than simply saving lives. They arranged and distributed the relief directly by their own hands. Resources were acquired by the Ambassador Layard through the channel of the Turkish

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<sup>34</sup> Dunstan, pp. 160-161.

<sup>35</sup> F.O. 424/62, Confidential (3433), pp.178-179, No. 312/1 cited in Şimşir, *I*, pp. 232-234.

<sup>36</sup> A Petition from 20,000 Turkish fugitives near Burgaz asked British Consul Brophy to forward their petition to *Sadaret* since they had no means of communication. They expressed their determination to leave the region if it was to be remained by the Russians or the Bulgarians. They demanded from the Porte to send steamers to Burgaz, if not sent, they were going to walk to the capital. Layard to Salisbury, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2784, No. 454, Copy No.10.

Compassionate Fund. Once received the means of relief, these diplomatic agents were in charge of the rest. Vice Consul Calvert in Filibe was an accurate example, he undertook the administration of the fund in that city. During the first week of February 1878, he reported that they were distributing about 5,000 rations per day. However after the fall of Filibe, his work turned into a recital of strife, the provisions were rapidly exhausted. Though the British Consul appealed to the occupant powers for assistance, the Russian General did not keep his promise to give them provisions and caused many deaths in vain.<sup>37</sup>

Communication between the agents was not limited to long and time-consuming reports, the telegraph was used as a means of communication when unexpected developments of significance required instant warning.

Five trains crowded with fugitives left Adrianople today for Constantinople. On arrival these many of the fugitives will be in need of immediate relief. As it is moving and most of them are in open trucks. Two children died from cold at the station today. Situation worse and I may have to leave this on Sunday. Shall go to Tchataldja.<sup>38</sup>

***Increasing Customs Duties:*** The network of British representatives in the Ottoman Empire with Henry Layard as their chief, were all seeking more concrete solutions at the macro level to cope with the influx. In April 1878, a consular body consisting of

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<sup>37</sup> “Seeing however that our funds were running low, the Committee addressed a request for assistance to the Russian governor of the town, General Stalibin, the preoccupation of the town by the Russians having cut us off from communication with the outer world, we could not apply for an increase of the funds at our disposal, which were rapidly diminishing, in consequence of the large number of starving Turks whom we were succouring (the sum we then had still in hand was about £200)(p.253) and we begged, therefore that the Russian authorities would kindly afford to us the means of continuing our labours in behalf of the starving victims of the war. The General at once promised to give us the assistance we asked for.” Mr. Calvert to Major de Winton, 17<sup>th</sup> March 1878, Philipopolis, F. O. 78 /2783, p. 249, No.430, also cited in Şimşir, I, pp. 396-400. from F.O.424/69, Confidential (3625), p. 70, No. 120.

<sup>38</sup> Consul Blunt to Layard, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Adrianople, F.O. 78/2776, No. 72.

European representatives to the Porte gathered in Istanbul. Britain was represented by Consul-General Fawcett.<sup>39</sup>

According to the reports, the number of refugees who took refuge in the Ottoman capital by that time was 160,000. Due to the sanitary conditions and the frequency of the cases of typhus, involvement into an epidemic was considerably probable. A case of a major outbreak would necessitate a quarantine which could interrupt all the communication with the West, consequently extensively damage international commerce. That was why the European consuls gathered to develop a common resolution.<sup>40</sup>

The representatives agreed on the fact that, in order to prevent an epidemic in Istanbul, refugees had to be sent away from the city. Returning to their homes which were then mostly under Russian occupation was almost impossible, thus the only option was to transfer them to different parts of the Empire, namely to Anatolia. The Ottoman government obviously had neither the means nor the power to undertake such an operation, hence European assistance was required.<sup>41</sup>

After prolonged discussions<sup>42</sup> the Consular Body agreed on suggesting:

“an ‘octroi’<sup>43</sup>, upon all merchandise for consumption of the city, at the amount of 25%, on the duties paid at the Custom-house, or, in fact an addition of 2% upon the duties now payable upon imports under the treaties of Commerce” to their governments. This was the only way to

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<sup>39</sup> Procès-Verbal de la Première/Deuxième Séance, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631) Inclosures no.1 & 2 cited in Şimşir, *I*, pp. 426-436.

<sup>40</sup> Layard to Salisbury, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631), pp. 116-117, No. 223 cited in Şimşir, *I*, pp. 423-425.

<sup>41</sup> Layard to Salisbury, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631), pp. 116-117, No. 223 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 424.

<sup>42</sup> Procès-Verbal de la Première/Deuxième Séance, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631) Inclosures no.1 & 2 cited in Şimşir, *I*, pp. 426-436.

<sup>43</sup> A tax put on various goods, especially on foodstuffs, brought into a town.

assure the means to the Ottoman for the removal of refugees. The surtax was to be collected and administered by a joint commission.<sup>44</sup>

Layard, expressing his personal accordance, asked for approval from London.<sup>45</sup> Three weeks later authorization was received from the British government.<sup>46</sup> But since the other governments, namely Germany and USA, considered the project as the end of the trade capitulations, they did not approve the appeal. Disapproval of a single state was enough to allow a cartel of transportation, thus the resolution failed.<sup>47</sup> As this was once more the case, the cordial cooperation of Layard and the British government was not a mere humanitarian interference, concerns of national interest were incontrovertibly apparent.

### **3.4. British Concerns of Muslim Public Opinion**

As stated by Henry Layard in his personal memoires, British philanthropy towards the '93 Refugees was certainly considered as a tool to shape the Muslim public opinion in the Ottoman Empire as well as British India. Both of these societies had vital importance for British interests. India, with its significant Muslim population, was under British imperial control, thus it was essential to prevent the potential uneasiness among its population that would harm British imperialist

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<sup>44</sup> Layard to Salisbury, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631), pp. 116-117, No. 223 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 425.

<sup>45</sup> Layard to Salisbury, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 424/69, Confidential (3625), p. 292, No. 552, cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 422.

<sup>46</sup> Salisbury to Layard, 13<sup>th</sup> May 1878, Foreign Office, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631), p.218, No.344 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 449.

<sup>47</sup> Salisbury to Layard, 13<sup>th</sup> May 1878, Foreign Office, F.O. 424/70, Confidential (3631), p.218, No.344 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p. 449; Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999, p. 83.

interests. On the other hand Indo-Muslims were faithfully bound to the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan Caliph.

“The British fear of pan-Islamism”<sup>48</sup> as Kemal Karpat put it, was one of the determinants of British foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Caliphate had almost three centuries of background, but was gaining a new meaning during the reign of Abdulhamid II, who aimed to constitute a new basis of Muslim solidarity. Apparently its scope was not limited to Ottoman Muslim subjects, the colonial authorities referred to the situation as “the new-fangled pretention that the Sultan of Turkey is Khalifeh of Islam”.<sup>49</sup> The British government perceived the Indian Muslims’ display of sympathy to the Sultan as an “ominous threat”. They were suspicious of Abdulhamid’s intentions to use his influence in India, against the British imperial presence.<sup>50</sup>

According to Karpat, the 1877- 78 Russo-Turkish War was a turning point in the history of pan-Islamism.<sup>51</sup> Even though the idea of a jihad to attract every Muslim group in the world was not realistic and the Sultan Abdulhamid was well aware of that, he saw no inconvenience in using it as a political weapon, sounding substantially self-confident:

We are accused in Europe of being savages and fanatics... Unlike the Czar, I have abstained till now from stirring up a crusade and profiting from religious fanaticism, but the day may come when I can no longer curb the right and indignation of my people at seeing that their co-religionist butchered in Bulgaria and Armenia. And once their fanaticism is aroused, when the whole Western world, and in particular the British Empire, will have reason to fear.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, p. 212.

<sup>51</sup> Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, p. 148.

<sup>52</sup> Joan Haslip, *The Sultan, Life of Abdul Hamid II*, London: Widenfield and Nicolson, 1973, pp.123-124.

Indian Muslims followed the events in the Balkans and eastern Europe with keen interest and anxiety. Their main concern was to defend and support the Ottomans. They held numerous meetings throughout India and sent addresses to the British government requesting them to side with the Ottomans despite the fact that Britain had declared her neutrality. Prayers were offered for the success of the Sultan Caliph, subscriptions were raised for the Ottoman soldiers and large sums of money were remitted to Istanbul. Indian Muslims were eager to follow the developments, which could easily be understood by a glance at the rise of news from Istanbul that appeared in the Indian press, and even the publishing of new journals exclusively of Turkish news.<sup>53</sup> The Muslim press in India had always been pro-Ottoman and since the Anglo-Ottoman relations were good British attitude towards it was lenient. However, with the Russo-Turkish War, the stand taken by the Muslim press and the open critics of the British eastern policy became a matter of concern to the Indian government. Soon *Vernacular Press Act* passed in 1878 to restrict the freedom of the native Indian Press.<sup>54</sup> According to Özcan, "...the Empire had been threatened by its own Christian subjects while the Muslims of distant lands were providing much needed support."<sup>55</sup>

Some sections of the Indian Muslim community linked their future with the fate of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey was symbolized in the person of the Sultan Caliph and his Empire was viewed as a source of Islam's pride. Furthermore, this kind of belief was followed by many leading Muslim thinkers of India. Indo-Muslim concern was generally manifested either by the establishment of organizations,

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<sup>53</sup> Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism, Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> Azmi Özcan, "The Press and Anglo-Ottoman Relations, 1876-1909", *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 29, No. 1, January 1993, London: Franks Cass.

<sup>55</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 43.

opening relief funds and raising money or by appealing to the Queen or the British government to defend the Ottoman Empire.<sup>56</sup>

“There was almost a conspicuous unanimity in the Muslim community in support of the Ottomans” asserted Özcan. Even before the war, they sent hundreds of resolutions clearly stating their concern for the Ottomans and rapidly responded to the anti-Ottoman public opinion due to the “Bulgarian Horrors”. They even started a campaign of buying Ottoman public stocks, in order to diminish the European economic pressure over the empire; if they needed to be indebted they had better be indebted to Muslims!<sup>57</sup>

*İane-i Hindiyye*: The enormous amount of money that poured into Indo-Muslim relief funds opened through India was the most significant demonstration of their interest. It was difficult to estimate the exact amount of money sent, however, the official Ottoman registers show that it was around 124,843 Ottoman liras.<sup>58</sup> Available data suggest that all sections of the Muslim community, contributed according to their abilities.<sup>59</sup> *Defter-i İane-i Hindiyye* was the name of the official Ottoman register for this fund and contained valuable information about organization of the fund and people working for them.<sup>60</sup> This amount money generated the need

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<sup>56</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 65; B.O.A. İ.HR. 273/16494-01.

<sup>57</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>58</sup> B.O.A. HR. TO. 126/93, HR. TO. 127/16, HR. TO. 127/91, HR. TO. 128/2 These documents are all telegraphs sent from India giving on the amount of money transferred to the Ottomans. HR. TO. 128/4 mentioned £7500, which was an enormous amount at the time.

<sup>59</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>60</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 69.

for control; at the end of 1877, Istanbul had a “visitor” from India, stating himself as a delegate sent by the Indian Muslims to superintend the distribution of relief.<sup>61</sup>

According to Lord Lytton, who was the British viceroy in India, the Muslim loyalty in India greatly depended on the policy of the British government towards the Ottomans. He wrote to foreign secretary Salisbury: “the strength of our rule will be seriously weakened if we deliberately alienate their loyalty by recklessly outraging their feelings.” Lytton urged London to support the Ottomans against Russia. He exaggerated the possible “Muslim danger” in India.<sup>62</sup> Lytton claimed that if the British were attacked by Russians in India, they could count on Muslim support, but it was somehow not less probable that the same Muslims would participate in a jihad against Britain if given an order by the Sultan. Layard, like Lytton, was also one of the people who overemphasised the Indo-Muslim threat. To him, the Porte was in communication with ex-rebel Indians in Mecca, through whom the Ottomans could attempt to bring about a rising in India with a calculation of forcing Britain into the War.<sup>63</sup> Thus, an acquired prestige by relieving the destitute Muslims by the British would have omnidirectional benefits for British imperial policies.

Apart from India, influencing Ottoman public opinion was also important, since a great portion of the Ottomans blamed Britain for what they had to go through. Consular agents were aware of the fact that their efforts would benefit their image in the Ottoman Empire and did their best to achieve this purpose. The attitude assumed

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<sup>61</sup> “A certain Mullah Ismet Effendi, styling himself an Indian notable, arrived lately in Constantinople, and presented himself to the Grand Vizier stating that he was sent as a Delegate by the Indian Mussulmans in order to superintend the distribution of the funds sent from India for the relief of the sick and wounded Turkish soldiers. His Highness is not satisfied that this person is really charged with any such mission, as he has not produced credentials, and has not brought letters from any Turkish official agent. His Highness has begged me to ascertain through the Indian Authorities whether anything is known of the person in question”. From Layard to Derby, 24th December 1877, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2594, No.1508.

<sup>62</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 72.

<sup>63</sup> Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 90.



by the British in front of the refugee crises of the Russo-Turkish War was extensively different from that of the continental Europe. In January 1878, we see that the *charge d'affaires* of France was writing home to the Foreign Ministry asking whether the French would extend aid as the English did.<sup>64</sup>

It was humanitarian diplomacy, which the British consuls in guidance of their ambassador implemented during the '93 Refugee crisis. A philanthropic work was carried out by the means of diplomacy. None of the operations could be in contradiction with the British interests, but ironically, the misery which was somehow caused by diplomacy was also tried to be relieved by the means of diplomacy. The resources of succour were mobilized in the name of Christianity for the Muslims, in return those Muslims were praying for the benevolent English *Pashas* and *Hanums* in their Islamic style!

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<sup>64</sup> Şimşir, *I*, p. 299.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TURKISH COMPASSIONATE FUND

#### 4.1. Origins of the Fund

In 1883 a book entitled *The Turkish Compassionate Fund: An Account of Its Origin, Working and Results* was published in London. It was an extensive activity report of the fund that made its title. The fund had been initiated by Baroness Angela Burdett Coutts, a well known philanthropist in Victorian England and received contributions by numerous British benefactors. Ambassador Layard undertook its administration and its operations were carried out by a wide range of British residents in the Ottoman Empire, mainly by the consular agents.

From the commencement of the Russo-Turkish War in April 1877, there were many examples of British philanthropy at different levels. The Stafford House Committee, the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded, Lady

Strangford's Fund<sup>1</sup> and miscellaneous personal initiatives came to the aid of the sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers. Nevertheless, until the Compassionate Fund was established in August 1877 no organized help was available for those "who had no share in the actual fighting, though they reaped the terrible harvest of its results", in other words: the '93 Refugees.<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence of the popular British newspapers regularly publishing news and reports of the Russo-Turkish War, depicting the "heartrending" sufferings of the Muslim population, British public opinion was once again manipulated. Public tendencies became visible by the summer of 1877, notwithstanding the sensibility to the human dimension, every Russian victory was considered as a blow to British interests in the East.

As the sympathy for the "Mohammedan sufferers of the War" was continuing to increase, a telegram from Mr Gay, a war correspondent with the *The Daily Telegraph*, was published on the paper on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1877. Gay asked whether the British could do something to assist the "women, children and the elderly" adding that he would be happy to distribute relief himself.<sup>3</sup> The first recourse to the British government was the telegraph from the British Ambassador, Mr. Layard, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August. It was addressed to the British Foreign Office with the concluding sentence of "Would any of the societies for the Sick and Wounded in War do

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<sup>1</sup> Viscountess Strangford was one of the most prominent characters of the British philanthropy in the Ottoman Balkans. She relieved the Bulgarian peasants in 1876-1877 under "*Bulgarian Peasants Fund*" (Viscountess Strangford, *Report on the Bulgarian Peasant Relief Fund, with a statement of distribution and expenditure*. London, 1877) of which the secretary was Mr. Barrington Kennet. In June 1877 she diverted her energy and interest to relieving Turkish soldiers and established the "*British Hospital and the Ambulance Fund for the Sick and Wounded in the War*". (Dorothy Anderson, *the Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson, 1968, p. 79). Lady Strangford was occasionally accused to be Turcophil during the Bulgarian incidents by the Bulgarians and was later criticized for being a pro-Bulgarian. The revenue of the sales from the above mentioned report was to go to the new fund and her motto was; "Is not humanity better than neutrality?" (Anderson, p. 81)

<sup>2</sup> H. Mainwaring Dunstan, *The Compassionate Fund: An Account for Its Origin, Working and Results*, London: Remington and Co., 1883, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri I*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1989, pp. 179, 183.

anything for these fugitives?”<sup>4</sup> A week after his first request, Mr. Gay sent another telegram to his paper, openly demanding succour for numerous refugees in Edirne.<sup>5</sup> During the same week, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1877, an appeal from Baroness Burdett Coutts appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*. This was the turning point and a Fund was initiated by Baroness was to organise British relief to the Ottoman war refugees.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.1.1. Angela Burdett Coutts: a Soul of Boundless Philanthropy**

*Suo jure*<sup>7</sup> Baroness Angela Burdett Coutts was one of the most well known women in Victorian England. She inherited her high position in society by birth from both sides of her family. Her father Francis Burdett was a politician and her mother Sophia was the youngest daughter of the famous banker Thomas Coutts. The incident that made the Baroness, perhaps the most important figure in the history of British philanthropy, as well as for the refugees of 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War, was her sudden inheritance of an immense fortune, some £1,8 million from her banker grandfather. However, this legacy was conditional; Angela could not marry a man from another nation and she had to take her mother’s maiden name “Coutts”. In summer 1837, at the age of 24, she turned into a millionaire.<sup>8</sup>

As well as assuring Angela Burdett-Coutts a unique position in society, as “the richest heiress in all England”, the fortune enabled her to carry out activities of her pleasure. She had begun her charitable work by giving large sums to the Church

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<sup>4</sup> Telegraph dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 1877, Pera, Şimşir, *I*, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Şimşir, *I*, p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> Dunstan, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Suo jure*: “in her own right”.

<sup>8</sup> Edna Healey, “Coutts, Angela Georgina Burdett”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-10, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/32175>.

of England. “No other woman under the rank of a queen ever did so much for the Church of England” said Diana Orton in one of the Baroness’s biographies. Owing to her intimate friendship with Charles Dickens, Angela’s eyes were opened to the appalling life conditions of the poor.<sup>9</sup> Without the guidance of Dickens she might have concentrated exclusively on the Church, he was acting as her official almoner and oriented her towards the “practical direction of aid to the causes of distress”. Her first establishment of a home for the homeless women was at that period of her life, many similar examples were to be seen in the subject of this study.<sup>10</sup>

There were numerous examples of her philanthropic work within the British Islands, her attitude inspired the Crown Prince to say: “After my mother, the most remarkable woman in the Kingdom”. She was a true philanthropist and her charity was not limited to her country. The preceding case of Ireland was the most similar one to the Turkish Compassionate Fund. While she was relieving the Irish she sought to find permanent solutions to temporary steps to appease momentary distresses. She established large relieve stores of essential provisions, helped the emigrants to the American continent, and tried to create a demand in England for Irish embroidery. These were early examples of the great philanthropic work which was to later take place in the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-Turkish War.<sup>11</sup>

The Baroness’s first intercourse with the Ottoman Empire had been during the Crimean War 1853-1856. She provided financial support to the wives of the British soldiers who were off to the battlefield. Her old friend Florence Nightingale

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<sup>9</sup> Diana Orton, “Angela Burdett-Coutts”, p. 273.

<sup>10</sup> Healey, “Coutts”.

<sup>11</sup> Healey, “Coutts”.

wrote her of the “sodden misery” in the Scutari Hospital and was provided with a practical drying machine.<sup>12</sup>

#### **4.1.2. The Founding**

A fundamental concern of this study is why Baroness Burdett Coutts initiated such an extensive relief campaign for the Ottomans, only few months after the “Bulgarian Horrors” campaign. Edna Healy brought an answer of four dimensions:

First of all, the Baroness was an admirer of the region, Turkey and the Orient fascinated her ever since her childhood, and on the contrary, she did not like the Russians. Secondly, the esteemed opinions of friends who had lived in the Ottoman Empire had impressed her. Thirdly, according to her, brutality was worse when committed by Christians. And the fourth and most blatant off all; the Baroness was an old friend of the British Ambassador to the Porte, Henry Layard, and his account on the sufferings of the refugees affected her deeply.<sup>13</sup>

Apparently Burdett Coutts wrote to Layard to receive relevant information on the conditions of the refugees. As a result of the first hand information received, an appeal appeared on paper with the title of “Turkish Sufferer’s Fund”. “The main point to which I am anxious to direct attention is” noted Baroness “the new and good opportunity for the distribution of any funds which may be sent direct to the Relief Committee at Constantinople”.<sup>14</sup> The committee that she referred to was the one

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<sup>12</sup> Edna Healey, *The Lady Unknown*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984, pp. 115-117. A drying closet especially was built for the hospital in Haydarpaşa in 1855 by Burdett Coutts on Dickens’s advice. It could be shipped out in parts and re-assembled. It could dry a thousand articles of linen in twenty five minutes. For its picture see appendix H.

<sup>13</sup> Healey, *The Lady Unknown*, p. 186.

<sup>14</sup> Dunstan, p. 20.

initiated by diplomatic means, the wife of the British Ambassador to the Porte, Lady Layard's activities and Consul Blunt's initiations in Edirne. As she called for contributions, she emphasised the fact that Henry Layard vouched for the wise action of the committees and the urgent need of fresh funds. At short notice, she brought about the necessity of organizing a "*Compassionate Fund for Turkish Women and Children*" and called British citizens for a union "in common action for the succour of the innocent, defenceless sufferers, into whose wounds Christendom, if it is to merit its name, is bound to pour its oil and its balm."<sup>15</sup>

In summer 1877, British people had already been providing aid to the sick and wounded soldiers from both the Ottoman and Russian armies. The peculiarity of this appeal was that it was solely for the non-combatant Ottomans.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it had a dominant religious tone; the Baroness called for contributions in the name of Christianity.<sup>17</sup> As if to further emphasise this dimension of the campaign, *The Daily Telegraph* announced right on the same day the collection of money in a church for the Turkish Compassionate Fund.<sup>18</sup> Burdett Coutts did not mind using agitative elements, she asked the British people to share the misery of '93 Refugees mentally if not financially.<sup>19</sup> A quarter of her letter referred to the upper level of the society, who were having their summer vacations to keep in mind the conditions of suffering people of Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Dunstan, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 173.

<sup>17</sup> "... I trust much bodily or mental anguish will begin to be soothed through that zeal Christianity which is still, in God's providence, the appointed means by which hunger and thirst are assuaged, sickness alleviated, and consolation given.", Dunstan, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> "The Turkish Compassionate Fund", *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 August 1877.

<sup>19</sup> "... We can wash our own hand; though free of its stain by binding up their wounds- if not by our money by our sympathy. If silver and gold is there none, we have prayers still..." Dunstan, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> "... I would pray one and all to bear in mind, either in their travel or their repose, the unhappy sufferers in a far-away country, of another creed, whose life is ebbing fast away-uncheered, desolate, abandoned." , Dunstan, p. 22.

The Baroness's call was very affective and heartily responded. Within the following forty eight hours of the appearance of the letter in *The Daily Telegraph*, she was able to announce the formation of a committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1877<sup>21</sup>:

#### THE TURKISH COMPASSIONATE FUND

Under the administration of His Excellency the British Ambassador, to whom a donation of £100 has been transmitted by HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN. Instituted under the auspices of

The BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

The Duchess of Sutherland	The Bishop of Ripon
Mrs. Tait	Rev. Dr. Phin
Mrs. Thomson	Rev. Dr. Rigg
Mrs. Layard	The Earl of Harrowby, K. G.
Mrs. Ellicot	The Bishop of London
Mrs. Bickersteth	The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol
Mrs. Brown	The Lord Houghton
Miss Bain	Frederick Calvert, Esq.
The Lady Lucy Calvert	Admiral Hon. Sir Henry Keppel, G. C. B.
The Hon. Lady Keppel	P.C. Lovett, Esq.
Mrs. Malcolm	General Malcolm
The Archbishop of Canterbury	The Lord Provost of Glasgow
The Archbishop of York	
The Archbishop of Armagh	
Bishop Ryan	

For the purpose of affording assistance to the fugitive men, women, and children, non-combatants, Jews, Christians and Mussulmans, in Constantinople, Adrianople, Philippopolis, and the surrounding districts.

Immediately the following day, the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1877, Musurus Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador in London, informed the Porte of the establishment of the

<sup>21</sup> The formation of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was dated on February 1878 according to *Basiret*, and referenced so by important works of immigrant historiography. Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1999, p. 77; Tarık Özçelik, *Basiret Gazetesi'ne Göre Doksanüç Harbi'nde İstanbul'da Rumeli Göçmenleri (1877-1878)*, unpublished Ma Thesis, Marmara University, Istanbul, 1993, p. 24.



committee. He emphasised the fact that the majority of the members were women, indicated some names and notified the Porte on the superintendence of Layard. Two days after the telegram an *irade* (imperial decree) was issued to show the gratitude of the Sultan.<sup>22</sup>

*The Daily Telegraph* recurrently emphasised the fact that the fund was guaranteed by the Ambassador. According to the paper, this philanthropic step was to benefit also the British people because it was "...to prove the patient Mussulman people that we do not watch their terrible struggle with indifference."<sup>23</sup>

The Committee for the Turkish Compassionate Fund was constituted of the above mentioned names and was soon to become the main intermediary between the British public and the '93 Refugees. Baroness Burdett Coutts was in charge of the fund in England and *The Daily Telegraph* was there for assistance. Since the usage of the money was limited to the non-combatants, Henry Layard, as an Ambassador of a neutral country, could direct the operations of the fund in the Ottoman Empire. With all the responsibility and the sensitivity of his diplomatic position, it was certainly an extra burden for him. Nevertheless, he contrived to find time for its superintendence.<sup>24</sup> According to Dorothy Anderson, founding a committee to organize the relief operations in Istanbul was not needed since Layard himself resided there. Moreover, his leadership made the usage of British representatives in the Ottoman Empire possible.<sup>25</sup> In addition to Istanbul, which appeared to be the centre of decision making for the operations, Edirne was the headquarters of the Compassionate Fund in the south of Balkans.<sup>26</sup> The British Consul Blunt and some

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<sup>22</sup> B.O.A. i.HR. 274/16677.

<sup>23</sup> Dunstan, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Dunstan, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 174.

<sup>26</sup> Dunstan, p. 52.

of the European residents of the town had previously set up a relief committee in Edirne.<sup>27</sup>

The fund was established exclusively with the purpose of serving the non-combatants, and occasionally felt the necessity to stress its neutrality. It was not connected with any society, “for the relief of Turkish soldier, but that it has been raised for the purpose of affording assistance to the fugitive men, women and children, Jews, Christians and Mussulmans without reference to creed...”<sup>28</sup>

**A Cordial Title:** Attention was drawn to the selection of the name, The Turkish Compassionate Fund. *The Times* stated that “while it admits legitimate sympathies, proclaims nothing sectarian or one-sided” thus indicating indiscrimination for the ones that were to be relieved. The same tone of indiscrimination was eligible for the ones to relieve: “...large –hearted of all views and opinions may fitly join in a movement of perfect Christian pity, and thus relieve the Christianity of our time from an ever increasing and dangerous misconception”.<sup>29</sup> A few weeks after this article, a different view on the name of the fund appeared in the same paper. A correspondent named Houghton mentioned the unfortunate possibility of damage on charity due to its title. According to him election of “Eastern” instead of “Turkish” would be more accurate since there was “nothing Turkish in its application, except that the various races and creeds to which it will be applied are those of the subjects

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<sup>27</sup> Anderson, p. 174.

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 25 October 1877, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1877 cited in Dunstan, p. 24.

of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>30</sup> The selection of the word compassion sounds rather cordial, with an evocation of the feeling of mercy.

The title of the fund was translated into Ottoman Turkish as “*Sermaye-i Şefkat-i Osmaniyye*”<sup>31</sup> which was a direct translation of the English version except for the term Osmaniyye/Ottoman instead of Turk. That was substantially natural since the term “Turk” was rarely used within the Empire and when the Europeans referred to Turks they meant only Ottoman Muslims.

#### 4.1.3. Contributions to the Fund

The first sum of money sent by the Turkish Compassionate Fund to Istanbul on 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1877 was £4,000. An initiation was made by Baroness Burdett Coutts with a subscription of £1,000 and further contributions were made by a number of British benefactors. Contributions were considerably wide in Britain varying in terms of quantity. *The Daily Telegraph* published the list of subscribers every day, which should have been a way of praising their noble conducts.<sup>32</sup> The public response was very immediate and massive; on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August the paper announced that the total money that was transmitted to Layard by Burdett-Coutts was £10,000 for the purposes of the Fund.<sup>33</sup> Musurus Pasha was closely pursuing the developments and sent a long list of subscribers to *Hariciye Nezareti*, the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1877.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> “The Turkish Compassionate Fund”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 September 1877.

<sup>31</sup> B.O.A. Y.A. RES. 1/50; *Basiret*, 9 Ca 1295, Özçelik, p. 24.

<sup>32</sup> The report book has an eighty pages long “list of subscriptions”. Dunstan, Appendix.

<sup>33</sup> “The Turkish Compassionate Fund”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 August 1877.

<sup>34</sup> B.O.A. HR. TO. 59/32

Subscribers should not be considered members of a certain class or particularly high society, as discussed in the preceding chapter, charity was a part of Victorian culture. Besides, there were notable examples to show the British society's approach to the idea of healing an overseas misery. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1877, *The Daily Telegraph* informed its readers about the letters from working men. These people expressed the sympathy of their class towards the sufferers of the war and suggested that if weekly collection of donations was organized amongst them, considerable sums could be obtained.<sup>35</sup>

Interestingly, subscriptions caused complications for the domestic banking system; *The London and Westminster Bank* had been through much inconvenience. Numerous subscribers forwarded their donations for the Turkish Compassionate Fund to this Bank, which were in fact received by *Messrs. Coutts*.<sup>36</sup> Thus the London and Westminster Bank requested *The Times* to promulgate that it received subscriptions only for the Turkish International Refugee Fund.<sup>37</sup>

Early in the year 1878 the sudden flow of refugees to Istanbul dramatically increased the demands and pressure on the fund. The Baroness received fraught telegrams from the agencies in the Porte and made another appeal to the British public. That time, a prompt response arrived from the Earl of Pembroke in the form of a £1,000 check. With this contribution the Baroness could send Istanbul a sum of £3,500, making a total of £24,000. An additional sum of £5,000 was telegraphed in the second week of February 1878.<sup>38</sup> On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1878, *The Times* promulgated the fete that was organized at the Alexandra Palace for the benefit of

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<sup>35</sup> "Turkish Compassionate Fund", *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 September 1877.

<sup>36</sup> The British bank that belonged to the *Coutts Family*.

<sup>37</sup> This committee was previously referred as "the International Fund". *The Times*, 29 January 1878, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> *The Times*, 28 January 1878, p. 6; Dunstan, p. 195.

war victims. £250 was gathered for the Turkish Compassionate Fund, through this organization.<sup>39</sup>

Contributions were not only given in the form of money, the fund received numerous letters of suggestions. Mr. Lovett of the Royal Navy, who joined the committee of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, offered the usage of his 200 ton yacht and presented his service as the captain.<sup>40</sup> As the probability of sending a ship full of clothes and food was heard by the public, generous offers flowed to the committee, compelling it to provide an organization for collection. Donations of this kind could not be enumerated but duly acknowledged in the columns of *The Daily Telegraph*.<sup>41</sup>

According to the report of the Compassionate Fund, a financial overview of the operations can be done as follows: At the end of the operations £34,001 of the £43,394 total money that Henry Layard received for the fund was directed by Messr. Coutts, and the difference between the two sums represented the amount received from India and other places.<sup>42</sup> However, though not giving an account, Henry Layard stated in his personal memoirs that the total money collected and received by him amounted near £80,000.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 15 March 1878, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> "Turkish Compassionate Fund", *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1877.

<sup>41</sup> Dunstan, p. lxxxii.

<sup>42</sup> Dunstan, p. 225.

<sup>43</sup> Sinan Kunalalp, *The Queens Ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009.

#### 4.1.4. Receivers of Relief

The Turkish Compassionate Fund was a product of the cordial philanthropic sentiments of the British people. As mentioned before, its constitution also involved diplomatic intentions as well as a religious background of charity. The founder Baroness Burdett Coutts had stated from the start, on her behalf of and the other contributors' susceptibility, the usage of the fund only for "the non-combatant victims of war", mainly women and children. The Baroness openly expressed in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* that she did not ask Mr Layard to institute a census in order to figure out the creed or religion in a district where the sources of the fund was taken to relieve the refugees. Being a Muslim did not ensure acquiring relief from the Turkish Compassionate Fund, the fundamental determinant was the level of poverty and necessity. For instance, despite being Muslims, Circassian refugees did not receive charity of the fund not because they were the source of uneasiness in most of the cases of immigration, but they were generally well-off. Reports narrated several cases of Circassian refugees, asking for aid ending up with the realisation of the agent that she did not need it at all.<sup>44</sup>

In short, the scope of the charity was certainly not limited to a particular group of people, the main objective of the operations was to save the most destitute; "The clothes, therefore, given to the naked, and the soup to the starving, will be given as originally intended, to the most destitute, whether they be Turkish Christians, Turkish Jews, or Turkish Mussulmans."<sup>45</sup> This was a respondent letter to ongoing critics of the relief that had been given to Bulgarians by the means of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. Burdett Coutts somehow sounded in contradiction

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<sup>44</sup> Report of Mr. Ashmead Barlett on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1878 cited in Dunstan, p. 212.

<sup>45</sup> Letter communicated to *The Daily Telegraph* by Burdett-Coutts on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1877 cited in Dunstan, p. 25.

with herself since her first appeal was done “for the unhappy sufferers of another creed”.<sup>46</sup> Non-discrimination became the principle of the fund, for instance in Sofia, Jews were taken care of with the mediation of a Rabbi, causing the following statement to find a place in the paper: “...and there is now no class of sufferers from calamities of war which can escape the far reaching benevolence of the Turkish Compassionate Fund.”<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.1.5. Agents of Relief**

The next question shall be “How and through which agents the aid was conveyed to the sufferers?” The answer to this is a demonstration of the cohesion of British diplomacy and relief. Ambassador Layard, as the administrator of the Turkish Compassionate Fund in the Ottoman Empire, deployed British diplomats like Mr. Henry Fawcett, the Consul General in Istanbul, Vice-Consul Calvert and Consul Blunt, who was the Consul in Edirne in 1877 and in Thessaly in 1878, Major Francis de Winton, a military attaché to the Embassy, Military Consuls Colonel Synge and Colonel Vincent and Consular employee Robert E. Master for the management and distribution of the Fund. Some of the Valentine Baker’s (Baker Pasha) gendarmerie who had chosen not to join the Ottoman army proved to be of real use and Colonel Blunt and Colonel Norton were prominent examples.<sup>48</sup> There was also a Ladies Committee initiated by the wife of the Ambassador, Lady Layard, and operated by

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<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 176.

<sup>47</sup> *The Times*, 25 December 1877, p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 175.

English ladies, residents of Istanbul, which in time began to operate as a sub-committee to the Compassionate Fund.<sup>49</sup>

## 4.2. Operations of the Fund

### 4.2.1. The Method

Burdett-Coutts, as the director of the fund in London, received detailed information on the conditions of the refugees, as well as the expenditures of the money sent to Istanbul. As the accounts were received, she immediately enlightened the public. British benefactors were constantly informed about where their money went, who controlled the expenditures, what kind of relief took place in favour of which group of people, and at what unit cost. The first £4,000 was sent to the Ottoman capital on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1877, the Baroness issued a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the following month.

The account cited by the Baroness constituted a lively example for understanding the matter. £500 was at once sent to Edirne, to the possession of Consul Blunt and the relief committee. With this money they established two asylums which were housing nearly 100 refugees. The monthly expenditure for each of these institutions was at £45. Outdoor relief was two *piastres* per day for each woman and one *piastre* for each child.<sup>50</sup> In addition, firewood and charcoal were also distributed. £150 was sent to Tekirdağ (Rodosto) and placed in the hands of Consul-General Fawcett. £200 was transmitted to Filibe in the possession of Vice-Consul

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<sup>49</sup> Dunstan, p. 25.

<sup>50</sup> Dunstan, p.34



Calvert and £100 to Şumla in the hands of Vice-Consul Reade. Apart from the sum that was sent to the provinces, £500 was spent for clothing, which was to provide 1000 garments at once. Through the study of the Compassionate Fund, whenever a work of cloth making was in question, it is appropriate to assume this was carried out by the Ladies Committee of Lady Layard in Constantinople. The greatest portion of the money was spent on the necessity that was regarded the most essential, charcoal. It was to be urgently needed during the coming winter for both cooking and heating and the prices were to explode as the season approached. Burdett-Coutts openly stated that more funds were necessary and whatever received was to be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Layard in Istanbul.<sup>51</sup>

Henry Layard as the administrator of the fund issued queries to the British consuls at different places in order to make uttermost use of the resources in his disposal. Questions were as follows:

- I. What are the numbers of Mussulman women and children fugitive in your district?
- II. What is the present daily expenditure of their relief?
- III. What are your available funds in hand? Does any local fund exist which may be relied on during the coming winter?
- IV. Are there any means of employing these people in a local industry which will be partly self supporting?
- V. What is most necessary in the way of food and clothing and other necessaries during the coming winter?<sup>52</sup>

The portions of the fund and the supplies were sent to centres of relief in accordance with reports received from the consuls. Above inquiries must have enabled Layard to exercise the most efficient distribution. But on the other hand, the

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<sup>51</sup> "Turkish Compassionate Fund", *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 September 1877.

<sup>52</sup> Dunstan, pp.103-105, 160-161.

answers did not always have relevance, for instance in the replies to the second question consuls often noted “at the moment... but numbers are increasing daily”.<sup>53</sup>

There were two possible methods in terms of allocation and usage of the resources. In the first scenario, the functionaries of the Compassionate Fund attained refugees in the towns and villages, visited and relieved them in their temporary shelters as well as the train stations. The second possibility was the refugees to get hold of these agents of relief, asking for assistance. An example of Military attaché Colonel Blunt depicted such zeal:

At Bazardjik I encountered Colonel Blunt, who has for some time been engaged in the distribution of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. Commencing at Rodosto, on Sea of Marmora, early in August (at which time he was accompanied by Consul-General Fawcett), he has gradually worked his way from village to village over a district extending between Kezanlik on the east, Kalofer and Sopot on the north, and Bazardjik on the west. The manner in which Colonel Blunt and his companions proceed is simple and effective: Arrived at a village, they proceed directly to the Konak, and request the Caimakam to send round with them a man who is acquainted with the houses in which the refugees are lodged. They then personally visit every house pointed out to them, and from the arabas by which, they are followed serve out to each inmate two okes of flour, one oke of rice, some coffee, salt, and soap and should there be real need of it, clothing is also distributed. Colonel Blunt informs me that if they simply contented themselves with calling at the villages and leaving the provisions at some temporary depot, those by whom they are most urgently required would be passed over as in many cases either too ill to come for their share or too weak to carry it away.<sup>54</sup>

Another presentation of this affective method of distributing relief was cited by Consul-General Fawcett. Undertaking the duty of distribution through Thrace, he arrived in Tekirdağ accompanied by Colonel Blunt and a British merchant and directly applied to the municipality of the town to obtain necessary information and the assistance. The houses holding refugees and their approximate quantity were

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<sup>53</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 174.

<sup>54</sup> “The Red Crescent”, *The Times*, 20 November 1877, p. 4.

discovered as the town officials suggested gathering all the indigent people in the town square and distributing the relief themselves. But the British consular agents did not confide in this plan, instead they hired carts and proceeded from one house to another.<sup>55</sup>

Grants were given from the Compassionate Fund to the regional relief committees formed in all the large towns.<sup>56</sup> Even though the fund was doing all in its power, sources did not seem sufficient for the urgent needs. According to a correspondent of *The Times*, no charity more sorely needed the assistance of the English nation.<sup>57</sup>

British relief agencies were careful with the detection of the needy even in the small villages of Rumelia. At the end of 1879, *muhtars* (village headmen) of several districts of Rusçuk (Ruse) were asked to send lists of refugees in need of aid to a later Consul, Mr. Dillon. The first versions of these lists were not accepted right away by the consul and got revised by the *Cadi Effendi (Kadi)* and the Ottoman notables. At the end, final lists were returned to muhtars with a notice to issue tickets to all parties accepted by the *Kadi Committee*.<sup>58</sup>

The second method was in order when the '93 Refugees themselves were appealing the agencies for relief. It somehow fit into a cooperative system between the Ottoman officials and the British functionaries, narrated by Mr. Master in his report on Sophia:

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<sup>55</sup> Report of Consul General Fawcett dated Rodosto, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1877 cited in Dunstan, p. 149.

<sup>56</sup> Henry Layard formed a committee to assist Mr. Reade, the British Consul at Varna, to whom relief operations were then confided. Mr. Reade was the president and the other members were: "Mr. Thomas Harrower, Inspector-in-Chief of the Varna Railway; Mr. W. H. Dalziel, British Vice-Consul; Mr. Alfred Dillon, the Chief Accountant of the Varna Railway; Dr. Hayes, superintendent of the Stafford House Committee; and Dr. Crookshank, Superintendent of the National Aid Society" Dunstan, pp. 38-39.

<sup>57</sup> "Shefket Pasha at Orkhanié", *The Times*, 1 December 1877, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Dunstan, p. 46.

I received a great deal of assistance from the Government; a commission appointed by them sat all day and as soon as a family of refugees arrived into the town they were taken before into the town they were taken before the commissioners who inquired into their case, found out all the particulars concerning them, the place they came from, the number of their family and their wants; the commissioner then gave them a card which they presented at the soup kitchen and they also came to the store where they received their clothing...<sup>59</sup>

The British agents of relief were generally in good terms with the Ottoman authorities, apart from the example of cooperation above mentioned, statements of praise often found place in consular reports.<sup>60</sup>

#### **4.2.2. The Relief Establishments of the Compassionate Fund**

Gaining utmost benefit from the Compassionate Fund was the main concern of all the relief operations. At the times of urgent and immense flow, immediate measures had to be taken. Though having an essential mission of displaying British humanity and philanthropy, those measures did not usually intend to have long term gains but rather to ensure the most acute and basic necessity; keeping the refugees alive.

In this sense, the operations of the fund were carried through several mediums, each of which was crucial for the well being of the victims of the war. Those mediums, namely the establishments of the fund, will be discussed under the subtitles of Soup Kitchens and Bakeries, Hospitals, Asylums and Orphanages.

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<sup>59</sup> Layard to Derby, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2775, No.11; FO 424/66, (Confidential 3508), pp. 40-41, No.82.

<sup>60</sup> "I am happy to say that the Kaimakam did what he could to alleviate the sufferings of the people that he worked in unison with me, and furnished a considerable quantity of bread and biscuits" Blunt to Layard, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2778, No. 170; FO424/67 Confidential (3598), pp. 267-269, No.612/1, Şimşir, I, p.323,

***Soup Kitchens and Bakeries:*** The fundamental necessity of thousands of people, either expelled from their towns or having to flee and spend days under the most miserable conditions, was food. Death from starvation was not rare among the refugees. Thus, main concern of the agents of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was to provide them the basic nutrition.

As understood from the records of the fund, the first trial of a soup kitchen was carried out in Istanbul. It was established in Çamlıca, a suburb of Üsküdar (Scutari) located in the hills, by Dr. Julius Millingen who was assisted by his son, Edwin Millingen.<sup>61</sup> According to H. Marinwaring Dunstan, who was the compiler of the Compassionate Fund's records, the great success attained by this institution resulted in the repetition of the experiment in Edirne and elsewhere.<sup>62</sup>

Train stations were the sites where the immense crowds of refugees coming from different districts of the Ottoman Balkans were gathered. Either by cart or on foot, these people had the thorniest journeys to the stations. Railway was the fastest and safest method to reach secure places. However, arriving at their immediate destinations by no means meant the end of sufferings. The masses had to wait at the stations for days, and even weeks in the case of accidents.<sup>63</sup> Carriages were invariably overcrowded, which made it extremely difficult to find a place for oneself. That is how the train stations turned into theatres of misery.

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<sup>61</sup> For further information on Millingens see; Yeşim Işıl Ülman, "Levanten Bir Hekim Ailesinin Tarihçesi: Baba-Oğul Millingenler", *İstanbul*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, Ocak 2004, pp. 90-92; Taner Timur, *Yakın Osmanlı Tarihinden Aykırı Çehreler*, Ankara: İmge, 2006, pp. 47-63.

<sup>62</sup> Dunstan, p. 186.

<sup>63</sup> The railways were kept out of order for days when a great accident took place, causing not only great interruption of the transportation but also many casualties and death. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1878, Colonel Blunt, an English Officer in the Turkish Gendarmerie reported Layard on the train accident: "During Monday, the 14th, a serious accident occurred near Hadem-Keui. An engine and seven carriages ran off the line, killing twenty-three people, injuring many others, and tearing the road up for nearly a mile. These unfortunate contre-temps delayed the progress of all trains for about three days, and was the cause of much additional suffering". FO78/2778 No. 170 and Şimşir I FO424/67 Confidential (3598), pp. 267-269, No.612/1.

That was the point when soup kitchens effectively entered the lives of '93 Refugees. British consuls as well as other consular agents, established soup kitchens with the money that was issued by the Compassionate Fund. This aid came into existence at peak of humanitarian necessities, when hundreds of refugees that had been either on the roads for days or been waiting for a train to get on, were exhausted and on the brink of starvation. This minimal level of nutrition played a crucial role, enabled them to hold on for a while longer. In many of the cases the consuls involved personally in the distribution of the soup and bread, working day and night continuously. William Ashmead Bartlett, a special commissioner of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, suggested establishing a soup kitchen in Edirne railway station to serve soup to every train that came to that stop in January 1878.<sup>64</sup>

Depending on the conditions, soup kitchens were not always established in the stations but also in the town centres of accumulation. Consular official Mr. Master informed Layard on the success of the soup kitchen established in Sofia and also mentioned its costs were very moderate: only “a penny each person per day”.<sup>65</sup> The same institution was doing admirable work in Varna in February 1878 where 30,000 refugees were gathered.<sup>66</sup>

The report from Filibe was in a similar tone, praising the work of the soup kitchens established in the town centre, giving out rice and soup to the Muslim refugees. It was somehow decided by the committee that the best way to relieve Bulgarian refugees was to distribute raw provisions, flour and vegetables and a weekly allowance. The reasons behind this decision were enumerated:

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<sup>64</sup> Dunstan, p. 129.

<sup>65</sup> Layard to Derby, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2775, No.11.

<sup>66</sup> Consul Reade's report, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1878, Varna cited in Dunstan, p. 43.

1<sup>st</sup>- That owing to the fasts so rigorously kept by the Bulgarian peasantry, which are particularly numerous at this season, few or none of the Christian refugees would have recourse to the soup-kitchen, where butter would be used in making the pilaf, and meat in the broth. 2<sup>nd</sup>- That the Bulgarian peasantry are unaccustomed to rice as an article of food. 3<sup>rd</sup>- It was anticipated that in the present state of feeling between the Bulgarians and Turks, regrettable demonstrations might take place between the refugees, if brought together to receive one charity.<sup>67</sup>

The distribution of bread was also one of the most crucial services of the Compassionate Fund. It was carried through the bake houses which were allocated to the committee by the local authorities.<sup>68</sup> In March 1878, the price of bread rose considerably in Istanbul, which made it more difficult for the Turkish Compassionate Fund to continue their operations. This situation was amended by the effective intervention of Ottoman Prime Minister Ahmed Vefik Pasha, who placed six public bakeries in the Capital to the disposal of the Turkish Compassionate Fund.<sup>69</sup> Compared to the soup kitchens, distribution of bread naturally enabled the relief agents to reach greater numbers but on the other hand a hot meal must have been the most pleasing thing for the sufferers.

**Hospitals:** One of the predictable consequences of the war and the great exodus was the sudden increase of the sick and wounded. This study does not encompass the relief operations for the soldiers but only the refugees, namely women and children. However, this group was not necessarily exempt from sickness and wounding. Many of these refugees, either in their hometowns or on the roads of immigration, were attacked by Bulgarian or Cossack irregulars. Therefore, knife and bullet wounds were not peculiar to the combatants. The earlier mentioned album of photographs of

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<sup>67</sup> Report of Vice-Consul Calvert, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1877, cited in Dunstan, p. 124-125.

<sup>68</sup> Özçelik, p. 24; İpek, p. 77.

<sup>69</sup> Dunstan, p. 213.

wounded refugees set a clear visual proof to that. In addition, due to lack of nutrition, over fatigue, lack of hygiene and overcrowding, cases of separate sickness were rapidly evolving into epidemics. On these grounds, establishing hospitals became an essential branch of the Compassionate Fund's operations.

Mr. Gay directed the public's attention to *sui generis* feature of this war by adducing the hospitals in the Ottoman Empire. He emphasised the fact that the British people were used to seeing hospitals full of men wounded in the war. However, a hospital loaded with women, young girls and children with bullet, lance and sabre wounds was something he had never seen up to that day.<sup>70</sup>

A variety of reports by the British Consuls display the existence of several hospitals within the regions of the Compassionate Fund's objective. For instance in Edirne, Consul Blunt was able to find two hospitals exclusively for women and children. Those hospitals were filled with Turks and Gypsies in appalling conditions, they were not only sick but many were actually wounded.<sup>71</sup> The Camara Hospital for refugee women and children, founded by a benevolent lady, born in Turkey from an English father, was taken over by the Compassionate Fund but was still superintended by a committee under Madam Camara's superintendence.<sup>72</sup> It was this establishment which made Mr. Gay claim, "if the women of my country could only see this hospital for a minute, the question of the participation of England at the War would soon be resolved".<sup>73</sup>

Another hospital with the capacity of a hundred beds was established in Şumla and a resident doctor, an Italian by birth, was appointed to take charge of it.

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<sup>70</sup> Telegraph by Mr. Gay addressed to *The Daily Telegraph*, Şimşir, I, p. 190.

<sup>71</sup> Dunstan, p. 155.

<sup>72</sup> Dunstan, p. 143, 151.

<sup>73</sup> Şimşir, I, p. 190.



Even though on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1878, the Compassionate Fund decided to suspend all relief operations so far as the *Vilayet* (province) of Danube, due to the Russian advance, the hospital somehow managed to work until all patients were in a state to be discharged.<sup>74</sup> Mr. Master, in his report on Sophia, mentioned that he had to leave the hospital he established with forty five beds to Mon. Durand.<sup>75</sup> “Dr. Calvert, under the auspices of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, opened a hospital for refugees (women & children)” said an English doctor in his report from Filibe and continued; “There could not have been any institution more needed at the time...”<sup>76</sup>

Istanbul was the centre of refugee accumulation and the final destination of the influx. The frequency of the cases of diseases was in direct proportion with the total number of the refugees. Moreover, the majority of these were fatal epidemics.<sup>77</sup> Therefore Istanbul had the highest number of hospitals established by the Compassionate Fund.

By making additions to the existing buildings in Gülhane Square, Gülhane Hospital, consisting of 200 beds, was established for the refugees. Apart from that, the building of *Darbhane* (the mint) was turned into a women’s hospital with 260 beds. Both of these hospitals were operated by the Compassionate Fund. Another Compassionate Fund hospital was established in Çamlıca where more than a thousand refugees accumulated, two thirds of whom were infected by the epidemic diseases.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Dunstan, pp. 43-44.

<sup>75</sup> Report of Mr. Master on “Condition of Sofia”. Layard to Derby, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2775, No.11

<sup>76</sup> Dr. Heath to Mr. B. Kennett, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1878, Philipopolis, FO78/2781, No. 337, p.311.

<sup>77</sup> B.O.A. HR.TO. 520/25

<sup>78</sup> Dunstan, p. 184.

In addition, a Ladies Hospital of Sirkeci Port which was established by the Red Crescent Society was taken over by the Turkish Compassionate Fund. This hospital witnessed an unfortunate consequence of philanthropic work, fifteen people among the staff caught typhus and five of them passed away. The fund also undertook the total expenditures of another women's hospital which was converted from a khan located in front of the Kalender Mosque.

A health support service was constituted by the Ottoman authorities under the 6<sup>th</sup> Municipal District of Istanbul (the Municipality of Pera) and was regularly examining 20,000 refugees. The Compassionate Fund was one of the foundations that provided doctors to this facility.<sup>79</sup> Hospitals established by Lady Layard, in Üsküdar and *Şehzade* Mosque were also financed by the Fund.

Establishment of a specialized hospital was mentioned for the first time in a report of Mr. William Ashmead Bartlett, special commissioner to the fund, dated January 1878.<sup>80</sup> Small-pox was a fatal illness common with the refugees. A hospital especially for the treatment of these cases was opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1878, and was visited by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Layard on that day. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett interpreted this development as the most important achievement of the Compassionate Fund. The Small-pox Hospital was a substantially prompt response; no time was lost after the burst of this disease among the refugees. Ahmed Vefik Pasha who was the new prime minister of the Ottoman government at the time, at once placed a house at the Compassionate Fund's disposal. The location of the house was perfect for its duty, up a hill in Istanbul with a beautiful view and easy to reach. The interior condition of the building, which was also regarded very satisfactory for

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<sup>79</sup> İpek, pp. 97-100.

<sup>80</sup> Dunstan, p. 201.

the purpose, was narrated in details by Bartlett. The hospital contained eighty beds and the nursering job was undertaken by the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity.<sup>81</sup> Despite the fact that Mr. Ashmead Bartlett did not mention it in his report, Layard claimed in his memoir that this hospital was opened by his wife. If this was the case, there was no point for Bartlett to hide this reality thus it is probably Layard who misreported the development.<sup>82</sup>

**Asylums:** The problem of the shelter for the '93 Refugees was the one most difficult to solve. At the beginning of the influx, when the numbers were tolerable, localities hosted these fellow Muslims, or other coreligionists in the case of Christian and Jewish refugees, depending on their capabilities.<sup>83</sup> As the course of the '93 War worsened for the Ottomans and waves of immigration crescendo continued pouring, it became very difficult to shelter those destitute people. Any available building was filled with refugees, especially great mosques, public buildings and empty houses and consequently providing asylums for the refugees became one of the objectives of the Turkish Compassionate Fund.

Contrary to many other cases in western Rumelia, relief work could start with relative comfort and better organization in Edirne. Consequently, more refugees could be sheltered there than in any other part of the region. By the end of August 1877, the Central Relief Committee of Edirne had about 1,000 refugees in their

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<sup>81</sup> Report of Ashmead Bartlett, February 6<sup>th</sup> 1878, Constantinople, cited in Dunstan, pp. 203-204.

<sup>82</sup> Kunalalp, *Layard Memoirs*.

<sup>83</sup> Conflicting cases were also present, not all the locals were willingly helping the refugees, on contrary, and some were using different methods to keep refugees away from their properties. Basiretçi Ali Efendi put down on paper this kind of incidents and criticizes the sheltering problems of the refugees. "*Some inhabitants of Istanbul put up ostensible curtains in order to prevent placement of refugees into their vacant properties*" Basiretçi Ali Efendi, *İstanbul Mektupları*, İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2001, p. 603.

asylums.<sup>84</sup> Two asylums for women and children, each of which had a monthly expenditure of approximate £45, were instituted.<sup>85</sup>

In the beginning of 1878, the flow of refugees to the Ottoman capital suddenly reached a level arduous to cope with. Ambassador Layard made an urgent appeal to the Baroness for an additional amount of £1,500 and requested Ottoman authorities to provide a building to the disposal of the fund. The endowed building was used for the establishment of an asylum near Sirkeci Station. Newly arrived refugees of the worst conditions were welcomed by the agents of the Compassionate Fund, given hot soup and bread and housed there under the superintendence of Mr. Master. Only three days after his appeal, Layard informed London that they had already fed 6,000 refugees.<sup>86</sup> The *muhacirs* were taken in, given food and cleared out within twenty four hours. The place was then cleaned and prepared for the new arrivals.<sup>87</sup> According to the report of Ashmead Bartlett, the Sirkeci Asylum was the largest of the relief institutions in the city, giving daily lodging and food to 1,800 people. In order to distinguish it from the others, it was named “Baroness Burdett-Coutts Asylum”. Its administrator was a Levantine ecclesiastic Charles Hanson.<sup>88</sup>

Asylums established by relief committees did not constitute the majority of the shelters. As mentioned before '93 Refugees basically used any building that was available at the arrival spots. The Compassionate Fund also undertook the relief of 4,000 refugees quartered in the houses in *Galata*.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Dunstan, p. 159.

<sup>85</sup> Dunstan, p. 148.

<sup>86</sup> Layard to Derby, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2776, No. 70.

<sup>87</sup> Dunstan, p. 194.

<sup>88</sup> Report of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1878, cited in Dunstan, p. 203.

<sup>89</sup> Dunstan, p. 193.

There were many cases when Jews and Christians benefited from the Turkish Compassionate Fund as well as the Muslims. During the relief distribution, the functionaries of the Fund discreetly considered the ethnical disputes. As narrated earlier, not serving Turks and Bulgarians in the same soup kitchen was a relevance of such sensibility, another example was the asylum at Pera. A large house which belonged to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was placed at the disposal of Henry Layard. Pera was a non-Muslim quarter and it was deemed suitable to present the house with 400-500 capacity, for the use of Greek and Bulgarian refugees.<sup>90</sup> This asylum was later referred as “*Lord Stratford de Redcliffe Asylum*” and sheltered 1,000 refugees.

***Orphanage:*** In the second half of the nineteenth century massive immigration waves were the fundamental reasons behind the increase in the number of the orphans in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the first industrial orphanages (*islahane*) were instituted due to the influx after the 1860’s and immigration always had an effect on the inmate populations of these institutions of the government.<sup>91</sup> Enormous and sudden rise of the quantity of the destitute children was also one of the most unfortunate results of the 1877- 1878 Russo-Turkish War. There are many records of abandoned children in the town centres and on the roads. A variety of solutions were sought both by the Ottoman officials and the committees of the Compassionate Fund, such as encouraging fugitive families to take care of an orphan from their village<sup>92</sup> and

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<sup>90</sup> Report of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1878, cited in Dunstan Dunstan, p. 201.

<sup>91</sup> Nazan Maksudyan, “Hearing the Voiceless – Seeing the Invisible: Orphans and Destitute Children as Actors of Social, Economic and Political History in the Late Ottoman Empire”, unpublished PhD Thesis, Sabanci University, 2008, pp. 207-208.

<sup>92</sup> “*I promised a small weekly allowance to any family from the neighbourhood of Sou-Seeskee, who would take charge for the winter of one small child, a native of that village. Her name is Aythe, she is seven years of age, and her father’s name was Ibrahim; it is feared that he and all her relations have been murdered by Cossacks or Bulgarians.*” Report of Capt. Synge, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1877, Schumla cited in Dunstan, pp. 37-38.

establishment of new orphanages. Orphanages did not only save many children but also relieved other adult refugees from remorse, since the conditions were too harsh to let any family to take care of an additional child. The founding of the orphanage in Filibe was a depicted example from the Consul's report.

After the capture of the city by the Russians and the means of transportation and communication with the centre of the Fund were cut off, the British relief agents decided to establish an asylum for the considerable number of orphan refugees. When the report was written by Mr. Calvert, it had been in existence for about five weeks and he could give some details on the mechanism.

According to the Consul, the orphanage cost considerably little since the attendants were also refugees who worked in return for food, clothing and shelter. It was under the direction of a young Ottoman surgeon called Hilmi Effendi who was sincerely committed to his job and worked for 4 *Ottoman Liras* a month.

There were ninety children of both sexes at the time. The admission process was well organized and meticulous; orphans were washed, shaved and newly clothed. The consul emphasised the fact that there was a conspicuous improvement in their appearances after a few days of nourishment, care and rest. The proof of the good sanitary conditions was the absence of typhus within the orphans. In addition to all the human zeal of the functionaries, children who were old enough were being taught how to read and write. Hilmi Effendi undertook the duty of teaching as well kept them occupied.

From the tone of the confidential, it is understood that establishment of an orphanage was not an order of the Ambassador Layard, but rather a regional initiative. It is also worth mentioning that this establishment was contributed to by

the Russian general, who demanded the administration to accept Christian children as well. The Committee agreed to do so if there appeared to be some in an equal state of hardship. Assistance was received from Dr. Minassian of the Stafford House Committee which turned this establishment into one of those of institutions of cooperation among different British committees of relief.<sup>93</sup>

As understood from the limited sources on the subject, the Ottoman government took over the maintenance of the orphans after the cessation of the Turkish Compassionate Fund's operations. The correspondences of *Dahiliye Nezareti*, the Ottoman Interior Ministry, dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1878, shows that the expenses were undertaken by the *Idare-i Muhacirin*, the immigrant administration.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.2.3. The Content of Relief

The operations of the Turkish Compassionate Fund were based on the endeavour to convey the means of relief to the needy refugees. They were namely food, medicine, clothing, charcoal and money.

**Food:** The necessity of feeding the refugees has been examined under the title of "Soup Kitchens and Bakeries". In this part, food is considered as an item of relief and different examples are given to draw a general picture. "The tide of misery and starvation beats heavily against the walls of Sofia just now" stated the correspondent

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<sup>93</sup> Report of Consul Calvert, March 17<sup>th</sup> 1878, Philipopolis cited in Dunstan, pp. 130-135.

<sup>94</sup> B.O.A.. Y. A. Res. 1/50

of *The Times* on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1877 and continued: “Mr. Master is administering the Turkish Compassionate Fund with great judgement and admirable effect.” According to him, the provisions were surprisingly cheap, “expenditure of three farthing per diem suffices to provide the 2,000 refugees now quartered in the town with sufficient quantity of nourishing soup”, he claimed and further stated that he actually tasted the soup and found the compound quite satisfactory.<sup>95</sup>

British Vice-consul Calvert reported from Plovdiv that the refugees who fled their towns before the Russian occupation were returning in great numbers. The Compassionate Fund immediately began to distribute rations to them. In order to ensure that the supplies last a little longer, bread was the only item that could be distributed. Nevertheless these sufferers were extremely grateful. By the first week of February 5,000 rations were being distributed daily.<sup>96</sup> Agents of the Compassionate Fund were trying to deploy the most nourishing food in their capabilities and always expressed their sincere pleasure in the report when they could gain better nourishing ailment for lower prices.<sup>97</sup>

In early 1880, when the activities of the Turkish Compassionate Fund supposed to be concluded, we still see consular reports informing the centre about the relief efforts that were still being carried out. Consul Brophy wrote to Layard, informing him on the recent provision sent by the Porte with a special attendant Ismail Bey. The tone of this report reveals that the Consul was not content with the method used by Ismail Bey in the distribution of 15,000 okes of flour. He had given 15 okes to each Muslim family which was supposedly enough for two months.

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<sup>95</sup> “The Army of Sofia”, *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> December 1877, p. 8.

<sup>96</sup> FO424/ 69 Confidential (3625), pp.71-72, No. 120/1, Şimşir, I, pp. 397-400.

<sup>97</sup> An example to that: Consul Reade informed Layard about distribution of a very cheap and local soup called “*Burghal*”, made of wheat and butter. Dunstan, p. 40.



“Although the amount would be, if economically used sufficient for the term mentioned” said Brophy, “I am afraid that as families have received ‘at once’ as much as two 120 okes each, they will not unnaturally sell part of it to buy soap, linen, and other minor necessaries, and that I shall have them again on my hands before twenty days are past.”<sup>98</sup>

**Medicine:** Lack of proper sanitary conditions, nutrition, shelter to protect either from the cold or the heat and living in crowds, naturally turned the issue of health into a profound problem of the refugees. Apart from individual sicknesses, easily spreading epidemics such as typhoid, typhus and small-pox were common. Death did not usually mean the end of the threat of oneself since in many cases the bodies were not properly buried.<sup>99</sup> The major scarcity was not generally the doctor but the necessary medicines.

Distribution of medicine among the '93 Refugees was carried out by the British relief agencies specialized in sanitary affairs and their employees were doctors to a great extent. However, the Turkish Compassionate Fund rendered a similar service in accordance with its abilities. Quinine as an antipyretic, was very much needed in all cases, was distributed as much as could be obtained by the British relief agencies.<sup>100</sup> In March 1878, Consul Reade wrote a letter to the ambassador, asking for a doctor to be sent to Varna, bringing with him the necessary supplies; chloroform for anaesthesia, and carbolic acid for wounds and disinfection

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<sup>98</sup> Report of Consul Brophy, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1880, *Lulé Bourgas* cited in Dunstan, p. 169.

<sup>99</sup> İpek, p. 92.

<sup>100</sup> “We distributed a considerable number of doses of quinine, leaving them a tumblerful of it ready mixed, to be taken, a tablespoonful at a time, every second hour...” Report of Col. Blunt, October 1877, *Kesanlık* cited in Dunstan, pp. 65-71.

purposes.<sup>101</sup> The cargo of the *Constance* included a considerable amount of medical supplies such as £900 worth of quinine and £100 of cinchona wine.<sup>102</sup>

**Clothing:** The majority of refugees were women and children, who had been subject to maltreatment and a variety of hardness through their compulsory journeys. They were often described as “naked” or “half-naked” in fact many reports depicted them covering their bodies only with rags. None of the reports include why the loss of clothing was so common, and it is not simple to understand the connotation of “naked”, which was probably referring to “not having any proper garments”. In autumn 1877, as the War was continuing clothing became a pressing need due to the coming winter. It was impossible to acquire anything in the district under occupation or in row for it.<sup>103</sup>

In some instances supplying provisions and nutriment was left to local authorities and providing clothing and covers for the refugees was undertaken by the Compassionate Fund.<sup>104</sup> Certain quantities of clothing items were brought by *Constance* from England, however in general the making of the cloths was duty of the Ladies Committee. Captain Synge, one of the commanding officers of the Ottoman Gendarmerie under Baker Pasha, emphasised the great need for clothing in his report from Şumla. Bales were soon sent to him from Istanbul and distributed according to the needs of the families.<sup>105</sup> Twenty six bales of clothing brought from Varna by Consul Reade were distributed in Şumla, Osmanpazar, Eski Cuma, and

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<sup>101</sup> Report of Consul Reade, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1878, Varna cited in Dunstan, pp. 43-44.

<sup>102</sup> B.O.A, Y. PRK. KOM 1/8; B.O.A, Y. PRK. KOM 1/8, Cargo of *Constance*, Dunstan, appendix lvxxxi. See appendix L and P.

<sup>103</sup> Report of Capt. Synge, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Schumla cited in Dunstan, pp. 35-37.

<sup>104</sup> Report of Calvert, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Philippopolis cited in Dunstan, p. 106.

<sup>105</sup> Report of Capt. Synge, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1877, Schumla cited in Dunstan, p. 37.

Hazargrad (Razgrad). He asked for different sizes of shoes since most of the people were barefoot.<sup>106</sup> News of cloth distribution in Sofia found place in *The Times*, which must have been a great relief in the middle of the winter.<sup>107</sup>

On one hand clothing was referred to as the most urgent need of the refugees, unless the garments were immediately provided people were in danger of freezing; but on the other hand, extreme conditions of humanity did not totally preclude the human wishes of people sounding rather ironic. Turkish women were reluctant to wear or adopt for their children any garments but those in accordance with local fashion, thus the agents of relief had to make the necessary modifications.<sup>108</sup> The ample stocks of clothing from England was distributed but not worn because the European style of garments showed that “the charity had been given and accepted”. It was better to sell the donated cloths and purchase local ones with the acquired money. At first the agents of the fund purchased the clothing in the local bazaars, but local merchants could supply neither the range nor the quantity of clothing required. Thus, the Ladies Committee in Istanbul diverted its full energy to cloth making.<sup>109</sup>

Detailed orders were part of the mission, Consul Blunt wrote to the British Ambassador and asked for winter clothes for at least 1,000 women and children and gave the following details: “These materials should consist of very coarse flannel in the piece, calico, and American cloth, and common muslin for yashmaks... The stuff should be done up in small bales and forwarded...”<sup>110</sup> The variety of clothes

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<sup>106</sup> Report of Consul Reade, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Schumla cited in Dunstan, p. 40.

<sup>107</sup> “The Army of Sofia”, *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> December 1877, p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> Report of Consul Reade January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1878, Schumla, Dunstan, p. 41.

<sup>109</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 178.

<sup>110</sup> Report of Consul Blunt, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Kesanlik cited in Dunstan, p. 69.

mentioned catches the eye in one of the Consul Blunt's reports and he narrated to have distributed "children's drawers, babies' shirts, women's shirts and suits".<sup>111</sup>

The cost of the clothing was mentioned in one of the reports from Filibe, which gave an idea of the expenses in general: Clothing for one peasant women cost "£T1", meaning one Turkish Lira on average and half of that for children.<sup>112</sup> A report consisting of information on the same subject was issued by Consul Calvert, who stated the unit cost as 65 piastres for Turks and 100 piastres for Bulgarians. The reason behind the difference between the two was explained by varying needs.<sup>113</sup>

**Charcoal:** As stated earlier, there was an extreme lack of proper shelters for '93 Refugees, thus the perishing cold weather caused serious injuries of frostbite as well as death. In most of the reports, the question of fuel for the winter was repeated. The agents of the Turkish Compassionate Fund tried to buy charcoal before the arrival of the winter season in order to keep the expenditures at the lowest level and maximize the benefit of the current resources. Fuel was stated to be the second most urgent item of relief after clothing and before nourishment in Şumla.<sup>114</sup> In Istanbul, Henry Layard in cooperation with Ahmed Vefik Pasha, purchased a large stock of charcoal before the price rose.<sup>115</sup> Consul Calvert reported from Edirne his achievement to obtain the best quality of charcoal at relatively low cost and added, "The poor refugees are delighted with it, and call it the charcoal of the Queen of England..."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Report of Col. Blunt, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Constantinople cited in Dunstan Dunstan, p. 74.

<sup>112</sup> Report of Consul Reade, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Schumla, cited in Dunstan Dunstan, p. 102.

<sup>113</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 178.

<sup>114</sup> Dunstan, p. 40.

<sup>115</sup> Kuneralp, *Layard Memoirs*.

<sup>116</sup> Letter of Calvert, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1880, Adrianople cited in Dunstan, p. 170.

**Money:** Reports on the British relief carried out in different parts of the Ottoman Empire made it apparent that the prior inclination of the agents of the Compassionate Fund was to make an ideal use of the financial sources by giving out actual provision. Although distributing money was not a preferred option, in cases when the fund did so, the distribution followed a pattern similar to that of cloths. It was done using a list ranking the most deprived and approved by the local authorities.<sup>117</sup>

Mr. Master's report constituted an interesting example on the issue. He reported from Sofia on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1878 that he gave a little money to each fugitive family as they were suddenly leaving the town on the Russian approach. Apparently he was not comfortable with his action and wrote "I had intended not giving money to any refugee, but if I have gone beyond my instructions I hope your Excellency will forgive me, as I could not stand by and see these people leave without anything". The Ottoman government disposed in the service of Master fifty cards of travellers passes.<sup>118</sup> There were cases when the money was distributed to the refugees for a certain purpose, for instance to enable them to return their hometowns and villages. The committee in Philipopolis decided to set apart a sum of 10,000 *piastres* which was to be spent for the refugee women to join their relatives in distant parts of the province.

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<sup>117</sup> "With the concurrence of the 'International Relief Committee' I have distributed, up to present time, about £T100 to the most distressed of the Turkish refugees. The Committee was of opinion that this would for the present be the most suitable mode of relief, the recipients being all women and Mussulmans, and therefore not likely to spend the money in drink." Dunstan, p. 103.

<sup>118</sup>"Condition of Sofia: Abandonment of town by civil population Mr. Masters Report", Layard to Derby, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, FO 78/ 2775, No. 11.

#### 4.2.4. Mission of *Constance*

The Turkish Compassionate Fund collected subscriptions, transferred to Istanbul in order to enable its agents in the Ottoman Empire to purchase the necessary items and carry out their operations. Somehow, its mission in Britain did not always stay limited to fund raising.

William Ashmead Bartlett, who was a close friend of Baroness Burdett Coutts, also a member of the circle of her secretariat and later to be her husband<sup>119</sup>, came to the Ottoman capital in the capacity of “special commissioner” of the Fund. He travelled in a yacht called *Constance*, a well-known yacht owned by Mr. P. Lowett, who kindly placed her at the disposal of Baroness Burdett-Coutts, left Southampton on 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1877<sup>120</sup> and sailed her at his expense to Istanbul.<sup>121</sup> The ship was full with a wide range of supplies donated by British beneficients which were handy for the relief operations.

The Cargo was collected in Southampton under the superintendence of John Sapsford, received on board by William Baker who also made the voyage and assisted the unloading in Istanbul. The yacht, brimful with boxes, bales and bags, encountered two great storms and reached its final destination a little delayed, in mid November, with all of her cargo safe and sound.<sup>122</sup> The cargo was firstly arranged and stored in the Mehmed Ali Khan in Galata and had been charged under the superintendence of a gentleman called Horace Guarraciano.<sup>123</sup> Ashmead Bartlett, as

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<sup>119</sup> Edna, pp. 186-187.

<sup>120</sup> *The Times*, 6 October 1877, p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> Dunstan, p. 186.

<sup>122</sup> The news of its arrival was published in *Basiret* on the 9th December 1877 (3 Zilhicce 1294) but Lady Layard recoded that they hosted Ashmead Bartlett in the Embassy on the 19th November 1877. Kunalp (ed.), *Twixt Pera and Therapia, the Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010, p. 71.

<sup>123</sup> Dunstan, p. 187.

the special commissioner, set out on an inspection tour through the centres of relief of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. He could only reach up to Tatarpazarcık when Plevne fell.<sup>124</sup> In April 1878, he came down with typhus and returned to England.

#### **4.2.5. Centres of Significance**

Refugees fleeing their homes in Rumelia, headed generally to the regions or the towns which seemed less likely to be occupied by the Russians. However, when the course of events proved to be unfavourable for the Ottomans, corteges had to continue moving south and east firstly to Filibe, then further to heartland of the Empire, to Edirne and finally to Istanbul.

***Edirne:*** The Administration of the Compassionate Fund was much more complete and satisfactory at Edirne than anywhere else. It was not only due to the early organization of a relief committee and the commitment of its members but also because of the geographical factors. The town was in some distance to the earlier theatres of the war, thus the operations of the fund started in relative tranquillity. Moreover, since Edirne is close to Istanbul, supplies could reach there with promptitude and regularity.

***Istanbul:*** The case of Istanbul was somehow different. Until the end of 1877, distress and burden was relatively easy compared to other regions closer to the scenes of battle. Therefore those functionaries of the Compassionate Fund located in the Ottoman capital either dealt with the requirements of the out-stations or made the

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<sup>124</sup> Dunstan, p. 128.

preparations for the expected pressure of refugees in this city.<sup>125</sup> Eventually, as the inflow of the refugees proceeded eastwards, the capital turned into a pool of fugitives in the most miserable phase. That is why Istanbul was recorded as the centre where the British relief to '93 Refugees reached its peak.

Three names are notable in this manner; Major Francis de Winton, military attaché to the British Embassy, Robert Master and Enid Layard. Admirable zeal of Lady Layard will be studied in detail in the following chapter, but the achievements by these gentlemen shall be mentioned here. Major de Winton and Mr. Master accomplished a great deal of work in the “Baroness Burdett Coutts Asylum” near Sirkeci Station where they relieved thousands of new arrivals.<sup>126</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1878, *The Times* correspondent wrote from Pera that 20,000 fugitives arrived at Constantinople in one week and both the Turkish Compassionate Fund and the Stafford House Committee under the direction of Major de Winton and Mr. Stoney were doing their bests to relieve them.<sup>127</sup> On the following day another letter was also sent from Pera, this time the emphasis was on the need of funds by the British relief societies. It was mentioned in a variety of British historical sources that, despite the devastating conditions, the city was

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<sup>125</sup> Dunstan, p. 190.

<sup>126</sup> “Major de Winton, with a devotion and self-sacrifice beyond praise, assisted by the members of Embassy, whom able to leave their heavy work, and by Mr. Master, an English gentleman who has rendered most valuable help in the distribution of the Compassionate Fund, has laboured indefatigably, night and day to succour and relieve the unhappy fugitives arriving continuously by train in Constantinople. They are mostly women and children. There is scarcely more than five per cent of men. They include persons in the better classes of life, as well as the poorest inhabitants of the villages. They come here in the utmost destitution. They are seen with their famishing children searching for dry bones, or any refuse to appease their hunger.” Layard to Derby, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 78/2776, No. 70.

<sup>127</sup> *The Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1878, p. 5.



disconcertingly quite, perished fugitives were tranquil and patient, permanent residents were more considerate than could be expected.<sup>128</sup>

A British citizen, Arthur E. Guest, who had recently been to Istanbul had written to the Editor of *The Times* on the situation in the city. He stated that during the last month about 50,000 refugees were fed and clothed by the Compassionate Fund in its three houses. In addition to his number, thousands more were relieved on the railway line between Edirne and Istanbul.<sup>129</sup> William Ashmead-Bartlett stated the number of people relived daily in “Constantinople”<sup>130</sup>, in his report of January 1878:

Lady Burdett- Coutts’ Asylum	1,428
Galata Soup Kitchen	2,500
Makri Kioi	600
Villages in the Bosphorus	300
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Total daily relief	4.828 people <sup>131</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1878, Mr. Bartlett recapitulated the “daily relief work of the Fund” in Istanbul as follows:

Three asylums, housing, feeding, warming and partially clothing over 3,000 people.  
 Four hospitals, including small-pox hospital of 80 beds. This number will probably be increased to five, which will give a total of between 400-500 beds.  
 Relief in soup to 2,000 refugees daily on the Pera side of the Golden Horn.  
 Various smaller and more scattered systems of relief.  
 Finally, relief in bread to 10,000 people daily.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>128</sup> *The Times*, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1878, p. 5.

<sup>129</sup> “Refugees at Constantinople”, *The Times*, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1878, p. 8.

<sup>130</sup> The list contains only the district in the European side of Istanbul, and referred to it as Constantinople. It does not include the relief distributed in Asiatic coast; Üsküdar and Çamlıca.

<sup>131</sup> Report of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Constantinople cited in Dunstan, p. 202.

<sup>132</sup> Report of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Constantinople cited in Dunstan, p. 207.

#### 4.2.6. Ahmed Vefik Pasha

Ahmed Vefik Pasha was the most important Ottoman character in the history of the Compassionate Fund. He had a long standing acquaintance with the British Ambassador Henry Layard, dating back to the early 1840s when Layard was a young agent of the British Embassy, and Ahmed Vefik was a young clerk, an *efendi*, in the *Tercüme Odası*. Owing to Ahmed Vefik's background of European education and liberal ideas, those two young men spent many evenings together reading and having intellectual conversations.<sup>133</sup> During the crucial period of 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War, Ahmed Vefik was firstly the president of the Ottoman Parliament, then the governor of Edirne and was finally appointed as the prime minister with the simultaneous capacity of the minister of interior, by the Sultan Abdülhamid II.<sup>134</sup>

Both because of their friendship with the British Ambassador and the offices that the Pasha held in the Ottoman government, Ahmed Vefik was involved in the Compassionate Fund's transactions. During the period of extensive relief, a smear campaign against him sprang among the British public. The rumours accusing him of encouraging the execution of Bulgarian prisoners and his disbursement of the resources of the Fund reached a level where Layard felt the necessity to defend his old friend.<sup>135</sup> Forwarding a despatch from Vice Consul of Edirne, Mr. Dupuis, to British Foreign Secretary Lord Derby, Layard openly stated his opinion on the issue. This letter and its attachment were published in *The Times* of December 25<sup>th</sup> 1877. According to Layard, Ahmed Vefik had given him "most valuable assistance and

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<sup>133</sup> Austin Henry Layard, *Sir A. Henry Layard, G.C.B., D.C.L.: Autobiography and Letters from his Childhood until his Appointment as H. M. Ambassador at Madrid*, London: J. Murray, 1903, pp. 44-46.

<sup>134</sup> "Ahmed Vefik Paşa", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, V. II, Istanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yay., 1989, pp. 147-148.

<sup>135</sup> A similar incident took place few months ago for Stafford House Committee and will be further recounted under that chapter.

advice” in employing the fund placed at his disposal “for the relief of fugitive women and children, Muslim and Christians”. Pasha had himself distributed a considerable quantity of food, cloths, and other necessities which were confided to him by Layard. The British Ambassador had also touched upon the sensitive issue of the execution of Bulgarian prisoners in Edirne. Despite the accusations of encouragement, Pasha was innocent in Layard’s eyes, to him Ahmed Vefik was not given the authority he was expecting and his efforts for intervention had failed.<sup>136</sup>

Additionally, in his report attached to Layard’s letters to London, Consul Dupuis exclusively talked about the “humane and unostentatious endeavour of Ahmed Vefyk Pasha”. According to the Consul, relief work was turned into a hobby by the Governor-General. Pasha was relieving every needy person without any discrimination. He distributed numerous items of clothing to the refugees and he made the intelligent move to buy fuel and store it for the winter before the weather got too cold and the prices had risen.

Ahmed Vefik also made some remarkable attempts for the future of the ’93 Refugees, while relieving them he also pulled them into production system and tried to make them self-sufficient. He provided the distressed women by the raw materials for making woollen socks and afterwards purchased the socks in order to encourage habits of industry. He made use of these women for making under jackets for soldiers. For some of the male refugees, he distributed small sums of money to enable them bring their crops and others he employed to repair roads. According to Dupuis, Pasha was in the habit of visiting refugee asylums and hospitals regularly.

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<sup>136</sup> “Ahmed Vefyk Pasha”, *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> December 1877, p. 8.

Vice-Consul finished his letter with the following words; “I consider money given to him for charitable purposes as money well laid.”<sup>137</sup>

Layard’s letter found place in the activity report book published in 1883, with the following introduction:

In the beginning of November, at the suggestion of Sir Henry Layard, a soup kitchen, under the management of Vice-Consul Dupuis, was established, and proved to be a great success. It was all the more needed, as the charities which had been disbursed by Ahmed Vefyk Pasha came to an end now, though subsequently some of the resources of the Fund were distributed through his instrumentality. As he was subjected to a considerable amount of unmerited abuse in the columns of a section of the English press, it is only right that the official defence of him and his conduct generally, made by Sir Henry Layard, should find place here.<sup>138</sup>

### **4.3. Achievements of the Fund**

It would certainly be inadequate to underestimate the Funds achievements. From the very beginning, constitution of such an initiative was a great motivation and a tool of courage to ask for more funds. From time to time, Henry Layard did not hesitate to ask for the announcement of the conditions of refugees in the Ottoman Empire and accented the fact that the relief given by Baroness Burdett-Coutts was the only one they could get.

Numbers do not always help to understand the efficiency of a relief project; in the case of the ‘93 War they were important due to the fact that the fundamental problem about the sudden flow of immigrants was their great numbers. As stated

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<sup>137</sup> Despatch from Vice-Consul Dupuis in Edirne to Henry Layard on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1877. *The Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> December 1877, p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> Dunstan, p. 162.

earlier, only in the European part of Istanbul, 5,000 refugees were daily relieved in January 1878, which covered the majority of the daily arrivals by railways.

Relief was not limited to those who fled their home, but also given to ones that headed back. Returning families to Sophia were in conditions worse than ever. At the time being neither the relief previously given by the Ottoman authorities was not replaced by the intruder Russians, nor was the sources of the Compassionate Fund renewed. M. Durand from Sofia voiced a relief project for the returning refugees to resume their agricultural labour which would “crown the humane work of the Compassionate Fund”. He suggested providing each village a certain number of oxen, and each family with maize and corn for sowing. “By these” he said; “the mean would find their present position more tolerable and their future hopeful. As for women, a distribution of clothing would suffice, as the season is approaching”.<sup>139</sup>

The Turkish Compassionate Fund did not only finance the operations carried out directly by its agents or committees, it also ensured the financial resources for the Ladies Committee, which was initiated under the auspices of Lady Layard and commenced its activities with preparing medical supplies for Ottoman soldiers evolved into a sub-committee of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. This important committee will be thoroughly examined in the following chapter however what is needed to be mentioned here is that Henry Layard allotted about £1,700 of the funds for the purchase of the materials that the Ladies Committee needed.<sup>140</sup> Owing to the disastrous and protracted course of the war, the Ottoman government had to suspend a great portion of the relief that it had been giving to the refugees. The local authorities announced ceasing the distribution of daily rations and had to neglect any

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<sup>139</sup> Letter of M. Durand, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1878, Sofia cited in Dunstan, p. 91.

<sup>140</sup> Dunstan, p. 174.

other kind of reported necessity. Under these conditions, Ahmed Vefik Pasha, who was the prime minister at the time, asked for a sum of money from the Turkish Compassionate Fund to continue governmental relief. Henry Layard found it appropriate since the fundamental duty of the fund was ensuring the well-being of the refugees.<sup>141</sup>

A vast majority of the relief of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was carried out in Istanbul and the western district of Rumelia, but the Fund made relatively minor contributions to towns in Anatolia and the Arab provinces such as ; Erzurum, Antep, Ankara, Izmir and Aleppo.<sup>142</sup> Numerous demonstrations of gratitude of the refugees that received relief from the British consuls were narrated in the reports. One of the very lively scenes was in *Loftça* (Lovech):

On our departure the next morning, many of the recipients came to their doors, holding up their children in order that they might see us, and, slightly drawing their old feridjees on one side, showed us that they were wearing their new shirts; and we left them, showering blessings on our heads, and with their eyes blinded with tears.<sup>143</sup>

***Difficulties faced by the Agents of Relief:*** Participating in the relief work was not a smooth process for the British. As they were living in a belligerent county, they naturally faced many difficulties like scarcity of food, prevalence of epidemics and lack of security. They were threatened just like any other Ottoman subject, perhaps even more due to constant contact with the perished refugees and extreme fatigue. As Dorothy Anderson put it, “It was a sad fact to record, but the volunteers had needed

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<sup>141</sup> Report of Mr. Burdett-Coutts (Ashmead Bartlett), February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1878 cited in Dunstan, p. 206.

<sup>142</sup> Dunstan, pp. 230-236.

<sup>143</sup> Report of Col. Blunt, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Constantinople cited in Dunstan, p. 74.

beside the positive virtues of courage, devotion, and enterprise, an extra intangible quality, resistance to disease.”<sup>144</sup>

In the towns subject to the Russian occupation they usually had to run away on army’s approach just like the Ottoman people. Those agents of relief, Consuls in most of the cases had to cope with local momentary tendencies and defend themselves. For instance, at one of the stations, some frantic men threatened Mr. Master with violence if the bread was not distributed.<sup>145</sup>

William Ashmead Bartlett, special commissioner to the Fund, who brought supplies in Constance and kept on working for an additional two months as special commissioner of the Compassionate Fund, was attacked by typhoid fever and became seriously ill. He was the fourteenth agent of relief who had caught the epidemic. Mr. Bartlett had to return England in June 1878, since he could not totally recover to continue to work. An even more regrettable development was the death of Mr. Robert P. Master, a deeply committed agent of the British relief since the commencement of the Fund’s operations, also became a victim of typhoid while distributing relief to the refugees.<sup>146</sup>

#### **4.4. End of Operations: “As you have done to us, so may God do to you and your houses forever”**

Frequent activities of the Compassionate Fund started to decelerate by the spring of 1877. A confidential letter written by Henry Layard to the British Foreign

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<sup>144</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 206.

<sup>145</sup> Dunstan, p. 192.

<sup>146</sup> Dunstan, pp. 213-216.

secretary dated April 16<sup>th</sup> 1878 explained the reasons behind the downsizing of the Fund:

... The 'Compassionate Fund', founded by Baroness Burdett Coutts, which has done so much for the unfortunate Mussulman fugitives during the winter, and has been the means of saving many thousands of lives, can no longer contribute to their relief except by supporting one or two hospitals. Of the persons who have been employed in administering this fund, no less than fourteen have been struck down with typhus fever, and it would be impossible to continue the work supposing there were the means for doing so, without the greatest risk to those engaged in it. The atmosphere in the Mosque of St. Sophia, for instance, is absolutely poisonous, and the condition of the place beyond description...<sup>147</sup>

Towards to middle of the May 1878, the operations were ceased. According to the records of the Compassionate Fund, the total of the subscription that was received by Henry Layard was about £40,000 and £9,000 was the residual sum. The Ambassador decided to retain this money in order to obtain a more permanent character for the Fund and deal with future emergencies. Food distribution could not be continued and all the relief works had to be limited to the narrowest level. During the following summer, Henry Layard spent £2,000 on the hospital maintenances, and a stock of warm clothing.<sup>148</sup>

The administration of the remaining of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was assigned to a committee of three, Mr. Guarracino, Mr Wrench and Mr. Hanson. Their decisions did not entail the reference of the Ambassador in regular proceedings, unless the matter was massive. During the winter of 1878-1879, some minor scale operations took place. Despite the time passed, the commissioner of the fund reported that there were still 100,000 refugees in Istanbul, and their conditions were

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<sup>147</sup> Layard to Salisbury, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1878, Constantinople, F.O. 424/69, Confidential (3625), pp. 308-309, No.577, Şimşir, *I*, p.410-2

<sup>148</sup> Dunstan, p. 216.



had not improved.<sup>149</sup> Consecutive reports on the operations of the Fund initially came to an end with a final one written by an engineer to inform the Fund on the employment of the refugees on road repairs at Pera, thus providing them some income.<sup>150</sup>

From the middle of the year 1878, the work of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was diminished. However in 1880, as a result of an appeal by the imperial commissioner of the Ottoman railways, received by the Consul General Blunt in Salonika, £1,000 was authorized in Consul Blunt's disposal for the aid of the refugees in this district.<sup>151</sup>

The financial dimension of the Turkish Compassionate Fund's operations can be done as follows:

The accounts covered a period of 23 months, which began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1877 and ended on July 31<sup>st</sup> of 1879. The total amount of money that Layard received in Istanbul in the name of the Compassionate fund was calculated as £43,394. The sum remitted from Great Britain to Istanbul by *Messrs. Coutts*<sup>152</sup> was £34,001 and the gap between those two numbers represented the subscription that the Ambassador received from India and elsewhere. The report book contained several lists of expenditures which are fairly explanatory.<sup>153</sup>

Those who founded and sustained the Turkish Compassionate Fund did not intend to achieve ephemeral benefaction. Even though during the process of the operations, it was not easy to keep this dimension constantly in mind, longer lasting

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<sup>149</sup> Report of Horrace Gurraciono, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Constantinople cited in Dunstan, pp. 216-219.

<sup>150</sup> Report of Engineer Isidore Radziwoowicz, July 1879, Constantinople cited in Dunstan, pp. 222-223.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from Mr. Cooper, Salonica, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1880, Dunstan, pp. 92-93.

<sup>152</sup> The Bank of the Coutts Family.

<sup>153</sup> Dunstan, p. 225; see appendix M

results somehow emerged in the form of *Women's Work Establishment*. The embroidery making skills of refugee women was noticed and turned into a mean to earn their living by the benevolent English ladies of Constantinople. This foundation was a product of the Ladies Committee which can be considered a branch of the Compassionate Fund but was an independent organism within itself. Its work did not end with the operations of the Compassionate Fund but continued and expanded.<sup>154</sup> “No one concerned then thought” said Zacaroff, “that it was one day to develop into the beautiful industry which should continue for years to provide honourable employment and self-respecting support to many hundreds who had been recipients of its bounty only<sup>155</sup>.” *Women's Work Establishment* shall be further examined under the Ladies Committee.

Personal feelings of satisfaction and gratitude of both British and the Ottomans found place in records. On the side of the British, the sentiments of a leading agent of relief, Consul Reade, expressed in his final report to Layard deserve a mention:

I have received various telegrams and letters of thanks from the chiefs of the refugees who never ceased blessing Lady Burdett-Coutts and your Excellency, and it only now remains for me to thank your Excellency for having afforded me the satisfaction of being the channel of relief to the distress of a large number of brave, honest, and patient people, whose suffering come from no fault of their own, and reflect everlasting infamy on the authors, and the sight of which will never be effaced from my memory.

When those innocent victims of war, extremely thankful on the reception of the relief, heard that the majority of the fund was contributed by “a single English

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<sup>154</sup> Dunstan, pp. 227-228.

<sup>155</sup> Cariclee Zacaroff, “The Turkish Compassionate Fund” Eagle, Mary Kavanaugh Oldham (ed.), *The Congress of Women: Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U. S. A., 1893*, Chicago: Monarch Book Company, 1894, pp. 618-622.

lady, who had been deeply grieved at an account of the sufferings” they asked for the name of “*the English Khanem*<sup>156</sup>” in order to pray for her.<sup>157</sup>

The Ottoman Ambassador in London, Musurus Pasha, constantly informed the Porte on the charitable attempts and developments for the '93 Refugees and these reports were responded with official gratitude. For instance, as soon as the Sultan became aware of the establishment of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, Musurus Pasha was ordered to express His Majesties gratification and compliments, hence paid a visit to Baroness Burdett Coutts on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1877.<sup>158</sup> Throughout the war, imperial edicts were issued to exhibit the pleasure of the Sultan for the sincere contribution of the British people.<sup>159</sup> The Sultan also rewarded some of the agents of the Compassionate Fund<sup>160</sup>

*Sermaye-i Şefkat-i Osmaniye*, The Turkish Compassionate Fund, stimulated the Sultan to institute a new decoration the Order of Mercy, to be given only to women for their benevolence. The name “*Şefkat Nişanı*” was chosen for this new order, which meant “Order of Compassion” with the direct translation, must have been inspired by the title of the Fund itself.<sup>161</sup> The Sultan showed his gratification by sending one of these first class orders to Baroness Burdett Coutts through his ambassador in London.<sup>162</sup> Edna Healey commented that it was the “most exotic honour” that the Baroness ever received.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Khanem, (Hanım) means “lady” in Turkish.

<sup>157</sup> Dunstan, p. 103.

<sup>158</sup> B. O. A. Y. PRK. 1/65; HR. TO. 59/31

<sup>159</sup> B. O. A. İ. HR. 274/ 16604; İ. HR. 275/ 16769.

<sup>160</sup> İ. HR. 275/16746

<sup>161</sup> Şefkat Nişanı will be examined under the title of the *Ladies Committee*.

<sup>162</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 197; Dunstan, p. 183.

<sup>163</sup> Healey, p. 186.

The story of the Turkish Compassionate Fund was a delectable combination of British philanthropic culture with international humanitarian awareness, the feeling of necessity to express political presence and a subliminal mission of image and prestige of British nation. Some contributed only to heal the suffering of the innocent victims of the war whereas the other did in order to improve the negative image of its people in the eyes of the Ottomans. Some wanted to support them against the Russian but did not want to be involved any aspect of the fighting. Reports occasionally included the feeling of remorse, since the British were claimed to have permitted this catastrophe by not backing the Ottoman Empire against the Russians. But at the end it was a timely humanitarian intervention with sincere endeavour, and must have certainly benefited both the sufferers and the benefactors. The following excerpt from the report book is a clear manifestation of the feelings among refugees towards the British philanthropists:

To those whose large-hearted benevolence has rescued so many from misery and death, it cannot fail to be a source off deep satisfaction, that their charity has borne such lasting fruit, and that thousands and thousands should hold them in grateful remembrance, and should pray in their beautiful oriental form, ‘As you have done to us, so may God do to you and your houses forever.’<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Dunstan, p. 229.

## CHAPTER V

### UNPREMEDITATED ASSISTANCE

“The Turkish Compassionate Fund was not the sole organization, nor were its agents the only gentlemen, on the work of relief for the refugees” said Dorothy Anderson, in her book *The Balkan Volunteers*.<sup>1</sup> However, the fund was founded specially for the ‘93 Refugees and acted as the main British agency of their assistance.

In the first chapter of this study, Ottoman relief efforts both by the government and the private initiatives were briefly mentioned. Additionally, the significance of the British contributions to the International Fund was also touched upon. This chapter deals with other institutions of British relief, which were not founded for the purpose of assisting the refugees, but under the extraordinary conditions of the ‘93 War found themselves helping these non-combatant victims of the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson & Co, 1968, p. 197.

## **5.1. The Ladies Committee**

### **5.1.1. The Origins of the Committee and Its Changing Role**

News of the first battles of '93 War reached all the European capitals accompanied by the accounts of the suffering wounded and sick soldiers. The medical services of the Ottoman army were extremely inadequate, lacking the personal as well as the equipment and was almost without any organization. It was not long before the news of suffering of the non-combatants, mainly Muslim but also Jews and Christians, was also heard. Some members of the English colony in Istanbul could not remain indifferent to this humanitarian distress caused by the ongoing war and Lady Layard was one of the most remarkable examples.

Lady Enid Layard was the wife of the British Ambassador to the Porte and she kept a journal for most of her life. Despite being generally cursory, her records were somehow including an almost continuous series of entries for the period of interest of this research. She arrived in Constantinople with her husband at the end of April 1877, just a couple of days before the commencement of the Russo- Ottoman War. Though she was twenty seven years her husband's junior, Lady Layard seemed not only to have fulfilled the necessities of her diplomatic position as ambassadress, but also carried out additional social and philanthropic activities.

As the domestic developments of the Ottoman Empire substantially affected life in the British Embassy and unpleasant news poured in from the theatres of war, Lady Layard decided to establish a society for the relief of the Turkish sick and wounded with other ladies, wives of prominent European gentlemen resided in the Ottoman capital and also the wives of several Ottomans of rank. According to H.

Mainwaring Dunstan, the members of the committee were: Lady Layard, Princess Nazlı Halil, Madame d'Ehrenhoff, Mrs. Henry Hanson, Mrs. Wellesley Hanson, Madame Server Pasha, Madame Hilmi Pasha, Lady Kemball and Baroness Burdett Coutts.<sup>2</sup> Princess Nazlı was the daughter of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, granddaughter of the Khedive of Egypt Mehmed Ali Pasha and wife of the contemporary Ottoman Ambassador to Paris, Halil Şerif Pasha. She spoke fluent English and was to become a lifelong friend of Lady Layard.<sup>3</sup> Madame d'Ehrenhoff was the wife of the Swedish Ambassador to the Porte, of English origin and sister of British Consul Reade.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Henry Hanson and Mrs. Wellesley Hanson, members of a British Levantine trading family, resided in Istanbul. Wellesley Hanson acted as secretary to the Committee. Madame Server Pasha was the wife of the Ottoman Foreign Minister. Madame Hilmi Pasha was the daughter of Kamil Pasha, the chief of protocol at the Palace,<sup>5</sup> and Lady Kemball was the wife of Sir Arnold Kemball, the military attaché to the Embassy.

After a deal of talking over arrangements, the committee decided to put Mrs. Henry Hanson in charge for material purchasing and to proceed as soon as possible.<sup>6</sup> The ladies could have joined the committee of the Red Crescent but preferred to carry out auxiliary work for that society as well as the British Red Cross and the Stafford House Committee.<sup>7</sup> Their activities seemed to evolve spontaneously. Three days after the first gathering, the Ladies Committee held another meeting in order to reach a production decision. They settled upon making sheets and pillows for 300

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<sup>2</sup> H. Mainwaring Dunstan, *The Tuskih Compassionate Fund: An Account for Its Origin, Working and Results*, London: Remington and Co., 1883, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> Sinan Kunalp (ed.), *Twixt Pera and Therapia. Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010, pp. 13, 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Kunalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Kunalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Kunalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 179.

beds for Batum Hospital which was under the superintendence of a British doctor, Dr. Temple.<sup>8</sup> Lady Layard with her concomitants began to make some materials of cloth, mainly bandages and bedding to be sent to the ambulances at the fronts. The activities of the Ladies Committee then evolved to embrace refugees.<sup>9</sup>

The productions of the committee soon spread over a wide area, thousands of kilometres apart from each other. Colonel Winton was informing from Tatar Pazarcik the receipt of two bales of clothing sent by Lady Layard.<sup>10</sup> A report from Colonel de Winton from Orhaniye (Botevgrad) referred to his admiration of the hospital beds made by the ladies and asked for more cloth materials from the committee.<sup>11</sup> The Ladies Committee supplied the hospitals for sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers with their productions. The Stafford House Committee, The British Red Cross, Red Crescent, and the Lady Strangford's ambulances all got their shares.<sup>12</sup>

In the first few months, the ladies met once a week at the British Embassy in Tarabya (Therapia) and organized their activities. For the rest of the week they did not necessarily work together, but kept sewing on their own. From the journal of Lady Layard, it is understood that cutting, sewing and making bandages became a part of her everyday life. She converted the embassy into an atelier, all the residents and the visitors to the embassy found themselves rolling or cutting bandages with Lady Layard. Mr. Young, the Commissioner of the Red Cross Society in Turkey saved a space to describe this endeavour in his report to Loyd-Lindsay:

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<sup>8</sup> June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Kuneralp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Dunstan, p. 173.

<sup>10</sup> Report of Colonel W. Blunt, 22 October 1877, Tatar Pazarcık, cited in Dunstan, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> Report of Colonel de Winton, 6 November 1877, Orhaniye, cited in Dunstan, pp. 82-83.

<sup>12</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 24 November 1877, p. 8.



Our countrymen here are hard at work in doing what they can to help, and at our embassy at Therapia I found Mrs. Layard, with other ladies, surrounded by hundreds of beds, pillows, and bandages, all made by their own hand, supplies having already reached Batoum to my knowledge, which came from them.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the summer of 1877, the refugee influx and their wretchedness resulted in the establishment of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, which altered the work of the Ladies Committee. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the majority of the '93 Refugees were women and children. They had to endure a formidable flight and were in a destitute situation, they extensively lacked proper clothing. The agents of the Compassionate Fund could no longer find necessary garments to purchase in the local bazaars. Moreover, European style clothes sent from England proved to be useless due to the fact that refugees did not want to wear apparent charity attires. Therefore, the Ladies Committee began to make garments especially for the refugees. Lady Layard described the work of the Ladies Committee in a private letter:

We are going on very well with our clothing for the refugees. I have two Greek girls here every day, and they do nothing but cut out, in which I and my maid help as much as we can, so that we get between 150 and 200 garments cut out a day. These we get made up by the poor of the village, who make them for a very low price, and are very thankful for the work. I have had 970 garments made here last week. I keep all the clothes in a spare room till I have a good quantity, and then, they all go down to the Khan or store house in town, where they are packed under the superintendence of Mr. Horace Guarracino, and sent off to different parts. As the other ladies are also making garments in the same proportion we keep a good supply of them always ready.<sup>14</sup>

It is rather interesting that, though it was a case of extreme emergency, demands of clothing from different parts of the country were considerably detailed

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<sup>13</sup> *Letters Relating to Operations of the Society in the Russo-Turkish War*, British Red Cross Archives (Hereafter R.C.A.), D/Wan/3/1/1, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Lady Layard, 20 November 1877, Constantinople, cited in Dunstan, pp. 188-189.

and in accordance with the traditional habits. Consul Calvert wrote from Filibe that “Most of the articles kindly forwarded to this place are suitable for Turkish Refugees only. The Bulgarian women wear shirts reaching to the ankles, and use neither drawers nor calico vests.” He even forwarded samples of Jewish clothing to Istanbul by the railway.<sup>15</sup> Another consular despatch from Colonel de Winton to the embassy contained the following, a lively narrative of careful observations:

Please tell Mrs. Layard that feridjees<sup>16</sup> are the article of clothing most in request. They may have only rags and tatters beneath, but the Turkish kari, like the rest of her sex, will not go abroad with nothing to wear. If about £20 worth of cheap dark stuff could be got and sent here, feridjees could be made at about £10 per 100. They would gladly make them, and a person could be found here to cut them out. It would, I think, be useful as an experiment.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Arthur Hanson narrated a picturesque example of her cloth making with Lady Layard. They went to Beylerbeyi Palace to visit the refugees who had been sheltered there by the Sultan. One of the women gave them a *shalwar*<sup>18</sup> to enable the English Ladies to take the pattern of, which in fact proved to be a great hurdle. Mrs. Hanson described themselves working with difficulty on the floor of the embassy’s drawing room. “We afterwards became like machines about cutting them out” She said, “I could have done them blindfold”.<sup>19</sup> The necessity of making different kinds of cloths for different groups of people triggered Lady Layard to have a plan to ensure refugees to participate in cloth making process thus make little bit of living for themselves.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Report of Consul Calvert, 24 October 1877, Philipopolis, cited in Dunstan, pp. 110-111.

<sup>16</sup> Feridjee (Ferace): a long, full coat worn by the Ottoman Turkish women.

<sup>17</sup> Report of Colonel de Winton, 31 October 1877, Tatar Pazarçık, cited in Dunstan, pp. 110-111.

<sup>18</sup> Shalvar (Şalvar): A Turkish styled baggy trousers, commonly used by the peasants.

<sup>19</sup> Diary of Mrs. Arthur Hanson, cited in Dunstan, p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Report of Mr. Burdett Coutts (Mr. Ashmead Bartlett at the time), 27 November 1877, Tatar Pazarçık, cited in Dunstan, p. 123.

### 5.1.2. The Employment of the Refugee Women

The Ladies Committee soon established a self-sufficient system; they had the refugee women make clothes and paid them small sums of money. The materials for clothing were bought wholesale at the lowest prices, through the instrumentality of Mrs. Hanson and the bankers.<sup>21</sup> She also supervised the system of allocation of work among the refugees, of which details are conceived through an extract of her diary.<sup>22</sup> At the their visit to Beylerbeyi Palace, Mrs Hanson and Mrs Layard gave refugee women 200 shirts to work on and provided them with the necessary equipment like needles and thimbles. The committee paid 1,5 piastres for each shirt. Ladies were assisted by the housekeeper Cemal Bey in order to keep the refugees in order.<sup>23</sup> Shortly afterwards this attempt evolved into a settled system, and Mrs. Hanson narrated her system in her diary:

I had the list of names in each house; they all stood on one side of me, and as I called out each name and gave a woman ten, twenty, fifty pieces according to her capacity, I put her over on the *tummum-* alright- side, until each one had her work without any confusion at all.<sup>24</sup>

Women among the refugee families sheltered in Hasköy were also used for this purpose and were thankful. These working women very rarely asked for any of the things they had made, and when they did, it was because some kind of compulsion. They were recorded to be extremely honest with their work, according to Hanson, she had given out about 17,600 pieces and only one woman cheated her.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 24 October 1877, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Dunstan, pp. 175-182.

<sup>23</sup> Diary of Mrs. Arthur Hanson, cited in Dunstan, p. 175.

<sup>24</sup> Diary of Mrs. Arthur Hanson, cited in Dunstan, p. 176.

<sup>25</sup> Diary of Mrs. Arthur Hanson, cited in Dunstan, pp. 177-78.

Demand for employment from the Ladies Committee was not limited to women, numerous refugee men also tried their luck. Mrs. Hanson made a couple of attempts but failed to find jobs for them. Hence she did the least she could, she stopped hiring regular *hamals* (traditional carriers) and, though finding them less sufficient, began to hire refugee men to carry the materials for the fund.<sup>26</sup>

The Ladies Committee did not restrain its charitable activities behind the walls of the embassy. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1877 Lady Layard established a hospital for women and children at the Şehzade Mosque. It required a £30 monthly upkeep, and was sustained by the resources of the Turkish Compassionate Fund.<sup>27</sup> Apart from a couple of visits to the station and to the asylums and hospitals in the capital<sup>28</sup>, there are no records of Lady Layard and her collaborators directly distributing the succour items in person.

### **5.1.3. Financial Source of the Committee**

The British Ambassador allotted about £1,700 of the funds to meet the necessities of the Ladies Committee.<sup>29</sup> The Functionaries of the Compassionate Fund had a difficult time distinguishing succour for the refugees from that of the soldiers. British public opinion was delicate on the issue. Most of the contributors to the Compassionate Fund wanted it to be used only for the non-combatant sufferers. It was exclusively used for the refugees and this consideration was voiced both in the

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<sup>26</sup> Diary of Mrs. Arthur Hanson, cited in Dunstan, p. 178.

<sup>27</sup> Dunstan, pp. 184-185.

<sup>28</sup> September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1877, Kunalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 57

<sup>29</sup> Dunstan, p. 173.

daily papers and in the activity book by Dunstan.<sup>30</sup> Presumably, since the Fund became the financier of the operations of the Ladies Committee that is one of the reasons why, over the time, its activities were limited to refugee relief.

As stated earlier, the question of “for which group to expend the sources of the Fund?” was a substantial concern of the British society. A special correspondent of *The Times* went thoroughly into the matter in his article of the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1877. Despite greatly praising the work carried out by Lady Layard, he stated his doubts on the composition of beneficiaries. According to him, in the theory the clothes were for all of the sufferers exclusively, regardless of religion and ethnicity, but in reality all of the facilities of the Committee would be captured and used by the “Turks”.<sup>31</sup>

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1877, an appeal directly from Lady Layard on behalf of her committee appeared in the paper. She emphasised the fact that they had been helping many other societies with their stock and whole initiative was an achievement of the women. The author of *The Times* added an appeal to the women of Britain, which said: “if they do not wish to send me their money, to make charpie and give pieces of calico or sheeting, I have the pattern of a shirt sent me by the Committee, and also measurements of sheets which I will gladly forward to anyone who applies”.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, as the committee was financed by the Turkish Compassionate Fund and devoted all of its energy to making clothes for the refugees

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<sup>30</sup> “A Ladies Committee at Constantinople for the relief of the Turkish wounded soldiers has been in operation for some time, though little known in England. It is now associated with the Committee for the relief of the fugitive women and children which owes its existence to the efforts of Lady Burdett-Coutts, but the latter is solely for the relief of the non-combatants.” “The Turkish Wounded”, *The Times*, 29 September 1877, p. 6; Dunstan, p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> “War Victims”, *The Times*, 24 October 1877, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> “The Turkish Wounded”, *The Times*, 29 September 1877, p. 6.

the Ladies Committee began to act more like a sub-committee to the fund. Today, it is not easy to separate the records of the Committee from the Fund's.

#### **5.1.4. In the Presence of the Sultan**

Sultan Abdulhamid II had an intimate relationship with Henry Layard, the British Ambassador to the Porte. Layard was well known for his pro-Turkish stance and British support was something the Sultan desperately desired during the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War. In due course, Lady Layard's efforts for the Ottoman victims of war attracted the Palace's attention. The Sultan preferred to demonstrate his appreciation through an unusual fellowship.

Lady Layard became the first non-royal European woman with whom the Sultan had dinner with at his own table. Sinan Kunalalp stated in his introduction to *The Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard* that "Unwittingly and indirectly Lady Layard has been a contributing factor in the modernization of the palace protocol... It is with her that the custom was initiated that the wives of the foreign ambassadors should also be present at state dinners given at the palace in the presence of the Sultan."<sup>33</sup> According to Lady Layard, the Sultan made conversation with her through the dinner and thanked her for her activities. He spoke of his visit to England, offered her *Şerbet*, a reddish sweet beverage, noticing that she was not drinking wine and refilled her glass himself.<sup>34</sup> *The Times* announced the event with the following expressions:

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<sup>33</sup> Kunalalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> August 1877, Kunalalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, pp. 54-55

...though it may not appear anything remarkable to people in England unfamiliar with the stringent rules of Oriental Court etiquette, is here considered something so startlingly unusual as to have excited more attention that would be bestowed on a Turkish victory or defeat...<sup>35</sup>

The Sultan continued to exhibit his contentment by sending Lady Layard messages of goodwill and presents, namely birds of rare species.<sup>36</sup> The course of events reached a point at which the Sultan instituted a new imperial decoration for the benevolent ladies.

#### **5.1.5. *Şefkat Nişanı*: The Order of Mercy**

*Şefkat Nişanı*, the Order of Mercy, was not only the initial order constituted by Abdulhamid II in his reign but also the first Ottoman order instituted particularly for women. The sultan wanted to reward those who had rendered a great service, relieving the destitute during the course of the war. Hence a decoration, particularly for women was created. Production of first twenty sets was ordered on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1878<sup>37</sup> and it was officially issued in three degrees on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1878.<sup>38</sup> The Order of Mercy could be granted to women from all origins, as long as she served in favour of the Ottoman state and succoured the victims of war or any other disasters.<sup>39</sup> It was designed as handsome diamond star and was

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<sup>35</sup> “Sultan Abdul Hamid”, *The Times*, 17 September 1877, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> B.O.A. Y. PRK. TKM. 2/ 64

<sup>37</sup> B.O.A. İ. DH. 774/ 62998

<sup>38</sup> Edhem Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz, Osmanlı Nian ve Madalyaları Tarihi*, İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004, p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Eldem, p. 261.

decorated with three words: *Hamiyet* (honour), *İnsaniyyet* (humanity) and *Muavenet* (relief).<sup>40</sup>

According to Edhem Eldem, the concept evoked by the word “şefkat”<sup>41</sup> (compassion) perfectly matched the role and character of the women in the society.<sup>42</sup> But on the other hand, it cannot be mere coincidence that the order carried the name of the establishment which indirectly caused its existence. The Turkish Compassionate Fund, with its usage in Turkish; *Sermaye-i Şefkat-i Osmaniyye*, must have been the source of inspiration for the name of the decoration.

The Sultan wished to give the first one to Lady Layard “as a proof of his reconnaissance”.<sup>43</sup> The acceptance of the order became another ring in the chain of diplomatic gestures, according to British state traditions, public servants were prohibited from “receiving such marks of distinction from a foreign sovereign without the Queen’s permission which was only granted for special military services”, therefore Ambassador Layard had to kindly reject the honour with the appropriate explanation.<sup>44</sup> However, Sultan courteously asked for the Queen’s permission through Musurus Pasha and received an affirmative response.<sup>45</sup>

Only two days after receiving the approval, Mr. And Mrs. Layard were once again invited by Sultan Abdulhamid II to the Yıldız Palace for dinner and after a

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<sup>40</sup> Eldem, p. 258.

<sup>41</sup> The word “Şefkat” is the vulgarized version of “Şefakat” in Ottoman Turkish. It can be read both ways. However, it was probably pronounced as the original one since in French and English sources it is referred to as “Chefakat”, “Shevakat” or “Shefakat”. For an example see: Sinan Kunalalp, *The Queens Ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard’s Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009, p. 498.

<sup>42</sup> Eldem, p. 260.

<sup>43</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> June 1878, Kunalalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 113.

<sup>44</sup> Kunalalp, *Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard*, p. 498.

<sup>45</sup> From the telegraph of Musurus Pasha, dated 14 October, 1878. “*Lady Layard’a itası arzu buyurulan nişanın müşarünileyha tarafından kabulüne Kraliçe Hazretlerinin muvafakat eylediklerini ve muvafakat haberini Sir Layard’a dün bildirdiğini Lord Salisbury bendenize söyledi...*”, B.O.A. Y. PRK. EŞA, No. 1/31.



complimentary speech for Lady Layard, the Sultan himself clasp the order on her neck.<sup>46</sup> Lady Layard became the first women to take the order on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1877. The news reached Britain immediately on the following day, and was on *The Times* on the 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>47</sup> According to Layard, the honour received by his wife gave rise to “jealousies and intrigues”, the French ambassador demanded an Order of Mercy to be conferred upon his wife Madame Fournier as well. Rejection of his will caused a tension between the French Embassy and the Ottoman Palace.<sup>48</sup> Nişan-ı Şefkat was continued to be given to charitable women until the end of the empire with the same name.

#### 5.1.6. Continuation of the Work

As may be followed from her journals and crosschecked from the witnesses, charitable activities such as making bandages and clothes in the embassy turned into a kind of a hobby for Lady Layard. This is why the termination of these activities did not seem to correspond to a decline of necessities. She noted at Pera, where the British winter embassy was located, her intention to finish the activities by the end of April 1878, and not to recommence in Tarabya that summer.<sup>49</sup> This was about the time of the cease fire and other British relief committees were also ending their operations. The Women’s Work Establishment was an outcome of the Ladies Committee in Istanbul. As Lady Layard and Mrs. Hanson were encouraging the

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<sup>46</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> October 1878, Kunalalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, pp. 148-149. For Lady Layard’s later dated Picture wearing the order see appendix R

<sup>47</sup> “*The English Ambassador and Lady Layard dined with the Sultan last night when His Majesty presented the latter with the newly newly instituted decoration in recognition of services rendered to the refugees*” *The Times*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1878, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Kunalalp, *Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard*, p. 499.

<sup>49</sup> April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Kunalalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 102-103.

refugee women to work and make living of themselves and giving them pieces of cut clothes to be sewed they discovered another medium to provide them with jobs. Many of these fugitive women had brought with them precious pieces of embroideries, which were usually family inheritances, in order to sell them when necessary. The ladies of the committee realised that most of these women were capable of copying these patterns which could be turned into a way of earning money.<sup>50</sup>

In June 1878, Baroness Burdett Coutts sent £50 to Istanbul, separate from the Compassionate Fund, for the purchase of embroidery materials like silk and frames.<sup>51</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month, Lady Layard recorded packing and sending embroideries to England, to the Baroness.<sup>52</sup> According to Dunstan, the actual organization took place in spring of 1879 in Kandilli. Employees overcame the difficulty of providing silk and other materials by weaving the silk themselves.<sup>53</sup>

The work grew enormously both in terms of the variety of articles and the quantity of production.<sup>54</sup> Lady Layard's mother Lady Schreiber, a well-known businesswoman, translator and art collector, undertook the duty of introducing the embroidery to England.<sup>55</sup> She presented samples of embroidery to the famed department store of Victorian London called *Liberty*, where they were offered for

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<sup>50</sup> Dunstan, p. 227.

<sup>51</sup> Dunstan, p. 227.

<sup>52</sup> June 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Kunalp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>53</sup> Dunstan, p. 228.

<sup>54</sup> Cariclee Zacaroff, "The Turkish Compassionate Fund" Eagle, Mary Kavanaugh Oldham (ed.), *The Congress of Women: Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U. S. A., 1893*, Chicago: Monarch Book Company, 1894, p. 619.

<sup>55</sup> Dunstan, p. 228.

sale. In five years time, the Working Ladies Association produced almost 70,000 yards of materials, which was sold at Liberty for more than £8,000.<sup>56</sup>

From Zacaroff's article it is understood that the activities of the establishment continued for a relatively long time. But after the first few years, as it became a sole burden of Mrs. Hanson and the demand diminished, they slowed down and finally concluded the work in 1888. Zacaroff, herself collaborating with Mrs. Hanson, introduced the work in Paris which was not a success, though according to her "The ideas for some of the most beautiful French creations of late years have been borrowed from originals executed by the Turkish Compassionate Fund".<sup>57</sup>

The Ladies Committee constituted an impressive story of British philanthropy by women's hand in the Ottoman Empire. The president of it being the wife of the most important diplomatic actor at the Porte made the existence of the committee even more meaningful. The activities, which were substantially sincere, not only benefited the destitute victims of war but also aptly contributed to the diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the British.

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<sup>56</sup> Jordanna Bailkin, *The Culture of property: crisis of liberalism in modern Britain*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 128-129.

<sup>57</sup> Zacaroff, p. 620.

## **5.2. The Stafford House Committee**

### **5.2.1. The Foundation**

The Establishment of the Stafford House Committee was a representation of the British utilization of philanthropy to express the political sentiments. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1876, Duke of Sutherland invited his likeminded friends to his house in London, as a response to a recent meeting held by pro-Russian leaders of the Bulgarian Agitation Campaign. It was the period of armistice between Ottomans and Serbs but the fire in the Balkans had not burned out, thus these gentlemen were summoned to discuss the opportunity to alleviate the sufferings of the Ottomans.<sup>58</sup> In this manner, the Stafford House Committee was founded under the presidency of the Duke of Sutherland.

The Stafford House Committee was established to relieve the sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers. It was indeed the most influential and practical way of supporting the Ottoman armies in a non-belligerent framework. It immediately started operations by sending its first sum of money to the Ottoman Empire. Its sphere of influence was determined as the second line of the relief operations, the hospitals and the transport of the wounded.<sup>59</sup>

What makes the Stafford House significant for the subject of this study was its compulsory encounter with the '93 Refugees. The agents of the committee had to assist the perishing refugees even though it was unpremeditated; consequently it became one of the British committees with a share in the '93 Refugee relief.

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<sup>58</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 46.

<sup>59</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 142.

The peculiar historical source of this part of the research is the report book of the committee which was titled *Report and Record of the Operations of the Stafford House Committee for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Turkish Soldiers*.<sup>60</sup> It was published in 1879, right after the cease of operations in the Ottoman Empire, due to a familiar reason: To prove their donors that the subscriptions were not dissipated and the committee performed a noble work.

The relief project of the Stafford House Committee commenced with insufficient funds to enable the committee to send a special commissioner to the Ottoman Empire. Instead they put in charge an Ottoman official, Ahmed Vefik Pasha. Not only because of his knowledge but also for his integrity, both British and Ottoman notables regarded him suitable for this position. Despite the heavy duties of his official position as the president of the Turkish Parliament, Ahmed Vefik undertook the management of the funds and the distribution of supplies of the Stafford House Committee till they were able to hire a special commissioner.<sup>61</sup>

### **5.2.2. Helping the Combatants: the Operations of the Committee**

In time, the Stafford House Committee's operations turned into a large relief network for Ottoman combatants at the theatres of war. The funds, that started by the Duke of Sutherland, continued to be contributed by the British public through newspaper appeals. The appeals of the Viscountess Strangford's Turkish Hospital Fund, the Sick and Wounded Russian Soldiers Relief Fund, the Stafford House Committee, Russian Sick and Wounded Fund and Relief to Starving Fugitives; The

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<sup>60</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations of the Stafford House Committee for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Turkish Soldiers, Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78*, London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1879.

<sup>61</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1877, p. 8.

Adrianople British Committee for the relief of the Fugitives were actually published on the same page of the paper.<sup>62</sup>

Essentially, the relief societies for the wounded Ottoman soldiers shared the work and worked harmoniously with each other. The Red Crescent took the field hospitals, the British National Society took care of the field ambulances for the fronts and the Stafford House Committee worked at the transport service and distribution of stores. The Ladies Committee contributed cordially to those committees with its productions.<sup>63</sup> Records of collaboration between the committees are well apparent.<sup>64</sup>

In the meantime an administrative alteration took place; in May of 1877, the Stafford House Committee hired a special commissioner, V. Barrington Kennett, and ended working with Ahmed Vefik. This was not a smooth transition since Ahmed Vefik was accused of misusing the funds. Mr Barrington Kennett, an experienced man in relief work, was appointed as the coordinator for the distribution of the further supply of stores.<sup>65</sup> The *Standard* newspaper claimed that Ahmed Vefik handed over the *Seraskerier* (The Ministry of War) large sums from the committee which was then used by them for purchasing arms. Gibson Bowles, the Secretary of the Stafford House Committee, sent a letter to the editor of *The Times* which was published. He disclaimed the assertion and stated that he received from Ahmed Vefik the receipts for acknowledgments, “..not only of the commanders of the corps to which it was transmitted, but also of everyone of the soldiers who received a blanket.”<sup>66</sup> Ambassador Layard had a negative reaction to these “libels”. He wrote to

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<sup>62</sup> *The Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1877, p. 8

<sup>63</sup> “War Victims”, *The Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1877, p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> “Aid to the Sick and Wounded”, *The Times*, p. 4; R.C. A. Wan 3/1/1.

<sup>65</sup> “The Stafford House Committee”, *The Times*, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> “The Stafford-House Committee”, *The Times*, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1877, p. 8.

the British Foreign Secretary Lord Derby to absolve his personal friend and his response appeared in the paper as well.<sup>67</sup>

The 1877- 78 Russo-Turkish War was the fourth campaign V. Barrington Kennett had taken charge of. He was a professional philanthropist. According to Dorothy Anderson, this war gave him the chance to put his theories into practice and he was actually the reason behind the success of the Stafford House Operations.<sup>68</sup> Kennett was received cordially by the Ottoman officials and was assured any assistance in their power. Moreover, he was granted an honorary position among the staff of the Red Crescent Society in order to provide him the benefits of the Geneva Convention to protect his supplies.<sup>69</sup>

The Stafford House Committee established or took over the administration of numerous hospitals.<sup>70</sup> Surgeons as well as other types of medical staff kept pouring in from Great Britain. The committee soon became the main medical service to support the Ottoman armies. But as the terrifying impacts of the war on the civilians began to make its presence felt, agents of the Stafford House Committee, namely the doctors, found themselves in horrifying positions, such as surveying a local massacre of women and children.<sup>71</sup> The next stage was not a surprising one; The Stafford House Committee for the Relief of the Turkish Soldiers spontaneously helped the destitute refugees.

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<sup>67</sup> "The Porte", *The Times*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1877, p. 8; F.O. 78/ 2586, No.1122 "From Layard to Derby", September 25, 1877.

<sup>68</sup> Dorothy Anderson, pp. 141-142.

<sup>69</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1877, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> B.O.A. Y. PRK. SH. 1/12

<sup>71</sup> F.O. 78/2775 No.138, Enclosure No. 58, "From Major Campbell in Shipka Camp to British Consul Blunt", October 30, 1877, *Report on the scene of a massacre in the Balkans of Turkish Women and Children from Muflis: ... in accordance with orders received from Raouf Pasha I left the Camp at Shipka on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October for the purpose of verifying the report of a massacre of Turkish women and children, said to have taken place at Kosak .Doctors Hume, Attwood and Sandwith of the Stafford House Committee and Doctor Leslie of the National Aid Society, accompanied the expedition which was under my command."*

One of the major donors of the committee, the Duke of Portland, sent his fourth donation of £1,000 with a letter saying that the greatest problem according to his observations was the families of soldiers who were asking for relief. He claimed that Stafford House should stick to its original goal of relieving the fighting and that the Compassionate Fund should deal with the non-combatants.<sup>72</sup> The purpose of the Stafford House Committee was separated from that of the Compassionate Fund, an apparent proof of this was that Lady Burdett-Coutts actually felt the necessity of sending £200 to the committee for relief of the soldiers. She probably wouldn't have sent money if the committee's goal was not different from her own initiation.<sup>73</sup>

### **5.2.3. An innocent transgression: Succouring the Refugees**

Though being a very interesting subject of philanthropic history, if it had strictly stuck to its founding purposes, the Stafford House Committee would not be a part of this study. The members of the committee often came across refugees which were in urgent need of help. Due to responsibility to the wishes of the donors, intermediaries did not want to spend money on civilians. Nevertheless, providing instant assistance to the destitute refugees was often the case. Reports from different parts of the Empire give hints of various examples to this kind of unpremeditated and unforeseen activities.

For instance on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1877, it was reported from Edirne that one of the Stafford House doctors was attending the wounded fugitive women and children,

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<sup>72</sup> "War Victims", *The Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1877, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> "The Stafford House Committee", *The Times*, p. 8.



Turkish, Bulgarian and Jews.<sup>74</sup> In Varna, the soup kitchen that was founded for soldiers was actually working for the refugees in the intervals between the transits of wounded soldiers.<sup>75</sup> In May 1878, an urgent telegram by Baker Pasha called upon the Stafford House Committee for additional aid saying: “No English doctors with army; all with refugees. Can you send fresh doctors?”<sup>76</sup> A report in January 1878 from Varna stated that the ambulance carts of the Stafford House Committee rendered good service for the refugees and carried about 600 of them from the station to the town.<sup>77</sup> Another report from Erzurum around the same period of time indicated that Stafford House doctors Barker, Clements and Edmunds were devoting their spare time to refugees until the committee’s hospital was full, in order to prevent an epidemic among civilians, which would be a great threat for the army<sup>78</sup>

Commissioner Mr. Stoney in Istanbul received telegrams from Britain which were inquiring if the funds of the committee were being disbursed on any charity other than the relief of the sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers. Those inquiries were replied in a negative but descriptive way, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1878: “Our soup contractor has a contract to supply on the same terms as ourselves, the Committee of the Turkish Compassionate Fund... The trains arrive crowded with wounded soldiers and fugitives. The soldiers are served first, the refugees after. Stafford House pays for the rations served to the soldiers, the other societies for the fugitives”.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> War Victims”, *The Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1877, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> “Stafford House Fund”, *The Times*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1878, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> “The Stafford House Fund”, *The Times*, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1878, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p. 30.

<sup>79</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations...*, p. 25.

#### 5.2.4. The Major Stafford House Contributions to the '93 Refugees:

During the first weeks of 1878, the refugee influx to the capital reached an enormous volume. Any available public building became shelters for the masses. Two great mosques of Istanbul; Ayasofya (St. Sophia) and Sultan Ahmed were the most symbolic, with about five thousand residents at each. Lady Layard's depiction noted in her journal on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1878 is perhaps one of the most precious:

... we went to St Sophia which was full of refugees. They told us there were between 4 and 5,000 people there. It was a wonderful sight. Each family had installed itself in a group barricaded by their rugs, etc., some were lying ill, some were huddled over their mangals. It was a curious contrast looking down on this misery and then looking up at the glorious building- the finest temple in the world- with its gold mosaics and fine marble.<sup>80</sup>

That is where the Stafford House Committee had rendered the major contribution to '93 Refugees. On the second week of 1878, the correspondent of *The Times* wrote that 20,000 fugitives had arrived at Istanbul in the previous week and the Stafford House Committee as well as the Turkish Compassionate Fund was "doing their utmost to relieve the sufferings". Barrington Kennett lent four surgeons to the Compassionate Fund and was harshly criticised by his committee for this decision. Kennett justified himself with the absence of a proper medical staff attending the masses of refugees in the mosques at the time when the doctors of the Stafford House were accumulating temporarily in the city. He put further emphasises on the rapid increase in the contagious diseases; an epidemic in the city also constituted a major menace for the troops. Those four doctors carried out a successful mission in the mosques. They separated the infected ones from the rest in order to circumscribe the epidemics. Concurrently, Kennett sent a quantity of

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<sup>80</sup> Kuneralp, *Diaries of Lady Layard*, p. 84.

medicines and disinfectants out of the Stafford House stores and received bandages from the Compassionate Fund in return.<sup>81</sup>

Dr. Barker, along with Doctor Edmunds, of Stafford House was ordered to temporarily render his service to the Compassionate Fund.<sup>82</sup> His report of March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1878, drew a very exhaustive picture of the conditions of the refugees in the great mosques and the work carried out by the Compassionate Fund.<sup>83</sup> The doctors shared the job; Dr. Barker was responsible for half of St. Sophia. He described the place to be overcrowded but though having a greater number of people in it, in better sanitary conditions than Sultan Ahmed owing to its vast cubic space and three entrances. According to him, the refugees in this mosque were from poorer classes and were in a more destitute position than the other. Family groups were seated on matting if had been brought with them. Bedding articles were piled in a heap to use to define the boundaries between the families. A few also had different cooking or heating devices with them. The doctors' preliminary goal was to detect cases of disease, in particular small-pox among the children. They tried to separate the infected ones from the crowd and vaccinate the rest. Vaccination proved not to be completely effective since Dr. Barker found some children infected after the application.<sup>84</sup>

Apparently the services rendered by the agents of the committee to the non-combatants were not limited to the mosques. An extraordinary agent of the committee, an engineer called Harvey, was appointed to organize the supplying of milk to the hospitals and burying the decomposing carcasses of oxen and horses on the roads of Istanbul. Harvey organized a corps of refugee men and buried more than

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<sup>81</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p. 31.

<sup>82</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p. 29.

<sup>83</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>84</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p. 128.

3,500 carcasses. This cost 5 or 6 diems each, including Harvey's and refugee's salaries.<sup>85</sup> Evidently, the Stafford House Committee, like the Ladies Committee, became an organization concerned to employ refugees so that they made a living.

Four doctors were far from being sufficient to overcome the sanitary complications in St. Sophia and Sultan Ahmed, besides they were needed by the soldiers. Therefore Barrington Kennett recalled his doctors. The Mosques were emptied when with the warmed whether caused the typhus to become an epidemic, and the refugees were sent elsewhere. However the diseases prevailed in the building and men who were sent to clean the building came down with the sickness. Herein the Stafford House doctors performed a consultant function. "In desperation the Turkish authorities appealed to the Stafford House doctors and on their advice took more drastic steps" noted Dorothy Anderson, "fire engines circled the building, ladders were raised, hoses directed through the windows, and a powerful stream of carbolic acid flowed down over the marble and the gold."<sup>86</sup>

#### **5.2.5. The Sultan's Attitude**

Due to the Islamic state tradition, the Sultan was considered responsible for the well being of his subjects, thus the humanitarian consequences of the '93 War were a weighty burden on Abdulhamid II's back. He tried to take the necessary measures like turning a majority of the palace buildings into asylums for refugees or sparing shares from the expenses of palace to contribute to the relief. Therefore, the Sultan's interest in the British societies was not surprising. *The Times* of the 10<sup>th</sup> of

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<sup>85</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 196.

<sup>86</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 196.

August 1877 referred to the “warm personal interest of the sultan” in the work of the societies. He offered a room in his palace as a meeting place for the committee, “in order to keep them close to himself and under his immediate and special protection”. A retrospective look at the Abdulhamid II’s policies makes it obvious that the close location of the committee can not exclusively be explained by protection but also by a desire to control it. His attitude can also be considered as a zeal of integration, he staked his claim on the activities that took place in his territory. The Sultan’s well-known personality and the habit of excessive governance resulted in a bizarre interference:

The other day His Majesty himself examined the models of the ambulance wagons, and rejected one with only two wheels, saying if he were wounded he would like to be carried in vehicle with four, and he did not see why any other soldier in his army should not be treated as well as himself.<sup>87</sup>

The members of the Stafford House Committee were thanked and praised repeatedly by different government officials as well as the Sultan himself. He awarded the members of the Committee, doctors and other employees with different ranks of decoration.<sup>88</sup> Barrington Kennett was actually granted an audience on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1878, during which the Sultan thanked the committee in his personality and himself for his supervision. Of course, all of this gratitude was given for the better known operations of the committee; aid to the soldiers.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> “War Victims”, *The Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1877, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, “Letters of Thanks”, passim; B.O.A. HR. TO. 59/51; HR. TO. 503/28; I. HR. 277/16895

<sup>89</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, p.187.

### **5.2.6. Closing the Operations**

Since the main objective of the Committee was to help the Turkish Soldiers, the end of the Russo-Turkish War meant the end of the Stafford House operations. News of termination was published on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1878 in *The Times*.<sup>90</sup> The introductory part of the report book was entitled “the Final Report”, signed by the chairman Sutherland and dated April 1879. According to the report, the total amount spent from all sources was £43,750. Overall, 44,892 sick and wounded Ottomans were treated in eleven hospitals, eight field ambulances and dispensaries. They gave to thousands the service of transport, distributed over 100,000 rations from the soup kitchens and assisted more than a thousand convalescents on their way home.<sup>91</sup>

### **5.3. The British Red Cross (the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War)**

The international movement of the Red Cross started in 1863 in Switzerland. Seven years later, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1870, affected by the international fashion of forming national committees, a public meeting held in London resulted in the following resolution: “A national society be formed in this country for aiding sick and wounded soldiers in time of war, and the said society be formed upon the rules laid down by the Geneva Convention on 1864.”<sup>92</sup>

The relief operations of the British Red Cross, or as was then referred to the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War, during the 1877-78

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<sup>90</sup> “Stafford House”, *The Times*, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1878, p.10.

<sup>91</sup> *Report and Record of the Operations*, pp. 1-4.

<sup>92</sup> “The beginning of the Red Cross Movement,” <http://www.redcross.org.uk>

Russo-Turkish War was one the earliest activities of this establishment. The Red Cross operation in the Ottoman Empire was one of the philanthropic initiatives which aimed to relieve the sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers. Just like the Stafford House Committee, the peculiarity of the '93 War dragged its members to give assistance to '93 Refugees. In other words, the relief compulsorily given to the civilian victims of the war, by the agents of the Red Cross Society, was again “unpremeditated”. The main historical sources of these operations are the letters written by the doctors from the theatres of war, in form of reports to the superiors, namely to the chairman of the executive committee in London, Lieut. Colonel Loyd-Lindsay.<sup>93</sup>

### **5.3.1. The Arrival of *Belle of Dunkerque*: the Beginning of the Operations in Turkey**

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1877, the editor of *The Times* received a telegram which called the British Red Cross Society to aid wounded Turkish soldiers in perished conditions.<sup>94</sup> The editor’s answer to this appeal was the announcement of the sailing of a National Society steamer, the *Belle of Dunkerque*, to Istanbul, which already took off from London at the previous week. According to the article, Belle of Dunkerque was “furnished with a most careful selection of medical comforts, surgical instruments, and Woolwich stores, such as ambulance wagons, cacolets, hospital marquees, litters, stretchers, etc.” These stores were granted out of the

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<sup>93</sup> Records of the Operations carried out during the Russia-Turkish War by National Society Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War are a part of the British Red Cross Archives (R. C. A.), London, with D/Wan/3 coding.

<sup>94</sup> “The Turkish Wounded” *The Times*, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1877, p. 9.

Queen's Stores with permission from the Secretary of State for War and paid for by the National Society.<sup>95</sup>

The steamer arrived in the Ottoman capital on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The crew included the medical staff of doctors Armand Leslie, Hope, Ralph Leslie, Schofield and Meyrick under the leadership of Mr. Young. Young was the Head of the operations during the 1877- 78 Russo-Turkish War, with the title of "Chief Commissioner in Turkey of the British National Society".<sup>96</sup>

The National Society was a relief establishment for the combatants of the war, thus this team came to Istanbul with the mission of assisting sick and wounded soldiers. Immediately after their arrival in the city, Mr. Young proceeded to the British Embassy in Tarabya. He consulted the future operations with Ambassador Layard, who acted as a mentor and an inspector for all the British relief operations throughout the war. Layard advised Mr. Young to canalize their assistance in Asia Minor, namely to Erzurum.<sup>97</sup>

The next day, Commissioner Young visited the head of the Sultan's secretariat (*Mabeyn Başkatibi*), Said Pasha, in Yıldız Palace. He was very content with the meeting and the collaboration with the Ottoman authorities, and noted the following in his letter: "...It was more than gratifying to find that the proposed efforts of the Society in the cause of humanity were so gratefully appreciated in the highest quarter that all the official routine was set aside in order to provide us with every

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<sup>95</sup> "The Turkish Wounded", *The Times*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1877, p. 12; the freight of the *Belle of Dunkerque* was important to understand the content of the operations of the British Red Cross in the Ottoman Empire. A clue was given in a letter of Dr. Crookshank who claimed to be given half of the contents of the steamer, which was: "*consisting of about 250 cases of everything imaginable in the way of soup, preserved vegetables, , milk, cocoa, tea, brandy, preserved meat, etc etc, as well as several cases of medicines, dressings, splints etc.*" October 14, 1877, Varna, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 47.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, November 24, 1877, Strand. R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2 p.5.1

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Young to Loyd-Lindsay, July 19, 1877, Istanbul. R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/1, p.4



authorization necessary to carry on...”. In a period of fourteen days, three fully equipped field ambulances in distant locations, Shipka Pass, Banks of Lom and Batum, were established.<sup>98</sup>

The representatives of the British Red Cross were in connection with their local counterparts, the Red Crescent Society (*Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*). Mr. Young informed the centres of his participation in a meeting held in Dolmabahçe Palace by the Red Crescent Society and their thankfulness for the effort of the National Society.<sup>99</sup> The operations of the National Society started with the sole intention of helping the soldiers, but the functionaries soon realized the most unfortunate consequence of the Russian advance, namely the thousands of despairing refugees.

### **5.3.2. Encounter with the Refugees**

As the doctors were on duty at the field hospitals, Mr Young went to Varna at once before proceeding to Trabzon for field research. Loyd-Lindsay started to receive reports referring to “inhabitant that fled their homes” and “the desire to render succour to wounded, though they were not properly so-called combatants”.<sup>100</sup>

The first vivid description of non-combatant victims of war that was received by Loyd-Lindsay was from Dr. Armand Leslie from the Balkan territory. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1877, he wrote that their hospital tents in Karapınar were not only filled by soldiers but there were also wounded women.<sup>101</sup> Five days later, he sent a more

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<sup>98</sup> Letter from Young to Loyd-Lindsay, November 24, 1877, Stand, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> D/Wan/3/1/1, p.6.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Young to Loyd-Lindsay, November 24, 1877, Stand, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 51.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from Armand Leslie to Loyd-Lindsay, August 1, 1877, Karabounar, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 14.

detailed account and complained about the insufficiency of the number of doctors compared to the volume of the distress.<sup>102</sup> On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, Henry Layard's report to the British Foreign Secretary was based on the detailed information provided by Mr. Young who had returned from the Balkan front and encountered thousands of fugitives around Edirne.<sup>103</sup>

This is when the National Society's unpremeditated relief started to take place in the history of '93 Refugees. Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of August, Dr. Leslie visited numerous refugees, women and children in Shipka. He stated that some of them were actually wounded. Leslie distributed *Liebig's extract* of beef among them which was a convenient item of nutrition.<sup>104</sup> Dr. Leslie's narrations about the refugees and the relief that was assured by the Red Cross facilities found place in some of the letters. For instance, in addition to the distribution of Liebig's extracts, the agents of the society gave out blankets, milk and even "a small sum of money to enable them buy some bread". Occasionally the society even fulfilled the service of sheltering, "Our hospital tents have frequently been the means of affording night of long wished for rest, and security to many terrified and starved woman" said Leslie in a later dated letter.<sup>105</sup>

As already noted the actual purpose of the National Society was to help impartially the sick and wounded soldiers. The Turks proved to be the more deprived party, thus relief operations were directed at the Ottoman army. The refugee influx

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<sup>102</sup> "The suffering and misery of the fugitives are great; nearly all are badly shot, some of them are hacked. Children are seen dying of thirst; every railway station is filled with starving wounded women and children from the neighbouring villages. The latter have all been burnt. Wounded are brought in to us in batches of 200. You may there for imagine how utterly powerless two medical men are under such circumstances. Our number is much too small. There is work here for 12 surgeons. We remain in Adrianople" Letter from Armand Leslie to Loyd-Lindsay, August 3, 1877, Karabounar, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> Turkey, No. 1 (1878), p. 206, No. 239 cited in Şimşir, *I*, p.188.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Armand Leslie to Loyd-Lindsay, August 30, 1877, Shipka, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 25.

<sup>105</sup> Report of Armand Leslie, October 1, 1877, Shipka, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 40.

induced the society doctors to treat and assist the non-combatant. In many of the records, it is not possible to distinguish the combatant from the civilian victims of war as receivers of the aid.<sup>106</sup> But in some cases, relief was aimed directly at the refugees. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1878, Dr. Jolly of the Red Cross Society received an appeal from the Governor of Varna to help the refugees. According to Jolly, non-interference with the work of the Refugee Fund was important thus he volunteered to start a soup kitchen for refugees at the Varna Station.<sup>107</sup> According to his words, he worked two days and nights without intermission before his first rest. His letter continued as the following:

On the last day of January the Russian cavalry made a raid on the first station from here, Gubedje, and blew up the line, since which time no further trains have run. The Governor then asked me to transfer my service to the conack (a sort of town-hall) containing about 1.000 refugees. We started yesterday 4 pm and fed every woman and child before leaving. They lay packed like herrings in a barrel, and my head was really unbearable from mauvais odeur, but still I was determined to carry out the old adage: "if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well..."<sup>108</sup>

Dr. Jolly's work continued unceasingly for a week at different spots, the Red Cross fed 6,270 people with only one soup kitchen.<sup>109</sup>

The Black Sea Region had a peculiarity in terms of British relief and the Red Cross operations. First of all, though not having as much wounded through their hands as the ambulances in the Balkans, they were on service where no other

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<sup>106</sup> A very detailed knowledge of the '93 War, fronts both in Balkans and Anatolia, distribution of population and geographical facts would enable the researcher only to estimate the composition of the aid receivers at a certain point of relief. But since the main characteristic of the period was mobility, ultimate conclusions cannot be easily reached.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from Robert W. Jolly to Mr. Young, February 11, 1878, Constantinople, R. C. A. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 82.

<sup>108</sup> Letter from Robert W. Jolly to Mr. Young, February 3, 1878, Varna, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 70.

<sup>109</sup> Letter from Robert W. Jolly to Mr. Young, February 11, 1878, Constantinople, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 83.

European society of relief had attained. Secondly, a different group of people, Muslim Georgians, came into the picture as victims of '93 War.<sup>110</sup>

### 5.3.3. Cooperation with Other Societies

The functionaries of the Red Cross Society did not find any inconvenience in furnishing other relief committees with their provisions, for instance Mr. Young provided Barrington Kennett of the Stafford House Committee with supplies.<sup>111</sup> In addition to that, the Red Cross Society lent the Soyer's store and culinary utensils to the Turkish Compassionate Fund, for making and distributing soup among the refugees.<sup>112</sup>

As touched upon earlier, Lady Layard as the president of the Ladies Committee in Constantinople, supplied the British Red Cross Societies with hospital items, mainly made of cloth, as she did for the other British relief associations. Lady expressed her pleasure for the commencement of the Red Cross Operations in the Ottoman Empire and promised her cooperation from the very beginning.<sup>113</sup> Reports referring to the supplies provided by the Ladies Committee are frequent among the records of the operations.

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<sup>110</sup>“ ..native Georgians found us out, and used to come in crowds for advice and medicine, even bringing their women to show us, a thing quite unheard of in a real Turkish Ambulance, and they were really in great and sore need, as their men were all away enrolled in the army as irregulars and the Russians, before their retreat from Housouban, had burned and ruined everything in the whole country...”Report of Surgeon Hope, October 9, 1877, Black Sea, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/2, p. 43.

<sup>111</sup> Extract from the letter of Mr Young to Loyd Lindsay, dated 9th September, 1877. “*The soup kitchen, established by Barrington Kennett for the wounded, while being transported long distances by rail, having proved of great benefit, I continue to give him supplies of preserved soups, which he tells me have been of the greatest service, owing to their being easily prepared for use on the shortest notice, and often wounded arrive at the station where the soup kitchens are without previous intimation of their coming being given. Other supplies of medical comforts I have given for the use of the sick and wounded under the care of the surgeons of the SHC.*” D/Wan/3/1/1, p. 26.

<sup>112</sup> Letter from Harry Crookshank, February 13, 1878, Varna, R.C.A D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 67.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, July 19, 1877, Constantinople, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/1, p. 4.

#### **5.3.4. Unexpected Incidents: Death of Dr. Meyrick And Captivity of the British Doctors**

Unfortunate incidents took place through this favourable course of philanthropy; the British Red Cross Society had its own casualties in the Russo-Turkish War. The death of young British doctor Francis Gethley Meyrick on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1877 was a striking incident for the functionaries. He was buried at the Haydarpaşa English Cemetery. Mr. Young was meticulous about the tablet for his tomb; he waited for its arrival before leaving Istanbul and had it. Meyrick's monument was adorned with the following:

In Memory of

FRANCIS GETHLEY MEYRICK

Surgeon during the Russo-Turkish War, 1877, in Service of the British National Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded in War.

This tablet is erected

By what Society, and by the Ottoman Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded in War, as a tribute of admiration of devoted services rendered to the Turkish Wounded, men, women and children from the battles and massacres of Yeni-Saghra, Eski-Saghra and Karabounar. In the performance of these services Doctor Meyrick fell a victim to a disease brought on by over-exertion, to the deep regret of all his fellow-workers, and all who knew him.

Born in London 8<sup>th</sup> September. 1855.

Died at Constantinople 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1877.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, September 8, 1877, Constantinople, R.C.A D/Wan/3/1/1, p. 21.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1878, another regrettable incident took place. In the plains of Kamarli, four British men, Dr. Armand Leslie and Dr. Neville of the National Aid Society, Dr. Kirkpatrick of the Red Crescent Society and Mr. Bell, an artist of *the Illustrated London News*, were detained on the Russians lines by the Russian military authorities. They kept working in the hospital for the first twelve days under the Russian control then were ordered to leave Stryglia.<sup>115</sup>

The British consul to Edirne, Mr. Blunt called the attention of Russian General Nelidov to the matter. He narrated in detail the mistreatment of the British subjects by the Russian soldiers. Firstly they were detained in Stryglia for twelve days, then made walk for almost twenty days. During this long and laborious journey though having them along, the British prisoners were not allowed to ride their horses. This treatment was not justifiable even if they were prisoners of war.<sup>116</sup> Blunt emphasised the fact that, it was not accurate according to the Geneva Convention to regard these British citizens as prisoners of war. Thus, the consul demanded their release under protection.<sup>117</sup>

Dr. Armand Leslie, Dr. Neville, Dr. Kirkpatrick of the Red Crescent Society and Mr. Bell reached Edirne in the first week of February. Layard found it appropriate to send the first group of British doctors back to Britain as soon as possible. He wanted to ensure the notification of the British government and enable them to prevent the repetition of a similar incident.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Turkey. No. 21 (1878) , *Journal of Dr. Kirkpatrick*, Inclosure 2 in No. 4, p.4.

<sup>116</sup> *Journal of Dr. Kirkpatrick*, p. 8.

<sup>117</sup> *Journal of Dr. Kirkpatrick*, p .9.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from Layard to Mr Young, February 7, 1878, Constantinople, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 74.

### 5.3.5. End of the Operations

The beginning of the end was voiced for the first time, in Mr. Young's letter dated the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1878 who had then started to send the doctors back home.<sup>119</sup> Five days later, he expressed his intention to cease operations in the Ottoman Empire and referred to a considerable amount of stores in hand.<sup>120</sup>

During the above mentioned closure, cooperation between the committees was once again in the picture. Mr. Young asked Barrington-Kenneth, the head of the Stafford House Committee, to appoint a doctor to take over the hospital in Gallipoli which was equipped by the Red Cross Society.<sup>121</sup> The final spot of Red Cross relief seemed to be Salonika; Mr Young wrote on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March to Loyd-Lindsay that he had sent Drs. Crookshank, Hope and Lightfoot to Salonika as a response to an appeal, due to the pressing needs in the region. He had distributed all the stores in hand and started to wait for the tombstone of Dr. Meyrick. His intention was to leave the Ottoman Empire as soon as he received it and wrote from Istanbul that: "... I have no intention of keeping the surgeons there one day longer that the present pressure or emergency shall exist. I shall probably, therefore, leave for Salonica about first or second week in April".<sup>122</sup>

As the active fighting came to an end with the Treaty of San Stefano on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1878, there was no point in continuing the operations of the National Society of Sick and Wounded. They continued to help the refugees they encountered.

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<sup>119</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, February 8, 1878, R.A.C. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 73.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, February 18, 1878, R.A.C. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 83.

<sup>121</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, March 8, 1878, R.A.C. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 94.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, March 8, 1878, R.A.C. March 15, 1878, Constantinople, R.C.A. D/Wan/3/1/3, p. 95.

The necessity of serving them was still very urgent, but the society did not continue its operations since its official target was limited to the period of war. About £30,000 had been expended during the '93 War, £27,500 of this amount came from the society's reserves and £2,500 from public subscription.<sup>123</sup> To sum up; Red Cross operations, though being unpremeditated, became a branch of the British relief operations for the '93 Refugees. It exhibited once more that all British philanthropic operations in the Ottoman Empire could not be considered as independent from the diplomatic presence, since the ambassador played a supervisory role and unexpected developments could be solved through the mediums of diplomacy. A feeling of contentment and achievement was apparent in one of the reports by Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay:

I've been told, not once but many times, by Turks, Greeks and Armenians, as well as by our own countrymen here, that the seed being sown by our efforts in aid of sick and wounded will bear good fruit hereafter, not only for the cause of humanity, but for the cause of civilization and toleration in region.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Dorothy Anderson, p. 160.

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Mr. Young to Loyd-Lindsay, August 8, 1877, R. C. A. D/Wan/3/1/1, pp. 19-20.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

*... We left the Golden Horn on the 21<sup>st</sup> February. A large crowd of Musulman refugees had collected at the landing place to bid us farewell. The chief men amongst them advanced and in a few touching words expressed the gratitude of their fellow sufferers for what we, and specially my wife, had done for them. I addressed a few words of sympathy to them in reply, ...*

*Layard Memoirs<sup>1</sup>*

*...On board the Saturno we found many waiting to bid us adieu and there 3 refugee children brought me a fine bouquet...<sup>2</sup>*

*Diaries of Lady Layard, 21st February 1878*

Gladstone's successful agitation campaign in 1876 played a significant role in determination of the Britain's *conditional neutrality* policy during the Russo-Ottoman War the following year. Despite the governmental policy, the British people

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<sup>1</sup> Sinan Kunalalp, *The Queens Ambassador to the Sultan, Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877-1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Sinan Kunalalp (ed.), *Twixt Pera and Therapia. Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard*, İstanbul: Isis Press, 2010, p. 173.

found a way to express their differentiating views and show their support for the Ottomans. The method was philanthropy.

Various humanitarian campaigns enabled the British public to corroborate any group of people that was affected by the war. Activities started with relief committees founded for the combatants for both belligerent parties, but eventually they came to concentrate on the Ottoman soldiers who appeared to be more in need. But as the Russian march through the Balkans caused a great exodus of non-combatants, the Britons could not remain indifferent, thus the sufferings of the Ottoman refugees emerged as the most “heart rendering” aspect of the war.

The Turkish Compassionate Fund, with its title, founder, first appeal, committee, organization, relief methods and administrator, was a distinctive undertaking. It performed a successful relief campaign and achieved significant operations. It was meant to contribute to the British image and it did; the endeavour of the relief agents was broadly appreciated both by the receivers of the relief and the Ottoman authorities.

The amount of money subscribed and spent is an important element in comprehending the significance of the relief operations, but this factor alone is not adequate. According to his own statement, the total money received by Henry Layard was around £80,000 through the whole process. A comparison done by Dorothy Anderson and also referred to by Orhan Koloğlu was the amount received by *the Lord Mayor’s Mansion House Fund for Famine Relief in India*, in one and half months over £250,000 was received by this organization.<sup>3</sup> This can be evaluated as

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<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson, 1968, p. 77.

evidence that the real interests of the British people lay elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, deep public divisions, high levels of controversy and a variety of institutions initiated with clashing targets caused the division of subscriptions in Britain for the Ottomans. Moreover, as shown in this research, the money received was very well utilized through various mediums of relief within the best organization possible which ensured the utmost benefit and cannot be underestimated.

Since the local Ottoman facilities were far from being adequate, British relief was momentous. The Ottomans lacked the organization and resources as well as the experience in relief operations. Even though there were several institutions, the state of war caused the governmental resources and energy to flow to military matters. This was reasonable on the grounds that interrupting the Russian advance seemed the most straightforward solution to their immediate problems.

Emphasising the fact that British relief to the '93 Refugees was neither the first nor the only attempt of its kind, should not attenuate its significance. It was an outcome of the Victorian philanthropic culture and a *sui generis* appeal to Christians to help suffering Muslims of another country. Organization and administration of the aid was through the British consular network. Besides the apparent feeling of satisfaction in terms of their contribution to impaired British image in the Ottoman Empire, there was no record of manipulative usage of the relief for diplomatic causes. Despite strict orders and public pressure, agents of the relief committees that were designed to relieve combatants only, namely of the National Aid Society and the Stafford House Committee, could not resist aiding the moribund refugees. These factors all together displayed the highly humanitarian character of the British relief

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<sup>4</sup> Orhan Kolođlu, *Avrupa'nın Kıskaçında Abdülhamid*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 33.

operations. Even today evidence of this humanitarian zeal is visible in Haydarpaşa Cemetery in Istanbul.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the Ladies Committee, it must be kept in mind that its initiator, Lady Layard, might have been influenced by the fashionable activity of Victorian times and the well-known models of charitable British ladies who had served in the Ottoman Empire beforehand. However, she did not follow a tradition of benevolent ambassadress in Tarabya or Pera since such a phenomenon had not existed. Lady Layard got engaged in these philanthropic activities simply because she wished to do so. But she somehow managed to set an example for her successors.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the Britannic concerns of image and the obsession to control, British relief of the '93 Refugees was probably the most humanitarian episode of the Anglo-British diplomatic interaction during the hazy atmosphere of the 1877-78 War. Henry Layard expressed his personal satisfaction in his personal memoirs:

The help we had been able to give to these unfortunate victims of the war and of the cruel persecution of the savage Bulgarians, and scarcely less savage Russians and the many thousands that we were able to rescue from misery and death, were amongst the results of my mission to Constantinople upon which I can look back with unalloyed satisfaction...

British enthusiasm for the relief of the Ottoman refugees, and the activities in this manner at the diplomatic level did not alter high politics. British intervention in regards to the Russian invasion did not come when hundreds of thousands became

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<sup>5</sup> Previously mentioned tombstone of Meyrick is still partly recognizable in Haydarpaşa English Cemetery in the present time. See appendix S.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Lowther, wife Sir Gerard Lowther, British Ambassador to the Porte (1908-1913), established a fund for the non-combatant victims of the Balkan Wars, with the members of the British community in Istanbul and appealed in England for aid. "Lady Lowther's Relief Fund", *The Times*, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1912, p. 5.

victims of war but only when the security of Istanbul was seriously jeopardized. London's unilateral order of British warships to cross the Dardanelles, allegedly to protect the British lives and property, hog tied the Ottoman government since Russia responded with an announcement of her intention to occupy the city. The possibility of an invasion by both powers caused great panic in the Ottoman capital and once the danger was surmounted, it was clear that "Britain was a dangerous friend, if friend indeed she was".<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Henry Layard, well-known for his pro-Turkish political standing, gained his utmost diplomatic success with the annexation of Cyprus right after the war, which was a major detriment to the Ottoman presence in the region. As the end of the war shifted the humanitarian concerns of Britain from the Balkans to the Eastern parts of Anatolia, due to the conflicts that took place during the warfare caused by the local ethnic elements, British influence turned to the question of reform in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup>

As other studies of philanthropic history, the present study reveals and emphasises the fundamental needs of people within a more humanitarian framework, isolated from secondary concerns such as national interests and international politics. As mentioned earlier, once the agents of relief found themselves among destitute victims of war, their target was nothing but to save the utmost possible. The episode of the British relief to '93 Refugees has revealed that the history of philanthropy in the Ottoman Empire is substantially poor. Further research on Ottoman relief efforts and the domestic committees for '93 Refugees would not only be an essential contribution to historical literature but also more satisfactorily answer the question of

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<sup>7</sup> F. A. K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdulhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1996, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Musa Şaşmaz, *British Policy and the Application of Reforms for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia 1877-1897*, Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 2000, p. 1.

cooperation with the British relief organs. This would also give the opportunity to re-evaluate through further comparisons.

Relief of the combatants of the '93 War is a comprehensive and little studied subject. Most of the archival materials, especially the records of the National Aid Society (The British Red Cross), the Stafford House Committee and the Red Crescent, provide invaluable information. Records are from the theatres of war and field ambulances. Hospitals close the fronts are equally important for the military history and the history of medicine, as well as for philanthropic history.

*İane-i Hindiyye*, the aid received from India, with its entire dynamic of pan-Islamism, Indian public awareness, British policy towards the Eastern Question, and its place in the philanthropic history, should be separately studied through Ottoman, British and Indian sources.

The British Ambassadorship and diplomatic networks were much more than a sole institution of diplomatic representation. Studies that could focus on the British Embassy and the consulates in an apolitical, socio-cultural framework and concentrating in the relationships with the localities would be considerably fertile and would give colourful pictures.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: A scene of Rusçuk bombardment, picturing inhabitants fleeing the town.



Source: Edhem Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz, Osmanlı Nişan ve Madalyaları Tarihi*, İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004.



**APPENDIX B: Convoys of *muhacirs*, dated September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1877.**



**APPENDIX C: A refugee family waiting in the Rusçuk Station.**



Source: Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri I*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989.



**APPENDIX D: A refugee train on its arrival at Istanbul.**



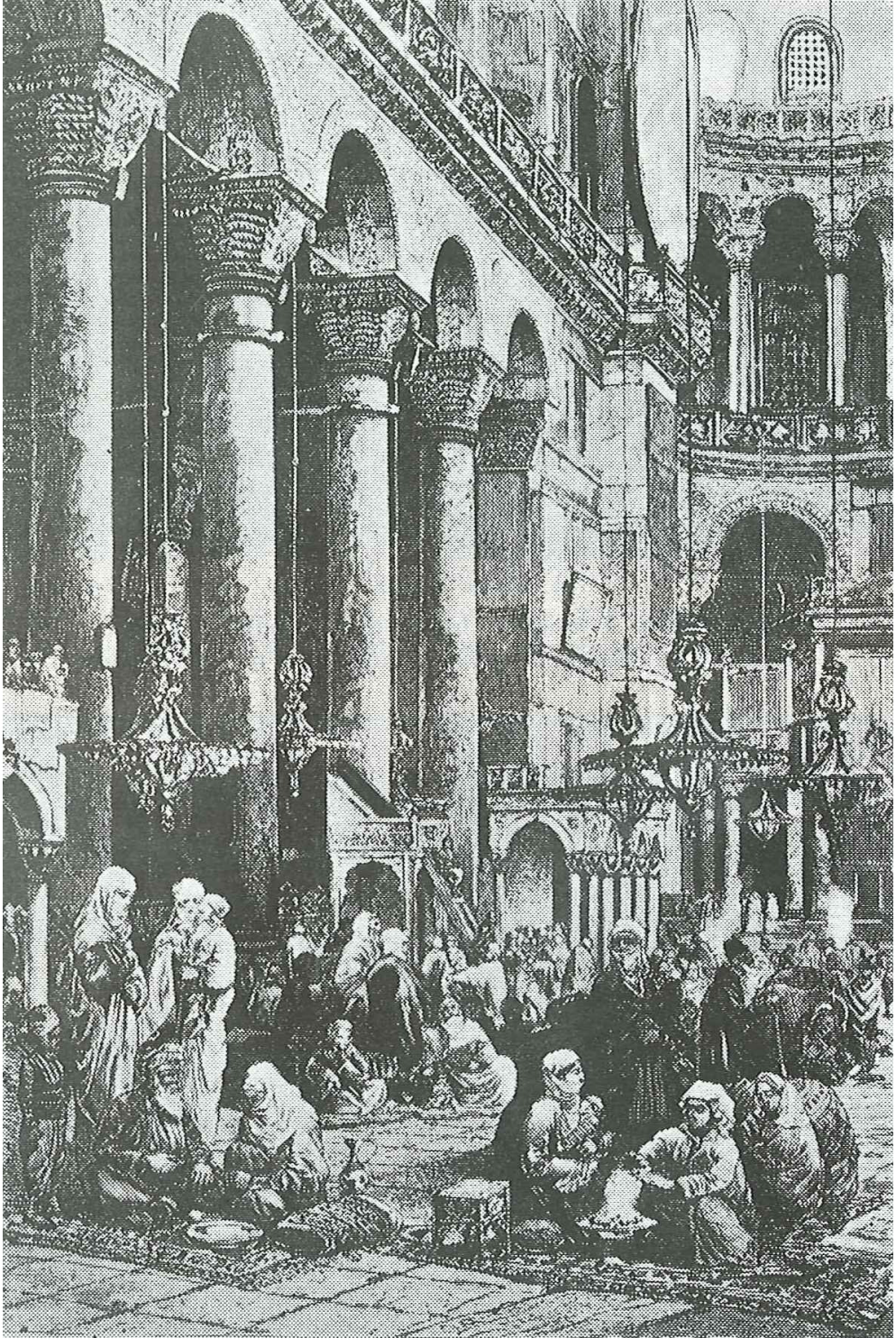
**APPENDIX E: An accident of a refugee train.**



Source: Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri I*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989.



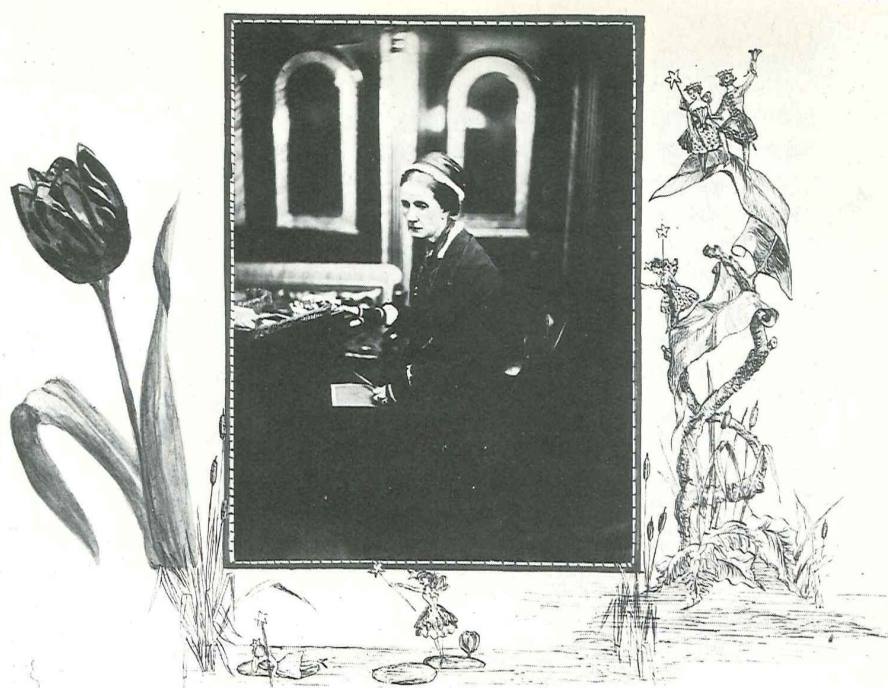
**APPENDIX F: St. Sophia filled with the *muhacir* families.**



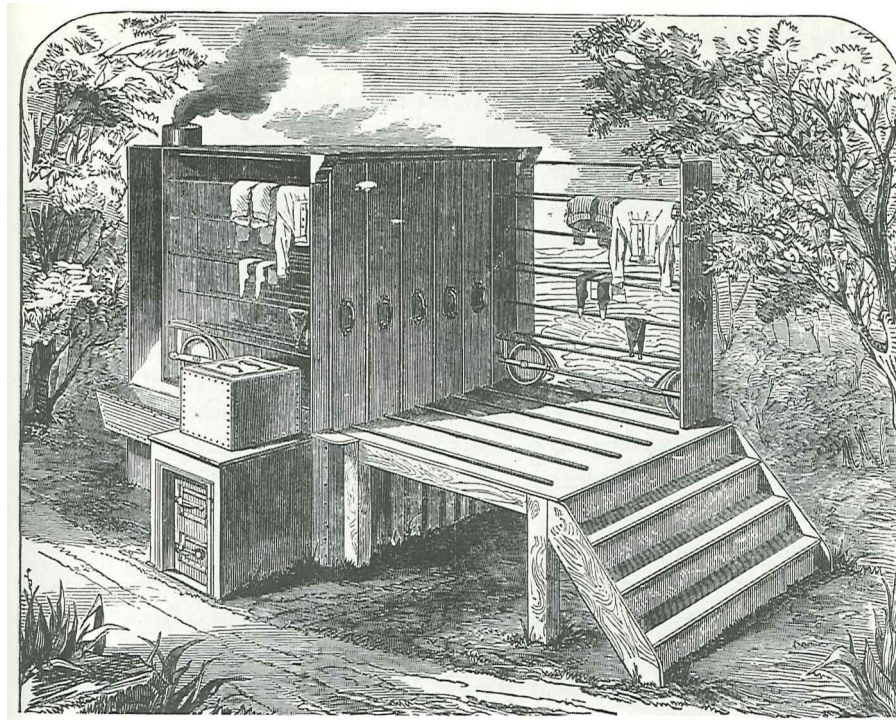
Source: Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri I*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989.



**APPENDIX G: Baroness Burdett-Coutts (1879)**



**APPENDIX H: An illustration of the drying closet sent to Florence Nightingale in Scutari Hospital by Burdett-Coutts (1855)**



Source: Edna Healey, *Lady Unknown, the Life of Angela Burdett-Coutts*, London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1984.

APPENDIX I: Translation of the telegram sent by Musurus Pasha on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1877 to Ottoman Foreign Ministry, reporting the establishment of the Turkish Compassionate Fund. (B.O.A. İ.HR. 27/16677)

مقام نفوس حیدرآباد خاجہ ۱۵ اگست ۱۸۷۷ء تاریخ میں لکھنؤ سفارت خانہ سے مندرجہ ذیل تلغراف نامہ

نظام خلیفہ عثمانیہ  
تعمیر و ترقی

محکمہ حاضرہ مصاب اولاد عثمانیہ اعلیٰ ترقی طویل عمریہ « عثمانیہ اولاد ترقی سرمایہ » نامہ و « لری  
برقیہ » کے ارتقائی برقیہ تشکیل و لری مہیلا سبب برقیہ تک اکثر اعلیٰ قادیانہ « روسیہ روسیہ  
و « قادیانہ » یقیناً زور مایہ « تہا » و یقیناً مہیلا تک کہ وہ لری « حادی » و سائر مقبولہ دولت  
ترقی اعلیٰ سبب موقی اعلیٰ بیک انگریزی و برقیہ بویارہ مویلا بارہ تعمیرہ ایسا اولاد و بیک موقی اعلیٰ  
طویل عمریہ موقی اعلیٰ بیک انگریزی و برقیہ بویارہ مویلا بارہ تعمیرہ ایسا اولاد و بیک موقی اعلیٰ  
تحت برقیہ بزم حقیر خیر برقیہ



**APPENDIX J: Distribution of cloths to the '93 Refugees, Şumla.**



**APPENDIX K: Wounded refugees in Edirne Hospital.**



Source: Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri I*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989.



**APPENDIX L: The cargo of Constance "Liste des echountillons" of the Turkish  
Compassionate Fund and its translation into Ottoman Turkish  
(B.O.A. Y. PRK. KOM. 1/8).**

*Turkish Compassionate Fund*

*Liste des echountillons de couvertures en laine, Bas, étoffes et appointes de divers par M. Lovett sur son yacht "Constance", et envoyés par M<sup>me</sup> La Baronne Burdett Coutts pour être distribués aux réfugiés de la guerre sous la bienveillante surveillance de S. E. le très honorable A. H. Layard etc. etc. etc*

<i>numéros des Echountillons</i>	<i>Objets</i>	<i>Quantité</i>
1 à 6	Six échantillons couvertures en laine . . . . .	4000
7 " 10	dir huit idem Bas en laine et coton . . . . .	8000
11 " 17	sept idem Jupons en laine (la plus grande partie transformés en chaloars)	160
" 18	un idem Chaloars " (coupés à Londres et cousus par les réfugiés)	300
19 " 20	deux idem Robes de chambre . . . . .	15
21	trois idem Echarpes tricotées . . . . .	
22	quatre idem " en laine . . . . .	1000
23	idem Cravates " . . . . .	
24	un idem Cravate " . . . . .	
25 " 27	trois idem Vêtements " . . . . .	300
28	un idem Bournois . . . . .	
29 " 30	deux idem Jaquettes d'enfants . . . . .	
31	un idem Chemises " . . . . .	100
32	un idem Capuchon " . . . . .	
33	un idem Pantoufle en laine de laine . . . . .	400
34	un idem Pair de draps d'ouvriers . . . . .	150
35	un idem Draps imperméables (usés comme protection contre l'humidité de la terre)	100
36	un idem Manteau " . . . . .	950
37	un idem Vêtoffe coupée pour être cousu par les réfugiés pièces	1000
38 à 42	vingt-cinq idem Vêtoffes en laine percale et autres pour confection de forêts, Libadés, chaloars & } pièces	20000
43	une boîte contenant des échantillons de fil, aiguilles, des boutons, etc. } douzaines	8000
44	un échantillon Bouilloire "Extra" à esprit de vin	70
45	une boîte Echantillons médicaments et autres - soit sulfate de quinine, sulfate de cinchonidine, Pilules de Fer et quinine, Extrait de Mèche, aliments pour enfants de lobbs et d'albermetry, Biberons, charpie } pour une valeur d'environ	2500

En outre il a été distribué aux réfugiés dans la capitale et dans les provinces de la Roumélie une grande quantité de chemises en toile, calons et habillements (voir les échantillons de la liste N<sup>o</sup> 2) confectionnés pour compte du "Turkish Compassionate Fund" par l'Association des Dames et par les soins de S. E. Ahmed Vefik Pacha (échantillons N<sup>o</sup> 46)

En conforme aux registres

le secrétaire honoraire . . . . . le commissaire spécial . . . . . le comptable  
*Alioum Tompaç Paşa* . . . . . *Ashmead Bantlett* . . . . . *Norac B. Kuarracus*  
*pp* *John P. Master*



## APPENDIX M: The Turkish Compassionate Fund, Constantinople Account Sheet.

### APPENDIX II.

#### TURKISH COMPASSIONATE FUND.

CONSTANTINOPLE GENERAL ACCOUNT SHEET.—Showing the Balance of Monies Received and Expended at Constantinople, under His Excellency Sir HENRY LAYARD's supervision, for LOCAL & PROVINCIAL RELIEF of the Poor, from 1st September, 1877, to the 31st July, 1879, *i.e.*, 23 Months.\*

Dr.	1st Working Season of 1877/8.		2nd Working Season of 1878/9.		Totals.		Cr.	
	Liras.	Ps.	Liras.	Ps.			Liras.	Ps.
To Disbursements, viz.—								
For General Constantinople Relief	T£20,401	27½	T£ 5,264	03½	T£25,665			
As detailed in Annex A for 1877/8								
and .. .. F .. 1878/9								
For General Provincial Relief ..	12,770	97½	3,300	65½	16,071	Messrs. C Hanson & Co.—		
As detailed in Annex B for 1877/8						For Total Amount of Donations and proceeds of Bills		
and .. .. G .. 1878/9						drawn by Sir Henry Layard on Messrs. Coutts & Co.,	46,363	31½
						as detailed in Account Book A. fos. 6 to 9 and 90 ..		
For General Relief to Jews ..	1,216	"	100	—	1,316	And for Proceeds of Rice and Sundries sold for Account	1,853	22
As detailed in Annex C.						of the Fund, as per Account, Book A. fo. 10 ..		
For General Clothing Account ..	1,751	78½	1,342	85	3,094	Examined and found Correct—		
As detailed in Annex D for 1877/8						Constantinople, 22 August, 1879.		
and .. .. H .. 1878/9						A. H. SCAIFE.		
For General Expenses ..	1,188	69½	593	83½	1,782			
As detailed in Annex E.								
Total of 1st Season ..	T£ 37,328	73						
Total of 2nd Season ..			T£ 10,601	37½				
Total of 2 Seasons ..			T£ 47,930		47,930			
Total Expended ..			T£ 47,930	10½				
Balance at Messrs. Hanson ..		246		01				
" .. Office ..		40		42				
				286	43			
			T£ 48,216	53½				
							T£ 48,216	53½

E. & O. E.,  
Constantinople, 1 August, 1879.  
HORACE B. GUARRACINO.

Source: H. Mainwaring Dunstan, *The Compassionate Fund: An Account for Its Origin, Working and Results*, London: Remington and Co., 1883.



**APPENDIX N: A British Embassy in Tarabya.**



**APPENDIX O: The Ladies Committee at work.**



Source: Dorothy Anderson, *the Balkan Volunteers*, London: Hutchinson, 1968.

**APPENDIX P: List of the supplies of Constance for the Ladies Committee, and its Ottoman translation (B.O.A. Y. PRK. KOM. 1/19).**

*Association des Dames de Constantinople*  
*pour venir en aide aux Malades et aux blessés de la Guerre*  
*Liste des Échantillons d'habillements et autres confectionnés par les soins de l'Association*  
*des Dames de Constantinople sous la présidence de Madame Gayard.*

<i>Numéros sur les échantillons</i>	<i>Confection</i>	<i>Pièces</i>
50, 51, 52	Trois échantillons chemises en toile	12000
53, 54	Deux idem Calçons	3500
55, 56	Deux idem Pantalons courts	1500
57, 58	Deux idem Pantalons en indienne doubles en percale	
59, 60	Deux idem Pantalons idem idem	4300
61, 62, 63	Trois idem idem idem en laine et en cotonades	
64, 65	Deux idem Pantalons en indienne	3500
66	un idem Habillements et jaquettes d'enfants	400
67	un idem Chemises en flanelle pour soldats malades	
68	un idem Jaquettes pour soldats malades	200
69	un idem Chemises de nuit en indienne idem	100
70	un idem Draps de lits	4000
71	un idem Toile d'oreiller	4500
72	quatre idem Bandages en toile	35000
74	un idem Matelas	1300
<i>Total 36000 pièces confectionnées et 35000 bandages roulés</i>		
<i>Un conforme aux registres</i>		
<i>Le secrétaire honoraire</i> <i>M. W. Stausson</i> <i>pour Madame Mary G. Stausson.</i>		
<i>par ordre</i> <i>le Comptable</i> <i>Hovace Pharanian</i>		



مخبره خطابه و مجریه ایچونه در سادته تشکلی ایچونه قانونی جمعیتی  
 علمیه و اداری لویه در سادته تشکلی ایچونه قانونی جمعیتی  
 نمونه ای دفتر

نمونه لویه نومره	معمولیه	عدد معمولیه
۵۴ و ۵۹ و ۵۰	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۱۲۰۰۰
۵۴ و ۵۴	کذا لویه	۴۵۰۰
۵۹ و ۵۵	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۱۵۰۰
۵۸ و ۵۷	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۴۰۰
۶۰ و ۵۸	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۴۰۰
۶۴ و ۶۲ و ۶۱	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۵۰۰
۶۵ و ۶۴	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰
۶۶	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰
۶۷	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰
۶۸	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰
۶۹	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۱۰۰
۷۰	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰۰
۷۱	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۵۰۰
۷۲	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۵۰۰۰
۷۳	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۱۴۰۰
۷۴	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۱۴۰۰
	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۰۰۰۰
	بزرگ کوملک نمونه عمده	۴۵۰۰۰

تصمیم مطابقت  
 سرانجام جمعیت  
 اولیای حاضرین

اشیا ایچونه  
 حوزی غاصبیه

**APPENDIX Q: Lady Layard wearing the Order of Mercy.**



**APPENDIX R: *Şefkat Nişanı*.**



Source: Edhem Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz, Osmanlı Nişan ve Madalyaları Tarihi*, İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004.

**APPENDIX S: The Tomb of Dr. Meyrick, Haydarpaşa Cemetery, May 2010.**

