The Muhacirin Komisyonu:

An Agent in the Transformation

Of Ottoman Anatolia

1860-1866

David Cameron Cuthell Jr.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Columbia University
2005
INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.
Dissertation Abstract

The Muhacırın Komisyonu:

An Agent in the Transformation

Of Ottoman Anatolia

1860-1866

David Cameron Cuthell Jr.

This dissertation is an examination of the role played by an agency of the Ottoman Government, during the middle of the nineteenth century, in the resettlement of the largest influx of foreign Muslims experienced by the Empire during the seven centuries of its existence. Beginning in the period immediately following the Crimean War, the Russian Government sought to consolidate its control over the lands along the northern coastlines and interior of the Black Sea. To do so, the Russians adopted a range of policies designed to reduce, if not clear the Muslim populations from the region. While the emigration of Muslims from the North Black Sea and the Caucasus had been under way for almost a century, the hardening Russian attitudes toward the resident Muslims sharply accelerated the process of emigration.

During the initial phase, Muslim families primarily of Tatar heritage were able to emigrate with personal property as well as liquidate their holdings in their homelands. However, as Russian pressure increased, the trickle of emigrants became a flood. Emigrants were increasingly desperate, able only to leave with what they could carry. At the same time the Ottoman Government, which at first had tacitly
encouraged a certain amount of emigration from Russia in an effort to bolster their frontiers and economy as well the claim of protector of all Muslims, now found itself with a tidal wave of refugees.

In response to a surge in the flow of Crimean and Nogay Tatar refugees during the years 1859-1860, the Government established a body dedicated to the task of dealing with issue of refugees. This was the Muhacirin Komisyonu or Emigrant Commission, an organization charged with all aspects of the resettlement of refugees, first from the Crimea and the Kuban and later from the Caucasus. During the years 1861-1865, the Commission acted as an independent agency of the Ottoman Government, maintaining its own records and accounts. These are recorded in two sets of journals found in the Prime Ministers Archives in Istanbul and represent several thousand précis of underlying dossiers.

It is these journals or defters constitute the primary source material of the dissertation. Taken as a collective, the journal entries afford a view into the workings of the Commission; their settlement choices and goals, problems encountered as well as successes obtained. At the same time, the records indicate biases toward or against certain groups, efforts to co-opt or punish, in short they provide a case study in the normative ideals of late Ottoman Society as betrayed in the policies of this elite branch of government. In the early stages, the linguistic and cultural affinities shared by the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars initially produced a windfall for the Government as Crimean capital as well as business and agricultural skills helped to reshape the contours of the economy, primarily in the Rumelian and West Anatolian provinces. This was to undergo significant change however as the refugee flow
quickly began to shift eastward to the Caucasus, bringing with it refugees with none of the shared culture and language as well as capital and skills.

At this stage, the picture that emerges from the records demonstrates a change of considerable strategic and social consequence. This is one which involved the transformation of a great swath of Anatolia into the late Ottoman and by extension, the modern Turkish heartland. This transformation came about as the result of a deliberate policy of refugee settlement into areas long inhabited by nomadic Turkmen as well as Kurdish tribes. These areas had long coincided with the frontier zones of effective control of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empire. In fact, effective control over the southeastern regions of the zone had only recently returned to the Ottomans after having been lost to Muhammad Ali’s Egyptians in the early decades of the 19th century. The introduction and settlement of large numbers of Caucasian emigrants served to promote sedenterization in the region as well as create a local population whose loyalty lay with the Government in Istanbul. Whereas earlier waves of refugees had been settled in European provinces in an effort to bolster the frontier Muslim populations, the primary intent in the settlement of the waves during 1861-1865 was designed to bolster the “internal frontier” of Eastern Anatolia.

Beyond this, the Commission’s journals reflect the changing nature of the relationship between the Ottoman Government and Ottoman Society during the middle of the 19th century. The emerging Civil Service, the direct result of the Tanzimat reforms, saw itself as professional, contractually salaried and most important, free. This emerging notion of individual freedom found particular resonance and a wider expression in the actions taken by the Commission with
respect to the welfare of the refugees, in particular in those cases involving slavery that fell under its purview. While most of the time under study found the Commission reacting to one unanticipated catastrophe and then another, it was in the periods of relative calm that this most basic question of personal status was addressed. In the case of the refugees, this turned on the problem created by the arrival of significant numbers of agricultural slaves who accompanied the early, wealthy landowners. There were also cases among the later waves of refugees involving destitute refugees who sold their children to slavers. In both cases the Commission was instrumental in the suppression of slave trafficking and slave holding, ultimately playing a leading role in the gradual process of contractual manumission (*mukatebe*).

The Commission’s settlement policies, as well as those policies reflecting the concurrent changes in the roles of individuals and the relationship with their government, produced a significant transformation of Central and Eastern Anatolia and its residents. The process of settling large numbers of refugees throughout the region served to bolster or establish a large population of Muslims whose loyalty was directed toward Istanbul. Within a generation, the sons and daughters of the refugees became tax paying subjects who farmed the land, worked in small towns, served in the military and most importantly, became Turks. This rapid transformation in identity was to prove crucial in the coming decades as the Ottoman Empire’s periphery continued to shrink, leaving the transformed Anatolian heartland alone as the basis for modern Turkey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TABLE OF CONTENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 1: Background and Historiography</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2: The Creation and Organization of the Commission</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3: Nobles and Peasants: The Commission and its Policies</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of Elite Identification and Co-optation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4: Settlement, Social Control and Order</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 5: The State and the Individual</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 6: Epilogue and Conclusion</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAPS AND CHARTS

Map I....................Circassia at Present (Jaimoukha)

Map II....................Tribal Regions 19th Century (Jaimoukha)

Map III..................North Caucasus and Transcaucasia (Jaimoukha)

Map IV...................Regions in Turkey settled by Caucasian Peoples

Chart 1...................Anatolian vs. Rumelian Defter Entries

Chart 2...................Crimean Tatar Settlement

Chart 3...................Nogay Tatar Settlement

Map V.....................Chechen Settlement Plans Diyarbakir #1 D38018

Map VI....................Chechen Settlement Plans Diyarbakir #2 D38018

Chart 4...................Slavery Related Entries
To my parents

Dawn H. and David C. Cuthell
Introduction

This dissertation examines the central role played by a little known agency of the Ottoman Government, the Muhacirin Komisyonu (Emigrant Commission) during an enormously disruptive yet largely forgotten time in late Ottoman history. The role it played was instrumental in one of the most profound transformations in late Ottoman society and had a significant impact in the creation of modern Turkey. This historical transformation was bought about as the result or the forced deportation of millions of Muslims from the Crimea and the Caucasus, across the Black Sea or along its coastlines and into Ottoman territory. The creation of the Commission in 1860 represented a desperate Ottoman response to a recent wave of refugees and was to undergo a series of enormous struggles almost from its inception. By the time of its reorganization in late 1865, the Commission had weathered a storm of epic proportions, largely out of the focus of a Western Europe whose attention was distracted by the American Civil War. Yet, it was during this time that one of the largest population movements in history took place, over a million individuals, creating not only enormous stress for the already weakened Ottomans but also permanently changing the landscape. In an editorial dated January 3, 1866, the British commercial newspaper, the Levant Herald wrote:
“It appears from the official returns that total number of emigrants into the
Ottoman empire (sic.) during the last six years, including Circassians, Tchetchenes,
and Nogay and other Tatars, amounts to a million of souls, men, women and children.
Of these, about 635,000 in the past two years and 365,000 in the four years previous.
The expense caused by the emigrants to the Imperial Treasury has not—it is officially
estimated—been less than 20,000,000....”¹

This is their story, as well as those who preceded and followed them, as seen
through the eyes of those who were charged with their settlement and welfare.

Origins and Earliest Emigrants

The origins of the deportations arose as a consequence of the Russian military
conquests of the Crimea and the Caucasus, a process of subduing resident Muslims,
dating back from Ivan the Terrible’s capture of Kazan. Unlike Russia’s earliest
victories, where the conquering Russian armies incorporated the Muslims into the
agricultural and trade sectors of the economy, and at times even into the Russian
elite², Russian policy during the years immediately following the Crimean War in

¹ *Levant Herald* 1/3/1866 p.399

² For an analysis of the process of cooptation and conversion see Chantal Lemercier-
Quelquejay’s *Cooptation of the Elites of Kabarda and Daghestan in the Sixteenth
Century* (p.18-43) in Broxup. Success or failure of cooptation was highly uneven in
the region, dependent as much on social structure as much as religion. Thus even
within regions such as Daghestan, where Islam had dominated since the Arab
incursions of the 10th century, resistance to conversion and cooptation depended
largely on social order and class rigidity.
1856 and lasting until the end of the Russo-Turkish of 1876-78, involved a deliberate program of subjugation and expulsion.³

During this period, an estimated 2-5 million emigrants (*muhacir*) were torn from their ancestral lands, loaded on boats or forced overland, and dropped on the doorstep of the Ottoman Empire, penniless, suffering from smallpox, typhus and malnutrition. This study is an examination of the measures taken by the Ottomans in order to address and solve the social and economic problems thrust upon them by the Russians. It represents an effort to understand not just the logistical aspects of receiving and settling large numbers of foreign Muslims within Ottoman territory but also to examine strategic considerations the Ottomans might have adopted in order to address problems internal to the Empire as well as threats posed by hostile powers on the Ottoman borders, specifically Tsarist Russia. Finally, this is an examination of the process of transforming the identities of a disparate group of Crimean and Caucasian tribesmen and their families into Ottoman subjects and ultimately, into modern Turks. This study will explore how the Ottoman felt toward the refugees, how were the masses of newly arrived different from one and another? Of even greater import is the

³ During the expansion of the Muscovite state during the 17th century, the tripling of Russian territory resulted in a corresponding increased demand for expansion of the service nobility. Under Peter the Great, the nature of the nobility was further transformed by Peter’s desire to reduce the power of the landed nobility and to transform the group into one whose status was linked to service to the autocrat. In doing so, Peter promoted what Liah Greenfeld has termed the “role of status insecurity”. This involved not only reducing the power of the Russian nobility, but also enrolling Muslim converts among the “list of names”. This Russification of Muslims played an important role in the consolidation of the power of the Tsar during the 17th and 18th centuries. This however was to change by the early years of the 19th century as Russian attitudes toward “*inoorodtsy*” (aliens) or “the other”, became more rigid. See, Greenfeld, “The Formation of the Russian Identity”. 
question of how the refugees were meant to interact with the communities in which they were settled? Taken together this study will show how this group of northern immigrants was to play a powerful role in the revitalization of the Empire during the final decades of the 19th century not only from an economic perspective but from a military and social one as well, leading to a profound transformation in the social fabric of Anatolia, and by extension, the very bedrock upon which the modern Turkish Republic was founded.

The origins of the *Muhacirin Komisyonu* lie with the flow of refugees that began during the late 18th century. During the 1770s and 1780s, following the campaigns of Tsarina Catherine II against the Crimean Khans and the Ottoman Turks, until the Crimean War mid-19th century, emigration from newly conquered Russian territory might best be described as a trickle punctuated from time to time by larger pulses.⁴ For the Ottomans, absorption of the émigrés was not a great problem as the numbers were generally manageable and the majority of those arriving spoke Crimean Tatar, a largely intelligible dialect of Turkish. Many of the new arrivals, in particular the Crimean Tatars, possessed agricultural skills or some rudimentary job skills or trade. This constant but low level influx allowed the Ottomans to repopulate territories largely abandoned or underutilized, bringing it the twin benefits of economic revitalization and increased security through a loyal Muslim population. After an initial period of exemption, tax rolls would be increased and the increased

---

⁴ Karpat, p. 65 in *Ottoman Population* states that in the period 1783/4 upwards of 80,000 Tatars fled the Crimean territories and were settled principally in the Dobruca and Bessarabia.
Muslim population served the purposes of the Ottoman Army in its never ending need for recruits, a burden which fell solely on the Muslim portion of the population.

This process of an orderly transfer of Muslims from the Russian to the Ottoman benefited all parties except, perhaps, the émigrés themselves. In this regard, the Tatars were not the only émigrés involved in the transfer of populations. Marc Pinson has written on the subject of Russo-Ottoman population transfer, or as he termed it, “demographic warfare” and has drawn attention to a reverse flow of ethnic Bulgarians during this period into Russian-held territory. Against the backdrop of rising nationalism in Western Europe and nascent nationalism or, at minimum heightened inter-ethnic tension within Eastern Europe, it is evident that the autocratic reformulations of the Russian Empire under Nicholas I and Alexander II were well served through the removal of non-Orthodox inorodtsy and the importation of Orthodox Bulgarians in their place.\(^5\) For their part, the Ottomans benefited not only in the ways mentioned above but through the addition of loyal Muslims, serving as a counterweight to the remaining Bulgarians as well as the more dangerous Orthodox adherents, the Greeks.\(^6\)

The arrangement therefore suited both parties, serving to reinforce the frontiers and to a small extent providing a relief valve to pent up ethnic tension or

\(^5\) The origins and transformation of the Russian concept of inorodtsy are discussed by John W. Slocum in “Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy?” From earlier and more general usage, the term came to have a stricter and narrower meaning by the time of its legal codification in 1822.

\(^6\) While a hostile Bulgarian population posed a security risk along the northwest frontier of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek population was a far greater danger to Ottoman security. This stemmed in part from the distributed nature of the Greeks throughout the Empire and their effective control of Ottoman shipping and commerce. They also enjoyed the support of the Western powers, a constituency lacking in the Bulgarian corner.
nationalism. It was not however to lead to a longer term *modus vivendi*. Russian aspirations to the role of ever greater imperial power continued unabated. The conquests of Catherine in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century were followed by the Russian expansion in Europe under Alexander I and membership in the Concert of Europe after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. On the one hand, Russian bitterness arising from the diplomatic snubbing by the Western Powers following the defeat of Napoleon had placed it in an increasingly hostile relationship with the Western Powers, particularly Britain. To the West, increased Prussian might as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire served to largely check Russian expansion. Elsewhere, British naval supremacy checked Russia’s ability to move beyond the Baltic, leaving the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits as the only effective route for Russian naval power to pursue.

The Russian move southward into the Crimea and the Caucasus served to continue its expansion into those regions and beyond. In securing its southern flank with the conquest of the Crimea, Russia was poised to move eastward toward the Caucasus and on to Central Asia. At the same time this campaign of south and eastward expansion was fundamentally different from the earlier campaigns against the Golden Horde and Kazan. No longer was there the possibility for the non-Orthodox elite to enter the Russian ruling class through conversion to Orthodoxy and enrollment among the Russian service nobility within the “List of Names”. Conversion may have brought a more favored status but no longer afforded a means of maintaining status and the prospects for advancement.

This increasing Russification was also evidenced in the emerging ideology espoused by Nicholas I, which called for adherence to the creed of Autocracy,
Orthodoxy and Monarchy. This official ideology served not only to demarcate the differences between Catholic Poles, Baltic Germans, and Finns, it served to further distance Orthodox Slavs from non-Slavic Muslims to the south and east of the traditional Russian heartland. The creation and delineation of the other, the "inorodtsy", helped to channel the official ideology along the dual paths of empire building and a Russian equivalent of the American Manifest Destiny. It is therefore unsurprising that during the period of greatest Russian assertiveness regarding the expulsion of Muslims in 1863-64 that the most clearly articulated expression of Russian Imperial aims was published. This was the Gorchakov Circular of 1864, a document that explicitly laid claim to Russia’s role in the conquest and civilizing those lesser peoples at their doorstep. This flexing of Imperial muscle was to reach its zenith during the twenty years following the Circular with the annexation not only of the entire Caucasus but with the conquest of Central Asia as well. The Russian attitude toward the inorodtsy was to survive the collapse of the Empire in 1917, taking new form under Lenin and his “Great Friendship Among Peoples” which was to serve as the velvet glove concealing the iron fist of Soviet control.

From the Ottoman perspective, the period following the Treaty of Jassy up to the time of the Crimean War was one of a generally stable, if hostile relationship between the Ottomans and the Russians. Ottoman attention was largely focused on internal problems as well as the threat from Egypt. During the reign of Abdul Mecid (1839-1860) the Ottomans were coping with the internal problems of nationalism and pan-Slavism in the Balkans, the effective loss of control of Egypt to Muhammad Ali as well as adjusting to the changes brought about by the Tanzimat (1839-76). This
Tanzimat (Reordering) reflected a social and political program, in part thrust upon the Ottomans during the 1830s and 1840s by the European Powers in an effort to open trade opportunities and to provide greater political freedom for non-Muslims within the Empire. At the same time there was another impetus for the reforms, which lay not with European pressure but sprang from a more traditional, Ottoman source. This was the reform movement within the Ottoman State which looked to a more centralized administration dominated by a growing, salaried bureaucracy. These aspects of the Tanzimat could be traced back to the brilliant but doomed Sultan Selim III (1789-1807). Selim had ascended to the throne in the aftermath of the bitter Ottoman defeat by the Russians in the northern Black Sea, which was highlighted, for the entire world to see, with the Treaty of Jassy in 1792. With this defeat came the loss of the invaluable vassal state of the Crimean Khans. The Giray family had for centuries provided the Ottomans with superb troops who fought not only in the northern marches of the Empire but against the Poles, Austrians and Russians along the westerns frontiers as well. So close were the Crimeans to the Ottomans that should the house of Osman fail to produce an heir, the House of Giray would succeed to the Ottoman throne.

Selim was faced with the total loss of control of the Crimea. At the same time, the Russians were moving steadily to subdue the Caucasus and the northeastern shores of the Black Sea. While these areas were never officially part of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman merchants engaged in extensive commerce along the coast from Kertch to Sukhum. Ottoman troops maintained a number of forts along the coastline and relations with the Emirs and Begs of the region enjoyed a long and stable history.
Russian encroachment into the region left an unambiguous message; either the Ottomans reformed their capacity to defend themselves or they risked annihilation. At the same time, the eruption of a Greek nationalist movement in the Morea and the concurrent moves for independence among Phanariot Greeks in Istanbul and Odessa threatened the empire from within. Greeks controlled virtually all of the shipping and a great deal of manufacturing and export agriculture, particularly in Thrace and Western Anatolia. As such, the Greeks, and to a lesser extent the Armenians represented a direct challenge to Ottoman control due to their rising and disproportional economic power as well as their links to foreign powers.

This last problem became manifestly clear in 1798 with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. Long the breadbasket of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was an essential component of the Ottoman civil and military machinery. Yet during the invasion and occupation, the Ottomans were incapable of nothing more than observing the French and the British fight it out on their territory. The Ottomans had clearly been reduced to the status of a second or third-rate power. The first order of business for Selim therefore was to rebuild his army along the lines of a modern European force. His Nizam-i Jedid (New Order) might best be described as a desperate attempt to close the gap between a seventeenth century army with those of nineteenth century Europe. At first relying heavily on European advisors, the new army was constructed along the lines of the latest military science, requiring considerable training in mathematics and tactics. New schools of military engineering

---

7 In reality a small corps of Selim’s new army did support the British in their blockade of the French at Rosetta. See, Shaw. Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Selim III, 1789-1807 Ch. 10
were established and separate barracks established away from the traditional military. This need for separate location of the schools and barracks underscored an important hurdle facing Selim and the reformers, namely the entrenched and highly conservative powers in Ottoman society.

In addition to conservative religious forces, the conservative elements fell into two important groups. The first were the Janissaries. While this group has been the focus of many studies, the salient point was their vested interest in maintaining the military and economic status quo. Originally an elite and highly motivated fighting force, the Janissaries had devolved into what we would view today as a corrupt and nepotistic class, largely concerned with maintaining their military privileges and payrolls, all the while pursuing other commercial and political interests. As such, the Janissaries represented less of a threat for those confronting the Empire from without as for those seeking reform from within. The second group consisted of regional magnates, (*derebeys*). These “lords of the valleys” benefited from decades of decentralization of power within the Empire. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the rotation of Ottoman military officials throughout the Empire known as the *timar* system was gradually replaced by a system of inherited appointments and tax farming (*iltizam*). Whereas in earlier times the administrative class would move about the Empire many times during a career, in theory keeping them free from local entanglements and preserving their allegiance to the center, by the early years of the 19th century many had come to reside in a single region and hand down their titles and privileges to their sons. As a result, local power bases formed and became entrenched with increasingly independent *ayans* exercising effective control.
Cadastral reviews lapsed and with it the State’s powers to effectively assess taxes as well as raise levees in time of war. Despite this, so long as some taxes were remitted and the population remained compliant, there was little interference from Istanbul.

The dilemma for Selim therefore was to effect an overhaul of the system, simultaneously rehabilitating the army in order to mount a better defense against foreign threats as well as bringing about a more efficient and responsive system of provincial administration. That these problems demanded urgent attention could not have been lost on the Sultan following the attacks by the French under Napoleon initially against the Habsburgs in Italy and the Adriatic, then in Egypt in an effort to check the British routes to India in 1798. By 1803 the reform campaign within the military had progressed sufficiently to cause the Janissaries to perceive the Nizam-i Cedid Army as constituting an imminent threat to their control of the capital. Their revolt in May of 1807 rapidly isolated Selim from his new troops who had been stationed in the European and Anatolian countryside. Outgunned and outmanned, Selim was forced to surrender, an act that led to his deposition in favor of the more pliant Mustafa IV. After this, Selim was forced to take refuge from his enemies in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. Ironically, the only effective means of rescue came not from the Nizam-i Jadid, but from an army led by one of the powerful provincial ayans, Bayraktar Muhtar Paşa. Despite the threat Selim posed to his own interests and welfare, Muhtar Paşa saw the Janissaries to be an even greater one. The attempt of July of 1808 failed, and Selim was murdered just as the rescuers arrived at the Palace.
The younger brother of the hapless Selim, Mahmud II was installed as the new Sultan and things reverted back to the status quo.⁸

Mahmud II however was no mere figurehead. Instead, steered by the fate that had befallen his brother, he embarked on a well documented campaign to gradually reconstruct the vision of his predecessor, all the while giving his enemies little opportunity to suspect his true agenda. The first decisive turn of events took a full twenty-six years to unfold, taking place on 1826. By this time Mahmud had rebuilt his brother’s army as well as a stronger Palace Administration. When the Janissaries once again overturned their soup kettles as a symbol of revolt, Mahmud was ready. Bringing in the new army, equipped with the latest in firearms and cannon, Mahmud was able to annihilate the Janissaries, bringing a sorry ending to a once proud corps whose origins dated back six centuries.

With a free hand to implement change, reform under Mahmud was to pick up renewed speed. Among the most important reforms were the broadening and deepening of the bureaucracy. To this end a system of salaries was initiated, replacing the traditional prebendial or venal order. The first permanent foreign legations were established in the European capitals. Perhaps, most significantly, the intermediaries between the Ottomans and foreigners, the role of dragoman (terciüman) or translators was removed from Greeks and Armenians and given to Muslim Turks. In doing so, a

---

⁸ The reforms of Selim III marked the earliest beginnings of the Tanzimat or “reordering” of the Empire and have been dealt with in Stanford Shaw’s Between Old and New. Of particular note for the present study to be found in this history are the roles Circassians played on both sides in the process of attempted reform. Selim appointed a Circassian, Küçük Hüseyin Paşa as Grand Admiral of the fleet, while the Janissaries counted on a significant number of Circassian mercenaries or Yamaks for support against the Sultan and his new army.
long tradition of shielding Ottoman officials from the corrupting way of foreigners began to come to an end. A younger coterie of elite Ottoman Government bureaucrats started their careers as translators to Ottoman Ministers and Ambassadors affording them foreign contacts hitherto impossible. It was these young Ottomans who were to serve as the most effective advocates of political and ideological reform for the remainder of the 19th century.  

It is important to keep in mind that the goals of reform and the methods through which it was implemented did not fall within a single vision. The policies advocated by the reforming elite, which was to take full form following the death of Mahmud II during the period of the Tanzimat (1839-1876), derived from the new professional, bureaucratic corps. With the allegiance placed firmly with the Ottoman State they were from the start in conflict with the provincial administrations, which reflected the vested interests of regional grandees, as well as with the power of religious conservatives. At the same time the process of reform should not be considered as an extension of rights and freedoms to the citizens of the Empire. Instead, reform was the means to attain the goal of a healthier economy and stronger

---

9 This transformation from what Carter Findley term the “scribal service” to “civil officialdom” lies at the heart of what has come to be known as the Tanzimat. As Findley so persuasively argues, the two terms underscore a vast difference in both the government and the role played by those employed by the government. In the case of the first, the scribes were perceived as servants of the Sultan who bestowed favor and appointments upon them. In the latter case, the civil officials were qualified functionaries working within a hierarchical order with fixed salaries and work venues. Most importantly, there was the implicit notion that the officials were free and functioned within a contractual order rather than a paternalistic one. While Findley notes the “ragged way often clearer in concept than implementation” adopted by the Ottomans prior to the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, this “civil officialdom” represented the vanguard of a movement toward modernity within the Empire. See Findley, Civil Officialdom. “Why Study Ottoman Officials?”
military which would serve to regain the glory of Empire and preserve it from its enemies.

At the same time, the goal of reform of the Sultan, while much the same as the pre-Tanzimat reformers, ultimately differed with regard to the role of the Sultan himself. Just as Mahmud’s counterpart in Russia, Nicholas I, was considered a reformer, reform for the Ottoman Sultan pursued a similar path, one premised on strengthening autocratic rule. To this end, the bureaucracy was the vehicle to extend the power of the autocrat throughout the Empire. This placed the regional power of the derebeys directly in the Sultan’s way. The period 1826-1856 witnessed the gradual reduction of power among the regional Agas, bringing with it a series of reforms in provincial administration and personnel involving the periodic rotation of salaried Governors and other officials throughout the provinces.

In the capital, the new system of Ministers began to resemble its European counterparts in organization and function. With this came another pattern of the administration of power. Mahmud II was an active participant in the daily affairs of state. His senior ministers, including the Vizier (Sadrazam), or Prime Minister, served the autocratic wishes of the Sultan. However after his death in 1839 and during the reigns of Abdul Mecid (1839-1860) and Abdul Aziz (1860-1876), a less involved Sultan, allowed the true powers of administration and reform to devolve to the senior ministers and their bureaucracy. It is during these times that the process of modernization followed a more Western European path in contradistinction to the Russian or even Prussian drifts to autocratic rule.
Ottoman Historians have tended to look upon activist, autocratic Sultans with greater interest than those who played a less active role in government. This is understandable as the reigns of the Sultans with a more autocratic and interventionist bias often make for livelier narratives than those who spent their time pursuing more pedestrian pleasures and left the affairs of State to others. In the 19th century, it is the Autocrats Mahmud II and his grandson Abdul Hamid II who receive the most attention. Mahmud II is famous for his resuscitation of the power of the Sultan; Abdul Hamid II provides a wealth of malign examples ranging from the persecution of Armenians to the creation of an early but ineffective police state, this exists despite the fact that under Abdul Hamid II the Ottoman Empire enjoyed one of the longest uninterrupted periods of peace in its history.

In contrast to these two strong Sultans, the two major Rescripts, which served as the basis for reform, did not take place during the reign of Mahmud II but during his successors'. It is during the period 1839-1876, a time of two of the most ineffective and uninspiring Sultans that we see perhaps the greatest transformation of the Ottoman Empire. This is especially true of changes in the bureaucracy and its worldview. Not only is this the period when the newly minted professional civil bureaucracy came to maturity, it is also the period when the realities of increased nationalism with its attendant changes in social identities forced its way into the forefront of Ottoman thought. The period opened with the death of the Autocrat Mahmud II, a leader whose external manifestations of reform, as symbolized by the adoption of the fez, hid the impulses of a Sultan driven to rule his Empire in the fashion of his ancestors with the application of modern science and practices. The
period closed with the collapse of the first Parliament in 1876 and the outbreak of war once again with Russia. While the first Ottoman Parliament was later to collapse and prorogued by Abdül Hamid II, the very act of opening Parliament underscored the reality that during this short period enormous social change had taken place. No event captures this better than that of Prime Minister Ahmet Vefik Pasha’s famous shouting “Sus!” (Shut up!), over the heads of the fractious and unruly Arab, Turk, Greek, Kurd and Armenian parliamentarians in 1867. The very notion would have been inconceivable in 1839, yet here was a man, representing the new Ottoman elite, attempting to bring order to what has been described as one of the most colorful and diverse legislative bodies of all time.

All of these changes however, can not only be understood through an analysis of the ruling elite and the bureaucracy. Real understanding requires the accompanying study of the underlying society. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the middle of the nineteenth century entailed not only reform and change within the ruling structure but massive demographic and social change among the ruled. It is the interaction between the Ottoman government and the emigrants from the Caucasus and the Crimea that is our focus. This study will not only explore the dramatic re-ordering of the heartlands of the Empire, Anatolia, Eastern Thrace as well as the Danuban Provinces, it will also examine the social transformations brought on as a result of the in-migration. It is the thesis of this study that the combination of a large influx of refugees into the Ottoman Empire and a bureaucracy newly attuned to the changing identities thrust upon them by a world of nationalist impulses, produced and then reinforced the transformation in identity of Muslim Ottoman subjects from one
of an undifferentiated Muslim community ruled by an Ottoman elite to one of a
Turkish-Muslim community ruled by a Turkish-Muslims. Paradoxically, the catalyst
for this transformation was the introduction of a largely non-Turkic Muslim people.
This rapid and willing Turkification of non-Turkic refugees from the Caucasus was
all the more significant as it underscores the attractiveness of the new formulation for
the new arrivals and the extent to which the Ottoman bureaucracy was willing and
able to extend the emigrants something we might term "proto-citizenship".

The impact of this process, though largely ignored in modern Turkey, was
profound. Taken from a superficial perspective, one discovers that the resettlement of
the emigrants brought about nothing less than a demographic re-ordering of Eastern
Thrace, the Marmara littoral and of even greater impact, the strategic, crescent shaped
frontier in Anatolia running from the region surrounding Adana, northeastward
towards Sivas and then northwestward to the Black Sea. This region, historically the
border marches of the Byzantine and early Ottoman Empires, was transformed into a
land dominated by Muslim "Turks" and was to serve as the heartland for the
nationalist movement under Atatürk. The irony of this is delightful, insofar as the
"Turks" of this homeland were, as we shall see, to a large extent the sons, daughters
and grandchildren of non-Turkic emigrants of the previous half century. The
ethnographic mumbo-jumbo of the early nationalists notwithstanding, the loyal
heartland of Anatolia was comprised not solely of Turks descended from the Hittites
and Sumerians but from an ethnic mélange of Muslim Turkish speaking inhabitants substantially bolstered by recent emigrants from the Caucasus.\(^{10}\)

Beyond simple demographic transformation, there exist a number of important social and historical changes in the late Ottoman world than we may discover in the interaction of the emigrants and the Ottoman bureaucracy. While the mass of emigrants from the Caucasus were illiterate and left no written records and few Ottoman officials wrote memoirs, the Ottoman Government did leave a significant amount of records and materials. During the years 1860 through 1865, the independent governmental agency, the Emigrant Commission (Muhacirin Komisyonu) was established and charged with overseeing the welfare and settlement of the recent arrivals. In doing so, a series of journals were established to record the incoming and outgoing correspondence with the Istanbul-based Commission and its agents in the field. These journals were divided into Incoming ledgers (Gelen defteri) and Outgoing ledgers (Giden defteri) and served to provide a summary or précis of all the correspondence. It is from these journals that this study will primarily draw upon

\(^{10}\) The late Ottoman/Early Republican history of Turkey has been one replete with a wide and wild variety of theories involving Turks, Turkism and Turkishness. From the time of Abdulhamid II, there have been theories, such as those of Arminius Vambery, which have attempted to categorize Turks in racial, historical or linguistic terms in an effort to justify their place in the world. For Vambery this came in the form of connecting Turks to Indo-Europeans, thereby connecting them to the rest of Europe. Others like Ziya Gök alf connected the Turks with Sumerians and Hittites, hence the existence of commercial banks in Turkey which celebrate the connection. This has been taken to such extremes that theories have evolved in the 20th century claiming that Turkish represents the “sun language” from which all others are derived as well as the notion that the Turks originally come from Anatolia (this based on the notion that the name itself means the motherland, from ana dolu lit. filled with mothers). All of this non-withstanding, it is clear from the scholarship of Claude Cahen and many others that the region is an ancient melting pot. In this way the, introduction of non-Turks who become Turkish nationalists is only a fitting and natural outcome.
in an effort to understand the problems, agendas and goals the Ottoman civil service found itself faced with when confronted with this enormous task. The reason for this focus stems from my desire to approach the matter from the Ottoman perspective. Many past studies have relied primarily on the accounts generated by Western sources such as travelers or foreign Consuls. In both cases, no matter how qualified an individual was, they were merely observers and not active participants. Another reason stems from the sheer density of the material itself. Too often, studies from the Ottoman and other archives make use of a number of documents chosen to suit the subject at hand, yet often lacking real continuity and possessing little in common other than the subject at hand. Here the material is continuous and abundant. Even allowing for a portion of the records having suffered damage, the total number of entries number just under 2600 for the years 1861-65. This provides continuity and depth of data over a variety of topics. While the précis in question may be as short as a few lines, taken as a whole they add up to a surprisingly clear picture much as the hundreds or thousands of mosaics combine to form a single life-like image.

At the same time, this study does make use of a number of documents from other sources within the Archives in Istanbul. This is done to provide additional details to the materials under examination. In particular these involve longer dossiers from the Meclis-i Vala (High Council of Judicial Ordinances) and Meclis-i Mahsus (Privy Council) and refer to specific issues dealt with by the Commission during its tenure as an independent body.

Unfortunately and for reasons to be dealt with later, the Commission was abolished in late 1865, in a re-organization which brought about the distribution of
Commission duties and functions among various other Ottoman governmental departments. From this period until the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the bulk of materials consist of ministerial reports on issues relating to the emigrants as well as the entries of a truncated Commission found among those of other Ottoman entities in the Monthly Journals (Ayniyat Defteri). While these documents serve to confirm the continuation of Ottoman policies regarding the emigrants and their condition, they lack the sheer density and flavor found in the journals (defter pl. defeterler).

Through an examination of these journals as well as the ministerial and monthly reports, I will highlight the changing Ottoman views of the refugees, one that initially viewed them as a logistical and political problem, then one of strategic and economic resource and finally to one of citizens whose rights and personal dignity were to be protected, whose liberty was to be safeguarded and who could and would be part of the process of Ottoman renewal. We will review the process of settlement with an eye not only on the methods adopted, often painfully patchwork given the parlous state of Ottoman finances during this period, but with a view of what the documents suggest in terms of the ultimate goals the Commission members envisioned. In the process we also examine those transformations in Ottoman policies as the settlement goals themselves were transformed. Questions will also be examined concerning philosophical changes of outlook taken by the government vis a vis the emigrants regarding the newcomers identities and roles in Ottoman society? If not what does change suggest about larger philosophical and conceptual movements taking place at the time. Through an examination of the relationship between the
governors and the governed we may discover both what determined and defined the social contract between them, we may also discover much concerning the underlying assumptions of legitimacy and duty placed on both parties. For example, when the Commission fretted about the emigrants blending of harmonizing (intizac) with the surrounding community, what was meant by blending? Did this simply mean not breaking the laws and restraining themselves from violence or did this entail something more extensive such as religious and social integration as well? What was the latitude allowed the emigrants by the Ottomans in deference to social custom?

Other questions to be examined will include the strategic concerns of the Government and how they promoted or limited settlement policy. Beyond the simple strategic concerns dictated by economic and political expediency, we will examine the records for hints of a larger, over-riding series of concerns and goals. Why, were only certain regions targeted for settlement, and in what order were they settled? Was a simple economic calculus employed or were there other, perhaps hidden agendas? Was the actual outcome of settlement policy the one originally intended or did it turn out otherwise? Did this policy change over time and what does it tell us regarding the Ottoman world view and of itself? Was there a single view to be inferred from Commission actions or does it reflect a series of competing views struggling for supremacy or simply for compromise?

From the perspective of the governed, the examination of the records raises questions and provides answers regarding a host of other issues. How did the refugees view Ottoman authority? How did this view change over time and across class lines? Did the emigrants view themselves as permanent exiles or did they strive to become
more Ottoman than the Ottomans? More importantly, did the refugees serve as agents or catalyst toward an altogether new formulation of Ottoman identity? Clearly, this author believes the answer to this last question to be yes. While there is scant evidence produced by the refugees in written form, the historical and archival record, I believe, resoundingly bears this out. My aim in this study is to make this process manifestly clear as well as to suggest that any real understanding of modern Turkey is impossible without knowledge of these events.

To achieve this aim, this dissertation will be broken down in the following manner. Chapter 1 consists of a review of the historiography surrounding the events leading up to the post-Crimean War expulsions, and in turn the creation of the Commission in 1860. It will trace the history and historiography of the peoples of the region from earliest times in order to provide a framework with which to examine the differing geography and ethnicities that are often confusedly lumped together under the terms Circassia and Circassians. Following this it will review the historical framework that set the stage for the Russian advance into the Crimea and the Caucasus as well as the reaction it produced. It will review how this became entangled with the Russo-Ottoman conflict as well as the larger involvement of Western commercial and military interests in the region. The enduring significance of this outside involvement is attested to by nothing less than the Circassian flag itself, designed by the British politician David Urquhart.\footnote{Urquhart, Britain’s most virulent Russophobe during the nineteenth century, not only designed the flag but is said to have written a Constitution for the Circassians as part of his ongoing efforts to rouse British public opinion to support military aid for the Circassian cause.} The chapter then examines the circumstances that brought about the mass deportations of the mid nineteenth century.
Finally, the chapter will review the modern historiography of Crimean and Caucasian resistance and deportation by the Russians and attendant problems associated with this topic. This has special bearing on the subject of Ottoman identity as well as its relationship to questions of identity in modern Turkey. An additional reason for this is a desire to provide a better framework for understanding the general neglect of social history and identity in modern Turkey until very recent times.

Chapter 2 examines the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Commission. To do so, the chapter begins with a review of both the origins of the Tanzimat and its reforms as well as the coincident development of a bureaucratic system of administration. The origins of the Commission form of administration are discussed in light of the developments surrounding the Crimean War. This chapter then examines the Ottoman approach to the problem of resettling refugees from Russia commencing in 1856, at the close of the Crimean War. This process underwent drastic change in response to sharp changes in Russian policy. In addition to discussing the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Commission this chapter will examine its early mandates and personnel. To this effect, this chapter will examine criteria relating to staffing the Commission; who was qualified and why they were chosen will be dealt with. Other aspects will include how priorities were assigned to the settlement process and how personnel in the regions were recruited and appointed. The rationale for the creation and ultimate abolition of the Commission will also be dealt with here. Finally the interaction of the Commission and its members with the refugees will be explored here in an effort to determine the extent to which the bureaucratic view was transformed through its contact with the
refugees. Pursuing these questions should provide us with a framework to analyze both the intent of the government in settling the new arrivals and the extent to which they succeeded as well as a possible gauge of the social impact of the refugees on Ottoman society as a whole.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will examine the interaction of the Commission and the emigrants from a thematic perspective. This is done in order to explore in greater detail several crucial key areas of contact that define the relationship between the Ottoman authorities and the emigrants, ranging from broader topics such as social control to narrower ones which focus on individuals’ access to the government and questions of personal status. Chapter 3 deals with the Ottoman program of co-opting members of the elites from the refugees groups. It will show how this policy was adopted both to facilitate the settlement of the larger groups of refugees as well as bolstering the legitimacy of the Ottoman State. It presents the wide range in economic and social status found both within and among the refugees and the varied approach the government adopted in order to achieve their goals. In examines how the differing natures of the relationships developed with refugees groups in their contact with the government and why a social hierarchy developed. It then examines how these differences affected with the political and economic elite among the émigrés as well the efforts made to distinguish and differentiate individuals from among the vast numbers of non-elite who followed. Finally, this chapter investigates the evolution in the application of settlement policy from one which was substantially oriented to the Rumelian provinces and oriented toward the elites to one designed to settle refugees
almost exclusively in Anatolia and largely oriented to the mountain peoples of the Caucasus.

Chapter 4 examines the central issue of settlement. It examines not only the selection of final settlement destinations adopted by the Commission but will also consider the underlying strategic concerns and goals in evidence during the settlement process. These include issues of quarantine and health, the Government's attempts to restrict the internal movement of refugees as well as the political and psychological battles undertaken in order to contain disaffection among the newly arrived. Once processed and settled, the Ottomans embarked on a series of measures to provide a positive image of the Empire as a haven for Muslims. In order to maintain this positive view, the government was forced to contend with a host of problems ranging from refugees with second thoughts regarding their flight to agents provocateurs seeking to spread disaffection among the masses. Ottoman propaganda, constructed for internal as well as external markets, will be examined.

In addition, this chapter will review how the process of co-opting and creating local elites affected the Government's ability to obtain social influence and harmony as well as continue the process of using the refugees in expansion of Government influence in the eastern border regions. It then discusses the sharp change in Russian embarkations of refugees in the autumn of 1863 and how the Commission was forced to respond to the unexpected deluge. Following these events, the chapter will show how Ottoman settlement policy adapted and changed during this period and how the long term goals were modified in light of the changes
Chapter 5 will examine the questions surrounding the émigrés’ personal status and how the Commission responded in order to preserve or reshape their roles in the new surroundings. It will examine social gradations as measured through the differing levels of access given individuals to appeal to the Government, through the process of petition. These petitions involved a broad range of favors and needs as well as access to justice, securing property and redressing grievances. It will also examine Ottoman policies of access not just accorded the elite but for those of particular professions, those seeking religious education and appointments as well as exploring the neediest groups and how they were able to be recognized and cared for.

Chapter 5 will then explore a topic central to any discussion of the individual, society and personal freedom. This is of course the issue of slavery. This section of Chapter 5 will review the views held and measures taken by the Ottoman government during the middle decades of the 19th century as well as those actions taken by Emigrant Commission to restrict slavery and slaveholding among the emigrants. To a great extent, slavery serves as the litmus test in determining the extent to which a society accords the most basic qualities of humanity and human potentiality. The existence of a large pool of agricultural and household slaves presented a major impediment to the process of developing a new Ottoman identity where equality under the law was a stated ideal. While Islam itself prohibited the enslavement of freeborn Muslims, the question of slavery among the Circassians contravened not only the dictates of Islam but stood squarely in the path of those who sought to buttress the Empire against nationalist threats as well as the problem of internal
stagnation brought on by the limiting of the human potential of significant portions of the populace.

This examination of the records of the Commission taken in conjunction with other Ottoman Ministerial documents regarding the Commission’s actions, affords us a clear picture of the most essential measures taken, as well as true intent of these agents of the Tanzimat. Slavery and individual freedom, perhaps more than any other aspect of the settlement and absorption of the refugees from the Crimea and the Caucasus, defined the agenda of the modernizing elite. It is also here that we find the most important determinant in the creation of a new identity among late Ottoman subjects. The review of the defters and a number of individual cases will provide a clear picture of the problems faced by the Commission and the extent to which their agenda was adopted in the Empire.

Chapter 6 provides an epilogue to the Commission’s activities and accomplishments. Following a brief review of the preceding chapters, this chapter will show how, taken as a collective, the policies and actions of the late Tanzimat, as exemplified through the work of the Muhacirin Komisyonu, brought about a permanent and fundamental change within the Empire. The seed of late Ottoman identity became established among the Muslim population while, at the same time, the added human population from the waves of immigrants served as ballast, providing a stability that was to survive through the creation of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923. The war with Russia in 1876 only served to further this process, through the further concentration in Anatolia and Thrace, of Crimean and Caucasian refugees who were once again displaced following the loss of Balkan and Thracian
provinces, made permanent with the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. The process of profound demographic transformation was to be largely completed with two final waves during the period 1911-14 and then during the population exchanges with Greece following the War of Independence.

While a substantial Turkish population still exists in Bulgaria, the process of emigration has largely come to a halt. What is interesting to note is the extent to which “Turkish” citizens both of the Republic of Turkey and of the surrounding states such as Bulgaria and Greece are often descendents of émigrés from the period 1856-1876, that is to say Crimeans or Caucasians. As noted at the beginning of this introduction, the cultural origins and heritage of these people has been so totally effaced that virtually none speak a language other than Turkish and very few have the first notion of their past. The conclusion many draw is that the role played by Muslim refugees from lands north of the Black Sea was minimal. The records however tell quite a different tale. Emigrants from these lands restored vitality to parts of Anatolia and Thrace. They became stalwart supporters of the Empire and the Republican movement. Perhaps nowhere do we find a better example of the contradictions and tensions involved in late Ottoman notions of identity than with the infamous case of Çerkes Ethem, a Circassian military leader instrumental in the defense of Turkey after the defeat in World War I who ran afoul of the Kemalist Republicans through his loyalty to the Sultan. Indeed, the very foundation and survival of the Republic might have been called into question had it not been for the support the nationalist received from the émigré community and their descendents. It is the sincere hope of this writer that this monograph will serve as a starting point for further explorations into the role
played by northern emigrants in the nineteenth century in the modern Turkish Republic's foundation and cultural development.
Chapter 1

Background and Historiography

In order to better understand the circumstances that gave rise to the forced migrations of Muslim residents of the Caucasus in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is useful to briefly review the region’s history, as well as the sources that have served to construct the history itself. To a great extent, the expulsion of the Circassians, Daghestanis and Chechens represented the final stage of a process whose machinery was set in motion centuries earlier. This process began with the gradual lifting of the foreign overlordship often termed the “Tatar Yoke” from the Russian peoples. It marked the rise of the Muscovite state and the beginning of the Russian championing of the Orthodox Church in its struggle with Islam. The earliest Russian expansion southward can be traced back to the battles of the Russian hero, Mtsislav with the Khazars as early as the 11th century. It was not until the mid-16th century however, that there was a decisive shift in initiative in favor of the Slavs.

This was marked by the campaigns of Ivan IV “the Terrible” (Grozny), which led to the capture of Kazan in 1552 and the strategically more important Astrakhan in 1554. This latter event placed the Russians in a strong position to move southward along the Volga to the Caspian and the Caucasus beyond. Beginning with the reign of

---

12 Jaimoukha p. 47 describes the early stages of Slavic contact with the Caucasus and Caspian regions. This contact represents the first large scale and organized Slavic expansion. Earlier contacts however can be traced back to large-scale, organized raids in 910 and 911/12 C.E. see E.I. Khazars.

13 Halil Inalçık in EI under Čerkes notes that Ivan’s second wife was Circassian.
Peter I, Russian aspirations to control the Black Sea and retake Constantinople in the name of the Orthodox Church took new form. While Peter’s goal of establishing a foothold on the Black Sea in 1711 proved to be premature, his campaign of 1722 in the East along the western shore of the Caspian met with considerably greater success. In that contest, which foreshadowed the more permanent presence of Imperial Russia, a modern Russian army demonstrated its tactical and technological superiority over the local Muslim inhabitants. Despite this initial success, Peter was obliged to remove most of his forces. In Derbent he left a small garrison, returning the major portion of his forces to the Terek delta and then on to Astrakhan and home.

In 1736 war between the Russians and the Ottomans again broke out. This time the putative cause was Tatar raids into Russian territory, allegedly at the behest of the Ottomans. In reality it reflected a Russo-Austrian attempt to take advantage of perceived Ottoman military and economic weakness. Such assumptions however proved to be misplaced and early Ottoman losses were followed by a series of victories not only in the Crimea but in the Balkans as well. In the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, two items of particular note to the present study are to be found. The first

---

14 Shaw 229-31

15 Muratoff and Allen 11

16 Baddely p.27. Barrett, Edge of Empire p.32 The earliest efforts to secure the frontier relied on the settlement of Don Cossacks in the town of Sviatoi Krest or Holy Cross. The Christianizing propaganda took on additional meaning as the location of the town was said to be on the spot where a Greek Christian colony had once existed. However, flooding and malaria soon led to the abandonment of the site and the removal of the Cossacks to Kizljar, which was to become the anchor for future Russian activities in the Eastern Caucasus for the next century.
was the reversal of prior Russian gains in the Crimea, in particular with respect to the strategic fortress of Azov which it was forced to demolish. Second, and somewhat more telling, was the explicit recognition that Greater Kabarda and Lesser Kabarda and its inhabitants were neither to be ruled by the Porte nor St. Petersburg. While such recognition may have appeared to be a positive development for the inhabitants of the region, some believe this only served to underscore the already divisive nature of the community, a reality that would only serve to facilitate the conquest in times to come.\footnote{18}

The conquest of the Caucasus and the expulsion of the Muslims began in earnest with the accession of Catherine to the Russian throne in 1762. During her reign, the northern flank of the Caucasus gradually was brought under Russian control. The first phase came with the extension of Russian military power up the Terek River with the establishment of a fort and Cossack settlement at Mozdok in 1763. (see map 2) This was followed by the further construction of a series of fortified settlements along what came to be called the Caucasus Military line. This followed a line from Mozdok to Stavropol, then to Ekatarinodar and down the Kuban River to the Sea of Azov. That the campaigns were carried out within an imperial and religious framework is highlighted by the Christian and Romanov iconography in evidence with the choice of names for the forts as it was in the settlement of those in the communities surrounding them. In the pre-existing towns of Kizliar and Mozdok,

\footnote{17 See J.C. Hurewitz, \textit{Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East vol.1}. pps.48-49}

\footnote{18 Jaimoukha op.cit. p. 58}
large number of Armenians and Georgians were encouraged to settle and soon the communities became active trading centers. Mozdok itself was the site of a village founded by a Kabardian leader encouraged to convert to Orthodoxy in 1759.\(^\text{19}\)

Events in the world outside the Caucasus were now to set the stage for the final conflict between the Russians and the inhabitants of the mountains. In Istanbul the government was increasingly alarmed by the expansion of Russian control in Poland and the probability of renewed pressure on Ottoman lands in the Crimea. Sultan Mustafa III demanded that St. Petersburg withdraw its army from Poland. When the Empress Catherine II rejected this demand, war broke out. While the Ottoman Imperial Army was quickly routed along the western front and pushed back beyond the Danube, the Ottoman suzerain in the Crimea, Kirim Giray Khan, initially produced quite different results, dealing the Russian armies a number of defeats. His attack into southern Russia again brought the region into the spotlight, an attention that was to prove his undoing. What followed was a Russian counterattack employing a combination of political assassination and an escalation of the military commitment in the region.\(^\text{20}\) Using of a policy of sowing dissention among already disaffected

\(^{19}\) Barrett, op.cit. p.38 The fluid nature of the frontier community is discussed in detail by Barrett who notes that conversion was obtained through cash payments as well as invitations to other Christian groups to come and practice their own form of Christianity in an environment of greater freedom. Perhaps the best example of this fluidity and ambivalence is found with the 1764 Kabardian delegation sent to St. Petersburg which simultaneously demanded the removal of the Mozdok fort as well as reduced tariffs at Kizilair.

\(^{20}\) Shaw 248-50, Baddeley p.35
Tatars and Nogais in the Crimea and western Black Sea region, Catherine was able to neutralize this vital and effective fighting force of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{21}

During the same time and farther to the East, Catherine dispatched the brilliant if erratic General Todtleben to the central Caucasus range on the Russian military road into Georgia. This campaign aimed at taking the port city of Poti. Despite success in brushing aside an Ottoman army of 12,000\textsuperscript{22}, neither Todtleben nor his successor were able to seize control of the strategic port. In the end, these forces withdrew through the Caucasus and back to the Terek Line in 1772. This apparent draw in the conflict with the Ottomans, however, masked a number of important transformations in the region. First, there was the strength demonstrated by the Don Cossacks and others in defending the Caucasian Military Line during the conflict. Second, the Georgian King Erekle became convinced that the future belonged to the Russians, inclining him to seek additional alliances with St. Petersburg. This led to the eventual incorporation of Georgia as a protectorate within the Russian Empire in 1783. Lastly, and as a harbinger of Russian policy in the ensuing years there, the exiling of the Kalmuks, a supposed Muslim ally\textsuperscript{23} of the Russians from their lands along the coast of the Caspian.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Russia’s ability to create dissension among the Muslim population was perhaps the most effective weapon in their reduction of the Muslims’ capacity for resistance. The use of political assassination and rebellion proved especially effective in the reduction of Crimean Tatar power in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, as exemplified by the case of Shahin Giray who suffered from rebellions among the Nogay as well as from his family as the Russians looked on impassively. See B. Spuler, \textit{Kirim in E12}.

\textsuperscript{22} Baddeley p.35
The ensuing peace treaty signed at Küçük Kaynarca set the stage for the endgame in the Russian expansion into the Caucasus. Signed on July 21, 1774, the treaty has been called “one of the most fateful documents of Ottoman history”.\(^{25}\) While the treaty has been the subject of considerable scholarship\(^ {26}\), the major consequence was the effective end of the Crimea and its people in their historic role as a political and military ally of the Ottomans. This deprived the Ottoman army of one of its most effective military units, as well as contact with an economically and culturally vibrant portion of the Empire. The Black Sea, long considered an Ottoman lake was transformed from an Ottoman preserve to a theater of conflict. The reduction

---

\(^{23}\) While the majority of Kalmuks in Central Asia were Buddhist, the Kalmuks of the Volga region as well as those of the Eastern littoral of the Caspian comprised a majority Muslim population at this time. See J.A. Boyle, *Kalmuk* in *EI2*.

\(^{24}\) A discussion of changing Russian attitudes toward “foreigners” or *inozemcstvo* is found in Yuri Slezkine’s *Naturalists versus Nations: Eighteenth Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity*, in *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands 1700-1917*. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini eds. In this discussion Slezkine delves into the complexities of Russian identity and the problem faced by a nation whose scientific and cultural pretenses condemned them to the problem of “foreigners at home, foreigners abroad”. Not only does this lead to Russification or the 19th century formulation of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality for those who fall within the boundaries, it forces the other to reassess their own sense of identity. On this point, the departure of the Kalmuks marks the beginnings of the process of exile, in this case one that ultimately would be internal as they moved to the region to be conquered in the 1860-70s in Central Asia and what is present day Kazakhstan.

\(^{25}\) Shaw p.250.

\(^{26}\) See Roderic H. Davison “*Russian Skill or Ottoman Imbecility? The Treaty of Kucuk Kainardji Reconsidered*” in *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History 1774-1923*. While there is little doubt as to the consequences of the treaty itself, the question has been raised as to whether, in fact, the Ottoman government was totally inept. Instead, Davison has proposed that the views of the Ottomans handing carte blanche representation of all Orthodox members of the Ottoman Empire is a misconception based not on the treaty itself but by subsequent practice. Furthermore, the treaty itself did forbid Russian intervention in the affairs of either Georgia or Mingrelia, both of considerable strategic importance in any campaign in the region.
of resistance in the Crimean peninsula allowed the Russians to consolidate their gains along the north coast of the Black Sea extending from Odessa in the west to Kertch in the east on the Sea of Azov. Strategically this was of vital importance as it allowed the Russian line of military forts running from the Caspian through Krasnodar and on to Azov to be free from threats to the rear. This greater security also greatly facilitated the process of settling Cossacks along the line far, in an effort to demographically shore up the frontier.

The next important phase in the conquest of the Caucasus came with the creation of the Georgian Military Highway. This began with the establishment of a fort at Vladikavkaz in 1784. A direct result of the establishment of the Kingdom of Georgia as a Protectorate of the Russian Empire following the treaty of Kartlo-Kakheti in 1783, the fort was to serve as the northern terminus of a new road connecting the new territories. In the following century it was to serve as the main line of communication for Russian military forces between the northern and southern flanks of the Caucasus and as will be discussed later, became the primary weapon in isolating the 19th century resistance to Russian power by the Daghestani Shamyl.

For the next half century Russian control within the region continued to consolidate. Ottoman control of the Crimea formally was lost after the Treaty of Jassy in 1799. While this merely reflected realities on the ground, the effect on the Muslim population throughout the northern Black Sea region was certainly disheartening. In December of 1800, the short-lived Russian Emperor Paul formally annexed Georgia to the Russian Empire. This was proclaimed the following month on January 18th of
1801, two months before his murder. In September the proclamation was reaffirmed by his successor Alexander I.

Russian territorial consolidation along the Black Sea Coast was matched during the following years by additional population resettlements north of the Caucasus range. In-migration of Armenians, Christian Ossetians and Cossacks continued to be encouraged in an effort to bolster the population of the garrison towns. In addition, the region’s difficult terrain allowed it to become something of a haven for escaped serfs and bandits from the Russian provinces to the north.\(^{27}\) This slow transformation of the valleys in the north Caucasus began to pick up speed during the period 1820s-1830s. The attraction of fertile farmland on the steppes to the north, the increased attraction of a refuge for those fleeing the repression of the Russian state coupled ironically with Nicholas I’s endorsement of an 1833 report calling for forcing the natives to “speak, think and feel Russian”\(^{28}\), helped to further add pressure on the native inhabitants of the region, the gortsy or mountaineers. Unsurprisingly, organized resistance was renewed, this time under the competent leadership of the Daghestani, Shamyl.

At the same time the situation in the Crimea was also undergoing substantial change. The Treaties of 1784 and 1799 had effectively ended Ottoman military relations with the Tatars of the Crimea. For the vanquished, the new situation brought

\(^{27}\) Barrett, op.cit. p.42-47. The Terek Valley of the late 18\(^{th}\) and early 19\(^{th}\) century served as a major refuge for a host of escaped slaves, peasants, convicts and others who were fleeing the increasingly oppressive Russian system. Stenka Razin, the infamous rebel and bandit leader was believed by the Cossacks to be living in the Caucasus and Pugachev himself was quoted as having lived along the Terek.

mixed results. Unlike their brethren, the Nogais Tatars to the north, the majority of
Crimeans were farmers and were therefore useful in maintaining continuity in the
region’s economic production, as well as relatively easy to control. Apart from
annexing lands to the new military rulers, the Russians at first had no plans to remove
the farmers from their fields. To a great extent there was continuity to economic life
as well as general Russian tolerance respecting religion. Those who did lose were
primarily from the former ruling class, as their landholdings were transferred to
Russians and others who served the Tsar.\textsuperscript{29} The result of the Russian conquest was
the beginnings of a slow process of emigration to lands under the control of the
Ottoman Sultan. This was an attractive choice, especially for those families at the
apex of the former Crimean Khanate for a number of reasons. First, the members of
this class had longstanding ties with their counterparts in Istanbul, arising from a
combination of social and military ties dating back to the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Second, the
cultural and linguistic differences between the Crimeans and the Ottomans were

\textsuperscript{29}The extent and nature of the Russian conquest of the Crimea has been the subject of
considerable debate. Pinson (p.6) provides a sizeable if somewhat vague estimate of
100,000-300,000 Crimean Tatars emigrating to Ottoman territory in the years
immediately following Russian annexation. A more detailed analysis of the Russian
conquest of the Crimea, as well as the process of land transfer in the period leading
up to the Crimean War may be found in Hakan Kirimli’s \textit{National Movements and
National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars:1905-1916}, Chapter 1. In particular,
Kirimli discusses the massive land transfers to the nobility, most notably Prince
Grigorii Potemkin during the rule of Catherine II. Additionally there is an analysis of
the total resident Muslim population in the Crimea at the time, which serves to
underscore one of the central problems in the history of the emigrations, namely the
real size of the populations involved. In the present case, it is said that 75\% of the
population emigrated within the first decade of the Russian annexation on April 19,
1783. At the same time it is proposed that as many as 1,800,000 Crimeans emigrated
in the years leading up to the Turkish Revolution, a claim that would imply an
extraordinary fertility rate among such an apparently oppressed people. It would
appear that, at minimum, in light of Ottoman records to be examined in conjunction
with later Tatar history, a substantially larger Crimean Tatar population remained.
minimal. Alone among the people in the region, the Crimeans spoke a Turkic language closely related to Ottoman. Culturally, the Crimean elite shared a common military history, enjoyed close social and even dynastic contact, as well as sharing a common Sunni Islamic background.

For this class, emigration often meant removal to Istanbul or one of the major cities of the Empire. Religious leaders were welcomed to the community in Istanbul as well as Bursa, and senior members of the military were often incorporated into the Ottoman ranks. As the numbers involved in the initial flow of the initial émigrés were generally small and the skills and literacy levels they brought with them were highly useful to the Ottomans, the problem of absorption was minimal. This however was to change as Russian consolidation in the Crimea was to become increasingly burdensome for many of those who remained. A major source of frictions arose from the Russian practice throughout the region of settling Bulgarians, Serbs and other non-Muslim peoples in the region, in an effort to build a more loyal population among the newly subjugated.\textsuperscript{30} In much the same way, Cossacks were being settled along the Terek farther to the East in an effort to build and then consolidate a military line of defense north of the Caucasus. In the Crimea, this policy amounted to the wholesale transfer of peasants in order to effect a demographic transformation.

Increased Russification of the Crimea brought on a second and more extensive wave of emigration. As the policies of the Imperial Russian Government began to press down further on the former relative economic and social autonomy previously

\textsuperscript{30} Pinson notes in his Introduction that Bulgarians had been introduced into the region of the Pontic steppes adjacent to the Crimea as early as the 1750’s when 650 families had been settled, joining pre-existing military colonies of Serbs.
enjoyed by Crimean Muslims, ever greater numbers made the decision to follow their former rulers to Ottoman lands.\textsuperscript{31} As is often the case, the first to leave were often those with the means to do so voluntarily. To a great extent, they possessed skills and a small amount of capital. For the Ottomans they represented a political, military and economic windfall. By the early years of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the numbers of Crimeans moving southward to Ottoman lands began to pick up pace, changing from a mere trickle to a fairly steady stream. Increased Russian military threats to the Ottoman Empire during the Napoleonic period served to sharpen the focus of the Ottoman government with respect to how they were to address the situation. For the Ottomans, the primary threat from the Russians came along the Western reaches of the Black Sea. At this time, the frontier of the Ottoman Empire had shifted to the Danube basin, extending from the mouth of the Danube and the region just to the north in what is now Romania and Moldova. Ottoman control over the region however was tenuous. To make matters worse, the European powers were increasingly hostile to the Ottomans and looked to carve Ottoman territories from the Empire and place them into their own. The clearest threat came with the Franco-Russian Treaty of Tilsit in 1806 where Napoleon acceded to Russian desires to expand southward, the so called "Greek Project" which called for the taking of the Straits at the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and capturing Istanbul in an effort to retake and restore the former capital of Orthodox Christianity with Russia. Russian attacks on the Ottomans during the

\textsuperscript{31} Kirimli, p.9 notes that Alexander II applauded the emigrations calling them a “happy event”.

War of 1809-12 were successful in pushing their army within easy reach of Istanbul and were only thwarted by Napoleon’s own assault on Russia in 1812.

The Treaty of Adrianople in 1812 served to buy the Ottomans some time in their efforts to bolster the European frontier against the inevitable return of Russian aggression. It also served to focus the government’s attention on the rising problem of nationalism. It was during this period when the Serbian nationalist movement begun under Kara George in 1804 was able to attain effective independence. By 1829, the Serbs had worked out a deal with the Ottomans whereby the Ottomans ceded effective control of Serbia in return for Serbian acknowledgement of suzerainty and the residence of an Ottoman governor in Belgrade. This lesson concerning the power of nationalism was not totally lost on the Ottomans’ part. As the external threat presented western European powers became increasingly evident and the internal threat of nationalist impulses within subject communities grew larger, the Ottoman government was forced to seek out a solution in order to survive.

**Demographic Warfare**

The solution to the immediate twin problems of a hostile and expansionist Russia and of increased immigration and was to be found in the settlement of Crimean Tatars along this frontier. This is the true opening phase of the “Demographic Warfare” described by Marc Pinson. As the Russians were

---

32 The interwar period from 1812-28 placed the two empires in direct contact with each other along a common border. Nogai and Crimean Tatars who had settled the Russian controlled Bujak region were once again forced southward into Ottoman territory and Bulgarians encouraged to migrate to Russian territory. An interesting outgrowth of the Russian policy, and one that was to find resonance among emigrants to Ottoman lands half a century later was the unequal status of the colonists. In some cases peasants enjoyed greater freedoms in Ottoman territories than to be found under
encouraging Bulgarians to emigrate to the Russian Empire, so the Ottomans encouraged the Tatars to settle in the Dobruca region as well as along the Danube back into the Balkans. For the Ottomans the benefits were manifold. First the Muslim and, implicitly loyal, population would serve to repopulate areas largely under-populated along the frontier. As such they were to bolster the region and the Empire both militarily and economically. After an initial tax holiday and exemption from military service, designed to speed the establishments of new farms and farming communities, badly needed tax revenues would flow to the Treasury and, after an additional period, new levees to troops would become available.\(^{33}\) Second, and as a direct consequence of the first condition, the allegiance of the population in the designated regions would become more reliable as the numbers of the Turkic-Muslim population rose in relation to that of the Orthodox Christians. This latter point took on additional meaning for the Ottomans after the Napoleonic Wars and the independence movements in the Balkans, particularly in Serbia in 1814. As the conceptions of frontier began to change from porous border marches to the more sharply delimited boundary lines, the process of using settlement communities to define and reinforce borders and frontier zones took on an increased attraction and efficacy.

For the Ottomans, this process of bolstering the border regions was still in its early phase. To a great extent, the settlement was dictated by the immediacy of the Russian threat as well as the relatively unpopulated region along the Black Sea Coast.

\(^{33}\) Ottoman policy regarding the resettled refugees was to allow newly settled immigrants a grace period from conscription. This period varied somewhat but generally afforded a three to five year grace period before any military call up.
As this was one of the principal lines of attack, the benefit of settling the Crimean emigrant here was self-evident. The locals would serve, at a minimum as a road block to any Russian advance. Farther back along the line of the Danube, the emigrants served both as a source of added economic vitality and as a means of keeping the population loyal. During the period prior to the outbreak of the Crimean War, the majority of Tatars emigrating to Ottoman territory were settled either in the Istanbul region or in Thrace and Bulgaria. Numbering between 100,000 and 300,000, these emigrants, Crimean Tatars as well as Nogai Tatars from the Kuban region, were placed among an increasingly restive Bulgarian and Greek population. The success of this project has been called into question by Pinson and others who argue that the introduction of alien Muslims only served to exacerbate the situation.\(^{34}\)

**The Eastern Question and the Crimean War**

The Crimean War (1854-56) in many ways served as a watershed in the history of the region. Paradoxically it represented the high water mark of involvement by the Western Powers in the region while, at the same time, signaling the beginning of the end of Europe’s concern for the fate of the residents of the Crimea and Caucasus. A review of Western sources allows us to trace this growth and then rapid decline in European interest. Written primarily in conjunction with French and British commercial interests in the region, both the focus of the material and the audience it was designed for reflect the modern capitalist concerns in the time of competing

\(^{34}\) Pinson p. 71
global empires, underscoring both the enormous scope of these enterprises as well how quickly the calculus of global strategy could shift the attention given the region from the wings offstage to center stage and just as rapidly back to the wings.

As is the case in much of the literature involving early Western European contact with much of the Middle East and Central Asia, the earliest available sources covering the Caucasus and its inhabitants date from the early 18th century. For the most part they are in the form of travelogues written by individuals often in the employ of the government of a Western power, often in the capacity of consular offices. As such, they were often broad-brush sketches of the topography of the region, the social structures and customs of the residents. Of primary concern were the natural resources found in the region as well as the existence or potential for ports and road systems, reflecting Western European commercial as well as military opportunities, alerting business and government to opportunities and dangers presented by the terrain. While many of the travelers adopted the stance of independent and unbiased observer, the reality was one of close connections with governments or members of government looking to make use of the material to advance their own political agendas. These sources encompass a spectrum of forms, ranging from simple consular reports on port conditions to detailed political manifestos masquerading as travelogues. The readership also covered a fairly large spectrum ranging from policymakers in Government to a wider public audience with a seemingly insatiable appetite for the exotic.

Without question, the most influential book on the subject of the Caucasus at the time was J. Stanislaus Bell’s *Journal of a Residence in Circassia 1837-1839.*
This multi-volume work served as political ammunition for the British politician and virulent Russophobe David Urquhart. Urquhart was one of the earliest proponents of containment policy, in his case directed toward checking Russian imperial expansion. A brilliant writer and firm believer in the primacy of the Russian threat towards British India, Urquhart served as a member of the British legation in Constantinople, accompanying the British Ambassador, Stratford Canning, on his way there in 1831. Upon his return to London in 1832, Urquhart began a lobbying effort aimed at reducing Russian influence in the region.\textsuperscript{35} This effort ranged from promoting commerce with the Ottomans to the publication of his book \textit{Turkey and its Resources}. This effort proved so successful that by late 1833 Urquhart was en route back to the region in the guise of a private traveler. A return to the Black Sea region in 1834 served to reinforce Urquhart’s commitment to check Russian influence, this time through the active enlistment of support of the Circassian residents of the northwest coastal region. By this time the attack by Mehmet Ali of Egypt on Mahmud’s forces had been turned back through Western and Russian intervention, leading to the secret Treaty of Unkia Iskelesi of 1833. This treaty provided the Russians with effective control of the Straits and had brought on a diplomatic crisis between London, St. Petersburg and Istanbul. Urquhart was enlisted by the Foreign Office to present their case to the Porte.\textsuperscript{36} Subsequent collaboration with the British

\textsuperscript{35} It was during this time in Britain that Urquhart produced perhaps his most influential work, \textit{Turkey and its Resources}. In it he argued that the process of reform undertaken by Mahmud II had placed the Empire on the road to renewal and advocated Britain’s role as a strategic ally, particularly with respect toward containing the Russian threat in the Mediterranean and against India.

\textsuperscript{36} G.H. Bolsover. \textit{David Urquhart and the Eastern Question 1833-37: A Study in Publicity and Diplomacy}, p. 449
Ambassador Ponsonby raised Urquhart’s status even higher, allowing him to actively participate in the British efforts to bring political and economic reform to the Ottoman Empire.

A tour of the Black Sea region in 1834 was to greatly change his mission. During this tour Urquhart was to discover the resistance against the Russians that was being mounted by the Circassian tribes of the northern Black Sea coast. Quick to discover a source of additional leverage against the Russian enemy, Urquhart opened another barrage of anti-Russian propaganda. This was primarily aimed at the home audience in London, in particular William IV.\(^37\) Urquhart’s strident demands for British intervention began to run afoul of Palmerston whose approach was more conciliatory. Despite the intervention of his ally Ponsonby in Istanbul, Urquhart, unofficial as he was, was recalled to London. In London, in early 1835, Urquhart began a campaign designed to sway not only the government but public opinion as well. Despite failing to convince the new government under Wellington, Urquhart achieved considerable public success with his England, France, Russia and Turkey. While the primary aim of his work was the destruction of the Treaty of Unk iar Iskelesi and checking Russian influence, the cause of Circassian Independence was also championed.\(^38\) Not content with his broadcasts, in early 1836, Urquhart sought permission from the Sultan to send a British ship into the Black Sea. Predictably, this

\(^{37}\) Urquhart’s lobbying efforts before King William IV and the Foreign Office included the drafting of a Circassian Constitution as well as the claim that there were six million residents in the region, with only one million submitting to the Tsar. Bolsover p. 451.

\(^{38}\) Bolsover p.458 notes the publication of his “Declaration of Circassian Independence” in 1835.
served to considerably annoy Palmerston. He then disregarded his ally Ponsonby’s request to remain in London, returning to Istanbul and drawing up plans to further force the issue of the Straits and Circassia. To this end, Urquhart enlisted the aid of George Bell and Company in an effort to trade with the Circassians.

In 1836, the H.M.S. Vixen was loaded with munitions and other goods and sent to the Circassian coast. The ostensible mission was to establish trade and to assert the British right to marine commerce in the Black Sea. The result however, was the Vixen’s capture and detention by the Russian Navy who were blockading the Circassian coastline at the time. The affair served as a cause celebre for those in Britain who feared Russian expansionist aspirations, particularly in the Black Sea and Central Asia which would ultimately lead to a threat to the British assets in India. At the same time Urquhart’s unilateral essay into the diplomacy of brinksmanship cost him his job. The Vixen thrust upon the British the dilemma of finding a means to enforce their claim to commercial contacts within the Black Sea, something that allowed them the additional benefits of gathering information regarding Russian military activities as well as supplying those who were resisting Russian advances throughout the region. The problem turned on the vexing question of how to intervene despite very long supply lines and the diplomatic problem of the passage of warships through the Turkish Straits. A decisive outcome was not in the offering. Instead the British and the Russians arrived at a diplomatic fudge, one which left Bell and the

---

39 The neutrality of the Straits had been a dilemma for the British for some time. Should the British force passage of their warships through the Straits, they would not only be faced with the prospect of an international incident, but would also have raised the specter of future passage for Russian warships as well.
Vixen in Russian hands for enough time for the issue to quiet down. Bell was released but the Vixen was not.\textsuperscript{40}

For the anti-Russian forces in the British Parliament the cause of the Vixen served as the rallying point for their efforts to win over the public and the Government to their point of view. At the behest of Urquhart, now \textit{persona non grata} with Lord Palmerston as well as Ambassador Ponsonby, and Urquhart’s friend and ally, the delightfully named Peter Strangeways, Under Secretary to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bell was induced to return to the Circassian coast in 1837. Again, the ostensible reason was to engage in “trade with the natives”. In reality, Bell was sent there to provide a series of political reports on local conditions designed to win over British support for the cause of the Circassians.\textsuperscript{41} Unfortunately for Bell, the political situation back in Britain was not receptive during this time and he was forced to bide his time and present his observations to the public in a two volume edition published after his return.

This \textit{Journal of a Residence} did however accomplish its original goal. While detailing a wide range of aspects of life among the Circassian peoples and providing a wealth of information regarding the countryside, it served the additional purpose of augmenting the image of the Circassians as noble savages, locked in mortal combat with the tyrannical and pernicious Russian Empire. For the British and to a lesser

\begin{itemize}
\item[40] For a short diplomatic history see G.H. Bolsover. \textit{David Urquhart and the Eastern Question 1833-37: A Study in Publicity and Diplomacy}, as well as
\item[41] Bell’s affiliation with Urquhart and others leaves little doubt that while he claimed the status of a merchant, he was part of the anti-Russian lobby within British governmental circles.
\end{itemize}
extent the other Western European powers, the process of detailing and championing the cause of the Circassians afforded the opportunity to cloak their own ambitions to stall the southward and eastward movements by the Russians in the support for the valiant mountaineers. These robust, attractive and exotic Indo-European people were further portrayed as fiercely independent and possessing a purity of character, expressed through the adherence to a rigid code of chivalry. In essence, they were Highland Scots rendered all the more attractive by the storied beauty of their women and their convenient lack of proximity to London.⁴²

This romanticized image of the Circassians endures until the present era. In the late 19th century this image was also adopted by the Russians themselves in the writings of Lermontov and most famously by Leo Tolstoy.⁴³ The essential problem for the Circassians, as well as all other Muslim residents of the Caucasus, was that the harsh reality that belied the romantic image was the simple fact that the Circassians were merely pawns in the Great Game Politics. Humanitarian impulses on the part of a handful aside, the politics of the Great Game dictated that the role of any aid to the Circassian resistance to Russian encroachment was subordinate to the primary goal of arresting Romanov expansion here and elsewhere. It must be remembered that during

---

⁴² This Scottish aspect to the inhabitants of the mountains takes on a delightful twist in Edmund Spenser’s Circassia, vol.1 p.310 where Spenser recounts the tale of a Scottish merchant, one Mr. Marr formerly as resident of Redout Kale, who takes to the hills after his business fails. Marr and his sons, benefiting from the salubrious quality of the mountain airs as opposed to the “miasmas” of the coast have “completely assimilated themselves to the manners of the natives: and the young Scots may now be numbered among the most daring hunters in the wilds of Mingrelia”. A bonnie tale at that!

this period, British military officers were exploring the vast regions to the east of the Caspian, forging alliances with the local Begs and Emirs, in the effort to block the Russians.\textsuperscript{44} Strategically, the Caucasus was important for two major reasons. First, it served to protect the north-east littoral of the Black Sea. Although the coast was not legally within Ottoman domains, the presence of Ottoman forts and garrisons helped serve as a buffer between Ottoman territory in the east of the Black Sea and the Ottoman heartland of Anatolia to the south. This in turn served to relieve some of the pressure the Ottomans were feeling in the western regions of the Black Sea. Any Russian advances into the lands now made up by Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria would expose the Crimea to attack from those remaining Ottoman forces along the Circassian coast.

A second and more vital element in the British interest in the Caucasus was the simple fact that any major Russian advance into Central Asia would run the risk of attack from behind. Without the pacification of the Caucasus region, there was always the risk that the defensive line of the Terek might be breached and that any Russian Army laying siege to Central Asia might suddenly find itself attacked from the rear. Furthermore, there was the problem or resources in the region. Any expansion into Central Asia and beyond would require considerable numbers of troops. Troops garrisoned in the Caucasus as well as local military commanders were a precious resource. Should the British be able to force the Russians to allocate

\textsuperscript{44} For a lively and penetrating study of the British efforts to thwart Russian advances into Central Asia see Peter Hopkirk's, \textit{The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia}. Murray, London. 1990.
additional manpower and resources to suppressing the mountaineers, Russian expansion into Central Asia might be effectively and economically stalled.

Lastly, there were Russian concerns regarding Persia to the south. While the Russians had been successful in defeating Persian armies since the time of Peter, the region still was open to Persian attack. However with the formal Russian annexation of the much of the Caspian coast in the Treaty of Gülistan in 1813 and the subsequent annexation of the Khanates of Erevan and Nahçivan following the Treaty of Türkmençay in 1828, the threat of attack from the south was largely neutralized. As a final concession to the Persians, the Russians secretly agreed to waive indemnity claims on the eve of the Crimean War during the summer of 1853.\(^{45}\)

The situation in the region changed substantially in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Despite its suffering a defeat at the hands of the Allied Powers, Russia emerged from the war with a redoubled sense of purpose in the desire to expand its frontiers southward and westward and to obtain control not only over the Straits, but over the Caucasus and Central Asia as well. Perhaps the most unfortunate result of the War for the gortsy was the rise and advancement of a corps of exceptionally talented and battle hardened military commanders and troops within the elements of the Russian Army assigned to the Caucasus.\(^{46}\) These resourceful and tactically

\(^{45}\) Allen p.80

\(^{46}\) The military situation in the Caucasus had been undergoing changes for some time; most notably the decision in the 1840s to appoint Count M.S. Vorontsov as Viceroy. This gave the administrator of the region direct access to the Tsar, indicating the high priority assigned the region by St. Petersburg. During the Crimean War the post was held by General N.N. Murav’ev, later of Central Asian fame. Despite Murav’ev’s lack of involvement in any major conflict during the war, the army was substantially reinforced at the war’s end. At that point the region assumed center stage due in large
innovative officers emerged within the Russian military command as a motivated and skilled officer corps with a strong sense of mission in the process of expanding the civilization of the Russian Empire.

Added to the battle hardened military was the redirection of Russian expansionist impulses. The defeat of the Empire by Britain and its Allies forced the redirection of the Russian focus on the Ottoman Empire and recapture of the Imperial Orthodox capital, Constantinople. As this was not currently feasible, Russia renewed its efforts to consolidate its gains in the Crimea and the Caucasus. In this respect, the Russians were fortunate as European attention and interest was focused elsewhere. African colonies beckoned, and the British and the French rose to the occasion. Within Europe, the emergence of Prussia as an arbiter of European power served as both buffer and distraction for the victorious allies of the Crimean War. For the British, interest in the Caucasus waned as recent problems in India demanded more attention to the colony itself and less toward securing alliances within Central Asia.47 The result of this series of changes was an opportunity for the Russians to exploit this favorable combination of events and to complete their pacification of the Caucasus while Europe concerned itself elsewhere.

part to the influence of D.A. Miliutin, a general and future Minister of War and Prince Bariatinskii who assumed command of the Army of the Left Flank of the Caucasus. The Miliutin/Bariatinskii camp was instrumental in convincing Alexander II to allocate the Empire’s severely depleted resources to this project. For an analysis of their plans and politics see Brooks (1996).

47 The Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 forced the British to substantially evaluate their military deployments in India as well as their alliances throughout the region. This led to a redirection of British concern away from containment of the Russians at the Ottoman Straits and more toward the deflection of an overland threat through Iran and Central Asia. For more on this subject see, Hopkirk, op.cit.
These developments led to a renewed and increased repression of the Muslim population in the Crimea and the Volga regions. As in earlier times, this produced another wave of emigrants into Ottoman territory. Unlike earlier periods however, the renewed expropriation of Muslim lands in the Crimea produced a sudden and sharp increase in the number of emigrants into Ottoman territory. At the same time the Russian Army was now free to concentrate on the reduction of the last significant resistance in the Caucasus. With the Crimean peninsula firmly under Russian control, the northern borders of the Caucasus were effectively sealed off along the line running from Krasnodar on the Sea of Azov to Kizliar on the Caspian. A crucial step in the military campaign was accomplished during the last years of the 1850s. In 1859 the Georgian Military Highway running from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis was largely complete, allowing the Russian military to move men and arms along a north-south route from the Terek to the Kura river valleys, cutting the Caucasus in half, thereby limiting aid from rebels in one portion of the mountains to another.

At the end of the Crimean War the Russians had the equivalent of three armies left in Chechnya and Daghestan. These were rapidly and effectively put to work. The first order of business was the elimination of the most significant resistance. This resistance centered on the movement led by Shamyl and his Murids. During the war they had been an effective guerilla force behind the Russian lines. With the Ottomans temporarily out of the picture, the Russians under the command of General Evdokimov and Prince Bariatinsky were able to hunt down and force the surrender of Shamyl in 1859. By August of that year Bariatinsky was able to proclaim, “Gunib has

\[48\] Allen p. 106
been taken. Shamyl is a prisoner. I congratulate the Caucasian Army."  

Shamyl was sent into exile and became something of a celebrity, touring the Ottoman Empire and Western European capitals. Unfortunately, such celebrity did not fall on his followers. Instead many were sent into exile with little other than what they could carry out with them. Additionally, the defeat of Shamyl in the eastern Caucasus paved the way for the direct appropriation of Circassian lands in the western regions of the Caucasus.  

This increased military power and the willingness to employ it was matched by an increasingly hard line Russian political view. Russian policy towards its Muslim subjects as well as Muslim populations outside its borders took on increasingly militant overtones. Adopting its own vision of a *mission civilatrice*, the Russians under Tsar Alexander II came to regard the Crimea, the Caucasus and Central Asia as natural and integral territories of the Empire. This view and its correspondence to the American notion of Manifest Destiny is best exemplified by the Gorchakov Circular of 1864 wherein the civilizing imperative of Russian conquests along its southern and eastern frontiers is explicitly formulated. Russia as an advanced civilization was in effect required to spread this advancement through conquest and subjugation of the backward peoples along its frontiers. Should the newly conquered populations resist this enlightened power of Imperial Russia, forced exile to another part of the Empire was a preferred and logical choice.

---

49 Ramazan Traho in S. Berzeg’s *Soçi’nin Sürgündeki Sahipleri Çerkez-Vubahlar*, p.21

50 Allen p.107. This process has been confirmed by family accounts I have collected from descendents of Circassian families who owned large farms as well as large numbers of agricultural serfs. For them, the defeat of Shamyl coupled with the emancipation of the serfs by Alexander sent a clear signal that there way of life was over.
For a large number of Crimean and Nogai Tatars, this new militancy was the final straw. Given the choice of exile to Central Asia or Ottoman lands to the south, most chose the latter. The result was an unprecedented surge in emigrants to Ottoman territories in the years 1856-1860. This new exodus of emigrants largely overwhelmed the Ottoman government’s capacity to deal with the problem. Unlike earlier flows from the north, the post-Crimean War wave swamped the capacity of the provincial governors to cope with the business of resettlement. As the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet had been largely destroyed at Sinop in the early stages of the Crimean War, the military had little capacity to transport the refugees. Working with a cobbled together system of supply, transport and settlement, problems quickly emerged. Refugees from the Crimea and the Kuban region suffered from malnutrition and disease. Worse, groups of indigent refugees would linger in Black Sea ports largely uncounted, draining local resources instead to being moved to areas where they might serve the economic and strategic aims of the government.

This disaster forced the Ottoman Government to take measures to prevent a recurrence in the near future. While the Russians were accelerating the depopulation of Muslims within the Crimea and the areas just to the north, additional Russian victories in the Caucasus were unfolding. There, the most effective resistance to Russian conquest was rapidly coming to an end. For almost one hundred years, the Russians had been unable to effectively control the highly diverse and fragmented peoples of the Caucasian highlands. The completion of the Georgian Military Highway, as noted above, allowed the Russian Army to cut the Caucasus in two, greatly reducing the ability of those fighting the Russians to provide aid to one
another. By 1859, the final serious challenge to Russian authority consisted of those followers of the Daghestani commander Shamyl. Shamyl, as the last in a series of charismatic military commanders, combined personal valor with religious fervor known as Muridism.\textsuperscript{51} For the mountaineers of Daghestan and the Eastern Caucasus, Shamyl and his predecessors had represented a combination of military and spiritual leadership. This had proved a formidable combination for the Russian military, much as the charismatic Chechen leaders in recent years have proved so difficult to subdue by the modern Russian forces. By 1859 however, the long, slow grind of the Russian assault led by a remarkably large number of exceptional Russian commanders, had worn the resistance down. When Shamyl surrendered in the spring of 1859, organized resistance came to an end.

For the Ottomans, the fall of Shamyl was to have enormous implications. To a great extent the Ottomans had relied on Shamyl and his forces to spearhead the resistance to Russian expansion. The Ottoman Foreign Ministry had accorded Shamyl the status of a head of state and had engaged in a longstanding program of aid and support.\textsuperscript{52} His stature both within Ottoman and Western European circles had grown to almost mythic proportions, so much so that after his defeat his tours of Russia and Europe took on aspects of a traveling circus.\textsuperscript{53} The period immediately after the surrender however marked a distinct low in Ottoman foreign policy and affairs. Once

\textsuperscript{51} On the subject of the Sufi and Naqshbandi connections with Murids and Muridism see EI2 “Murids”.

\textsuperscript{52} Details of some of the correspondence between the Porte and the Daghestani resistance can be found in the publication by the Turkish Prime Minister’s Archives, \textit{Osmanlı Devleti ile Kafkasya, Türkistan ve Kırım hanıkları arasındaki münasebetlere dair arşiv belgeleri : 1687-1908 yılları arası}. Ankara, 1990.

\textsuperscript{53} See, A. Knysh, “Shamil” in EI2
again, the Ottomans had demonstrated an inability to effectively support an ally or proxy in their war against Russian expansion. During the past twenty years the Ottomans had been forced to rely on the British to defend them against a rebellion from within during the campaign against them by their own Governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali, as well as rely on the British and Allies to thwart possible annihilation at the hands of the Russians during the Crimean War. While the lands of the Caucasus had never been integral to the Empire, they had served as a vital buffer. Now this too was gone, leaving a reforming but feeble Ottoman Empire to face its aggressive northern rival at a time when the balancing powers of Western Europe were preoccupied elsewhere.

At that time however, the recent events of the Tatar exodus and resettlement were rapidly forcing their way into a top priority among Ottoman concerns. Largely ignored however was the fact that along with the Tatars, both Nogai and Crimean, there was also a new and much larger flow of refugees preparing to come to Ottoman territory from the lands to the east of the Crimea.

**Historical sources:**

The study of the Caucasian and Crimean emigrations into the Ottoman Empire suffers from the essential problem of an almost complete lack of source material written by the émigrés themselves. As noted above, virtually all the émigrés were illiterate and consequently left nothing by way of written records. Furthermore, the people and history of the region have been defined until the present time largely by outsiders. The result of this has been a portrait of the Circassians as others would see
them, at times bloodthirsty villains, at other times noble savages, defending their freedom to the death. These fanciful depictions only serve to confuse rather than explain. In addition, examination of modern Circassian communities in Patterson, New Jersey or Amman, Jordan does little to reconstruct what their societies were like in the Caucasus any more than the study of 18th century Navajo life can be inferred from their descendants living in Albuquerque or Phoenix today. In the case of those settled in Anatolia, the problem is even greater, as assimilation into the larger “Turkish” identity has left little in the way of distinct cultural manifestations among any but the smallest fraction of those of Circassian decent.

To a large extent, the identity of the émigrés, the Circassians in particular, was thrust upon them. Depending on the period and the politics involved one discovers the Circassians portrayed across a broad spectrum, ranging from treacherous savages to majestic mountaineers whose first impulse is democratic freedom. Naturally the subjects portrayed largely reflected the perspectives of those describing them, yet the great range of opinion over time deserves some review. Accordingly, it is useful to divide historiographic sources into three broad categories. The first group begins with the earliest recorded sources from the Greco-Roman period, continuing through the Byzantine and early Islamic centuries and lead up to the early years of the 18th century. These sources generally had their origins with commercial contacts in the region and are designed to provide a general atlas of the region’s topography and classification of the residents. Some, like the writings of the 11th century Byzantine

54 Nowhere is this more evident than in the 19th century Russian literature on the subject of the region. Most prominent among these sources are Tolstoy’s short stories, drawn in large part from his experience in the Caucasus as a young man and Lermontov’s Prisoner of the Caucasus.
Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus or the Ottoman Evliyya Celebi, are designed to serve political purposes, yet all are derived from a broad-brushed aim of locating and classifying foreign peoples in foreign lands. The second period extends from the 18th century until the early 20th century is one almost totally dominated by Europeans. This group reflects the growing economic and political power of Western Europe in the region, arising in large part from the increasing inability of the Ottomans to control shipping on the Black Sea, thereby denying Western Europe and Russia direct access to regional markets. Initially, much of this material is directed toward an audience primarily interested in commercial ventures. However by the second and third decades of the 19th century the sources often serve political purposes. Others are clearly directed toward an audience enthralled with “Orientalist” travelogues of exotic places. To a great extent this continued until the early 20th century when the first modern academic studies begin. Again the initial studies are European in origin, ranging from general histories to a series of monographs dealing with particular groups of events.

This leaves the third group of sources. Beginning in the 1960s, a renewed interest in the region and the question of nationality and identity has emerged. On the one hand there has been a considerable amount of work done in the field of minorities within the former Soviet Union. This has brought about an interest in the study of Muslim communities in the Crimea and he Caucasus, usually from the perspective of those who either stayed following the 19th century Russian conquest or from that of those communities who stayed but were later exiled to other parts of the USSR by Stalin. In more recent times this field has been greatly enhanced by the addition of
works by scholars who examine taking a transnational perspective. This group has chosen the Ottoman Empire as its focus and examines the problems of refugees from the Crimea and the Caucasus as they affected resident communities throughout the Empire. In virtually all cases this has involved problems that arose in the European provinces of the Empire, with the main topic of discussion centered of the non-Muslims, i.e. the host populations. Lastly, and of particular import here, is the recent addition of material by a group of Turkish historians drawing upon materials found in the Ottoman Archives, primarily those of the Prime Minister’s Archives in Istanbul. This material ranges from monographs on such topics as Ubykh emigrants who rose within the Ottoman hierarchy to the Circassian role in the Turkish War of Independence. While seldom theoretical, the bulk of this scholarship is of considerable worth as it delves into the primary source documents of the Ottoman Government.

**Earliest Sources**

The earliest sources making reference to the Circassians and their ancestors date from Hellenic times. Herodotus, Pliny and other historians of the Greco-Roman era write of a Kerketes people inhabiting the northern Black Sea in proximity to the Sea of Azov. These people as well as Sindes and Zikhes are included in a larger group known as Maeots.\(^{55}\) The geographers Strabo and Ptolemy offered greater detail concerning the names and locations of smaller groups within the region. Often defined either as the savages on the other side of the border or as counterparts in

\(^{55}\) Namitok Chapter II.
trade, the Circassians and their society remained largely a mystery to both the Greeks and the Romans apart from those communities living along the coastlines. That this was the case is underscored by numerous accounts linking the inhabitants of the region with the Cimmerians as well as the Amazons. As Namitok notes, the Cimmerians were the first peoples encountered in the region and who had taken on mythic status.\textsuperscript{56} The subsequent inclusion by some authors of the Maeots within the Cimmerian world as well as the association with the mythic Amazonian women highlights the lack of mutual contact.

Later invasions from the East by the Avars and Mongols did produce distinctly local material that survives to this day. These are the Narts, a series of legends and tales recalling Circassian bravery and prowess during these times and passed down in oral form from generation to generation.\textsuperscript{57} They offer a glimpse of social customs and structures among the tribes of the Caucasus and serve to this day as a cultural touchstone for the Circassian community throughout the world. Among the more interesting themes found in the Narts are the role women played in war, both as leaders rallying support and building resistance to invaders as well as actual combatants.

A considerably more detailed picture does emerge during early medieval times. The Byzantine historian Procopius chronicles the attempts by Justinian to convert the residents of Circassia to Christianity. At the same time, he alludes to the

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid p.70

sale of young boys, probably by the Abasikh clan, to the Byzantines to serve as eunuchs for the palace household.\textsuperscript{58} If true, this is one of the first examples of the systematic trafficking of young boys and girls from the Caucasus to the imperial household in Constantinople/Istanbul. Procopius also ties the peoples of the northern shore of the Black Sea to the Laz of the Black Sea Coast of Turkey today.

Even more detailed accounts of the inhabitants are provided by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his Treatise on Imperial Administration. In it he provides names and details regarding settlements in the Kuban and Azov regions. Of particular note, as Namitok points out, is the general application of the term “Zikhie” to the entire Circassian coastline, indicating a slow but general consolidation in the region.\textsuperscript{59} In addition, Namitok claims it is from Porphyrogenitus’s description of the region that the case for the term Adighe predating the arrival of the Tatars can be made.

Contact with the Arab world was somewhat more peripheral. Arab raids into Azerbaijan in the years immediately following the death of Muhammad awakened commercial and political interest in the area. Ibn Hawkel and other Arab geographers placed the mountains of the Caucasus among the great range of mountains circling the world that serve to divide the lands of darkness from the civilized world.\textsuperscript{60} Tabari described the initial conquest along the Caspian as far as Derbent during the time of Umar as well as subsequent clashes with the Khazars. However, despite numerous

\textsuperscript{58} Namitok, op. cit. p.95
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid p.96
\textsuperscript{60} See C.E. Bosworth, “Caucasus” in EI2
reports by Arab geographers, Arab contact with the region was largely confined to the eastern Caucasus and the coast of the Caspian. Continued commercial interests in the region and the tribute in slaves levied by the Abbasids served to maintain some knowledge of the residents and their customs.

Later sources include the Ottoman traveler Evliyya Çelebi, who passed through the region in 1665 and describes local customs as well as problems the Circassians had with neighboring tribes.\footnote{Inalcık, “Çerkes” in EI2} Ottoman interaction with the Circassian and other peoples in the region nevertheless was largely confined to commercial contact with those living along the Black Sea Coast and did little to further understanding or relations with those in the interior. That this is true is borne out in part by the late conversion to Islam by the mountaineers. For those living at a distance from the Black Sea or the Caspian, the process of conversion was delayed until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and then largely accomplished through contacts with wandering Naqshbandi Sufis.\footnote{Quelquejay, “Çerkes” in EI2.}

During the pre-modern period knowledge and reporting about the Circassians was not confined to regional or Muslim sources. Medieval sources included a representative of the Pope, Jean du Plan de Carpin, who traveled through the region in 1245 en route to the court of the Mongol Khan.\footnote{Namitok. P. 99. This early contact and others are dealt with in great detail in the chapter “De L’Antiquité à nos Jours” in Origenes des Circassiens. This work remains the most comprehensive and scholarly work regarding the Circassian peoples and their origins. In fact most of what has been written on the subject of early Circassian history and ethnography relies heavily if not completely on his work.} The Hapsburg Ambassador to the
Ottoman Court of Suleyman the Magnificent, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, one of the earliest European visitors to Ottoman Empire during the 16th century makes mention of Circassia and the Circassians. Despite never actually visiting those regions, in large part due to the stringent restrictions of movement which applied to foreigners, Busbecq provided a detailed if somewhat fabulous description of the region, its politics and inhabitants.64 To a large degree this limited Western view of the Circassians was to persist for another two hundred years owing to the power of the Ottomans to restrict the movement of foreigners in the Black Sea region. This power to close off the region to foreigners also took form in the Ottoman Sultan’s designation of the Crimea Khan as the overlord of the Circassians. This and the lack of overland roads served to thwart Russian incursions from the north as well.65

**Modern European Sources:**

---

64 Busbecq p.126. Busbecq recounts the visit of the Georgian King Dadian during his residence in Istanbul. In a letter dated June 1, 1560, he describes both the visit of Dadian to the Ottoman court as well as provides a general sketch of the feuding and raiding among the residents of the Caucasus. Of particular note is his description of the use of firearms by the mountain tribes as well as cannonry despite their supposedly primitive economies and social conditions. Additionally, there is considerable attention paid to those attributes of the “noble savage” encountered in later tracts. The residents are said to disdain agriculture as well as money, paying their taxes in kind. As for the people themselves, “There are many instances of girls of only ten years of age who are mothers. If you express surprise and refuse to believe that such tiny creatures can have children, they show you an infant not much larger than a big frog—and this though as a race are tall and of fine physique. They are destitute of manners and politeness that, amongst other habits, they think that they are paying you a complement and doing you an honour by making a kind of eruption in their throat.”

65 Inalcik *EI*2 op.cit.
By the mid 18th century, Russian success against the Ottomans and the Crimean Khans opened the way for a fundamental shift in the regional balance of power. This manifested itself in two ways. First, Russian military successes brought about the increased attention of the Western powers. This, in turn, led to an increase in the demand for written assessments of local conditions, especially as they related to a resistance to the Russian expansion. Second, the relative decline in Ottoman power opened the door for Western adventurers and businessmen to travel into the Black Sea in pursuit of fame or profit. This period produced a wave of travelogues and autobiographies providing the first detailed information concerning local geography, economy as well as social and political events. A review of this material shows that, from the beginning in the 18th century and prior to the First World, European sources concerning the region fall into three general categories. The first and most important sources are derived from books and records produced by those from the above mentioned commercial/governmental class. Designed to entertain as well as indoctrinate, these books were often authored by Consular officials of the major powers assigned either to the Ottoman or Russians Empires. Others, as is the case with Bell, were ostensibly from the private sector, but in reality closely bound to governmental/political concerns. Internal Consular reports themselves are a most valuable source in this matter but seldom made their way into the literature before the 20th century.

A second source consists primarily of those books written by what might be called the professional travel writer. Largely written for pure entertainment, they waxed eloquently about the exotic East and its peoples, paying less attention to
factual reporting than in obtaining a dreamy, largely fictional, narrative. Miss Julia Pardoe (1806-1862) was a notable example of this genre with *Romance of the Harem* and * Beauties of the Bosphorus*.\(^{66}\) Lastly, there are those sources belonging to Western missionaries. They were relatively late arrivals to the region, only beginning in the Tanzimat period of the early 19\(^{th}\) century. Unsurprisingly, unlike the consular/commercial group, their reporting was less concerned with discovering commerce and mapping strategic opportunities but instead focused mostly on the discovery of converts to whatever sect of Christianity they belonged.

Namitok, in *Origenes des Circassiens*, states that the first modern Western source on the Caucasus dates to 1724.\(^ {67}\) The most important of these were derived from English, French or Dutch adventurers who traveled to the region ostensibly for commercial purposes. Early examples of this include the Dutch Taitbout de Marigny whose travels in the region are chronicled in *Three Voyages to the Black Sea Coast of Circassia* which was published in 1837 and J. Stanislaus Bell’s *Journal of*

---

\(^{66}\) This genre, while of little use for serious historical study should not be overlooked due to the wealth of detail some of the better writers would provide. Specifically details of dress, personal habits and daily life in the region emerge in far greater detail than in most other sources. The Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu stand out as a particularly valuable source in this regard. See, *Embassy to Constantinople: the travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* / introduced by Dervla Murphy ; edited and compiled by Christopher Pick. Century, London. 1988.

\(^{67}\) Namitok p.7. The voyage of the French Consul to the Crimean Khan in 1724 is considered the first modern contact by a European with the region. In large part this stems from Xaverio Glavani’s efforts to construct a system of classifying the indigenous peoples. While Namitok admits to the lack of real scholarship on the part of Glavani (Bien que sa description ne soit ni complete, ni si fort…) it did mark the beginnings of an effort toward systemic attempts toward classification. ("C’est en effet, la premier classification des diverses branches du people circassien fait par un auteur européen.")
Residence in Circassia During the Years 1837, 1838 and 1839 which appeared in 1840.

This genre of the travelogue, as mentioned above, reflected an already well developed appetite in Western Europe among wide range of audiences. For some the books represented pure entertainment, providing an intimate view of exotic lands and peoples. Unsurprisingly, the books are constructed in a manner designed, at one level, to entertain the general reader. The good and the bad were clearly delineated as was the ultimate superiority of the European observers who, in turn, represented the best of Western European Civilization. Physical beauty or ugliness of the local populations is often described in the context of a “racial” attribute. For the Circassians, potentially menacing aspects of their behavior are almost invariably trumped by their savage nobility. All in all, the portraits make for lively reading, which was their original intent.

At another level, however, the journals or travelogues served the less fanciful purpose of providing intelligence for commercial and political interests. This is apparent in the detailed attention paid to the topography, designed to aid merchants and governments in their quest for suitable anchorages and interior routes within the region. Here the essential congruence of business and government in developing intelligence served as a prime motivating force. Roads that could carry goods might also serve as invasion routes. Information regarding local political divisions might serve in developing trading partners as well as regional allies in times of conflict.

Lastly, among these sources there is a common underlying hostility to the designs of Imperial Russia. If one strips away the exotic narrative of the brooding
coastline, the towering mountains and the sexually charged atmosphere created by virile Europeans living among an exotic and attractive people, one is left with what are clearly diatribes against the expansion of Russian power into the region. There is a clear ambivalence however, which often can be found in the tension between the subjugation of the native peoples on the one hand and the “civilizing” aspects that may be found through the imposition of a Christian, albeit Orthodox order. The Russians are depicted as oppressive overlords yet this is often expressed not in terms of oppressing the region’s natives but in curtailing the freedom of movement among the Europeans themselves. De Marigny complains about the Russian Censor and draws explicit attention to this in his extensive use of footnoting those passages expunged from the Russian version of his book. Others express their distaste for the Russians in terms of Russian restrictions on commerce. This last point highlights the importance of the nexus between Western European commercial and foreign policy interests, globally and regionally during the 19th century. Commercial travelers were often in the pay of the government or were provided with some form of government assistance. Unsurprisingly, the most well placed European powers in the region reflected those who had a long history of corporatist governmental politics.

Nowhere was this more clearly in evidence than in the relationship between David Urquhart and James Stanislaus Bell’s writings. Urquhart, as discussed above, more than any other individual was responsible for shaping the international discourse involving the Circassians during the middle part of the 19th century. Bell of course was solidly in the Urquhart camp, influenced not only by the latter’s Russophobe views but also stung by the personal loss of liberty and fortune as a result
of the Vixen’s capture. De Marigny also expressed outrage at the capture of the Vixen, reflecting the commercial preoccupations natural to his employment as a consular officer to the Dutch mission at the port of Odessa. The strong commercial bias of both Bell’s and de Marigny’s activities calls into question their ability to provide meaningful social perspectives among those they encountered in Circassia. Largely cut off by language barriers from any direct communication with the locals, both seemed to have suffered from the desire to ascribe to the Circassian those attributes they felt would best resonate with the home audience. A fine example of this construction of a Circassian identity may be found in the genesis of the Circassian Constitution.

The Circassian Constitution, as well as much of the imagery depicted in Western Europe concerning Circassians, was also a product of the enterprising Urquhart. Drafted in 1837, it was designed to elevate the visibility of the noble mountaineers in their efforts to resist the Russian machinery of oppression. While the history of the Constitution is not central to the discussion at present, what is important is its emblematic significance during this period before the Crimean War in forming the fictitious notion in Western and the United States that the Circassians were essentially a democratic and noble people engaged in a battle with tyranny and oppression. Somewhat ironically, de Marigny himself acknowledges the hand of Urquhart in the creation of this propaganda in the opening of his own work.

Other writers of note during the period leading up to the Crimean include Edmund Spenser’s *Travels to Circassia and Krim Tartary* and the American, George Leighton Ditson’s *Circassia: A Tour to the Caucasus*. Spenser’s is a classic example
of the genre of the professional tourist. Largely descriptive in broad brushed terms, Spenser scarcely seems to make any contact with actual Circassians until chapter twenty of his two-volume account. What makes Spenser’s travels interesting is the controversy that erupted at the time of its publication. Accusations were made that Spenser was simply fabricating his adventures, and the affair took on such public notoriety that Spenser felt compelled to address the situation in the preface to the second printing in 1838. Spenser’s defense against the charges was to seize the moral high ground, wrapping himself in the Union Jack and roundly condemning the Russians for the seizure of the Vixen and other British shipping in the Black Sea, as well as calling for the support of an independent Circassia. This, despite a rather obsequious portrait of his Russian hosts in the Crimea and the Caucasus, most notably the Russian Governor, Count Vorontsov, helped contribute to an even greater skepticism as to veracity of his adventures. Clearly, the effort of Urquhart and friends to push the Circassian issue to the forefront of British attention was having some success. Had it not taken on aspects of serious discourse and claims of an accurate account of events in Circassia, Edmund Spenser’s diversionary fluff would most likely have been received at face value.

George Leighton Ditson’s *Circassia*, by contrast, is significant in two respects. First, it is the first account written by an American. This is of particular significance as Americans were hardly active or influential commercially in the region at this time. Instead, Ditson represented an early example of the American academic-missionary who explored uncharted lands in the hope of advancing useful knowledge and saving souls. Ditson’s early interests were in numismatic discoveries
in the Crimea. This however soon yielded to an interest in the Circassia and its peoples. Unlike the majority of the European authors, Ditson actually did venture off the coastal districts and into the interior. Here he came into direct contact with Circassians, Ossetians and others. Also unlike the Western European writers, Ditson took a strikingly sympathetic view of the Russians and the Russian military. He explicitly drew the parallel between the American and Russian experiences in the process of civilizing the savages. Ditson allowed that:

"The Americans, however though they may recognize in it many of those shameless and cruel features which characterized our wars with the Red Men as we drove tribe after tribe from their homes, lands and sacred graves of their fathers may see an analogous tendency in the Muscovite progress ultimately beneficial—and be willing to assent to what all my observations bear me out in asserting, that Russia is doing much to civilize and Christianize the eastern world. That her priests assist but little in this good work, I am willing to admit, for they are said to be excessively dissolute: or that religious motives actuate their master. It arises rather from the commercial relationship which is established and being extended by Russia among the semi-civilized Orientals, in order to make up for her limited maritime resources;—elegant forms of refined society and its genial influences, accompanying her."\(^{68}\)

Ditson, unlike Bell, Spenser and de Marigny saw the Circassians not as pawns in a global political-economic struggle but more in light of the American belief in progress and Manifest Destiny. Russia, while imperfect, served as the agent of change, bringing Truth and Enlightenment however imperfectly. This feeling was best summed up with his observation:

"...but every thing had the same of squalidness and heathenish existence, without the shade of refinement or comfort: and when I left them, I was more than ever impressed with the importance of a new system of things—a new religion, and a

\(^{68}\) Ditson xii
new government; and with the inestimable value of those institutions with which Russian intelligence was surrounding them."^{69}

For Ditson, the Circassians represented man in a primitive and repressed form. The poverty and squalor Ditson found in those Circassian villages he visited served to distance himself from any meaningful social intercourse with the residents. It did not however diminish his sympathy. His inability to communicate arose from language and cultural barriers as well as the apparent poverty. Nevertheless Ditson did see the human potential and felt that Russian dominance represented the best outcome given the dearth of choices:

"What commercial enterprise, what new invention, what new discovery, what in art or science, has spread its wings in those regions, and, soaring, carried its blessings to mankind? The Tatar squats in his mud and felt hut, or, much like our Indians, roams over the vast prairies or steppes. The Caucasian shivers in his mountain chaumine, as far from the influence of civilization as the benefits of education are from his dreams."^{70}

This construction of the Circassian as man in a state of unrealized potential stood in sharp contrast to the European construct of Circassians as noble savages yearning for independence from Tsarist oppression. As the events of the following decades were to bear out, the European interest was almost entirely bound up in the project of checking the Russian eagle, just as it was to check the Russian bear in the next century. The simple fact that the Europeans abandoned any interest they may have felt for the Circassians during the years immediately following the Crimean War

---

^{69} Ibid p.334

^{70} Ibid ix
underscores the merely rhetorical nature of European support. Ditson and his fellow
adventurers were to continue their engagement in the region, most notably in
Ottoman territories in the decades to follow. Cyrus Hamlin, the Dwrights and others
were to carry on with the mission of education, albeit largely constrained to the non-
Muslim populations of the region.\textsuperscript{71} For the Circassians, education would largely
have to wait, both for those who emigrated and for those who stayed.

What follows in the modern historiography of the Caucasus and the
Circassians is a rather long period without significant scholarship.\textsuperscript{72} This was to
change with the magisterial history by John F. Baddeley, \textit{The Russian Conquest of
the Caucasus} which appeared in 1908. Baddeley focused on the military campaigns
of the Russians dating from the Petrine campaign of 1722. It represented the first and
most exhaustive history of the Russian conquest, ending with the surrender of Shamyl
in 1859. It was followed by Allen and Muratoff’s \textit{Caucasian Battlefields} of 1953,
which examined the continued military campaigns in the region until the end of the
First World War. Taken together they are an invaluable source, not only for military
historians but for details regarding the local populations and conditions in the region.

\textsuperscript{71} Cyrus Hamlin arrived in Constantinople in the 1850s and leaving aside strict
missionary work was to establish the first American college overseas there in 1863.
Robert College, at first predominantly a college with an Armenian and Bulgarian
student body is today one of Turkey’s premier universities. Nationalized in the 1970s
Robert College is now known as Boğazici Universitesi. Robert College also still
exists but is now a high school. For a detailed account of the founding of Robert
College see Hamlin’s \textit{My Life and Times}.

\textsuperscript{72} With respect to Russian sources I must here claim ignorance. To the best of my
knowledge there are a series of ethnographic monographs but nothing of great
consequence appears in later citations or sources.
It also during this period that Aytek Namitok wrote his *Origenes des Circassiens*, first published in 1939 and still the definitive work on Circassians and their history. However, little in the way of materials concerning those who emigrated from the region in the decades after the Russian conquest has been forthcoming. Instead, most of the material regarding Circassians and other Muslim Caucasian peoples was subsumed under a general heading of studies of non-Russian nationalities either in the Soviet Union or in post-USSR Russia. Scholars such as Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzerini in *Russia’s Orient* and Marie Benningsen Broxup in *The North Caucasian Barrier* have in recent years contributed significantly to the understanding of the interaction and changing identities of the peoples of the Caucasus and the Crimea during the 19th and 20th centuries. These studies do examine the history of the internal exile of Muslims from the Caucasus and the Crimea under the Imperial and Soviet regimes. As such they afford a useful series of studies relating to issues such as the forced assimilation to a larger Russian or Soviet culture and the extent to which this has been successfully resisted. Nowhere however do they examine what happened to those who chose the Ottoman Empire as a haven.

This last issue is largely confined to scholarship done in the last few decades and is largely Turkish in origin. There are two notable exceptions in this respect. First, there was the Robert Conquest’s *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* of 1960. In this general examination of both the internal and external deportations used by the Soviets, Conquest examined the previous centuries’ clearance of the Caucasus under the Romanovs. Using Berzhe’s *Chechnia and the Chechens*, Conquest derived
the total of 600,000 Circassians expelled from the region from 1862-1864.\textsuperscript{73} This is of significance as it came to be a generally accepted number used by others such as Karpat in their later work. It also served as one of the first, if slightly tangential, examinations of the region. The question of population and their numbers was further taken up in Marc Pinson’s PhD dissertation in 1970. Entitled, \textit{Demographic Warfare}, Pinson examined the forced exchange of Crimean Tatars and Bulgarians in the western Black Sea coast territories of the Russian and Ottoman Empires during the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Pinson however concentrated not on the Circassians, but on the Tatars and strategies and motives behind the two powers’ use of forced migration of population designed to shore up control in the border region between the empires. This examination however did lead to the broader study of the problem of forced deportation from Russia of Muslims to the Ottoman Empire during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and later by the Soviets during the 1920s and 1930s. This has, in turn, led to the additional examination of deportations that took place during the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries from Balkan provinces once within the Ottoman Empire but lost during the period between the Russo-Ottoman War of 1876 and the end of the First World War. Of particular note are the work of Kemal Karpat and Justin McCarthy. Karpat in particular has tried to determine the total number of refugees arriving in the Empire during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, drawing upon a series of census materials in his \textit{Ottoman Population 1830-1914}. This is by far and a way the most comprehensive source for demographic material in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. It brings together a series of reports commissioned by the Ottomans as well as European sources and gives as

\textsuperscript{73} Conquest p.8.
detailed an overview as can be found. It does however rely on the same general
guesstimates provided by earlier researchers when dealing with the issue of
immigration of people from the Crimea and the Caucasus.

The same problem arises with the works of Justin McCarthy which constitutes
the other major effort in the determination of the magnitude of immigration.
McCarthy in his books, *Death and Exile* and *Muslims and Minorities* explores the
issue of the forced movement of Muslim populations in the region and the extent to
which these populations were victimized by the resident Christian populations as well
as by external, European powers. The real thrust of McCarthy’s work is not to
determine the extent of the immigration but instead to chronicle the sheer magnitude
of the suffering of the Muslim population in the region during the past two hundred
years. It makes extensive use of Salnames, or yearbooks, providing data from
individual Ottoman provinces, and as such, constitutes an invaluable source. It does
however appear to fail to account for the extent of immigration, leaving an apparent
gap in projected population in the west Anatolian provinces unexplained. 74 While
many have taken a rather unsympathetic view of McCarthy’s work, it does remain the
most original and methodologically rigorous to date.

Recent Scholarship

74 McCarthy provides a detailed and valuable series of demographic studies
concerning Muslim and Christian populations in the Anatolian provinces in the late
19th century. He also makes a strong case for the lower growth rates found among the
Muslim population, largely a result of conscription. This however fails to account for
the higher than expected growth rates experienced in Bıga and Hüdavendigar
provinces, something that can readily be explained by the influx of Circassians as
detailed in the Commission records.
The last and most promising source of material relating to the immigration of Circassians and Crimeans comes from modern Turkish scholarship. This last category has undergone considerable change during the last few decades. This apparent irony arises in large part from the history of the modern Turkish Republic. Despite the masses of archival material available and the simple fact that Ottoman History was the foundation upon which modern Turkey was built, Mustafa Kemal or Atatürk and his entourage were determined to create a complete break with the past in an effort to secularize and Westernize the new Republic. In order to accomplish this, Atatürk instituted a process of language reform combined with the secularization of government and education as well as a general rewriting of Turkish history in an attempt to redefine the Turkish identity. The outcome has been a formation that is simultaneously primordialist and ethnically Turkic; no small feat for a people who by common consensus arrived in the 11th century. In this creation, the Turks were descendents of the ancient Hittites and Sumerians, yet somehow were also the direct, lineal descendents of the Oğuz and other Turkic tribes of Central Asia.

While these historical formulations are contorted, to say the least, they did serve as the propagandistic basis for a wholesale rewriting of history designed to forge a clear and accessible Turkish identity for the Turkish-speaking Muslim survivors of the Ottoman Empire living in the post-Treaty of Lausanne borders of modern Turkey. This process of cultural and historical redefinition was led by the likes of Ziya Gökalp, Halide Edip and others with the stated aim of separating the

---

75 The exception to this is the current Hatay Province which was added to Turkey just prior the Second World War as a quid pro quo by the Western Powers for Turkish neutrality.
new Republic from the decrepit Empire, looking forward and never backward. Atatürk’s slogans such as “Türkiye ileri!” and “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene” (“Onward Turkey” and “How fortunate I am to be a Turk”) became the mantra for the new order.

Completely left out from any of these formulations was a critical examination of the Empire or its institutions. The only purpose an examination of the past could serve would be a critique of its failures. As a result, scholarship during the first decades of the Republic was largely limited to the discovery of connections that might be found to the pre-Ottoman past. The massive archives, found in Istanbul, were largely off limits to researchers and state support for Ottoman historical study was almost completely absent.76 By divorcing the Turkish people from their Ottoman past, the Republicans were able to reinforce the cultural isolation they desired from the surrounding territories. Türkiye, the Turkish word for Turkey literally means “of the Turks”, specifically in opposition to the Arab world and the lands of the Greeks, Bulgars, Armenians and Persians. History, in short, like language, had become a weapon.

76 Apart from the history published by Gûnaltay Şemsettin in 1923, there appear to be few, if any, histories of the Ottoman era until 1947. Those publications appearing during the interval 1923-47 deal exclusively with individual biography, such as Findikli Silahtar Mehmet Aga by Ahmet Refik (1933) or explore local ethnic origins as in Uzuncarsili’s Anadolu Türk Tarihi Tetkikatı, (Examinations of Anatolian Turkish History) 3 vol. 1928-32. As such, the approved subject materials appear to have been largely confined to the task of establishing the historicity of the Turks within the Anatolian and Rumelian territories of the Republic and selecting some models of progressive thinking among those who preceded the Republican founders’ generation.
This aggressive enterprise of remaking the identity of the Turks began to ease during the period following the Second World War. Turkey had emerged unscathed from the destruction experienced throughout Europe and had even prospered due to increased exports to the combatants during the war. More importantly, Atatürk had died in 1938 and a less aggressive administration had come to power. As the Cold War began to take shape, Turkey once again found Russia to represent the major threat, this time in the cloth of the Soviet Union. An alliance with the United States through NATO helped bolster Turkey against any real threats against its territorial integrity. While the Republic was threatened by the Soviet Union, other external and internal threats had largely abated. This translated to a gradual lessening of Kemalist control over all aspects of Turkish life. In the discipline of history this easing of control took the form of the first publications directly addressing the Ottoman past. In 1947, the Turkish Historical Foundation published a multi-volume Ottoman History. Scholars like Fuad Köprülü, Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and Halil İnalcık began the process of examining Turkish history prior to the founding of the Republic.

This first generation of scholars was followed by a second group who focused on narrower topics in Ottoman history as well as Republican history. This second phase of scholarship, one which runs from the late 1950s and continues, in part, to the present, includes a number of studies of Muslim peoples of the former Ottoman Empire and the surrounding regions who were forced to migrate to modern Turkey during the great upheavals of the preceding two hundred years. Examples of this type of study are found with Berkok's *Tarihte Kafkasya* (The Caucasus in History) of 1958, Hayati Bice’s *Kafkasya’dan Anadolu’ya Göçleri* (Refugees from the
Caucasus to Anatolia) of 1991, as well as Bedri Habicioğlu’s identically titled
*Kafkasya’dan Anadolu’ya Göçleri*. These tend to be straightforward presentations of
the material, long on dates, places and names and short on any efforts to analyze or
draw inferences from the material. Most originate from among the community of
descendants of refugees from the Caucasus whose ancestors arrived during the last
decades of the 19th and first decades of the 20th centuries. As such they represent an
effort to establish and reinforce the legitimacy of and prestige of Caucasian
immigrants in modern Turkey. Some, such as Mühittin Ünal’s *Kurtuluş Savaşında
Çerkeslerin Rolü* (The Circassian Role in the War of Independence) or Izzet
Aydemir’s *Çerkes Aydinlarım* (Circassian Intellectuals) consist solely of biography,
designed to bolster the image of those of Caucasian ancestry.\(^{77}\)

Taken as a group, material from these sources serve as a useful collection of
general background information but are almost entirely devoid of critical analysis or
attempts at developing a historiography. Instead, they serve as catalogs of names,
dates and places, useful in identifying individuals and groups, particularly during the
early Republican period. It would appear that the intended audience is more
concerned with facts and not with questions and conclusions. In short, it is not
particularly scholarly but does have the great virtue of being largely derived from
original sources, in particular the Prime Minister’s Archives in Istanbul.

\(^{77}\) Ünal’s book while secondary to the present study nevertheless provides a
particularly valuable source for the process of assimilation experienced by the
Circassians and their descendents. The picture that emerges from this work is one of a
determined group of sons or grandson of immigrants who played an active role in the
Turkish War of Independence, continuing the long martial tradition of the
Circassians. It further underscores the extent to which the younger generation
embraced the ideals of the new Republic, and was willing to participate to the extent
they did during this crucial, formative time.
The recent scholarship by a younger generation of Turks however has produced markedly more scholarly works and has brought the field very much more in line with what is expected and found in global academic circles. Authors such as Selçuk Akşın Somel who has written on late Ottoman public education in

*Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908*

*Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, Nedim Ipek’s *Rumeli’den Anadolu’ya Türk Göçleri* (Turkish Migration from Rumelia to Anatolia) or Nurcan Abacı who explores the application of Ottoman law in 17th century Bursa (*Bursa Şehri’nde Osmanlı hukuk’un uygulanması*) are examples of this change. In these works, extensive use of the Ottoman Archives is combined with an overarching theoretical framework which serves not only to present and analyze the material but also to place it within a larger context of Ottoman society.

It is in this last group that we find the only published work to date, dealing exclusively with the problem and issues surrounding the wave of immigrants from both the Caucasus and Crimea during the period immediately following the Crimean War. This is Abdullah Saydam’s *Krim ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)* analyzes the history of the forced migrations as well as the Ottoman response to the crisis. Drawing upon records from the Başbakanlık Archives in Istanbul, Saydam discusses the steps taken by the Ottoman Government to provide transportation, food and shelter during the first years following the War. The book presents a wealth of detail including steamships requisitioned for transport as well as the initial staffing and implementation of a coherent plan of settlement under the *Muhacirin Komisyonu*. It is an invaluable source of information on the timing and numbers of the refugees’
arrival into Ottoman domains. However, for Saydam, the main concern is the process of migration itself. The questions he examines are focused on the mechanics of the migration. They involve the structure and composition of the waves of migrants, largely ignoring how the immigrants were received by their host communities and, more to the heart of the present thesis, how they were viewed by the agents of settlement. On this point, Saydam believes no conclusions may be drawn. The reason for this is a lack of explicit statements available to date that would detail such an overarching plan. This apparent silence leads Saydam to conclude that it is impossible to draw any inferences as to Ottoman thought concerning the larger goals they may have held for the immigrants.

This study represents an effort to categorically refute Saydam’s last point. While no single document can be offered in order to demonstrate an Ottoman manifesto concerning the settlement and socialization of the Circassians, it is this study’s central thesis that the collective actions of the Muhacirin Komisyonyu as evidenced in its journal entries, as well as related memoranda from other branches of the Ottoman Government, paint a very clear picture of Ottoman intentions. Taken as a whole, the documents and the actions taken speak louder than any manifesto.
Chapter 2

The Creation and Organization of the Commission

This chapter will examine the circumstances surrounding and the creation of the *Muhacirin Komisyonu* (Emigrant Commission), as an independent, single purpose administrative entity in the Ottoman system of government during the early 1860s. The first section will review the historical events that brought about the Commission’s creation during the period following the Crimean War. This will include an examination of the Commission’s establishment in light of the evolution of the Ottoman government and the bureaucracy during the *Tanzimat* (1839-76), tracing both the development of the Commission system as well as the rapid changes taking place within the Bureaucracy itself. It will also examine how the Commission was staffed and what criteria were involved in the choice of leadership. It will examine the relationship between the Ottoman officials and the emigrants, with particular attention to what extent the policies and measures adopted by the Commission officials regarding the refugees may have reflected the aspirations and values of the Tanzimat itself. Lastly there is an analysis of the changing nature of the role of the Bureaucracy during this period of the Tanzimat and how these institutional changes also came to influence settlement policies and goals.

The *Muhacirin Komisyonu* (Emigrant Commission) was expressly created in response to perceived failures in the existing Ottoman Government’s ability to cope with the waves of Muslim refugees from the Crimea and the Caucasus in the years
immediately following the Crimea War. Prior to the War, the flow of refugees from the north had, for the most part, been constant but manageable. Provincial governors, working in conjunction with the military, were able to either settle the immigrants or pass them on to other provinces where they might be put to good use. The immigrants represented a useful and largely pliant Muslim population. The Ottomans found the Crimeans to be a particularly valuable group as they were farmers and spoke a language that closely resembled the Turkish of the peasantry. In regions along the Western Black Sea Coast, the refugees helped to revive the agricultural output as well as securing the loyalty of the population. Crimeans were settled in the region of the Dobruja as well as along the Danube and westward into the Thracian provinces.  

In all, the early flow of immigrants from the Crimea, and Muslim regions to the north was something of a windfall. Agricultural output increased, skilled workers and craftsmen from among the Tatars were directed towards Istanbul and other major cities, adding to economic growth. From a strategic viewpoint, settlement of the refugees helped to bolster the Muslim population along the borders to the north and west, a useful counterweight against the rising influence of nationalism among the Christian populations of the Balkans and Greece. It also served to fill the void left by

---

78 Saydam p.65, notes that the total figure arriving from the Crimea before 1800 might have been quite substantial. Citing Mirza Bal and Halil Inalcik’s entry on Crimea in the Islam Ansiklopedisi, he places the number as high as 500,000. This figure certainly seems to be on the high end of the range of estimates but nonetheless is possible as the influx was spread out over the latter half of the 19th century.

79 The actual numbers in the early years are difficult to determine. Dr. Hayati Bice places the number of Tatars arriving in Bessarabia and the Dobruca in the years 1783-4 at roughly 80,000. (Bice p.44) He also notes the predominantly the urban pattern of settlement that was to follow with most Crimean Tatars settling in Istanbul, Izmir, Bandirma and other centers. Unfortunately, much of Bice’s material is unsupported and if derived from archival sources, not cited.
Bulgarian and other Slavic peasants who had been induced by the Russians to settle in
the Crimea.

This gradual process was to undergo a fundamental change however in the
aftermath of the Crimean War. Despite apparent defeat at the hands of the Allies,
Russia was essentially left alone to do as it wished in the northern Black Sea region
and the Caucasus after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1856. Britain was
distracted by problems in India, while France was turning its gaze southward to
Africa. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was faced with its own problems, and Prussia
was pursuing opportunities elsewhere both home and abroad. The new Tsar
Alexander II, whose coronation during the previous year included banners with the
double eagle of the Byzantine Empire, wasted no time in completing the conquest of
those Muslim powers to the south and to the east that had stood in the way of Russian
greatness. Once the Tatars and the other Muslim peoples of the Caucasus were
subdued, then Central Asia could be brought under Russian rule, leaving one final
prize, the retaking of the center of Orthodoxy, Constantinople, not to mention direct
access to the Mediterranean.

The first problem was one of neutralizing any threats among the Tatars. The
solution was quite simple; those who would not convert to Orthodoxy would be

---

80 Von Moltke’s account found in Eva March Tappan, ed., The World’s Story: A
VI: Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan States, and Turkey, pp. 201-207. In it he
notes: “No mortal man has such power in his hands as the absolute monarch of the
tenth part of all the inhabitants of the earth, whose scepter reaches over four quarters
of the globe, and who rules over Christians and Jews, Mussulmans, and pagans. Why
should one not pray to God heartily to enlighten the man whose will is law to sixty
millions of people, whose word commands from the Chinese wall to the Weichsel,
from the Arctic Ocean to Mount Ararat; for whose call a half-million soldiers wait,
and who has just given peace to Europe?”
forcibly removed. In their place came an array of pliant, reliable people. Serbs, Czechs, Poles and others were encouraged to settle those areas previously owned by Muslims. Unlike earlier periods, the Russian Government was now free of any constraints relating to their ability to act *vis a vis* the Muslims. The Ottoman-Tatar alliance had been severed and a weakened Ottoman Empire was incapable of fighting Russia on her own. As a result, a policy of wholesale clearance was adopted against those who might resist any form of Russian conquest. As the Crimean nobility and large landholders had served as the backbone of any resistance before the War, they became the first target. Once the landholders were removed, the remaining Tatars would be reduced to serfdom. By the end of the Crimean War, any remaining power of the nobility had been almost entirely destroyed, at which point the forcible expulsion of the peasantry became an option.

For their part, the Ottomans, while removed from the scene, were not entirely passive. Hoping to exploit the advantages they had gained from the immigration of Tatars in the period before the War, the Ottomans actively encouraged further

---

81 This question of resettlement of populations in the Crimea finds many parallels with the Ottoman pattern or resettlement in the period immediately following the conquest of Istanbul in 1453. Mehmed II called upon his notables to take charge in the business of settling empty sections of Istanbul and the surrounding region. For this purpose, entire groups of Turks, Armenians and Greeks were transported to the capital and provided with the means of revitalizing the imperial capital. In the Crimea, military commanders and other Russian notables were allotted vast landholdings and encouraged to repopulate the areas cleared of Muslims with largely non-Muslims. Of note however is the fact that this process did not adhere solely to a formula based on religion or ethnicity. Spuler, "Kirimi" in *EI2*, notes that Kuban Tatars were included among those peoples moved into the Crimea. Also of note is the fate of the vestigial Gothic community in the Crimea. Those who chose not to follow the Bishop of Gothia at the time of his removal into Southern Russia in 1779, and instead converted to Islam, were among the losers at the time of the mass removals in the late 1850s.
migration into the Empire. These efforts were to prove altogether too successful. By the last years of the 1850s, the trickle was to assume flood proportions. In 1859 alone more than 100,000 Tatars flooded into the Ottoman Empire effectively swamping the ability of the governors of the western Black Sea provinces, on whom the majority of the burden fell, to cope with the process of transportation and resettlement. Food, clothing and tent supplies were quickly exhausted, leaving the refugees stranded on the piers as the slow machinery of the Ottoman Government struggled to respond. Requisitions to the capital, slow in the best of times, were further bogged down by the sheer enormity of the demand. The wave of immigrants also quickly exhausted the supplies of the military in the region. As the military was often the first line of support in the event of disaster and coordinated with the provincial governors, once the military supplies were gone there was little to do other than wait for help from Istanbul. The immediate solution served only to make matters worse for the Government in Istanbul. Refugees from the Crimea either were sent directly to the

\[82\] Saydam pps.73-4 recounts the embassy of Ahmed Paşa in April of 1856 to the Crimea. In it he was able to redirect a group of 7,683 Tatars who were in the process of being sent to Kazan and, most probably further East, to the port of Gözelevi and then on to the Ottoman Balçık.

\[83\] That the military would serve as the primary vehicle for administering aid and support at this time is not surprising. Not only did they constitute the only organized force of any consequence at this time, they were both the prime candidate for governmental measures of reform and, more importantly, government funds. Levy, “Mahmud II” in EI2, notes that in the last years of Mahmud II’s rule, the military consumed fully 70% of the Ottoman budget. Given the threats to the Empire and the historical weight of the military within Ottoman society, it underscores some of the constraints placed on the ability of the Ottoman Government to expand and reform in other badly needed areas, such as infrastructure, health and the business of addressing social dislocations from war and natural disasters. When such disasters did occur, there was really only one organization to turn to, the military.
capital or were immediately resent from other administrative district such as Edirne, Tulça or Varna. Refugees clogged the courtyards of the great mosques in Istanbul, bringing the desperate situation directly before the eyes of the Sultan and his ministers.

This influx of refugees into Istanbul, the first of an oft repeated series of debacles during the next sixty years, signaled the need for radical change in the government’s capacity to respond to such emergencies. Despite the introduction of governmental reforms under Selim III (1794-1807) and a meaningful expansion of military and civil reforms under Mahmud II (1808-1839), the Ottoman Government’s attempts at planning for or responding to major emergencies was for the most part woefully inadequate. In much the same way, the early reforms initiated during the Tanzimat (1839-76) were directed at the most inner working of Government ignoring many of the issues of governance away from the center. Real reform in the administration of Ottoman provinces largely brought about through the work of the great Ottoman reformer Midhat Pasha during the early 1860s still had not come about, leaving Governors to cope with unforeseen events largely on an ad hoc basis.

---

84 The general lack of Ottoman preparedness for large scale emergencies, in particular those involving large numbers of refugees, appears to have been endemic to the end. Perhaps the best, albeit most depressing accounts of the plight of refugees is found in the poetry of Nazim Hikmet and others describing those refugees in the Balkan Wars of the early 20th century.

85 The Provincial reform program was one largely created by the brilliant Ottoman reformer Ahmet Midhat Paşa. The son of an Ottoman notable Rusşuklu Haji Hafiz Mehmet Effendi, Midhat first proposed a large scale reform of provincial government to Reşid Paşa in a memorandum in 1854; in response to problems he had witness in Edirne Province during the Crimean War. The adoption of reform however had to wait until 1864 when his plan, modeled on the French system and developed during his tenure as governor of Niş Province was enacted under the Grand Vizierate of Fuad
In fact, any meaningful governmental reform was still in its infancy. The Meclis-i Vala-yı Ahkam-i Adliye or Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, which served at the heart of governmental bureaucratic reform, was only established some two decades prior to the events under examination, on March 24, 1838.\textsuperscript{86} Meaningful change was slow, hampered by, as Shaw has diplomatically noted, “the normal mores and modes of Ottoman behavior”.\textsuperscript{87} Nevertheless, the Council had been given an explicit mandate for administrative reform in the language of the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane (Rescript of the Rose Bower) in 1839 and the Sultan’s Grand Vizier Reşid Paşa, seized upon this opportunity to concentrate power within the Council and abolish rival centers of power within the government.\textsuperscript{88}

While the Council was able to slowly arrogate power to itself, the impact on the provinces was decidedly limited and slow. It was not until 1845 that the first representatives of provincial governments (Meclis-i Imariye) were invited to Istanbul in an effort to assess the needs of the Provincial Governments and institutionalize some form of regular communication. Even so, real change had to wait until the 1850’s. This was due in large part, as Shaw has noted, to the ironic tendency of the

---

\textsuperscript{86} Shaw, \textit{The Central Legislative Councils of the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movements Before 1876}, p.54

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. p.55

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. p.57
reformers to expand their mandate of investigation and reform to such a broad scope that the process itself became hopelessly bogged down in its own work.\textsuperscript{89}

This institutional drift with regard to provincial administration and reform was to continue until the eve of the Crimean War. At that point several factors combined to transform both the Ottoman Government and the goals they adopted. The first was the \textit{Hatt-i Hümayun} (Imperial Rescript) of February 18, 1856.\textsuperscript{90} While this Rescript is most famous for its abolition of the millet system, a system of self-regulating communities based on confessional lines established by Mehmet II after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453\textsuperscript{91}, the Rescript reflected a change in the internal dynamics of the reformers of the Tanzimat itself. To a great extent, the promulgation of the Rescript marked the transition from the first generation of Tanzimat reformers, as exemplified by Reşid Paşa, to the next generation such as Ali and Fuad Paşas. This second generation reflected a new coterie of government bureaucrats, trained along increasingly Westernized modes of the Tanzimat administration, one which saw an added urgency in the realization of a more ordered and bureaucratic administration of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. p.62-63
\textsuperscript{90} See J.C. Hurwitz, \textit{Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East} p. 149.

\textsuperscript{91} While the Imperial Decree of 1856 is best known for its abolition of the millet system at the behest of the British Ambassador Viscount de Redcliffe (Stratford Canning), thereby nominally placing all religious faiths on an equal footing before the law, it was in the property and commercial clauses of the \textit{Hatt} that the greatest impact on the shape of Ottoman Administration was to be felt. Those clauses dealing with police administration, taxes, public works as well as law, served to promote reform through the creation of the new administrative bodies required for their execution.
For the younger generation, the reform of the administration of government along the lines of a western civil service was essential for the survival of the Ottoman State if it was to successfully resist increased economic and military pressures from the Western Europeans and, more perilously, the Russians. The Decree of 1856 laid out the groundwork for a new system of organization within the framework of the Tanzimat. Functional areas of responsibility within the Meclis-i Vala were drawn up, including the military (Askeriye), Foreign Office (Hariciye) and Treasury (Maliye). As the events of the Crimean War unfolded, these and other new branches within the government developed both internally and in conjunction with the Allied Powers. It was during this time in particular that the influence of French methods of administration began to find their way into the structure of Ottoman administration.

French and other Western European administrative practices were evident in an array of new Ottoman organizations, ranging from municipal reforms to special purpose commissions designed to deal with problems arising from the War. An example of this change included the restructuring of Istanbul’s municipal administration with the active cooperation of foreign advisors. The creation of the Intizam-i Şehr Komisyonu (Commission for the Regulation of the City) serves as an example of both the changing face of the Ottoman Bureaucracy as well as the new structures adopted in order to address local problems of administration. The formation of the Commission arose from Allied demands during the Crimean War for

---

92 See Lewis, Emergence of Modern Turkey: Ch. 11 “State and Government” and Shaw, op.cit. p.63-7
improvements in the mechanism for provisioning and billeting of the military in Istanbul during the War. At first, the Meclis-i Vala had assigned the responsibility of meeting the Allies' needs to the newly created municipal bureau called the Şehir Emanet. The structure was one modeled after the French Prefecture system and gave the prefect (Şehir Emin) power to regulate markets and oversight of guild activities. In a classic case of form outpacing the development of content, as often happened in the adoption of reform in the Ottoman Empire, the new system quickly found itself ill-suited to the task. Further pressure from the Allies brought about the creation of the Intizam-i Şehir Commission as well as the incorporation of Europeans among those serving on the Commission.

The presence of Europeans on the Commission marked an extension of the Westernizing influence on the internal structures of Ottoman administration. While the presence of European advisors, particularly in the military, had long been in evidence and had featured such famous advisors as the le Compte de Bonneval, the Baron de Tott and the German von Moltke, the Crimean War marked the introduction of Europeans into mid-level advisory roles for more mundane administrative bodies charged with the daily operating machinery of government. This willingness to allow the intrusion of foreigners, and non-Muslim foreigners at that, underscores the extent to which the Ottoman fiscal and political exigencies of the time had compromised their ability to assert sovereignty over their own bureaucracy. Not only was the Ottoman Government dependent on France and Britain for financial and military support, it had at times no choice but to rely on foreigners in order to staff its own

---

95 Ibid p.230
agencies with competent officials and advisors. At the same time the adoption of both Western forms of administration and willingness to accept the role of foreign advisors underscores the appreciation the Ottomans had for the new system of administration.

This unbalanced nature of the relationship between the Ottoman State and the West during the Crimean War was not however, without benefits. Economically, trade with the West grew exponentially, increasing two thousand percent during the War. Practical benefits included the introduction of French firefighting techniques through a brigade of French firemen as well as the introduction of English methods of policing in the Pera and Galata districts. While this no doubt reflected a compromised sovereignty, it also provided an acceleration in the training and adoption of more modern techniques of municipal administration. As a source of training, the Europeans were invaluable.

In the case of the Intizam-ı Şehir, a Frenchman, Antoine Alleon, served as advisor to the Commission but, at the same time, oversight of the activities of the Commission rested with the Tanzimat official Emin Muhlis Effendi. A true “Man of the Tanzimat”, he embodied the new model of the Ottoman administrator, beginning his career with a foreign tour as a junior aide to the Ottoman Ambassador to Vienna. As a member of the Meclis-i Vala, he reflected the highest circle of Ottoman official power and had the ability to guide the Commission as he saw fit. As for Alleon, he was also reflective of the changing nature and patterns of social and political development in the Ottoman Empire at the time. A descendent of a wealthy French

---

96 Ibid p.239

97 See Emin Mehmed Paşa (Müftizade) in Sicill-i Osmani vol. 2 p. 478
family that fled their home during the revolution, Alleon and his brothers belonged to the wealthy Levantine class of the 19th century that served as a catalyst to economic development, and more indirectly social change, in the Eastern Mediterranean. He was behind civic developments such as the opera house in Galata as well as instrumental in negotiating loans from France to the Ottoman Government. That he considered himself Levantine rather than French was underscored by the fact that when he died in France, he insisted that he be buried in Istanbul.98

This European influence at the top and mid-levels of Ottoman administration is instructive regarding the extent to which the old Ottoman structures of government were in a state of flux and transformation during the mid-nineteenth century. It should however, be noted that this did not imply that the Ottoman capacity to reorder itself had fallen under the total control of the Allied Western powers. Rather it reflects two major considerations on the part of the highest level of bureaucrats. The first was the absolute need to balance the western European powers, Russia included, thus preserving Ottoman territorial integrity. To a large extent, the Ottomans had been successful in this endeavor since the end of the 18th century and the Napoleonic invasions in the Balkans and then Egypt. At the end of the day, all the European powers had designs on Ottoman territory. In this respect, the Russians were only the most dangerous of a thoroughly hostile and aggressive group. If the Ottomans were to successfully reinvigorate their economy and military, it was essential that the technologically more advanced Western European powers be enlisted first as defensive allies.

98 Rosenthal p.232
This second major consideration for the Ottomans, that of an economic, political and technological resuscitation, involved a complex set of considerations. For the purposes of this study the technological and financial considerations requisite for closing the substantial gap with the West are of secondary importance; while important, these considerations largely reflected constraints the Ottoman Government had to live with during the process of reform and rehabilitation. Instead it is the administrative and logistical considerations that are of greater import. While the history of the Ottoman fiscal debacles of the late 19th century have been well chronicled and accorded great importance, they are really of secondary importance as determinants of the internal developments of late Ottoman Society and its successor, the Republic of Turkey. 99

If we turn to the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Government at the outset of the major emigrations from the Caucasus, we should first note that the evolution of

---

99 This point, while perhaps somewhat tautological, is important as it must be remembered that while the Ottomans were to give up a great deal of administrative power during the reign of Abdul Aziz and during the early years of Abdul Hamid as far as finances were concerned, other aspects of development were moving ahead at a rapid pace. While the Board of the Ottoman Debt was able to direct the course of financial flows within and without the Empire, other areas such as the postal and telegraph services, PTT, the Army and Navy as well as the development of the rail system were advancing rapidly. On the eve of World War I, the Ottomans had substantially closed many of the gaps that had existed between themselves and the Western Powers fifty years earlier. Crucial to this was the development of a Civil Administration as well as a more highly trained military. Through emulation of Western methods of administration, the Ottomans had advanced to such an extent that by the early days of the Republic of Turkey in the 1920s, Western administrators were unnecessary. This reality is often clouded in Western historiography through the combination of the persistence of the nineteenth century’s “Sick Man of Europe” approach to the Empire coupled with the deep frustrations European investors encountered in their dealings with the Ottomans. This frustration is beautifully captured in the invaluable biography of Sir Edward Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*. 
the Civil Bureaucracy into a truly independent administration has been largely achieved by the end of the Crimean War in 1856. This transformation, stemming from the earliest day of the Tanzimat, had not come easily. As Carter Finley notes, the Ottoman civil service had encountered an array of obstacles and vested interests since the days of Selim III in its efforts to break away from the traditional system of servitude to the Sultan to a modern system of professional administration.\textsuperscript{100} By the end of the Crimean War and the start of the larger waves of emigration, this change in the transformation at the upper levels of the bureaucracy was largely completed.

Integral in this process was the introduction of: a) salaried officials with defined job functions, b) a marked slowing in the process of rotating officials though the Empire as well as the removal of influence from the Palace in the day to day affairs of the bureaucracy itself and c) the change in the conditions of service ranging from assigned physical locations to the implicit notion that the individual civil servant’s contractual relationship to the Government admitted to his ultimate personal freedom.

The result was a developing service of professional bureaucrats and scribes whose focus was the day-to-day administration of government and the execution of policy and directives from above. The establishment of purpose-directed commissions

\textsuperscript{100} Finley, Chapter 5, \textit{Civil-Bureaucratic Hegemony}, traces the problems encountered by the true reforming leaders of the Tanzimat, Reşid, Ali, and Fuad Pashas. Aside from the simple transformation of the Ottoman administration from a prebendial one to a modern, salaried organization, the reformers were presented with an array of opposition ranging from regional magnates, members of the Imperial Household including the Sultan as well as the military, whose notions of reform were often at odds with those of the Civil Service. There was also the problem of credibility at home and abroad as the early bureaucrats had to fight the impression that, as Finley notes, were merely “mimetic” of Western European counterparts and as such not to be taken seriously either by Europeans or Ottomans.
became a new means of addressing specific problems confronting the government that did not naturally fall within the purview of a single Ministry. Earliest examples of this included the Sanitary Commission, set up in March of 1838 to address problems of public health, most notably the control of plague and cholera. Ottoman interest in governmental agency as a means of control stemmed from a combination of the discovery of the vector for transmission of the disease by Europeans during the mid-1850s and the desire to control the devastation not only visited upon those during the Crimean War but those involved in the Haj to Mecca. Working closely with Western European physicians, the Ottomans established a series of procedures and facilities to quarantine new arrivals in the Empire in an effort to check the spread of cholera at the borders.

---


102 In his chapter, "Tanzimat et Sante Publique", Panzac (Population) traces the development of the Sanitary Commission (Meclis-i Tahaffuz-i Devlet-i Aliyye) from its inception in 1838. Of particular note is the system of lazarettos brought into service during the first years of the Commission. The first at Kuleli, was personally inaugurated by Mahmud II in December of 1838. This was followed by additional facilities at Fenerbahçe and Küçükçesme and Anadolu Kavâğı as well as two forward stations at Selvi and in the Dardanelles. This program was expanded in the next two years to include seventeen other stations throughout the Rumelian and Anatolian Provinces. Such was the efficacy of the program that plague was largely eradicated. This however was not to be the case for cholera which was to surge with the arrival of the Caucasian emigrants, largely due to the lack of quarantine in the Russian ports on the Black Sea.

Of additional interest in Panzac’s study is the role played by Europeans in the management of the Sanitary Commission. In the case of the Sanitary Commission, fully half the Commissioners in 1848 were Europeans (p.80). The highly visible role of the European Doctors Clot Bey in Egypt and Drs. Fauvel and Barucci in Istanbul, has been well documented and will be discussed in a later chapter. Nevertheless the
In the case of immigrants arriving in Ottoman domains in the period immediately following the Crimean War, the first Ottoman agency charged with the task of administering to the needs of the new arrivals was the Commerce and Trade Administration (*Ticaret Nezarieti*).\(^{103}\) This consisted of transshipping those recently arrived from the Russian controlled ports of Kertch, Sevastopol and Gözleve onward to the Dobruja.\(^{104}\) Those who were able to avoid direct resettlement in the Dobruja and further west along the Danube were often able to travel to Istanbul, where they came under the watch of the Municipal Administration of Istanbul (*Şehremaneti*) as well as the Police Administration (*Zaptiye Nezareti*).

In most of these cases the various branches of government did little to collaborate or coordinate their activities. Instead, primary responsibility for the care and welfare of the immigrants fell on the local governments. This meant the provincial governments such as those of Silistre or Varna along the Black Sea and, more visibly, on the municipal agencies such as the Istanbul government. It would appear that there was also a correspondence between social status and where the

---

\(^{103}\) Saydam p.102. The failings of the government to anticipate, let alone deal with the problem, is evident in the lack of any structure to cope with the situation other than to charge whatever governmental body came into contact with the problem to form some ad hoc solution on its own. In this case, the Trade and Commerce Ministry had been charged since 1854 with the solution of the refugee issue as it was the first governmental agency to make contact with the refugees during their transport.

\(^{104}\) This program of resettlement along the Black Sea’s western borders has been discussed extensively in Pinson’s *Demographic Warfare*. In the period immediately after the end of the War in 1856 it is estimated that the number of Tatars emigrating from the Crimea amounted to between 30,000 and 40,000. (p.31)
refugees were sent. Those with connections were often able to secure direct transportation to Istanbul.105

For those arriving in the Black Sea provinces, the ultimate responsibility for settlement fell to the Vali, or Governor who in turn often called upon the military for supplies and shelter in the short term. For the Ottoman Government, this redirecting of settlers had the dual benefit of bolstering the frontiers as well as keeping the most destitute off the streets of Istanbul. During the early years of emigration, 1856-59, the flow of refugees to the Dobruca and further along the Danube was for the most part manageable. While conditions were often grim, the local governors were able to locate the refugees at a sufficient distance to prevent their suffering from either becoming too great or too noticeable. In some cases, the local governors were even able to profit from the settlement of the refugees, buying tracts of land that would become de facto agricultural fiefs for the Valis.106 In some cases local governors were

105 Pinson p.72. Pinson’s assertion of special treatment accorded the elite is also borne out in the entries of the Commission as well as earlier records. A more detailed discussion of personal status and settlement will follow in Chapter 3.
106 Ibid p. 68. Pinson notes the case of Said Pasha who was a prime advocate of Tatar settlement in the Dobruja and who profited personally from the relocation of emigrants into the district. Of additional note is the early employment of the formula that was to become the general norm for allocating resources to the emigrants. This consisted of the construction of homes on a ratio of one home for five emigrants and an allotment of one team of oxen for every two families as well as seed and farming tools. There were also tax and military service holidays. For emigrants setting farms in the countryside, the standard tax holiday extended to the first three harvest years. For military service, exemptions were granted for periods up to fifteen years, effectively relieving many of the refugees from that onerous burden. While the formulae were no doubt generous, the actual implementation varied to a great extent, largely due to the highly uneven distribution of resources to the provincial governors, as well as the endemic corruption and almost total lack of auditing capabilities at the time.
running independent operations to such an extent that they negotiated directly with Russian agents regarding the flow and control of the refugees.\textsuperscript{107}

By 1858, the situation in the Dobruja and Bulgaria had begun to deteriorate to the extent that a report submitted by Ismail Pasha to the Porte found a list of problems and hardships endured by the settlers. Poor quality and diseased draft animals were dying, leaving the farmers largely unable to cultivate their fields. Housing quality was increasingly poor and limited in availability. With this came the even more unsettling circulation of the notion among the refugees that a return to the Crimea might be preferable to staying in Ottoman lands. At the same time the Russian and Ottoman Governments both displayed considerable confusion in their outlook and plans for the refugees. The Russian policy towards the Tatars began to show a deep ambivalence. On the one hand, it still appeared to follow the ideological bent of the Crimean Governor Count Alexander Stroganov who saw the Tatars as a “harmful element” and whose views were shared by Alexander.\textsuperscript{108} However, the pace of the emigration of Tatars was sapping the economy to such an extent that land prices were falling, which in turn threatened not only tax revenues but the assets of those wealthy Russians who had been accumulating Tatar property. To further add to the confusion, the Russian imposition of new taxes on the Tatars and the threat of the confiscation of “Surplus lands” only served to accelerate the emigration. By early 1860, the Russians

\textsuperscript{107} Said Pasha was not the only administrator to fall afoul of the central authorities. Salih Mirza Bey who was stationed in Köstençe was reprimanded in a case in 1279 (1863) for his failure to control emigrants attempting to return to Russian territory. Salih Mirza Bey later came under suspicion of colluding with Russian agents to secure assets seized by the Russians in the Crimea. See 758/79/251.

\textsuperscript{108} Pinson. p.32
estimated that 100,000 taxable subjects had left the Crimea as well as 46-50,000
Nogais from their lands to the north.\textsuperscript{109} The extent of this economic dislocation was
captured in the price of land, which fell from 20 rubles to 3-6 rubles in early 1860.\textsuperscript{110}
These events produced a certain amount of confusion among the Russians who
undertook a series of measures designed to slow the rate of emigration in the early
summer of 1860, only to reverse the decisions two month later.\textsuperscript{111}

For their part, the Ottomans appear to have been equally confused from a
policy perspective. Clearly, the immigration of pliant Muslims was a positive event
for a government under internal and external stress. At the same time, the
uncontrolled influx of refugees presented considerable economic, political and social
problems, not to mention the dangers of plague and cholera. Despite all of these
developments and stresses, the first order from the Porte directly addressing the
problem of refugees only dated from 1859\textsuperscript{112} and any actual policy stance regarding
the subject of immigration was never explicitly taken. For their part the Porte was
content to adopt the position that the Porte stood as the Protector of Muslims and
therefore would undertake whatever needed to be done to protect and shelter them.

This combination of ambivalent policies by the Ottomans and the equally
ambivalent but distinctly malevolent policy by the Russians produced an explosion of
emigration in the summer of 1860. Pinson, who has worked with Russian sources

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid p.36

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid p.42

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid p.38-42

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid p. 35
relating to the emigration, believes that the catalyst was the emigration of the 46-
50,000 Nogais in early 1860. According to Pinson, it was their transit through the
Crimea and its ports that ignited the fears of the Crimean Tatars. The actual initiation
of this was probably during the latter part of 1859, the delay owing to the
impossibility of crossing the Black Sea during the winter. By April of 1860 the first
great wave of emigration was under way. The Ottoman policy of diverting the
emigrants to Varna, Vidin, Kostence and other Western Black Sea ports quickly
broke down as the mass of refugees swamped all local capacity.

The result of the overloading of the Black Sea ports was that large numbers of
Crimean Tatars were disembarked at Istanbul. Unsurprisingly, the results were
disastrous. With no planning for the care and resettlement of the refugees,
responsibility fell on whoever could provide it. This meant the mosques, relatives and
the government, largely in that order. Destitute families camped out in the courtyards
of mosques and relied on the charity of strangers or the few Tatars who had
previously settled in the region. Government efforts to move refugees out of the city
to the Marmara region as well as the Aegean and southern coast were largely reactive
and small scale. For the five months from April to August, the streets of the city were
clogged with refugees whose only fortune was the summer weather.

To add to the Government’s problems, the wave of Crimean immigrants was
now being joined by another wave of Muslims from the Caucasus. In this case,
Daghestanis, Circassians and others were following the Tatar lead, abandoning their
lands. These first arrivals were for the most part representative of those groups with
the funds and the inclination to move voluntarily. These tended to be drawn from the
middle nobility and often consisted of groups led by the noble or notable, his family and entourage. As there was no explicit Russian pressure on this group, in contrast to the Crimeans and overt emigration might involve the confiscation of their property, a considerable number of these groups came to Ottoman territory under the pretext of performing the Haj to Mecca.\textsuperscript{113}

Overall, the situation by the summer of 1860 in the countryside and in Istanbul was a shambles. Not only was the capital swamped by the destitute placing enormous strains on the government’s ability to cope, the presence of so many refugees living in squalor on the streets and in the mosque courtyards generated a major source of embarrassment for the Ottoman Government both domestically and abroad. For the officials of the Tanzimat, the situation must have been unendurable.\textsuperscript{114} To make matters worse, steps had already been taken to guard against just such an eventuality. The only problem was that by the summer of 1860, these steps were still largely on paper.

To address these needs from an institutional and operating perspective the Porte looked for a solution with the creation of a single purpose charged commission. On January 1 of 1860, a protocol was drafted detailing the needs for and the creation of the Emigrant Commission. On January 4, an additional note of petition was issued announcing the names of the Commission members. Hafiz Paşa was named Chairman

\textsuperscript{113} Ottoman policy regarding high ranking or wealthy Circassians and Daghestanis had for some time been quite accommodating; from as early as the middle of the 19th century, the Ottomans had extended incentives in the form of salaries, homes and lands to certain members of the Circassian elite. For more see below, Ch.3 and Saydam p.96

\textsuperscript{114} This is underscored in the appearance of an article in the Ottoman newspaper \textit{Ceride-i-Havadis} describing the presence of Crimean refugees lining in tents in the courtyards of Sultan Ahmet mosque in central Istanbul.
of the Commission as well as Remzi Efendi, Refik Bey, Gürcü Ismail and Haci Pir Efendi. The choice of the members for the Commission reflected both functional and ethnic considerations. Hafiz Paşa was an esteemed and experienced army commander who had extensive military and administrative experience. He had been governor of Trabzon Province and had extensive first hand knowledge of the region that was to serve as the primary landing site for the waves of immigrants to follow. He was also of Circassian ancestry. This pattern of employing Ottoman officials of Caucasian or Tatar ancestry was to be followed throughout the life of the Commission and reflects both the Ottoman desire to smooth the process of acculturation of the emigrants as well as the overall pervasiveness of Caucasian Ottomans in the military and Civil Service.\footnote{Hafiz Mehmet Paşa was Circassian by birth and attracted early attention as a champion wrestler. Raised within the palace household, Hafiz Paşa rose through the ranks and served in Kurdistan, Egypt, the Balkans and Sivas among other postings before becoming governor in Trabzon in 1854. As head of the Commission he brought considerable prestige as well as extensive experience in regions with substantially mixed populations. See \textit{Sicill-i Osmani} vol.2}

The other principal members of the Commission represented the various branches of government most closely related to the transfer and settlement of the refugees. Remzi Bey, a Chiot, was a member of the Commerce Department, the branch of government that had first been involved with the refugees. Refik, the son of a distinguished Ottoman army family represented the military, which was essential in any process of relocating the refugees as it alone possessed the resources to both move and temporarily house a sizeable number of immigrants. The others, Gürcu
Ismail and Haci Pir Efendis were experts, brought in for their knowledge of the immigrant populations.\textsuperscript{116}

The Commission was provided with staff and a headquarters from property held in the Hamidiye Trust in Istanbul and on the 5\textsuperscript{th} of January, 1860, an irade or official proclamation announced the creation of the Commission.\textsuperscript{117} The duties and purpose of the Commission, as well as the circumstances surrounding its creation, were announced in the semi-official newspapers of the Empire, Ceride-i Havadis and Takvim-i Vekayi. Of particular note in those announcements was the direct reference made to the problems presented in Istanbul by the arrival of Circassian and Nogay emigrants and the need to find them some suitable means of settlement. The situation was described as one that had been developing during the past year and that at present more than ten thousand refugees were currently within the city and that twenty six thousand had passed through recently.\textsuperscript{118}

A further sign of the importance the government attached to the success of the Commission was the increase in salaries offered to those clerks transferring from other departments into the Commission. Aggregate monthly salaries paid the

\textsuperscript{116} Remzi Bey was a Chiot and most probably of Greek origin. He held a number of positions in the Ottoman Government first in the translation bureau and then as an assistant in the Ticaret Nezareti (Trade Ministry) before joining the Commission, most probably having had something to do with the earlier transport and resettlement of the refugees. Refik Mustafa Bey represented the more traditional members of the Ottoman elite. The son of the Alemdar’s lieutenant, Haci Bekir Aga, Refik spent time as a scribe to the head of the Dar-i Şura-yı Askeri, followed by provincial assignments before returning headquarters and joining the Commission. Of the last two, no entries are found in the Sicill although Ismail’s name indicates his Georgian origins.

\textsuperscript{117} MM696 and Saydam p.106.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid
Commission for the 31 new clerks jumped by almost sixty percent from 7,720 kuruş to 12,150 kuruş. Salaries ranged from 700 kuruş for the chief recording scribe Asim Bey to 150 kuruş for the janitor Mehmet Ağa.119 Other members of the Commission staff included accountants, clerks charged with population, clerks recording deaths (estate issues were a major concern), cashiers as well as port and warehouse officials. Still other functions reflected the logistical and political realities accompanying the transit of the refugees. Three positions were assigned to the landing and processing of emigrants (*Duhuliye Memuru*) and two positions were designated to address the problem of poverty and indigence of the new arrivals (*Fukura Pusula Muharrari*). Yet another was charged with the correspondence and billing associated with shipping companies as well as the military for the use of its ships (*Vapur ve Gemi Defterleri Kayıt Memuru*).

In all, these new clerks and the Commission members represented the first concerted efforts to establish a bureaucratic organization dedicated to the task of coordinating resources in order to process and settle the influx of refugees. It was at first an organization created in response to a sudden crisis and one clearly reactive to its circumstances. Over time however the Commission was able to move to a more proactive posture and, despite periodic disruptions brought on by additional inundations of refugees, was able to formulate a clear policy of resettlement and

119 This list can be found in Saydam p.106 and the Maliye's Müdevver Defteri 9072 p.11. An oddity in the list is the entry mentioned above for Mehmet Ağa as janitor for the Commission. Since the title Ağa implies someone of considerable stature it appears odd at first that he should be listed as a janitor or office odd body. In reality he was probably a refugee from the Caucasus or the Crimea hired into a make-work position. This form of direct aid will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter.
socialization. In its start up phase the Commission was administered and organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Trade. By July of 1861 however the Commission had attained enough momentum to be given its independence. This incarnation was to last until November of 1865 when the functions of the Commission were scattered among a series of ministries.\textsuperscript{120}

**Choice of Personnel and Ottoman Aspirations:**

Staffing patterns, as well the choice of the senior members of the Commission provide us with a number of insights or clues regarding the Ottoman approach to both the problem of the immediate resettlement of the émigrés as well as what aspirations the State had for them in the future. While most of the scribes remain all but nameless, a review of the top personnel, appointed to the Commission, allows us the opportunity to deduce Ottoman thinking with regard to some of these policies and intentions. Given the knowledge of the senior staff’s profession background, we can form a fairly clear picture of what professional skills and social qualities might be of best use in a project such ad that assigned to the Commission.\textsuperscript{121} Broadly, these fall

\textsuperscript{120} The successor organization was known as the Muhacirin Idaresi and was assigned only those tasks directly related to the supervising and monitoring the progress of settlement. Issues relating to logistics, transport and indigence were hived off to the gendarmerie (Zaptiye). Other issues such as orphans and personal status claims were referred to the judiciary. Reporting from the Commission flowed both to the Zaptiye Nezareti and the Meclis-i Vala.

\textsuperscript{121} An invaluable source of information regarding the professional and social backgrounds of senior Ottoman official, throughout the history of the empire, is to be found with the Sicil-i Osmani. This multi-volume biographical dictionary gives detailed accounts of the careers of the senior military and civil officials, indexed by name and death dates.
into two categories. The first and most straightforward addresses the question of who would best qualify for the logistically and politically difficult job of settling the refugees among the existing populations in the European and Anatolian provinces. The second has more to do with longer term aspirations and goals. For example, once the refugees were settled, what were the skills needed to socialize and harmonize them within the framework of a larger community? While the Ottoman Government of the mid-nineteenth century was certainly not in the same league as its Western counterparts in terms of state intervention in matters of social welfare and nation building, the government nonetheless did reflect certain desires and sensibilities in its choice of appointments to the top posts in the Commission.

The highest ranking member of the Commission was the Reis or Commission Head or Chairman. In the first period of the Commission as an independent entity the position of Chairman went to Hafiz Paşa. Hafiz Paşa brought great prestige and administrative experience to the Commission. Beyond early military service as a junior or middle ranking official in Kurdistan, Sivas and Belgrade, Hafiz Paşa was subsequently appointed to Governorships of Mosul, Yanya, Edirne as well as Trabzon. Best of all, from the perspective of the new commission, Hafiz Paşa was Circassian by birth. For a individual who was to be charged with the integration of large numbers of non-Turkish speakers into Ottoman lands, it was this combination of active service in frontier provinces, with ethnically mixed populations, coupled with his own Caucasian heritage made Hafiz Paşa a natural choice to head the Commission. As Trabzon was one of the principal ports of entry for the refugees, Hafiz Paşa required little time to reacquaint himself to the region and its opportunities
and constraints. The only problem was his age. As a member of the general staff as early as 1833 when he was appointed administrator of Iskodra, Hafiz Paşa must have been in his mid-sixties by the time he became Commission head in 1860. Hard years of campaigning and service throughout the Empire no doubt took their toll. For this reason, Hafiz Paşa was only to serve until the fall of 1861. In 1862 he became Şeyhülharem and was to die in Medina in 1866.\textsuperscript{122} Beyond the qualities listed above was the deep piety of the man and exemplary service to the Ottoman cause.

Hafiz was replaced by Izzet Paşa who, while the son of a Turkish Pasha, shared a similar background in service with Hafiz. Born before the turn of the century, Izzet was also a member of the new army and served as governor in Hakkari, Van, Kurdistan and Trabulus. As such, he brought considerable understanding of the politics and logistics of the East Anatolian provinces. Perhaps due to his age or merely a preference for the life of the Governor, Izzet served less than a year a Commission Head. Significantly, after leaving the position he returned to the East first in the capacity of Governor of Harput until 1867 and then Sivas until 1879. This is notable as these were two of the main provinces for resettlement, most importantly Sivas.\textsuperscript{123} As we will see in a later chapter, the role of the provincial governors in the process of resettlement was central to the success or failure of the project, as they had the resources of the army at their disposal as well as the ability to control whatever flows of resources, emanating from Istanbul, that were to be administered locally.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Sicill-i Osmani} vol.2 p.557
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid vol.3 p.844
Izzet in turn was succeeded by Vecihi Paşa, again roughly the same age as his predecessors. Born in the Anatolian city of Yozgat, Vecihi Pasha followed a different path to the upper echelons of Ottoman government. His early posts involved service to the Treasury, primarily serving in positions as a fiscal inspector. He rose to the position of Governor, serving in Salonica, Aleppo and Baghdad as well as several tours in the central Anatolian province of Ankara. As was the case of his predecessors, Vecihi brought detailed administrative knowledge of the frontier and Anatolian Provinces with him as well as administrative skill in fiscal matters. This was perhaps useful for the period he served from January 1863 until 17 April of 1864 was marked by increased fiscal demands on the Commission and the government due to the rising influx of refugees.\(^{124}\)

Vecihi in turn was replaced by the Governor of Niş Province, Osman Paşa. Son of a Paşa, Osman worked his way through the Ottoman bureaucracy as clerk to the Council of Ministers and served as administrator in Canik and later as governor of Niş. After leaving the Commission at the time of its dissolution, he assumed the governorship of Konya, another area of heavy resettlement. As a skilled insider within the Ottoman bureaucracy, it was Osman who proposed the structure for the continuation of Commission activities.

This pattern of moving Commission heads to the provinces most affected by the immigrations was one often repeated and made obvious sense insofar as those best acquainted with the problems were kept within those posts most affected. This

---

\(^{124}\) Ibid vol.5 p.1655. Saydam p.110 also notes that due to the sharply increased pace of immigration, Vecihi, among other, received a 50% increase over his starting salary of ten thousand kuruş. (MM 1189)
policy however had its downside. As the senior members of the Commission were only there briefly before being reassigned to positions in the affected provinces, there arose an essential problem of lack of continuity. This problem also existed in the field, particularly so in Anatolia. In a report of February 18, 1864 by the Governor of Amasya Province, Abdulhamid Ziyaeddin Paşa wrote what proved to be the most illuminating and influential report to be written on the Commission and its activities. In particular it detailed the shortcomings of Commission policies in Amasya. After a review of the considerable amount of money expended on the refugees in the province, Ziyaeddin explained the pressing nature of the problems in the region arising from the constant rotation of the military officers assigned to the process of resettlement. In a report both poignant and graphic, Ziyaeddin lamented the dire problems faced by the Circassian refugees who undergo the process of partial resettlement under the watch of a local commander or settlement official. At times these officials are corrupt and abuse the refugees and their position, at others times they are honest and mean well, overseeing the settlement of the refugees, only to have much of the progress undone when the officer’s tour of duty ends and he is reassigned. Once the officer is gone, the refugees are left to fend for themselves as they face a future devoid of social connections, surrounded by bleak and frozen fields as their sub-standard homes fall down about them.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{125} This memo found in MV 22848, portrays not only the problems faced by the Circassians but provides a detailed analysis of the social order and groupings of the immigrants. Its tone is remarkably empathetic and underscores the great concern felt by members of the government in the process of resettling the emigrants in a humane fashion. His report is also scathing with respect to those settlement agents who make only cursory checks of the region and its people before returning to the capital in order to collect praise and rewards \textit{mişafhhamname ve mükafat}:
This problem of “institutional memory”, especially when dealing with regional problems, was to plague both the Commission and its successor organizations. Even as the constant rotation of personnel often aided development in the breadth of knowledge local commanders and administrators, at the same time it denied the regional administrations badly needed continuity in their personnel. This problem was in turn exacerbated by the almost total lack of sufficient funding available from the central government. Ottoman fiscal health in the 19th century, never good, was in increasingly parlous shape as the constant demands of the military in its ongoing police actions in the Balkans and elsewhere relegated the Commission to a third-tier status. As the records of the Commission and other sources show, the relief efforts were often forced to rely on the kindness of strangers, whether they came from the Harem or from Western Sources.  

Despite the general problem of lack of continuity, there were times when transfers of officials did significantly improve the situation. Examples include the

---

“İskan-ı muhacırın hakkında mukaddem ve muahhıran şeref vurud eden talimname ve emirname-i sami ahkamı üzere bunlar her on beş nefer bir hane itibar ve okuz bahasi beş yüz ve tohum için almışığı büyük ve edevat-i çift tedarükü zimnında yüz yirmi guruş ki camaan altı yüz seksen beş büyük guruş ita olunup ve bazı yerlerde haneleri iane-i ahali tarafindan inşa ve bazı mahalde dahi emr-i inşaları ötekine berikine sipariş edilup ve tarla deyu boz ve raç biraz toprak göstərilip bu harde familyala halleine birakılarak geçilmişekte ve bununla iş bitti ve muhacırler yerleşti zanniyla dersaadet’e arz-i hizmet için mufahhimname mazbata takdim kılınmaktaka ve aferin ve tahsınler ve bazıları dahi rutbe ve nişanlar ile mükafat-i seniyyeye mazhar olunmakta olup halbuki bu yolda muhacırlerden mesela bir mahalde elli hane iskan olunmuş ise de çok ileri gidilmeyip fakat ertesi sene muayene olunduktan nsfi bile kalmadığı görülür ve ötekiler ne olmuş deyu sual olunduktan buranın havası uydaydınştan geceinemeyip bir takımı vefat etmiş ve bir takımı dahi mahalları ahere gitmiş olduları cevabı alınır.” MV 22848
This will be discussed later in the context of Ottoman relations with the immigrants and the transformation of identity.

126 For more on aid and relief, see Chapter 4.
promotion and transfer of the Chief Scribe Yaver Efendi to Trabzon in 1863 in order to direct the flow of traffic onward to the Anatolian interior or to the Western Black Sea. Such movements often reflect an ad hoc response to rapidly changing situations, a fact that further emphasizes the strained resources available during this period. Beyond the actual Commission member such as Yaver, there were regional agents, largely drawn from the ranks of the military. They in turn worked with the army in its capacity of logistical support, allocating housing, food and agricultural supplies to the emigrants. For those in the Commission, the actual implementation of transport and settlement fell outside their purview once the refugees arrived in the ports or at the overland borders. This job fell to the military and ultimately devolved to the municipal or local authorities. Instead, the Commission and its agents were charged with oversight of the process and in the development and co-ordination of planning.

Evolution of Commission Goals and Settlement Policy

A major step in the evolution of the Commission, one in part triggered in response to the growing sense of urgency of the refugee situation, was the shift in the direction of refugee flows during the first years, 1860-61. The first sign of a major change in policy came in the first year of the independent Commission’s tenure, when Hafiz Paşa ordered the redirection of emigrants away from the European provinces,

---

127 The extensive role of the army in the mechanics of settlement is underscored by the chart of regional settlement chiefs found in Saydam (p.110). Of the twelve regional settlement executives, all were listed by their military titles, (e.g. Mirliva Abdi-Major General Abdi or Binbaşı Davut-Major Davut). For a table of military, religious and vizierial rankings, see Shaw and Shaw (vol. 2) p.37.
as had formerly been the case, to the Anatolian Sivas-Uzunyayla corridor in 1861.\textsuperscript{128}

Prior to this time, the majority of immigrants, largely Tatar, had been settled in the Dobruca, along the Danube and in Eastern Thrace. At first blush, this shift may appear to have merely conformed with the somewhat ad hoc policies developed over the decades prior to the Crimean War. In reality, the shift was due to a number of far more important considerations. Some were purely logistical. As the major flows of refugees no longer originated in the Crimea but from the Caucasus, there was a natural inclination to land refugees crossing the Black Sea at the ports closest to their ports of embarkation. As Kertch was now the primary transit point, Trabzon and Samsun took on a greater attraction. In the past, Kostence and Tulca had been preferred as they were ports nearer to the main source of emigrants originating in the southern Crimean peninsula.

Another reason for the shift reflected the increased use of steamships as the vehicles of transport. Commission records indicate that both European and Russian

\textsuperscript{128} MM 958, Saydam p.107. This reallocation of the flows of refugees to Sivas-Uzunyayla reflects a range of considerations. Habıçoğlu p.123 notes that the policy for the three years preceding May of 1861 had been one of almost exclusively settling the emigrants in European districts. He estimates a number of 150,000 and notes that with the pickup in the pace of emigration, the Asiatic Black Sea ports of Samsun and Trabzon were brought into greater play. This policy of reorientation was further underscored with the 1863 transfer of Yaver Efendi to Trabzon. This, in turn, was followed with the assignment of Nusret Paşa, a Circassian, to serve as administrator for all immigrant settlement in the European Provinces for those emigrants debarking at Samsun and Trabzon. Lastly, there was the expansion of the settlement duties of Miralay Salih Bey from Konya to encompass Sivas as well. These events underscore the necessity of redirecting the emigrants toward Sivas and other Anatolian districts, brought on not only as a result of the increased difficulties the Ottomans were encountering in the European Provinces, but due to the increased pace of immigration, to such an extent, that the government had little choice but to send emigrants in every possible direction as the ports of Trabzon and Samsun were becoming disaster areas.
companies owning steamers were chartered. In addition, Turkish steam warships were allowed to transport refugees if they removed their guns during transit.\footnote{129} Steamships had the major advantage over sailing ships as they were capable of taking more direct and predictable routes, saving time and could operate under a wider range of conditions. Smaller coast-hugging sailboats, while still used, came to play a stopgap or backup role. Under reasonable conditions, the transit time from Kertch to Trabzon was reduced to a matter of days as opposed to coasters that might take weeks to travel from Kertch to Kostence.

There were also a number of political and economic considerations involved in the redirection of emigrants to Anatolian ports and thence inland. First there was the basic problem created by the sheer volume emigrants. As the pace of those leaving the northern Black Sea region surged, so did the logistical problems of absorbing the new arrivals in the European provinces. Once landed, the refugees were primarily sent overland or up the Danube to the countryside. By early 1861, the Western Black Sea Provinces were beginning to suffer from increased intra-communal frictions brought on by the introduction of refugees. While earlier waves of agrarian, Turkic-speaking Tatars had, for the most part, been successfully settled in relatively under-populated areas, the new arrivals were largely pastoralists and because many did not speak Turkish, often found themselves as odds with both their Muslim and Christian neighbors. Added to this was the ongoing social unrest among the Christian population, as a combination of home grown nationalist movements and

\footnote{129} For ship charters see Karpat \textit{Population} p.69 and Pinson, \textit{Warfare} p.119
external *agents provocateurs* helped create an increasingly hostile environment.\(^{130}\)

For the Ottoman government, considerations of the benefits of settling a loyal Muslim population among an increasingly restive Christian one were offset by the expense of maintaining troops in the region as well as pressure from foreign governments.

Added to this last point was the tacit agreement between the Russians and the Porte that the emigrants, particularly those from the Caucasus with prior military service spent campaigning against the Russians, would be kept at a distance from the frontiers lest they be tempted to resume their attacks.\(^{131}\) While this most directly affected any thoughts of resettlement along the northeastern frontiers in Anatolia, it also had a direct bearing on resettlement in Europe among Orthodox populations that

---

\(^{130}\) This process of rising nationalism in the Balkans has been analyzed in considerable detail, although largely from the perspective of the Christian and European populations. A few studies, such as those of Justin McCarthy have focused on the intra-communal frictions from a perspective more sympathetic to the Muslims. What has been largely ignored however is the role played by foreign powers in the manipulation of nationalist impulses and in the heightening of tensions. The settlement of Tatars and Circassians did add fuel to the growing frictions among Muslims and Christians in the region, especially in Bulgaria. In that case the presence of a substantial number of destitute Circassians served as a major catalyst to the eruption of violence that lead to the Russo-Turkish War of 1876. Retaliation by Bulgarian peasants against Circassian predations in turn drove larger numbers of Circassians to join Başbozuk, or irregular army units, largely responsible for the well-publicized massacres. See Cuthell, *The Road to Batak Köy*, Columbia University, 1999, unpublished M.A. thesis.

\(^{131}\) This last point was somewhat problematic for the Ottomans as well as reflective of the extent to which the balance of power had swung in favor of the Russians. In acceding to Russian demands that settlement not take place in the frontier zones, particularly in the north-eastern Black Sea provinces, the Ottomans were faced with the problem entirely of Russian manufacture. As a means of repopulating the regions in the Caucasus and along the Black Sea with a pliant and Christian population, the Russians had for some time been promoting resettlement of Pontic Greeks in the newly cleared region. These Greeks came from the Trabzon and Sivas districts which were the exact same regions the demanded the Ottomans refrain from resettlement. The Ottomans therefore not only were unable to stem the loss of population in the region but were effectively coerced from taking the most effective steps to remedy the problem. (see Pinson p.121)
were increasingly being used as fuel for the Pan-Slavist formulations of the Russians. This was evident as early as the Crimean War period and was to culminate in the aggressive Russian policy in the Balkans in 1876, which, in turn, help serve as the pretext for War in 1877. Formulated in large part by the Russian Ambassador to the Porte Count Nicholas Ignatiev, this pan-Slavist hostility to the Porte and its Balkan possessions was to serve as the rationale for Russian efforts to wrest control of the region and ultimately evict the Ottomans from the Straits and Istanbul itself. While the events of those years were a decade and a half away, the frictions associated with the resettlements were already in evidence.

The Commission had yet another major consideration in the reformulation of its policy for resettlement of the refugees, one which served as the deciding factor in the choice of regions. This was the problem of the continued instability of the southeastern lands in Anatolia. Centered on the ancient region of Cilicia, the region had long been a zone of political and military contest. In the most recent period, the ancient competition between Anatolian and Egyptian power had taken the form of a contest between the Porte and its former Governor, Muhammad Ali. An Ottoman of Albanian background, Muhammad Ali had been instrumental in the reassertion of Ottoman control in Egypt after the expulsion of Napoleonic French forces. Later, in 1807, he successfully checked a British landing of forces in Alexandria and four years

---

132 The province of Cilicia and its surrounding territory is one of the oldest frontier zones in the world. For centuries, this was the region of the southern frontier for the Hittite Empire. Similarly, this represented a frontier at times for both the Greek and Roman powers as well as the Byzantines who gained the region only to lose it during the early Arab conquests then reclaim and lose the region once again. At other times, it represented the southern boundary for Armenia, taking on the name of “Lesser Armenia”. Even today, the region maintains a culture distinct in many ways from both Anatolia and Istanbul.
later was able to assert control over the fragmented Mamluk society that had long exercised effective control over Egypt. With this consolidation of power came a sweeping overhaul of the Egyptian administration and society, one which found echoes and competition in the Ottoman Tanzimat. This competition ultimately took military form with a resulting stunning victory by Muhammad Ali’s army, which was only checked near the Anatolian city of Konya, largely at the behest of British intervention.

The result of this competition was the renewal of Cilicia’s status as a frontier zone, where neither contestant for control could fully exercise their administrative will. As had been the case throughout its history, local warlords or regional potentates moved in to fill this gap. In "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia"\footnote{See Gould, "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia" in IJMES 1976.}, Andrew Gould discusses the strategic importance the Ottomans attached to the region, noting how it lay astride the main commercial route from Istanbul to Egypt and the Hijaz. Distance and topography added to the logistical problems of control faced by the Ottomans and other would-be conquerors. Cilicia’s considerable distance Istanbul and other centers of power coupled with its mountainous topography rendered it ill-suited to the efficient use of large campaigning armies. This presented the Ottomans with the dilemma of facing a problem that was simultaneously critical to their overall security, yet potentially lethal the solution threatened to drain precious military and economic resources from other regions.

Effective control in the region prior to this period had devolved to a group of Derebeys or Lords of the Valley. For the most part they arose from tribal families,
both Kurdish and Turkmen who had inhabited the region for hundreds of years dating back to the period of the Seljuks and before. By the late 18th century, these families had attained a level of control that served to threaten the Ottomans to an extent where they could no longer afford to ignore them. Beyond controlling the trade routes to the East and South, the Derebeys could now attack and disrupt caravans of pilgrims on their way to Mecca during the Haj, a situation Istanbul could not abide. Gould’s article, as well as an earlier doctoral dissertation, maintains that the solution to the rebellions and their threat to Ottoman governance arrived in the form of a “Reform Division” created for the purpose of suppressing and disbanding the rebels. Gould provides a useful history of the region and its dynastic families, yet he fails to address the question of why the Ottomans succeeded in subduing the tribal leaders in the 1860s whereas previous efforts had failed. For the answer to this question one must

134 Ibid p.486. Gould provides a brief history of the rise and fall of several of these local mini-dynastic families, including the Küçük Ali-oğulları. Dating from the late 18th century, this derebey family was able to exploit the regional power vacuum, taxing villagers and maintaining a small but effective fighting force which allowed their control to continue for generation until the period under consideration. Gould ultimately attributes the success of the Ottomans to the quick application of force administered by the newly constituted “Reform Division”. Interestingly enough, in the case of another conflict with the “Reform Division” the Kozan-oğulları, Gould notes the role played by one Avşar Çerkes Bey (p.496) in tipping the balance in a case of internecine struggle, evidently missing the Circassian origin of this individual as well as his purported relation to the aggressive tribal Avşar clan. While this incident admittedly took place in 1853, a full decade before the major relocation of refugees to the region, it underscores the presence of Caucasian emigrants along the frontier zone and the role they played in resolving conflict and ultimately reordering the social structure.

135 Ibid. p.494. A particularly interesting point raised by Gould in his article is that alliances sometimes formed between Derebeys and the regional Armenian powers. In one case, the local Kozan Oğulları formed a long-standing alliance with the Ajaphian clan, cementing regional control at the expense of Armenians who defied the Catholicos and affiliated themselves with American missionaries in the region.
examine the concurrent demographic changes taking place in Cilicia as well as the lands arcing to the north and east to Sivas and then north-westward to the Black Sea and Samsun, for it was here that the work of the Commission was to exert its greatest impact.

The Changed Bureaucracy: Cultural Dualism and Governance

As it has been noted in the beginning of the chapter, the creation and structure of the Muhacirin Komisyonu reflected a range of social, cultural and political transformations in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19th century. As Carter Finley has noted:

"The drive for governmental reassertion, the transformation in conditions of service, the chronic fiscal-economic crisis, egalitarianism and cultural dualism—these issues played the key roles in shaping the context in which Ottoman civil officialdom developed."\(^{136}\)

This cultural dualism or “bifurcation” as Niyazi Berkes has described the world view of the late Tanzimat officials reflected the competing cultural and educational systems of the traditional Ottoman/Islamic systems of the past and the secular/western notions finding their way into the Empire from Western Europe. By the time of the creation of the Commission, the prebendal vestiges of the early 19th century Ottoman scribal class had virtually disappeared among the administrators in

\(^{136}\) Findley, Ottomon Civil Officialdom, p37.
Istanbul as well as in the provinces.\textsuperscript{137} The routines and salaries of Civil Service administration had displaced that which relied on venalities as the principal means of livelihood.

There was also the concurrent development of new modes of identity expressed in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled or the government and the governed. Hakan Yavuz has noted that this period of the late Tanzimat represented a fundamental shift in the Ottoman Administration’s relationship to the peoples of the Empire. Speaking from the perspective of Kurdish identity Yavuz notes:

“The major reason for the politicization of Kurdish cultural identity is the shift from multi-ethnic, multi-cultural realities of the Ottoman empire to the nation-state model. The politicization of ethnic identity in the Ottoman domain took place in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century when the Ottoman Empire decided to govern rather than simply rule.”\textsuperscript{138}

This transformation from a system of rule to one of government reflected a deeper involvement of the Ottoman ruling class with its subjects. Implicit in this was a denser and more complex connection, one that included an identification and empathy with those who would be governed. This was not merely a connection based on a shared religion, although Sunni Islam was a central component. Nor was it the benign rule of the Ottoman State over the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional Empire of

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid Ch. 2.

\textsuperscript{138} Yavuz, M. Hakan. \textit{Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey}, paper presented at Columbia University, 4/17/2004
the earlier centuries. In this respect, the Rescript of 1856 represented a watershed, a
definitive break from the past. At the same time, the failures of the Porte to co-opt
and defuse the fissiparous forces of nationalism in the Balkans in the decades
immediately preceding the Crimean War as well as the continued hostility of Russia
on the northern flanks of the Empire was only too apparent to Ottoman officials. In a
time where senior Ottoman Ministers and Bureaucrats were almost universally
literate, the affairs of the outside as well as the Empire world were accessible through
newspapers such as Tercuman-i-Ahval, Ceride-i-Havadi and Tasvir-i-Vekayi.\(^{139}\)
News in these papers covered events in the provinces as well as the capital. Progress
reports, or their lack, regarding the Balkans could be found in these papers as well as
foreign papers such as the Levant Herald. The Levant Herald itself could be obtained
either in both English and French and contained the latest in international news
delivered through the telegraph network.\(^{140}\)

---

\(^{139}\) The subjects of literacy and the transformation of Ottoman notions of
administration and rule have been dealt with extensively, most notably by Şerif
Mardin in his *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization
of Turkish Political Ideas*. Mardin, Finley and others trace the role of the early
generation of Ottoman officials in the Foreign Ministry as a catalyst to the
development of a broader world view as well as changing notions of governance. For
the members of the Commission, these events would have served as major influences
during their formative years. The traditional Ottoman notion of *adab* or a worldly
literate culture was increasingly supplanted by what might be called, for lack of a
better term, vocational literacy. While Findley notes that literacy in the Empire in
1800 was perhaps no more than 1 percent (p.52 *Civil Officialdom*), literacy among
those officials in the Commission in 1861 must have effectively been universal.
Military officers of any seniority as well as officials coming up though the Ministries
simply could not have survived the constant flow of orders and memoranda without
reasonable, if not considerable, literacy skills. This of course does not address the
question of penmanship, which for those, who have had the misfortune to encounter
the skills or lack thereof of some of the poorer hands, can be attested to.
In addition to the increased awareness of external threats and internal pressures calling for change in the basis of governance within the Ottoman State, there was the ongoing tension between those competing forces within the Tanzimat bureaucracy; those who championed the rise to power of the “Men of the Pen” and those who sought the return of absolutist power under the Sultan. At the time of the creation of the Commission, the pendulum had swung in favor of the former under the guidance of the Tanzimat reformers, Ali and Fuad Paşas. In time, this was to swing in the opposite direction under the Vizierate of Ahmet Nedim Paşa, which began in September of 1871. The battle turned on the fundamental question of basic identity, being “What should constitute the ideal Ottoman State?” Bound up in differing interpretations were questions concerning the underlying causes for the manifest decline in the Empire? These included debates between those who saw order gone astray from fundamental Islamic law and values and those who saw an ossified society in need of educational reform along Western lines.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{140} The Levant Herald, first published in 1860, was an enormously useful source of information, particularly with respect to commerce. Detailed shipping registers, commodity prices as well as articles on commercial ventures within the Empire were available daily. The Herald also afforded up-to-date information on affairs outside the Empire though telegraphic new services which had been in place in Istanbul since the time of the Crimean War. In addition there were other newspapers available in Istanbul and Izmir, such as the Journal de Smyrne and Journal de Constantinople whose short stories served as a source of entertainment for a number of the young men of the Tanzimat. (see Mardin, p.195.

\textsuperscript{141} This topic lies at the heart of the historiography of the Tanzimat and can be best seen in the language of the original document of the Tanzimat, namely the Rescript of Gülhane in 1839. In that document, the problem of decline in the Empire was directly attributed to the failure of Government to adhere to the basic precepts of law as expressed though the religious law, Shari’a and the more civil/administrative law, kanun. This dual attribution of the cause of decline opened a variety of routes to reform that varied in interpretation from a return to a stricter adherence to the law as encompassed by the Shari’a, one which ultimately revolves around piety and
These tensions between the opposing camps existed throughout the time of the first Commission and indeed were probably to be found within the inner workings of the Commission itself. Exactly how they shaped policy is difficult to determine. The choice of Hafiz Paşa, a man of great experience in the frontier regions of the Empire as well as being known for his piety, may have been a manifestation of a compromise struck among the ministers who chose him for the job. In a similar vein, the succession of elderly Commission head may have reflected additional compromises at the top. On the other hand, the choice of Abdülhamid Ziyaeddin Paşa, clearly reflected a man of the Tanzimat.\textsuperscript{142} His role in the reform of the Commission as well as his evident concern for the plight of the refugees underscores both a willingness to seize the initiative and to critique the system regardless of the political cost. Most of all, his manifest empathy for the refugees’ plight seems to embody the shift, as described by Yavuz, in the Ottoman State’s role from one of rule to one of governing. One wonders whether this activist among the Tanzimat bureaucracy was perceived as too reformist, costing him the opportunity to run the Commission itself in 1864.

Despite these divisions, there was a common apprehension among Ottoman officials of the need to address the dual problems of the general erosion of the Empire as an integral polity on the one hand and the immediate and pressing problem of the influx of refugees on the other. While arresting Ottoman political and economic observance of a single moral code of conduct, to one that turns more on the deterrence of autocratic behavior on the part of the ruler. This last point is essential in any consideration of the nature of Tanzimat reform as the checking of the autocratic power was at the core of the rationale for the rise of an independent Civil Service. For more on this see: IE2 Kanun, Hurewitz, \textit{Diplomacy Rescript of Gülhane} and Abu-Manneh, \textit{The Sultan and the Bureaucracy}.

\textsuperscript{142} See, \textit{Sicill-i Osmani} vol. 5 p. 1716, \textit{Ziyaeddin Abdülhamid Paşa}
decline occupied the Government in an immediate and constant fashion, the
protection or sheltering (dehalet) of dispossessed Muslim refugees cut to the very
heart of the Ottoman State’s legitimacy. The Sultan’s role as Caliph since the time of
Selim I (Yavuz) bound the legitimacy of the House of Osman to the protection of the
Muslim ummah, or community. In a world of increasing nationalism, literacy and
rapid dissemination of information, the Ottoman Bureaucracy was faced with the
dilemma of balancing a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional state and of maintaining the
primacy of rule within an Islamic framework.

This was the world in which the Commission was created. As a mix of old
soldiers and young scribes, the Commission reflected the world of the Ottoman
Bureaucracy at mid-century. As such it represented an elite in transition, with the
older members divided in history and thought from the younger generation by the
advent of the Tanzimat.\footnote{143} For the older generation, there was the tradition of Empire
where their fathers and grandfathers had served as members of a ruling class after an
education within the traditional system whose highest level was exemplified by the
Palace School. While the reversals of the late 18th century were apparent to this

\footnote{143} This intergenerational divide finds a parallel in the 20th century West where the
“establishment” in government, as exemplified by the U.S. Government’s State
Department elite in the 1950s and 1960s came to be supplanted by a younger
generation of WWII veterans during that time. In much the same fashion as in the
Ottoman bureaucracy of the mid 19th century, leadership in the State Department
passed from an aristocratic generation born in the late 19th century, as exemplified by
Averill Harriman, (Yale, former Governor of New York, or John Foster Dulles,
(Princeton, grandson of a former Secretary of State) to Dean Rusk (Davidson College,
N.C.) In much the same way, the Ottoman elite underwent this type of change for as
Mardin notes, “The young men of the 1850’s who became the leaders of the 1870’s
were outsiders to the existing Ottoman “establishment.” This was the result of the
deliberate policy of cutting off the new army from traditionalistic roots.” Mardin,
p.130}
generation, much of their lives had been a continuation of those of many generations before; defense of the frontiers from foreign attack and the suppression of, or negotiation with rebels within the Empire, as well as the perpetuation of the Ottoman/Sunni/Hanafi system of rule.

For the younger generation, the formative aspects of education and the surrounding world were quite different. In addition to the traditional modes of indoctrination into the Ottoman Elite such as the Palace School, there were the Mekteb-i Ulum-i Edebiye and Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye, founded in 1838-39 for the expressed purpose of training civil officials. The very essence of the bureaucracy was changing in its evolution into an Ottoman Civil Service. For the younger generation, the damage to the integrity of the Empire as a result of nationalism in the Balkans and the dominance of non-Muslim interests in the economic sector was all they had known. This changing nature and vision of the bureaucracy may be examined in the following chapters though its policies towards the emigrants in a variety of ways, from the question of co-optation of certain groups to the measures adopted to punish or change the behavior of those who challenged the state in both traditional and non-traditional ways. In the end, hints at the ideal of the State are betrayed by those measures taken to construct it.

---

144 See Findley, Civil Officialdom, Ch.IV.
Chapter 3

Nobles and Peasants:

The Commission and Its Policies of Elite Identification

and Co-optation

This chapter will examine how the Commission looked upon the wide spectrum of emigrants arriving in Ottoman territory and how a series of policies was created to deal with them. It will also examine the extent to which the policies reflected social and economic differentiation on the part of the Government. In the first section it will review Ottoman attitudes toward émigrés in the years before the creation of the Commission and how they came to shape early policies adopted by the Commission. The second section will involve an examination of the initial problems faced by the Commission in 1860 and trace the development of policies affecting the allocation of aid and favors with special attention paid to how these policies serve, in turn, to reflect Ottoman views and aspirations. Lastly, this section will review Ottoman policies designed to employ the émigrés in an effort to resolve regional economic problems as well as to create potential economic benefits.

Earliest Arrivals

As was discussed earlier, the origins of the great influx of refugees from the regions north of the Black Sea dated back a century or more before the creation of the Muhacirin Komisyonu in 1860. This, coupled with much earlier contacts as well as
direct rule over portions of the lands of the north Black Sea region by the Ottomans, left the Government with a detailed and longstanding working knowledge of the origins of the refugees.\textsuperscript{145} This was particularly true regarding members of the region’s elite. In the Crimea, the Giray clan had a centuries-old role in the governance and defense of the functioning of the Empire, so much so that the Girays were the designated successors as Sultans of the Ottoman Empire, should the House of Osman be extinguished. Further to the East, the Circassian and other peoples of the Caucasus had longstanding commercial contacts with Ottoman merchants, who maintained warehouses in the small ports along the coast in order to trade with the residents of the interior. Circassian hides, beeswax, honey as well as guns were exchanged for Ottoman textiles, spices and other finished goods. In another longstanding trade, Circassian boys and girls had long been sent or sold to the Ottomans, especially the Imperial Household. Young men were trained in the Palace School and for the most part entered the military upon completion of their studies. The young women, if they did not become permanent members of the Harem were often married off to members of the Imperial Household. This resulted in a substantial portion of the Ottoman elite being able to trace its origins to the northern Black Sea.

The apparent familiarity with the Circassians belied a real cultural understanding. Socialization within the Ottoman elites’ households and a general

\textsuperscript{145} Extensive contact with the populations north of the Black Sea predated the Ottomans. Byzantine and Mamluk governments were earlier buyers of slaves, and Circassians have played roles in both governments. Contact however was, for the most part, limited to coastal trading and in all cases had little or no direct contact with the tribes of the interior. In much the same way, the Arab raids and conquests had been largely limited to the lands near the coastlines, especially the Caspian. See. Namitok Ch. 4 “De l’Antiquite a Nos Jours.”
admiration for the martial spirit of the mountaineers did not imply a deeper understanding of the clannish and feudal emigrants. The earliest trickle of emigrants from the Caucasus had reflected a class of refugees whose wealth and power caused them to be the first group to be expelled by the Russians. To a large extent, this group had been able to leave their homelands and bring with them a portion of their property, most notably slaves.\textsuperscript{146} The Ottomans had even adopted a policy prior to the Crimean War which called for promises of land as well as monetary rewards for certain members of the Circassian elite to emigrate.\textsuperscript{147} By contrast, the later waves of emigrants, reflecting the poorer peoples of the mountainous regions, suffered from all the attendant problems of rapid forced displacement from their homes and the consequent inability to transfer or carry any of their wealth to the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, they brought with them their clannish ways as well as the mountain traditions of raiding and revenge.

Even further to the South and East, beyond the Circassian Coast, lay the territory that until recently had been under direct Ottoman control. This included the coastal forts of Anapa and Poti and ran along the coast as far as the Rion River with Batum beyond it. In reality control of the region had always been limited to the coastline and a small distance inland. As was the case on the Circassian coastline, Ottoman traders carried on their commerce with the residents of the interior, Abhaz, Ubykh and Chechens as well as Daghestanis. Commercial contact however did little

\textsuperscript{146} The ability of the wealthy, slaveholding families of Western Circassia to bring significant numbers of agricultural slaves with them was to produce considerable friction among the emigrants as well as define the Commission itself as an agent in the suppression of slavery in Ottoman Rumelia and Anatolia. For more see Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{147} Saydam p.98
to prepare the Ottomans for an understanding of the marked differences in their
cultures and ways. This reality was to become apparent in the first months of the
Commission.

The Process of Co-opting the Elites

The first entries of the independent Commission, which begin on July 10,
1861, serve to offer a representative picture of the immediate problems at hand as
well as affording a useful glimpse of their scope. The first five entries into the
incoming registers (defter pl. defterler) read as follows: 1) the forwarding of 413
passports taken from among a group recently arrived in Şumnu, (Shumna) 2) assault
and murder of a number of refugees by Afşar tribesmen in Geçen, 3) a petition for the
granting of Imperial farm property to a Crimean notable, 4) a petition from a
Dagistani to settle in a part of the Üsküdar section of Istanbul, 5) the transport of five
thousand recently arrived Nogai and Circassian refugees in Amasya.\footnote{758/78/1-5}

Simply put, the Commission, at the time of its inception, faced simultaneous
problems of obtaining and maintaining control of the refugees at the frontier,
addressing their immediate needs for housing and provisions and at the same time
trying to prevent civil unrest and havoc in the provinces. To address these problems,
the Commission first sought to gain control of the situation through a policy that first
identified and then tried to co-opt the elite class from among the refugees. To a great
extent, this policy represented a continuation of earlier patterns of settlement both
before and immediately after the Crimean War. In those cases, the majority of emigrants had arrived in medium to large groups whose leadership was drawn from representatives of large and wealthy households. As such, they came from either members of the nobility, senior Muslim clerics or wealthy landholder. In those cases, the Ottomans would go to great pains to provide the group leader’s household, sometimes numbering in the dozens, temporary settlement in Istanbul or another town nearby, in preparation for their settlement on new lands. In cases of extremely large groups, the majority of the group might be sent on to a village while the group’s leader remained in the capital. This was the practice adopted, in particular for Crimean Tatars as well as a few early Circassian groups.

In the case of defter entry number three, the Crimean leader, Seyyid Bey is first identified as coming from the privileged ranks of Crimean Emirs (Kırım muhâcirleri ümerâsından Seyyid Bey). While in this case, there is no tally of the number of refugees in his retinue, it is safe to say that it would have numbered in the dozens if not hundreds as they were petitioning for farm property in several locations. (Emlâk-i humâyûn çifilikâtından Silivri ve Tekfurdağı săhillerinde kânî çend kitâb’în çifilikâtıda)

Seyyid Bey as a Crimean Bey was in a highly privileged position. From the perspective of the Ottomans, the Crimeans, with one exception,149 were at the top of the social ladder. Among those Crimeans, the two most esteemed groups were the ruling class, represented by the Efendis (a title that by this time in Ottoman history

149 The highest honors fell to the Kazan Tatars who though small in number, were accorded high honors and privileges due to their historical prestige as much as their wealth. This subject will be dealt with in greater detail below.
denoted the fact that the individual was literate), Beys, Emirs and Paşas and the religious leaders usually referred to as Hocas. This group, in theory possessing both administrative skills and some basic literacy, was given preferential treatment and allowed to settle either in the Istanbul region or in urban areas in Thrace or Western Anatolia. In addition to housing or farmland, the Commission provided this group with employment and honors. At other times incentives might include employment by the government as was the case for Mustafa Bey, who was hired as administrator of a kaza or district near Varna. (Kirim muhâcîrlerinden Mustafa Bey'in Kostence ve Varna cânîbinde bir kazâ müdürliğinde istihdâmına âdîr)\textsuperscript{150} In doing this the Ottomans were sending a clear signal to the emigrants and the larger community as well, that being the direct transfer of the former Crimean elite to positions of power and prestige within the Empire itself. As Varna and Costanza represented some of the wealthiest regions in the Empire, the appointment was something of a political plum designed to show everyone the largesse of the Ottoman state.

In this vein, the Crimean notable community was also accorded the additional privilege of direct petition to the Commission for additional favors or needs. Those living in the regions surrounding Istanbul are frequently found in the defters as is the case of the Crimean Haci Yusuf Efendi who sent two emissaries to Istanbul to present his petition. From the entry we see an example of the inner workings of the State as well as the favors accorded the Crimean elite. While the vast majority of emigrants were anonymous as far as the Commission was concerned, Haci Yusuf, as an identified group leader, was able to enlist the aide of the local governor (kaymakam)

\textsuperscript{150} 758/78/280
in his effort to present a petition directly to the Commission in Istanbul. (Dersaâdet) It should also be noted here that this process took place at a time when all movement by refugees was strictly controlled.\textsuperscript{151} As such, the petition represented an exercise of considerable political clout and favor. Haci Yusuf Efendi, as both a notable and man of religious piety and stature stemming, in part from his having performed the Haj to Mecca, was clearly someone to be reckoned with. A further nod to the social hierarchy which the Ottomans were catering to is provided in the additional social differentiation provided in the descriptions of Haci Yusuf’s two emissaries, Şeyh Tanzil Efendi and Sari Abdülganî. The former was a man accorded the status of Sheykh, a man of learning and stature whereas his companion is simply listed as “someone named Yellow Abdulganî”. (Kırım muhâcîrilârînden Haci Yusuf Efendi tarafından i’tâ olunan müzekkerede istidâ kilinan Şeyh Tanzil Efendi ve Sari Abdülganî nâm kimesnelerin Dersaâdet’e azîmetleri zmninda Gelibolu kaymakamına emîrnâmê-i sâmî tazîrine dâir)

The Commission both recognized and promoted continuity in the social structure common to both Crimean and Ottoman Societies. This effort here was fairly transparent in its motives; by incorporating the Crimean elite within the Ottoman elite, it was hoped that large groups of Crimean emigrants would follow their leaders’ lead and directives in the process of incorporating them into Ottoman society. In the case of the Crimeans, this was facilitated by the high degree of congruence between Ottoman and Crimean society and language. As first cousins to the Ottomans, the initial hope was that the co-opted elite would naturally solve the relocation problems

\textsuperscript{151} See Chapter 4.
through the reassertion of their prior roles as leaders of Crimean society, thereby
directing the emigrants under their charge to settle and work the land given to them.
While the names and places had changed, the structure, once reasserted, could remain
essentially intact. It is also important to note here that regions targeted for Crimean
settlement by the Commission also reflected a continuation pattern adopted earlier.
This was the policy of locating the Crimean Tatars primarily in the Rumelian
provinces of the Empire such as the Dobruca and along the Danube, as was earlier
described in Marc Pinson’s study. At that time as well, the co-optation of the elite
settled among a newly arrived Tatar population served to smooth the process of
resettlement and realignment.

The existence of a policy of elite identification and co-optation is strongly
suggested by the fact that the Commission kept a “list of names” (*ma‘lümü‘l-esâmi*)
in an effort to identify and recognize the status of the arriving Crimeans.¹⁵² Social
distinctions were also noted in the journal entries not only in the form of titles but
also in the context of any relations of social consequence, residing in the Ottoman
Empire or abroad. The most favored came from the highest echelons of the former
Crimean elite. (A major exception to this was the extended family of the recently
defeated Daghestani leader, Shamyl.) The primacy of the Crimeans stemmed from
their Turkic connection as well as the House of Giray. Shamyl however was a unique
figure. As the greatest hero of the nineteenth century resistance against the Russians,
Shamyl, his family and entourage’s arrival in Ottoman territory, afforded the

¹⁵² 761/78/104 The reference is to a petition from “one of those known notables” sent
by one Habib Aga. “Kırım muhâcîrlerinden Habib Ağâ hâk. bâzi ifâde ve şikâyete dâir
ma‘lümü‘l-esâmi kesânûn arzûhâli gönderildiğine dâir”.

Ottomans the perfect opportunity to demonstrate to the world at large the legitimacy of the Ottoman State as the protector of Muslims and the Faith under the shelter of Islam (Islam-i Pennah) where refuge (dehalet) might be sought.

Shamyl’s surrender in 1859 had broken the back of Caucasian resistance among the Circassians and Daghestanis. In the face of Russian triumph, the Ottoman Empire badly needed to bolster its legitimacy in its role as leader of the Islamic world and as the rallying point for the defense and protection of Islam. While the topic surrounding late Ottoman efforts at self-legitimating, through Pan-Islamic or other formulations is beyond the scope of the present study, the arrival of Shamyl’s family and entourage and the political and propagandistic opportunity it handed the Ottomans, is central to the study of the Commission. Shamyl’s group had an appeal to the refugees that transcended ethnicity of clan. As a mürşid, Shamyl not only represented a battle-tested hero but was considered to have spiritual powers as well. Furthermore, Shamyl had high visibility in the Western, Russian and Ottoman press. He was a living hero who had fought a long campaign against a considerably stronger foe. As such, co-opting Shamyl’s name as well as cultivating his entourage allowed the Government an opportunity to seize the initiative in an effort to embrace Shamyl’s heroics as their own. To a certain extent, the privileged position was extended to other members of the Daghestani elite. However while the Daghestani elite generally ranked high on the list among the refugees, the entourage surrounding

---

153 Shamyl, as a mürşid, was not only a military commander but a spiritual leader as well. Muridism, a spiritual quest for enlightenment, arose from Sufi traditions in Islam. As a Naqshbandi shekyh, Shamyl’s followers (murids) were, in essence both Sufi disciples of Shamyl as well as soldiers within his military organization. For more on this subject see *El2, Murid.*
Shamyl was always reserved a special place over and above other groups, including Nogay and Kazan Tatars, Circassians, Abhaz and others.

With the collapse of Chechen and Daghestani resistance fresh in the minds of those following the recent events in the Caucasus, it was unsurprising that matters relating to the resistance received special attention. For this reason, during the first year of the life of the Commission, special requests for Shamyl’s entourage ranked at the top of the priority list. Leaders from Shamyl’s army were given the special treatment normally accorded only to the Tatar elite; petitions were heard, travel to Istanbul provided as well as housing and incomes. Others who had lost their possessions at the hands of the Russians or those in transit from their homeland were compensated and provided with a means of setting themselves up with the Ottoman realms. The importance attached to the fate of Shamyl and his men was critical and its bearing on Ottoman prestige is underscored in the entries that show the role the Commission played in gathering information concerning Shamyl and his capture. Not only was the Commission concerned with advancing Ottoman legitimacy over the Daghestani refugees, it played the role providing a conduit for information about Shamyl sent to the highest levels of Government.

---

154 Dağıstân muhâcîrlerinden ve Şeyh Şâmil Efendi adamlarından Dersaâdet’e hicret etmiş olan Gânevi Mehmed Efendi’ye Erzurum mâl sandığından müsâfirhânedede yevmiyye 20 gûrûş i’tâsi ve kendisinin oraya i’zâmi istîzânına daîr 758/78/113

155 Dağıstân muhâcîrlerinden Mehmed Efendi Şeyh Şâmil Efendi’nin ademlerinden olup vak’a-i istilâda envâl ve eşyâsi gasb ve garet olunup tehâdest ve kalmadığından müsâfirhânedede yevmiyye verilmekde olan 20 gûrûşun Erzurum sandığından i’tâsi ve vukûbulacak mahûlâtdan kendisine mûnâsib mikdâr maâş tahsisi zîmnînda Erzurum vâlisine emîrînâmê-i sâmî tastirîne ve mukaddemce Mehmed Hân hakkında tastîr olunup battal olan emîrînâmê-i sâmînîn takdîmine daîr 758/78/203
Despite similarities in the treatment of the elite Crimean Tatars and Shamyl’s group, the overall approach of the Commission toward the Daghestanis was quite different. As one of several groups from the Caucasus, the Daghestanis shared no great linguistic affinity with the Ottomans. Beyond this, there was little historical allegiance owed to the Ottoman Sultan. Daghestan had been occupied by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461 and held until 1606, yet this represented a thin veneer of Ottoman authority. The region was in constant contention by the Ottomans, Persians and Russians and as a consequence had maintained a fair degree of autonomy. Only with the Russian campaigns of the late 18th and early 19th centuries had Daghestanis truly come to feel their autonomy threatened. As the struggle against the Russians intensified, a new resistance developed through a series of charismatic leaders, or Murids, who claimed legitimacy through a combination of religious and personal prestige. Shamyl represented the last of a series of Murid leaders and, as noted above, even in defeat carried this combination of religious and political legitimacy.157

These differences led to the adoption of a three-tiered policy of settlement vis a vis the Daghestanis, one drawn exclusively on class. The upper tier was identified through the Ottoman effort to bestow honors on Shamyl’s family and entourage. As noted above, these members were favored with homes and estates parcelled out on an individual basis, as in the case of Ahmet Pasha’s estate in Biga or Ali Askeri in

156 Şeyh Şâmil Efendi’nin esâretden istihlâsi zimminda ol-havâlide ulemâ ve meşavihinin fârisîyyû‘l-ibâre arzuâlî varakasî 758/78/230
157 In many respects the Murid tradition represented a direct challenge to Ottoman authority and an alternative or competing leadership for all Muslims against the Russian menace. See Hamid Algar, Nakshbandiyye in El2
Bursa.\textsuperscript{158} These entries reflect the individual attention paid to the "names" of the retinue of Shamyl or the upper class. Benefits also included salaries as in the case of Shamyl’s uncle or his friends.\textsuperscript{159} The litmus test for any special treatment accorded this group was either direct kinship or having been counted among Shamyl’s closest companions. This was consequently a very small group that possessed a charisma derived solely from the great man himself. Unlike the Giray family and the upper ranks of the Tatar hierarchy, this group derived it status not from its ancestral lineage but from its martial background. To a great extent, the goal of the Ottomans in the settlement of this group was twofold. The first was to capture their fame and heroism against the Russians in order to further Ottoman designs. The second was to settle the group in areas where the Government could keep a close eye on their activities, lest this combative group stir up problems either within Ottoman territory or back in their homeland.

The second tier consisted of those distinguished by their wealth, a distant connection to Shamyl, usually as a former military commander, or through their status as members of the \textit{ulema}. These individuals appear most often in the context of requests to perform the haj or in appointments to religious institutions or schools. A few others however appear in a different context. These were Naqshbandi sheykhs, a group looked upon with considerable skepticism when they first arrived, as they were believed to be potential challengers to Ottoman authority. A number of these leaders

\textsuperscript{158} 758/80/158, 758/79/60

\textsuperscript{159} 758/78/113
were detained and interviewed and subsequently rewarded with salaries and homes.\textsuperscript{160} As with the Tatar elites, the second tier of Daghestani applicants enjoyed the ability to directly appeal to the Commission for a variety of needs ranging from extended stays in Istanbul or specific requests for farmland.\textsuperscript{161} However, the majority of petitions involving this group related to religious matters or salaries for religious leaders and did not correspond with the Tatar requests for lands of aid in agricultural enterprises.

The third tier was comprised of what, for lack of a better term, were the “great unwashed”. As is the case in most large migrations, this group of anonymous individuals comprised the overwhelming majority of the emigrants. Their names are for the most part unrecorded and in many cases, they fall out of the records of the Commission once they were sent in large numbers throughout the Empire. Despite this anonymity however, these waves of Daghestanis and others were differentiated from those of earlier groups of Crimeans and later groups of Circassians or Abhaz and the regions these groups were sent to, did vary based on their origins. At this point however, it is useful to return to the issue of the elites and how their perceived differences in status affected the overall pattern of settlement.

**The Primacy of Kazan and Krim Tatars**

\textsuperscript{160} 758/78/152, 758/78/217

\textsuperscript{161} The case of the Daghestani Abdülkadir Efendi and his petition for certain pasturage in the Trabzon region provides a stark example of the class based nature of the Ottoman settlement process. Against the backdrop of thousands of refugees landing in Trabzon itself, Abdülkadir Efendi was able to occupy the attention of the Commission from 12/27/1861 until 4/14/1862 when the decision was made to grant him the land.
As we have noted, the records of the Commission confirm the most privileged position of the Tatar group among the northern emigrant populations. This is explained in large part by the linguistic similarities found among Ottoman Turkish and Tatar. There was also a high degree of congruence between Ottoman and Tatar Islamic belief and praxis. Both were Sunni and for centuries had upheld the Orthodoxy against Shia heretics as well as neighboring Christian powers. The shared Turkic roots of the two groups helped cement a far deeper relationship than those of the Ottomans and the other emigrants from the Caucasus. The roles played by Kazan as the capital of the Golden Horde and the Crimea as home to the Ottoman suzerain Giray family were of utmost importance to the Ottoman State, highlighting the past greatness of the Turks.

Unlike the Giray Crimea however, the Kazan Tatars had long ceased to be counted as a military power. Since the 16th century and their absorption into a resurgent Russia, the Kazan Tatars had transformed themselves into the commercial and religious elite among Tatars. By the time of the post-Crimean War emigrations, the vast majority of those identified in the Ottoman records as Kazan Tatars were either senior clerics or individuals of considerable wealth. As such they represented a highly valued group, one that could be relied on to augment Ottoman prestige as defenders of the faith as well as a source of capital and business acumen. The value attached to the Kazan elite by the Ottoman government and in turn the Commissions is demonstrated in the level of attention paid to the Kazan contingent during the first

---

162 See W. Barthold, “Kazan”, in EI2
years of the Commission, one which far outweighed those of the other Tatars, who in turn took precedence over non-Tatars.

Again, unlike the other groups identified in the records by background, the Kazan Tatars represent a relatively small group of named individuals of high status. Over half of the entries identify individuals by name and involve individual treatment. Settlement requests were heard and received rapid attention. Housing was provided in the most favorable of locations, namely in Istanbul or the nearby cites of Bursa, Izmit or in Hüdavendigar Province. Kazan religious scholars were highly valued, such as ulema member Mehmed Kerim\(^{163}\) and were the recipients of considerable special attention, from housing in Istanbul to such esoteric needs as funds for the circumcision of a son of one Abdulgafar.\(^{164}\)

For the Kazan émigrés, it appears that the bulk of those who elected to move to the Empire did so in 1280. Unlike their Crimean or Nogay brethren, there appears to be little in the way of Russian pressure on them to emigrate as the overall numbers are small with most of the arrivals identified by their elite status. Furthermore the larger groups appear to be groups of families of 4-5 persons and housing and funds were readily provided in Istanbul and Izmit, indicating an easy absorption into the urban Ottoman settings. Only in one or two cases is the problem of poverty mentioned, and this comes in the case of those settled in Kirmasti who fell on hard times there.\(^{165}\) Those problems that did arise with the Kazan Tatars appear to have

\(^{163}\) (758/78/400)  
\(^{164}\) (761/80/175)  
\(^{165}\) (758/80/ext.11)
stemmed from the refusal of some individuals to accept the housing provided them, presumably as it was of an unacceptable quality or location.  

For the Kazan Tatars, resettlement in the Ottoman Empire was for the most part an easy transition. It also followed a pattern to be found among the elites of the other groups at the time. This was the early resettlement of the elite in the Istanbul region and a ready use of funds and honors to bring the elite rapidly into the Ottoman system. As the first waves in 1278 and 1279 gave way to larger numbers during the years 1280-82, the numbers of elite families allowed to settle in Istanbul was sharply curtailed with secondary cities and towns designated as settlement areas. As the Kazan Tatars represented the crème de la crème, their distribution into the Istanbul-Izmit-Izmir regions reflected this privileged status. As will be demonstrated below, the lower the status of the ethnic group, the greater its distribution throughout the provinces and the greater the distance from Istanbul itself.

For the next group, the Crimean Tatars, there was a similar pattern in their distribution, particularly in relation to Istanbul. As noted earlier, the Crimean émigré experience began considerably earlier and involved both a considerably longer time span as well as a wider socio-economic range of immigrants. As the Russians were by fits and starts engaged in the general expulsion of Muslims from the Crimea, the conditions of emigration were, at times, far more severe and the number of individuals involved far greater. The influx of Crimean refugees represented all classes and economic conditions, ranging from those who were allowed to bring out capital to those forced to flee with nothing more than hand luggage if anything at

166 (761/80/53)
all. Nevertheless, the pattern of Crimean emigration mirrors that exhibited by the Kazan emigrants. In reality, it should be said that the Kazan pattern reflects that of the Crimean, namely the assimilation of the top echelon into the Ottoman elite in conjunction to a wider distribution of the non-elite away from the capital and into the regions of the Empire.

As was noted earlier, during the early stages of the Crimean emigration at the turn of the 19th century, Crimean Tatars were used in an effort to bolster the Ottoman north-west frontier where the Empire faced the Russians. This meant settlement in the Dobruca region as well as along the frontier regions running along the Danube. As the pace of emigration picked up in the years following the Crimean War, the vast majority of Crimeans arriving overland or by boat were shunted away from Istanbul and sent into the Rumelian (European) provinces including the Dobruca, along the Danube, as well as among the Bulgarian countryside, Silivri, Tekfurdağ and in the Maritza Valley. At the time of the creation of the Commission, this basic pattern of settlement was well established and is clearly outlined by the documents.¹⁶⁸

Unlike the Kazan Tatars who represented a rather narrow socio-economic class, the Crimeans reflected a broader social spectrum. For those Crimeans of the upper class, namely the religious, military or commercial elites there were the same

¹⁶⁷ Shaw (vol.2) p. 115, notes the terms of the Immigration Law of 1857 (Muhacirin Kanunnamesi) which stipulated favorable terms for those families arriving with little or no capital. For those with less than 60 gold Merediye, land grants were made from property held by the state (miri) or from abandoned properties (metruk). These grants were accompanied by tax holidays and exemptions from conscription ranging from 6 to 12 years for the Rumelian and Anatolian provinces respectively. For those members of the elite fortunate enough to leave with substantially more of their capital, direct purchase of large tracts of land were available, particularly in Rumelia. For a more detailed analysis of this process see Chapter 4 below.

¹⁶⁸ See the Crimean settlement chart in the Appendix.
privileges, honors and possibility of assimilation within the Istanbul based Ottoman elite given the Kazan Tatars. For those found among the "list of names" this even extended to the restitution of a standard of living for those who had lost their money and positions in the emigration as can be seen in the case of Haci Hafiz Mustafa Efendi. As both a member of the elite and one who had performed the Haj as well as committed the Quran to memory, Haci Hafiz was a man of great prestige and rank, yet somehow someone who had fallen on difficult times. The possibility that a man of such stature in the Crimean and Ottoman community might find himself destitute was unthinkable for a State committed to the protection and sheltering of good Muslims. The Commission’s solution in this case and in many others like his was to furnish him both with housing and a stipend in order to restore his status and to bring him into the mainstream of Ottoman society.\footnote{169}

Other examples of Ottoman largess extended to the Crimean elite included appointments to the military, (761/80/195), the continued pursuit of religious education\footnote{170} and care for widows and orphans, of which more will be discussed below. Members of the topmost stratum reflecting former officers, senior clerics as well as the nobility were immediately given quarters in Istanbul as well as stipends, as in the case of Mehmet Bey who was a member of the Giray dynastic family.\footnote{171}

\footnote{169} \textit{Kırım muhâcîrlerinden Haci Hâfiz Mustafa Efendi’nin zarâret-i hâlinden ve mes’ele-i sâbihkada vukubulan hüsni-i hizmetinden dolayı sâkin olacak bir bâb hâne itâsîyle ma’aş tahsîsine dâir itâ eyledîği arzuâhîn gönderilmesini şâmîl 761/79/66.}

\footnote{170} \textit{Kırım muhâcîrlerinden Ali Efendi’nin bir medrese odası irâsîni müstedî takdîm eyledîği arzuâhîn gönderildiğini şâmîl 761/80/81}

\footnote{171} \textit{Kırım hânedânından Dersâdet’e geleceği istihbâr olunan Mehmed Bey’e bir hâne isticârî ve me’kûlât itâsî istizâmına dâir 758/78/396.}
Away from Istanbul and the major cities, the system of resettlement developed into a two-tiered pattern that was to become the blueprint for later waves of immigrants. The first tier consisted of settlement based on large land grants or sales made to wealthy individuals or individuals of high status such as Seyyid Bey mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. In that case, Seyyid Bey had petitioned the Commission through its agents in the region who, in turn referred it to Istanbul. Once there, it was referred to the Meclis-i Ali-yi Tanzimat (Committee of the Tanzimat) who considered granting him Imperial lands that were currently not under cultivation. The property in question was comprised of a number of farms in Silivri, Büyük Çekmece (Tekfürdağ) as well as pastureland in the Dobruca. Together with a relation or business partner and fellow Crimean from Akmescit, Ibrahim, Seyyid Bey was responsible for a large scale agricultural enterprise. With properties spread out over a hundred or more miles, Seyyid clearly was not concerned with working the land himself but with its administration. Instead, Seyyid and Ibrahim were responsible for the overall restoration of production to the farms in preparation for their resumption of inclusion on the tax roles.

In the case of Seyyid and Ibrahim Beys, it is not clear as to whether or not the farm workers and shepherds were also from the Akmescit region of the Crimea.

172 The initial property described in 758/78/3 lies today in Bulgaria as does the pasture land described in 758/78/109. (Kırmızı muhâcirlerinden ve Akmescid ahâlisinden olup Silivri’de Necâyes nâm çiftlikde iskân olunan Seyyid ve İbrâhîm Beylerin Dobruca ovasında bulunan ağnamlarıyla ol-tarafa gönderilmesi zmnunda emirname-i sâmi tastîrine dâîr) As for the property described in 758/78/107, the farms found in Tekfürdağ lie on the westernmost fringes of modern Istanbul. (Kırmızı muhâcirlerinden Seyyid ve İbrâhîm Beyler 3 hâne 15 nufüs hânelerini inşâsına deîvin şindilik mûsâfîreten Çekmece-i kebir kazâsında ikame edilmesi hk. emîrname-i sâmi tastîrine dâîr)
were simply Crimean refugees who were assigned to lands granted to the pair. In all likelihood, these two were entrepreneurs of a sort who had had the good fortune to arrive with some capital and were able to have access to the local Commission officials. In other cases, where large numbers of immigrants would arrive without significant capital, the process would involve placing the newly arrived group under the aegis of either a spiritual or temporal leader. This reflected a mode of settlement predicated on a completely different set of circumstances. In the former case, the Commission in essence was using the Seyyid and Ibrahim Beys as sub-contractors, assigning them land either through a process of petition and sale or outright grant or through auction.\textsuperscript{173} The Commission would then provide these individuals with the human capital to establish or, in many cases, re-establish agricultural communities. In the latter case, groups with single or at times multiple leaders were assigned land and sent on to establish themselves in the new locations. For the Crimeans and others, these groups reflected communities of individuals who moved en masse from their homes. An example of this is found in the case of Hoca Abdülhalîm Efendi and his party which consisted of 158 individuals from 36 households. Unlike Seyyid and Ibrahim, the Hoca Abdülhalîm party was assigned land in the vicinity of Tekfürdağ and Silivri and was given basic food supplies and transport to the region.\textsuperscript{174} Once in the region, Hoca Abdülhalîm would continue to serve as liaison between the group

\textsuperscript{173} The process of auction for land rents or outright purchase created problems of collusion which the Commission was forced to address. In one case the Commission was able to punish the offenders and seize their profits. (761/81/305) Nevertheless it is likely considerable fortunes were obtained during this period.

\textsuperscript{174} Kırım mühâcîrlerinden ve Hoca Abdülhalîm Efendi takımından 36 hâne 158 nufûs Tekfürdağ'ıla Silivri beyninde iskânlarına ve nân-i azîz verilmesine dâir (758/78/106)
and the Commission either through local agents or the army. Petitions for housing, food or clothing would flow through the Hoca as would any further orders affecting settlement. The social importance and local authority accorded to these individuals was considerable, in large part due to the fact that the Commission was chronically understaffed in its network of field agents, forcing the refugees groups for all practical purposes to fend for themselves, barring major disasters or insurrections.

This form of settlement was to become the template for large numbers of Tatars as well as Circassians and others during the next few years. It reflected the simple expediencies of identifying someone who could serve as a contact as well as someone who carried enough personal prestige to keep the group from falling apart and disbursing throughout the countryside. As those sent to the countryside were almost entirely to be involved in agricultural enterprises, the single most important issue for the Ottomans was the prevention of any additional movement once groups were assigned a particular location. For the Ottomans, the Crimean Tatars represented a relatively easy population to resettle and integrate within Ottoman territories. The uppermost elite enjoyed a longstanding political, social and cultural affinity with the Ottomans and therefore were relatively easy to settle in the capital and other urban centers. The middle tier represented by the Seyyids and Ibrahims were also quick to settle into the countryside and tend to their enterprises and the large numbers of

175 This issue of control was to become the major issue of concern for the Commission as the large-scale waves of immigrants threatened not only to swamp the government's ability to feed and clothe newcomers but to create large scale civil strife as well. In fact the inability of the government to adequately control roving bands of Circassians in Bulgaria in the period immediately prior to the Russo-Turkish War of 1876 was to serve as a catalyst for that war.
village and small town groups with their traditional headmen were largely able to re-establish their agrarian communities within the new territories.

The Crimeans also enjoyed another major advantage not shared with later groups of immigrants. This was the almost total relocation of Crimean groups to either Rumelian or Western Anatolian provinces. The benefits here were better climate, a more advanced infrastructure and better transportation. This was accompanied by a considerably higher degree of control and influence by the Ottoman state, making it easier for the Crimeans to enjoy the benefits of public security and access to the judicial system for the resolution of disputes. The records for the Commission during the years A.H.1278-82 (1861-65) indicate an almost complete settlement of Crimean Tatars within one of two regions; Varna, Silivri, Kaza-i-Erbaa, Mecdiyye and Tekfürdağ in Rumelia and Bursa-Bandırma-Izmir in Anatolia. Less than 5% of the entries indicate settlement in central or eastern Anatolia in areas such as Kayseri of Konya, major centers for later immigrants. Furthermore, it would appear from the records that those groups sent to eastern Anatolia were sent there due to previous bad behavior or resistance to settlement.176

Overall the Crimeans raised few problems for the Commission and served as the model to be followed from the elite to the village headmen. Despite their substantial numbers,177 the resettlement process was relatively seamless, allowing the

176 See the case of the Abdül Celal and Abdül Haci in Chapter 4. Also 758/78/160

177 Ipek in Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri uses both Eren’s and Gözaydın’s figures to derive a total of 140,000 Crimean Tatars arriving in Rumelia from 1854-60 followed by another 230,000 along with Daghestanis and Nogays from 1860-62.
Crimeans to rapidly assimilate across the Ottoman social spectrum. Unfortunately, this was not to be repeated in the case of the following groups.

**Nogay Tatars**

The Nogay Tatars presented the commission with its first major challenges with respect to their assimilation into the Ottoman order. Unlike the Kazan and Crimean Tatars, the Nogays were largely pastoral and organized in clans.\(^{178}\) Claiming as their heritage the elevated status accorded descendants of the Mongol Golden Horde, the Nogays were nonetheless largely illiterate nomads with virtually no agriculture or simple manufactures. The tribes and clans did organize themselves around a loose confederation and maintained a rough feudal order. Within the Nogay community, no group held more status than the Canboyluk confederation of clans. For the Commission, and the Ottoman Government in general, the Nogays presented a major dilemma with regard to the issue of settlement and socialization. This arose from the largely nomadic nature of the Nogay population, as well as its elite, one which claimed the historical status and honors due a great Turkco-Mongol lineage, yet the Ottoman authorities were presented the same problems of control the they, as well as their predecessors the Seljuks, had struggled with for centuries in Eastern Anatolia when confronted with the nomadic Turkmen and Kurdish tribes.

---

\(^{178}\) See I. Vasary, *Noghay* in *EI*. Vasary provides a general sketch of Nogay culture from the times of the Golden Horde and mentions the mass emigration of the 1860s. In it he claims that while most emigrated to Ottoman territory, the majority became disillusioned and returned to their homeland. That this is most probably wrong will be discussed in Chapter 4 on Settlement and Control.
For the most part, the Nogays were latter day refugees with little prior contact with the Ottoman government. The first large-scale emigrations had begun at the time of the outbreak of the Crimean War and continued up to the time of the Commission. During this period (1854-60), it has been estimated that 176,000 Nogay and Kuban Tatars had left their homelands for Ottoman territories.\textsuperscript{179} The majority of these refugees were settled in either central or southern Anatolia. (See Settlement Distribution Charts for Crimean and Nogay Tatars in the Appendix) These last refugees were settled in the Cilician plain and suffered heavy mortality in the heat and malarial climate there, as well as encountering resistance to their settlement there and to the north from Turkmen and Kurdish nomads. Despite claims of their complete extinction, it is more likely that the Nogay of Cilicia merely moved to the Anatolian plateau, leaving the Cilician settlement mostly abandoned.

The next wave of Nogay to emigrate, those who are described by Pinson as helping to trigger the 1860 exodus of Crimean Tatars, also found their way into Anatolia. While Karpat and Pinson believe that they accompanied the Crimeans to the Dobruca, there is little in the way of evidence to suggest that this was the case. Instead, it is likely that smaller groups led by notables were allowed to settle in Rumelia while the mass of refugees was sent on to the same central and southern Anatolian locations as had the earlier groups. From the beginning it was apparent that this would not be an easy exercise. Unlike the Crimean Tatars, the Ottoman Government had little in the way of historical contact with the Nogay. There was no significant Nogay population within Rumelia or Anatolia prior to 1854 which might

\textsuperscript{179} Shaw and Shaw p. 116.
serve as an aid to making the transition to their new surroundings. Those Nogay who had been settled were for the most part removed to distant Anatolia and had resumed their pastoral ways. The Nogay language, while Turkic and therefore somewhat mutually intelligible, was not enough to offset the essentially alien culture they brought to the settled regions of the Empire. The result of this was a rather marked and deliberate managed fragmentation of the Nogays arriving during the years A.H.1278-82 (1861-65). This involved splitting off the uppermost stratum of Nogay society and sending them, along with their families and retainers to the preferred provinces in Rumelia and Anatolia. Those not of the privileged class were sent further east into the more unsettled provinces of Eastern Anatolia. In both cases this proved disastrous.

In the first case, Nogay sensitivity regarding their status in relation to their Crimean brethren immediately flared into open conflict in those regions where they were both settled. Intra-communal skirmishes threatened to destabilize whole regions as Nogays attacked Crimean farms as well as those of Ottoman Turks and Christians. As the Ottomans were aware of the explosive implications of intra-communal violence, the highest priority was assigned to defusing the situation. In a particularly revealing document found in the archives of the Meclis-i Vala, fighting had been occurring in Tulca in 1278 (1860-61) between Crimeans and Nogays and threatened to escalate to dangerous levels. The major source of friction between the two groups was Nogay anger of a perceived lesser status in the eyes of the Ottoman

---

180 MV 25717 also discusses attacks made by "Kazaks" on Christians in Manyas, Karesai in 1283 which most likely are Nogays mistaken for other exotic peoples from the north.
Government. In considering the case the Ministers drew attention to these grievances
and ordered a solution that underscores the non-material nature of the conflict,
namely that both groups leaders would be honored with 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} ranks of the
\textit{Mecdiye}, the standard medal given in recognition for meritorious service to the
Ottoman State. This appears to have produced the desired effect as feathers were
smoothed and no further major outbreaks of this kind appear for Tulca during this
period.\textsuperscript{181}

The Commission’s own records confirm the policy of placating the Nogay
elite’s demands for special treatment. In Köstence, a Nogay emir, Canbulat was able
to petition the Commission to have his former slaves, recently discovered in Rusçuk,
brought back to him.\textsuperscript{182} In another case, another Nogay notable, Haci Bilan Bey who
is described as an Emir of the Tokutmuş tribe, was able to travel with his family from
Bursa and to receive individual attention concerning his request to settle with their
families within Istanbul proper.\textsuperscript{183} Had he not belonged to the ranks of notables, there

\textsuperscript{181} MV 21755.

\textsuperscript{182} Köstence sancağına tâbi Mankalya kazâsında iskân etdirilmiş olan Nogay
muhâcîrleri ümerâsından Canbulât Bey’in köleleri olup Rusçuk’da tavattun etmekde
bulunan çend nefer kesâmin kendisine itâati içi̇n Silistire válisine emîrnâme-i sâmi
tasîrine dâir 758/78/66. This petition is also noteworthy as it demonstrates both the
application of the Commission policy of settling the elite in the more favorable
provinces, in this case Mankalya which was located in Köstence sanjak (now in
Bulgaria) as well as a willingness to take measures to restore slaves and demand their
obedience (itâat). This policy of restoration was to undergo a major transformation
during the next few years and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{183} Nogay muhâcîrlerinden ve Tokutmuş kabîlesi ümerâsından Haci Bilân Bey’in
mutlakası Hâcêhanım ile Burus’a’dan gelip Yeni câmi-i şerîf avlusunda bulunan 10
hânenin Sultan Ahmed câmi-i şerîfine nakillerine ve ba’demâ mezkûr Yeni câmi ve
would have been no chance of settlement there and only a slim chance that the
petition would have been received at all. Still others were given the opportunity to
retrieve relatives from other regions, reclaim property and in some cases travel back
to their homeland, ostensibly to resolve estates.¹⁸⁴

Despite these and other concessions, the Nogay elite’s relationship with the
Commission and the Ottoman Government was one of constant unease and friction.
Nogay leaders were closely monitored and with one or two exceptions, there appear
to be few examples of Nogay leaders taken into military or Palace service.¹⁸⁵ For the
majority of Nogay, the relationship with the Commission was strikingly different
from that experienced by the Crimeans. Apart for those reasons discussed above,
there were several additional reasons for this. One stemmed from the different
circumstances surrounding their emigration. Not only did the mass of Nogays arrive
later and in larger groups, they arrived in a different set of locations. Many of the
Crimeans had traveled overland along the western shores of the Black Sea or had
come to the Western Black Sea ports of Varna, Kostence and Tulca. Still others had

¹⁸⁴ The issue of return was especially sensitive with respect to the Nogay. In addition
to the concerns noted above (see also notes 172, 198), the Nogay presented the
Commission with a major challenge arising from the fact that most were relocated in
the more unstable and often poorly controlled regions of Anatolia and were less
inclined to stay in one place if they were not satisfied with their situation. While there
was a great deal of movement, (See Ch.4 on Control), the situation did ultimately
resolve itself with the great majority of Nogay staying in Anatolia. Nevertheless,
many Nogay did petition to return for a range of reasons, the majority of which were
most probably excuses to flee Ottoman control.

¹⁸⁵ A major exception is the case of Berakay Bey, the leader of a particularly large
contingent of Canboyluk whose courtship with the Commission will be discussed in
Chapter 4.
come to Istanbul and been transshipped to ports in the Marmara or back to the Black Sea. The result was one of a steadier, more manageable flow of refugees, with the occasional exception as in 1860. In addition, the Crimeans were also able to be parceled out among pre-existing communities of other Crimean Tatars. In the case of the Nogay, virtually all had come either to Anatolian Black Sea ports, such as Sinop and Trabzon, with small numbers coming Kōstence to and perhaps, some arriving overland. They also arrived in large blocks making the management of the refugees all but impossible. The result was the wholesale transfer of very large groups of Nogay into Anatolian regions whose capacity to absorb such blocks was extremely limited.

Once in Ottoman lands, they were sent overland, either to Konya, Sivas or the Adana region. An earlier wave, which arrived in Ottoman lands along with the Crimeans during the late 1850s, had been sent on to Adana region. At his time, much of the prized agricultural land of the present time was still largely undeveloped and consisted of great tracts of swamp and brackish marshes. The result was disastrous, with large numbers of the nomadic Nogay dying of malaria or other diseases. Those who did not succumb to the high heat and humidity during the summers months fled inland to the plateau where, despite the hostility of the residents, at least were able to find land better suited to their lifestyles as dry land pastoralists.

As for the 1860s wave, which is amply recorded in the Commission documents and elsewhere, the vast majority also arrived with little or no personal property or capital and virtually no agricultural skills. Unlike the Crimeans, there is for the most part neither a “list of names” for the uppermost elite, nor a series of
names of hocos or tribal leaders for the smaller groups. Instead there are a few leaders mentioned who are leaders of large clans such as the Canboyluk or the Tokutmuş. The smaller groups for the most part remain nameless.

This lack of named contact underscored the dilemma the Commission faced with the majority of the Nogay. Poor and peripatetic, the Nogay represented a potential nightmare with respect to settlement and social control. As fate would have it, the catalyst for realizing this nightmare came with the choice of destinations for a large portion of the refugees. This was the region on the fringes of Ottoman control in Eastern Anatolia. It was the long arc stretching from Samsun through Sivas and then southward to Uzunyayla and then to Adana. It was there that the Ottoman Government contested its authority with those of Kurdish and Turkmen tribes as well as Armenians. It was an area still dominated by pastoralists and one that only recently had returned to Ottoman control in its southern parts. For the Ottomans, this lower stratum of Nogay was merely fodder in a greater plan.

The Mountaineers

The remaining groups of emigrants are often simply referred to as Circassians. In reality they included not just Circassians but Abhaz, Ossetians, Chechens and
Daghestanis. The Daghestanis have already been discussed in the context of the special treatment received by the seemingly vast entourage of the Daghestani leader Shamyl. For those Daghestanis who were not considered to be among the military or religious elites, they were generally relegated by the Commission into the large mass of non-Turkic émigrés. As such, they were largely undifferentiated in Commission records apart from being identified in the most general terms. Groups were identified as Chechen or Abhaz or more indirectly, led by a Berakay or Sami Bey who would be identified as a Circassian or Daghestani. This was probably done not for reasons arising from the ethnicity of the refugees but more from the simple expediency of identifying groups so they might be better monitored as they moved throughout Anatolia.

What really served to differentiate one people from another, as far as the Ottoman efforts to co-opt groups other than the elite was concerned, had more to do with the time and nature of their arrival than anything else. For those who arrived in small groups before the catastrophic wave of 1863-5, there was a more concerted effort on the part of the Commission to address their needs and respond to their petitions. Once the flood began, it is clear from the records that any meaningful effort to differentiate among any but the largest of groups quickly was abandoned.

For those recorded in the Commission defters as arriving in the years 1278 and 1279 (7/1861-6/1863), efforts were made to identify and court the religious and temporal elites, particularly among the true Circassians. The reasons for this stemmed in part from the long standing relations between the Ottoman Court and the region. As noted earlier, Circassian boys and girls had long been sold into Ottoman service
either as Palace servants or soldiers in the case of the boys or as members of the harem in the case of the girls. In addition, Western Circassia was home to large landholders whose estates used large numbers of agricultural slaves. These landholders were among the first to be threatened by the dual Russian threats of annexation and of Alexander II’s abolition of serfdom in 1861. As a result of these threats, and perhaps in anticipation of the day, elite families had been quietly migrating to Ottoman territory since the time of the Crimean War. By and large these families had been settling in the region around Istanbul although others had been settled along with Tatar families in the Rumelian provinces.\textsuperscript{186}

At the same time this process was fundamentally different from that adopted for the Crimean and Kazan Tatars and much more like that adopted for the Nogay Tatars. There was little effort to co-opt the elite in order to socialize the larger groups they arrived with or those that followed. Instead, the elite were courted in order to bring military talent into Ottoman service as well as men of religious standing into the Ottoman religious hierarchy in order to bolster its prestige. As in the Tatar case, for those who had military backgrounds or other high ranking positions in their homelands, there was a rapid process of identification and co-optation. One major difference in the case of many of the mountaineers was that many had not resisted the

\textsuperscript{186} This early and sometimes only partial migration to Ottoman territory is a subject which raises a number of interesting questions. As the Russian Government was eager to remove the local leaderships throughout the Crimea and the Caucasus, it adopted both a carrot and stick approach with regard to inducing emigration. In some cases this involved active cooperation with the Ottomans to allow émigrés to sell their lands, transfer assets and even to have access to the courts in adjudication of disputes. For their part, the Ottomans allowed some of the refugees to return to their homelands to settle claims or retrieve family members. In other cases, honors and titles were transferred or recognized as in the case of military appointments and even for service to the Russian Government. For more on this subject see Chap. 4 below.
Russians but had actually been members of the Russian Army. An example is the
induction of Kaspulan Bey into the Ottoman Army as a Binbaşı (Major) based on his
former service in his homeland.187 The entry in question, as in many other cases,
makes reference to his former commander as well as the protective role of Ottoman
Government. (Zir-i cenâh-i saltanat-i seniyyeye dehâlet arzusuyla Dersaadet’e
gelmis.) As a military officer with the rank of major, Kaspulan enjoyed lateral entry
into the most privileged element of the Empire. As with the case of Shamyl’s
entourage, entry into the Ottoman Army at the officer level constituted immediate
incorporation into the elite, despite having fought on the opposite side.

In general, the process of identifying corresponding elites among the non-
Turkic emigrants was fairly limited in comparison to the Crimean and Kazan Tatars.
Perhaps this was partly due to the poor experience the Commission and the
Government had had with the Nogays. Certainly linguistic barriers did not help nor
did the essentially pastoral lifestyle of the majority of these emigrants. Of equal
import was the complete lack of any sense of allegiance among the non-Turkic
refugees to any group larger than the clan. The notion of any identity based on being
an Ottoman subject was nonexistent. All of these characteristics combined to
fundamentally alter the Commission’s attitudes and policies.

One group among the early Caucasian immigrants that did benefit from the
Commission’s policy of identifying individuals was those chosen to work in the
settlement process. These individuals were drawn from members of the ulema or

---
187 Muhâcirîn-i Çerâkiseden ve Kaspulan Bey müteveffâ Hırâb Bey’in mahdûm olup
ve binbaşılık rütbesini âhrâz edûp zir-i cenâh-i saltanat-i seniyyeye dehâlet arzusuyla
Dersaadet’e gelmiş ve isti ’âfi şâmil müzekkire takdim etmiş olduğuuna dâir
(758/78/245)
other designated leaders, assigned the task of shepherding groups to the designated settlement regions. As was the case with the Tatars, these individuals would serve as the administrative contact for the Commission and the regional governments. Differences however can be discerned between these groups and the Crimeans who preceded them. In many respects they reflect the Commission’s unease toward the refugees as a result of their experience and the problems that befell the Nogays. As outsiders to Ottoman culture and for the most part an agrarian lifestyle, the Caucasian immigrants were closely monitored at this stage, in order to ascertain their progress towards a sedentary existence and general harmony with the surrounding communities. This responsibility to blend into the surrounding community fell squarely on the shoulders of the designated leaders. This can be followed in two concurrent entries involving two named groups; the first was a Circassian group under the direction of Abbas Bey, the second a group of unnamed ethnicity under Haci’s Said and Aslan. 188

Both groups were settled within 150 miles of each other in the vicinity of Kütahya. The first entry involving the standard formula of sending an identified band to their settlement site under the leadership of an identified leader, in this case Abbas Bey. The settlement documents (the initial petition arzuhal and settlement order mazbata) enclosed with the entry also make reference to housing and agricultural

---

188 Çerkes muhacırlarinden ve Abbâs Bey takmından Eskişehir kazasında ikân olunacak muhacırların hâne ve tohumluklarına dâir arzuhal ve mazbatanın tâkdîmini şâmîl (758/78/246) Saruhan’da Güzélhisâr kazasında ikân etdirilen Hoca Saïd ve Aslan’ın 32 hâneden ibâret olan kabilei orannı âb ve havâstyla imitâc edemediklerinden Uzunyayla’ya nakilleri hk. isti lâm-i keyfiyete dâir cevâben livâ-i mezkûre mazbatasî tâkdîmine dâir (758/78/248)
supplies to be allocated to the group.\textsuperscript{189} As the region was fairly densely settled, the settlers were expected to tend their assigned land and to improve the property under the protection of the tax holiday, usually three to five years. Most importantly, the immigrants were expected to stay on their land and to blend in with the surrounding community. In this case, the orders were noted, and nothing more concerning the group appears in the registers. This importance of blending and of staying in place is underscored by the second entry, one that describes the group under two Hocas or village religious leaders. This group, led by Hocas Said and Arslan were initially settled in Saruhan, slightly to the south-east of the first group. The entry report details the failure of the group, consisting of thirty-two households or approximately 150 individuals having been unable to blend in or adapt to their environment (\textit{âb ve havâs\textsuperscript{ı}yla intizâc edemediklerinden}). Whether this reflects the actual climate or a deeper failure to harmonize with their neighbors is unclear in this particular entry, although it is highly probable that the failure did not involve the climate. Moreover, the subsequent observation that the group is to be sent on to Uzunyayla in the east highlights a basic rule to the settlement of both the Nogay and the Caucasian settlers. This was one of a policy of immediate transfer of malcontents or troublemakers to the east. This also applied to those who lacked the skills to farm as well for the eastern provinces afforded more open land, better suited to pastoralists. In the current example the origins of this inability to “blend or harmonize” probably reflected both a failure to successfully settle into an agrarian lifestyle as well as friction with

\textsuperscript{189} There were standard formulae prepared by the Commission for housing, food and farming supplies. At his point the standard allocation was one home per 5 individuals and one team of oxen per two families. In addition, a supply of seeds and agricultural tools were allocated each family.
neighboring communities. The lack of further identification beyond belonging to Hocas Said and Arslan coupled with the choice of the word tribe (kabile) as distinct from band or group (takim) seems to indicate their clannish and perhaps montagnard status.

**Conclusion:**

The Commission’s efforts to identify leadership among the émigrés served a number of purposes. For the true elite, those who comprised the uppermost tier of religious leaders, military officers and those wealthy landholders who had preserved some capital or members of the ruling elite in their native lands, the Ottoman effort as demonstrated through the Commission records shows a program designed to both ease the burden on the Government during the settlement process as well as add to the human capital of the Empire. This was achieved by providing certain individuals access to the Government through petition as well as extending a range of favors ranging from homes and appointments to position of high office to assistance in resolving estates and the care of widows and orphans. In return, those favored were incorporated into the Ottoman State either as soldier, government functionaries or as members of the ulema. Others were agrarian capitalists, charged with the settlement of refugees as well as the expansion of agricultural output in the countryside. All these groups were expected to serve as role models for the greater numbers of refugees of the lower classes.
This co-optation of the top elite also was marked by a strong variation among the arriving groups. For the Crimean and Kazan Tatars, similarities in social orders, cultures and language as well as historical contacts allowed an easy and extensive interaction with not only the elite but with the groups as a whole. The result was a rapid integration of these groups within Ottoman society. This was not the case for the Nogay Tatars and was even less so for the non-Turkic groups. The sole exception to this was the topmost stratum of Daghestanis and one which involved the entourage of the former anti-Russian resistance leader Shamyl. For these largely pastoralist refugees, the co-optation of the elite had less to do with speeding the readjustment of the peasantry to a new life within the Empire than was the case with the Tatars. Instead, these elites were valued for their potential contribution to the Ottoman military or to reinforcing and legitimizing the role of the Ottoman Empire as the protector of all Muslims through the incorporation of religious leaders into the Ottoman ulema. That this was the case was confirmed by the policy of splitting the Nogay and non-Turkic elites from the rest of their countrymen.

This splitting of elites from their people created a new middle tier. This was the group of leaders named as heads of village or tribal groups or bands. Their role was to lead tribal groups to their settlement areas and serve as the contact agents for the Commission. Here the policy is far more erratic. Unlike their Crimean counterparts who oversaw large landholdings and groups in the more accessible provinces of Rumelia and Western Anatolia, this group was largely left to fend for themselves in the less accessible Anatolian provinces. Designed at first to serve as proxies for the settlement agents of the Commission, these leaders often found
themselves working in a vacuum. As the overall demands on the Commission increased with the rising flow of refugees, the ability of its agents to identify and track the refugees began to deteriorate and ultimately almost fell away completely. By 1864, any capacity of the staff to cope with anything other than conducting a massive triage operation was non-existent.

Despite this eventual loss of contact with the middle-tier leaders, efforts to co-opt the upper tier elite continued. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than with three consecutive entries for 1280, on or about March 3, 1864. By that time 10,200 refugees were waiting on the dock in Trabzon. Commission agents had given up on providing anything other than the most cursory enumerations and identifications and were unable to effect any logistical plans for settlement other than to order a general scattering of refugees by threes and fives among villages in Anatolia. In the next entry but one, an emergency disbursement of bread is made to 2300 in Trabzon. At the same time, the intervening entry captures the continued access enjoyed by the upper tier of émigrés, this despite the chaos on the docks in the Black Sea ports. In this entry three homes and provisions are provided Haci Ismail and several others, presumably in Istanbul. Haci Ismail met the requirements for elite status due to his membership among the Kazan refugees as well as his own pious status as one who has performed the Haj while the others were from the Circassian Devlet Efendi’s

---

190 Trabzon’da 10200 nufus muhacir mevcud idağüne üçer beşer hâne kazâlara iskânlarına dâir (758/80/264)

191 Trabzon’a gelen 2300 nufus muhacirine nân-ı azîz itâsma dâir (758/80/266)
group. Even in the greatest time of chaos, the elite had the ear of the scribes in Istanbul.

In contrast to these members of the privileged elites, the wretched and destitute masses on the docks would, for the most part, forever remain anonymous. Away from the bureaucracy and the foreign press found in the capital and its surrounding regions, these refugees would sink into near total anonymity, yet the latter were to effect the more profound change on the future of the Empire and modern Turkey as their odyssey across Anatolia was to create a greater legacy.

---

192 Muhâcirîn-i çerâkiseden Devlet Efendi cemaâati ve Kabartay kabîlesinden Hasan ve Tamük tâfesinden ve Kazân muhâcirlerinden ve Şâbsûh kabîlesinden Hacı İsmail üç hänenin iskoânlarına ve nân tâyîni verilmesine dâir taraf-i müsteşârîye komisyon tezkiresi.
Chapter 4

Settlement, Social Control

and Order

This chapter examines the Commission's approach to the fundamental issues surrounding the resettlement of the refugees. It will examine the goals embraced by the Commission and the criteria adopted in order to bring about successful settlement. Specifically, it will trace the events that led to a policy of dispersing the refugees to the hinterlands, particularly toward the Anatolian provinces as well as the policies adopted to promote social harmony or blending "intizac" among the refugees and the pre-existing communities. It will also examine how those goals and criteria reflected emerging notions held by the Ottoman Government regarding its relations to the general populace, reflecting perhaps not only the political and economic exigencies of events at the time, but also deeper aspirations for what the immigrants and their communities might come to reflect, in turn on Ottoman rule and order.

As has already been discussed in Chapter 3, the guiding principles of the Commission were anchored with the notion that the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan were the guardians and protectors of Islam and of Muslims. The shelter of Islam (Islam-i penah) and the role of the Ottoman Sultan in providing refuge (dehalet) for the émigrés from the north was at once a legitimating and reinvigorating mantle to assume. For the Commission, this role was no doubt a great source of pride and motivation. Funds raised from private sources for the immigrants, both from the
Government officials and as well as Ottoman citizens, bear a resounding testimony to this conviction. At the same time, the agents of the Commission were also faced with an enormous logistical task that rapidly swamped all Ottoman Government efforts to address. If the literature surrounding the history of the Ottoman Civil Service is replete with examples of Ottoman corruption, venality and incompetence, especially from the perspective of contemporary foreign observers, the view that often emerges from examinations of Ottoman governmental undertakings is that they accomplished rather more than their foreign contemporaries believed possible.\(^{193}\) The scale of immigration into Ottoman territory in the post Crimean War era, with its sharp bursts of refugees arriving overland or at the ports, would have overwhelmed any country at the time. While many succumbed to disease and the cold, the vast majority did not, ultimately finding permanent settlement and incorporation into late Ottoman Anatolia and Rumelia. That they did so was due in no small part to the efforts of the Commission with the aid of the army.

How then did the Commission establish policies for the arrival and transfer of hundreds of thousands of immigrants during the years 1861-66? There were no railroads of consequence in either Rumelia or Anatolia. The road system was poor

\(^{193}\) The views presented by foreign observers or negotiators throughout 19th Ottoman history in general are seldom sympathetic to the Civil Service or the Government as a whole. In general, the British have been the most influential in shaping views and these, in turn, have been some of the least sympathetic. Sir Edwin Pears, one of the most influential observers of late 19th century Ottoman society was repelled by what he saw as a culture “honeycombed by corruption” and saw those “philo-Turk” members of the English community as pleasantly deluded. This contemptuous stance carried through the 19th and into the 20th century and finds perhaps its best example in the negotiations between Horace Rumbold and Ismet Inönü at Lausanne in 1923, where Rumbold continued to hold that the ‘oriental mind’ of the Turks was incapable of governing a modern state. In the end İnönü so frustrated Rumbold that he essentially gave in to all of İnönü’s demands.
and the telegraph was only available in the larger centers. At the same time, the prestige of the Ottomans was very much on the line. Visible failure, in the eyes of the Western World, would be quickly spread by the Western Powers to the Muslim World of the Middle East, North Africa and India as another example of the Ottoman "Sick Man of Europe", thereby undercutting any effort to restore legitimacy. The process therefore required political as well as logistical and financial initiatives.

To this end, the policies of the Commission reflect some basic tenets upon which a general policy evolved in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner. First among the rules of operation was the immediate transfer of all immigrants from ports of entry into the countryside unless they were members of the nobility or possessed certain skills.¹⁹⁴ There were several reasons for this; refugees in the major urban centers strained the normal provisioning capacities of the centers, especially Istanbul. Disease was also a major consideration. Cholera, typhus and diphtheria were a constant threat and the recently established quarantine facilities were severely strained. Sending the refugees on to the provinces ran the risk of spreading disease but this was offset by the benefits of reducing the density of refugees among the urban population.¹⁹⁵ Sometimes the ill

---

¹⁹⁴ The identification of those exempted from immediate resettlement in the countryside included not only senior clerics, those with some literacy and the military, but also those who had trade or craft backgrounds.

¹⁹⁵ This was an ongoing dilemma for the Commission. During the first years, the ill were provided with some medicines and aid, but were then quickly sent on. As the quarantine facilities were developed, some semblance of an orderly process was developed. Unfortunately, this order was to be overwhelmed again in 1864, when the wave of refugees arriving at the quarantine stations in Trabzon and Samsun forced immediate orders for a wholesale evacuation.
were sent on with only paltry rations as is witnessed by an entry indicating nothing more than soup to fortify the ill in preparation for their journey to Rumelia.\textsuperscript{196}

Other motives for a quick resending of refugees included problems of crime and general control of refugees wandering through the city. Some of the refugees were given shelter in the courtyards and grounds of the great mosques of the cities such as Istanbul’s Aya Sofia, Sultan Ahmet, Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (758/78/59) while others were given shelter in a number of Hans or trading centers such as the Ibrahim Han (758/79/128), Kiliçhan (758/80/308) and the Atuk Kiliç Han (761/81/21). Despite this, many were simply left to fend for themselves, often resorting to petty thievery. This, in turn produced a public relations debacle for the Government. As the streets filled with destitute refugees, some would wander into the European areas such as Pera or along the Bosphorus. As early as July of 1859, the Levant Herald reported that large numbers of Circassian refugees were observed behind the French Hospital behind Aya Sofia.\textsuperscript{197} By January 4 of 1860, some 18,000 were reported to have arrived in Üsküdar on the Asiatic side of Istanbul on board steamships including the Catherine Green. Shippers were reportedly paid the equivalent of $6 per head to bring those Circassians and Abadzeh who had surrendered on December 18, 1859 as well as others.\textsuperscript{198}

The Ottomans were thus presented with a disaster which all of the world might observe. Had the refugees been sent over the Eastern frontiers, the disaster

\textsuperscript{196} Rumeli’ye sevk olunmak üzere müsâfireten Deraliyeye de bulunan muhâcirînîn hastalarına çorpa i tâsimna istizânma dâir (758/78/67)

\textsuperscript{197} Levant Herald 7/27/1859 p.213

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid 1/4/1860 p.420
would have been well out of sight and thus probably out of mind for the
Westerners. Instead, the thousands of refugees in the Istanbul region served as a
painful reminder of Ottoman weakness which belied the Ottoman claim of refuge to
be afforded Muslims. The only real solution was to clear the capital of all but the
most privileged refugees, sending those already there onward to European or Asian
villages and to sharply curtail any further entry of refugees into the city. Ships
heading to Istanbul with refugees were at first diverted to Varna where the newly
appointed settlement chief Nusret Bey was setting up the first Commission field
offices, largely under the aegis of the army. From there, the refugees were resent to
vacant lands already identified in the Vidin, Edirne and Silistre regions.

Alternatively those refugees, who were on board ships able to avoid diversion
to Varna, were immediately resent to ports to the south such as Izmit, Izmir or as far
onward to Adana where they were similarly debarked and sent inland. In Izmir and
Izmit, the refugees would follow the roads leading inland and onto the Anatolian

---

199 In fact there was a substantial, if poorly documented, number of refugees who
crossed the frontier near the city of Batum, now in modern Georgia. Given the largely
uncontrolled nature of the north-east frontier of Ottoman Anatolia, it is unsurprising
that virtually no reference is made. It is however known that large numbers of
Chechens and Daghestanis made it into the Ottoman Empire from this direction and
that at times there was active co-operation between the Russian Government and the
Ottomans in the regulation of large groups moving across the border near the Black
Sea Coast. An example of this is found with the entry 758/82/65, which details the
negotiated handover of surrendered Chechens under the control of a Russian
Commissar to a Commission official at the border. This was in all probability a large
group and not one of the countless family or tribal groups moving overland and away
from the seacoast in an effort to evade Russian soldiers. Instead, the smaller bands
appear from time to time in reports from Erzerum and Kars and consist mainly of
Chechens and Daghestanis, groups seldom counted in the registers of those landing at
ports.

200 Saydam p.108
plateau, in the direction of Denizli, Konya, Ankara and Eskisehir. From Adana, the refugees were sent inland to Uzunayla, Sivas and Konya.\textsuperscript{201} Through an examination of the first years of the independent Commission’s records, we can observe that the settlement picture took shape along on several distinct patterns. The first was the continued settlement of Crimean Tatars primarily, if not exclusively in the Rumelian provinces. Pre-existing settlements were added to in the regions of Silivri and Tekfürdağ. Other areas such as Edirne and Filibe also continued to attract additional Crimeans as well as notables from the Circassian, Dagestani and Nogay groups.

The second and far more important aspect in the pattern of settlement was the decisive shift away from the Rumelian provinces and towards the Anatolian ones. As table 1 (Anatolian vs. Rumelian Entries) shows, the number of entries listing the location and/or final destination of the refugees shifts decisively to Anatolia. The shift not only is evidenced by the 3:1 ratio of Anatolian to Rumelian destinations, but in the underlying composition of those populations. An example is the group of entries for Varna, the most important port of debarkation in Rumelia during this time. Most of the Varna entries after 1278 involve small groups under named group leaders and the towns in which they are to be settled. The last hint of substantial settlement in the Rumelian regions comes in 1278 with the references to housing and provisions to be

\textsuperscript{201} Beginning with the Crimean War and lasting up to the time of the Commission in 1860, some 200,000 Nogay and Kuban Tatars fled the Russians and were settled in Central and Southern Anatolia. Shaw and Shaw (p.116) place the number, perhaps overly precisely, at 176,700. Many of these Nogay were settled along the banks of the Ceyhan River and suffered high rates of mortality due in large part to the malarial swamps in the region. This perhaps is the source for the generally held view that the later, 1860-66 wave of refugees, suffered high rates of mortality, due to disease. With the exception of the 1864 surge, high rates of mortality do not appear to have been endemic. For entries on Ceyhan transit see 761/78/250 and 758/78/342.
allocated to a portion of the 10,000 families (50,000+ individuals) being settled in the Ziştova region of Vidin and the settlement of 400 families (2000+) of Tatar in Lofca. After this period, the only time Varna entries detail substantial numbers of immigrants is during the flood of 1864 when large numbers of refugees were cleared from the docks of Samsun and Trabzon and resent to Varna and Kostence in a frantic effort to clear the docks and lessen what rapidly became a disaster. In that case, while a substantial number of the refugees sent to Rumelia were subsequently resent to Anatolian ports and moved inland.

202 Ma’a Ziştovi Vidin eyaletine gönderilen 10 bin hâne mukdâri muhâcîrîn için inşâ olunacak hâne ve özkâz ve tohumluklar ve säireleri hk. Vidin valisi săbkı Said Paşa’dan mevrûd telgrâfnâmênin takdimine dâır (758/78/156)

203 Lofça sancağında kâin Niyebolu kazâsında bulunan 400 hâne Kırım muhâcîrînîn hâneleri hk. Lofça kaymakamından mevrûd şükkanîn takdimine dâır (758/78/219)

204 The failure of a number of contemporary observers as well as subsequent historians to note the fact that the Commission used Varna and Köstence as transfer points perhaps accounts, in part, for the over emphasis on the Rumelian provinces as the final destination for a great number of emigrants during this period. In reality, the two towns had the capacity to shelter refugees before they were sent on to Anatolian destinations and were not automatically sent on to the Rumelian sites. By using these ports as a means of alleviating the north Anatolian ports overcrowding, the Commission was doing nothing more than buying itself some time. While the Rumelian infrastructure was far more advanced, and did provide an opportunity to send some large groups to destinations inland, once the pressure was off, the focus on Anatolian settlement resumed in force.

An additional incentive at this time for the general resumption of settlement in Anatolia was the higher cost of settling refugees in Rumelia. Land and animal costs were higher and the incremental benefits of settlement there from an economic view were lower. A report from the Dahiliye (Interior Ministry) of 1864, discusses the strains placed on the Provincial as well as Central (Maliye sandığı) Treasuries, incurred in the settlement of 2800 families or 8000 individuals in Lofça and Ziştova. While the settlers were had almost three years remaining for their tax holidays, expenses incurred in their settlement already approached 15 Yüks, leaving the Government scrambling for ways to find near term offsets to this drain. (D 39470)
In order to bring about this shift in settlement from Rumelian to Anatolian territory, Istanbul, Varna and other western Black Sea ports were downgraded in favor of Samsun, Trabzon and Sinop as well as a group of secondary ports. Quarantine facilities were already available in Samsun and Trabzon as both served as major ports in Black Sea trade. From these cities, refugees were sent either to the countryside in the surrounding area or along the overland roads to Konya, Sivas and the Uzunayla region. Still others were sent eastward to Erzerum, Kars and Harput.

Taken as a whole, the entries describing settlement in Anatolia confirm the efforts of the Commission to redirect the bulk of the new arrivals to Anatolian provinces. At the same time, there was the additional effort to settle different groups by themselves and not to mix them with other immigrants from different regions. A particularly clear example of not only the policy but also of the general anonymity of the Anatolian refugees including a rare group of Crimeans can be found in the entry of 1278 detailing the settlement of the Circassian portion of a large, mixed group. In it, the Circassians have been identified and split off from the larger group containing both Crimean and Nogay Tatars. These two latter groups are clearly from a lower economic stratum and without named leadership. By this stage, those landed in Ottoman realms and not from the upper stratum were shunted away from the capital and primarily sent to Anatolia, in this case, to Sivas. That the Commission report bothers to note the separation of the Circassians from the Tatars underscores the recognition of ethnic differences as well as a general aversion to lump groups
together during settlement. Here, the Circassians were to be sent with the Tatars to the pasturelands of Uzunayla but in all probability would be sent on to villages or pastureland exclusively intended for Circassians.

As mentioned above, after 1278 virtually all entries concerning groups of substantial size belong to those involving Anatolian provinces. The composite picture that emerges from the entries is interesting not only for what it details of the settlement choices and process but for what they reveal in what is not there. There is no evidence that large groups of immigrants were to be settled in the Rumelian territories or along the Western Anatolian coast except in cases of extreme overload as was the case in 1864. Additionally, there is no evidence that the refugees were used to subdue or overwhelm non-Muslim communities either in Rumelia or Anatolia. In fact, the entries provided clear evidence to the contrary, with the Commission paying considerable attention to the legality of immigrants settling on property abandoned by Pontic Greeks who were induced by the Russians to settle in the Caucasus on properties confiscated from Muslims. For the Commission, the settlement of refugees was predicated on intizac, the blending and harmony among the population. When non-Muslim neighbors provided aid and support to the newcomers, the Commission made the same efforts to broadcast this news as it did with aid extended by Muslim groups.

---

205 Amasya sancağına gelmiş olan 5000 bu kadar Nogay ve Kırm ve 400 bu kadar dahi Çerkes muhacirlerinin Uzunayla taraflarında süret-i iskânlarına dair
206 MV 24289
207 See the discussion on Propaganda below.
At the same time the composite entries of the settlement program do provide a clear image of an agenda somewhat less benign than the preservation of property rights or the protection of minority communities. The almost exclusive settlement of large blocks of refugees in Anatolia points to something other than simple necessity and the availability of large tracts of available land. As in earlier population movements in Anatolia and the Ottoman Empire, this relocation bore testimony to political considerations. Much of the eastern portion of Anatolia as well as Cilicia had long been regions whose allegiance to the center was based on alliances struck with local ruling families. In this sense, the region was no different from other parts of the Empire prior to the dawn of the 19th century. With the rule of Mahmud II during the early decades of the century had come the slow transformation of rule to one exerted through the Bureaucracy and the Army. Sivas, Tokat, Erzerum and other provinces were just recently consolidated into the administrative rule of the Ottoman Government in Istanbul. To the south, Cilicia and the region of Uzunyayla were still zones of contest.

Lying to the north and east of the Cilician plain and Adana, Uzunyayla was to take on special meaning as it represented a natural home for those refugees with pastoral backgrounds. Literally meaning "long mountain pasture", Uzunyayla represented a natural home for Circassians, Nogays and other pastoralists. At the same time Uzunyayla represented an ancient zone of contest between the power of the Byzantine or Ottoman capitals and the people of the hinterland. It lies before the mountains of the Taurus, which have long served as a natural barrier against the invasion of the Anatolian heartlands from eastern invaders. Protecting the "Cilician
Gates” has always been crucial to the protection of Anatolia. Once the Byzantines lost them, Anatolia fell, at first to the Arabs and then the Seljuks Turks. For the Ottomans, the importance of this lesson had only recently been painfully relearned with the successful attacks by the Egyptian forces of Mehmet Ali on Konya in the November of 1831 and eventual cession of all of Cilicia to him by Sultan Murad II in 1833.

By 1861, Uzunayla was back under nominal Ottoman control but still largely in the control of Turkish tribes and Kurdish clans. As such, it represented one of the last regions within the Anatolian portions of the Empire that lay outside effective Ottoman control. The greatest problem with this was by then not so much the potential threat to the heartland arising from foreign invasion, but with the threat it posed to the main roads leading from Anatolia to the Levant and the Hijaz beyond. For the Ottoman government, the prospect of the reassertion of effective control by the Istanbul was a highly important one, in strategic, economic and political terms. The refugees represented a potent tool in the advancement of centralized power in the region; they were pliant and apparently loyal exclusively to the Government. Unlike the Kurds and the Avşar Türkmen in the area, who based their allegiances on a series of tribal and clan loyalties, and whose economic focus was to a great extent locally determined, the ultimate allegiance of the refugees settled in the region would now lie with the Sultan and Ottoman State as the result of the protection and generosity extended to the refugees. Or so it was hoped for and believed by those working for the Ottoman government.

By relocating the refugees into the frontier of Uzunayla, as well as the other contested regions of Sivas, the Ottoman government took a gamble on the ability of
the immigrants to change the regional demographics; in doing so reorienting loyalties from clan to State. The initial result of this policy was near complete disaster. In the period immediately preceding the time of the Commission, refugees had been sent in small groups to the region, with little in the way of supplies and government protection. By the time of the first Commission entries of early 1278, immigrants to the region were already in conflict with both Kurds and Avşar. This is underscored by the second entry in the journals details the unfortunate immigrants who were attacked with three murdered and six wounded by Avşar while collecting firewood in Geçen who then stole their vehicles.\textsuperscript{208} As more refugees converged on the region either through the northern overland routes from Trabzon and Samsun or from the south via the Ceyhan River\textsuperscript{209}, the level of friction between the newcomers and the Kurdish, Turkmen and Armenian populations reached a boiling point. In a report dated December 10, 1861, Hafiz Pasha reported escalating frictions between the emigrants and the Armenian population.\textsuperscript{210} This report was quickly followed by others detailing increased friction between Nogay and Kabarti emigrants and the Turkmen and Kurds.

\textsuperscript{208} Geçende Ağaç kat ıycın dağa giden muhâcîrlerin Afsâr eşkîyası men’ ile üçünü telef ve altını Pakreleyüp ve arabalarını zabit etmiş oldukları hakkında mahallinden vürûd eden telgrafınamenin takdimine dâir (758/78/2) “In Geçen, emigrants going to the mountains in order to cut wood were set upon by Avşar bandits who killed three and wounded three (chopped up) and stole their cart.” This telegraph report makes particular mention that the assailants are Afsâr eşkîyâşı, a term which carries the connotation of “outlaw” and as such a group requiring not just their capture but also having them brought under the control of Ottoman law.

\textsuperscript{209} See 758/78/342 and 761/78/250 provide a glimpse of the continued transport along the Ceyhan, discussing the need for more boats (kayiks) to shuttle the immigrants.

\textsuperscript{210} 758/78/225
in the entire region. Fighting erupted in Niğde, Kirşehir and Malye with members of the Rışvan tribe of Kurds and the Nogays.

With the pace of relocation picking up, friction with locals and among the refugees themselves rapidly escalated. Most refugees coming across the Black Sea at this stage were entering through Samsun. Most of those arriving during the winter were sent to the immediate regions of Kastamonu and Canik to wait until the spring. Once spring arrived, these and new arrivals were sent primarily to Sivas, Ankara and Konya although others were sent to Kangiri, Harput, Erzerum and Urfa. Once there, the military would oversee the settlement process which followed one of the following patterns. 1) Refugees would be assigned grazing lands for the summer as well as simple village quarters or materials to build basic shelters for the winter. This was most frequent in the case of open lands such as Uzunayla. 2) Refugees would be assigned vacant land and homes according to local availability. This was the case in regions such as the Black Sea coast and the immediate interior where Greek or other populations had abandoned property. 211 3) Settlement among communities of refugees from previous years. 4) Direct settlement among existing Turkish villagers.

---

211 This issue of settlement on lands abandoned by non-Muslims was one of the most sensitive issues faced by the Commission. Not only did it involve the thorny issue of religious bias and the pressure from the Western Powers to adhere to the declared principles of the Tanzimat where protection was to be granted equally under the law regardless of creed; it also involved basic concerns with property rights and their protection. The efforts at following due process is evident in the following entry in which non-Muslims, in this case Greeks have abandoned the region and traveled eastward to Russia, raising the question for Yaver whether the homes and lands may now be used to settle refugees: Sivas ve Köçgiri sancaklarında kat’-i alâka ile câniib-i şarâka(glmış olan kurâ’-i ma’lûme ahâli-i gayr-i müsliminin terk etmiş oldukları hâne ve arâzilerinin mîkdâr ve keyfiyâtını mutazammı cevâben Yâver Efendi tarafından gelen âşıkâmın takdimine dâir taraf-i müsteşârîye (758/81/164).
making use of whatever spare facilities were available. These last two options placed
the burden of settlement directly on the local communities, requiring great patience
and charity on the part of the locals for the refugees.

Unsurprisingly this Ottoman "Thousand Points of Light" program quickly ran
into difficulties. Not only were marauding bands of Ayşar, Rışvan and Kurds
attacking refugee settlements but locals in Adana, Amasya and elsewhere were
reported to be directly interfering with settlement. 212 Other problems included whole
tribes resisting settlement and increased bickering among groups of refugees
themselves. The upshot of this increasingly chaotic situation was a rapid and general
disaffection among the refugees. This in turn led to attempts by a substantial number
of refugees to flee their settlements and return to their homelands. Some were able to
flee over substantial distances; one man settled in Adana was only discovered on the
docks of Trabzon. 213 Once again, the Commission and the Ottoman Government were
faced with potential domestic chaos and foreign embarrassments.

In an effort to reestablish some control over the refugees within Ottoman
territory, the Commission and the Army had a number of tools available to them. The
first was the confiscation of internal and external travel documents or permissions.
This appears to have been most effective for the wealthier refugees and those arriving

212 761/78/91 and 761/78/190
213 761/78/101 The question of the total number of emigrants who actually fled to
their native lands is difficult to ascertain. While the assertion that most Nogays
returned to Russia is clearly wrong, there was some return flow northward. However,
there are no reported cases that indicate any substantial flow back to Russia that
appear in the Commission records of this period. Additionally, any return by sea
would have involved considerable expense, something all but the wealthiest would
not have been able to afford.
by ship. Without these, it was very difficult to return for whatever reason the refugees might have had in mind. Entries concerning the collection of passports detail both the mass collection of passports in the countryside in an effort to limit the return options of the emigrants to a cat and mouse game played by the wealthier and more powerful members of the Tatar, Circassian and Daghestani populations. In these cases, the Government was forced to examine the sincerity of requests for documents needed to clear Ottoman and Russian customs. The most commonly used grounds for return was the need to resolve estates or to sell property in the newly consolidated Russian territories. Others claimed the need to attend funerals or to bring spouses and families. In order to resolve these problems, the Commission and the Russian government worked together at times, in an effort to ease the total flows while at the same time making it possible, to a certain extent, for those who wanted to liquidate holdings in their former homelands to do so. In 1278 this process of effecting a smooth transition seemed a distinct possibility. Not only were the Russians working to smooth the flows of refugees, they also seem to at least have been responsive to

\[214\] Larger groups did apply to return but with no recorded cases of success as in the case of a large group of Kanbulat Circassians in Samsun: *Samsun iskelesinde bulunan Kânbülät kabilesinin vatan-ı aslîyelerine avdet eskîr-ı fasidesinde bulunduklarına ve istîzân-ı keyfiyete dâir* (758/78/68)

\[215\] 758/78/260 details the collection of 1622 passports from emigrants in the countryside, which may represent a group of close to nine thousand individuals in the likely event that only heads of households were issued passports by the Russians and that the average household size at this stage in the immigration was five. 758/78/199 details another 2041 implying over ten thousand.
Ottoman efforts to seek compensation for thefts suffered by the refugees on the Kertch piers.\textsuperscript{216}

The apparent cooperation between the Russians and Ottomans was to wax and wane during the period in question and was one that clearly improved during those times when the Russians were less eager to expel all Muslims under any pretext. The more cooperative periods did not however lessen Ottoman concerns for the issue of refugees returning to their homelands other than for temporary reasons. Those refugees who were able somehow to trick the Commission into providing documents for return were quickly labeled as renegades and “perfidious”. In one particularly angry entry one Seyyid Ali is labeled “treacherous” in his “duplicitous” efforts to return to his native land.\textsuperscript{217} While there is no evidence of any Russian efforts to discredit Ottoman settlement policies, any hint of failure elicited a vigorous and often angry reaction by the Commission and the Government.

Control over passports was certainly effective for those refugees moving through Ottoman ports. It is safe to assume that, given the Ottoman sensitivity to refugees returning to their homelands, very few among those once passed through Ottoman ports and passport controls, did in fact return. This however is not the case for those traveling overland into north-eastern Anatolia. As noted above this group must remain, in large part, a mystery as neither were there Ottoman controls in place

\textsuperscript{216} 758/78/137, 138 and 139 consecutively deal with a) reasons presented by emigrants for return, b) Russian reports regarding refugees in transit and c) the request for losses suffered by emigrants waiting to embark at Kertch.

\textsuperscript{217} Seyyid Ali muhâcirini ifsâddan hâlî olmadığında vatan-i aslisine gideceği ilânında bulunmakla hemen gitmesi taallül eder ise bir taraf def'i husûsuna dâir (758/78/398)
beyond the coastal regions, nor were the arriving refugees likely to have had prior contact with Russian authorities.\textsuperscript{218}

A second method for dealing with the problem of refugees looking to return was the identification of the leaders of those groups thinking of return. Once this was done, a long process of carrot and stick was used. A fine example of this game is found in the case of a group, settled in Silivri and led by one Arslan Bey. Despite having a farm granted to him, the Commission suspects the wily Arslan Bey and his group of trickery and debates the necessary steps needed to placate him.\textsuperscript{219} In the end, the group would either see the Commission’s view, perhaps gaining more in a bargaining process or face punitive actions such as being sent to Anatolia or facing arrest. For many groups the thoughts of return, \textit{avdet efkari}, reflected general homesickness or disaffection with the homes and lands provided. The solution was often simply more or better land and some extra funds with which to work it. Unfortunately for Arslan Bey, an easy solution was not in the offing. Instead, the Commission found him to be someone with whom cooperation was not an option. He

\textsuperscript{218} This is not to say that there were no recorded groups arriving by land who wished to return. A group led by Kelmit Bey and settled on pasture land in Amasya received a stop movement order as it appeared they were about to start back overland to the east. (758/79/70)

\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Avdet efkâriyla Edirne’den Dersaadet’e gelmiş olan Arslan Bey takımlarının Silivri’de çifliklerinin birisinde tevakkuf edeceklerine dâir söz vermişler iken bu sözleri dahi desîse olarak vatan-ı astilerine avdete müheyyâ olduklarına dâir} (758/78/369)
was removed from his group along with some other trouble makers and sent on to İzmir and then perhaps inland.\(^{220}\)

In some cases the Commission had to bow to the will of individuals who commanded groups of both great size and considerable loyalty. This was the case for the Nogay leader Berakay Bey. As a friend of Kavâs Hüseyin Ağa, Berakay Bey enjoyed considerable prestige within the world of the emigrants. He and his group were settled in the attractive region of İzmit, not far from Istanbul. Within a short time, Berakay Bey and his brother Hacı Timur became dissatisfied with their new homes and began to think of return to their homeland, ostensibly in order to settle their parents’ estates. Clearly the Commission agents did not accept Berakay’s explanation and using the pretext of failure to adapt to their new surroundings sent them on to Amasya in north central Anatolia.\(^{221}\)

The story however did not end with the relocation of Berakay. As the leader of a large group, (kabîle or tribe) as well as an individual of evident means, Berakay was in a position to engage the Commission in a continued process of negotiation. The Commission continued to monitor his activities (758/79/143) and opened secret negotiations with him in an effort to gain his loyalty. To this end he was offered a

\(^{220}\) Azîzâbâd karyesinde meskân Çerkes muhâcîrlerinin tahrîk eden Arslan ve havadârlarının muhâcîrlerden tefrikiyle başka bir mahalde iskânları istizâmına dâir İzmir‘in tahrîrâtı takdimini şâmi (758/79/79)

\(^{221}\) Nogay muhâcîrlerinden İzmîd‘de ikamet ederek vatan-ı astîlerine avdet efkârında olan Berakay ve Hacı Timur beylerin peder ve vâîdelerinden müntakîl envâl-i metrâkesinin istihsâline dâir hemşireleri Zeliha hatunun mûzekkeresi takdimini şâmil (758/79/93)

Nogay muhâcîrlerinden İzmîd‘de bulunup havâsîyla imizâc edemeyen Berakay ve Bekîr Beylerin Çorum ve Amasya‘da iskânları zınında emîrname tastirine dâir (758/79/94)
salary and awards. By 1280 the records indicate that Berakay Bey had been sent on from Amasya to Samsun where he was reported to continue in his desire to return home despite the gift of a home as well as tents and provisions. In the face of special treatment, Berakay Bey continued to hold his ground. The extent of the Commission’s success in these secret negotiations is unclear for the next and last entry concerning Berakay Bey found him in Samsun, on the Black Sea coast. There in late 1280, despite the growing numbers of refugees in Samsun, Berakay Bey was still reported to be trying to return to his homeland. The seriousness of the matter and the Commission’s sensitivity to the issue was again underscored in the sealed nature of the documents. The final outcome of these negotiations is not spelled out. What is clear however is the extent to which the Commission was willing to carry on negotiations, first overt and then in secret, to win the public allegiance of this influential Nogay leader. While neither side may have succeeded entirely, the Commission was at least able to keep Berakay Bey quiescent during the difficult initial transition period, allowing the military to undertake settlement.

---

222 Nogay muhâcirlerinden Berakay Bey takımının süret-i iskanlari ve kendisinin taht-i muhâfazaya alınması ve yâhud reng verilmemek hâliyle terki mümâileyhi Berakay Bey’e nişân ve yâhud maâş verilmesinin komisyonda mahremâne müzâkere olunduğuna ve tefferruâtına dâir (758/79/232)

223 Samsun’a izâm kilinan Berakay Bey avdet efkarında bulunduğundan şimdiye kadar verilen yevmiye ve hâne bahâsının istirâdâsına ve yâhud mîrî çayırının iskârı için Canik mutasarrîfîna emirnâme-i sâmi tasvirine dâir (758/80/140)

224 Samsun tarafında bulunan muhâcirinin nakillere içün vapurun lüzümü ve Konya tarafindan geçen sene Rusya’ye gitmek emeliyle oralara gelmiş olan Nogaylarım iâde olunacağı ve Berakay Bey’in Rusya’ya hicret edüp etmeyeceği hk. verdiği memhûr varakası ve bazı ifâdeyi şâmil (758/80/271)
The third alternative involved considerably less finesse on the part of the Commission. This was the physical arrest and detention of either individuals or whole groups threatening to return of simply fleeing difficult conditions. At times entire groups were detained by the army in the provinces as in the case of Mankat Nogay fleeing Harput in 1279 and were stopped by the army as they headed to Erzerum. (758/79/86) The Army’s ability to do this was aided by the general policy of confiscating weapons from all immigrants upon their arrival in Ottoman territory. This was no small problem as some groups, particularly the Daghestanis, arrived in Ottoman lands armed to the teeth.\textsuperscript{225} One Daghestani, Haci Begayia Aga arrived with 100 guns, and two others, Hacis Omer and Zazi had 55 guns between them when they arrived at Ottoman customs. (758/78/332 and 79/87) That the removal of guns from the immigrant population was a highly sensitive priority is underscored by the extent to which seemingly minor incidents found their way into the records. One example of this is an incident where a Circassian hired into the army fired his pistol in Sinop. The full story remains a mystery, yet the fact that it came to the attention of the Commission in Istanbul underscores the sensitivity of firearms and any uncontrolled use.

\textsuperscript{225} Both the Circassians and the Dagestanis had a long history in arms manufacture. Prior to their emigration to the Ottoman Empire, the Circassians had been famous for the quality of their weapons, including firearms. Even the Russians acknowledged the quality of Circassian guns and had been known to purchase them during the times of the conquest. While the Ottomans took great pains to disarm the immigrants, they did support gunsmiths among the refugees. The following entry details the aid given to Ilyas Efendi, a Dagestani who was settled in Trabzon, in his manufacture of rifles and pistols, presumably for sale to the military. “\textit{Dağıstân muhâcirlerinden mukaddemâ Trabzon'a gelmiş olan Ilyâs Efendi’nin tüfeng ve tabanca ımdâli için içrâ'-yi san’at etmesi ve sermaye olmak üzere duyândan birkaç bin gurûş ihsânına dâîr}” (758/79/41)
For those who further resisted Ottoman orders to cease movement, the final outcome was arrest and imprisonment of the group leaders. Standing orders were left in place for those known to be likely to move as well as those who had decamped and been found in other regions. In the case of the eastern provinces, these orders began to apply not only to the refugees but to nomadic tribes in the area as well as in the case of the Tacirlu where orders were sent in advance calling for punishment should they leave Göksün in the coming year.\footnote{“Tâcîrîlî aşiřeti bu sene-i mübârekède dahi Göksun nâhiyesi hâvâlisine çıkarlar ise sâbîkî veçîle isâl-i dest-i hasâra cesâret edecekleri” (758/79/266) These Turkmen tribesmen had been among those groups of nomads who the Ottomans had long wished to settle and thereby extend control over. Gould (p. 490 in \textit{Derebey's of Cilicia}) notes that as early as 1852, the Ottomans had been able to collect taxes from the nomads as well as draft some into military service by intercepting them during their annual migrations.} Other cases involved the detention or banishment of leaders, fines and in extreme cases, breaking up the group and sending the troublemakers off to distant locations. This last choice seems to have been effective albeit infrequently used. Once the troublemakers were sent away the rebellious groups seem to have lost much of the will to continue to resist. Instead, once in the countryside, most of the refugees were ultimately forced to resign themselves to their lot in their new homeland.

The dire conditions confronting the refugees in the central and eastern portions of Anatolia were captured in considerable detail by the Governor \textit{(mutasarraf)} of Amasya, Ziyaeddin Abdul Hamid Pasha. In his astonishingly frank and empathetic memo to the Meclis-i Vala, Ziyaeddin chronicled the often bleak and desperate situations faced by the refugees in Anatolia. In particular, he described the three classes of Circassian refugees who were flooding the region in 1864. The first
group consisted of those Circassians who had arrived in past years and had been successfully settled. The second were those Circassians who had arrived during the past year and still had not been successfully settled. The third and most ominous group was comprised of those already enroute, facing real disaster. After detailing the different social and economic challenges to be faced by the three groups, Ziyaeddin turned his attention to the essential breakdown that was haunting the settlement efforts. Foremost among these was the lack of continuity in contact experienced by the refugees with the settlement agents. This, he noted, arose from the fact that once the junior officer assigned to a given area was brought up to speed regarding the problems and need within a given region, he invariably was transferred to another district. The net effect was a near constant disconnect between the settlement agents and those they were assigned to aid. This in turn resulted in a dangerous gap between the real and immediate needs of the refugees and the ability of the agents to monitor these needs and obtain solutions.

The result of all this was a crisis of terrible proportions but one largely away from the eyes and ears of the government. Homes of inferior quality were built for the refugees only to collapse with the first rains of winter, leaving the half-naked refugees looking out at a mud-filled landscape, huddled with their starving wives and children only to wonder how the Lord had abandoned them to this wilderness.

This lack of continuity among the settlement agents had the most severe impact on those emigrants settled in the countryside in newly designated farming communities. Here the gap between Ottoman planners’ aspirations (See settlement maps 1 and 2) and reality was at its widest. This failure however was not endemic to
the settlement program. At this point it is useful to briefly review the basic patterns employed by the Commission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Settlement</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-Large scale agricultural settlement under contract</td>
<td>Rumelia</td>
<td>Usually involve lease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to named individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td>agreements over 3-5 years with capital support provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-Large scale agricultural/no names to individual tenants</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Anatolia</td>
<td>Individual ownership granted after 1862. Small capital support and housing provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III-Small scale agricultural</td>
<td>Rumelia and Anatolia</td>
<td>Settlement is made among pre-existing communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV-Large scale pastoral with identified individuals</td>
<td>Rumelia Principally in the Dobruca region</td>
<td>Usually granted in conjunction with other agricultural settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-Large scale pastoral to groups</td>
<td>Anatolia-Uzunayla, Konya, Erzerum, Kars, Diyarbakir</td>
<td>Designated regions granted by Provincial governments to clans or smaller family groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI-Small scale pastoral | Canik, Trabzon and others | Granted individuals through petition
VII-Urban | Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne etc. | Provided for notables and those with special skills

The large scale transfer of refugees into the countryside was the most expedient yet plague-ridden method of resettlement used by the Commission. Urban and small town peace was achieved at the cost of considerable misery in the countryside. At the same time an alternative method was adopted in an effort to speed the settlement and acculturation of the newly arrived. This was the policy of moving groups of refugees and settling them in groups of three to five families among village and small town communities. As was noted above, this system placed a considerable burden on the locals as well as the village leaders. While the Commission could not provide anything other than minimal food and clothing, it could serve as cheerleader. In a remarkably modern fashion, the Commission adopted a range of policies designed to win support for the refugees in both local and international terms.

At the local level, villages and towns aiding the refugees were recorded by the settlement agents. For those cooperating with the settlement effort, there were gifts of grain, clothing, money and shelter. It would seem that seemingly small acts of kindness extended to the refugees carried enormous weight with the Commission, perhaps reflecting its own essential powerlessness.227 As compensation, the

227 Housing donations to the refugees serve to confirm the dramatic shift in the Commission's settlement policy toward Anatolia after 1278. During that year there were substantial amounts of housing built or given by residents of the Rumelian
Commission could offer little other than praise, aside from the occasional reimbursement to a village headman or other local notable. Despite this, the level of support seems to have been remarkably consistent over time and with no great regional variation. Funds and gifts in kind were extended to the refugees throughout Anatolia and Rumelia. It was also a generosity that crossed confessional lines. In perhaps one of the more interesting cases, aid to refugees was furnished by the Christian community of Zagra-i Atik in Filibe Province, in what is now Bulgaria.\(^{228}\) The universal message of charity in the face of desperate need was pounced on by the Commission, which turned to the official Ottoman paper of record Ceride-i Havadis in an effort to spread the word.\(^{229}\) This proved to be a highly effective tool for mobilizing additional aid not only from the Istanbul population but also from those at a great remove from the capital.

Aid arriving for the refugees was recorded from Iraq, Batum and Vidin. With this, the general level of awareness was substantially increased. After the initial provision of aid by the British and American Women’s association in Istanbul, other foreign groups acted to support the refugees. This was to become an increasingly

---

\(^{228}\) Filibe sancağına rabi Zağra-i atik ve Kizanlık kazılarında bulunan muhacirine ahalı tarafından vukubulan mesârîfîn hazîne-i cellîeye terk ve teberru olunmuş olduğuna ve keyfiyetin Ceride-i havâdis ve sâire ile ilân olunmak üzere bulunduğuna dâir (761/79/80)

\(^{229}\) Zağra-i atik kazıásında meskûn muhacirîn hânelerinden muhterik olan hâneler İslam ve Hristiyan taraflarından inşâ olunduğundan mesârîfi hizmet-i müfîhîre olmak üzere kabâlûne dâir olan evrâkîn takdimini şâmîl (758/80/167)
important factor in averting total disaster in 1864. At that time British, French and American contributions were to play a major role in feeding and clothing those on the docks of Samsun and Trabzon. During the early stages, broadcasts to the papers, which were to include the *Levant Herald* and *Takvim-i Vekayi*, served as an effective propaganda vehicle and as a means of attracting attention and donors. Broadcasts detailed gifts of food, clothing and land by the Government as well as similar gifts from private individuals and groups. The beauty of this program lay with the relative lack of financial strain it placed on the Treasury. As the indigenous residents in the villages and towns of Anatolia were providing a substantial portion of the capital, the Government could provide the only resource that it had in substantial quantity, land. With the Land Law Act of 1858, land owned by the State could be transferred either under leasehold or freehold. Land given to refugees was either sold or given with a three year tax holiday. Once this tax holiday was over, the new and simplified tax 

\( \text{öşr} \) of 10% was applied.\(^{230}\) In the majority of cases involving land in Central and Eastern Anatolia, the land had been abandoned or underutilized for centuries. Thus

---

\(^{230}\) Shaw and Shaw p.114. The older Islamic categories of property ownership were replaced by five new categories, 1) private property (*mülk*), 2) state property (*miri*), foundation property (*vakif*), 4) communal or public (*metrük*) and 5) idle or abandoned land (*mevat*). The reasons for the changes were both economic and political. Not only did this represent what Shaw states is “a first effort of the Tanzimat to consolidate its victories over the old holders of power”, it represented a major effort to reclaim state property as well as overall the tax rolls. A cadastral review of all properties was accompanied by the issuance of new ownership deeds (*tapu senedi*) allowing not only the reinforcement of tax receipts but an expansion of the tax base itself. Of the five categories, the last five were most involved in the settlement of the refugees. State land (*miri*) was often used in the creation of large agricultural enterprises as was abandoned lands (*mevat*) which often simple was transferred without having to escheat to the state. Foundation (*vakif*) property was more commonly found in the towns or cities and hence had more limited use. The last (*metrük*) was most commonly found in Eastern Anatolia and served as open pasturage.
the transfer represented a golden opportunity for the Government to enlarge its tax revenue base though its gifts or sale of land to immigrants. If the refugees were successful, they would not only return a handsome dividend to the Government through increased taxes but would serve as agents for the extension of Ottoman state’s power in the region. As their numbers grew, they would become a powerful demographic counterweight to the nomadic populations as well as a group whose loyalty was reinforced though their ostensible gratitude for Ottoman largesse. Unlike the Turkmen, Kurds, Armenians and Pontic Greeks, these Sunni Muslims presumably would look to the Ottoman State as their advocate and protector. With hindsight, it becomes clear that this is in fact what happened. However the events of 1863-65 placed much of this planning in jeopardy.

The Deluge

Ottoman history is filled with periods of social upheaval and the forced migration of peoples. Few, if any were as difficult and disruptive as the surge in Caucasian immigrants that took place during the winter 1863 and lasted until the spring of 1865. During this period hundreds of thousands of refugees flooded the Black Sea ports of the Empire and threatened a human disaster of epic proportions. The question is raised as to why, if an event of this scale actually took place, did it receive so little attention? The answer is twofold. First, the Western World, which would normally be the chief conduit for disseminating the news, was largely distracted by events in the United States as well as Italy and India. Russia, as has
already been noted, was enjoying the diversion of British attention and making the
best use of it with the active consolidation of power in the Crimea, the Caucasus and
at same time, launching its campaign of conquest in Central Asia.

A second reason for the general lack of attention to the unfolding catastrophe
was due in small part to the earlier success of the Commission itself as well as the
Army. This was the considerable success the Ottomans had obtained in ridding the
capital of tens of thousands of destitute refugees. No longer were the courtyards of
the great mosques overflowing with impoverished Circassians, threatening civil
disorder and the prospect of outbreaks of plague, typhus and cholera. Instead, these
refugees and those in transit were moving in a fairly orderly fashion through the ports
of Samsun and Trabzon on thence onward to Anatolia. In more ways than one,
problems and frictions could be conveniently buried in the countryside. However, all
of this was to change in short order, catching the Government completely unawares
and throwing the system once again into a dangerous disorder. Unlike the later waves
of refugees from the Balkan Wars, which flooded Edirne and Istanbul and whose
sufferings are chronicled by late Ottoman poets, throughout most of this period, there
were few destitute refugees on view in the major cities who might serve as the basis
for reports chronicling the sufferings and disasters of that year to the readership in
Istanbul or the world beyond.

The genesis for the flood lay with the final consolidation of Russian power in
the East Caucasus. Where the previous years had produced continued Russia pressure
on Tatars and Circassians, at times intense and other times slack, by late 1863 the
pressure was directed toward those in the East against the Ubykh, the Abhaz, the
Chechens and the Daghestanis. As the focus of conquest turned toward Central Asia, the Russians looked to a quick means of pacification of the newly acquired territories in an effort to secure their southern flanks. The solution was the wholesale deportation of the Muslim population. The legacy of their efforts is clearly mixed. On the one hand, the Ubykh population of the Caucasus is extinct. On the other, the conflict with the Chechens and the Daghestanis has never ended.

The first hints of trouble come not from Commission records but from the British Consul to Trabzon at the time, Francis A. Stevens. Stevens came from a merchant family long engaged in business in the region and with his brother George A. Stevens served as Consul. In a dispatch dated October 10, 1863, Stevens reported the news of a “scorched earth” policy adopted by the Russians in order to speed the clearance of Nethac and Shapsug. This was a particularly ominous development as it represented the application of Russian pressure late in the season, at a time when most of the shipping across the dangerous water of the Black Sea was beginning to shut down for the winter. For their part, the Commission agents were already reporting the strains of the increased flow of immigrants. In a report dated October 15 from Sinop, Nethac refugees were being settled among the local population in conditions of up to ten per home, twice the normal formula. (758/80/115) By December, Stevens was reporting the news that plague was reported among the refugees crossing the eastern land frontiers and that typhus and smallpox were present among the refugees arriving in Trabzon. At this point the number of refugees had

---

231 F.O. 197 vol.792. 10/10/1863 Stevens to Russell
risen to seven thousand, with 20-30 were dying each day. For their part, the Commission was rapidly becoming aware of the potential enormity of the disaster that was beginning to unfold. Despite having cleared the docks of Trabzon and Samsun by late summer, the continued flow of the fall and early winter showed no signs of abating. The Commission was left with little choice other than to transship some of the refugees on to Istanbul as well a Varna and Kostence. Once there the Commission proved unable to locate basic housing for the refugees, in one instance detailing 987 recently arrived refugees without shelter. Faced with an undeniable failure and in a sign of their increasing desperation, the Commission broadcast a general appeal to the people of Istanbul on December 12, 1863 calling for aid and support.

The wholesale transfer of refugees from the Anatolian Black Sea ports to Varna, Istanbul and Kostence brought some relief to Samsun and Trabzon but did so at the cost of spreading the smallpox and typhus found among the refugees. On January 5, 1864 Stevens wrote that “during the past month, nearly one thousand have died”, later adding that between January and February the total amounted to 2700. More ominously, an additional 2500 refugees had arrived during this period with an additional forty to fifty thousand expected. As the pressure of new arrivals

232 Ibid 12/21/1863. Stevens to Bulwer
233 987 nufüs Dersaâdet’e muhâcir gelîp yer olmadığından bir hâna konumlara ve tâyînâtlarına dâîr
234 Bu günlerde Dersaâdet’e pek çok muhâcirler gelmekde olduğundan Dersaâdet ahâlisinden iânâ etdirilmesine ve mahallât ve săîredê ilân kalımmasma dâîr (758/80/182)
continued unabated, the Governor of Trabzon, Emin Pasha was forced to draw upon outside resources and resort to extreme measures. To combat the outbreaks of typhus and smallpox, Emin enlisted not only army doctors but also from a group of European doctors. Stevens notes the presence of three Europeans, including one Englishman and one Frenchman. The later was Dr. Barozzi, a member of the Sanitary Commission and an expert on quarantine facilities.\textsuperscript{236} As the winter wore on, Barozzi and other worked feverishly to contain the spread of disease in Trabzon in the face of the continued arrivals. Weakened by the cold and acute malnutrition, the casualties continued to mount, sometimes in gruesome fashion. Stevens reported the panic spreading after a dead Circassian was found in a public fountain. By the middle of February, disease was killing not only the weakened among the refugees but the local population as well. According to Stevens, the deaths by this time amounted to 3000 Circassians, 470 Turks, 36 Greeks, 17 Armenians, 9 Catholics and 6 Europeans.\textsuperscript{237}

The danger of crossing the Black Sea so late in the season apparently was of little concern to the Russians. In their efforts to rid themselves of Muslims in the Caucasus, foreign as well as Russian ships were chartered. As the supply of steamships was limited, the Russians turned to small ship-owners, primarily sailboats. These smaller boats were primarily coast-hugging fishing boats, carrying fewer refugees and taking much longer to arrive at their destination. For the Ottomans, this

\textsuperscript{235} FO 195 812 Stevens to Erskine

\textsuperscript{236} Barozzi was obviously a man of considerable achievement, as well as strong opinions and desires to have his plans executed according to his own directives. There are a number of entries during this time detailing the frictions between Barozzi and the Ottoman authorities. Barozzi was ultimately transferred, but may have later regained the upper hand as he was rewarded and thanked by the Sultan himself.

\textsuperscript{237} FO Ibid 2-17-1864 Stevens to Erskine
created a major additional headache as the small boats would put in at small ports or in sheltered bays, simply discharging their human cargo in pursuit of another run. The upshot was an additional uncontrolled group of refugees wandering the North Anatolian Coast, completely disoriented and often near death. By April, this unregulated refugee flow was creating such problems that the Commission placed a ban on sailboats as a means of refugee transport.\textsuperscript{238}

For their part, the Ottomans were forced to mobilize their own flotilla in order to relieve the dangerous overcrowding of Samsun, Trabzon and surrounding ports. On February 21, 1864, the Commission broadcast an appeal for foreign shipping companies to transport refugees from the Anatolian ports. This was in addition to Ottoman ships already in service at the time. Notable among the ships flying Ottoman colors were the steamships of the \textit{Fevaid-i-Osmaniye Company}\textsuperscript{239}, \textit{the Şirket-i-Hayriye}\textsuperscript{240}, as well as Imperial ships including the steamships Aziz, Taif, Ali Paşa and Mulakov. As these too proved to be insufficient, Danube steamers as well as the Oppenheim Shipping Company were brought under charter. This emergency transport of the refugees became an enormous drain on the Treasury as the private companies demanded cash payments and were well aware of the lack of alternatives.\textsuperscript{241} By early

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{238} 758/80/293
\textsuperscript{239} 761/81/180
\textsuperscript{240} 761/81/136
\textsuperscript{241} The cost of shipping the refugees was truly enormous for the Commission. The single entry below details the expenditure of 2500 lira (250,000 kuruş) to the Oppenheim Company. Saydam p.200 furnishes figures that show an outlay to the company for 1864-65 totaling 2,777,676 kuruş, a figure almost equal to the Commissions total expenses for the year 1860-61. (\textit{Nakl-i muhācīr icitın istikrā}
\end{footnotesize}
March however, there were signs that some measure of success was being achieved.

Stevens reported 1400 refugees cleared to Samsun and another 800 to Varna. On the other hand, the refugees’ population of Trabzon had swelled to 10,000 and Stevens estimated that as many as 60 refugees were dying each day.\(^{242}\) Ten days later, Stevens reported the additional arrival of four thousand refugees with two thousand sent along. This last influx caused the Ottomans to close the port of Trabzon, forcing any new arrivals into smaller ports up the coast.\(^{243}\)

This last development was significant as it moved much of the significant flows of arrivals away from the major cities of the Anatolian Coast and directed them to much smaller and less accessible locations. Ports such as Akçakale and Seredere in Trabzon Province assumed the primary burden. There were also secondary ports, used primarily for fishing and small coastal trade and not equipped with quarantine facilities or other major support structures. While the port of Trabzon was closed, it was left to these small ports, along with Samsun, Sinop and Batum to pick up the slack. Those cleared from Trabzon were sent to Samsun and Varna as well as five thousand who were shipped overland to Amasya.\(^{244}\) While Dr. Barozzi and his team were clearing the refugees from Trabzon, the deluge merely shifted to the other ports.\(^{245}\) By May, Stevens reported 27,000 landed at Akçakale and 35,000 landed at

\(^{242}\) FO op.cit. Stevens to Erskine 3/8/64

\(^{243}\) Ibid 3/18/64

\(^{244}\) 761/80/136
Samsun. Barozzi moved to Samsun to address the problems there and a Turkish frigate was reportedly dispatched along with other ships in order to pick up another 200,000 waiting refugees.²⁴⁶

As the weather warmed so did the rumors. By June, Stevens reported the rumor of up to 300,000 Abhaz waiting to emigrate. This accompanied his report that somehow the refugees population in Trabzon had grown to 70,000 and that the number of refugees in Samsun has reached 100,000.²⁴⁷ While these numbers are most probably an exaggeration, the Commission’s records support a major increase in the flows. As early as late February and early March, the Commission had opted for the expedient settlement means of distributing refugees, arriving by steamers and small boats, among the villages within Samsun and Trabzon provinces in groups of three to five families.²⁴⁸ Although the totals for Samsun are not provided, in this way they hoped to disburse 10,200 from Trabzon alone.²⁴⁹

Other entries in June noted the extensive accumulation of refugees in Trabzon and called for the rapid return of all Imperial steamships to the ports of Samsun and

²⁴⁵ Stevens reported in early April that Barozzi had cleared 5,000 refugees through quarantine and onward to Samsun and Varna, leaving 25,000 in the city. In a communication a week later he wrote that an estimated 100,000 Ubykh were en route and that the mortality rates in the city were dropping. Stevens to Bulwer 4/7/64 and 4/18/64

²⁴⁶ Ibid 5/19/64

²⁴⁷ Ibid 6/18/64

²⁴⁸ Samsun’a sandâllar ile gelmiş olan muhâcîrlere ve karindaşlarına, Üçer beşer âhne köylere yerleşdirilmesine dâir

²⁴⁹ 758/80/264
Trabzon in an effort to clear the still overcrowded docks. Further confirmations of the extensive nature of this refugee flow during the first half of 1864 can be found in the entries recording the need for emergency transfer of refugees from Samsun and Trabzon to Rumelian ports on the Black Sea, at first Varna and then later to Kostence. In the first few months of the crisis, the refugees were sent to Varna, either for settlement in the region or to spend the winter there in preparation for transshipment to Anatolia via west or south Anatolian ports. By late spring, the majority of the overflow of refugees in Samsun and Trabzon were sent on to Kostence. A memo dated August 31, 1864 refers to the forty to fifty thousand refugees resent to Kostence “a little before the present time”. A general broadcast was sent to provincial governors demanding an assessment of the number of refugees who might be immediately absorbed. Reversing the earlier shift in policy away from the European Provinces, the Commission now had little choice but to direct some of the flow back to those better organized and immediately accessible areas. A frantic report asked for an immediate response on two thousand homes needed to absorb refugees in Edirne and Tekfürdağ. Given the emergency conditions this reflected as many as twenty thousand refugees.

250 761/81/8, 761/81/14

251 Direct reference to this may be found in the entry of 12/28/63, which describes the steamship Kars bringing in over-wintering refugees. (758/80/198)

252 Trabzon ve Samsun tarafından Kostence iskelesine sevk olunacak 40-50 bin nüfus muhâcirinın bir an evvel ırsâline dâir (761/81/98)

253 758/81/10
As for the central and southern Anatolian regions, the news was not good. Replies from the governors indicated a high degree of saturation coupled with the request not to send any more refugees. A report from the Ankara settlement agent, Muhtar Efendi, indicated that in Ankara, Kangiri and Kastamonu Sanjaks, there was simply no capacity left and that it was impossible to settle more.\textsuperscript{254} Despite this and other reports detailing problems of dilapidated housing, overcrowding and insufficient seed stocks and animals, the flow of refugees into Anatolia continued unabated. As refugees continued to be sent by sea to Varna and Köstence, still other groups numbering twenty to forty thousand were sent to Van, Kars and Çıldır.\textsuperscript{255} Other blocks of refugees were sent overland from Samsun to Diyarbakır.\textsuperscript{256} In all, and despite the overload on the already meager resources of the Anatolian provinces, the bulk of the refugees ultimately found their way into those provinces. Those initially sent to Rumelian Black Sea ports were, for the most part, subsequently transferred to other locations. By October when the worst of the summer’s backlog was being cleared up, steamers were directed to Köstence in order to transport those not settled on to Anatolian provinces.\textsuperscript{257}

\textsuperscript{254} Ankara ve Kangırı sancaklarında tertibinden ziyade muhâcirîn iskân olunduğu ve Kastamonu sancağından gönderilecek muhâcirîn tevkîfine ve ba ’d-ezîn buralara muhâcîr gönderilmemesine dâir iskân memuru Muhtâr Efendi şükası takdimine ve teferruâtına dâir (758/81/138) also (758/81/150)

\textsuperscript{255} Van ve Kars ve Çıldır sancaklarına Erzurum eyaletine sevki kararlaşdırılmış olan 4 bin hâne muhâcîrin sevki olunduğu ve bahren Köstence’ ye sevki olunacaklar için vapurların sür’at-i irsâline dâir Trabzon şükası ve telgrafnâmesi leffiyyle 761/81/137

\textsuperscript{256} 761/81/144

\textsuperscript{257} 758/81/136
The toll in human terms by October had been enormous. In the locations of
the most extensive reporting, Varna, Köstence and Trabzon, there emerges a sad and
consistent picture. By the time the refugees arrived at these ports, a substantial
number were already severely malnourished and many were described as “naked” or
“half naked.”258 So many refugees had died in the transit from Russia that special
provisions were made for those children orphaned during the journey. For those who
did survive the winter transit or arrived during the summer months, the threat of
smallpox and typhus was replaced by the scourge of Asiatic cholera. Stevens reported
in August of 1864 that among the refugees in Trabzon, the addition of cholera was
carrying away up to 300 a day. While the epidemic was reported contained by late
September, its effects were devastating.259

In Varna, the Commission made an effort to assess mortality rates among the
somewhat unbelievably precise 33,693 refugees who were listed as staying there.260
Köstence reported continuing health and supply problems as did the Anatolian Black
Sea ports. However by the end of the summer, the intensity of the crisis began to
subside. Logistical problems of bringing enough food and shelter to the refugees
showed signs of finding solutions and the former haphazard dispatch of doctors was

258 The condition of the refugees was so poor that one entry (758/80/236) was a call
from Varna for any available clothing for the refugees. Another, (761/80/208) of May
3, 1864 appealed for clothing for the naked children arriving on two ships from
Kertch.

259 FO 195/812 Stevens to Bulwer 8/4/1864 and 9/29/1864

260 758/81/41
given a more orderly structure.\textsuperscript{261} The reasons for this had less to do with the flow of refugees than the weather and the general mobilization of resources by the Commission itself. By the end of the summer the Commission had been able to obtain several major successes. First among these was the permission of the \textit{Meclis-i Vala} (Council of Ministers) to hire more staff.

The events of the previous winter had made it painfully clear that internal changes were desperately needed. As the initial staffing levels had never anticipated the deluge of refugees, the Commission staff in Istanbul as well as the field agents had been caught off guard and totally overwhelmed. In the provinces, the inability to control the flow of refugees had led to chaos in both the ports and the countryside. The influential report of February 18, 1864 by Abdüllaham Ziyaeddin, the Governor of Amasya, which detailed the chaos and general breakdown in the Anatolian countryside led to a decision on April 11, 1864 by the \textit{Meclis-i Vala} to overhaul the Anatolian provincial settlement officials. Seven officials were appointed with salaries and expense accounts. Included among these were Yaver (Amasya and Canık), Salih (Sinop and Sivas). New governors included Tevfik Efendi, formerly of the gendarmerie (Trabzon), and Kabüli Pasha, former Governor of İzmir (Izmir). Four officials from the Meclis-i Vala were also added; Necib Bey (Hüdavendigar, Kutahya and Karesi), Haşim Efendi (Konya), Muhtar Efendi (Ankara), and Hasan Bey (Kocaeli, Kastamonu and Bolu).\textsuperscript{262}

\textsuperscript{261} Reports for this period include: Doctors/mortality at akcakal 758/81/40, winding sheets (a good proxy for determining death rates) 758/81/50, Dr.Ahmed report on deaths in Köstence 758/81/118, Cyprus mortality 58/81/115, winding sheets in Harput

\textsuperscript{262} MV 22848, Saydam 112.
In July permission was given for hiring thirty additional officials in Istanbul.\footnote{758/81/30} At the same time additional measures were taken to secure raises as well as future hiring.\footnote{758/81/35} Accompanying these measures there was an increase in funds provided to the Commission for food, medicine and transport.\footnote{758/81/31,39 and 60} This spurred the large scale clearances of the North Anatolian ports as well as the hiring of additional doctors, tentmakers and transport providers. In a flurry of activity, the Commission agents were able to take advantage of the summer and early fall to reduce the congestion in the ports and continue the basic goal of resettlement with a focus on Anatolia.

With the success in obtaining increased staffing and wages came additional success in drawing the plight of the refugees to not only the Ottoman public but the wider world as well. This was essential to any success, for while the increased staffing and funds were useful, the magnitude of the needs of the refugees continued to dwarf the Commission’s abilities to cope. A partial solution to the problem came with the unusual appeal by the Commission to outside sources of aid. Playing on the continued sympathies of the Western Powers for those dispossessed at the hands of the Russians, the Commission used articles detailing the plight of the refugees with the Ottoman press, most notably the Ceride-i-Havadis and Takvim-i-Vekayi. These in turn found their way into the local European press Levant Herald and the Journal de
*Constantinople.* In turn, these stories were picked up by the major papers in London, Paris and New York. The result was an outpouring of aid and goodwill.

By the summer of 1864 aid in the form of food clothing and cash was arriving in Istanbul for use by the Commission. British steamers brought food and clothing to Samsun as well as Constantinople.\(^{266}\) This was, in turn broadcast in the Ottoman newspapers along with letters of praise and thanksgiving. More aid was to follow with American cloth and funds as well as 79.5 gold lira presented by the French. Foreign generosity was matched locally by some unusual sources. The women of the Royal Harem, no doubt a good number of Circassian ancestries, provided a cash gift of 98,000 kuruş.\(^{267}\) Elsewhere funds poured in from government officials in Constantinople as well as from 7065 kuruş from the zabits in the 6\(^{th}\) Army. Others such as the Governor of Sivas donated over one thousand dönems of his own farmland to the refugees who would become the legal landholders.

By these measures, the Commission was able to make real inroads into the backlog of problems despite their continued under-funded budget. This proved to come not a moment too soon. Once again, the Russian pressure on the Muslims in the Caucasus showed no signs of easing up for the winter. This time however there was a capacity to deal with at least a portion of the onslaught. By late September, word was received that 80,000 refugees were being collected in the north Black Sea port of Soğucak in preparation for transshipment.\(^{268}\) This time, however, steps were taken to

---

\(^{266}\) 758/81/32

\(^{267}\) 761/80/124

\(^{268}\) 758/81/93
provide some small amount of funds for their passage as well as for the delivery by commercial steamship of provisions to sustain the refugees on the Russian docks. In anticipation of the arrival of refugees on the docks in Trabzon, the Commission sent the Imperial steamer Izmir to that city with food supplies.\textsuperscript{269} As if to prove the old adage that “no good deed goes unpunished,” an entry of early October asks the question of what to do with the surplus food now that the refugees had departed.

By September it was clear that another wave had begun. In anticipation, Yaver reported the availability of suitable land to settle as many as ten thousand in Eastern Sivas.\textsuperscript{270} Ships from commercial companies including the Oppenheim Company were chartered as the volume of those crossing began to pick up and directives were issued stipulating what ports should be used and when. As was the case during the previous year, Samsun and Trabzon bore the brunt of the immigration. Unlike the previous year however, Trabzon did not simply shut down. Instead, bolstered by the funds and staff, the Commission and its local agents were able to maintain a continuous flow of communication and orders. The evidence for this development can be witnessed in the normal bureaucratic audits taking place in Trabzon in the early fall as well as the ability of the local agents to engage in a search for additional medical personnel who might be found among the Greek population of the city.\textsuperscript{271} By the middle of

\textsuperscript{269} 758/81/195

\textsuperscript{270} 758/81/88

\textsuperscript{271} 758/81/2 and 758/81/7. While admittedly somewhat dull, these and other entries underscore the general functioning of the bureaucracy during the middle and later parts of 1864. This is in complete contrast to the previous year’s entries, which by contrast highlight the near complete breakdown of the government’s ability to cope with the problem.
September those dealing with the refugee problem in Trabzon and Samsun were being stretched to the limit. Once again, the flood of refugees began to overwhelm medical and other resources. At this point the decision was made to divert a portion of the more than eighty thousand refugees now waiting at the Toçarlı and Soğucak piers directly to Köstence. This was described in a telegram from Tevfik of September 16.272

By all appearances another disaster was in the making, perhaps much worse than the one of the previous winter. A comparison of the records however demonstrates a significant change. While the defter entries of the prior winter were alternatively concerned with the minor welfare issues of the elite or beginning to provide detailed descriptions of the unfolding tragedy, the entries for the last six months of 1864 and the beginning of 1865 depict an organization actively engaged in marshaling every available resource for the aid of the new arrivals. In addition, the entries also provide a clear picture of a larger strategy for the settlement process. These included the building of new roads for newly designated settlement regions. An example of this was the construction of a new road from Trabzon to Harput, the direct outgrowth of the earlier decision to shift refugees in that direction. Other differences included the reports, however bleak, of conditions in the countryside. Instead of turning a blind eye to the plight of those in the interior, there was now a steady stream of information and requests coming in from the provinces. Yaver reported “frightful

272 Toçarlı ve Soğucak iskelelerine şu günlerde 80 bin mikdarı muhâcirin ineceği cihetle bunların doğruca Köstence’ ye iân ve ırsâllerine dâir Tevfik Efendi telgrâfinamesi leffîyle (761/81/111)
conditions” in Sivas in mid-September, not exactly welcome news but at least the information requisite for some rough sort of solution.\textsuperscript{273}

Elsewhere major changes can be seen in the level of logistical support obtained by the Commission. On the northern side of the Black Sea, the Ottomans were engaged in the process of negotiating a smoothing out of the flow of refugee embarkations. By late summer, negotiations with the Russians and the Muslims tribes were obtaining some successes, with progress reported by the Ottoman negotiator Hayriz Bey.\textsuperscript{274} Ever more ships were chartered and a more organized system of transport put into place. Pack animals were requisitioned for transport inland Anatolia, tents were purchased and clothing distributed from warehouses in Samsun, Trabzon, Kostence and Varna. Most important was an ongoing stream of desperately needed funding, this despite the acute financial crisis the Ottoman Government was experiencing at the time.

A last major difference in the handling of the second winter’s crisis was the assembling and co-ordination of the medical staff. By the late summer and early fall of 1864, doctors had been hired and dispatched to every major port of debarkation and collection in the Rumelian and Anatolian provinces. In addition, surgeons and pharmacists were hired and added to the medical teams in the major centers.\textsuperscript{275}

\textsuperscript{273} İskân-i muhâcîrîn için memuriyetle Sivas câniibinde bulunan Yâver Efendi’nin muhâcîrînin ahvâl-i perişâniyyetine dâir olan telgrâfin takdimini şâmîl (758/81/92)
\textsuperscript{274} Abaza ahâlisinden ve Mûrşân kabilesinden Hayriz Bey’in Sohum’a ittilâ´ eylediği bazı havâdîsi müş ir varakasının gönderildiğini şâmîl Rîzâ Efendi şûkası leffîyle (761/81/112)
Together, these groups represented a far stronger system than the one that had been swamped earlier in the year. Where problems arose and doctors were lacking, petitions were sent in for their appointment. In the major ports, quarantine facilities were now used for their intended purpose instead of simple shelter. As the weather grew colder and the number of refugees continued unabated, there was a constant flow of medical report and requests. Refugees who arrived by steamer and were ill were identified and quarantined. By October, Trabzon reported 320 who were unable to clear quarantine.\(^{276}\) In other areas, such as Izmir, requests poured in for medicines. All this served to underscore that the system was beginning to function as it should. Under-funded and understaffed it may have been; nevertheless there was a functioning framework.

As the winter approached, the number of refugees continued to arrive at a steady and heavy rate. Overall, the process was far more orderly than the previous winter, due in large part to improved provisions for those embarking, the general use of steamships\(^{277}\) and co-ordination with the Russians on the flow. Nevertheless, the total numbers presented a considerable strain on the Ottoman capacity to absorb the refugees. Housing reports from Sivas describing 2000 homes for 26,700 refugees indicated both a massive investment and an equally great stress at the provincial

\(^{275}\) A more detailed report in the increased staffing of quarantine facilities is to be found in MV24289. This 1281 report demonstrates the commitment of additional personnel and funds allocated to confront the health problems at the time.

\(^{276}\) 758/81/125

\(^{277}\) In a partial reversal of the earlier prohibition of sailboats, in mid-September, the Commission broadcast a request for ship charters in September that called for both steamships and sailboats. (761/81/122)
level. While considerable numbers of refugees were allowed to over-winter in the regions nearest the port, there were large numbers of refugees recorded as being sent overland from Samsun and Trabzon during the late fall and early winter to Biga, Diyarbakir and Van. From Köstence, refugees were sent to Anatolia via Izmir and other Aegean ports as well as into Thrace. One group of fifteen hundred families (8000 to 12,000) was sent inland as far as Kosovo. This last departure from the normal direction of refugees to Anatolia was accompanied by the direction of refugees to Istanbul itself. For the first time since the creation of the Commission, non-elite populations were sent to Istanbul for temporary shelter while in transit to final destinations, underscoring the relentless nature of the flood of refugees during the winter of 1864-65. By the beginning of the New Year, reports continued to show large numbers of refugees waiting on the docks in Sogucak and other ports in the northern Black Sea. On January 12, 1865 twenty five thousand refugees were reported on the docks in Soğucak and Kambetur. The decision was made to immediately send thirteen thousand of them to Köstence, away at first from...

---

278 (761/81/129) The entry states that two thousand homes have been constructed to house the 26,700 refugees. This is a clear indicator of the stress placed on the system as it represents a more than doubling of the standard formula of one home per family of five.

279 Kosova'ya sevk olunan 1500 hâne ile Yenipazar’a gönderilib muahhiren Kosova’ya avdet etmiş olan 500 hâne mühâcîrinin ne vechile taytın ve iyvâ edildiği ifadesine dâir olan evrâkin ırsâlını ıspan (761/81/176)

280 This should not imply a fundamental shift in policy but rather a nod to the expediency of transshipping emigrants through Istanbul at a time when the other West Black Sea ports were subject to heavy loads. In addition, the numbers appear to have been fairly small and the duration short.

281 761/81/230
Anatolia. At the same time provinces like Kastamonu in the Black Sea region of northern Anatolia were reporting being saturated with refugees. The result was a renewal in the social frictions experienced several years earlier. This time however the crisis faded. As the spring developed, the pressures of the winter abated somewhat as the piers were cleared\(^ {282} \) and the overland roads to Anatolia reopened.

This final year of the Commission as an independent body was notable for several developments. First, with the improved weather came a refocusing of the settlement of refugees almost exclusively toward Anatolia. With the one major exception of a very large group of 12,000 refugees sent on from Kostence and subsequently broken into four groups and settled across the Danube Province (\textit{Tuna Vilayeti}), the major focus of new settlement was the East. Corum, Kangiri, Van, Cildir and Sivas captured the lion’s share of the new arrivals. Among these provinces, Sivas was the leader, so much so that in a report to the British Government by the new British Consul to Trabzon in 1868, Gifford Palgrave estimated that four hundred and 40,000 Circassians had settled there.\(^ {283} \) Other smaller groups were directed to Biga, Bolu and other West Anatolian regions.

The abating of the emergency allowed the Commission and its agents to refocus their attentions to those details and projects largely neglected during the

\(^{282}\) By early June the number of refugees on the pier at Soğucak was estimated at five thousand. (761/81/323)

\(^{283}\) FO 195/812 “Report on the Provinces of Trabzon, Sivas, Kastamonu and Part of Angora” included in Gifford to Elliot 1/7/1868. Palgrave had considerable prior experience with the refugees, having traveled to Abhazia and including a number of Abhaz among his friends. Unlike his predecessor Stevens, Palgrave traveled extensively in the region and was the author of a number of reports on the peoples of Anatolia and the region’s resources.
previous year and a half. One of these projects was to address the communications problems experienced with the refugees. Most of those arrived during the past four years spoke no Turkish. To remedy this, a program for identifying and hiring translators was initiated. Chechen, Daghestani and Circassian (Adighe) speakers were hired. In another effort to bring the refugees into the Ottoman mainstream, religious leaders were hired to staff the renewed process of building and staffing mosques and schools.\textsuperscript{284} Petitions from those wishing to pursue religious or medical study were once again reviewed and a number of the refugees were sent off to Istanbul to study.

The less turbulent environment allowed the process of settlement and sedentization to continue in earnest. For the first time in almost two years, the Commission could be seen dealing with the pressing problem of ensuring the agricultural success of those settled in the countryside. Foremost among the concerns after the issue of building homes was the problem of ensuring an adequate supply of oxen. The promise of a pair of oxen for every two homes rang hollow due to the chaos of the preceding period. In addition, the records indicate that substandard and ill animals had been purchased during the preceding years. Disease was reported among the ox and water buffalo stocks in both the Rumelian and Anatolian provinces during this period, with the Commission's agents making the task of replacement of

\textsuperscript{284} See Chapter 5 on the hiring of religious leaders. Regarding the control of religious leaders, it is apparent that the Ottoman Government’s unease with certain Sufi brotherhoods played a role in the early detaining and interviewing of several Nakshbandi sheikhs. There is no indication however that anything came of the detentions. Clearly the Government wished to harness any prestige of the Murid fighters in their efforts to win over the larger populations. When it came to Sufi Sheikhs, initial suspicion apparently was replaced by indifference. For a later discussion of the Ottoman Government’s efforts to control this order see: Karpat, \textit{the Politicization of Islam}. Ch. 4 on “The New Middle Classes and the Nakşbandia.
diseased animals a high priority. This was understandable as the key to success to the
dry land farming of Eastern and Southern Anatolia lay with not only the necessity of
plowing larger areas for wheat and barley production but for the fuel obtained from
the animals’ dung as well.

This refocusing on the concerns of establishing the refugees in farming
communities was matched by a renewed effort to reassert control over their
movement as well as that of the indigenous nomadic people. The last year of the
independent Commission brought renewed efforts to punish lawbreakers as well as
readdress the problems with the Avşar tribesmen as well as the Kurds. One of the
clearest indications of this was the renewed settlement of Uzunyayla, where an
additional 1,000 homes were planned.\textsuperscript{285} At the same time and in the same region,
plans were made to address the issue of Avşar predations.\textsuperscript{286} The process of winning
the loyalty and control of the frontier region’s population was back in the forefront of
the Commission’s thinking.

A final and crucial element in the Commission’s aspirations that emerged as
the flood waters of the preceding year and a half receded was the issue most essential
to the notion of human freedom and dignity itself. This was none other than the issue
of slavery. As an acid test of the philosophy of the rulers and the ruled, slavery is
without peer. The existence in a society of the concept that an individual can look
upon another as property establishes a fundamental and unbridgeable divide between

\textsuperscript{285} Saroz arazisinde bin hâne inşâ ve iskân etdirilmek üzere olduğundan bazı ifâdeyi
hâvi Uzunyayla'da meskân mühacirin ümerâsından Muhtâr Ahmed Bey tarafından
Bedisi Hüseyin Bey'e gelen telgrafnamenin takdimine dâir (758/82/54)

\textsuperscript{286} Afsârârların Saroz’a iskânları kararlaştırıldığından bazı fesâd ve uygunsuzluğu
intâc edeçği ifâde ... dâir Yâver Efendi sukkası takdimine dâir (758/82/92)
the slave and the master. In the last year of the Commission, the problem of slavery, one that had been dealt with from time to time in previous years, emerged as the key issue. The next chapter will explore this topic as well as its relationship with other concerns with personal status.
Chapter 5

The State and the Individual

This chapter examines the relationship of individuals among the masses of refugees, and the Ottoman State. It is an effort to understand the roles and relationships between the two and how these were changing during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. As the Ottoman State evolved from its traditional, decentralized structure to one of a more centralized and bureaucratic form, the interaction of the State with its population was transformed. Some of these changes were internally generated. Many were the product of outside pressures. Clearly, the Ottoman government had long been aware of external pressures from the West and Russia, the reforms of Selim III and the Tanzimat being the best examples of this. At the same time, there were distinctly endogenous sources of change agitating for reform or transformation, to be found in the Empire. The efforts Midhat Pasha to reform the provinces and the national and international political changes brought about by the likes of Reşid, Ali and Fuad Pashas as well as Ahmed Vefik Paşa all serve as examples of the changing notions of the essential relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

The records of the Commission are far more pedestrian than the memoirs or biographies of the great men of the Tanzimat. At the same time they provide a practical expression of beliefs carried into action. The journals of the Commission
and the supporting memoranda from the Meclis-i Vala and other governmental bodies offer insight based on the appeals considered and actions taken. They also provide, in their quotidian way, an insight into the possibilities and as often as not, the limitations experienced by the realities of nineteenth century Ottoman society. There is no great story to be found in the records, or with a very few exceptions is there any inspiring rhetoric. The change that is to be found is small and incremental. This is not to suggest however that the picture is trivial and of little meaning. Quite to the contrary, the incremental change is highly important. It reflects a beginning of a process that continues today in modern Turkey, the general enfranchisement of all people within the society.

This last point is crucial when considering the Tanzimat and the Ottoman State. Without engaging in a lengthy review of this extensively discussed and researched topic, we can note two central aspects to pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Society. First, society was comprised of a series of communities based on confessional lines. Islam was tightly linked to the State and the ruling class and was privileged above all other religions. Second, Muslims were either from the great mass of peasants and small tradesmen or from the military/governing elite (askeri) or the religious leaders (ulema). Until the Tanzimat, non-Muslims could flourish, and many did, but could never become members of the ruling class. In essence there was a parallel system in place for non-Muslims that at best lived with the same fictional promise of advancement as the “separate but equal” race-based strategies of the United States once suggested.
For the Muslim community, access to power and governance came at the cost of individual freedom. Members of the ruling class lived entirely at the sufferance of the Sultan. Any deviation from this meant demotion or possibly death. While the later, pre-Tanzimat Ottoman State witnessed the diminution of the Sultan’s power though the rise of regional Agas and Derebeys, the fundamental ideology of the elites’ status as slaves or servants to the Sultan remained. With the coming of the Tanzimat, these two tenets were substantially transformed, first on paper and later in reality. With the two Rescripts came the stated notion that:

“The guarantees promised on our part by the Hatti-Humayoun of Gülhane, and in the conformity of the Tanzimat, to all the subjects of my empire, without distinction of classes or of religion, for the security of their persons or property, and the preservation of honor, are to-day confirmed and consolidated, and efficacious measures shall be taken in order that they have their full and entire effect.”  

This passage from the 1856 Rescript is certainly one of the most important if not the single most important declaration in late Ottoman and modern Turkish history. No one however should take it as the defining moment in either case.  

\[\text{287 Hurewitz p.150}\]

\[\text{288 The Rescript of 1856, while philosophically forward looking, created enormous tensions within the Empire. The most notable example of these tensions was the riots and massacres in Damascus in 1860 which drew the unwelcome attention of the Western powers. Muslim sensitivities were markedly increased by the Rescript, owing to the potential for the further diminution of their status in Ottoman Society. In one case, a British Consul in Adana was burned alive in 1858 after calling a local \textit{kadi} (judge) a “pimp” (\textit{pezevenk}). See Gould p.58}\]
represents the culmination of years of pressure exerted on the Sultan by foreign and domestic parties to broaden political and economic equality and enfranchisement. The edict represented a great achievement for the reformers and as such was a victory in a battle, but not in the war. This war continues up to the present time in modern Turkey, with the latest victories going to those who have obtained Kurdish language broadcasts in the public media for Turkish Kurds. After the publication of the 1856 Rescripts, reformers were able to obtain a series of victories of their own, leading to the Constitution of 1876 and the opening of the Ottoman Parliament on March 19, 1877.²⁸⁹

The Rescripts and the resulting political and social changes are among the most far-reaching examples of reforms found in Ottoman and modern Turkish history. To be sure they were subject to equally great reversals, the closing of Parliament in 1877 and the development of the autocratic state under Abdul Hamid II as the most well known example. At the same time, they were “top down” reforms, imposed on society by insurgent members of the elite. The success of these reforms was, all too often, impossible to measure. Opening a Parliament represented a major accomplishment but meant little to society as a whole if it has no connection to the masses, as was the case with the Ottomans’ abortive experiment. At the same time the expansion of the centralizing power of the Ottoman State during the period of the Tanzimat marked a fundamental change in the relationship between Istanbul and the people in the provinces. By adopting a gradual policy designed to displace the regional competition of the Ağas and Derebeys, the Ottoman State brought itself into

²⁸⁹ See Shaw and Shaw Ch. 3
direct contact with its subjects. With this came greater uniformity in administration and the concomitant pressure to adopt greater uniformity and regularity in the peoples' relations with the state. It is therefore instructive to review how the center, in this case the Commission, reflected the reforms and changing ideas of society in its daily business. The flow of administrative orders, petitions and the like can serve as a window into Ottoman thought.

In this chapter three aspects will be reviewed in an effort to bring some of these developments to light. The first concerns the ability of individuals or groups to reach out to the government. In most cases this was achieved through the process of petition. By examining who was able to petition the Commission and under what circumstances, it is possible to measure the extent to which the government actually responded to the populace, as well as ascertain circumstances were deemed worthy of their attention. The second involves those cases of where the Commission was instrumental in identifying and diverting individuals from the larger masses of refugees. This was done either as a courtesy to the named elites arriving along with the masses or, in other cases, singling out individuals or groups whose backgrounds or skills allowed them to stand out against the rest of the émigrés. Lastly, there is the essential question of servitude. Did the Commission regard itself as a guardian of individual liberty in the most basic sense? What position did it take on the highly charged subject of slavery? The answers to these questions can provide us with a better sense of how the bureaucracy, in this case, the Commission, saw themselves, the state and the people they were administering.
It should be stated here that this examination is not designed to highlight dramatic change or even an inflection point in Ottoman thinking. Instead the purpose is to provide a broader, general reading of subtle and longer-term transformations taking place among the people of Anatolia and Rumelia and the government in Istanbul. It is also a snapshot taken of an interaction involving the State and those suddenly thrust upon it. In this sense it is akin to the period in late nineteenth century American history when large numbers of relatively poor and unskilled immigrants arrived from Southern Europe. In both cases the immigrants were seldom fluent in the hosts’ language but shared a similar religious/cultural heritage. How the Federal and local governments dealt with these people speaks volumes about themselves. Often ambivalent and confused, it does however offer an insight into the meaning of the American experience.

**Petitions: Who does the State listen to?**

The question of who might file a petition, *(arzuhal)* with the Muhacirin Commission turned in large part on the structure of the Commission itself. The vast majorities of individuals, or groups, submitting petitions to the Commission were resident in the countryside and therefore had no direct contact with the scribes in Istanbul or with the Commission members themselves. Instead they were required to submit their petitions to the Settlement Agents in the field. As noted earlier in the discussion of Abdülhamid Ziyaeddin’s report of February 18, 1864, access to these field agents was often difficult due to their constant rotation or reassignment to new
districts, as well as the distances sometimes required to reach the agents within their own districts. This last issue could at times involve considerable travel by petitioners as some of the assigned districts assigned were to be found in remote areas in Konya or other Anatolian provinces. Travel time in winter could amount to days or weeks. At this time the petitioner or petitioners would need to meet with the Settlement Agent and his scribe, if available and draft the petition. Owing to the fact that the mass of refugees were illiterate, this stage of the process would serve as the initial gateway through which any petition must first pass.

Once the petition was in the hands of the Settlement Agent, reviewed and deemed compelling, it was sent on to the Settlement Manager for the province. Should the Settlement Manager be resident in the provincial capital at the time, the petition would undergo another vetting and, if again deemed worthy, be sent on to the Commission in Istanbul for review and disposition, usually enclosed with other petitions or documents. In this fashion it can be understood that the vast majority of petitions never made it to Istanbul. Minor issues would have been dealt with at the local level. Others might simply have been ignored or deliberately cast aside by the local or provincial staff who in their own turn were overtaxed in their duties. Therefore, those petitions found among the defter of the Commission in Istanbul reflect a collection that, unsurprisingly, reflect a heavy weighting towards those with the means to assure that their petitions were heard at the highest level, namely the wealthy notables.

290 MV 22848

291 See D38018 Settlement Maps in Appendix
There are nevertheless a number of themes among the petitions that indicate a resonance with Ottoman concerns. First, there were petitions involving permission to travel to Mecca in the performance of the Haj. As the Ottomans were the keepers of the Holy Cities and the Sultan also acted as Caliph, facilitating the Haj to Mecca and Medina was a duty that could not be ignored. At the same time the overarching concern of keeping the Anatolian settlers in place during the settlement process effectively trumped a widespread granting of permissions to travel. The process of obtaining all the requisite permissions to travel could be overwhelming as well. In the case of the Crimean Haci Hasan Efendi, the process of taking his family to the Holy Cities involved notification of not only the Governors but the Şeyhül-Harem (keeper of the Holy Places) as well.\(^{292}\) Therefore, the petitions considered and approved, invariably list the names of notables or members of the ulema, as in the case of the Crimean Beyr Seyyid who petitioned the Commission for funds to travel to Mecca and do not originate from among the poorer and illiterate classes.\(^{293}\)

At the same time, there was a distinctly more sympathetic ear given to those wishing to continue a religious education through entrance into a religious school (medresse)\(^{294}\), establish a religious primary school in an established village or town (mekteb), or to build a mosque in a newly established village. Here the Commission took an active hand. Not only did the Commission approve the construction of

\(^{292}\) Kirım muhacirlerinden Haci Hasan Efendi iyâl ve evlâdiyla cânib-i Hicâz’a azîmet edeceğinden Mısır ve Cidda ve Şeyhül’-harem hazretlerine hâlâben tâvsiye-nâme-i sămil tâştirine dâir muhacirin komisyonu ilâmî arzuâhâl (758/80/pet.7

\(^{293}\) 758/78/124

\(^{294}\) Kirım muhacirlerinden Ali Efendi’nin bir medrese odası irâesini müstedî takdîm eylediği arzuâhâlın gönderildiğini sămil (761/80/81)
mosques and elementary schools, it hired local residents to staff them as well. Many of these positions would appear to be make-work jobs for the needy. One mosque in Sivas was listed as having hired nine workers, certainly a large number for those in country villages. Other petitions for employment by low level clerics (hocos) were effective and inexpensive means to maintain the new communities’ continuity in their new surroundings.

Petitions for employment and funds from individuals from non-religious métiers were even more in evidence. Here, with the exception of those with military backgrounds, were mostly former members of the economic or political elites in their homelands who were petitioning the Commission for some form of economic aid or restitution. Some were granted stipends, others homes, all evidently based on their former status. As was noted in an earlier chapter, considerable amounts of time and energy were devoted to these pursuits, especially in the period preceding the arrival of large numbers of refugees in the fall of 1863.

Of apparently greater interest to the Commission were those efforts undertaken regarding the protection and welfare of widows and children of the notable class. For these individuals, the Commission reserved special attention and care. Women who were widowed or abandoned by their husbands appear to have warranted unusual access to the Commission and its agents in the field. In one case, the Commission even helped secure a divorce for a recently arrived Crimean woman whose husband had stayed behind in Russia.295 Appeals from women in need of assistance came from such diverse regions as Belgrade, where a widow needed aid for

295 761/81/16
her two sons, to Trabzon where a woman petitioned for aid after her husband abandoned her following a quarrel.\textsuperscript{296} Again, access was easier in the cities as there was more immediate contact with Commission agents or, in the case of the Belgrade petitioner, access came through a member of the Imperial Equerry.

Preferential treatment was also accorded individuals whose petitions were concerned with the reunification of families. The chaos on the docks, both in Russia and the Ottoman domains, coupled with the successive waves of emigration within families often produced terrible dislocations. As success of settlement was often bound up in the preservation of family and clan, reunification as a high priority made great sense. Men and women from all classes and even religions were able to address the Commission in their efforts to reunite with relatives located in other parts of the country.\textsuperscript{297} Exactly how the information was gathered in the first place is often a bit of a mystery, yet individuals appear to have been able at times to locate missing relatives hundreds of miles away. Sometimes the relatives were nearer, as in the case of Emine Hatun who located her son in an area nearby. Other times the distances were greater as in the case of Zeynep of the Imperial Harem who somehow located her family in Manyas and petitioned for them to be brought to Istanbul.\textsuperscript{298}

\textsuperscript{296} Belgrad muhâcirlerinden Çefe hatunun 2 nefer oğluyla istirhâmi şâmil rikâb-i şâhâneye takdim eylediği arzuâîn gözderildğiine dâir (761/80/90)
Müslâme hatunun zevci İmirzân Efendi'nin bundan akdem kendisini Trabzon'da terk ile savuşmuş olduğundan bir mikdar maât tahsînîne dâir komișyon ilâmî arzuâîl (758/81/pet.16)
\textsuperscript{297} Petitions records identified one woman as Russian “Rusyalu” (761/81/294), another as being Jewish (758/78/62).

\textsuperscript{298} 761/82/39
Nevertheless, when such near miraculous events occurred, they found a willing reception with the Commission.299

Family issues involving property and estates were also a subject of considerable attention to the Commission, if only for its potential mercenary value as a future source of tax revenues. In the case of deceased recent emigrants who had been able to bring capital into the Empire, settling estates provided the Commission with a potential source of funds.300 A wealth of examples indicates a broad range of property and estate matters in which the Commission took an interest. One woman appealed for the continuation of the pension her late husband had received for service to the state.301 Other petitions asked for decisions relating to the distribution of estates both in and outside of Ottoman territory. Cases such as those involving Circassians who died intestate were referred to judges (kadiler) outside the Commission and, once adjudicated were then returned with the decision to the field agent for disposal.

Still other cases demonstrate the willingness on the part of the Commission to actively pursue the return of lost or stolen property belonging to the emigrants. In some cases, the Commission investigated abuses allegedly committed by Ottoman subjects either on the piers or while the émigrés were in transit. In other cases

---

299 The process of locating lost relatives was daunting to most of the refugees for the simple reason that they were neither literate nor understood Ottoman. However, as groups were generally settled together in a region. In addition, the problem was somewhat lessened at the provincial level as records listing the groups leaders were registered with the Settlement Agents. See Konya settlement document 1. Eskişehir kazasında muhacirin-ı çerâkiseden Emine hatunun oğlu diyâr-ı âharda bulunan Mehmünd Koc nâm kimesnenin müteallisâti zmnnda oraya selbi hk. Kütahya kaymakamının tahrîrât-ı vâridesi ile berâber arzuhalı leffîyle (761/82/38)

300 758/80/274

301 758/80/pet.13
involving Russian subjects, the Commission heard appeals and sought to effect some form of compensation, even to the extent of contacting the Russian authorities in an effort to secure the sale or return of that property.

A last aspect of the Commission’s involvement in family affairs concerned its role in the guardianship and education of orphans. In this respect the records indicate a high priority attached by the Commission to this issue, one which closely paralleled the general pattern of petition and response to the urban notables. In both cases, the records indicate a strong desire by the Commission to secure the welfare of those who had undergone drastic reversals in their conditions, making them the objects of pity. Unlike the notables, the orphans did not only come from the genteel class but consisted of children from all the classes of the refugees. During the worst of the flood in 1864, special facilities were established for those children orphaned in transit or while waiting on the docks. Unlike the bulk of refugees who were turned away from settlement in Istanbul, orphaned children were directed to the capital in order to receive care. An example of this priority treatment came on May 4, 1864 at the height of the crisis in Trabzon when Yaver reported to Istanbul that twenty to thirty orphans were to be sent on in groups of five to ten in order to be cared for in Istanbul.  

302 This interest in providing care for orphans extended beyond simply providing food and shelter; it included the education of the children as well as the interest the

302 Muhâcirînîn Trabzon’da peder ve mâderi olmayan 20-30 çocuğun onar beşer gelecek vapurlarla Dersaadet’e ızâmları istizâma dâir Yâver Efendi şukkastı takdîmî (758/80/306)
Commission took in the pursuit of assets owned by orphans that were held by banks in Russia.\textsuperscript{303}

Another area of intervention by the Commission into the personal realm of individuals took place within an economic framework, involving cases where personal status deriving from particular talents or skills became known to the Commission. In these cases, individuals were singled out from among the mass of refugees, who were being resettled primarily in Anatolia. While the basic plan was to employ the bulk of new arrivals in the restoration of farming on abandoned property or fallow lands, as well as in other enterprises such as the restoration of the Kozan Salt Works\textsuperscript{304} or rice farming in the Izmit region\textsuperscript{305}, other refugees possessed special skills the Government wished to employ. Sometimes they were simply members of the religious or ruling elites caught up among the crush of refugees. These individuals, especially those from the religious/scholar group, the ulema, were invariably shunted either to Istanbul or one of the major cities, to be hired into positions where their literacy and learning might best be employed. Others, as members of the former ruling elite, were primarily settled in the Istanbul region in favored locations where they could be hired into Palace Service, the military or other governmental positions as well as have their activities and allegiance monitored.

\textsuperscript{303} 761/80/2

\textsuperscript{304} In addition to the Salt Works there are reports detailing home and mill refurbishing along with a range of infrastructural renewals. See also. MV 23968.

\textsuperscript{305} 761/78/170
This left two groups of individuals of particular economic interest to the Commission and the Government. The first were those with particular business skills and qualifications. These ranged from artisans (*erbab-i-sanayî*) and skilled tradesmen (*erbâb-i-hüref*) to professionals such as doctors or medical students. Their identification and diversion to the urban areas served as a means of adding to the economy’s human capital. In most cases they involved individuals with commercial skills or skills in fields such as cabinetry, metal working or gunsmithing. These individuals were often identified through the guilds they were affiliated with, as in the case of a Circassian cutler who was diverted from other Circassians, given a stipend, and sent to Istanbul.\(^{306}\) Other cases involved skills which were of esoteric but of great value as in the case of Oğlı İbrahim Bey who was allowed to continue his studies in urology.\(^{307}\)

A second and more problematic group consisted of those with prior military experience. These individuals included not only former irregulars in the resistance against the Russians but also former members of the Russian Army as well. As the overall political situation with the Russians remained one of considerable tension and mutual suspicion, the incorporation of these individuals into the military or into the local gendarmerie (*zabit*) raised a host of problems, as well as, at the same time, raising the promise of seasoned and motivated troops for the Ottoman army. The concern the Ottomans felt toward this group, in particular the former regular military,

\(^{306}\) *Muhâcirîn-i Çerâkiseden selca) sandîk ve bıçakçı esnafından olanlar Dersaâdet’de tavattun edeceğinden ve buna mümâsil sâir muhâcirîn Dersaâdet’de tavattun niyetinde bulunanlara yüzellişer guruş attiyse verilmesine dâîr* (758/78/108)

\(^{307}\) *Oğlı İbrahim Bey’in Mekteb-i Fünûn-i Tibbiye şâgirdâmi silkine idhâline dâîr* (761/80/227)
can be understood through the examination of a number of entries involved with the questions regarding the former officers’ true status in the Russian military as well as exactly where did their current allegiance lie? To ascertain this, background investigations were undertaken in order to verify ranks and honors within the Russian military and secret reports were filed regarding a number of commissioned officers.  

This was especially sensitive and important at the most senior levels, as the Ottomans made great efforts to recruit the best and the brightest into their own ranks at equivalent, or lateral levels. Top officers were not only given equivalent ranks but were granted medals deemed to be of equal status to those previously awarded to them by the Tsar. An interesting legacy of the program charged with bringing former members of the Russian officer corps into the ranks of the Ottoman military can be found in Muhittin Ünal’s *Kurtuluş Savaşında Çerkeslerin Rolü* (“The Circassian Role in the War of Independence”). This incorporation of Circassian Russian army officers into the Ottoman military led to a multi-generational tradition of service to the Empire; so much so that by the time of the War of Independence, Circassians played a high profile role in the campaigns against the Greeks as well as supporting both the Republicans as well as those loyal to the Sultan in the civil struggles taking place immediately after the conclusion of the war.

---

308 761/79/85

309 758/79/228, 761/80/16, 761/81/289

310 Another interesting aspect of Circassian settlement may be inferred from Ünal’s book, which serves in part to corroborate my thesis that the majority of Circassian settlement was not generated by Pinson’s and others’ notions of “demographic warfare” and thus aimed at the Rumelian provinces but indeed was primarily aimed at Anatolia and the expansion of Ottoman governmental control in the eastern marches. This can be found in the biographical profiles of those taking part in the War of
The incorporation of many of the former officer class found a counterpart in the entry of former non-commissioned officers and their men into the lower ranks of the army and gendarmerie. Emigrants entered the military at times in groups, at other times individually as the result of a petition. Others became policemen or police officials, usually based on prior service but sometimes as the result of status within a particular community.\textsuperscript{311} For their part, the Russians looked upon this process with some well justified apprehension. An early tacit agreement was struck whereby the Ottomans would not station former soldiers in the northeastern provinces near the Russians, but there is little to indicate that this agreement was enforced. In general, the Commission's role in helping the military enlist former soldiers seems to have been an active one and a role that over time proved not only beneficial to the Ottomans but one that was to play a vital factor in the creation of modern Turkey.

\textsuperscript{311} The entries range from the appointment of Haci Ismail as the deputy police chief of Adana (761/78/103) to the enrollment of 270 unnamed soldiers into the military (758/80/322). As desperate and willing fodder for the army the emigrants provided a key source of manpower during the decades between the Crimean and Russo-Turkish War of 1877. At the same time, the irregular troops (başbozkı, literally broken heads) were as much trouble to the Ottomans as they were of use. Usually staffed by those unable to make it in the regular military, they became an armed source of friction, especially with the Christian populations, in the countryside.
The Commission and the Problem of Slavery

Perhaps no other issue confronting the Commission was as difficult and complex as that of slavery. Against a background of foreign pressures, in large part exerted by the British, as well as calls for reform or outright abolition arising from individuals and groups within the Empire, slavery was a divisive and hotly contested subject within the Ottoman government circles of the 1860s. For the reformers of the Tanzimat, slavery represented yet another example of the decayed economics and social morays of the old regime. While a considerable amount has been written on this subject during the past two decades, little has been written on how slavery was regarded within the Civil Service and in the day-to-day affairs of the educated middle class. The persistence of some aspects of slavery as presented in the autobiography of Halide Edip\(^{312}\) serve to create the impression that the institution lingered in some tacitly accepted form on a broad scale until the early twentieth century. This is probably a serious misperception as it fails to account for the slow but steady shift in attitudes taking place within the urban, literate public during the last half of the nineteenth century. In this instance, the collected records of the Commission provide an interesting glimpse into those shifting views.

---

\(^{312}\) In addition to the theme of the damage done to Ottoman families through the practice of polygamy, Edip painted a decidedly negative picture of household slavery in Istanbul during the last decade of the 19\(^{th}\) century. A central figure in her early days was the Circassian slave girl Fikriyar who was sold by the chief of her clan to an Egyptian household in Istanbul. For Edip, Fikriyar represented a life unfulfilled despite the relatively easy conditions Fikriyar experienced in Edip’s father’s household. See: *Memoirs of Halide Edip*. The Century Company, New York. 1926
Before reviewing the records, it is useful to very broadly retrace the topic of slavery within the late Ottoman world. In recent years two scholars in particular have focused on this topic and have produced a number of outstanding works on the subject. The first, Ehud Toledano has written two of the most influential volumes, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression*, which appeared in 1982, and *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, 1998. The second, Hakan Erdem’s *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise*, appeared in 1996. Toledano’s focus is more on the process of suppressing the slave trade and examines this process largely from the external perspective of the British. Erdem, by contrast, traces the ownership of slaves in Ottoman Society back to Classical times and examines its evolution and abolition through a “concomitant” involvement of Ottoman and British policies and actions. Both authors nevertheless agree on most general characteristics of the institution and its demise.

In general these were as follows: 1) Ottoman slavery in the nineteenth century involved two distinct sources of slaves; there was black slavery and white slavery. Unlike earlier centuries when slaves were captured in war or came to the Palace as part of the devşirme\(^\text{313}\) who, like the Mamluks in Egypt formed the ranks of the elite but formally were the property of the Sultan, slaves in the nineteenth century no longer came through this channel but arrived in the Empire by two different means. The black slave trade originated in sub-Saharan Africa with the vast majority of slaves acquired for agricultural use or as household servants. The other trade, the “White Slave Trade” relied, at this point almost exclusively on slaves acquired from

\(^{313}\) The *devşirme* was the term for the conscription of mostly Christian children into the Ottoman military or administrative elite. See Menange, *Devshirme* in E12
dealers in the Caucasus. Until the mass emigrations of the mid-nineteenth century, this trade had focused almost exclusively on young women and boys who were destined for either the Imperial Harem or Ottoman households. As such, this form of slavery was relatively benign. Poor families in the Caucasus might sell off a beautiful daughter or son with the hope that they might be afforded a better life and prospects than might be experienced should they stay at home. This was not entirely unrealistic as a young woman might find herself in the Imperial Harem for a number of years and then be married off to a young military officer in the Court entourage. Similarly, young men were often adopted by their owners and were able to rise through the ranks to positions of considerable power. Hafiz Paşa, the first Chairman of the Commission came from just such a background.

Pressure on the Ottomans to abolish slavery began during the early decades of the nineteenth century as a result of the growing English anti-slavery movement under the leadership of James Wilberforce. Constant pressure was applied on the Porte by the British Legation in Istanbul during the 1830s and 1840s, which resulted in the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Mecid’s decree (ferman) to the Vali of Tripoli in January of 1857. This called for the abolition of the importation of black African slaves into the empire with the exception of the Hijaz. This was followed in the

---

314 For a detailed history of the transition from Ottoman acceptance of British intervention in slave shipping in the Mediterranean in 1847 to the 1857 decree see Toledano, Suppression, 125-147.

315 The inclusion of this exception into the ferman underscores the Ottoman approach to solving difficult problems such as slavery. Instead of approaching an issue and, after weighing the merits and assessing the longer term implication, arriving at a decision applicable to all such cases, the Ottomans often preferred to adopt policies which were often only to be applied on a case by case basis. This can be seen in the
post-Crimean War era by another decree calling for the complete abolition of the black slave trade. Despite these formal pronouncements, the Ottomans were able to evade the issue of the White Slave trade originating in the Caucasus. This in part was due to the difficulty the British would have had enforcing the ban in the Black Sea region and in part due to the difficulty of convincing all the parties involved in the white slave trade of the desirability of such a ban.

Once the Crimean War was over and the British Government’s attention turned elsewhere, it was left to a small group of foreign diplomats, missionaries and educators to maintain any effective pressure on the Ottomans. At the same time, it is evident that by 1860 and the time of the establishment of the Commission that an absence of external pressure was no longer going to be the only means of effecting change. As Toledano has noted:

“Unlike the prohibition of the African slave trade—which, as we have seen, owed a great deal to British pressure—reforms concerning Circassian slavery and the

measure taken against the Black Slave trade and the exemption allowed the Hijaz due to religious sensitivities. In a similar vein, the political climate surrounding the White Slave trade in the Caucasus during the Crimean War produced the seemingly incongruous simultaneous issuance of two fermans in October 1854. The first was published in Batum and called for the immediate and total prohibition of the enslavement and transport of Georgians whereas a second ferman, distributed in Circassia, called upon parents and others not to sell their children. Erdem (p. 104) believes the reason for the difference stemmed largely from a desire to continue the acquisition of slaves destined for the Harem, as well as the fact that the Georgian prohibition was enforceable due to the shared common border where the Circassians shared no border allowing for greater smuggling. While true, this seems to ignore the fact that large numbers of Georgian slaves were Christian and that the Ottoman allies against the Russians were doubly sensitive to the enslavement of Christians. The decision therefore reflected the Ottoman penchant for reaching outcomes where all parties concerned might claim some sort of victory, however small in nature.
slave trade were entirely the result of Ottoman initiative. Motivated by internal considerations, the Porte moved gradually and with caution during the last third of the nineteenth century to the de facto abolition of agricultural slavery among the Circassian immigrants. Involuntary traffic in female slaves was also limited to a great extent."316

Among the groups within Ottoman society it is quite clear that the Tanzimat civil servants on the Commission were quite active in the push for the abolition of all forms of slavery. Before taking a closer look at the evolution of the Commission’s stance, it is useful to review a few key points. First, the Commission was an administrative body. As such, it was charged with the process of arranging transport for the emigrants from the newly conquered Russian territories of the Northern Black Sea. Once they arrived in Ottoman territory they were responsible for the refugees’ maintenance in the ports of entry and subsequent assignment onward to designated regions of settlement. Once there, field agents, working in concert with the Army, the Provincial Governors and the zaptiye were to oversee and monitor the successful establishment of the refugees in order for them to become loyal, law-abiding and productive subjects of the Ottoman State. This last point was of utmost importance to the State.

To aid in the efficacy of the overall process, the Commission, as noted, was able to call upon the various branches of the Ottoman Government, usually the military, for logistics and control but also made use of the Zaptiye (Gendarmerie) as

well as redif or reserve units. They also were able to seek advice and guidance from the Ministry of Justice, the Şeyhülislam and from the Courts. They could not however formulate policy as it related to personal status in legal terms and more specifically in matters of slavery. Here they were bound to the interpretations of the Courts whose decisions were final, and it was here that they often found their greatest problem. This stemmed from the Quranic acceptance of slavery as an institution as well as the notion that those things not strictly prohibited were permissible. As the actual abolition of slavery was untenable, those opposed to slavery were forced to seek the next best alternative, the suppression of the slave trade itself. If this could be achieved, a gradual process of encouraging manumission would ultimately bring about de facto abolition.

Those hoping for such an outcome were sorely disappointed during the years immediately following the Crimean War. The rapid increase in Muslims leaving the Crimea and the Caucasus sharply changed the contours of the earlier flows of white slaves entering the Ottoman Empire. The greatest change came about as a result of wealthier Circassians leaving their homelands, bringing both their families and their agricultural and household slaves with them. This sharp increase in both the number

---

317 The use of redif troops is found in the Dahiliye report D 38018 involving the settlement of 3500 families of Chechens in several locations in Erzerum, including Harput and Muş. A map detailing a portion of this 1865-66 settlement is provided in the appendix.

318 See, R. Brunschvig. ‘Abd in E12. Erdem p.94, argues that, as the Ottomans were constrained by the recognition and sanctioning of slavery in the Şeriat, “all Ottoman measures against slavery had to be confined to the slave trade.” This is a highly important point not only for its implications in the methods adopted by those opposed to slavery but in terms one of the most fundamental internal contradictions faced by the men of the Tanzimat and later by the Young Ottomans.
and nature of the enslaved created a host of new problems for both the Government and Ottoman Society itself. First, the “high end” slaves of the Harem and the Palace were eclipsed by the presence of those forced to suffer the more onerous privations of agricultural servitude. Legalities aside, it was much easier to let pass a beautiful cariye on her way to a wealthy household or the Harem in the understanding that she was upwardly mobile in Ottoman society and life. By contrast, the agricultural slave, condemned to live a life of forced labor among free Muslims could only evoke pity and regret for his or her condition. Second, the sheer numbers of indentured or enslaved Circassians brought the entire issue of slavery into the fore. Estimated to have been as high as 150,000319, the number of newly introduced slaves in the Rumelian and Anatolian countryside could not have been ignored. Indeed it caused substantial disruptions.

In his work discussing the impact that the new wave of emigrants and their slaves had on the Commission, Toledano has noted four distinct types of problems involving slavery faced by the Commission:

a) supervision and facilitating of settlement of the large groups containing slaves

b) settlement of disputes arising between the slaves and their owners

c) guarding against the enslavement of those found to be in desperate circumstances

d) protection of individuals against slave dealers

319 Toledano. p.164, Erdem p.118 MM 1407
This last category (d) differs from (c), as the majority of those involved in (c) found themselves in the countryside and were probably already engaged in agricultural pursuits. In this respect it would more closely resemble the plight of sharecroppers who found themselves increasingly bound to the land by their creditors. This last group, as we shall see, applied primarily to the large mass of refugees who arrived during the period of the independent Commission (1860-65). They were not resettled agricultural slaves but instead were the most desperate of the refugees who were impoverished and disoriented and thus vulnerable to the deceptions of slave dealers. Ironically, the dealers in question were at this time beneficiaries of recent Ottoman attempts to suppress the slave trade itself. This paradox stemmed from the 1846 decision to close the Istanbul Slave Market. In doing so, the Porte abolished the position of the Officer or Warden (kethüda) of the market, thus removing any form of supervision. Erdem notes that with this move, the slave dealers disbursed to different locations, often working from their homes, which made any supervision virtually impossible.\footnote{Erdem. p.96}

The question of slavery was, for these reasons, a difficult and confusing one for the civil servant of the Commission to address. For their part, both Toledano and Erdem acknowledge the role played by the Commission during this period in the effort to suppress slavery. Both cite entries from the defters which indicate the steps taken by the Commission against slavery and the slave traders. However, in both cases, the activities of the Commission during the years 1860-65 are lumped together without any effort to analyze them in the context of the time and place. As a result,
both fail to take into account some key differences which serve to underscore the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of the Ottoman struggle to come to terms with and ultimately suppress the institution of slavery.

An example of this problem arises from Toledano’s broad brush treatment of the issue of Circassian slavery. While the analysis is sound, and was at the time path-breaking, there are some key points missed in his analysis. Of primary importance to this study is the failure to note that in most of the cases Toledano examines, the problems of slavery confronting the Ottoman government arise not as a result of the mass migrations of the 1862-65 period but stem from the wealthy Circassian families who migrated to the Ottoman Empire prior to this time, in some cases decades before. This ignores the changing socio-economic circumstances in which the refugees found themselves over time. While it is probably correct to assume that the flood of Caucasian emigrants exacerbated the problem in the early 1860s, lumping the problem of agricultural slaves and their manumission along with the slavery confronted by the great flood of Abhaz, Ubykh, Chechens and Daghestanis of this time simply misses the underlying, and more subtle reality.\footnote{321}

For example, Toledano discusses the problems of transfer of agricultural slaves, principally from Rumelia to Anatolia.\footnote{322} In all cases they involve agricultural slaves located in the regions settled before the great influx of refugees. As such they

\footnote{321 The influx of poor refugees from the Caucasus into Rumelia, most notably Tekfurdağ, during the 1863-5 period seems to have been largely comprised of the Abaza and other groups from that region. Some did in fact own slaves and brought larger groups. Most however were in small family units, some of which must have been easy prey for those looking for agricultural slaves.}

\footnote{322 Toledano p.153. The footnoted citations are those found in the following journal entries of the Commission, 758/78/101 and 758/81/26, 31, 271.}
reflect the slaves of the upper class, agrarian Circassian families that moved to Ottoman territories prior to 1861. This can be confirmed through a cursory analysis of the locations where disputes between Circassian slave owners and their slaves originate. In virtually all of the cases recorded during the years 1860-65, the locations correspond to either Rumelian districts or provinces or to those Anatolian provinces where pre-1861 refugee farming communities were established, principally the Vilayets of Hüdavendigar and Konya. With only two exceptions, none arise in the post-1861 designated settlement districts of Anatolia, where the vast majority of immigrants were sent. Those refugees who were sent to Rumelia during the post-1861 period were almost completely from the overflow of refugees in the north Anatolian ports and did not represent the wealthy, slave-owning families but rather the largely destitute victims of the Russian forced marches to the ports. In short, Toledano’s discussion of manumission and the Commission, while cogent and informative, are drawn almost exclusively from those of the elite stratum of landowning Circassians who had responded to prior Ottoman invitations to settle in the Empire.

By subsuming the Commission’s measures adopted in response to these Circassian slave holders, Toledano misses the time-specific aspects of those measures as well as a policy that appears to have evolved in quite distinct time and place-specific steps. In doing this, Toledano as well as Erdem fail to discern or at least fail to illuminate the ways by which the Commission differentiated the questions and problems of slavery. For example, in its first days as an independent entity,

---

323 Both cases date from 1281 (1864) and involve questions of manumission in Ankara and Aziziye respectively. (758/81/165 and 293)

324 Saydam p.98
Commission records concerned with slavery concern themselves largely with matters of estates and their distribution or as Toledano noted with the transfer of slaves from one region to another.\textsuperscript{325} Questions of manumission or claims of freedom, as we shall see, were still not in the mainstream of the Commissions concerns.

At this stage, the primary concern of the Commission was the problem of the sale of children as well as the movement of slaves across Ottoman borders.\textsuperscript{326} This arose from fundamental Commission concern with the general welfare of the émigrés, especially the protection of children, coupled with the vital problem of maintaining control over all movement through the countryside and across borders in an effort to stem the rising chaos in the countryside. As the flow of refugees increased, it became increasingly apparent that the attitudes towards slavery adopted by Commission and its agents were shaped by these two lines of thought. Both evinced the sentiment that slavery and slavers deserved the full opprobrium of the Commission and that the institution of slavery should be curtailed if not extinguished. That this is so is not open to doubt. Records document Commission-imposed constraints placed on those with slaves as well as reports detailing the illegal tricks and ruses used by slavers in

\textsuperscript{325} 761/78/102 for example deals with seventeen male and female slaves listed in the estate of the late Mehmed Bey, a Circassian noble who had settled in the Izmir region. In this case the case involved the appeal by his inheritors to raise funds through the sale of these slaves. At this time, the Commission took little or no action other than to send its approval to the governor (vali) of Izmir for the sale to take place. Çerkes muhâcîrîrinden müteveffâ Mehmed Bey’ın 17 nefer köle ve càriyesinin furuhti veresesi tarafindan iddîa olunduğundan bu bâbda ne vechile hareket olunmasna dâîr Izmir valisîsinin tahrîrâtîyla melfûfâtı gönderildiğini şâmil

\textsuperscript{326} 758/78/126, 761/78/159, 761/78/205
order to deceive the Commission.\textsuperscript{327} At the same time, as is noted above, it was not in the power of the Commission to pronounce on the legality of the matter. Therefore they pursued solutions to the problems best suited to reform or resolution through their own means. As guardians of the refugees’ welfare and supervisors of their movement, two options emerged.

The first was the aggressive pursuit of traffickers in slaves where the Commission could function in its role a guardian. The earliest entries deal largely with the dubious sale of individuals who might find protection through the Commission, in particular the sale of children. As the Government had already indicated in its 	extit{ferman} of 1854 that the sale of children was repugnant, the Commission pursued this matter to the fullest. In particular, the pursuit of those attempting to sell girls came top of the list.\textsuperscript{328}

Beyond the protection of children, the Commission from an early time adopted a policy of intervention in those cases where the welfare of the slaves was threatened. In those cases there was little ambiguity under Islamic law as to the

\textsuperscript{327} 761/81/70, 758/81/ pet.34 “Üzerî hk. olan memnûyyet-i sâbîkanın te’kidiyle berâber maslahat-i zâtîyyesi olmadıkça efrâî-i muhâcîrînden hiç birinin Dersaadet’e azîmetine ruhsat olunmamasının memurîn-i mülkiyeye ve esîrîlere kethudâsi nâmî verilencerin ellerinden mühûrîlernin alınmasına ve taşrâyı gideceklерîn yedîlerinde komisyonun ilmiâhaberi olmadıkca murûr tezkeresi itâ külînmamasına ve tefürrûâtına dâîr komisyon mazbatası”

\textsuperscript{328} The seriousness attached this subject is underscored in a December 15, 1861 communication from the Governor of Aleppo who reported the sale of children of slaves in the Province. While the disposition of the case is not found in the records, the very fact that a governor of a distant province attached enough importance to the issue that he bothered to report the matter, indicates the priority the Commission assigned the protection of children. This was followed by an order obtained on April 30, 1864 by the Commission prohibiting the sale of young girls: \textit{Muhâcîrinin kız çocuklarını satmakda olduklarından mücâzât ve istirdâdına ve müteallikâtına verilmesi için umûmen emirnâme yazılımasına dâîr komisyon mazbatası 758/80/309
legality of the Commission actions. Violence against slaves or their general mistreatment allowed the Commission solid grounds to intervene. This intervention also took form in actions taken against those who would move slaves from place to place. Here again the Commission had clear jurisdiction. Should the problem involve the welfare or movement of an emigrant (*Muhacirin*), the Commission would become involved. As the control of movement within and across Ottoman borders was a high priority, those who defied the laws found themselves quickly pursued.

Where the Commission was less effective in controlling or limiting slavery was in the resale of slaves within the Empire. As slaves represented a substantial portion of many individuals’ capital, the Commission was presented with a number of cases where the sale of slaves was the only choice for cash-starved individuals.\(^\text{329}\) As a result, the question turned on the welfare of the master and the slave. If the slave could not make a case for illegal enslavement or an arbitrary breaking up of a family unit, there was little room for intervention by the Commission, Indeed, the years 1860-63 show little evidence to indicate that this process of disposing of assets to meet expenses was interfered with at all. In fact there is a regular flow of petitions either to sell slaves as a result of hardships as well as petitions for the return of escaped slaves.\(^\text{330}\) In this process, as well as the matter of resolving estates that included slaves, the Commission prepared a series of guidelines in order to ensure

---

\(^{329}\) *İzmir ve Aydın’da sakin Arslan Bey ve sàirenin katʾ olunan yeşmiyelerinden dolayî köle ve càriyelerinin furuhtu hk. vukûbulan işkence ve hasînden dolayî diğer mûnâsîb ve bir mevkie nakl olumâlarî istidâlarîna dâîr Arslan Bey ve sàirenin arzûhâli ûzerine komisyon ilâmî*

\(^{330}\) 758/78/133, 761/79/115
uniformity and preserve the legality of the sales.\textsuperscript{331} Taken together, the early entries provide a picture of the Commission simultaneous taking action to protect those who might become enslaved, hearing petitions for those who claimed illegal enslavement, as well a pursuing those who would improperly sell or transport slaves. At the same time there is also ample evidence to indicate that despite the general disdain for slavery and slavers, there was a strong sense of the importance of balancing the protections of slaves with the economic interests of the slave-holders. Slaves were property and as such slave-owners were entitled to dispose of them. Economic necessity further tipped the balance in this regard. Therefore the Commission was required to comply if not facilitate the return of escaped slaves as well as regulate their sale, until the flood of refugees in 1863-65 changed the landscape and the rules.

The arrival of so many refugees in 1863-65 created a host of new problems for all parties involved with slavery. Foremost among these was the problem of such a large number of disoriented and destitute émigrés. For the slave traders this mass of desperate humanity was ideal material. Beginning at the piers in Russia, families were coerced into selling their children in order to pay for transport. One report described the use of a formula whereby a certain fraction of the children would serve as a transportation "tax".\textsuperscript{332} Once inside Ottoman territory, families faced additional dangers as they were again approached by slave-dealers who were able to offer some money or food in return for the emigrants children, especially their young women.

\textsuperscript{331} 761/78/205
\textsuperscript{332} Toledano p.154
Stories of these illegal and unconscionable acts made the European as well as into the Ottoman press.\footnote{Levant Herald 8/17/1864}

At the same time, the policy of the Commission was undergoing a clear and profound change. In place of the previous policy of simultaneously protecting the weak and preserving property rights, there was the rapid development of a policy of pursuing and suppressing slave traders as well as the development of what one might term the muscular encouragement of manumission. The evidence for this is found not only in the précis of the Commission, but in larger dossiers of the Ottoman Ministries. In particular, one dossier by the \textit{Meclis-i Mahsus} or Privy Council chronicles this shift.\footnote{MM1407} As this dossier has been examined on numerous occasions and is central to the discussion of both Toledano and Erdem, it will suffice here merely to recapitulate the major points. The first and most important of the documents in the dossier is an order of July, 24 1864 by the Ottoman Grand Vizier Fuad Pasa. In it he describes the perfidious nature of the slave trade with “experts in profiteering” (\textit{erbab-i-ihtikar}) exploiting the reduced circumstances of the refugees in order to enslave women and children. Due to the chaotic situation prevailing in the ports and the countryside at the time, all sales of slaves by the immigrants were suspended. Erdem has correctly pointed out that Fuad’s call was groundbreaking not because it called for the end of the sale of freeborn individuals, which had always been the case under the Sharia, but in the application of a blanket prohibition regarding the sale of all slaves.\footnote{Erdem. 115}
Accompanying this document were two others in the dossier that spelled out two important aspects of this order. The first was the case of five emigrant boys (beş nefer Muhacirin çocuğu) found in the possession of one Arab Süleyman who was in the process of transporting them to Egypt. When the Government had the police (Zaptiye) seize them on the grounds that they were free, Arab Süleyman brought the case before the Şeyhülislam, on the grounds that they were legally purchased slaves. The case was argued back and forth with the Government pursuing the provenance of the children even after Fuad’s dismissal in 1866. Ultimately, the case was referred to Osman Paşa, a member of the Meclis-i Vala who blasted the legality of the slavers’ case despite the ploys employed by the slaver. This appears to have left the entire issue very much in the air.

However, a second document with direct bearing on the slavery question is to be found in the same dossier. This is a telegram sent from the Governor of Edirne detailing a conflict between Circassian slave owners and their slaves in Tefürdağ. During the uprising several people were killed, and when the Ottoman army arrived they were initially turned back by the landowners. A subsequent and larger show of force brought an end to the immediate conflict but did little to resolve the larger issue.

336 Ibid. Erdem has raised an interesting question regarding Fuad’s order with regard to repeated references made to “foreigners”. This concern with foreigners and the prevention of the émigrés falling into their control also shows up in the Commission’s own records. In this case 758/81/17 makes use of the term “foreign and non-Muslim”. Foreign therefore might be referring to Muslim and non-Muslim as well as both combined. In this case it would seem to apply to foreign in the context of non-Ottoman, more specifically to Egyptian and other slavers from the Arab world, perhaps reflecting a changing notion of Ottoman subjects as defined by their territorial boundaries as much as religion. “Muhâcîrin-i Çerâkisenin eçebî ve tebâ-i gayr-i müslîme yedlerine geçûrûnmemesi hk. komisyon mazbatasının taktîmine dâir”
of the claims of freedom raised by a substantial number of agricultural slaves. The larger resolution to the problem was the Ottoman push to promote a process of manumission through payment of a fee. (*bedel-i atti*). This was very much in keeping with the Ottoman propensity to fudge and, given the slaves’ inability to pay the fee in the case at hand, the Government defused the problem by paying the fee itself. Nevertheless this case became the test case for the use of contractual manumission (*müktebe*) as a solution to the larger problem of slavery.

Taken together, these solutions or campaigns reflect the rapid change within Ottoman thinking during the early 1860s. The universal application of the *müktebe* was endorsed by the Sultan on May 1, 1867, paving the way for the continued decline of slavery in the Empire. At the same time these are the most obvious manifestations of a process that was hard at work within the Commission during the years 1863-65. This can be readily observed in the transformation of the earlier policy of simultaneous protection of those from enslavement with the protection of property rights of slave owners to the far more aggressive policy alluded to above. As the crisis of settlement subsided, the attention to issues surrounding slavery rose. (See Slavery chart) As the numbers rose, so did the aggressive pursuit of slavers and questionable owners of slaves. The principal focus now became the prevention of slaves leaving the country as well as determining the status of the slaves in question.\(^{337}\) Entries also focus on the banning of sales of slaves in Trabzon\(^{338}\), as well as measures to avoid the tricks used by slavers to circumvent the law.

\(^{337}\) 758/82/66, 758/81/ext.36, 761/82/49

\(^{338}\) 761/81/138, 761/82/23
Altogether it is clear that the final two years of the independent Commission demonstrate a renewed capacity to involve itself with the welfare of its charges and not simply their basic survival. In taking the lead in the resolution of the problems associated with the predations of slavery, the Commission was able to substantially change its approach from administrator and guardian to one of a highly proactive participant in the formation of basic rights within Ottoman society. While these activities were for the most part behind the scene, there can be little question but that the Commission and its work were prime movers in the slow and still incomplete progress towards universal emancipation.
Chapter VI

Epilogue and Conclusion

On November 25, 1865 the Commission was abolished. Ostensibly the reason for its abolition stemmed from a desire to save funds. To a certain extent this was true as the monthly salaries had mounted to thirty-five thousand kuruş a month.\textsuperscript{339} At the time the \textit{Levant Herald} reported the sorry state of Ottoman finances and the need to reduce officials' expenditures, if only to bring them into line with British and French Government salaries.\textsuperscript{340} With the ballooning of the Ottoman debt, there certainly was an underlying rationale in curtailing administrative expenses. Nevertheless, given the events of the past two years and the fact that the government was only just beginning to reassert control over the situation, it would appear that the abolition of the Commission was shortsighted at best.

With the abolition of the Commission came the reassignment of duties to other ministries as well as the relocation of the staff. The major work of the continued resettlement of the refugees as well as the disbursing of food and supplies fell to the Gendarmerie (\textit{Zaptiye Nezareti}). As the army and the gendarmerie had a long history of working with the settlement agents in the field, this represented little or no real

\textsuperscript{339} Saydam \textit{p115}

\textsuperscript{340} A comparison of the salaries of the President of the United States and the British Prime Minister versus the those of the Grand Vizier and the Şeyhülislam claimed that the adjusted salaries of the first two was approximately five thousand pounds against 11,000 pounds for the latter. Senior military officers were said to make over 5,000 pounds. This, the paper claimed, had resulted in an increase of the Porte's debt from zero to 80,000,000 pounds during the past twelve years. \textit{Levant Herald} 1/3/1866 p.399
break in continuity in the field. By contrast, issues of personal status, the care of orphans, children and women without other means were referred to the Justice Ministry (Adliye Nezareti). As the courts had long been the defenders of the rights of slave owners to their property, this would have most likely not helped to further the cause of those seeking manumission. The remaining business of responding to reports from the countryside and the allocation of property was forwarded to the Meclis-i Vala. It was there that the last head of the Commission, Osman Paşa was assigned with a salary of 15,000 kuruş.\footnote{Saydam p.114}

Not long after the abolition of the Commission, another organization devoted to the question of settlement of new refugees was re instituted first within the Meclis-i Vala and then its successor, the Şura-yi Devlet under the leadership of Osman Paşa. During the intervening period, it had become clear that the waves of immigrants had not totally abated and that some form of organization was necessary in order to manage a renewed flow of traffic. In early 1867 upwards of 20,000 Abaza refugees were known to be on the move towards Ottoman territory.\footnote{FO 95/812 Palgrave to Stanley 5/16/67. Saydam p.115 also refers to a report detailing the impending arrival of four thousand households.} Scribes were rehired as were translators and settlement managers were once again dispatched from the capital. The Muhacirin Idaresi was in business.\footnote{The records of the Muhacirin Idaresi can be found in the Ayniyat Defteri (Monthly Registers). They are in substantially the same format as the registers of the abolished Commission although they are mixed with other agencies of the government and are somewhat more lumped together thematically. The only exception to this format was from the years 1879-80 when the reinstated Commission kept independent record once again.}
For the next decades, the successor entities to the *Muhacirin Komisyonu* continued to monitor, plan and execute the difficult business of the mass resettlement of refugees. As the flow of refugees waxed and waned, these entities were added to or curtailed. During the 1870s the Commission was re-established in Commission form only to be abolished again in 1875. A final Commission served from 1879 until 1880. This pattern clearly demonstrates the reactive nature of the Ottoman Government as well as the constraints it faced due to budgetary concerns. When large surges in refugees occurred, as at the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, the Government was forced to play catch up to the situation at hand. Never known for its logistical prowess, it appears that the Ottomans were fated to struggle with each crisis to the end.

Despite this rather bleak picture of Ottoman governmental capabilities, the record of the first Commission is worth assessing. No doubt it would receive mixed reviews during the period 1860-65, particularly with its inability to anticipate the enormity of the flood of refugees of 1863-65. Yet this is an unfair criticism in many ways. Funding was inadequate and information regarding the Russian decision to evict the Ubykh and Abaza and others from their homelands in the fall of 1863 was impossible to anticipate to any great degree. At the same time the picture that does emerge is one of a working organization within the Ottoman Government that was chronically understaffed and under-funded throughout it existence. The inability to marshal resources needed to relieve the Black Sea ports during the winters of 1863-4 and 1864-5 point to both a poor level of planning and execution. Certainly without
the help of European doctors and the infusion of foreign money and materiel, the
already disastrous situation would have been even worse.

At the same time there are moments that point to real progress and
improvement, not only in the logistical aspects of moving, feeding and settling
refugees, but also in the larger context of reforming the way government worked and
improving the relationship between the government and the governed. The
memorandum, written by Abdulhamid Ziya Paşa, is noteworthy not only for its acute
understanding of the problems experienced by refugees throughout the Anatolian
countryside but also by the manner by which it produced reform within the
Commission. The memorandum is also noteworthy in its genuine concern for the
plight of the refugees in their new circumstances, reflecting a more concerned and
interventionist approach on the part of the Government with its subjects.

The real successes of the Commission, however, were those that have emerged over time. Once the dust had settled, a new and profoundly different
Anatolia had emerged. Sivas, Kastamonu, Trabzon and Canik, Konya, Erzerum,
Ankara and Adana provinces were all now home to substantial numbers of refugees.
In addition, there were significant populations of newly arrived refugees in
Hudavendigar and Edirne as well. The exact numbers are open to considerable
debate.\footnote{The question of population in the Ottoman Empire has always been a difficult one. While the Ottomans were one of the first European states to engage in the process of systematic enumeration, there are numerous problems that crop up. This is partly due to shifting targets and partly due to shifting borders. Kemal Karpat’s \textbf{Ottoman Population 1830-1914}, is a wonderfully rich source for Ottoman demography and at the same time a great example of the numerous perils in any such study. Karpat gathers a series of data, beginning with the census ordered by Mahmud II in order to}
of 1865, one can see that the effect of this rapid introduction of so many newcomers into an Anatolia whose total population amounted to no more than 10,000,000 would have had an enormous impact under any circumstances. When one considers these numbers in the more focused context of the major provinces in question, the numbers take on an even more profound meaning. For example in the 1874 census taken by Ritter zur Helle von Samo, Sivas province was listed as having a population of 481,404 Muslims, and 90,404 non-Muslims for a total population of 571,808. At the same time, Gifford Palgrave had reported in 1867 that there were 440,000 Circassians in Sivas proper alone. Despite the fact that Palgrave was one of the more critical observers in the region, and even allowing for flight from the

assess the number of military levees available among the male Muslim of the Empire in 1831. Despite issues of evasion, incompetent enumerators and other problems, it stands as a model of its time. Subsequent efforts by both European and Ottoman officials all help to provide a fairly consistent, if sometimes methodologically suspect, picture. At the same time, there is the reliance on large numbers of thumbnail sketches produced by a number of consular and other foreign officials throughout the 19th century. These are often accorded a level of authority that might be described as optimistic at best. In turn, these and other reports are often included in academic papers or dissertations such as this one. While some of the data may generally be reliable, shipping invoices for example, there is an alarming tendency to recycle older data which is itself of dubious provenance. After a certain time, the data acquires an unquestioned validity this transforming educated guesses into fact.

This estimate is my own and makes no claims to scientific rigor. It merely takes the previously agreed upon ranges of 700,000 to 1,200,000 for Circassian and 375,000 Crimeans and Nogay (Karpat. Ottoman Population. P.66) and discounts this by 50%. It then compares the total to the reasonably firm figure of 300,000 arrived during the period 1863-64 as a means of validation. The goal here is to err on the conservative side in order to demonstrate the significance of even the lowest population assumptions on Anatolian society.

Karpat. Ottoman Population. P.117

FO 182 Palgrave to Elliot “A Report on the Provinces of Trabzon, Sivas, Kastamonu and Part of Angora.”
province, it is obvious that either or both sets of figures are inaccurate to a fairly large degree. Nevertheless, these reports coupled with the entries from the Commission itself suggest a massive change in the demography of the province and the region. A similar example may be found in another report by Palgrave of 1867 in which he examines Lazistan province. There he notes the settlement of 9500 Circassians and Abhaz, who were said to have arrived during the wave of 1863-5, as well as 1200 Abhaz arrived in 1867. This total of 10,700 may be compared with the total population of 145,538 listed for Lazistan in the much delayed Ottoman Census of 1881/2-1893.\(^{349}\) Allowing for additional immigration following the War of 1877 and normal population growth, it is not unreasonable to extrapolate a 20 per cent immigrant population as a base.\(^{350}\)

Success can therefore be measured by the numbers of refugees now resident in the countryside. The ports had been cleared, and the majority of the refugees were now in the process of regrouping and recovering their lives in Anatolia. This was no mean feat given the desperate circumstances of the previous year and a half. This is also not meant to suggest that the general situation in the countryside was idyllic. On

---

\(^{348}\) Palgrave was a cartographer with extensive experience in Georgia and Abhazia.

\(^{349}\) Karpat p.117. The Census of 1881/2 was initially begun prior to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and was delayed as a result of the War and other intervening crises.

\(^{350}\) The post-War of 1877 period immigration involved two large overland refugee flows. The greatest by far came in the European provinces where large numbers of Crimeans and Circassians were evicted from the provinces ceded to the Bulgarians. At the same time, an additional wave of emigrants were forced from the Russian-controlled Caucasus as well as the newly conquered Batum. Using Karpat's figure of approximately 25,000 for refugees landed in Samsun in 1880 it is safe to assume a similar number fled overland, yielding at total of over 35,000, well in excess of 20%. 
the contrary, conditions were still primitive and the problems spelled out in Abdülhamid Ziyaeddin’s memorandum were no doubt still in force. On the other hand, housing was being built, towns planned and the abandoned or underutilized land of Anatolia coming back into production.

A less visible but longer lasting outcome of the Commission and its policies was achieved as a result of the introduction of this large and, to a great extent, loyal population. This was the benefit accrued from the settlement of the refugees in central and eastern Anatolia. This region corresponded with the ancient zone of contest beginning in the south at Adana and running north and east along the Seyhan and Ceyhan Rivers before the Taurus Mountains. It passed through Uzunyayla and then turned north toward Sivas, Tokat and to the Black Sea Coast. Behind the Taurus Mountains there was more settlement in the Central Anatolian heartland reaching north to Ankara and east through Hudavendigar and Biga. By bolstering both sides of the Taurus, the Ottomans set the stage for the ultimate pacification and consolidation of the region, something that had long eluded the Government in Istanbul.

The refugees served as the agents of the new Government enterprise. In planned new villages and interspersed among older settlements, the new settlers were given land, tools, seed and the animals needed to cultivate. With the reformed land laws, the land was assigned to them along with the tax holidays and draft deferments necessary to make the settlements take root. As these settlements grew, they along with older towns and villages changed the landscape, giving the refugees a new sense of place as well as loyalty directed toward the Sultan and Istanbul. In doing so, the new settlers combined with the earlier residents aided in the solution to the long-
standing problem of bringing the nomadic Turkmen and Kurdish tribes into the control of the Government through a process of settlement.

This process of sedenterization and control of the Kurdish tribes involved the Circassians in both military and agricultural capacities. Before the introduction of the Reform Battalion in the region in March of 1865 under the command of Cevdet Paşa, Circassian settlers had been used in military levies in order to reduce the power of the Kozanoğlu and their Armenian allies in Cilicia. While ultimately successful, it raised fears in the West of a concerted effort to drive out the Armenians in the region, if not Eastern Anatolia. At the same time, the refugees were instrumental in the development of agriculture in the region. In one of the few turns of good fortune they were to experience, the American Civil War produced a worldwide cotton shortage which significantly benefited not only the Egyptian crop but the newly planted fields of Cilicia. Throughout the eastern marches a new order was being ushered in. Concomitant with the introduction of settled refugees with their deeded property came the decline of the traditional local men of authority, the Derebeyes, Ağas, and Ayans. In their place came salaried Government officials whose job it was to provide security, administer justice and ultimately to collect the taxes

351 Gould. Pashas. P.217

352 Gould demonstrates the long standing working relationships between members of the Kozanoğlu of Cilicia and their Armenian allies in both suppressing the Armenian population as well as the Muslim community. Adding to the tensions generated by the Kurdish derebays and their Armenian allies was the introduction of Western missionaries during the 1840s and beyond. With the publication of the Rescript of 1856, the region became a powder keg. This culminated with the murder of the American missionary Coffing and the Zeytoun affair of 1862 where the attack on the Armenian village of that name led to the threatened intervention of the French.

353 Gould p.68
once the tax holidays expired. Allegiance was now to be directed toward the provincial capital and then to Istanbul and not to some Kurdish or Turkish valley lord. With these changes came an even greater change, that of the very center of the Empire. Konya, Sivas and Ankara were becoming the heartland of a dying Empire.

The significance of the demographic changes in the Anatolian provinces was felt in other way. This came in the early counter flow of non-Muslims from the region. It included the out-migration of Pontic Greeks as well as a constant outflow of Armenians, either to the cities or those emigrating from the Empire. In this respect, it is difficult to assess the attitudes of the Commission towards these two communities. As we saw above, the Commission went to great lengths to avoid intra-communal frictions and made efforts to shower praise when Christians and Muslims worked together. It also proceeded cautiously with the disposal of property thought to be abandoned by those Greek families who had responded to Russian calls to settle in the Caucasus. Whether this was done to avoid larger conflicts with the European powers is yet unclear, although it seems unlikely that the internal records of the Government would reflect a concern that foreign auditors might later examine them. Certainly there is nothing there to suggest an anti-Christian bias. If anything the only real anger one finds in the records, with one exception, is directed at those Muslim refugees or officials who appeared recalcitrant or defiant of Commission orders. The exception is reserved for the reputed Russian spy Ebolon Ranče.

354 For Greek and Armenian Emigration see Karpat. *Ottoman Population Ch.4* and McCarthy, *Muslims*, Ch. 3&4.

355 Ranče is a shadowy figure who seemed to have been a Russian agent in Kostence in 1861-62. Ottoman suspicions were that he was attempting to sow dissension.
The underlying reality nonetheless, was one of rapid change in Anatolia. After 1861, the Ottoman State had clearly demonstrated a preference to settle the refugees in Anatolia. Only the devastating crush of refugees in 1863-5 had altered this basic plan and here only temporarily. In making the Adana-Sivas-Samsun arc the primary zone of settlement, the Ottomans were advancing the line of control deeper into Anatolia. With this the state was using the changing demographics to its advantage in bringing the region, with its Kurds, Türkmen and Armenians into the fold. Simultaneously, the rear flank, the Anatolian plateau regions of Konya and Ankara were taking on additional populations of refugees. Ahead of this advancing frontier lay the Van, Bitlis, Erzerum and Diyarbakir provinces, regions where Kurdish and Armenian control was more entrenched. While these provinces too were regions of settlement, the major demographic change, the expulsion of the Armenians was still thirty years distant.

Turning back to the West Anatolian and European provinces, the picture is less clear. Most western scholarship to date on the subject of the settlement of Caucasian refugees has focused primarily on the European settlement of the refugees. The focus and weight assigned these activities appears to be unwarranted. Without question, substantial numbers of refugees were settled in the Rumelian provinces before and during the Commission’s existence. However, there are substantial flaws in many of the assumptions made regarding both settlement and relative numbers. There are a number of reasons for this problem. The first stems from the numbers themselves. Figures for the Tatar and Circassians in settled in Rumelia are for the
most part gathered from British, Russian and Austrian sources. These come in the form of consular reports and other reports by visitors to the region during the time in question.\textsuperscript{356} Few, if any, of these reports are derived Ottoman sources such as the Commission or from other records which might provide insights based on the amount of food and provisions were sent there or the number of refugees to be transported and housed. Reports do exist and can provide some solid support for general orders or magnitude with regard to the refugees’ real numbers, yet these are seldom used in lieu of newspaper articles and reports by those who obtained information second hand.

Second, there is a problem of timing the arrival and settlement of the refugees. As the European provinces had long been the destination for resettlement of Tatars and Circassians, the overall numbers mask the actual timing of arrival. Karpat himself notes that perhaps as many 80,000 Tatars left the Crimea in 1783/4 alone.\textsuperscript{357} Most, if not all of these refugees would have been settled in the Dobruca and Bessarabia. The question becomes, were these eighteenth century refugees lumped together with the newly arrived? Should the earlier settlers also be moving within the region, were they separately accounted for? There seems to be little evidence that were differentiated. Third, many of the major scholars of the subject, most notably Karpat and Pinson, draw upon British Consular sources, indicating that forty thousand families or a quarter of a million people had arrived in the Danube Province by early 1864.\textsuperscript{358}

\textsuperscript{356} Pinson’s numbers as noted above are derived largely from Russian reports which are a combination of governmental and newspaper sources. In addition, virtually all population studies rely on Ubicini’s \textit{L’Empire Ottoman} which in turn are drawn from the earlier and quite impressionistic study by Prince Salaheddin. See, Ubicini p.37

\textsuperscript{357} Karpat op. cit. p.65

\textsuperscript{358} Karpat 68 and Pinson
Allowing that this data is correct, and the Ottoman sources do in fact corroborate the case for a large number, it does not follow that all were settled in those provinces. For example, an examination of the Commission records indicates that while substantial numbers were settled among other refugees in Tekfürdağ, Varna, Silistre, Silivri and along the Danube, there was also an effort made to clear those not settled soon after the major transshipments from Samsun and Trabzon to Varna and Kostence. This often meant temporary shelter in one region while the refugees waited to be sent on to their final destinations. Evidence of this comes from the order to resend all those not resettled in Kostence onward as well as the use of Danube steamers to transship refugees to Western Anatolia.\textsuperscript{359} This seriously calls into question both the actual numbers of refugees settled in the Rumelian provinces as well as the ultimate intentions of the Commission regarding their settlement.

Why then is there such weight assigned the Rumelian settlement? One factor that accounts for this general preoccupation stems from the relatively advanced economic environment of those provinces at the time in relation to Anatolia. Not only were the provinces wealthier, they were better administered, in part due to the reforms undertaken recently by the Governor, Midhat Paşa. News traveled more quickly due to the telegraph network and European commercial relations were considerably more involved throughout the region’s economy. There was also the issue of rising nationalism among the non-Muslim portions of the population, creating

\textsuperscript{359} Karası sancağına gönderilecek muhâcirîninden 1500 nüfûsun Tuna vapuruyla ızâm Olsonacağına dâir Canik mutasarrîfinin tahrirâtı gönderildiğine dâir taraf-i saltanat-ı müstesârîye (761/80/231) Köstence’ye sevki mukarrer iken Tuna vapuruyla Dersağel’ê gönderilen muhâcirîn hk. cevâben Canik mazbatasî leffiyle (761/81/213)
a heightened sense of anxiety with the introduction of new, Muslim groups to the area, a theme of considerable interest to both the Western European Powers. The notion that the Balkan Christians were at last throwing off the yoke of the “terrible Turk” found great resonance in the West. For many, including such figures as the American missionary Albert Long, the independence of Bulgaria was a longstanding dream. For years Long, in his capacity as a missionary and professor at Robert College in Istanbul had served as both ally and conduit to the Western press for the Bulgarian nationalist movement.\(^{360}\) Lastly, there was a growing Russian interest in fomenting rebellion in the Danube region as well as achieving the long held goal of the Romanovs, the recovery of the Orthodox capital, Istanbul itself. For these reasons the question of refugees in the Rumelian provinces received an unusual amount of Western and Russian attention. By 1875, the rising frictions between poor refugees and the resident Bulgarian population had deteriorated to such an extent that the Western sympathies for the refugees had all but evaporated, transforming the English view of the Circassians from an image of noble mountain warrior resisting the Tsar to one of marauding brigands.\(^{361}\)

---

\(^{360}\) Long’s role in the Bulgarian movement is mentioned in both Cyrus Hamlin’s, *My Life and Times* and in George Washburn’s *Fifty Years in Constantinople*. It was long who first alerted Schuyler to the massacre at Batakköy, discussed above.

\(^{361}\) The Levant Herald paid particular attention to the problem highlighting the “brigandage” of the Circassians throughout the Bulgarian countryside. This combined with the more organized groups of Circassians serving as irregular troop units (*bastbozuklar* literally broken heads), reached a climax with a massacre which took place at Batakköy in 1875. A subsequent investigation by the American Consul Eugene Schuyler and his newspaperman friend James A. MacGahan led to the publication of the “Bulgarian Horrors” that opened the way for Russian attacks on the Ottomans in 1877.
A last reason for the general tendency of western scholarship to focus on Rumelian settlement was the subsequent loss of the Ottoman Balkans and the large scale population exchanges of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The independence of the Balkan States, the Balkan Wars and the Turkish War of Independence produced massive upheavals and movements of refugees, all of which has served as rich fodder for generations of scholars. This is perhaps unfortunate in the context of the transition of the late Ottoman Empire into the modern Turkish State as it directs the focus away from the true locus for the genesis of modern Turkey, Anatolia. The question may be raised as to the success or failure of the Commission settlement policies in Rumelia, particularly with respect to Edirne, yet this would seem to be of little import and better examined in the context of the later in-migration of Balkan Muslims. In the present case, the refugees who were settled in the Danube region and the Balkans had little time in which to settle before they were again forced to flee, thereby playing only a minor and transitory role in the area.

The impact of the refugees on the social fabric of Anatolia was felt not only in terms of demography and state control. It was felt in a subtle but profound transition of Anatolian Muslim society itself. This extended beyond the centuries old questions of settling Kurdish and Turkmen nomads and the deepening of Government control within the eastern arc. Its essence lay with a series of social transformation, found in the shifting attitudes and beliefs of the people themselves. This is not to say that these attitudes changed over night; real, perceptible change was to take decades. For example, slavery did not disappear during the period under question. It did however begin a swifter decline as the attitude of acceptance of enforced servitude began to be
challenged and curtailed as a direct result of being forced to confront the problems raised by the refugees. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the Ottoman inclination to fudge when confronted with stark choices made the clearly delineated end of slavery impossible. However, the combination of pressure from within the Government and the pressure from refugee calls for manumission ultimately starved the institution out of existence.

Of equal, or even greater import, was the incorporation of the refugees into late Ottoman society. What at first was an act of charity and duty on the part of the Sultan and Caliph, as protector of the faithful, soon was transformed into something of event greater import. This was the creation of a new, loyal population which looked upon the Ottoman State now not just as savior but now as loyal subjects. Not only did the refugees reinvigorate the Anatolian countryside, towns and villages, they also joined the Ottoman establishment itself, in particular in the military. Circassian, Daghestanis and others became a key element in the Army, providing a backbone of unquestioned loyalty and service. The results are readily seen in the War of Independence leading to the creation of modern Turkey in 1923. At that time descendents of Circassian and other refugees played a pivotal role in the national struggle. Two of the most famous were Çerkes Ethem and Rauf Orbay. Ethem was famous for having been a highly successful military leader in the campaigns against the Greeks during the War of Independence, only to turn against the nationalists at the conclusion of the war in an effort to defend the power of the Sultan. Orbay, by comparison, rose through the ranks to become one of Atatürk’s closest confidants. As if to confirm the importance of the Anatolian refugees, a compilation of biographies
of major Circassian figures in the War of Independence indicates an overwhelming number of those soldiers to have come from homes in Anatolia. 362

The successful incorporation of Caucasian and Tatar émigrés into the elite stratum of Ottoman society was not the only major achievement of the settlement process. A less obvious but equally important outcome, one with long lasting implications, was the beginning of the process of profound social transformation in Anatolia proper. In stark contrast to the destabilizing role the introduction of refugees played in the Balkans, the influx and settlement of the millions of refugees from the north in Anatolia bolstered the process of consolidation and expansion of the new Turkish heartland. Beyond the new farms and roads, beyond the revived rice fields, salt works and mines and beyond the rolls of new taxpayers and military levees, lay a population whose allegiance lay first with the Sultan and State and in later decades with Nation and State. Nowhere did this allegiance show itself more clearly than in their willingness to adopt Turkish as their language and to rally to the side of the Ottomans and then the Nationalists in times of trouble. 363 This loyalty to the Sultan aided the process, detailed in the work of Andrew Gould, of subduing the Kurdish derebey and agas. In turn, the successful expansion of State control allowed the burst of late 19th century infrastructural development of the region, bringing railways to Konya and on to Baghdad as well as a better road network. By the final decade of

362 This is another reason to suggest that the numbers claimed for Rumelian settlement are greatly overstated.
363 See Ünal’s Kurtuluş Savaşında Çerkeslerin Rolü for a series of biographies that confirm that by the time of the War of Independence, the majority of those officer of Circassian decent fighting for the nationalist cause were the sons and grandsons of Circassian army officers who were settled predominantly in the Anatolian provinces.
the century, the revived eastern provinces of Adana, Konya Sivas and Ankara, with 32% of the Anatolian population, were remitting 27% of the total tithe revenues.  

This demographic shift and the accompanying expansion of control by the late Ottoman State no doubt played a key role in the genesis of the Armenian conflict and the massacres of the mid-1890s as well as during the First World War. The removal of the last significant non-Muslim population in the region left only certain elements of the Kurdish population as not naturally allied to the increasingly Turkic center. It was natural therefore, when Atatürk was forced to flee Istanbul in May of 1919 that he fled to Samsun and then inward to Sivas, Konya and Erzerum, the Anatolian heartland of the new Republic.

---

364 Quartaert. *Dilemma of Development*  p.217


Bell, James Stanislaus. *Journal of a Residence in Circassia: During the Years 1837, 1838 and 1839*. 2 vols., Edward Moxon, London. 1840


-------- *An Inquiry Into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to Classes. From Millets to Nations*. Center for


Quataert, Donald. Dilemma of Development: The Agricultural Bank and Agricultural Development of Ottoman Turkey, 1888-1908. IJMES Vol.6, No.2 (1975)


*---Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East.* University of Washington Press, Seattle. 1998.


Türkay, Cevdet. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Oymak Aşiret ve Cemaatlar.* Tercüman Kaynak Eserler Dizisi İstanbul 1975


----------*Turkey and it Resources*. Saunders and Otley. London, 1833.


**Newspaper Sources**

Istanbul Newspapers:

*Ceride-i Havadis*

*The Levant Herald*

*Takvim-i-Vekayi*

**Archival Sources**

*Başbakanlık Arşivleri* (Prime Ministers Archives, Istanbul)

BEÖ Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası
D Dahiliye
MM Meclis-i Mahsus
MV Meclis-i Vala
ȘD Şurayı Devleti

*Public Record Office, London*

*Foreign Office--195 Turkish Consular Records (FO 195)*
Tribal Regions during the 19th Century (Jaimoukha)
North Caucasus and Transcaucasia at present. (Jaimoukha)
Regions in Turkey settled by Caucasian peoples
Nogay Tatar Settlement Distribution
1278-1282
Topographic map detailing settlement sites for Chechen refugees in the Jebel Abdul Aziz region of Diyarbakir province. (Dahiliye #38018)
Topographic map detailing settlement sites for Chechen refugees in the Jebel Abdul Aziz region of Diyarbakir province. (Dahiliye #38018)