THE BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ARMENIAN QUESTION 1878 - 1908

by

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PREFACE

The Armenian question as a whole has been lost sight of in the tangle of events and alliances that preceded the First World War. As the complicated diplomatic background of this period has been treated elsewhere, no attempt has been made to include it here. Where outside events had a direct influence on the question, however, mention has been made of them. The Armenian question, in so far as it concerned Great Britain, found its origins in the Congress of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention of 1878. Although the question was not satisfactorily solved, after the turn of the century the British public and, in turn, the government lost interest in the search for a successful conclusion to the problem. With the Turkish Revolution of 1908 a new regime was set up in Turkey and British interests were diverted to areas where the situation was more acute.

The significance of the Armenian question in the formulation of the general British attitude toward Turkey has not been previously been emphasized. This question and its repercussions in England explains in large part

some of the otherwise conflicting elements in British policy towards Turkey and the Concert of Europe. No other aspect of the Eastern Question had quite so intense a reaction in England as the treatment the Armenians received at the hands of the Turks. As British official policy was subject to the fluctuation of public opinion, at one moment it thwarted government policy and at another strengthened it. When the public finally lost interest in the Armenian question the British government was left with a confused policy based on sentiment and politics. The Armenian question was a clear illustration of an instance in which British foreign policy felt the force of public opinion strongly enough to be seriously influenced by it. This conflict between public feelings and government politics forms what may be called the British attitude.

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THE ORIGINS OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

From the very outset the Armenian Question was a complicated one. As a race the Armenian people constituted a distinct group, but as a political entity, they did not exist. There was no such place as Armenia on the Turkish map. Under the rule of Abdul Hamid the very name was forbidden. In Turkey any map which described such a district was confiscated. The name simply meant those Turkish provinces in north-eastern Asia Minor in which the Armenians were most numerous, particularly the vilayets of Ezeroum, Van, Sivas, Harput, Bitlis, Diarbekir, and parts of Aleppo.[1] It is obvious from this that any observations pertaining to the characteristics of the population inhabiting these areas must relate to the Armenians as a race rather than as a nation. A glance at the background of the Armenian people, however, is necessary for an understanding of the problem which faced Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

The terrain of northern Asia Minor is largely mountainous and, in general, the Armenians inhabited the elevated

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[1] Sir Charles Eliot, Turkey in Europe (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), p. 424.

plateaus of the region. On the north the plateau drops abruptly to the Black Sea while, on the south, its descent to the lowlands of Mesopotamia is broken by a series of terraces. To Persia and Asia Minor on the east and west respectively, there is a gradual descent. Between the plateaus are found the rivers of Armenia, flowing through high, wide valleys surrounded by grass-covered but treeless hills.[2] The Euphrates and Tigris rivers find their sources here, but only beyond the boundaries of Armenia do they reach any considerable size. The soil is rather poor but the district possesses the largest lake in Asiatic Turkey, called Van, which is almost entirely enclosed by heavily wooded hills. The climate is one of extremes, characterized by long cold winters and hot summers.[3]

Some writers find excuses for the political ineptitude of the Armenians in their geographical position.[4] The isolated areas caused by the high mountains tended to separate the population and the long river valleys provided an accessible route for foreigners seeking the coastal

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[2] Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, II, 564.

[3] J. C. McCoan, Our New Protectorate (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), II, 222-3.

[4] G. H. Perris, The Eastern Crisis of 1897 and British Policy in the Near East (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), pp. 35-6; also Eliot, op. cit., p. 432.

harbours and fertile lands of Asia Minor from the east.[5] The Armenians did not constitute a majority in any of the six provinces loosely described as Armenia. In fact, they only made up approximately one third of the total population in this area, although an estimate is difficult in the absence of any scientific census.[6] The total number in the Turkish Empire at the end of the nineteenth century was judged to be about one million. The largest percentage of them were the peasants, who because they lived in the mountainous regions of Asia Minor played an insignificant part in Armenian national development. The strong tendency of the Armenians to emigrate to the large cities is shown by the fact that there were said to be approximately 150,000 living in Constantinople. It was in the large Armenian colonies in Constantinople, Brussa, Smyrna, and the other western cities where these people voiced their national consciousness.[7] This migration of the population including the cleverest and most virile elements was an important factor in the inability of the peasant population to ameliorate their sufferings. The scattered

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[5] Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, II, 564.

[6] H. F. B. Lynch prepared a reasonably trustworthy estimate: Moslems (Turks 442,946; Kurds 410,812), Christians (Armenians 387,746; Greeks 4,604; others 6,733)in "The Armenian Question", Contemporary Review, LXVI (1894), 442.

[7] W. L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (New York: Knopf, 1935), I, 147-8.

population abroad had no power of united action for either resistance or reform.

Lynch placed the presence of the Kurdish population on the plateau at the heart of the Armenian question.[8] Because the Kurdish and the Armenian population was mixed in most of the districts, especially in the vilayets of Erzeroum, Bitlis, Van, and Diarbekir, the connotation Armenia was practically interchangeable with that of Kurdistan, although the Turks preferred to call the region after the Kurds.[9] Kurdish power dates back to the sixteenth century when Armenia was captured by the Turks. The country was governed in the more accessible regions by Turkish officials, while the mountainous regions were organized under local Kurdish chiefs. This policy brought some degree of peace to the country but fostered the growth of Kurdish influence and power.[10]

There were two distinct classes among the Kurds. There were the tribal nomads who recognized no law but that of might, and the non-tribal Kurds, who, after their conquest by the Turks, represented a reasonably settled

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8 H.F.B. Lynch, "The Armenian Question", Contemporary Review, LXVI (1894), 466.

9 Eliot, op. cit., p. 425.

10 Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, II, 566.

and peaceful population except when they came in contact with the Christians.[11] It would almost seem certain that there existed a feudal connection between the Kurds and the Armenians. The Kurds promised the Armenians protection from other Kurdish tribes in return for tribute paid to their chief whom the Armenians must recognize as their overlord. One disastrous result of this arrangement was that one Kurd bearing ill will towards another would be as likely to kill his Armenians as to take vengeance on the Kurds themselves.[12] Forced to find shelter from the severe winters the nomadic Kurds were often quartered in Armenian villages. They were required to pay a tax for their accommodation but the money usually found its way into the hands of the local Turkish officials rather than the Armenians. From the middle of the nineteenth century the custom of quartering gradually disappeared through the allocation to the Kurds of certain villages vacated by Armenian emigrants, yet, much later, the Kurds were still finding justification for their village raids in the ancient right of quarter.[13] . . .

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[11] Isabella Bishop, Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan (London: J. Murray, 1891), II, 372.

[12] Eliot, op. cit., p. 434.

[13] Lynch, op. cit., p. 448.

Although there were certain very general characteristics which could be applied to the Armenian race as a whole, such as soberness, industriousness, intelligence, and, on the other hand, greediness, jealousy, and vanity, there were two distinct types of Armenians. The peasants and farmers inhabiting the provinces of Asia Minor constituted the larger class. Having little contact with the commercial life of the cities, they were little affected by the world outside, and knowing nothing of justice and government except through the tax gatherer and his brutal methods, they retained a strong allegiance to the Sultan.[14] The second type of Armenian was represented by the "cosmopolitan financier". The Armenian possessed an extraordinary aptitude for commerce and finance and it was as a money-lender that he was best known to the rest of the world.[15] The Porte trusted the Armenian more than any other class of non-Moslem and so there was a small third group represented by those who attained good positions in the civil administrations of the provinces. The best features of the Armenian race, however, were found in the rural classes. The Armenian living in Constantinople or the larger

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[14] Bishop, op. cit., II, 374.

[15] Eliot, op. cit., pp. 423-4

towns of Asia Minor soon degenerated, losing his customs although remaining faithful to his religion.[16]

The Armenian race was held together chiefly by the adherence of its members to the Armenian national church. They claimed that their ancestors were first exposed to religious doctrine by St. Bartholomew the Apostle and Thaddeus about A. D. 34, but, St. Gregory the Enlightener is supposed to have found the country almost pagan as late as 312. By converting the king Tiridates and the people, to the faith of the Council of Nicea, he laid the foundations of a national church. He established the Armenian Patriachate and became its first incumbent. In the fifth century, the invention of the Armenian alphabet led to a translation of the Bible into the vernacular and the new faith received a more permanent form. A synod of Armenian bishops, in the following century, seceded from the Byzantine communion, and from the year 552, the Armenians date their calendar and their church.[17] The Gregorian Armenians, the adherents of the church founded by St. Gregory , constituted the majority of the Armenian people. A schism in the church in the fifteenth century brought

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16 McCoan, op. cit., I, 136-7.

17 Ibid., 177-8.

about by Jesuit missionaries resulted in a number of Armenians joining the Church of Rome and becoming a separate community known as the "Catholic Armenian Church" and, then, under American missionaries in the last half of the nineteenth century a Reformed church was organized as the "Protestant Armenian Church". Except for these two communities the Armenian race and national church are identical.[18] Although the Gregorian Armenians did not belong to the Orthodox Church the differences which separated them were small.[19] The Armenians, however, valued the pecularities of their church as an essential national characteristic. In fact, the church stood out as practically the only point of contact between the peasants of the Asiatic provinces and the migratory population, so that Armenian patriotism has usually been identified with the Armenian Church.[20] The Constantinople Patriarch of the Armenian church voiced this concept when on taking office he declared his fidelity to the nation was identical to

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[18] Bishop, op. cit., II, 335 (footnote).

[19] The chief differences are the denial of the supremacy of the Pope, the rejection of the Council of Chalcedon which holds with the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, and the retention of certain "pagan" rites such as the sacrifice of animals. McCoan, op. cit., I,177-8.

[20] Eliot, op. cit., pp. 429-35.

his fidelity to the church, because it was the duty of the Armenian church not to separate the two sentiments.[21]

The clergy of the church was made up of four patriarchs and numerous bishops, preachers, and monks. The Patriarch of Echmiadzin, in Russian Armenia, was the spiritual head of the church. Under him ranked the Primates of Sis, Agathmar and Constantinople while the lowest in the ecclesiastical rank was the secular head of the nation in Turkey who was endowed with extensive civil powers.[22] On the whole the Armenian clergy were superior to the Greek, although they were not more educated. They did not support the side of the Porte against that of their fellow Christians although the average Greek or Slav showed less regard than this for his Armenian brother. In the provinces the clergy never attempted to make money out of their congregations.[23] Mohammed the Conqueror had given the Armenian Gregorian Church extensive powers tending towards self government. He organized his non-Moslem subjects into communities

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21 The Times (Jan. 11, 1895), p. 3.

22 McCoan, op. cit., I, 179.

24 Eliot, op. cit., p. 429.

or "millets" under an ecclesiastical chief who was given absolute authority in civil and religious matters. Appointed by the Sultan with the rank of vizier, the Patriarch of Constantinople, assisted by a council represented in each province by a bishop became the civil and practically the ecclesiastical head of the Armenian race. The Armenians were secured a recognized position before the law and the right to practise their religion but the priesthood degraded as priests became more and more political leaders.[24] The post of Patriarch was not coveted by any competent Armenian, however, for the liberal constitution granted to the community by Mohammed was not in harmony with the necessity, as conceived by the Porte, of keeping a close check upon Armenian aspirations for autonomy. Consequently, the Patriarch had great difficulty in satisfying the legal demands of the Armenians while keeping at the same time in complete agreement with the Ottoman authorities.[25]

Slow in developing a national feeling to any

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[24] Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, II, 566.

[25] The Times (Aug. 21, 1894), p. 3.

large extent, as a race, the Armenians were a political failure. They had never displayed any ability to hold their own against the onslaught of enemies , as a glance at their history will show how they merely exchanged one master for another. At different periods they owed allegiance to the Parthians, the Romans, the Persians, and the Greeks. There had been vague stirrings of nationalism directed towards a desire for independence at the end of the seventeenth century when, as the instrument of their aspirations, the Armenians looked to Russia. The answer they received was the Treaty of Turdmenchai in 1829, by which Russia took the eastern part of Transcaucasia as far south as the Aras River and, thus, a large percentage of the Armenian population was incorporated into that country. At the end of the nineteenth century the Armenians were divided between three Empires, the Russian, the Persian, and the Ottoman.[26] It is evident, therefore, that any lack of political unity was not entirely due to the conquest by the Turks.

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[26] For a discussion of Armenian political history, see Eliot, op. cit., pp. 425-8.

Under the Turks the Armenians traditionally enjoyed a relatively good position. They were trusted subjects of the Ottoman Empire, having been given more posts in the civil administration of the provinces than any other class of non-Moslem. The favour in which they were held depended in large part on the fact that they were thoroughly oriental, unlike the Greeks and the Slavs who were European in culture.[27] During the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, western influences began to penetrate the provinces of Asia Minor as foreigners introduced education and books. English and American missionaries filled with zeal, gave new force to patriotic feelings. Secret societies began to appear and the Sultan who had always been confident of Armenian loyalty, becoming suspicious, began to class the Armenians with other dissatisfied elements such as the Greeks and the Bulgars.[28] This Turkish hostility to the Armenians resulted from the view that any attempt to establish independence was, in effect, a desire to break up the remnants of the Ottoman Empire.

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[27] G. P. Gooch, "Problems of the Near East", in Kirkpatrick, ed., Lectures on the History of the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: University Press, 1902), p.287.

[28] Langer, op. cit., I, 154.

Coupled with stirrings of nationalism was a second factor which tended to aggravate the situation. The Pan-Islamic movement which laid its emphasis in the Sultan's position as Caliph received a great impetus in the 1880's. The movement which aimed at procuring compensation for the territorial shrinking of the Ottoman Empire in a new accession of religious power served to accentuate the fact that the Sultan and the Mohammedan subjects of his empire stood on one side and all Christians stood on the other.[29] Finding a common meeting ground between the two was to all practical purposes impossible. Furthermore, the Sultan, an adept hand at playing one force against another, did all in his power to foster jealousies within the different Christian elements of his population in order to weaken religious opposition. Consequently, the Armenians and Greeks who shared no love for one another would have sooner fallen in with the Turks than have united against them.[30]

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8 had been little concerned with the suffering populations of Asiatic

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[29] Eliot, op. cit., pp. 443-4.

[30] J. B. Bryce, "Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 612.

Turkey, for while it had enlightened Europe on the deplorable conditions existing in Turkey-in-Europe scant attention had been paid to Turkey-in-Asia where conditions were equally bad. When the final settlement was made, however, the provinces of Asiatic Turkey were included in the peace arrangement. By the Treaty of San Stefano with Russia, Turkey engaged to carry into effect the "improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements" and to guarantee the security of the Armenians from the Kurds and the Circassians.[31] The Treaty brought the Armenian question into the international spotlight and when it had to be revised at the Congress of Berlin, it was natural for the Armenians to expect some recommendations on their behalf.

The Treaty of San Stefano had been disappointing to the Armenians for while the demands of other Christian subjects of the Porte had been specified in detail the Armenians had scarcely been mentioned and, furthermore, had been given no security that their case would be considered at the Congress of Berlin. Consequently, re-

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[31] Article XVI of the Treaty of San Stefano, March 3, 1878 in Sir A. Oakes and R. B. Mowat, Great European Treaties of the Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), p. 385.

presented by the ex-Patriarch of Constantinople, an Armenian delegation presented to the Congress of Berlin a program requesting the minimum safeguards for personal safety and justice. They proposed the appointment of a Christian governor-general who could not be removed at the inclination of the Porte, a militia devoid of irregular soldiers,[32] and an effective gendarmerie. Armenian hopes were raised for a more satisfactory settlement at the Congress of Berlin by the interest shown by Britain in the Asiatic provinces, but the British policy at this time was not to reflect any deep concern for the condition of the populations but rather was to be moulded on her basic political and economic interests.

Russia's offer to protect the oppressed subjects of the Sultan renewed British fears of a Russian advance in Asia Minor. Consequently, Great Britain's policy was henceforth motivated by the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, a principle to which she had agreed after the Crimean War in the Tripartite Treaty of 1856.[33] Salisbury, Secretary of State for

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[32] Langer, op. cit.

[33] Great Britain, Austria, and France guaranteed "jointly and severally the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire" and considered any infraction of the treaty stipulations as a "casus belli". British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, LXXXIII (1878), Turkey no. 40.

Foreign Affairs in 1878, would like to have invoked this treaty calling upon England's allies, Austria and France, to"assist them in maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman dominion", but neither were willing to risk war for the purpose of upholding the twenty year old provisions.[34] Great Britain's particular anxiety over Asiatic Turkey at this time was occasioned by concern for her interests in India. Almost immediately after the crisis brought about by the Treaty of San Stefano however, she diverted her attention from the north-east to the south-east Mediterranean, believing that her permanent route to India lay through the Suez Canal and the Dardanelles in the future would hold little strategic importance for her.[35]

Henceforth, Britain hoped to maintain Turkish rule in the provinces of Asia Minor solely as a means of preventing an extension of Russian influence, although, at the same time, she hoped to accomplish this without condoning the misgovernment of Turkey's subject populations.

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[34] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 48, no. 1.

[35] H. A. Gibbons, New Map of Europe 1911-1914 (New York: Century, 1914), pp. 139-40.

> The country wanted, in short, the moral satisfaction of a condemnation of the Turks to be combined in some way with the political security provided by the continued existence of a Turkish empire, and it is not surprising that this gave rise to a good deal of muddled thinking and some conscious hypocrisy. 36

Russian influence in the Balkans was a remote danger but her predominance in the Asiatic provinces could prove a direct threat to England's hold in India. Salisbury felt that for England the question of Turkey-in-Asia was very different from that of Turkey-in-Europe and he was afraid lest the defeat of Turkey in the Russo-Turkish War would cause a "general belief in its decadence" and Russia might take advantage of the situation to provide the disintegrating force.[37] As it was obvious that Russia had no intention of surrendering her Armenian conquests acquired during the Russo-Turkish War, the only way to provide security for the stability of the Ottoman Empire would be an engagement on the part of a strong power to guarantee it by force of arms.[38]

One of Britain's fundamental concerns was the

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[36] W. N. Medlicott, Congress of Berlin and After 1878-1880 (London: Methuen, 1938), p. 7.

[37] Salisbury to Layard, May 8, 1878, in Temperley and Penson, eds., Foundations of British Foreign Policy (Cambridge: University Press, 1938), pp. 384-5.

[38] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 36, no. 1.

economic aspect of the problem. The British were afraid that an advance of Russia into Asia Minor would bring a depletion in their markets. The acquisition of the Suez Canal had lessened the importance of the region as a trade route, but businessmen were still very much interested in Asia Minor as an area for railroad expansion. Although the British Government would make no definite statement on the value of railroads from the Mediterranean to India, Sir Charles Dilke, a Liberal, spoke in favour of a line to the Persian Gulf to be used as an alternate route because, at that time, there was no guarantee that England would occupy a dominant position in Egypt for the protection of the Canal.[39] As Britain's other commercial interests in the area were large, every advance of Russia into Asia Minor meant that that much territory was taken from British markets, because every territory annexed by Russia was closed to British trade by means of heavy protective duties.[40]

Because of Britain's primary interests in Asia

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[39] D. E. Lee, Great Britain and the Cypress Convention Policy of 1878 (Cambridge: University Press, 1934), p. 126.

[40] L. Wolf, "Lord Salisbury and the Eastern Question", Fortnightly Review, LXI (1897), p. 464.

Minor the pleas of the Armenians were scarcely heard at the Congress of Berlin. Disraeli, who dominated the Congress, dictated the proceedings along the lines of British interests. He cared little for the Christians on sentimental or moral grounds. Yet, although the Armenians did not receive their specific requests, the Treaty of Berlin did offer them substantial gains. The Porte undertook, "to carry out, without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements" and guaranteed "their security against the Circassians and Kurds."[41] As one writer pointed out, by this article the condition of the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey was "raised to the dignity, and was invested with the importance of an international question."[42] The provisions of the Treaty of Berlin reflect the fears aroused by the Treaty of San Stefano. In general the Berlin Treaty established two principles. The Concert of Europe was given authority to control the Near Eastern Question in a collective capacity and the right and obligation to secure reforms

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[41] Article LXI, Treaty of Berlin, July 13, 1878 in Oakes and Mowat, op. cit., p. 358.

[42] F. S. Stevenson, "Armenia", Contemporary Review, LXVII (1895), 201.

for the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Disraeli had abandoned the policy of supporting the integrity of Turkey-in-Europe in favour of concentrating all his efforts on saving what was left of Turkey-in-Asia, not so much out of love for the Turks as from fear of Russia.[43] The Congress of Berlin had the effect of bringing British policy into line with its Asiatic interests.

To implement this policy the Cyprus Convention had been signed on June 4, 1878 by Great Britain and Turkey, but it was not made public until the Congress of Berlin the following month. It provided for the defence by England of the Sultan's territories in Asia against any further encroachment by Russia and, in return, Turkey promised to introduce the "necessary reforms ... for the protection of the Christians and the other subjects of the Porte in these territories". England was to be assigned Cyprus to enable her to carry out her engagement.[44] In effect the Convention was no more than a "defensive alliance" and could not be considered a "guarantee treaty" in the true sense of the term. The association of Dis-

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[43] R. W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question (London: Macmillan, 1935), p. 561.

[44] Convention between Great Britain and Turkey, June 4, 1878 in Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 36, no. 2.

raeli and Salisbury, at this point, proved to be fortunate, for the gains Russia had made in Asia Minor by the Russo-Turkish War and the subsequent treaty were completely offset by the British acquisition of the Suez and Cyprus and the renewal of her alliance with Turkey.[45] One contemporary writer believed the Cyprus Convention was destined to strengthen Anglo-Turkish relations and in time make the Treaty of Berlin obsolete.[46]

The summer of 1878 had been an opportune time for negotiations with Turkey, who lay exhausted from a disastrous war, ready to yield to the first country which would protect her from the ruinous terms of the Treaty of San Stefano. England seized the opportunity in the Cyprus Convention, the credit for which is usually given to Disraeli. It is true that early in the year he had investigated the feasibility of a Euphrates Valley railway and realized that the acquisition of Cyprus would be beneficial strategically as the point opposite the logical terminus of this railway,[47] but there is evidence

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45 W. L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890 (New York: Knopf, 1950), p. 162.

46 McCoan, op. cit., I, 1-2.

47 H. L. Hoskins, British Routes to India (New York: Longman's Green, 1928), p. 44.

to show that the initiative belonged to Salisbury and to Colonel Home.[48] Salisbury was not convinced of the economic or the military value of the island, but he was anxious to commit England to a Turcophile policy in order to secure British prestige in the Near East. Although doubtful at first whether England was able to fulfil the alliance necessitated by her interests, Salisbury decided that it was possible, if she insisted on the Porte's giving her some assurance of its intention to carry out reforms and if she was able to acquire a position near the coast of Asia Minor. The proximity of British troops would be the best guarantee of Turkish cooperation.[49] In view of the arguments in favour of an alliance with Turkey, Salisbury accepted the Cyprus Convention as a necessary instrument for the execution of British policy. His decision was the result of much deliberation but once arrived at was strenuously held and received the support of the Conservative government.[50] For the purpose of acting as a support to the Turks in a period of crisis he felt the Convention

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48 D. E. Lee, "A Memorandum Concerning Cyprus, 1878", Journal of Modern History, III (1931), 235-41; the article includes a reprint of "Home's Confidential Memorandum" which formed the basis upon which the Convention was agreed.

49 Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 36, no. 1.

50 T. G. Bowles, "The Cyprus Convention", Fortnightly Review, LX (1896), 634.

would have the enormous advantage of pledging the national honour of England.[51]

The need for reforms in Armenia had been fully recognized by both the Berlin Treaty and the Cyprus Convention but under each arrangement the measures required for the introduction of the reforms differed. Under the Berlin Treaty the necessary measures were to be determined by the Sultan and then communicated to the other signatories of the Treaty, who reserved the right of supervision.[52] Under the Convention, however, the Sultan engaged to agree with the English Government upon the details of the reforms to be introduced.[53] In an individual capacity England had undertaken the obligations she held only as as a member of the Concert of Europe under the Berlin Treaty. She now had a separate right to insist on the Porte's execution of the agreement.

Criticism of the Cyprus Convention in England did not follow any apparent direction nor was it organized on party lines. The Opposition was torn hopelessly in

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[51] Salisbury to Layard, May 10, 1878, in Temperley "Disraeli and Cyprus", English Historical Review, XLVI (1931), 277.

[52] Article LXI, Treaty of Berlin, in Oakes and Mowat, op. cit., p. 358.

[53] Article I, Convention between Great Britain and Turkey in Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 36, no. 2.

two directions. On the one hand they condemned it for forfeiting England's freedom of action in the Eastern Question and on the other hand, they upheld it for liberating another portion of the Turkish Empire from its oppressive master.[54] Some criticized the Convention violently calling it a "derogation of that territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire which British policy had long defended and which the British government was still committed to preserve in Asia".[55] Others saw only added responsibility in the promise to supervise the strengthening of Asiatic Turkey. A motion introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Hartingdon caused a lengthy debate on the question. By assuming the guarantee of the territorial integrity of Turkish Asia Minor it was felt that the military liabilities of the country had been unnecessarily extended.[56] The Convention was also criticized on moral grounds. For instance, it was not judged right for a Christian power to form an alliance with a Mohammedan

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54 Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 525.

55 P. P. Graves, Briton and Turk (London: Hutchinson, 1941), p. 30.

56 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Third Series, CCXLII (1878), 527.

Power in order to secure the latter's protection, although there was a precedent in England's protection of the millions of Mohammedan and Hindu subjects in her Indian Empire.[57] Critics of the Government questioned her ministers on the methods of reform to be initiated and other issues involved in the acquisition of the island. The Convention was declared a "needless offence" to Russia and a source of misconstruction of English policy. The same end could have been achieved by some other means and Britain should not have had to pay as high a price for Cyprus as giving her consent to French occupation of Tunis.[58]

The justification of England's policies in Asia Minor as expressed in parliament and the press did little to strengthen the position of the Government. The evasive answers of the government to the Opposition's questions on the methods of reform to be introduced increased the assumption that England had embarked on a policy without carefully exploring its outcome, its obligations,

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[57] Stratford de Redcliffe, The Eastern Question (London: J.Murray, 1881), p. 46.

[58] L. Wolf, op. cit., p. 464.

or its entailment's.[59] The Government defended itself by applying the old fundamental policy of the protection of her interests in India by the prevention of any further advances of Russia into Asiatic Turkey. The Porte was not capable of performing the task alone so it was England's obligation to secure a position equal to the task of protecting Turkey's provinces from any foreign encroachment and of furthering the economic and political improvements of Asia Minor.[60] They were determined to bolster up that part of the Turkish Empire by reforming its administration. Internal reforms and increased efficiency, order, and prosperity were felt to be the best deterrent to Russian attack.[61] If the government's explanations as to how they hoped to reform Asiatic Turkey left something to be desired, journalists, engineers, and promoters supplied the deficiency by pointing out that the building of a Euphrates Valley railway constituted one of the best methods. "It was undoubtedly the recollection of former dreams and natural drift of British speculation, set in motion by the prospect of peace in the Near East, which caused the

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[59] Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, p. 117.

[60] Ibid., p. 3.

[61] Medlicott, op. cit., p. 290.

Cyprus Convention to be connected in the public mind with railway enterprise in Asiatic Turkey."[62]

If the Cyprus Convention was met with mixed feelings at home, in the realm of international affairs it was an even more controversial subject. Accused of disregarding the rights of the Powers, Salisbury declared England had not ignored other interests, particularly those of France as a Catholic power in the Lebanon. England had attempted to secure equal rights for men of all religions in Asiatic Turkey but had not taken upon herself any obligation to defend particular religious bodies.[63] The Convention removed some of the suspicions Britain had aroused at the Congress of Berlin but the Sultan and many Turks encouraged by the Russians and French Ambassadors at Constantinople developed the belief that her object was the partition of Turkey.[64] Britain was assuming a virtual protectorate over Turkey which could only be viewed with jealousy by any of the other powers having

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[62] Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, p. 128

[63] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1878), Turkey no. 48, no. 3.

[64] Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, pp. 144-5

Mediterranean interests. It was a departure from the principles set forth in the Berlin Treaty and Russia in particular could not be expected to look favourably upon it.[65] In general, the criticism among the Powers of Europe, was "rather envious than bitter". There was an appreciation of the ease with which Britain had attained the objects of her policy without disturbing the affairs of Europe.[66] Her critics on the continent, however, were aware of the tendency for the British public to combine sentiment with business by adding to the interests of "realpolitik" the plea of humanitarian interest in reforming the Turks.[67]

From 1878 the problems connected with the Armenian population of Asiatic Turkey were to play an important part in the Near Eastern Question as a whole. With the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention to act as the

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65 Redcliffe, op.cit., pp. 46-7.

66 Lady G. Cecil, Life of Salisbury(London: Hadder and Stroughton, 1931), II, 294.

67 H. Temperley, " British Policy Towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey 1830-1914", Cambridge Historical Journal , IV (1933), 156-7.

bulwarks of British policy, the efforts of the British government vacillated according to the interpretation given to these two agreements. As the government embarked on its policy of introducing the means to better administrative conditions in Turkey, the main current of opinion was that the Ottoman Empire was worth preserving if it could be reformed.

FIRST EFFORTS AT REFORM AND THEIR FAILURE

The Cyprus Convention was instrumental in bringing Asiatic Turkey, for the first time, within the scope of British national influence. Of all the Powers, Great Britain had the most to lose by the decay of the Ottoman Empire and the least to gain by its dismemberment. Disraeli had abandoned the idea of the integrity of Turkey-in-Europe in return for a policy in Asia Minor which would preserve British economic and political interests through the use of the Turks as a check against growing Russian influence. This system of protection formed the basis of Salisbury's reform efforts which constituted his particular contribution to the policy of the time.

Sir Henry Layard, the British Ambassador appointed in 1878 to Constantinople to represent the government in the negotiations for reforms for the Ottoman Empire had been selected by Disraeli because of his well known friendship for the Turks, and his general hostility towards Russia.[1] Layard possessed a strong personal liking for the Sultan and considered him a man of some ability with a "concientious desire to promote the welfare of his subjects

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[1] Sir E. Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid (London: Constable, 1917), p. 82

of all classes."[2] Consequently, he came to the Porte with the strong conviction that he could persuade Abdul Hamid to accept a scheme of reforms which, while increasing the general prosperity of the Turkish Empire, would bring relief to the oppressed inhabitants of Armenia.[3] Layard had no desire to fight for the autonomy of the Armenians. To him, they were incapable of self-government and the agitation for it was no more than a Russian intrigue. What was needed was a strong force to protect the Christian inhabitants from the lawless tribes of Asia Minor.[4] The only policy that could be used with effect to obtain promises of reform from Turkey, Layard believed, was the "gentle art of persuasion."[5] Disraeli shared the same belief. " You may bully with impunity the Turks in private, provided you uphold them publicly: but strong remonstrances accompanied by identic notes, and such machinery, always fail with them."[6]

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[2] A. H. Layard, " Turkey and England", Contemporary Review, XLVII (1885), 611.

[3] Sir E. Pears, in Villari, ed., The Balkan Question (London: J. Murray, 1905), p. 32.

[4] Salisbury to Layard, May 15, 1878, in Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, p. 192.

[5] Lee, op. cit., p. 150.

[6] Disraeli to Salisbury, Sept. 20, 1878, in G. E. Buckle, Life of Disraeli (London: J. Murray, 1920), VI, 375.

The reforms proposed by the British Government were practical and specific. They were to be applied to the three elements of Turkish administration which most urgently required attention, the maintenance of order, the administration of justice and the collection of the revenue. Salisbury sent instructions to Layard to negotiate for the institution of a gendarmerie, organized and commanded by European officers, and in the important towns, central tribunals with trained European representatives and jurisdiction over the lower courts. The third proposal was for the appointment of a collector of the revenue in each province who was to abolish tithe-farming. Added to these three areas of reform was the necessity of securing the terms of office of Valis and judges for a fixed number of years during good behaviour.[7] Salisbury felt that the institution of representative assemblies that the Powers hoped to set up in Europe was not practical in the Asiatic provinces. The Christian population was too scattered and the Mohammedans were unsuited to this kind of government.[8] Consequently, Salisbury

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[7] British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 51, no. 1.

[8] Ibid.

instructed Layard, when making reforms, to use India as a model rather than any European state. His main concern being the quality of the administrators, he wanted to employ intelligent governors and Europeans in governing posts wherever possible. Salisbury, therefore, instructed Layard to direct his attention to "persons rather than to paper institutions" which only gave "perpetual subject-matter for diplomatic wrangling."[9]

When communicated to the Porte, the British proposals met with partial acceptance. The Grand Vizier allowed that the creation of a gendarmerie was not unacceptable, but that it was financially impossible. The institution of Central Tribunals brought more criticism because Tribunals of Appeal already existed, the Grand Vizier said, and all that was needed were good judges. Because they would be hampered without a knowledge of the language and their interference would be resented by the inhabitants, objections were found to the use of European members in the courts. Difficulties were also found in the proposal for the abolition of the tithe system. Although the idea was not objectionable it was impractical because there was no survey of the land as a basis for a money tax or rent. Finally it was stated that Valis and judges were already supposed to be

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[9] Salisbury to Layard, June 25, 1878 in Cecil, Life of Salisbury, II, 3o4-5.

irremovable but the difficulty was in finding good men.[10] The Sultan did not seem too displeased with the proposals. Layard had not asked for English supervision of the reforms which would have created the impression that England was trying to extend her influence in Asia Minor.[11] The Porte in making some recommendations on the proposals offered said they were willing to accept European organization of a gendarmerie but would not submit to European commanders. They would reform their judicial system but proposed instead of having a European on every tribunal to appoint a few Europeans as inspectors on certain tribunals.[12]

The general impression Layard received from the Grand Vizier was that there would be a good deal of resistance to some of the reforms at first but that they would "be accepted in principle".[13] No ambassador ever worked harder for reforms than Layard but although he was a favourite with the Sultan he could not overcome the traditional hostility of the Turks to western interference.

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[10] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 51, no. 2.

[11] Lee, op. cit., pp. 150-1.

[12] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 51, no. 3.

[13] Ibid., no. 2.

There was a party in the government which opposed all foreign intervention as a violation of the Sultan's sovereignty and of the independence of Turkey, giving credence to Layard's theory that the delays were not due entirely to the Sultan and the Grand Vizier but to the procrastination of the Porte.[14] Because the Turks did not regard any treaty with the "infidels" as binding and opposed any foreign intervention as a violation of the sacred rights of the Sultan, Layard had difficulty in obtaining any answer from the Porte on the scheme of reforms proposed by his government.[15] The most important thing, Layard felt, was to begin with the introduction of reforms. He found many of the Turkish objections reasonable and if England would make a few concessions now, he was sure, that once European officials gained the trust of the Turkish government they would be able to increase their effectiveness.[16] Fully aware that the Porte's final answer did not correspond to the original British demands, Salisbury agreed to accept the Turkish proposals

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[14] Ibid., no. 3.

[15] Sir E. Pears, in Villari, ed., The Balkan Question, p. 41.

[16] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 51, no.4.

as an "adequate instalment of the changes to which,... the Porte had pledged itself".[17]

It soon became evident that there would be little chance of the introduction of reforms because of the financial and economic condition of the Turkish Empire as a whole and Asia Minor in particular. The fact that Anatolia in Asia Minor was the main area from which Turkish armies were recruited meant that thousands of men needed for a recovery program were taken from the provinces. Good men for administrative offices were hard to find and it was not likely that the government would send them from Constantinople to Asia Minor.[18] An even more important problem came as a result of the bankruptcy of the Turkish Empire. No reform program could be made effective unless it was based upon a sound financial system. Good administrative officers must be regularly paid and farming of the revenues abolished.

Many thought that, like Britain's other imperial interests reforms in Asiatic Turkey were "worth paying for." Consequently in 1878 when the Sultan appealed to

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[17] Ibid., no. 5.

[18] W. M. Tyler, European Powers and the Near East 1875-1908 (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1925), p.118.

England for financial assistance certain British ministers made efforts to secure a loan. The Sultan's appeal fostered the idea that his need would provide a suitable means of pressure for the introduction of reforms. Turkey could not raise money without foreign aid and in return for a loan England could demand execution of the proposed reforms. Salisbury seized the opportunity and presented numerous schemes for the raising of Turkish loans to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, for approval.[19] Failing to arouse Northcote's enthusiasm Salisbury decided in 1878 before the end of the parliamentary session to "put out a pilot balloon" to ascertain the disposition of the House towards the subject, but they put an end to any financial schemes which involved a sacrifice or risk on the part of the British Government.[20] The Turkish government continued to plead for aid, but with no result. Turkey was not considered worthy of the confidence and England had financial complications in Egypt. The Sultan could not understand the refusal of the British

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[19] Salisbury to Northcote, Aug. 5 and Aug. 22, 1878 in Cecil, op. cit., II, 306-7, 309-11.

[20] Salisbury to Layard, Dec. 18, 1878, in Cecil, op.cit., II, 313-4.

government. To an Oriental sovereign constitution and parliament were merely names, so that the explanation that England could not make any large loan without the consent of parliament failed to satisfy him.[21]

The failure of the Turks to secure a loan from England was their chief excuse for delaying the execution of reforms. The British government's impatience at Turkish procrastination found expression at the end of October, 1879, when a British naval demonstration was made at the mouth of the Dardanelles. Because the threatening attitude of the British government was "designed to throw dust in the eyes of the British public" and influence the coming elections, the demonstration failed except as a political maneuver. If the fleet had been used effectively and if Smyrna had been seized as a material guarantee of Turkish cooperation, the results might have been different. Either the Turkish Empire would have collapsed or it would have been reformed. The Turks made every effort to stir up anti-British feeling but they were also aware of the nature of the demonstration and they realized that a diplomatic defeat would place the British government in a very embarrassing position.[22]

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[21] A. Vambery, Story of My Struggles (London: F. Unwin, 1904), II, 356.

[22] "Contemporary Life and Thought in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 336-8.

An excerpt from the Turkish press reflected the general attitude. "Our opinion is that the English Government has taken up an armed diplomatic attitude .... For they had expected that the threat of sending their fleet would have so struck us with terror as to lead us to comply with England's caprices."[23] The only tangible result of the demonstration was the appointment of General Valentine Baker to an independent command of the gendarmerie in Asia Minor.[24] The Turks were indignant at the pressure put on them and the Christians were disappointed and less inclined to place their confidence in England.

Although the Conservative Cabinet had failed to obtain acceptance of their reform program or a loan to Turkey, there was tangible evidence of its efforts to introduce reforms in the appointment of military consuls to Asia Minor. In 1879, six military vice-consuls were sent under the Consul-General for Anatolia, Sir Charles Wilson. The need for improvement in the diplomatic and consular services in the Ottoman Empire had been recognized in 1877

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23 "The End of the English Demonstration", Terjumani Hakekat in "Contemporary Life and Thought in Turkey, Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 336.

24 W. N. Medlicott, "Gladstone Government and the Cyprus Convention, 1880-1885", Journal of Modern History, XII (1940), 188.

by the establishment of a school for interpreters in Constantinople. These trained interpreters were assigned to the military consuls to assist in the task of improving the Turkish administration in Asia Minor and of redressing the grievances of the Armenians against the Kurdish chiefs and Turkish pashas.[25] Anatolia, being divided into four consulates with a military vice-consul in each, they were able to accomplish a good deal during the first couple of years of their work by securing the dismissal of some of the worst Turkish officials and in other ways effecting considerable improvements in local government.[26] The vice-consuls travelled throughout Anatolia and Armenia despite the fact that they were hampered by restrictions and the suspicions of the Porte. They listened to petitions, accompanied Turkish commissions appointed at the instance of Layard, investigated conditions, and reported faithfully on every aspect of the inhabitants complaints. The reports gave to the British public the first honest statement made on the character of Turkish rule.[27] "They rep-

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[25] Lee, op. cit., p. 156.

[26] Monypenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, VI, 1172-3, also Lee, op. cit., pp. 155-7.

[27] "Contemporary Life and Thought in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 341.

resented the only practical effect ever given to the desire of the British Government to reform Turkey by means of European and English advisers."[28] The Armenians were encouraged by the efforts of the military consuls and if these men had been well supported from London, they might have wrought a permanent change.

Criticism of the government concerning its policy in Asia Minor was directed into several channels. Layard's mistaken estimate of the character of the Sultan and the refusal of Sir Stafford Northcote and his parliamentary majority to force the financial consequences of their commitments in Turkey under the Cyprus Convention were considered two grave blunders.[29] Expecting that the Sultan would resist reforms it was thought that England should have taken a stronger hand by taking steps immediately to assure the prevention of any designs to obstruct British efforts. One member of parliament, reviewing the events of the year since the Treaty of Berlin in the light of British obligations towards Armenia, indignantly announced that the government's policy had shown "large promise and

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[28] Lee, op. cit., p. 157.

[29] R. W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question, p. 522.

scant performance".[30] Another Liberal member accused the government of taking on responsibilities whose execution was impossible and of failing to ask for evidence of the Porte's intentions to carry out its promises.[31] In answer to the criticism that the government had abandoned the cause of the Armenians there were many adherents to the idea that England had never promised them reforms as their critics assumed. Under both the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention it was the Porte that undertook the introduction of reforms and England did not engage to use "force".[32] Salisbury declared that England had no special obligation to correct every abuse existent in Turkey, and besides, in many cases, the responsibility lay in the hands of the Turks themselves, and not their government. "It is perfectly useless", Salisbury felt, "to multiply codes of diplomatic promises if you expect that by them you can alter the nature or temper of a people".[33] One

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[30] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Third Series, CCXLVII (1879), 818.

[31] Ibid., pp. 826-9.

[32] Sir Charles Eliot, Turkey in Europe, pp. 457-8.

[33] Commons Debates, Third Series, CCXLVII (1879), pp. 820-3.

criticism a little more difficult to answer was that the government and the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin should have foreseen the fact that the reforms were impractical and financially impossible to execute.[34]

It soon became evident that British policy had failed in its attempts to introduce reforms. Sir Charles Dilke regretted that as yet either the reforms had not been put into operation or had been carried out in such a manner that no benefit could be derived from them.[35] One reason for the failure was that time was needed to produce results and both Layard and Salisbury were unwilling to idly watch the disintegration of Turkey before England could secure a stronger position for her Indian Empire and the Christian population could gradually supplant the Turks.[36] Layard found himself in a very difficult position during the negotiations, for he had his reputation in England to defend as a friend of the Turks while trying to obtain consent to reforms for which the Sultan did not care. Britain's policy had been ambiguous but, until 1880, Abdul Hamid had reserved some gratitude

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34 Ibid., pp. 829-30.

35 Ibid., CCLVIII (1881), p. 768.

36 Lee, op. cit., p. 160.

for Layard's efforts in his behalf. Layard had over-estimated his position, however, because the Sultan's gratitude had no political application except when it facilitated an appeal for his own benefit.[37] A general hostility towards foreign influence had been stimulated by the Russo-Turkish War and the men about the Sultan nourished and tended his distrust and suspicions. They succeeded in convincing him that the occupation of Cyprus, the appointment of military consuls, and the interest England had taken in the Armenian population were proof of her designs for annexation.[38]

Salisbury's policy in the Armenian question during his administration at the Foreign Office at this time has been widely interpreted. The fairest estimate that has been presented was that he was genuinely interested in the improvement of Turkish rule in general and realized a system of protection as outlined in the Cyprus Convention was needed against the encroachment of Russia. He felt that basically the Turkish government was no worse than any other and that with British assistance it

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[37] W. N. Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin and After, 1878-1880, p. 295.

[38] Lee, op. cit., p. 203.

could be made effective.[39] At the time of the Cyprus Convention, Salisbury had boldly taken the lead in Europe in regard to protection of Asiatic Turkey but during the last months of 1879 he began to entertain doubts as to whether the Turkish Empire would hold together. Alarmed at the turn of events in Europe, he abandoned his reform policy and there the question remained until the fall of his government in 1880. It is difficult to decide whether Salisbury would have continued his Near Eastern policy had he remained in office. There is evidence that he intended this relaxation of pressure on the Porte as only temporary until the international situation had cleared.[40] In general the Cyprus Convention and the Treaty of Berlin did not produce much effect on Armenia but Salisbury believed the British government had seen its duty and acted upon it. The results were small but there was some tangible evidence of their efforts. The British consular staff had been increased so that the Turkish government would be better informed on abuses in the empire and an inquiry

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[39] L. Penson, "Foreign Policy of Lord Salisbury, 1878-9", in A. Colville and H. Temperley, eds., Studies in Anglo-French History(Cambridge: University Press, 1935), pp. 128, 140-1.

[40] Salisbury to Layard, Jan 2, 1880, in Medlicott, "Gladstone Government and the Cyprus Convention 1880-1885", Journal of Modern History, XII (1940), 189; also Congress of Berlin and After, p. 345.

was in progress concerning conditions in Armenia.[41] The effect in Armenia was one of familiarizing the inhabitants with the idea that they were entitled to privileges. Although it was evident that Great Britain was anxious to keep on friendly terms with Turkey, the Armenians trained their hopes of independence on British assistance.[42]

With the accession of the Liberal party to power in 1880 there was an immediate improvement in Anglo-Russian relations. The election showed how the war fever had subsided and made possible the resumption of friendly relations. Gladstone immediately inaugurated a new policy based on the Concert of Europe in which he saw the hope of putting down European disturbances. He felt that it was England's particular mission to bring Europe into the Concert and maintain it by always acting as the friend of freedom to other nationalities.[43] Continually urging this plan in his speeches at this time as the essence of Liberal policy, Gladstone never failed to point out the dan-

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[41] Commons Debates, Third Series, CCXLVII (1879) p. 825-6.

[42] Eliot, op. cit., p. 440.

[43] Gladstone's Speech at Loanhead, March 22, 1880, in "Foreign Policy of the Liberal Party", Westminster Review, CCXVII (1897), 622.

gers of the single-handed action employed by the Conservative party.[44] As applied in Asia Minor the Liberal policy was friendly action within the Concert of Europe in an effort to secure the fulfilment of the Treaty of Berlin. Little mention was made of the Cyprus Convention because the Government did not wish "to give more sanction than necessary to its validity".[45] When Gladstone formed his cabinet a general reversal in foreign policy was expected, including a repudiation of the international engagements of the late government, but, contrary to expectations, the Liberals were determined to carry out the provisions of the Berlin Treaty. Queen Victoria at this point feared that the government was becoming engaged on the wrong side and was encouraging hostilities which she would not sanction. She declared that under no condition would she consent to war with "our old ally Turkey" or even to a reversal of the old Conservative policy which she believed was in the true interests of the Empire.[46] The Liberal cabinet,

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44 "Foreign Policy of the Liberal Party", Westminster Review, CLXVII (1897), p. 622,

45 Granville to Dufferin, May 5, 1880, in Temperley and Penson, eds., Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt to Salisbury (Cambridge: University Press, 1938), p. 397

46 Victoria to Granville, July 27 and Sept. 18, 1880 in G. E. Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria (London: J. Murray 1928), Second Series, III, p. 122, 141.

however, felt a considerable amount of pressure could be applied jointly without any risk of war.[47]

At the general election of 1880 a cry went up in England for the recall of Layard who was regarded as too violent a partisan for the majority of the British public. It was pointed out that there had been no removal of an ambassador on a change of government for twenty years and therefore the political element was negligible. It was doubted whether the Powers would have welcomed Layard's retention as ambassador because it was thought he had been impulsive and indiscreet in his relations with his colleagues. The Government felt that the execution of reforms had not been pushed with enough vigour and due to their new policy of pressure through the Concert of Europe Layard would cause "great dissatisfaction in the Liberal Party".[48] Actually Layard had worked hard in the cause of reform but as a favourite of the Sultan the philo-Turk party in England had expected too much of him. The Liberal government in an effort to press execution of the Treaty provisions sent George J. Goschen as ambassador on a

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47 Granville to Victoria, Sept. 19, 1880, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, III, 141-2.

48 Granville to Victoria, May 1, 1880, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, III, 92-4.

special mission in reference to Montenegro and Greece. Abdul Hamid interpreted Layard's recall as evidence of a reversal of British policy while Layard pointed out that his recall was made as offensive as possible to the Sultan.[49] He believed in the necessity of personal relationship between the English ambassador and the Sultan and severely criticised the sending of Goschen to reprimand and lecture a sovereign in such a manner.[50]

Gladstone's plans for a Concert of Europe had the psychological effect of enabling the Powers to abandon their differences for more zealous and united pressure on the Turks. The enthusiasm for collective action which Gladstone lost no time in utilizing was directed in large part to Balkan troubles, especially the Montenegrin and Greek claims under the Treaty of Berlin. The cause of Armenia was not forgotten, however, because in May, 1880, a despatch was sent to British representatives at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome and St. Petersburg calling on the united efforts of the Powers to put an end to the procrastination of the Porte in carrying out its treaty

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[49] Valentine Chirol, Fifty Years in a Changing World (London: J. Cape, 1927), p.91.

[50] A. H. Layard, "Turkey and England", Contemporary Review, XLVII (1885), 612.

obligations in respect to Montenegro, Greece and Armenia.[51] Consequently, in June, the Powers served an Identic Note to the Porte demanding execution of the Treaty provisions to which in July the Sultan returned an evasive reply outlining his own proposals. Goschen, the British Ambassador, feeling that there was nothing to be gained by isolated notes to the Porte, advocated a policy which would push the Turks to stop the general anarchy and chaos.[52] The numerical force of the two different races and religions should be the controlling factor in any reform program, he felt, and consequently the Powers should not commit themselves until the real facts concerning the population were available. A census would mean loss of time but the objection from Goschen's point of view was less than proceeding without the information. The Porte had sent two commissions to Armenia to investigate conditions but they refused to recognize in all areas the predominance of Christians, a fact which would have to be established before any reform could be carried out.[53] The Collective

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[51] Granville to British representative, May 4, 1880 in Temperley and Penson, eds., Foundations of British Foreign Policy, p. 395.

[52] Commons Sessional Papers, C (1881), Turkey no. 6 no. 1.

[53] Ibid., no. 15.

Note issued by the Powers in September claiming the Porte's proposals did not meet with either the "spirit or letter" of the Treaty of Berlin brought to the Porte's attention the fact that, despite the two commissions, conditions in Armenia had not improved and their proposals were inadequate.[54]

The Porte's answer to the September note was aggressive in announcing what it proposed to do about reforms without reference either to its own earlier proposals or to the criticism of the Powers.[55] As concerted action had brought no appreciable results the zeal of the Powers began to cool. Goschen feared the inevitable effect on the public would be the idea that the Powers did not wish to press their views and agreed with the Porte's proceeding to its own solution of the question.[56] If England did not use all the necessary force to secure thorough and honest reform, it would be obvious to all Europe that she did not regard the maintenance of Turkish power as of sufficient importance to compensate her for the expense and trouble of sustaining it.[57] Perhaps she did not for

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54 Ibid., no. 79.

55 Ibid., no. 98.

56 Ibid., no. 129

57 "Contemporary Life and Thought in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 348.

in February, 1881, the British government in concert with the German and French governments who felt further discussion of the Armenian question would only interfere with the settlement of the Greek frontier, agreed to defer making representations to the Porte with respect to the non-fulfilment of the Berlin treaty provisions in respect to the Asiatic provinces.[58] Although the Liberal government was able to replace the "friendly pressure" of Salisbury with "forcible coercion" in the Balkans, it never successfully applied it in the provinces.[59]

The reference made to Armenian reforms in Granville's circular despatch of May 4, 1880, showed that the new administration intended to base its reform policy on the Treaty of Berlin rather than the Cyprus Convention. Both Gladstone and Granville, his foreign secretary, found objections to the Convention and worked towards its repudiation. Granville's policy sprang from a real fear that the Turkish government possessed such a strong feeling against the Convention that negotiations with Turkey might be made difficult because of it.[60] The

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[58] Commons Sessional Papers, C (1881), Turkey no. 6 no, 172.

[59] Valentine Chirol, in Villari, ed., The Balkan Question, p. 245.

[60] Granville to Victoria, June 9, 1880, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, III, 111.

policy adopted was a negative one rather than a positive denunciation of the Convention. Although the Liberals would have liked to declare it null and void the question was treated delicately because there would have been no advantage in declaring to Russia and Turkey that it had failed.[61] Despite their attitude towards the Convention the government was not prepared to surrender Cyprus, although they considered its acquisition brought no political or military advantage to Great Britain. They had denounced the Convention at its inception as a "corrupt bargain" by which England acquired a useless island in return for a promise to sustain a despotic and corrupt empire, but in office they repudiated one half of the bargain but not the other.[62]

After the British made strong their hold on Egypt there was a general feeling that Cyprus had lost its strategical importance and except for the loss of prestige England would have been wise in handing back Cyprus to Turkey, although undoubtedly there was a strong humanitarian feeling against returning to Turkish domination an

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61 Granville to Dufferin, May 5, 1880, in Temperley and Penson, eds., Foundations of British Foreign Policy, p. 397.

62 R.J. Sontag, Germany and England, Background of Conflict 1848-1898 (New York: D.Appleton-Century, 1938), p. 183.

island which was three quarters Christian.[63] Far from agreeing with Lord Granville who felt Cyprus was worthless as a place of arms, Queen Victoria relying on the reports of military, naval, and other officers maintained that it would be a post of great advantage and because the maintenance of British power in Turkey depended on her right to insist on reforms it would be unwise to totally abandon this means of influence.[64] Ten years later all that remained of the Cyprus Convention was British occupation that did not result in the naval authority envisaged in the beginning, a defensive alliance with Turkey that was never invoked, and a vague promise of reforms in Asia Minor.[65]

Failing to sympathize with the political aims which underlay the Conservative policy, the Gladstone Government was anxious to limit its responsibilities in the Levant. On the pretext of a war against Arabi in Egypt in 1882, the consular officers were removed from Asia Minor to Egypt. To the Liberals the very system

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63 C.J. Orr, Cyprus Under British Rule (London: 1918), p. 44.

64 Victoria to Granville, June 10, 1880, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, III, 112-3.

65 Tyler, op. cit., pp. 118-9.

of military consuls was enough to stimulate undesirable political excitement, for the Armenians were already changing their pleas for amelioration of their sufferings to aspirations of a national character and it was only reasonable to assume that the presence of military consuls had stimulated their ambitions and any reprisals on the part of Turkey were justifiable. The military consuls threatened the prestige of Turkey with their freedom to move about and chastize or cajole Turkish officials and interfere with the course of their administration.[66] Goschen, the British ambassador, claimed that among the ignorant classes of Turks the presence of the military consuls created the impression that Britain entertained ideas of annexation in Asia Minor.[67] Lord Fitzmaurice stated in the House of Commons that their endeavours to bring about reforms had been unsuccessful, and that there was no longer any justification for a continuation of the expenditure involved. The Liberal government which had clamoured

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66 W. N. Medlicott, "Gladstone Government and the Cyprus Convention 1880-1885", Journal of Modern History, XII (1940), 201-2.

67 Commons Sessional Papers, C (1881), Turkey no. 6, no. 39.

for a "foreign policy based on humanity" when they were in opposition destroyed the machinery set up under the Cyprus Convention for securing better government for Asiatic Christians.[68] Before their withdrawal, however, the government had nullified the effect of the military consuls by sending Sir Jacob Goschen to Constantinople whose job it was to threaten and coerce the Sultan rather than offer friendly advice.

One of the chief differences between the Conservative administration and the Gladstone government which followed it was not found in the attitude towards Turkey but rather the importance with which they held the relation of Turkey to the route to India.[69] Layard felt strongly that if England was determined to preserve her position in India against Russian influence, it was imperative that she return to her traditional Conservative policy towards Turkey which Gladstone and the Liberal party had repudiated.[70] Even the Queen felt that the Eastern question as it stood embraced India as well as Turkey and that more consideration should be given to the fact that

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[68] Monypenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, VI, 1173.

[69] Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, p. 161.

[70] A. H. Layard, "Turkey and England", Contemporary Review, XLVII (1885), 615.

Turkey had the power to incite the Mohammedan population of India against England.[71] The Powers could understand and appreciate a practical interest such as the securing of a route to India but they still harboured suspicions of the British sentimental attitude towards the Turkish Christians. Sir William White, the British Ambassador to Constantinople in 1885, concerned over the emphasis given to British interests in Asia Minor, admitted that her interests there were the greatest but still felt Great Britain had a European position to maintain and her course in Europe should not be directed by her Asiatic interests.[72] All these factors tended to influence British policy to some extent but the determining factor was the occupation of Egypt. It tended to command the full attention of the government and ultimately Cyprus and Asia Minor were neglected. It would have been impossible for England to extend her influence over both areas, because from the outset the task was too great and any attempt would have aroused the hostility of France and Russia.[73] The recall

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[71] Victoria to Granville, Sept. 21, 1880, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, III, 143.

[72] White to Sir Robert Morier, in Villari, ed., The Balkan Question, p. 272.

[73] Sir J. Headlam-Morely, Studies in Diplomatic History (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 207.

of the military consuls from Asia Minor was partially attributed to a desire to win Turkish consent to British occupation in Egypt.[74] Seeing the increased benefits from a virtual protectorate the government directed its attentions towards that end.

The change in attitude of the British government after 1880 was bound to produce reactionary tendencies in Turkey itself. The Sultan, mortified by the coercive policy of England, sought to restore his prestige by employing two different devices, the first of which was a revival of the spiritual authority of the Chaliphate. The Turk used to have "an easy confidence in the grandeur of his empire and the sublimity of his religion", but his contacts with Europe had destroyed this feeling to a large extent. "Christendom was everywhere encroaching on Islam".[75] Consequently, Abdul Hamid tried to inaugurate a Pan-Islamic policy, but his attempts to create a political movement failed. As a purely religious one, however, it made great strides in Asia and Africa.[76] Designed as it

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[74] Tyler, op. cit., p. 118.

[75] "Mysteries of Administration in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 360-3.

[76] Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid, pp. 149-51.

was to strengthen the allegiance of Mohammedans within the Ottoman Empire to the Sultan, and, in addition, to weaken that of Mohammedans outside his Empire to western nations who ruled over them, the movement was great in its conception.[77] The Sultan's second effort at rebuilding his power was an attempt to concentrate the whole civil and military authority of his government in his own hands. In this policy he was extremely successful. By destroying ministerial government he was able to make himself sole ruler.

The Turkish attitude towards Britain at Constantinople differed noticeably from that of the inhabitants of the Asiatic provinces. In the capital the Turks had always trusted Disraeli as one who would never desert them while the name of Gladstone struck terror in their hearts. The change of British policy furnished the anti-British elements in Constantinople with new arguments. There was a widespread feeling that England and Russia had come to an understanding before the Russo-Turkish War and that Russian opposition to coercion was only a deception to facilitate British acquisition of Cyprus and

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[77] Chirol, Fifty Years in a Changing World, p.90.

Asia Minor.[78] The occupation of Egypt in 1882 only served to emphasize this belief. In contrast, the attitude of the mass of the Turkish population towards Britain was similar to that of the Christian nationalities. As Layard pointed out, public opinion in Turkey could hardly be said to exist but, where it was in evidence, it was favourable to Britain. Mohammedan and Christians alike in Asia Minor both looked to Great Britain for protection against oppression and aid in obtaining reforms.[79] One contemporary writer even went so far as to say that neither the Turks of the Asiatic provinces nor the Christians would offer any resistance to a British occupation of the area.[80] The Christian nationalities, regarding Disraeli as their enemy, believed that with the Gladstone government their "redemption" was at hand. Layard, however, was afraid of the consequences of a Liberal administration which would encourage the various dissatisfied elements unless they were convinced without delay not to expect any sympathy

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[78] "Mysteries of Administration in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 359.

[79] Layard to Salisbury, April 27, 1880, in Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, p. 208.

[80] "What Can a Liberal Government Do for Turkey?" Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 893-4.

or support from England.[81]

> The sooner, therefore, that English statesmen comprehend the bitter antagonism which exists towards England on the part of the Government of Turkey, and the entire devotion to England of the great mass of the Asiatic population of the empire, the more intelligently they will be able to deal with the question of reform. [82]

Salisbury's administration of the foreign office in 1885 was too shortlived to give opportunity to any constructive policy. The interruption of the continuity in foreign affairs was of little consequence in the European scheme of relations but there were differences to be noted in British relations with Turkey which could be traced to modifications of British policy introduced by the previous Liberal government. Turkey had finally been lost as an ally and Salisbury complained the steps towards reform which had so consistently occupied his attentions in 1879 and 1880 had been nullified and the loss of British paramouncy at Constantinople had deprived England of any solid basis for further intervention in that direction.[83] England's entry into Egypt had affected Salisbury's attitude

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[81] Layard to White, April 27, 1880, in H. S. Edwards, Sir William White, His Life and Correspondence (London: J. Murray, 1902), p. 200.

[82] "Mysteries of Administration in Turkey", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 363.

[83] Cecil, op. cit., III, 219.

towards the Asiatic provinces where there was a visible contrast between his two administrations. Little had been done since his first efforts and his correspondence was mostly on other subjects.

The more pressing issues of the day were concentrated in the Balkans where the questions of the Macedonian frontier and the unification of Bulgaria occupied the energies of European statesmen. British suspicion of Russia and sympathy with the subject races of Turkey were both gratified by Salisbury's championship of Prince Alexander and the Bulgars. Soon after Salisbury's return to office, however, an Armenian appeal did recall to him his former enthusiasm, but his warm answer only brought reproach from the Ottoman minister for foreign affairs.[84] From Salisbury's correspondence it is evident he attached great importance to Asiatic reforms but without sufficient backing from the government or from public opinion many matters were allowed to go by default which had recently been of prime concern.[85] The Salisbury government resigned

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[84] Penson, "The Principles and Methods of Lord Salisbury's Foreign Policy", Cambridge Historical Journal, V (1935), 96-7.

[85] Seton-Watson, op. cit., pp. 511-2.

and Gladstone once more took over the administration in 1885. Lord Rosebery was in command of the Foreign Office but there was little change in British eastern policy. The continuity of Anglo-Turkish policy from one Liberal administration to the next emphasized the fact that Salisbury had modified the attitude of the Conservative party.[86]

By the time Salisbury returned to power in 1886, it was evident that the whole fabric of his policy of 1878 had collapsed. The time had come to examine the extent of British interests in the East. The old policy of maintaining the integrity of Turkey against Russian aggression had been repudiated by such men as Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Hamilton. Salisbury was uneasy about foreign affairs because he felt that Lord Randolph was willing to give up British influence at Constantinople and that the other Powers would not be long in finding out such a change in the direction of British policy.[87] Liberal leaders believed the real battle with Russia was in Afghanistan and that, in having Egypt and Cyprus, British Mediterranean

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[86] J. H. Rose, The Development of European Nations, 1870-1900 (New York: G. Putnam, 1905), I, 328.

[87] Salisbury to Randolph, Oct. 1, 1886, in Cecil, op. cit., III, 321.

interests were protected.[88] The policy of non-intervention in Turkey gradually became the dominant national view although some of the Conservatives including Salisbury failed to recognize this change of public opinion. By virtue of her other interests Britain was obliged to lean to the Triple Alliance. Particularly as France tended to grow closer to Russia, England sought the cooperation of Germany, Austria and Italy. As early as 1880, Layard had noticed that France was siding entirely with Russia in questions connected with Turkey.[89] Especially to Austria did England give her diplomatic support, encouraging her to resist Russian expansion in the Balkans because she was not content to see Russia paramount at Constantinople. For instance Salisbury adhered to an identical note served by Austria and Italy outlining a program for the maintenance of the status quo in the East and the defence of the integrity of the Turkish Empire by the contracting powers.[90]

The policy followed by Sir William White, the

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88 Salisbury to Victoria, Sept. 7, 1886, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, I, 201-2.

89 Layard to White, Jan. 1880, in Edwards, op.cit., p. 198.

90 Salisbury to Austro-Hungarian and Italian Ambassadors, Dec. 12, 1887, in Gooch and Temperley, eds., British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914 (London: H. M. Stationery Office), VIII, 12-3.

British Ambassador at Constantinople during the last four years of the decade, was also inspired by Salisbury's policy of encouraging German penetration as a barrier to Russian aggression.[91] Sir Charles Dilke pointed out at this time that for the most part the Liberals gave general acquiescence to Salisbury's foreign policy because he made no attempt to revive the pro-Turkish or warlike policy of 1878. Therefore, the mass of the Liberal party had to be counted as Conservative supporters and Salisbury was able to carry out his policy unhampered by any opposition. The Conservatives themselves, fearful of Gladstone and the return of the Liberal party, remained very silent in Parliament.[92]

The first British efforts at reforming Turkey-in-Asia under the Cyprus Convention and the Treaty of Berlin had been a failure, for there was scant improvement in conditions in the provinces. It would seem that the British government thought it a more practical policy to keep the forces of Islam in comparative quiet than to excite them by a display of hostility towards the Turks. British political and economic interests took ascendancy over the cause for relief of Armenian suffering.

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[91] Sir Telford Waugh, Turkey, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (London: Chapman and Hall, 1930), pp. 31-2.

[92] C. W. Dilke, "Conservative Foreign Policy", Fortnightly Review, LI (1892), 3 also Gwynn and Tuckwell, Life of Sir Charles Dilke (London: J. Murray, 1917), II, 475-8.

DISTURBANCES IN ARMENIA AND THEIR INVESTIGATION BY THE POWERS

Originally based on political and economic interests, British policy in regard to Armenia was to undergo a decided change by the time the Armenian question was to occupy the international spotlight as a result of the series of massacres in 1894 and 1895. Humanitarian and religious principles would then take ascendancy over Britain's paramount interests. Public opinion was to play a predominant role in the shaping of official policy and because public opinion was to a large extent formed in protest against Turkish methods and administration in Asia Minor, a review of the actual events is fundamental in furnishing a background for the development of the unofficial British reaction.

With the opening of the Armenian question at Berlin in 1878, there was widespread disorder in the Asiatic provinces which continued, sometimes with more disastrous consequences than at other times, throughout the last quarter of the century. The publication in 1880 of the reports of British consuls in Asia Minor gave the British

public the first honest statement of conditions in Armenia and the general character of Turkish rule. From these reports it was evident that following the end of the Russo-Turkish War an unfortunate situation had developed in Armenia. As a result of the preparations made by the Russian occupation forces to evacuate Armenia, the Christians in this area were in a panic regarding their fate whenever they should lose the protection of the Russian army. The vice-consul at Erzeroum, aware of Moslem hatred towards the Christians, found justification for their ill feelings in the fact that while the Moslems were suffering the misfortunes of the Russo-Turkish War the Armenians had openly displayed their arrogance.[1] A second cause for disturbances in Armenia was the antagonism shown by the Kurds towards the Armenians. The Kurds, blaming the Armenians for the presence of the military consuls and the measures taken against them by Turkish officials, openly and publicly vowed that they would redouble their persecution of the Armenians in order to wreak their vengeance.[2]

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[1] British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 53, nos. 179, 213.

[2] "Contemporary Life and Thought in Turkey", Contemporary Review , XXXVII (1880), 342.

The consequence of Armenian fears was a large scale emigration to Russia in the footsteps of evacuating soldiers. Although those Armenians who had compromised themselves were obliged for their personal safety to leave the district, the Russians were not accused of offering any encouragement. The rural population being more disturbed than the town dwellers, a committee was set up at Erzeroum by the Armenians to induce the peasants to remain.[3] Layard received countless letters from Armenians begging for intervention on the part of Great Britain and from the Archbishop of Erzeroum and the Armenian Patriarchate reporting the fears of the inhabitants. There were complaints against the annual tribute which the Armenians had to pay, of outrages committed on persons and property by the Kurds, and even against the Turkish troops sent to protect the inhabitants.[4] To these pleas Layard answered by urging the Porte to take immediate steps for the security of the lives and property of the Armenians. Although the Grand Vizier was certain that the reports were exaggerated and the fears of the Armenians unfounded, he agreed to

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[3] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no, 53, nos. 179, 204.

[4] Ibid., no. 213.

send a Commission to settle complaints and deal with the alleged outrages.[5] In spite of the fact that the Grand Vizier had given assurances that the necessary steps had been taken to secure tranquillity, Layard was forced to make representations to the Porte when he learned that only one Armenian representative was proposed for the commission at Erzeroum.[6]

Despite the reports that continued to issue from Armenia, British and other officials were not misled. The possibility of outrages committed on the Armenians was not denied but the inevitability of a general massacre was discounted. The French consul, following this line, believed that the possibility of any depradations by the Kurds was subject to the effectiveness of Turkish authorities.[7] Layard, of much the same opinion as the Grand Vizier, felt that the Armenians had been purposely excited with the object of inducing them to leave the country. By the circulation among the peasants of already published accounts of attacks the populace were led to believe that as soon as the Russian forces left they would be exposed to outrages from the Turks and Kurds. The British vice-consul was fully aware of this fact when he mentioned to Lord

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[5] Ibid., Turkey no. 54, no. 15.

[6] Ibid., Turkey no. 53, nos. 85, 86, 154, 155, 191, 192, 222, 223.

[7] Ibid., no. 204.

Salisbury that in all the letters and petitions he received mention was always made " in general terms of more flagrant outrages perpetrated in other districts."[8] Nevertheless, Layard felt the necessity of urging the Turkish authorities to secure immediate order and deemed it essential that the British government " should be fully and accurately informed"[9] of events in Armenia.

In October of 1878 official reports from Erzeroum began to tell of restored order although the rumours of outrages continued. General unrest was still prevalent, however, for there was a revolt amongst the Kurds themselves.[10] Captain Trotter, in charge of the Erzeroum Consulate, felt that in November the feeling on both sides had calmed down and that the fact that danger of an outbreak seemed remote could be attributed to the exertions of the Turkish authorities.[11] In the following January, however, as a means of preventing the Kurds from exerting absolute authority over the Christian populations with no guarantee of their protection he recommended the estab-

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8 Ibid., Turkey no. 54, no. 222.

9 Ibid., Turkey no. 53, no. 214.

10 Ibid., Turkey no. 54, nos. 112, 153

11 Ibid., LXXX (1878-9), Turkey no. 10, nos. 1, 2.

lishment of a permanent consulship at Erzeroum.[12] Still, despite the restoration of a degree of tranquillity the Armenians were dissatisfied. They looked for a permanent guarantee of their security in the form of a governor selected by the Powers as the minimum requirement for their security. Goschen, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, fully aware of the aspirations of the Armenians, explained that the Powers could not come to an agreement in Asia Minor while the Montenegrin question was still unsettled.[13] As the Armenians saw their high hopes shattered once more they were inclined to blame England for their disappointment.[14]

The policy of the Salisbury government had been one of "friendly pressure" motivated generally by Britain's primary interests in Asia Minor. With the advent of the Gladstone administration in 1880 a more sincere interest was taken in the Armenians themselves. Goschen, however, was not in complete accord with his government's championing of the Christian population. He felt the result would

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[12] Ibid., no. 6.

[13] Ibid., LXXIX (1878-9), Turkey no. 54, no. 269.

[14] "Armenian Question", Contemporary Review, XXXVII (1880), 538-40.

be the setting of class against class and eventually the alienation from Britain of whatever sympathy still existed amongst the Moslem population of both European and Asiatic Turkey.[15] During the next few months, however, despite Goschen's reluctance, the military consuls were instructed to tour the disturbed districts and make reports on the conditions. Despatches flowed into the foreign office containing tales of outrages committed by the Circassians and the Kurds on the Armenians, and information on depopulated villages and the disastrous effects of bad harvests and crop failures.[16] The failure of judicial reforms was attributed to the incompatability of laws framed on the European system with the character, habits, and conditions in Turkey and the lack of experienced officials to apply them.[17] The consul-general for Anatolia felt that never before had the prestige of the courts fallen so low or the administration of justice been so "venal and corrupt".[18] By carrying out a reform procedure made known as European in as ineffective a manner as possible the consul for the district of Trebizoid was convinced that the Turks were

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[15] Commons Sessional Papers, C (1881), Turkey no. 6, no. 92.

[16] Ibid., nos. 13, 14, 19, 26, 28.

[17] Ibid., Turkey no.8, no.8.

[18] Ibid., no.9.

using its failure as a means of impressing the population with the disadvantages of the reforms the Powers were endeavouring to force upon them.[19]

Turkish attitude towards the Armenian population had undergone a decided change since the years before the Russo-Turkish War when they had occupied positions of trust. The Turks who had always regarded the Armenians as loyal subjects had been filled with suspicion by their appeal to the Powers at the Congress of Berlin. A further cause of Turkish mistrust was the presence and increasing activity of Armenian revolutionary leaders. The inhabitants whom the Turks had regarded as harmless, it seemed, were as capable of sedition as much as were the Bulgars or Greeks. Evidence of secret committees and revolutionary printing presses was justification enough for Turkish fears.[20] The ambassadors at Constantinople were quick to recognize the agitation, reporting from 1888, on, the presence of revolutionary and seditious literature. Sir William White, aware of both the agitation amongst the Armenians and the repressive measures taken by Turkish officials in the form of imprisonment and exile,

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[19] Ibid., no. 8.

[20] Eliot, Turkey in Europe, p. 442.

found it impossible to ascertain whether the repression was the result of the agitation or vice versa. One thing was certain, however, that the publications issued by certain Armenians domiciled in London and Paris increased the irritation between Mohammedan rulers and their Armenian subjects.[21]

After the assassination of Armenia's friend Alexander III in 1881, the anti-Armenian policy adopted by Russia encouraged Armenian patriots residing in Russia to emigrate making Paris, London, and Geneva their headquarters. Bismark's refusal to apply coercion to the Porte in 1883 checked external assistance for reforms and Armenian revolutionists abandoning the hope of foreign aid looked to internal intrigue.[22] In 1887 a secret society called Hentchak was founded in Paris. The Armenian revolutionary movement was supported morally and materially by Russia but, in order to maintain a neutral character, it transferred its headquarters to London forbidding any branches in Russia. Successful in attracting British sympathy, the Armenians were able to instigate a revolutionary movement in Great Britain with the goodwill of

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[21] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXVII (1889), Turkey no.1, no. 17.

[22] Armenia and Kurdistan (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1920), p. 22.

Russia. An ardent patriot, Nazarbek, published for five years at Geneva several revolutionary newspapers and reviews under the names Hentchak and Aptek.[23] Turkish fears reached alarming proportions as these patriots published appeals for action on the part of their fellowmen. Partly to counteract the efforts being made to include the Kurds in the revolutionary movement, the Sultan in 1891 organized them into the famous Hamidie regiments to act as a frontier defence force. The opportunities thus offered for plunder and the gratification of race hatred brought out the worst in the Kurds who from this time began raiding Armenian settlements sometimes with the support of regular Turkish troops.[24]

Somewhat afraid of appearing in Turkey themselves, the Armenian revolutionists sent agents into the provinces to distribute literature and arouse the feelings of the populace. The cry went up to "Organize, arm, - arm with anything .... Spread the fight for liberation".[25] Wealthy Armenians were blackmailed into supporting the revolu-

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[23] Eliot., op. cit., p. 441.

[24] Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, I, 160.

[25] Hentchak, V (July, 1892), no.7 quoted in Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, I, 159.

tionary cause and placards were posted in the cities. Any efforts at total organization failed, however, for the whole Armenian populace was not in sympathy with the movement. The Armenian peasantry dissociated themselves from revolutionary committees because their recollection of Turkish rule was one of goodwill and tranquility. They looked for continuance of the Sultan's favour unlike the agitators who possessed no real property and harboured greedy ideas for power and possessions.[26] A traveller through the district in 1891 felt that the Armenian peasant was "as destitute of political aspirations" as he was "ignorant of political grievances". His main concern being protection from the Kurds and Moslem marauders and security of life and property he expressed no wishes for administrative reform or for political autonomy.[27] Quite prepared to sacrifice thousands of their countrymen to their cause revolutionary leaders hoped to raise from the disorder a new Armenian socialist state. The fact that the revolutionists operated preferably in areas where Armenians were in the minority led Europeans in Turkey to

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[26] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1890), Turkey no. 1, no. 1.

[27] Isabella Bishop, Journeys Through Persia and Kurdistan, (London: J. Murray, 1891), II, 377.

believe that the agitation was intended to incite disorder resulting in inhuman reprisals thereby provoking foreign intervention.[28] From the Armenian point of view, the leaders felt the necessity of stirring up disorder to draw the attention of Europe to the deplorable conditions. The publication of this information had been suppressed in Turkish and European newspapers by the Sultan because of his memory of British and Russian indignation after the Bulgarian atrocities of 1877.[29]

Colonel Chermside in July, 1889 had no doubt as to the existence of revolutionary aspirations among the Armenians or the political restlessness stirred up in the Van district, but he did feel that the situation as it stood was not sufficiently dangerous for the Porte to show any real anxiety. As far as he could see, while organization was at a minimum, the movement depended upon external support. He hoped White would agree that the Turkish authorities had over emphasized the danger.[30] Chermside's optimism was proved to be unfounded, however, for in the summer of 1890 serious disorders again

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[28] Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, I, 157, 163.

[29] Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid, p. 240.

[30] Commons Sessional Papers, LXXXII (1890), Turkey no.1, no. 69.

broke out at Erzeroum arising out of a search for arms under the Armenian Cathedral and the Sanassarian College. The Armenian nationalists seized the opportunity to create a disturbance and riot and bloodshed resulted.[31] Unfortunately the Armenians were to be disappointed because no particular action was taken on the part of the Powers. The British, French, and Russian consuls urged the restoration of order in the area but there were no despatches from the Foreign Office to the British Ambassador to that effect.[32] When the reason for this was asked in the House of Commons, the Under-Secretary replied by stating that Sir William White had been instructed in January to urge settlement of any disturbances and that " the instructions given continue in force, and continue to be acted upon."[33]

As a result of revolutionary agitation, particularly the events at Erzeroum in 1890, many Armenian political leaders were imprisoned. The interest shown by the British government both officially and unofficially was largely directed towards securing the release of those

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[31] Bishop, op. cit., II, 383.

[32] Commons Sessional Papers, XCVI (1890-1), Turkey no. 1, no. 69.

[33] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Third Series, CCCL (1891), 205.

falsely accused and fair trials for the remainder. Sir William White in January, 1891, made a request unofficially for amnesty for all political prisoners.[34] The imprisonment of the Archbishops of Marash and Zeitoun, two missionaries, and other ecclesiastical personages created considerable interest in the House of Commons, where hardly a week went by in 1893 without requests for British representations in their behalf and inquiries into the manner in which their trials were conducted.[35] Efforts were made to declare their imprisonment a violation of the 61st and 62nd articles of the Berlin Treaty.[36] The undersecretary for foreign affairs, Sir Edward Grey, declared the archbishops had been tried on charges of sedition, and although it was admitted there were irregularities in the proceedings, without an inquiry into the trial he said it could not be stated whether the Berlin Treaty had been infringed upon. In answer to a request for a commission of examination, Grey declared it was not the

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[34] Commons Sessional Papers, XCVI (1892), Turkey no. 1, no. 2, 4.

[35] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, X-XIV (1893), passim.

[36] Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin guarantees religious liberty and recognizes the right of diplomatic and consular agents of the Powers to give official protection to ecclesiastical personages and their establishments.

intention of the government to propose a conference of the Powers in regards to the condition of Armenian prisoners.[37] The British vice-consul at Angora, however, was instructed to report on the proceedings of the trials in that district, although many members of the House of Commons thought that a higher representative was necessary.[38] The trials began in May and Grey deprecated any public discussion until the results were known and declined making any representations until that time.[39] The attitude of the Turkish judicial authorities, who did not even adhere to the Ottoman penal code, foreshadowed the results of the trial which was reported as extremely unfair.[40]

It was pointed out in a debate in the House of Commons that in districts where there was no British representative more barbarous treatment was meted out to prisoners than in areas where British consuls and vice-consuls were in residence. Consequently, a recommendation was put forward for an increase in the number of consular

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37 Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XI (1893), 209-10.

38 Ibid., 1019-20, 1305-6, 1733.

39 Ibid., XIII (1893), 1673-4, 1822-3.

40 The Times, (June 28, 1893), p.5.

officers.[41] Sir Edward Grey; replied that the existence of a consular staff was dependent upon the extent of British interests.[42] There were numerous reports on the ridiculous charges on which Christians were imprisoned. Papers found on travellers were misinterpreted, sermons were made out to be seditious and people were imprisoned by means of forged documents and false witnesses.[43] The specific charges laid against the higher ecclesiastical personages were such as harbouring rebels, fortifying monasteries, inciting Armenians to sedition, and attacking the Zeitoum prison and allowing prisoners to escape.[44]

Although no trustworthy estimate could be given of the exact number, by 1895 the record of political prisoners had increased alarmingly. Kimberly feared tha Government would be pressed into taking joint action in the matter because of the pressure of public opinion. Instructed to ascertain the attitude of the Powers, Currie

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[41] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XV (1893), 1152-4.

[42] Ibid., 1186-7.

[43] Commons Sessional Papers, XCVI (1892) Turkey no. I, no. 5; and XCV (1896), Turkey no. 2, no. 3; also Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XIV (1893), 136-7.

[44] Commons Debates, FourtheSeries, XXX (1895), 185-6.

found that France and Russia would deprecate any joint representation until it could be made in the form of a demand for a general amnesty and be incorporated into a general scheme of reforms.[45] The Sultan did agree, however, in March to grant amnesty to all Armenian ecclesiastical prisoners except those accused of murder and other serious crimes. Currie urged upon the Grand Vizier similar action in the case of lay political prisoners, in addition to instructions to Turkish authorities in the provinces forbidding the arrest of Armenians without sufficient evidence.[46] The ecclesiastical prisoners were released in May and amnesty was granted in July to lay prisoners except those accused of murder, bombthrowing and other crimes. Letters from Armenians, however, expressed their fears that the lay prisoners would not be released without outside pressure.[47]

In July of 1894 news reached Constantinople of an alleged Armenian revolt in the Sassoon district of the vilayet of Bitlis. The sending of additional troops of Kurdish irregulars to the region resulted in protests

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45 Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no.1, nos. 3, 4, 5.

46 Ibid., nos. 7, 8, 9.

47 Ibid., Turkey no.2, no. 3.

and warnings to the Sultan by the British Ambassador, Sir Philip Currie. In answer to an inquiry, prompted by a report of the movement of troops in the vilayet of Bitlis, the Porte informed Currie that the troops were being moved to quell a revolt by the Armenians. A strong protest was addressed to Said Pasha, the Grand Vizier.[48] According to him, the Commander-in-chief of the Fourth Army Corps, Zeke Pasha, had been instructed to restore order with the aid of regular soldiers, being careful to see that no excesses were committed. Irregular soldiers were to be used to garrison those areas where there had been no disturbances. Despite the instructions supposedly issued to Zeke Pasha, the British Consul had only the worst reports to give concerning the "barbarous auxiliaries" whose employment he was confident would have disastrous consequences.[49] Currie was alarmed because of the reputation of the Hamidie regiments but could get no satisfaction from the Porte, which insisted that they were not so undisciplined as supposed, and were in fact modelled on the Russian cossaks. Official Turkish reports declared the despatch of regular troops as necessary to suppress

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[48] Ibid., CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, nos. 3,4.

[49] Ibid., nos. 4, 10.

what the Turkish authorities considered an "armed rebellion fomented by foreign political agitators" and to protect Mohammedan subjects from "acts of revolting cruelty" to which they were exposed at the hands of the Armenians.[50] Despite repeated declarations of the Porte that the Armenians had instigated a revolt, Currie was not convinced that Turkish military preparations were being carried out solely to put down the alleged disorders.[51]

The British Consul at Van, receiving news of the deplorable conditions in Bitlis, requested authorization from home to send Vice-Consul Hallward to the region to investigate the actuality of the alleged atrocities.[52] Hallward was subsequently commissioned to conduct an investigation and, in the early days of October, 1894, his despatches began reporting evidence of the suspected conditions. He was able to obtain information on Kurdish raids of Armenian villages and the plundering of houses and destruction of churches.[53] As an outbreak of cholera had placed the district under quarantine Hallward's reports, unfortunately, were second hand. No amount of

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[50] Ibid., Proces-verbaux of the Commission of Inquiry, pp. 193-4.

[51] Ibid., no. 7.

[52] Ibid., no. 1.

[53] Ibid., nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22.

pressure applied by Currie was able to secure his exemption from the quarantine, the excuse of the Grand Vizier being that the presence of the vice-consul in the disturbed districts would only serve to encourage renewal of the insurrection through expectation of British intervention.[54] Hallward, however, saw a more satisfactory answer for the Porte's objection to an investigation in the fact that the recent occurrences did not bear examination. If he had not been prevented from having communication with the population, he might have felt there was some exaggeration in the reports, but as any close inquiry was prevented he could only be led to believe that the Turkish authorities were hoping for the passing of winter to obliterate any evidence of their misdeeds.[55] Accusations were made by the Vali of Bitlis and the Grand Vizier that not only were Hallward's reports unfounded but that he was guilty of inciting the Armenians against the Turkish government.[56] Currie, although he was confident of Hallward's integrity, immediately proposed an investigation of the accusations by Colonel Chermside, the military attache of

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54 Ibid., nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22.

55 Ibid., no. 28.

56 Ibid., nos. 30, 31, 32.

the British Embassy.[57]

Currie warned the Grand Vizier of the seriousness of his accusations against Hallward and on the basis of Hallward's reports urged an independent inquiry into the disturbances and the severe punishment of the guilty officials. The Armenians, charging the Governor-General with the discrediting of witnesses and the extortion of false evidence joined with the British in demanding an investigation. As a result of this pressure the Grand Vizier urged the abandonment of the Chermside mission, while the Sultan declared the accusations against Hallward as null and void and proposed a Turkish commission of inquiry.[58] The Sultan, refusing to believe the charges made against Turkish troops, declared the commission only an instrument for the maintenance of good relations with England.[59] The Porte employed the usual devices of Turkish procrastination, so that it was only as a result of constant reminders and warnings of independent action on the part of the British Ambassador that a Commission of Inquiry was eventually dispatched in late November of 1891.[60]

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[57] Ibid., nos. 32, 33, 34, 42.

[58] Ibid., nos. 26, 36, 51, 65, 67.

[59] Ibid., nos. 27, 41.

[60] Ibid., nos. 40, 44, 47, 48, 53, 54, 55.

Before this took place, however, there was to be considerable controversy over the nature of the Delegates and the question of action in concert with the Powers to be solved. Both problems were confused by the different purposes of the Commission as conceived by the Turks and the British.

From the British point of view the investigation was to be conducted along specific lines. Their delegate was instructed to endeavour to show whether any massacre had actually taken place and if so whether it was committed by regular troops or Kurdish irregulars and from whom the soldiers received their authority. If superior orders were given were they founded on facts and if the presence of armed Kurds was justified could not the Armenians have been subdued by a show of force or punishment of the leaders rather than the reported atrocities.[61] The Turkish Commissioners, on the other hand, set themselves the task of proving that a state of open rebellion existed amongst the Armenians who committed barbarous acts against their fellow men and the Kurdish population.[62] The notification in Turkey of the Commission's purpose to inquire into the "criminal conduct of Armenian

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61 Ibid., no. 142.

62 Ibid., no. 150.

brigands" led to remonstrances by the British government. In answer to British objections the Sultan maintained that the nature of the official announcement was meant to counteract the exaggerated accounts that had appeared in Turkish newspapers.[63] In fact, the Sultan never ceased to emphasize that the conduct of the Armenians had been seditious and was receiving encouragement in England.[64]

On the appointment of the Commission the British government decided that if the Powers were to receive any satisfaction or guarantee of an honest inquiry there would have to be some facility made for foreign representation. Consequently, Currie proposed communication by the consuls with the commission and suggested an invitation to France and Russia, as the only other Powers with consular representation in the disordered districts, to join with the British consuls. Not regarding such a course as sufficiently forceful, Kimberley looked for more effective action in the conducting of a separate investigation and sent instructions for Currie to sound France and Russia on the subject.[65] Informed of the Sultan's willingness to accept British consular representation on

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63 Ibid., no. 58.

64 Ibid., nos. 27, 35, 58.

65 Ibid., nos. 56, 57.

the Commission, Kimberley was willing to compromise, deciding the offer could be accepted on the clear understanding that a separate report should be made by the British consuls. France and Russia were advised to demand similar rights.[66] Austria-Hungary would have liked to associate herself with the action but her absence of consular representation hindered her from giving the cooperation she thought desirable.[67] Germany, on the other hand, replied that as she was not directly interested, the only support she could give was in advising the Sultan to appoint a commission which would satisfy the demands of the Powers.[68] The Russian and French governments agreed to participate in the investigation and in the punishment of the guilty officials but were opposed to the raising of any political questions.[69] Although the British government gladly accepted the cooperation and participation of the other Powers, Kimberly was careful to point out that British acceptance of the Turkish proposal was independent of the action of the other governments.[70]

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66 Ibid., nos. 70, 71, 72, 73.

67 Ibid., nos. 76, 83.

68 Ibid., no. 78.

69 Ibid., no. 91.

70 Ibid., no. 96.

Although the idea of foreign representation on the Turkish Commission had been accepted by both the Powers and Turkey, there were still two problems with which to deal. The first was concerned with the question of who should be the representatives and the second with the extent of the powers given to them. The Russian and French governments felt the representatives should be nationals and not consuls and although the British government would have preferred consular representation they were willing, in order to secure the cooperation of the two Powers, to accept their proposal.[71] Eventually, the British government decided that nationals would be more effective than consuls in ascertaining the truth for the status of the latter would have forced them to take a more active part than desired and would have given the commission the character of a "European inquiry thwarted by Ottoman authorities."[72] Consequently, Shipley, the vice-consul at Van, was appointed as the British Delegate.

Fearful of the partiality Turkey would be likely to show during the investigation, Kimberley was anxious to preserve the rights of the Delegates to ask questions

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[71] Ibid., nos. 94, 99.

[72] Ibid., no. 125.

directly of the witnesses, to report independently to their governments, and to refuse to adhere to the report of Turkish authorities on the proceedings of the Commission. Furthermore, he insisted on reserving to the Powers the right to despatch a consul to the spot if the investigation proved unsatisfactory.[73] The last point caused some controversy among the Powers, France and Russia hesitating to insist on the point, but the British government considering the retention of the right as absolutely necessary to be used as a lever for exercising pressure on the Commission. Although the Porte had proposed the idea of consular representation in the first place, Kimberley feared that if once the right were allowed to lapse it would be difficult to retrieve.[74] Eventually these proposals were accepted by all concerned and the duties of the Delegates were outlined as securing the impartiality, good faith, and sincerity of the inquiry.[75]

Even before the Commission could begin there were

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[73] Ibid., nos. 101, 103, 104, 105.

[74] Ibid., nos. 112, 120, 137.

[75] Ibid., nos. 126, 127.

occurrences which threatened the maintenance of this good faith and impartiality. The conferring of decorations on the Mufti of Moosh, who was said to have incited the troops against the Armenians, and on Zeke Pasha, who was in command of the troops, led to an outcry on the part of the British.[76] At the same time, Great Britain in conjunction with the other Powers demanded the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis, but it was only by the refusal of the Delegates to attend the Commission that the Vali's dismissal was effected.[77] During the first sittings of the Commission held in January, 1895 the Turks proceeded with a chronological investigation of the disorders without suggesting any authority for their statements. The British realized that this method of procedure, if adopted, would only lose valuable time by leading the inquiry into side issues. The result of the first major difference of opinion concerning the conduct of the inquiry was that any attempt of the Delegates to begin with the investigation of charges against Turkish troops was defeated by the ...

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[76] Ibid., nos. 49, 63, 68, 82.

[77] Ibid., nos. 133, 144, 145, 146, 147.

president.[78]

The Delegates soon realized that definite steps had to be taken to assure an honest inquiry. In order to establish the facts and gain the truth from and confidence of the witnesses the presence of interpreters, speaking Armenian and Kurdish, was advocated by the British Delegate. The British, by threatening either withdrawal from the Commission of the despatch of a consul to the district obtained the Sultan's acceptance.[79] There were, however, additional problems connected with witnesses which were eventually to cause the breakdown of the investigation. Although the Turkish Commissioners denied it, there was strong evidence to prove they employed bribes and threats to secure false testimony. Coupled with the problem of the extensive length of time spent on immaterial evidence and the counter-balancing of Armenian reports by witnesses on their own side was the refusal of the Commissioners to take evidence of certain witnesses.[80] The European Delegates, threatening to provide a separate inquiry, endeavoured to counteract these difficulties

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[78] Ibid., nos. 149, 153, 162.

[79] Ibid., nos. 166, 167, 172, 173, 178, 187.

[80] Ibid., nos. 180, 189, 191, 197, 221, 226.

by insisting upon the examination of the witnesses in question. Despite all the efforts of the Delegates to institute an impartial inquiry, the British Ambassador, in April, could only inform Kimberley that "the proceedings of the Commission are conducted in as unsatisfactory a manner as ever".[81]

With the refusal of the Commission to summon certain witnesses, the European Delegates, issuing an identical telegram to their governments in June, declared their intention to examine the witnesses separately and closed the inquiry. The British Ambassador at Constantinople, however, refusing to support the declaration, instructed the Delegates to remain in attendance until the inquiry was closed by the president. The Delegates, accordingly, remained with the Commission but as far as they were concerned the official inquiry was terminated.[82] Instructed not to sign or otherwise adhere to the Turkish Commissioners report, until it was submitted in a complete form, the Delegates continued with the preparation of their own reports. In August, a copy of the

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[81] Ibid., no. 192.

[82] Ibid., nos. 200, 211, 212, 213, 220, 220, 221, 226.

Joint Report of the Delegates was submitted to Salisbury and the Delegates were authorized to leave the district.[83] The result of their efforts was the Joint Report and the Proces-verbaux of the sittings of the Commission which were submitted to parliament in September 1896.

Although there was sufficient evidence and testimony presented at the Commission of Inquiry to prove that there had been a massacre, the Turkish authorities were able to confuse the issue so completely that no definite statements or united opinion concerning the extent of the massacres or the persons responsible was ever published. Hepworth, a contemporary writer, was convinced that the Sultan honestly believed that the facts of the case had been misstated to Europe and that he allowed the investigation only because he felt it would prove the initial reports false. He further pointed out that the Sultan was not the only one to be misinformed for no one could possibly know the number of deaths. The Armenian's stories could not be trusted because "terror makes multiplication easy" nor could the Turkish authorities be trusted because Europe was infuriated and they must of necessity minimize the affair.[84] There was little

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[83] Ibid., nos. 231, 232, 248, 252, 237.

[84] G. H. Hepworth, Through Armenia on Horseback (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1898), p. 12.

confidence in the Commission on the part of the Powers. Prince Lobanoff had been doubtful of its success and felt that more attention should have been given to what should be done when the Commission was concluded. The British Delegate was of a somewhat similar opinion. His despatches related all the evidence presented at the sittings but he failed to draw any conclusions as to the conduct or the probable results of the inquiry.[85] If the investigation ended with little feeling of accomplishment and scant promise of any effective solution it did bring to light many aspects of the situation heretofore undisclosed by the Turks.

Prior to the sittings of the Commission the British consul at Erzeroum had refrained from reporting officially on the disorders because of the lack of trustworthy evidence to confirm Hallward's reports, but, as early as November 1894, he had ventured to say that no intelligent person save a Turkish official could have doubted the outrages.[86] Although the murdering of women and children was absolutely denied, by the Turks, lists of

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85 Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, nos. 179, 193.

86 Ibid., no. 60.

the number of houses destroyed and inhabitants killed or injured were obtained from several witnesses, testifying to the accuracy of the early reports. Shipley, the British Delegate during the course of the inquiry, declared that he and his colleagues were gradually being forced to admit that an amount of suffering had been afflicted on the Armenians out of all proportion to any offences of which they might have been guilty, and contrary to their first impression, the magnitude of the affair had not been exaggerated.[87] Six depositions of Armenians taken separately by the European Delegates gave the most lurid account of the atrocities which took place. The burning of houses, the theft of cattle, the pillage and murder, and the destruction of fruit trees and farmland headed the list of complaints.[88] The Turks had no difficulty in denying these statements or in finding witnesses to dispute them, but it was obvious from the testimony that many witnesses had been intimidated and many others prevented from appearing at all.

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[87] Ibid., nos. 184, 206.

[88] Accounts of atrocities are found in the Proces-verbaux of the Commission of Inquiry and in the separate depositions of the Armenian witnesses, Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895) Turkey no. 1, Part II, passim.

The European Delegates, having satisfied themselves of the fact that the disorders had actually taken place, began to look for the persons responsible. From the information pieced together from the testimony of Armenian witnesses the best explanation of the origins of the Sassoon massacres laid the responsibility on Turkish authorities. In 1893, the Armenians having been forced to pay for Kurdish protection were unable to meet the demands for taxes from the local Ottoman officials. When attention was called to the fact there existed an untaxed Christian district the Turks decided to teach the inhabitants a lesson by instigating a massacre. The Kurds took advantage of the situation to plunder the Armenians but the massacres were chiefly attributed to the troops.[89] The military precision with which the massacres were executed and the fact that the motive was political and not religious, although it became anti-Christian by the fact that many Armenians were offered their lives in return for renunciation of their religion, were two remarkable features of the disorders. In consequence of these circumstances it was believed that the massacres were directed from Constantinople forming part of an official

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[89] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, Part II, passim.

policy to depopulate and impoverish the Armenian districts.[90]

It was alleged but not proved that secret agents of the Armenian committees had been working in the districts prior to the Sassoon massacres. Two Armenians, Damadian and Murad, were accused of inciting their people to found an Armenian kingdom but they denied encouraging revolt against the government or war against the Kurds, maintaining that if the Turks continued the existing system of injustices the inevitable result would be quarrels between the Armenians and the Kurds.[91] During the early months of 1895, the British consul at Erzeroum noticed a remarkable absence of political agitation attributable, he thought, partly to the terror inspired by the massacres and partly from fear of compromising the good results the Armenians hoped to obtain from the Commission of Inquiry.[92] It soon became evident to the Armenians, however, that no action could be expected from the Powers and the revolutionary committees resumed their activities. A letter from the disturbed district reported efforts of the Hentchak Society to establish committees

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[90] Eliot, op. cit., pp. 451-2.

[91] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895) Turkey no. 1, nos. 677, 678, 679, 818.

[92] Ibid., no. 163.

in the villages. Emboldened by the liberation from prison of their political leaders they were able to incite the inhabitants to violence through foolish demonstrations.[93] Armenian youths were accused of reckless behaviour as demonstrated by their organization of large gatherings to sing national songs and parade through the towns. Revolutionary excitement spread and the organization of a demonstration in Constantinople claiming encouragement from England led to the shedding of Armenian blood for the first time in the capital itself. Although local leaders arranged that their followers should be well armed they denied responsibility for any "regrettable consequences" which the intervention of troops might have.[94]

The ostensible purpose of the Commission was not only to discover the facts concerning the massacres but by the introduction of effective reforms to ameliorate the sufferings of the population. Before discussing any scheme with French and Russian ambassadors, Currie had outlined a provisional program. In large part it was concerned with administrative reforms in an attempt to

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93 Ibid., XCV (1896), Turkey no. 2, nos. 4, 16.

94 Ibid., no. 50.

institute a political system devolving from an executive to small divisions of local government. There were further provisions for a gendarmerie containing Moslems and Christians and over all a governor to be appointed only with the approval of the Powers.[95] There would be difficulty in satisfying the Armenians without reforming the whole administration of Asia Minor but although the Treaty of Berlin gave the Powers the right to insist on reforms there was difficulty in giving them practical shape. As Prince Lobanoff pointed out, there were no vilayets in which the Armenians constituted a majority and the three districts of Bitlis, Angora, and Alexandretta in which they were numerically in control were so far apart they could scarcely be united in one province.[96] The Sultan, however, made his position clear by declaring the Commission would suggest remedial measures " without any alteration of existing laws and regulations" unless it was absolutely necessary to introduce modifications.[97] In answer to the Sultan's request for the nature of reforms the Powers would present,

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[95] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1,

[96] Ibid., no. 14.

[97] Ibid., no. 15.

Currie was not at liberty to offer details but stated their guiding principle would be security and contentment for the Armenians based if possible on existing laws and maintaining the rights of the Moslem community but giving to the Armenians a fair share in the administration.[98]

In May, 1895, the three Powers approved a project which outlined administrative, financial and judicial reforms "conceived in accordance with the existing laws of the Empire", pointing out measures indispensable for the practical workings of the project.[99] The proposed reforms as presented to the Sultan for his acceptance fell far short of what the British envisaged as the minimum requirements for relieving the distress of the Armenians . The British government was convinced that nothing less than Armenian acquisition of the control exercised by the Turks would satisfy the Armenians and were apprehensive lest the proposed guarantee for the execution of reforms would be found in practice to be inadequate.[100] Fearing it would render the Sultan's consent more difficult to obtain,France and Russia refused

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98 Ibid., no. 21.

99 Ibid., no. 45; full text appeared in The Times (June 6, 1895), p.5.

100 Ibid., nos. 23, 34.

to support any drastic reform program. Consequently the British Government attaching great importance to immediate and unanimous action had not insisted on their proposals.[101] Also, well acquainted with the habits of the Turkish government, the British realized the need of impressing urgency on the Sultan. Currie was instructed to inform the French and Russian Ambassadors that a communication should be presented to the Sultan stating that the proposed provisions were the minimum that would be accepted. If no answer was received by the end of the month some agreement must be reached as to the manner in which pressure would be applied because feeling in England was "becoming more acute every day".[102] Prince Lobanoff in consequence of Britain's proposal for having recourse to measures of constraint stated that in no case would the Russian Government associate itself with such means.[103]

During the summer of 1895, the Porte submitted three separate answers to the proposed scheme of reforms.[104] The scheme as presented to the Turks, while giving the

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101 Ibid, nos. 36, 37.

102 Ibid., no. 60.

103 Ibid., no. 65.

104 Ibid., nos. 74, 95, 130.

Armenians no guarantee of better government, was sufficiently "complicated and formidable" to exasperate the Turks. Most of the proposed reforms existed already in Ottoman statute books but had never been put into practice. The scheme's most important aspects were the creation of a governor-general for six Armenian vilayets and the development of various institutions of local and municipal government to secure representation of Christians as well as Mohammedans.[105] Russia, however, proved a stumbling block. She would have been glad to see reforms applied to all subjects of the Sultan but "she could not consent to the creation of a territory in proximity to her frontier where the Armenians should possess exceptional privileges---to the creation, in fact, in Asia Minor of another Bulgaria."[106] Russia, while willing to join Britain in urging on the Turkish government a temporary committee to supervise the introduction of reforms, refused to sanction the formation of a permanent supervisory committee because it would make the Powers directly responsible.[107] The refusal of Russia to exercise

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105 Eliot., op. cit., pp. 449-50.

106 Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1, no. 83.

107 Ibid., no. 136.

force on the Turkish government left Great Britain helpless in the situation.

The procrastination of the Porte meant that when the Liberal government was defeated in June, Turkey had not accepted the proposed scheme. With the return of the Conservative party under the leadership of Salisbury all attempts at coercion were abandoned. Salisbury, dismissing any idea of autonomy for the Armenians, was intent only on securing simple justice and a governor in whom Europe could have confidence.[108] In October, 1895, the Turks finally accepted the reforms in a modified form but refused to make them public. This refusal of the Porte to publish the scheme of reforms was interpreted by the Armenians as conferring new privileges upon them and by the Mohammedans as placing them in a position of inferiority to the Christians.[109] The result was increased enmity between the two races which gave rise to new disorders. The Porte, making only a feeble attempt to implement the reforms by the appointment of a Commission, was to see the culmination of Armenian revolutionary fervour in the Constantinople massacre of September 1896.

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[108] Ibid., no. 11.

[109] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), 102-4.

CONFLICTING PUBLIC OPINION

Until the massacres of 1894-5 British public opinion did not express itself with any great vehemence on the subject of the Armenian question. In parliament there were occasional questions raised concerning the detention of political and ecclesiastical prisoners in Armenia and after the Zeitoum affair in 1890 there were some requests from organized groups for official investigation and action on behalf of the oppressed inhabitants.[1] For example, in 1893, the Anglo-Armenian Association asked Gladstone to receive a joint deputation of protestant churchmen and Armenians with a view to urging the government to accept what they called their duty to the Armenians.[2] The newspapers carried notification of events in Asiatic Turkey but the public as late as the fall of 1895 offered little comment.

One reason for the apparent unconcern of the British public might be found in the fact that coupled

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[1] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Third Series, 1890-1894 passim.

[2] The Times(Oct. 3, 1893), p.7; (June 28, 1893), p. 5.

with the accounts of disturbances were often other reports testifying to the fact that the reported outrages were exaggerated and stories of Turkish fanaticism or oppression were unfounded. One writer after a mission of inquiry in Armenia went so far as to say that he was convinced there was no Armenian question at all and no revolt of the Christians against the Turks in the district in question.[3] But, if the British public was not yet fully aware of the conditions in Armenia there were organizations which did not fail to keep before the British government the effects of Turkish misrule. The committee of the Armenian Patriotic Association residing in London and represented by the chairman Hagopian, as early as 1888 petitioned the government to make representations on behalf of their fellow Armenians, who sent appeals from Asia Minor claiming the right to expect great things from Great Britain who "stood forth as the powerful champion of the down-trodden Christians".[4]

The British Cabinet made a strong effort to conceal the information it received from its ambassador and

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[3] Ibid., (April 17, 1893), p. 5.

[4] British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, LXXXVII (1889), Turkey no. 1, nos. 1,6.

consular officers in Turkey. Members of the House of Commons requesting information in 1893 in regard to the imprisonment of Armenian political and ecclesiastical prisoners invariably received the answer that the laying of the papers in the House would not benefit either the prisoners or the other Armenians whose welfare was the first consideration. The government did not wish to lay papers regarding only one aspect of the Armenian question when full publication would be of no advantage.[5] With the outbreak of the massacres in 1894 demands increased for the publication of official reports concerning the disorders and the conditions in Armenia prior to these events, but the release of information was felt detrimental to the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry. When asked if the reports were being withheld because they were too terrible for publication, Sir Edward Grey, the under-secretary for foreign affairs, replied in the negative adding that publication would not promote the combined action of the Powers so necessary for good results. He also completely denied the charges that the government had made an agreement with the Turks

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[5] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XV (1893), 1747-8; XVIII (1893), 336; XXIII (1894), 854-5; XXVII (1894), 1407-8.

to withold parliamentary papers relating to the Armenian question.[6] Consequently, the government was attacked by Dillon for being in possession of the facts, and finding it impossible to have them remedied, also deemed it unadvisable to have them published.[7]

Without access to official papers reliable information on the conditions in Armenia was difficult if not impossible to obtain from other sources. One very good reason for the lack of confirmed accounts was the result of the withdrawl of the military consuls by the Gladstone government. Always sensitive to the influence of the foreign press, Abdul Hamid did all in his power to create the impression that Turkish action in Asia Minor was necessitated by the troubles fomented by Armenian revolutionists.[8] Turkish authorities were not allowed to let private communications circulate which dealt harshly with Turkish participation in the affair and the Armenians were afraid of reprisals for giving detailed information.

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[6] Ibid., XXX (1895), 186-7.

[7] E. J. Dillon, "the Condition of Armenia", Contemporary Review, LXVIII (1895), 189.

[8] An article from a Turkish newspaper in H. A. Salmone, "Real Rulers of Turkey", Nineteenth Century, XXXVII (1895), 720 illustrated Turkish efforts to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

In addition English press correspondents were prohibited by the Turkish government from visiting the disturbed districts during the meetings of the Commission of Inquiry.[9] Although European newspaper correspondents in Constantinople endeavoured to remain loyal to the truth, they soon realized very little news was allowed to reach the capital and events were taking place about which they could obtain no trustworthy evidence. An outcry was raised in England against the concealment of information by the government, for reports were gradually leaking out and British newspapers and periodicals were printing what were said to be eyewitness accounts of the tortures and other cruelties perpetrated on the Armenians.

Because the first reports of the Armenian massacres that reached England were unconfirmed they were received with considerable skepticism by many, particularly as they were from anonymous sources transmitted through the Anglo-Armenian Association which was known to sympathize with the Armenians. Some said the reports were exaggerated, others laboured under the impression that further news would diminish the extent and the gravity of the massacres.

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[9] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXX (1895), 194-5; 462.

A report from a Constantinople correspondent stated there was proof of much exaggeration and error in regard to the most commonplace facts purposely circulated in the European press by irresponsible Armenian National Committees abroad with the object of arousing public feeling against Turkish authorities and sympathy for the Armenian population.[10] As Lynch pointed out, nothing effective could be accomplished until the nature of the political situation was understood. The reason that nothing had been done since the Berlin Treaty was due to the conflicting statements and the lack of any definite conception of the situation.[11] The lack of confirmed accounts meant, therefore, that both pro-Turks and Armenian sympathizers could put their own interpretation on the news they did receive.

Previous to official confirmation of the atrocities one member of parliament complained that it was open to a few philo-Turks to deny the truth of the ghastly report and lay all the blame on the Armenians.[12] Another member claimed that the Turks never received fair play in this country because of overstatement of the Armenian

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[10] The Times (Feb. 25, 1893), p. 5.

[11] Ibid. (Dec. 14, 1894), p. 14.

[12] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), 37-42.

cause. The reason he found for this was the cleverness of the Armenian revolutionists who appealed to the emotional principles of religion and national rights in contrast to the dullness and stupidity of the Turks whose cause claimed no champions.[13] Aware of the fact that information from Asiatic Turkey was difficult to obtain, another member failed to understand why one side should be believed rather than the other. As far as he could see no greater credence could be given to the imaginative foreign correspondents of the Armenian Association whose members had never been to Armenia than to the official utterances of the Turkish government.[14] While it was possible to share in the detestation of the alleged crimes, Ashmead-Bartlett pointed out at a meeting of the Mohammedan Society of London it was not only unjust but impolitic to condemn "so old and friendly an ally" as Turkey before trustworthy evidence could be obtained, full consideration given to all sides of the question, and the origin as well as the nature of the disturbances taken into account.[15]

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13 Ibid., 91-3.

14 Ibid., XV (1893), 1154-5.

15 The Times (Dec. 4, 1894), p. 14.

While the philo-Turks contented themselves with denying the reports from Asia Minor, Armenian sympathizers took more active steps to express their loyalty. There were organized in England several groups interested in improving conditions in Asiatic Turkey. According to their members they were not revolutionary although many suspected them of such tendencies. One such group formed in the interests of the Armenians was the Grosvenor House Committee which Canon MacColl helped organize in the spring of 1895. It was a small committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster and through the efforts of its chief members, Stevenson and Schwann, it was enabled in some degree to investigate the suffering of the survivors in the Sassoon region.[16] The Committee, in so far as it was able because of the concealment of official reports, supplemented the accounts from foreign correspondents found in the leading newspapers.

The most important and the most active of the groups formed in aid of the Armenians was the Anglo-Armenian Association, founded in 1890 by J. B. Bryce. It was a society made up of several prominent Englishmen unconnected with the British government or the Armenian revo-

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[16] Ibid., (Feb. 17, 1896) p. 4; (Feb 24, 1896), p. II.

lutionary societies such as Hentchak. The three leading and most vocal members of the Association were Canon MacColl, F. S. Stevenson, and C. E. Schwann, the latter two being members of parliament. In answer to accusations concerning its political affiliations Canon MacColl said there had never been an Armenian revolutionary committee in London and the efforts of the Anglo-Armenian Association were directed towards furthering education in Armenia by means of schools and of improving conditions through efforts made in Great Britain. The only political aim of the Association was the fulfilment of the terms of the Berlin Treaty, although it could easily be understood why the Sultan regarded it as revolutionary when the spread of education was not looked upon favourably.[17] Its main object was to ameliorate the conditions of the Armenians and to secure the introduction of reforms promised by treaty but its project was hampered by ignorance of the spirit and methods of the East.[18]

The Anglo-Armenian Association frequently addressed petitions to the Cabinet demanding redress of the

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17 Ibid., (Feb. 24, 1896), p. 11.

18 Eliot, Turkey in Europe, p. 443.

Armenian grievances following the massacres. They thought it important that this crisis be brought to the attention of the British public as a "diabolical conspiracy of silence" seemed to exist at the Foreign Office in defiance of the wish of liberal newspapers to publicize the facts of the persecutions in Armenia.[19] At a special meeting of the Association in December of 1894, a series of resolutions was drawn up to be presented to Lord Kimberley. They insisted upon the introduction of reforms and the immediate appointment by the Powers of a governor-general for Armenia. Until provincial governors were responsible to such a man, the Association was convinced any commission of inquiry not composed exclusively of the Powers would be futile because the witnesses would have no security after the departure of the commission.[20] Although opinion varied on the nature of reforms to be introduced the members of the Anglo-Armenian Association agreed on the general lines on which they should be carried out and on the necessity of their introduction. The governor-general should be appointed by the Sultan with the consent of the Powers with certain guarantees of tenure of office.

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[19] The Times (Dec. 12, 1894), p. 10.

[20] Ibid. (Dec. 19, 1894), p. 10; (Dec. 25, 1894), p. 3.

He should be supported by a mixed gendarmerie with a certain percentage of European commanders. Also the Kurds should be made liable to military service and subjected to military discipline while the courts should undergo reorganization.[21] The Anglo-Armenian Association in considering what steps should be taken to secure these reforms resolved in the early months of 1895 that the British government must take the initiative in insisting upon reforms.[22]

When the project of reforms drawn up by the Commission of Inquiry into the Sassoon massacres was made public in May of 1895, the Anglo-Armenian Association protested that the provisions fell short of the essential requirements in the situation by virtue of the absence of any definite stipulation for adequate and continuous European control.[23] Actually, two months before their acceptance by the Powers, Lord Kimberley was well aware of the dissatisfaction that would result from the reform proposals. He knew that the failure to appoint a governor-general subject to the approval of the Powers, with tenure

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[21] F.S. Stevenson, " Armenia ", Contemporary Review LXVII (1895), 206-7.

[22] The Times (Feb. 5, 1895), p. 9.

[23] Ibid., (June 7, 1895), p. 3.

of office fixed for a certain number of years, would bring forth strong public criticism.[24] The Anglo-Armenian Association's attacks on government policy were viewed with disfavour by many Englishmen who would otherwise have been included amongst its supporters. Gladstone, who would have joined their numbers, wished them success but would not give the Association his backing. Also in this group of disapproving sympathizers were such men as the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Argyll, the Bishops of London and Manchester, and the Archbishop of Canterbury.[25]

Like the Anglo-Armenian Association the Armenian Relief Committee declared it had "no connection with any political organization either in the United Kingdom or elsewhere". They stated its sole purpose was the collection and distribution of funds through the Secretary of State to the British Ambassador at Constantinople for food and clothing for the destitute survivors of the Armenian massacres.[26] Entirely non-sectarian appeals were made to every conceivable group, civic leader, or religious

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[24] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1, no. 28.

[25] The Times (Decl 18, 1894), p. 8.

[26] Ibid. (April 22, 1896), p. 12.

body, and notices appeared regularly in The Times of the contributions made by various communities. The Scottish Episcopal Church entreated its congregation to support the fund, and circulars were issued to the American, Canadian and Australian press, calling upon the bond between English speaking countries throughout the world to provide for the destitute Armenians. Special communications were opened with the French, Russian, and Greek clergy for universal collections in aid of the Armenians.[27] The president of the Armenian Relief Fund, the Duke of Argyll, gave full discretion in allotting the funds to Sir Philip Currie who established numerous depots in Asia Minor for the distribution of the funds.[28] The distribution of the funds was not always successful, however, for it was reported in the House of Commons that Currie had been forced to make representations to the Porte because relief funds in one district had been seized by Turkish officials for the payment of taxes.[29] In answer to a request from the Relief Committee that he take the initiative in creating

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[27] Ibid. (May 23, 1896), p. 12; (April 4, 1896), p. 8; (April 27, 1896), p. 9.

[28] Ibid. (April 4, 1896), p. 8; (June 25, 1896), p. 3.

[29] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), p. 32.

a national fund, Salisbury pointed out that the collection of funds for such a purpose had invariably been the work of private persons or local authorities and no advantage would be gained by the interference of the Crown.[30]

Women working in the field of Armenian relief came gradually to the conclusion that more help was needed for the victims of Turkish atrocities than replenishment of their immediate needs. A frantic appeal was made by Mrs. Hickson of the Women's Armenian Relief Fund, who pleaded with English men and women not to grow accustomed to tales of horror nor let the "recitation of them harden their hearts and deaden their conscience and imagination". The suffering was of such an extent that people might fold their hands in despair of touching it, but she reminded them that that was no way to remedy it.[31] One relief worker writing from Armenia felt sure that the only hope for countless numbers lay in emigration and she expressed a hope that the British government and others would advocate such a course.[32] In answer to her hopes there were two funds established to assist Armenians by means of emigration. One was the Women's Armenian Relief Committee

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30 The Times (March 18, 1896), p. 8.

31 Ibid., (May 14, 1896), p. 12.

32 Ibid., (May 25, 1896), p. 12.

established in concert with friends in the United States. Although the details of the Committee were not made public it aimed at removal of the suffering to another country in so far as it proved practical. The second group was the Armenian Refugees Fund for the purpose of establishing cheap quarters in safe districts especially for widows and orphans.[33]

Mrs. Sheldon Amos, a champion of the oppressed Armenians, went further by suggesting a scheme for the establishment of Armenian widows and orphans on the island of Cyprus. Although Mrs. Amos did not put her scheme prominently before the public another writer investigated its feasibility. She found the Cyprus government reluctant to foster any immigration, and the British government indifferent if not obstructive to the idea. British officials in Cyprus although unable to act officially gave their sympathy to the project and Mrs. Amos's English Committee made a grant in aid of the destitute Armenians making their way to Cyprus.[34] The whole project brought forth criticism on the economic aspects of the

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[33] Ibid., (Aug 21, 1896), p. 11.

[34] Emma Cons, " Armenian Exiles in Cyprus ", Contemporary Review, LXX (1896), 888-95.

scheme. One writer, seeing that a dole fund would soon be exhausted and public interest diverted eventually to some other situation, recommended that the relief funds be invested. By rallying the "captains of industry and the chiefs of agriculture", he felt the exiles could be gainfully employed and technically developed.[35] By early 1897, however, it was reported there had been no large scale emigration to Cyprus although a small number of widows and orphans had been received by private agencies. The British government feared that if there was a large influx of destitute refugees there would be pressure put on by local authorities to prevent their landing because of the lack of funds of the Cyprus government.[36]

During the latter months of 1894 the demands on the part of societies, groups, and individuals for government intervention in the Armenian question reached enormous heights. Hagopian, the chairman of the Armenian Patriotic Association, addressed an appeal to Kimberley publishing with it a letter disclosing the horrors perpetrated on the Armenians to give strength to his cry

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[35] Patrick Geddes, "Cyprus, Actual and Possible", Contemporary Review, LXXI (1897), 905-6.

[36] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XLVI (1897), 264-5.

for aid.[37] The Council of the Baptist Union sent a memorial in a similar vein, thanking the government for insisting on an impartial investigation of the massacres and hoping for vigorous efforts in the punishment of the guilty.[38] The Armenian population and their patrons abroad would have liked to have seen Great Britain act singlehandedly and innumerable appeals were made privately and through the British Ambassador at Constantinople to the Foreign Office for its effective intervention. On behalf of a body of English Presbyterian Ministers in London, Mr. Schwann presented a petition to parliament claiming that the government's duty through the responsibilities it incurred under the Berlin Treaty was to make every effort for the introduction of permanent reforms in Armenia.[39] The pastors of the London Congregational Union also expressed their "detestation of the horrible cruelties" and petitioned the members of parliament to use their efforts to make it impossible for these atrocities to ever again be perpetrated. A Presbyterian minister, Dr. Joseph Parker, "thanked God there was what was sneeringly called the Nonconformist Conscience" and felt that

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[37] The Times (Nov. 17, 1894), p. 5.

[38] Ibid. (Dec. 20, 1894), p. 11.

[39] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXII (1895), 1400.

all diplomatic relations with the Sultan should cease until the outrages were investigated.[40]

The Anglo-Armenian Association and other similar groups, whether organized or unorganized, invoked the emotional principles of Armenian rights and religious equality, but the religious aspect which crossed all denominational barriers created the greatest interest. The British public were made to feel shame at the ease and security in which they lived when as a nation they shared in the responsibility for the suffering of the Armenians. The call was for immediate action as Dillon appealed to every "reasoning inhabitant of these islands deliberately to accept or repudiate his share of the joint indirect responsibility of the British nation for a series of the hugest and foulest crimes that have ever stained the pages of history". Dillon by the use of tales of horrors called on the religious and humanitarian feelings of the British public to place their protests on record. He feared that as the stories of Armenian massacres and Turkish misrule grew familiar they lost their power of conveying corresponding definite impressions to the mind.[41]

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[40] The Times (Dec. 14, 1894), p. 10.

[41] E. J. Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal", Contemporary Review, LXIX (1896), 1-19.

In addition to the meetings and petitions to the government, individuals and private societies found diverse ways of expressing their sympathy. A service was held in commemoration of "the Armenian martyrs of the Christian faith"[42]; the Bible Lands Missions Aid Society prepared statements on the extent of the outrages and the need for help.[43] The British and Foreign Bible Society sent a printing press to Armenia so that they might print their own bible in the vernacular.[44] Several wealthy Armenian gentlemen as a tribute to the English sympathy and to Gladstone in particular placed a stained-glass window in Hawarden Church in memory of the Armenian martyrs. Some objections were raised to this gift on the grounds that the money could be better employed in Armenia but the principal subscriber was also a generous contributor to the relief fund.[45]

Some of the religious fervour of the British public found its outlet in attacks upon Mohammedanism and consequently the Mohammedan religion received far more abuse than constructive criticism during this period

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42 The Times (March 26, 1896), p. 11.

43 Ibid. (May 20, 1896), p. 12.

44 Ibid. (Sept. 7, 1894), p. 7.

45 Ibid. (April 22, 1896), p. 13.

of violent emotional outbursts on the part of religious fanatics and humanitarians. Typical of the general public opinion were statements such as "Islam with its fanaticism, narrowness, obstructiveness, and grooviness is really at this moment the greatest obstacle to every species of advance both in Turkey and Persia, and its present activity and renewed proselytizing spirit are omens of evil as much for political and social progress as for the higher life of men".[46] The idea that the Mohammedan religion was unfit to be a moral code for a nation to live under underlay the whole Eastern Question in every country except Russia. According to Gambier, the idea sprang partly from a desire to pander to the Christian voter and partly from the idea that Constantinople was of no importance to Great Britain. He felt there was nothing in Mohammedanism to make it incompatible with good government. The massacres in Armenia though apparently religious he described as racial and the moral degeneration of a nation had nothing to do with its religion. In fact, the Mohammedan religion was perfectly suited to the Oriental and if western morals were better

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[46] J. Bishop, Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan, II, 337.

than theirs it was only because of more adequate law enforcement.[47] Another writer drew attention to the fact that although the Turkish authorities showed some partiality to their Mohammedan subjects they were substantially no better off. Personal outrages against the Mohammedans were not so frequent but they were robbed like the Christians and yet had no recourse to foreign intervention.[48] Queen Victoria called it a great difficulty and a misfortune that the impression that England was opposed to Mohammedanism should be encouraged by the "impolitic half-mad " attitude of certain men and women who had no regard for the consequences if the idea gained ground in India[49].

Canon MacColl was an outstanding offender in this matter. He declared that the Commission of Inquiry was "an utter farce, having no other object than to throw dust in the eyes of civilized Europe," the authority for his statement being based on his interpretation of the sacred law of Turkey. Because no Christian evidence was ever received against a Mohammedan and because a

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47 Gambier, " The Turkish Question in its Religious Aspects", Fortnightly Review, LX (1896), 532-3.

48 J. B. Bryce, " Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 606-7.

49 Victoria to Salisbury, Nov. 5, 1895, in Buckle, Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, II, 571-2.

Mohammedan would never give evidence against a member of his own faith in favour of a Christian, the Commission could not reach the facts.[50] MacColl found some support for his opinion in a letter from a Turkish official who found British policy incompatible with the Mohammedan creed. The pressure brought to bear by the Powers to compel the Sultan to introduce reforms ignored the fact that no reform based on an equality of races and creeds before the law could possibly be carried out by the Sultan. The Turk was astonished that England who ruled over a large Mohammedan population should have accepted such a policy.[51] MacColl accused the English people of being unaware of the impossibility of reforming Asiatic Turkey and the British statesmen of closing their eyes to the difficulties. Turkish administration based on the Koran put an impossible barrier between Mohammedans and non-Mohammedans and to compel its ruler to change or modify his state was to ask him to forfeit the allegiance of his subjects.[52]

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50 The Times (Nov. 28, 1894), p. 7.

51 Letter from a Turkish Official published in MacColl, "The Crisis in the East", Contemporary Review, LXXII (1897), 500.

52 M. MacColl, " The Crisis in the East", Contemporary Review, LXXII (1897), 497.

MacColl's ideas on Moslem religion and law did not go unrefuted, however. A Turkish writer stated that there was no law to be found in the Koran or the traditions of the Prophet stating that Christian evidence was not admissable against a Mohammedan and, therefore, it was not a precept of the unchangeable sacred law. Other aspects of the law such as the carrying of arms by Christians and the gratuitous hospitality they were forced to grant were all disputed as having no foundation in sacred law.[53] Canon MacColl's interpretation of Turkish law was labelled by Ashmead-Bartlett as contrary to the spirit of Christianity and his doctrine of Islam as pure nonsense. A general protest was made by the Mohammedan Society of London against the "misrepresentation of Islamic law and religion". It deplored all attempts to excite religious animosity between Christians and Moslems and expressed "regret and indignation that this matter should have been made a subject of pulpit oratory and given a religious aspect when it was purely political".[54]

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[53] The Times (Dec. 22, 1894), p. 11.

[54] Ibid., p. 7. The massacres had a religious aspect by virtue of the fact that only Gregorian Armenians suffered at the hands of the Turks and that by renouncing their faith the Armenians were guaranteed protection.

The number of articles and books published on the subject of distress in Armenia was considerable. Eliot gives one of the best accounts of what actually happened, although he is taken to task on several counts by a later writer. Bryce wrote that contrary to Eliot's interpretation the friends of Armenians in England did everything in their power to denounce conspiracies or attempts at rebellion knowing how fruitless they would be. Their appeal to the British government was based on the Cyprus Convention and the Berlin Treaty which bound Britain to provide the protection that Russia would have given under the Treaty of San Stefano.[55] Many efforts were made by friends of the Armenians to convince the British public of the gravity of the Armenian question. Such was the purpose of a correspondence carried on between two British travellers in Asiatic Turkey and their friends in England. The letters were moderate in tone partly out of necessity because of the danger of interception by Turkish authorities and partly in an effort to convince thoughtful persons of their reliability.[56]

After the publication of many reports concerning the Armenians, especially those containing descriptions

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55 J.B.Bryce, "Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 609.

56 R.J. and H.B. Harris, Letters from Scenes of Recent Massacres in Armenia (London: Nesbit, 1897).

of the terrible conditions in the Asiatic provinces, most Englishmen were full of sympathy for the Armenians who possessed an "identity of ideals, aspirations, and religious faith". By virtue of their heroic stand against the "hurricane of persecution" the British felt the Armenians had strong claims on their sympathy.[57] A long debate in the House of Commons was analyzed as a definite expression of this sympathy and an assurance that past efforts would not be relaxed in the future.[58] One member of parliament summed up the feeling of the country as "a mixture of pity and indignation; pity for the most awful sufferings of modern times and indignation that this diabolical crime should have been consummated in the face of a selfish and corrupt Christendom".[59]

Like every other aspect of the Armenian question there was little agreement on whom the blame should be laid for the massacres. There were some Englishmen who refused to consider that the fault lay anywhere except at Turkey's doorstep. Canon MacColl made such an unequivocable assertion using as his authority "an intimate

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[57] E. J. Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal", Contemporary Review, LXIX (1896), 2-4.

[58] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), 125.

[59] Ibid., 45-6.

knowledge of the methods of Turkish administration".[60] A much more liberal view was taken by Lynch who, while refusing to "exonerate the Turkish officials from blame", nevertheless, did not ignore the responsibility of the left wing of the Armenian party for having promoted the troubles in Sassoon.[61] Kennaway, a member of the Grosvenor House Committee, would not deny that the Armenian agitators had done some unwise things but felt that to say that they had provoked the atrocities was ridiculous.[62] Others went further by favouring the interpretation that the Turks, forewarned of an Armenian revolt organized in the Sassoon and Zeitoum regions by warlike herdsmen, were entirely justified in taking strong measures to restore order. Regardless of the backing that the latter theory received from the Turks, British public opinion relying to a large extent on the events of the past few years, concluded that what happened at Sassoon in 1894 was not a spur of the moment policy but a planned one. According to one writer the preparations were elaborate and known to all. Turkish authorities encouraged by the official British attitude which adhered to the idea of refraining

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60 The Times (Nov. 28, 1894), p. 7.

61 Ibid. (Nov. 20, 1894), p. 11

62 Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), 46-8.

from meddling with "the domestic affairs of a friendly power" proceeded with the massacres as advertised.[63] After the publication of the Blue Books in September of 1895, the Armenian sympathizers found new evidence to support their theories. The consular despatches showed that the massacres were deliberately planned and that any evidence proving the Armenians had provoked them was obtained under threat of torture.

Although public opinion was never completely in agreement it was forceful enough to have a direct effect on government policy. The Liberal administration found itself subject to domestic attack when it did not meet the demands of the public and open to international criticism which ever way it turned.

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63 E.J. Dillon, " Armenia: An Appeal", Contemporary Review, LXIX (1896), 12-3.

ROSEBERY AND THE CONCERT OF EUROPE

The fluctuation of recent events in Europe had made it impossible to secure any united action for reforms on the part of the signatories of the Berlin Treaty. The same situation also made it highly probable that the Powers would combine against Great Britain if she embarked on any coercive enterprise of her own.[1] The tangle of alliances and alignments which would eventually embrace all Europe was begun by Germany in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin. After her defeat at the Congress, Russia never again quite trusted Germany and she felt betrayed when she saw herself defrauded of her Balkan gains. Germany, in an effort to placate Russia, consented to a renewal of the Dreikaiserbund in 1881 by which these two Powers and Austria agreed to remain neutral if attacked by a fourth, and in the event of Turkey being divided they would agree in advance on the spoils. Austro-Russian jealousy in the Balkans, however, wrecked the Dreikaiserbund, and an agreement between

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[1] L. Wolf, "Lord Rosebery's Second Thoughts", Fortnightly Review, LX (1896), 622.

Austria, England, and Italy in 1887 to preserve the status quo in the Near East relieved Germany of the task of settling the Austro-Russian dispute. The same year Germany made a curious reinsurance treaty with Russia but after Bismark's resignation in 1890 the German emperor refused to renew the treaty. The Kaiser, on the contrary, made every effort to cultivate the friendship of the Sultan and in general seemed to have resolved upon a consistently pacific policy.[2]

Inevitably Russia and France were driven together. It was Germany and the interests of England that cemented relations between the two countries. Both Russia and France had grievances against England, the former on the Afghan border and the latter in Egypt and on the upper Nile. In addition, there was the likehood in the 1890's that England might have become a fourth partner in the Triple Alliance which would have left Russia and France isolated.[3] As the network of alliances grew, however, it was England who was to find herself alone. Relations

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[2] For the background of the international situation see Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890 and the Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902; also R. J. Sontag, Germany and England.

[3] The Triple Alliance was formed in 1882 by the addition of Italy to the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria.

with Germany were strained as Anglo-German trade rivalry and misunderstandings were intensified.[4] In 1894, therefore, Europe was divided into two hostile camps neither of which would show much friendship for England in her efforts to find a solution to the Armenian question. It was hardly likely that if Great Britain took any decisive action in the Near East her venture would receive any praise or support.

The liberals had inherited from Salisbury in 1892 a policy of moderation in dealing with Turkey. Lord Rosebery, however, on Gladstone's retirement from public life in 1894, discarded the Conservative tradition of friendly pressure and adopted a policy of strong language and threats which were eventually to estrange the Sultan. Convinced that a strong foreign policy was the only foreign policy, Rosebery saw the first requisite of such a policy as consistency. It was intolerable to him that European diplomats should be able to count upon the domestic conflicts of English parties as counters in their game. Aware of the fact that an English minister was never safe from attack for being either too warlike

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[4] For further discussion see R. J. Hoffman, Great Britain and German Trade Rivalry 1875-1914 (Philadelphia: University Press, 1933.).

or too weak, he found himself at a hopeless disadvantage with the diplomats of countries hampered by none of these embarrassments.[5] As a result of the extraordinary diversity of view exhibited by British statesmen the old distinguishing lines in British foreign policy were almost obliterated, and worse still, the plain facts were to be lost "in a mist of partisan controversy".[6] Rosebery, however, never felt the Armenian massacres were a party question nor that the British people should look to the Liberal party for an answer, because the responsibility lay less with the British government than with the Powers.[7] But despite Rosebery's personal convictions, the Liberal government was forced by popular agitation to take a stronger line than it might otherwise have done. Caught between the forces of public opinion and the hazards of the international situation, Rosebery sought to use the Concert of Europe and the policy of Gladstone as the only practicable instrument to solve the Armenian question.

To the best of their ability, Rosebery and Kimberley, his foreign secretary, tried to bring about common

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5 J.L. Garvin, "Disraeli of Liberalism: Lord Rosebery", Fortnightly Review, LXV (1897), 133.

6 G. H. Perris, Eastern Crisis and British Policy in the Near East, p. 612.

7 The Times, (Sept. 14, 1896), p. 5.

action with France and Russia in an effort to remedy Britain's isolated position. There was evidence that Rosebery was willing to allow the Russians to occupy Armenia in 1894 in return for recognition of Britain's special position in Egypt, but Russia was averse to raising any political questions over troubles in Asia Minor.[8] This was a greater concession to Russia than most of the Cabinet could accept as they believed that the occupation of the Armenian provinces by any European Power without the consent of the Sultan would be a violation of the Treaty of Berlin.[9] There was, however, little division on the necessity of coming to a definite understanding with Russia, as many saw the rashness of misguided attempts to reopen the Eastern question without it. They felt that no Power except Russia was capable of saving the Armenians from the Turkish extermination policy. Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was one of the chief advocates of such an understanding. The only way of strengthening the position of the British government, he felt,

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[8] British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, CIX (1895), Turkey no. L, no. 91.

[9] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fourth Series, XXXVII (1896), 456-7.

was by an agreement with Russia "as a friend, and not as an enemy, as an Asiatic neighbour, and not as an Asiatic foe". The first step in forming a closer relationship would be the repudiation of the Cyprus Convention which stood as a declaration of British hostility towards Russian interests in Turkey.[10] British efforts towards a rapprochement with Russia soon became obvious to Europe. Two Austrian newspapers accused England of exaggerating the calamitous events in Armenia not on the grounds of humanity but in order to influence Russia. England's efforts to make herself agreeable to Russia they felt were not the "first folly of which Liberal politicians on the Thames had been guilty".[11] The truth of this statement was soon made evident by the failure of the Anglo-Russian negotiators to come to any agreement for the solving of the Armenian question.

According to a statement in The Times the Russian government, believing British interests were not such as to lead her to any independent action, desired to abstain completely from any intervention in the

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[10] Speech of Oct. 5, 1896, in A.G. Gardiner, Life of Sir William Harcourt (London: Constable, 1932), I, 415.

[11] The Times (Dec. 8, 1894), p. 5.

Armenian question.[12] A correspondent in St. Petersburg reported there was no sympathy there for Turkish Armenia and that the details of horrors published in the British press did not have the slightest effect.[13] Russia's whole policy on the Armenian question as directed by Prince Lobanoff was later described by one writer as "detestable in its cynical selfishness and its absolute indifference to human suffering."[14] The Russian attitude was understandable, however, in view of the fact that the large number of Armenians lying within Russia's borders had successfully resisted the introduction of her language and institutions. However, when it became apparent to Russia that Great Britain might take action on her own and thereby reap all the moral and material advantages for herself, she decided that the more practical policy was to take part in any negotiations. She therefore subsequently joined with France in the investigation of the Armenian massacres and the presentation of the scheme of reforms that followed.[15]

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[12] Ibid. (Dec. 25, 1894), p. 3.

[13] Ibid. (April 4, 1895), p. 5.

[14] "Year of Shame", Westminster Review, CXLIX (1898), 127.

[15] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, Correspondence Relating to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey.

The Concert of Europe as it was revived in 1894, therefore, became an understanding between England, France and Russia, the other Powers remaining neutral, for the investigation of the Sassoon massacres and the preparation of a scheme of reforms as provided under the Treaty of Berlin. The relationship established has been referred to as the "Armenian Triplice" but in actual fact it was "not so much a grouping designed for the attainment of a common aim as a combination in which two of the partners regarded it as their chief task to hold back the third".[16] Actually Russia was more concerned with preventing an Armenian revolution than in introducing reforms or granting autonomy; and France joined in to keep the question international and exercise her perogative as a Russian ally.[17] From the British point of view the association was the successful result of Rosebery's desire to establish contact with Russia and at the same time focus her attention on Near Eastern affairs.

Both partisans and critics of the Concert of Europe seemed to take it for granted that the main object of the Concert was to settle the Eastern Question by

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[16] Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, I, 147.

[17] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, nos. 103, 109, 121, 129.

bullying or cajoling the Sultan into accepting schemes of reform. The truth was, however, that the Powers originally united themselves for the purpose of preserving the peace of Europe by maintaining the territorial status quo in the East, and the campaign for administrative reforms was only employed to serve that purpose and to assure their solidarity. If the British public was not aware of this fact, the Sultan certainly was.[18] In the years immediately following the Congress of Berlin the Sultan had lived in perpetual apprehension of intervention in Asiatic Turkey, while his Armenian subjects were reasonably assured that they were under special protection of the Christian Powers. Gradually, however, as his crimes went unpunished the Sultan realized his apprehension was groundless and the massacres from 1894 through 1896 illustrated the fact that he was little concerned with any repurcussions his mistreatment of the Armenians might have in Europe.[19]

Few persons would have believed after the defeat

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[18] L. Wolf, "The Sultan and the Concert of Europe", Fortnightly Review, LXII (1897), 315-6.

[19] Evidence in the Blue Books showed that the massacres were carried out, if not under the Sultan's direct orders, at least with his approval. Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1; XCV (1896) Turkey nos. 1 and 2.

of Turkey in 1878 that the Sultan would ever have dared to disregard the mandate of the Powers, but then no one could foresee the weakness and the cynicism of their policy towards Turkey. Great Britain was the worst offender in confusing objects and methods in regard to the solution of the Armenian question. Other nations which probably had less sympathy for the Ottoman Empire knew better how to deal with the Turks. Although every Power was guilty in varying degrees of bullying and cajoling, threats and bribery, Great Britain went farther in bothering the Turk about his customs, his social system, and his mode of administering his own affairs.[20] Britain tried to compel the Turks to accept reforms inconsistent with usages of their religion and, owing to the British zeal without judgement, the Turks came to despise the "reformer within his gates".[21] Turkish ministers interpreted British efforts at reform and education as a threat to

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[20] British policy towards the Turks was in sharp contrast to her policy towards the Mohammedans of India and Egypt where Britain governed without interfering with their religion. Salisbury maintained this situation was an insult to the Sultan as Caliph and the basis of much Turkish hostility towards England.. Salisbury to White, Sept. 14, 1891 in Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 338-9.

[21] Edward Dicey, "The Isolation of England", Fortnightly Review, LIX (1896), 335.

the Sultan's position as Caliph and successfully instilled these fears in the Sultan himself. There was one statesman, Fouad Pasha, however, who tried to dispel this hatred of progress and modern concepts, although he was fully aware that the majority regarded him as an enemy of the Turkish religion and government.[22]

British representation at Constantinople formed a good reflection of the attitude of the Foreign Office towards the Armenian question. Sir William White, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, had been succeeded in 1892 by Sir Clare Ford. Due to the comparatively short period of his embassy, Ford was unable to gain much personal influence over the Sultan and, as the situation in Turkey grew steadily worse, as evidenced by the recurrence of massacres, the Armenian question became acute. In a manner such as to make "it appear a favour ardently desired and solicited by the Sultan", Rosebery appointed Sir Philip Currie to succeed Ford in 1893.[23] The importance attached at the Foreign Office to the

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[22] Fouad Pasha to the Sultan in H. A. Salmone, "The Real Rulers of Turkey", Nineteenth Century, XXXVII (1895), 731-2.

[23] Rosebery to Victoria, Dec. 19, 1893, in Buckle, Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, II, 333.

situation in Turkey was made evident by the appointment of a man with such a reputation for skill and determination. Currie lost no time in taking up the question of Armenian reforms with the Porte but, unfortunately, his remonstrances and even threats were of no avail since the British government was not prepared to use force.[24]

From the days of Canning to those of Disraeli England had been a constant and fairly successful competitor for the friendship of the Sultan. However, Great Britain's popularity at Constantinople had not long survived the conclusion of the Cyprus Convention. The Turks recognized Gladstone as the friend of subject populations, and British prestige, impaired by the return of the Liberal party to office in 1880, was finally shattered by the British occupation of Egypt. British relations with Turkey were further strained, chiefly owing to the support England gave the Bulgarians in incorporating Eastern Roumelia into the Bulgarian principality. In addition, Sir William White fostered German initiative particularly in economic enterprises as a counterpoise to Russian influence.[25] The period of Germany's greatest

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[24] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, passim.

[25] A. H. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy (London: J. Murray, 1947), p. 47.

expansion in Asia Minor came at the time when the outrages in Armenia led to the belief among some Englishmen that one of the best methods of giving security to the Armenians was by foreign rule, particularly Russian. If Germany, therefore, were allowed a free hand in Asia Minor she would not be likely to let it fall into the hands of Russia.[26]

Germany, profiting by Turkish dislike of England and fear of Russia, so extended her influence at Constantinople that her commercial policy was completely successful in that the wealth of Asia Minor passed into her hands. She gained these advantages by acting on the belief that morals did not count in foreign policy. The German Ambassador at the Porte, Baron Marschall von Bieberstien, convinced the Sultan that Germany was his only friend as she was the only one of the Powers with no political aspirations in Turkey. Anxious to promote economic development, Bieberstien encouraged Abdul Hamid in his Pan-Islamic policy and his hope of recovering Egypt.[27] Britain did not consider Germany's methods

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[26] Sir Edwin Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid, p. 160.

[27] B. E. Schmitt, England and Germany 1740-1914 (Princeton: University Press, 1918) pp. 260-1; see also J. B. Wolf, The Diplomatic History of the Bagdad Railroad, University of Missouri Studies, XI (1936), no.2.

cynical while there was opportunity for the enterprise of both. In fact British statesmen and politicians paid little attention to German activities in Asia Minor. Sir Edward Grey pointed out years later that British policy in Turkey was made at the cost of British material interests because her representations over the Armenian massacres made her hated at Constantinople but not feared. As Germany exploited the situation to her own advantage, Britain prided herself that she had kept "her hands clean" and acquitted the national conscience, but she had done this without effectively helping the objects of her sympathy. It was a barren and unsatisfying result.[28] Germany successfully paralysed the Concert of Europe in its efforts to secure reforms in Turkey by refusing to aid the Anglo-Franco-Russian alliance.[29] In an effort to divert Russia as much as possible from the Near East, Germany was willing to support Russia to the limit in the Far Eastern crisis.[30]

Russia, following just such a course of action as the one advocated by Germany, made overtures to the

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[28] Sir Edward Grey, Twenty-Five Years (New York: F. Stokes, 1925), I, 127-8.

[29] Commons Sessional Papers, CIX (1895), Turkey no. 1, no. 78.

[30] Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, I, 195.

British government in 1894 to join with her in intervention in China with a view to keeping Japan off the Asiatic mainland. Intimating that Rosebery could almost make his own terms, she offered Great Britain the opportunity of securing Russian support or a free hand in Turkey in exchange for British support in China. No official papers were published dealing with the Far Eastern crisis so that nothing is known of the motives which lay behind British policy. There is some evidence in Queen Victoria's correspondence, however, that Rosebery would have liked to cooperate with Russia but he was unable to convince his colleagues.[31] The Cabinet failed, therefore, to seize the opportunity , but "peddled away" at the scheme of reforms confident that as soon as the project was completed it would receive the Sultan's acceptance.[32] Since the British Cabinet itself did not grasp the fact that the development of the Near Eastern question would be largely governed by the outcome of the Chino-Japanese War it was not surprising that the public in general failed completely to understand the international

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[31] G. E. Buckle, Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, II, 496, 499, 507.

[32] L. Wolf, "Lord Rosebery's Second Thoughts", Fortnightly Review, LX (1896), 622-3.

complications. The public was interested only in immediate action in the Armenian question, and as the government could not ignore what was virtually a command, it turned to deal directly with the question of Turkish misrule without looking to the right or to the left. It excluded by its policy the more subtle and comprehensive plan of merging the two Eastern questions and a spirited policy in the Far East was dropped.[33]

The Cabinet's refusal to recognize the international implications of the Near Eastern question was partly attributable to its lack of foreign policy. Britain's foreign relations had been continued without much comment during the preceding decade for the Liberal attitude had been one of vigilance rather than of action. Emphasis having been laid on the domestic issues of industry and labour, the Empire, and home rule, the Liberals had lost grip of their fundamental principles of foreign policy. For ten years foreign relations had been placed in the background by the controversy over home rule and it was even longer since an acute crisis had occurred in the Near East. Therefore, when the Rosebery government was faced for the first time with a need for

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[33] "Two Eastern Questions", Fortnightly Review, LIX (1896), 205-6.

a clearcut policy they did not know what to do.[34]

On the one hand, the British government and, in particular, Rosebery was accused of falling back on its policy of maintaining the Turkish Empire as a barrier against any Russian advance to the Mediterranean and in so doing of forfeiting all hope of protecting the Christians under Turkish rule.[35] On the other hand, those who adhered strictly to the Berlin Treaty and paid scant attention to the Cyprus Convention held the other signatories equally responsible and felt that any British action should be in concert. Because the original engagement under the Berlin Treaty was such that it could only be executed by coercive measures on the part of all its signatories, they were held responsible but in varying degrees. Although Russia's refusal to apply pressure on the Sultan was the immediate stumbling block, the reason for her decision was frequently placed at Germany's doorstep, particularly the political regime of Bismark which eliminated all sentiment from politics. Great Britain could still remember that Russia at the time

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[34] "Foreign Policy of the Liberal Party", Westminster Review, CXLVII (1897), 617.

[35] The Times (April 14, 1896), p. 11.

of the Russo-Turkish War had been willing enough to come to the aid of persecuted Christians.[36]

Despite the attitude of the Powers towards any united action against the Sultan, the Cabinet refused to abandon the idea of the Concert of Europe completely, because the only alternative, which was a "free hand for England", was believed to mean war with Russia. The war scare, according to one writer, was a formula invented chiefly for the purpose of preserving the status quo in Turkey, and this devotion to the status quo paralysed the Concert for any useful action in promoting freedom or good government.[37] The scare was real enough, however, for Sir William Harcourt was no more disposed than the rest of the Cabinet to plunge into war and was privately alarmed at the attitude of Bryce and others who were in favour of independent action.[38] Although Rosebery felt the pressure of public opinion he refused to go forward into what he thought would involve a European War. The duty of the government as he saw it was to take every measure which did not encourage war. With the public demand for the deposing of the Sultan he could not agree, in the face of Russia's statement in May of 1895

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[36] Ibid. (Dec. 4, 1896), p. 6.

[37] "The Concert of Europe", Contemporary Review, LXXI (1897), 618-9.

[38] Gardiner, op. cit., II, 413.

opposing separate action on the part of the Powers.[39] Rosebery saw no reason to think that Russia had changed her mind or that the Turks would have to stand alone in resisting British action.[40] He was completely defeated by a Russian government which refused to countenance independent British action and yet would not come to an agreement on united action.

The German government seemed to exult in the defeat suffered by British diplomacy. The publication of the Blue Books in London in September of 1895 brought forth the remark from Germany that it was a fortunate circumstance that the British inquiry into the massacres was subjected to French and Russian control as it compelled the British government to adhere more closely to the truth than it would otherwise have done.[41] The German government thought it too much for the British foreign office to expect the Powers to cooperate with British policy, which tried to beguile them into dangerous action. Furthermore, it expressed its resentment at the accusations made

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[39] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1, nos. 65, 71, 76.

[40] The Times (Sept. 19, 1896), p.8.

[41] Article from the National Zeitung pub. in The Times (Feb. 1, 1896), p. 5.

against the European Powers for the responsibility for the defeat incurred by British diplomacy.[42] One British writer found justification for the attitude of Europe for, as he pointed out, if England was actuated at the time of the massacres by a sense of duty how could she have ignored that duty persistently for years. It must be obvious to Europe, therefore, that England only remembered her duty at a time when it would bring her some political advantage and she could hardly affect surprise when the Powers regarded her policy as a political trick.[43]

The Powers were not the only critics suspicious of Rosebery's motives. Dillon claimed that the Armenians were the innocent victims of Britain's pursuit of her own selfish interests, and regardless of the fact that she was left empty handed there were still the calamitous results of the situation to be faced.[44] He thought Rosebery would have shown more benevolence by ignoring the Sassoon massacres than by irritating the Turks to the point of madness and leaving them free to vent their fury upon the Christians,

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42 Article from the Cologne Gazette pub. in The Times (Feb. 1, 1896), p.5.

43 E. J. Dillon, "The Fiasco in Armenia", Fortnightly Review, LIX (1896), 352.

44 Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal", Contemporary Review, LXIX (1896), 2-4.

who were protected only by British "sentinental eloquence". The Armenian question, in his opinion, ought to have been treated on the basis of either pure politics or pure benevolence, for the two were incompatible.[45] He regarded Rosebery's trust in the Powers as a political blunder because it was based neither on diplomatic promise nor on the current trend of European public opinion.[46]

Most British writers agreed with Dillon that the main feature of Rosebery's policy was its strong-handedness and indecision, which were particularly conspicious because of the "friendly coercion" applied by the previous Conservative administration. Rosebery was accused of reviving an aggressive policy towards Turkish misgovernment in Asia Minor, which had been in suspense since 1881, and of persisting in it regardless of the obvious meaning of the attitude taken up at the beginning and consistently maintained by the Russian government.[47] It was said that Great Britain had had no such absurd Anglo-Franco-Russian coercion of Turkey under Disraeli or any abortive concerts of Europe. Since the Liberals had come into office

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45 Dillon, "The Condition of Armenia", Contemporary Review, LXVIII (1895), 153-6.

46 Dillon " The Fiasco in Armenia", Fortnightly Review, LIX (1896), 347-8.

47 L. Wolf, "Lord Rosebery's Second Thoughts", Fortnightly Review, LX (1896), 616.

they had done nothing to reform Turkey, had irritated the Sultan, excited Mohammedan fanaticism, and alarmed the Powers.[48] This criticism was carried into the House of Commons where the diversity of view among British politicians on the Armenian question was greater than was usually the case. In the face of all the attacks Rosebery deemed his position untenable and called for an election in June of 1895. His party was defeated and Salisbury was handed a policy that was no longer practicable in the eyes of hostile Europe.

When, on October 8, 1896, Rosebery resigned his leadership of the Liberal party, the announcement startled the country. His resignation, however, was directly related to the Armenian question. Only two weeks prior to the announcement Gladstone had uttered against the Turks his "clarion call to the nation". Gladstone's moral authority in the country was still unrivalled and the rank and file of the party received any utterance from him with reverence. Rosebery condemned his outspoken appeals which demanded separate action by Great Britain and the ultimate possibility of war.[49] Gardiner suggested that

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[48] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVIII (1896), 53-8.

[49] G. H. Perris, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

the Armenian question and Gladstone's speech were the occasion rather than the cause of Rosebery's resignation, because there was not sufficient divergence of opinion between the two statesmen to justify the split.[50] Be that as it may, as a result of Rosebery's desire to regain his freedom of action, his speech at Edinburgh in defence of his resignation directly and through the rift it made in the Liberal party practically destroyed the agitation for Armenian reforms. As one writer suggested, by the paralysing of the Armenian agitation, the Great Assassin was given a "carte blanche" as Rosebery's policy of "drift, impotence, and despair" triumphed on his resignation.[51]

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[50] Gardiner, op. cit., II, 412.

[51] "Year of Shame", Westminster Review, CXLIX (1898), 126.

SALISBURY AND THE CONSTANTINOPLE MASSACRE

The Liberal party had been thrown out of office in 1895 largely because it failed to do anything about the Armenian massacres. Salisbury, therefore, was faced with the task of satisfying public opinion in order to hold his majority. The public as a whole gave him its support. In fact many looked to him as the only man capable of putting a sudden end to the "Armenian Pandemonium".[1] Salisbury regretted that the Sultan had taken no steps to satisfy public demands, although on coming back to office he noticed how much ground the Armenian question had lost in British opinion. A settled conviction was growing that nothing could be hoped for in the way of improvement or reform. Salisbury held to the principle that the Ottoman Empire should be maintained and the rightful prerogatives of the Sultan protected. Therefore, the essential matter in securing equitable government for the Armenians was the dismissal of all ideas of autonomy or special privileges. He, therefore, sought only a means to put an

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[1] E. J. Dillon, "The Condition of Armenia", Contemporary Review, LXVIII (1895), 189.

end to the Armenian question rather than to find a settlement that would satisfy the national aspirations of the Armenians, the rights of the Turks, and the demands of British public opinion.[2]

In contrast to Rosebery, Salisbury, seemingly unaware of the presence of public opinion, habitually ignored its current. Although it was seldom vigorous enough to be seriously consulted it was never apathetic enough to be completely ignored. Salisbury tended to work absolutely independently of all influences, even his own Cabinet with which he was rarely in agreement. He accepted the double responsibility of Prime Minister and head of the Foreign Office with complete confidence, and particularly in the latter with its extremely centralized organization, he enjoyed full independence of authority.[3] Because of his talent for decision without recourse to the restraining hand of his Cabinet Salisbury's views were of overwhelming importance for both England and Europe. His policy, motivated by Britain's political interests as opposed to her political sympathies, was towards isolation

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[2] House of Commons, Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1, no. 112.

[3] Lady Cecil, Life of Salisbury, III, 200-1.

among nations. The "sheet anchor" of his policy was peace because it was the foundation of confidence and confidence was the object of his political creed. In order that peace should prevail each individual nation, he thought, should agree to a policy of give and take and the Concert of Europe should become a reality.[4]

Salisbury, at first, sought a solution of the whole Eastern Question by a friendly agreement with the Powers. He seemed to have lost his use for the Turks and his confidence in their ability to reform. Consequently, he abandoned for the moment the old Disraelian tradition of opposing the advance of Russia towards Constantinople. He saw nothing to be gained by the policy of his predecessors if only because of Russia's refusal to coerce the Sultan. There was no reason to bolster up a tottering Turkey when he did not believe the route to India would be menaced or Britain's other interests jeopardized. Instead, he visualized a partition of Turkey by which the Turks would retain Anatolia, Russia would fall heir to Constantinople and the Straits, Austria would be compensated in the Balkans, Italy in Tripoli, France in

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[4] H. E. Egerton, British Foreign Policy in Europe (London: Macmillan, 1918), p. 347.

Syria, and England would maintain her hold on Egypt and extend her influence to Mesopotamia. Salisbury first sought the approval of Germany, aware of the fact that he would have to make some concessions to her.[5] European statesmen, however, were confused by this revolution in British policy and came to the unwarranted but plausible conclusion that Salisbury was trying to concentrate the attention of the Powers in the Near East where they would most certainly quarrel. His proposals, therefore, met with hostility and foundered because of the suspicion they aroused.[6] The Russian Chancellor Prince Lobanoff made it clear that he would not sanction any course which might lead to forceful interference with the internal affairs of Turkey.[7] Without the support of the Powers, Salisbury was forced to abandon his scheme. He returned to the policy of forcing the Sultan to accept the proposed scheme of reforms.

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[5] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 1, nos. 89, 91, 92, 94, 110. Also an analysis of German official papers in The Times (Jan. 8, 1924). p. 14.

[6] The misunderstanding with Germany over the presentation of the scheme was known as the"Cowe's Incident". Although British official papers on the subject were not published important accounts are those of Valentine Chirol, The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III, 275; and his Fifty Years in a Changing World,pp. 289-91; R. J. Sontag, "The Cowe's Incident and the Kruger Telegram", Political Science Quarterly, XL (1925), 217-47; and Buckle, ed. Letters of Queen Victoria, II, 544-8.

[7] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896) Turkey no. 1, nos. 129-36.

With Salisbury at the Foreign Office the Turks were inclined to expect a relaxation of pressure on the part of the Powers. They miscalculated, however, for it was due to Salisbury's insistance that the Porte accepted in October of 1895 the scheme of reforms drawn up by the Commission of Inquiry for the six Armenian vilayets.[8] The Turks, somewhat alarmed at the massacres they had allowed, amazed at their own audacity, and fearful of the vengeance of Europe, had accepted the reforms on paper. These reforms if carried out would do much to ameliorate the sufferings of the Armenians. The opportunity for Great Britain to take some decisive action to see that the reforms were carried out had arisen but the importance of the moment was not fully appreciated in London. Instead, Salisbury tried once again to revive the Concert of Europe.

A large British naval squadron was assembled at the entrance of the Straits indicating that the British government intended to take some decisive steps, but Salisbury would not take action without first consulting the Powers. Both Russia and France feared that Britain meant to put an end to the Armenian question by the occupation of the Dardanelles or at least the islands at

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[8] Ibid., nos. 199, 201.

its entrance. Salisbury could not be sure what action their fleets would take if he proceeded without some guarantee of their cooperation. In November, 1895, the Italian and Austrian fleets offered their services and in return Salisbury promised to oppose any Russian encroachment on the Straits.[9] Germany protested at both Italy and Austria becoming tools of British policy and warned them to avoid taking the lead until England committed herself.[10] Salisbury, however, was prevented from taking action at this time because of embarrassment arising out of the policies of his predecessors, the geographical position of Armenia, and the conduct of Russia.[11] Instead of acting, he consulted the Powers with probably the same faith in the Concert of Europe as Lord Rosebery and he lost the opportunity for independent action. It was thought,

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[9] Salisbury checked Austrian fears that England would no longer support the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire against Russian aggression by reassuring her that British ill feeling towards Turkey did not go so deep as to make her indifferent to the fate of the Sultan's dominions. Gooch and Temperley eds., British Documents on the Origins of the War, VIII, 4-5.

[10] Commons Sessional Papers, XCV (1896), Turkey no. 2, nos. 57, 58, 68, 91, 98, 179, 255, 269.

[11] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fourth Series, LX (1896), 866-7.

in England, that if Salisbury had used the fleet he would not have met with any serious opposition.[12] The Times correspondent in Rome felt that "Salisbury had made an awful muddle of it" while confessing that nobody in Italy could understand his policy.[13]

As the months passed, the Turks realized that Europe was too indifferent or too divided to take any serious action in forcing them to introduce reforms and they began to feel correspondingly reassured and confident. The result of this newly found confidence was the outbreak of massacres in the Spring of 1896. Conflicts broke out at Zeitoum, Trebizoid, and Van which could be traced to attempts made by Armenian revolutionary committees to stir up an insurrectionary movement in an effort to attract the attention of Europe to the deplorable conditions still existent in the Armenian provinces.[14] There were fewer tales of horror accompanying this series of outrages but the British government was kept fully informed of events by its consular officers in Asia Minor. The inability of the Concert of Europe and the ineffectiveness of British

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[12] G. H. Perris, The Eastern Crisis and British Policy in the Near East, pp. 86-8.

[13] History of the Times (London: Times Publishing Co., 1947), III, 276.

[14] Commons Sessional Papers; (1896), Turkey no. 8, nos. 246 ff.

efforts without the support of the Concert clearly demonstrated that the Powers had failed to carry out the policy they had undertaken under the "Armenian Triplice". The Armenians of all classes, therefore, soon felt that neither Russia nor England could be depended upon to act as champions of Christianity unless it suited their own interests and they saw it was useless to manufacture stories of horrors which failed to attract the attention of Europe. The Sultan had defeated Europe and successfully asserted his right, in defiance of treaties, to deal with his Christian subjects as he pleased.

After the failure of the Concert of Europe to enforce the scheme of reforms, the British government relaxed any pressure it had applied on the Porte. Representations were made when cases of hardship or claims for compensation for property destroyed came to the attention of the ambassador at Constantinople, but the British government refused to take the initiative in finding a satisfactory or permanent settlement of the Armenian question.[15] Consequently, Salisbury had no objection to the publication of the consular reports on the most recent outbreaks in Asia Minor.

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[15] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XXXVII (1896), 1005; XLI (1896), 1688 and Commons Sessional Papers CI (1896), Turkey no. 2 Correspondence respecting the introduction of reforms in the administration of the Ottoman Empire.

He did feel, however, that an expression of sympathy on the part of the British public, while having no effect on restraining the action of the Turks, might increase between Moslem and Christian the intensity of feeling which should be diminished as quickly as possible. Religious hostility would only increase the difficulties between the two nations.[16]

It was at this point in August of 1896 that the Constantinople massacres broke out in the capital. The outrages, caused by the exploits of Armenian revolutionists, came as a shock to the governments of Europe although their embassies at Constantinople had received threats from Armenian revolutionary committees if the Powers continued to do nothing.[17] It was natural for Armenian revolutionists to strike their final blow in Constantinople where they had a better chance of concealment and of extorting concessions from the Turks through terrorism and where their institutions such as the Armenian Cathedral and Patriarchate were situated and recognized by the Porte. The new revolutionary society called "Dashnaktsutium" appeared more violent in its methods and objects

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[16] Commons Debates, Fourth Series, XLIII (1896), 113.

[17] Commons Sessional Papers, CI (1897), Turkey no. 1, Correspondence respecting the disturbances at Constantinople in August of 1896.

than the old Hentchak Society. Armed with dynamite, on August 26th, the revolutionists attacked and captured the Ottoman Bank in Galata, threatening to blow it up if their demands for reforms were not granted. The conspirators did not push their advantage, however, because of the death of their leaders in the first rush on the Bank. Consequently, Moslems armed with clubs and other weapons paraded the streets killing all the Armenians they saw. The victims were chiefly of the peasant class and the Turkish police did nothing to stop the massacre as an estimated six thousand persons perished.[18]

The result which the Armenians hoped to obtain from their demonstration, as Eliot suggested, was a matter of uncertainty. Whether the revolutionists expected to capture the Porte was open to conjecture although on the same day bombs were thrown near Galata Serai and it seemed plausible that the Armenians contemplated a series of attacks. The Turkish police with their system of espionage must have been informed of the plans and allowed the plot

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[18] For the best contemporary accounts see Eliot, Turkey in Europe, pp. 43 ff. and the "Constantinople Massacre", Contemporary Review, LXX (1896), 457-75.

to develop. "They justly calculated that it would discredit the Armenians in the eyes of Europe, and if it succeeded it would merely blow up a pack of Christian clerks".[19] There were many who could find no justification for the Constantinople outbreak. There was provocation enough in the treatment the Armenians had received for the previous twenty years for any recourse within reason but there was nothing in their plan to attract the sympathy of the Powers or to arouse a favourable public reaction.[20]

Despite the general reaction against the Armenians which attended the attack on the Ottoman Bank, public opinion was expressed with more vehemence than previously, although it was to be shorter-lived. Great public meetings attended by thousands and demonstrations with parades and brass bands illustrated the fervour aroused in England.[21] One writer warned the nations of Europe that if they allowed the Turks to continue their "scourge of savage barbarism" they would write the "saddest chapter in the history of the nineteenth century".[22] Professor Ramsay, a student of Armenian history, compared the massacres

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[19] Eliot, op. cit., pp.455-6.

[20] "Constantinople Massacre", Contemporary Review, LXX (1896), 458-9.

[21] Letters and reports of meeting appeared in The Times from Sept. 1896.

[22] The Times (Sept. 23, 1896), p. 8.

to Diocletian's persecution of the Christians.[23] He further added to the frenzy by publishing an account whereby he claimed that Abdul Hamid, because of his Armenian mother, was the Armenian Sultan who, according to prophecy circulated in Turkey in 1880, would cause the ruin of the Ottoman Empire.[24] Despite the risk of war that British active intervention would incur, the horror and indignation deepened and broadened into an agitation on the part of some Englishmen for the dethronement of the Sultan and the destruction of his government. This section of the British public felt that a frank appeal to the sympathies of the people was the answer. It was only by permeating the minds of individuals and by creating a favourable environment that State action and Christian principles could be fused. Gladstone, although careful to avoid censuring the British government, was an outspoken adherent to this theory. With the memory of the Bulgarian horrors still in his mind he felt that the time of year was favourable for the instigation of a national movement.[25]

There were some Englishmen, however, who refused to leave the settlement of the Armenian question to the

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[23] W. M. Ramsay, "Two Massacres in Asia Minor", Contemporary Review, LXX (1896), 435.

[24] The Times (Oct. 20, 1896), p.4.

[25] Ibid. (Sept. 15, 1896), p.8;(Sept. 16, 1896), p.8; (Oct. 5, 1896), p.6.

country in general. They were determined to keep it alive as a party issue. The Liberal Forward Movement was begun, therefore, in protest against what was considered a lack of moral leadership in regard to the Armenian question. Complaining that the clergy of the Established Church had abandoned to Nonconformist ministers the work of guiding the national conscience in this great issue between right and wrong, George Russell claimed the movement was an effort on the part of some Liberals to lead themselves, and do that which the non-party movement had promised but failed to do. Russell never trusted Salisbury to deal adequately with the crisis and resented the support the Prime Minister received from both parties.[26] Those Liberals who adhered to Russell's ideas seized Rosebery's resignation of the leadership of the party, in October of 1896, as the opportunity to launch their movement. The group announced to the world that its name was "Mr. George Russell's Committee" and that the new departure which it recommended was to be known as the Liberal Forward Movement.[27]

Russell laid the blame for the present situation in the East on Conservative policy, particularly Salisbury's record of little accomplishment in ameliorating the

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[26] G.W.Russell, "Armenia and the Forward Movement", Contemporary Review, LXXI (1897), 21-3.

[27] The Times (Dec. 7, 1896), p. 8.

sufferings of the Christians. Clayden, another active member of the group, denounced Salisbury as co-author with Disraeli of the "moral spoilation" of Russia and published a pamphlet, "Armenia: the case against Lord Salisbury", in which he accused him of maintaining a Turcophile policy.[28] According to Russell the movement was enthusiastically received and the "smug philistinism of the comfortable classes found it incredible that sensible men should take an unpopular side for the sake of a moral cause".[29] The movement was criticized as being deplorable, however, because it aroused emotions of the heart but was so lacking in faith that it refused to advocate the action in which its enthusiasm should have resulted.[30]

Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, saw a means of settling the Armenian question by an appeal to the humanity of the Christian Powers. He formulated a plan for utilizing the sympathy expressed by the American public for the condition of the Armenian population. There had been notices published frequently in English newspapers of meetings in various American cities, held mainly under church auspices, in which all

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Russell, op. cit., pp. 25-6.

[30] "Foreign Policy of the Liberal Party", Westminster Review, CXLVII (1897), 268-9.

denominations protested against the alleged Armenian atrocities and criticized the refusal of the Sultan to allow the Americans to make an inquiry.[31] Also American missionaries had been very active founding schools and colleges in Asia Minor, bettering the conditions of the inhabitants, and endeavouring to dispel their excessive ceremonialism and superstition through religious education.[32] Chamberlain, in an effort to employ this humanitarian interest of the United States, had suggested in December of 1895 that a strong appeal based on the Sassoon horrors might bring about joint naval action by British and Americans to subdue the Sultan. Salisbury's refusal to consider such a move because of the naval, political, and military difficulties did not change Chamberlain's feelings that something ought to be done.[33] Therefore, when visiting the United States in September of 1896 after the recent Constantinople massacres, he broached the subject of Anglo-American cooperation to stop the Armenian massacres. Chamberlain was astonished at the reply of the

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31 The Times (Dec. 31, 1894), p. 5; (Jan. 25, 1896), p. 5; (Jan. 26, 1896), p. 5.

32 Eliot, op. cit., pp. 442-3.

33 J.L. Garvin, Life of Chamberlain (London: Macmillan, 1932), III, 68-9.

American Secretary of State, Olney, who while admitting a common cause with England would engage in no entangling European alliances. Salisbury was relieved of the responsibility of following Chamberlain's initiative.[34]

Although sympathy with the Armenians was widely expressed the same feeling was not held by all Englishmen. There was an effort on the part of some to reduce the excessive emotional frenzy that accompanied the reports of these latest crimes. The only conspicuous difference they saw between British agitators and the Armenian Revolutionary Committees was that the former "sat in their armchairs and incited and encouraged while the unhappy Armenians duped by false hopes sacrificed their lives".[35] It was a relief to all sensible minds to see that The Times was attempting to steady public opinion in regard to the crisis. To rail against the Sultan was easy, wrote one man, but there was no necessity for enlarging his crimes. It was right for the stories of disorder and bloodshed to be met with a revulsion of feeling and for people to hate the selfish motives from which the atrocities arose but the way to remedy the distress was not by invoking "Christian intolerance" against

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34 Ibid., pp. 166-7.

35 The Times (Sept. 19, 1896), p. 8.

that of Mohammedanism.[36]

The public agitation as a result of the Constantinople massacres was described as being directed solely against the Sultan and in no way hostile to Salisbury's government, but, if it was meant to strengthen the hands of the government in its dealings with Europe and the Porte, it fell far short of its purpose. Instead it involved Salisbury in serious difficulties in his negotiations with the Powers and unconsciously embarrassed him at every turn.[37] The Economist, while agreeing with those who condemned the infamous rule of the Sultan, emphasized the considerable danger that the agitation for intervention contained when there existed something like an agreement among the Powers to do nothing to coerce Turkey, but to maintain the status quo. The question was whether England was justified in acting alone and if she did whether the Powers would make coercive action a "casus belli". It would be madness to precipitate a war or a coalition against England which might be organized by France to force the British out of Egypt. If the people of England wished to depose the Sultan they would have

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[36] Ibid. (Sept. 16, 1896), p. 3; (Sept. 18, 1896), p. 8.

[37] "Lord Salisbury's Silence", The Economist, LIV (1896), 1312.

to come to an agreement with Russia.[38] The outcome of such an agreement would have to be Russian repudiation of their policy of refusing to countenance coercive action.[39] For as Salisbury pointed out, independent action was out of the question because "No fleet in the world can get over the mountains of Taurus to protect the Armenians."[40]

The recent massacres had their consequences in Turkey itself where the British Ambassador from Aleppo reported there had been disastrous effects on trade. The political troubles had hindered the development of native manufactures and the restriction of credit had resulted in a decline in imports, although British imports had not suffered as much as those of some other countries.[41] The Armenian Relief Fund appealed to European nations and the United States to supply their diplomatic and consular agents with adequate funds to meet the terrible state of destitution. Houses were opened in England for the victims of the massacres and, because the United States and Russia refused admittance to the refugees, the Armenian

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38 "Anti-Turkish Agitation", The Economist, LIV (1896), 1212-3.

39 The Times (Oct. 1, 1896), p. 3.

40 Guild Hall Speech, Nov. 9, 1896, in A. L. Kennedy, Salisbury (London:J. Murray, 1953), 273.

41 The Times (Oct. 10, 1896), p. 12.

Relief Fund was prepared to accept a large number in England. Many of them found their way to Greece, however, where the British embassy supervised the distribution of relief. But the majority were settled in Bulgaria where the government established them on farms as subsidies sent by English funds provided only for their immediate needs.[42] Despite the real need of the Armenians none of the Powers were prepared to intervene officially because they were not sufficiently moved by events to be willing to make sacrifices, incur risks, or endanger prospective advantages, to rescue the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire from its present ruler.[43]

From the beginning Salisbury had been influenced by the "mildly pro-Turkish and strongly anti-Russian" policy of Disraeli. The closest he came to repudiating the old Disraeli policy was his partition scheme in 1895, but he returned to the policy of maintaining Turkish integrity as he saw no other alternative. In his speech on the re-opening of parliament in 1897, which is famous for its catch phrase "we put all our money upon the wrong horse", Salisbury seemed to disown the pro-Turk policy

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[42] Ibid. (Oct. 13, 1896), pp. 4-5; (Oct. 26, 1896) p. 6; (Nov. 9, 1896), p. 6 and (Dec. 12, 1896), p. 7.

[43] "Constantinople Massacre", Contemporary Review, LXX (1896), p. 465.

he had accepted in 1878 and almost consistently maintained. Medlicott refuted the attitude generally attributed to Salisbury that the speech was a repudiation of his old policy.[44] Penson reaffirms Medlicott's interpretation stating that Salsibury's policy in so far as it existed could be explained by the shifting of his interests in the Ottoman Empire. At one time they lay more heavily in Asia Minor and at another Egypt but behind all his changes underlay consistency in the idea of "protection". Salisbury was convinced from the beginning that Turkey could not stand alone.[45]

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[44] W. N. Medlicott, "Lord Salisbury and Turkey", History, XII, 244-5.

[45] L. Penson, "The Principles and Methods of Lord Salisbury's Foreign Policy", Cambridge Historical Journal, V. 89-106.

1 DECLINE OF BRITISH INTEREST

Although Salisbury's efforts to bring relief to the persecuted Armenians had been in vain, during the latter part of his administration the pressure from the British public for decisive action disappeared and the question of reforms for Asiatic Turkey went by default. Meanwhile the public attitude towards the Turkish government had not changed, except in its intensity and its direction. Crete and the Greco-Turkish War occupied the immediate attention of Great Britain in 1897, while South Africa and the Boer War were to occupy the international spotlight a few years later. Although the British government did not entirely abandon the cause of Turkish reform during the decade following the Constantinople massacres, its energies were primarily directed towards relieving the Macedonians whose plight was more obviously critical.[1]

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[1] The Macedonian question became critical in 1903 and was not settled until the Turks were expelled during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. see H.N. Brailsford, Macedonia (London:Methuen, 1906), C. Anatasoff, The Tragic Peninsula (St. Louis:Blackwell, 1938), and Gooch and Temperley, eds. British Documents on the Origins of the War, V, 55 ff.

As the furor aroused by the Constantinople massacres subsided the British public retained a feeling of hatred and disgust for the Turks. The general opinion was that there was no longer any hope for the introduction of reforms such as had been in the air since the signing of the Cyprus Convention. In considering the future of the Ottoman Empire it was felt that the Sultan could not be prevented from continuing his misdeeds by any action on the part of Great Britain or the other western Powers.[2] In fact Europe was accused of encouraging Abdul Hamid in the very course which it so violently condemned. The Powers continually affirmed and strengthened the Sultan's position by turning only to him when seeking the introduction of reforms in Turkey although there existed a group of reformers called"Young Turks" to whom they might have appealed.[3] There was a gradual drift on the continent towards British opinion which by 1897 was pretty well agreed on the merits of the Sultan and his government. Up until the massacres in 1894, Disraeli's favourable view of the Sultan had held its ground although with

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[2] J.B.Bryce, "Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 610.

[3] "A Study in Turkish Reform", Fortnightly Review, LXI (1897), 649.

diminishing force, but in 1897 there was hardly a statesman in England who would not repudiate this concept. Salisbury offered proof of his country's feeling when he declared that in any negotiations with Turkey the antipathy towards assisting the Sultan would be so extreme that regardless of the motive behind British policy he did not think it would induce the public to support a government which they so thoroughly detested.[4]

Since the failure of the Sultan to implement the reforms presented in 1895 the ambassadors of the Powers at Constantinople had steadily been working towards a scheme of reforms that would be acceptable. Early in 1897 the scheme was near completion but it was never to be submitted to the Turks because of the series of events which followed.[5] At this time Crete and Greece were the source of trouble rather than Armenia and British interests were diverted to that area. As a consequence Anglo-Turkish relations were determined by the outcome of that dispute. An insurrection in Crete against Turkish misgovernment occurred in 1896. The British Cabinet was

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[4] Salisbury to Rumbold, Jan. 20, 1897, in Gooch and Temperley, op. cit., IX, 775.

[5] British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, CVI (1898), Turkey no. 1, Further correspondence respecting the Asiatic provinces of Turkey.

informed that several of the Powers were disposed to support a naval blockade of the island in an effort to prevent the sending of Greek troops to the aid of the insurgents. Salisbury, however, declined these overtures on the grounds that England traditionally refused to interfere by force between insurgent populations and their sovereign, adding that the Sultan's proceedings in the Armenian question made it unfitting that England join in helping the Sultan to subdue his subjects.[6] As a result of the sending of Greek troops to the aid of the Cretans, the Greco-Turkish War broke out in the following year. Ultimately the Greeks were defeated and the Powers stepped in to save them from a humiliating settlement.[7]

The importance here of the Greco-Turkish War lies in the effect it had on the general current of opinion towards Turkey and her subject populations. The defeat that Greece suffered at the hands of Turkey had important

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[6] Salisbury to Victoria, July 31, 1896 in G.E. Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, III, 58.

[7] The events of the Greco-Turkish War and the settlement arranged by the Powers are given in the Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III, 238-42; Letters of Queen Victoria, Third Series, III, 130-60; and Commons Sessional Papers, XCVI (1896), Turkey no. 1, CII (1897) Turkey nos. 4,5,8,9,10, and CVI (1897), Turkey nos. 11 and 12.

implications for Europe. All the Sultan's failures in the eyes of his subjects were covered by his victory, and he had proved to Europe that even when his administration was nearly bankrupt and weakened by corruption that he could not be defeated in the field except by a force superior in numbers. It was a fact which impressed European diplomats and tended to limit the extent of their pressure on the Porte. Before this victory modern policy in relation to Turkey had been based on the assumption that she was dying and her total destruction was only delayed by European jealousies. The collapse of Greece was a serious event for Europe for it involved a sort of revivification of Turkey. The Cretan question and the poor figure cut by the Greeks in the war lessened British sympathy for all Christian races struggling against the Turk.[8]

As a consequence of this change in attitude towards the subject populations of the Turks, Salisbury turned his attention to the protection of Britain's material interests in the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean. It will be remembered that he had suggested to the Powers in 1895 that they partition the Turkish Empire. Undaunted

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[8] "Turkey and Greece", The Economist, LV (1897), 598, 634-5.

by the rebuff Salisbury received at that time he tried again in 1898.[9] The occasion was the seizure of a north China port, Kiauchow, by Germany. Salisbury realized that the policies of England and Russia were so opposed in relation to the Chinese and Ottoman Empires that they only served to neutralize each other's efforts. He, therefore, contemplated an understanding with Russia by which both countries would give way to and assist the other in those territories where they were least interested. Aware of the difficulties inherent in such a scheme Salisbury aimed not at a "partition of territory" but at a "partition of preponderance".[10] Russia, however, was unfavourably disposed to the discussion of any scheme involving Turkey and the idea lapsed.[11] One of the reasons for Salisbury's efforts may be found in the fact that when he was not prepared to fight he was reluctant to threaten Turkey in order to protect British interests.

Although Salisbury abandoned his efforts towards forcing the Sultan to implement the reform scheme, there

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[9] Commons Sessional Papers, CV (1898), China no. 1 Correspondence respecting the affairs of China.

[10] Salisbury to O'Conor, Jan. 25, 1898, in Temperley and Penson, eds., Foundations of British Foreign Policy, pp. 500-1.

[11] Commons Sessional Papers, CV (1898), China no. 1, nos., 72, 76, 82, 83, 87.

were others who still looked for a means to that end. The idea gained ground in England that the only real solution to the question of reforms was to invite Russia to occupy Constantinople. There were many objections raised to the idea, not the least of which were Russian methods of government, the improbability of Russian acceptance, and the jealousies of the other Powers. Answers to these objections were looked for in the fact that Russia might accept a friendly European mandate, that their form of government was superior to that of the Turks, and that the Ottoman Empire was vast enough to compensate each European power.[12] The main objection raised to any plan which destroyed the integrity of the Turkish Empire, however, was that it would give offence to Indian Mohammedans. On the other hand, it was maintained that England could not govern her relations with Christian Europe in regard to Mohammedan prejudices. The only policy which would encourage the respect of her Indian subjects was one of justice and strength.[13] England would not gain credit with Indian Mohammedans on the score of friendship with

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[12] R.K. Wilson, "Shall We Invite the Russians to Constantinople?", Contemporary Review, LXXI (1897), 270-5.

[13] "Year of Shame", Westminster Review, CXLIX (1898), 144-6.

the political head of their communion except at the cost of bolstering up a government that she had come to loathe. It was not for England to accommodate her notions of national duty to the supposed requirements of another faith.[14]

After the turn of the century England no longer attempted to play a decisive role in the international politics of the Near East. Since her last attempt to take the initiative in the Armenian question her sympathy with the Christians of Turkey in general had cooled not solely on the grounds of expediency but also because they had not always shown themselves worthy of the interest shown in them. J.B.Bryce, taking time to reflext on the merits of the Armenian race, could come to no definite conclusion on their worthiness. The British Turcophiles felt bound to disparage them while the humanitarians dwelt on the more attractive features of the Armenian character and traditions.[15] The remonstrances Great Britain still occasionally addressed to the Porte because of the terrible conditions in Armenia were, according to one writer, "entirely platonic" and proceeded from a desire to save

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[14] Wilson, ibid., p. 275.

[15] J.B.Bryce, "Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 602-3.

appearances rather than to do any good.[16] The Sultan's celebration of his jubilee in 1900 gave rise to the comment that no one would ever have expected after 1878 that at the turn of the century the Turks would be stronger than at any time since the liberation of Greece. From a superficial point of view the Turks had just cause for celebrating for they had successfully thwarted all the attempts of the Powers to introduce reforms into the Turkish Empire.[17]

By 1907, according to Sir Nicholas O'Conor, the British Ambassador, Anglo-Turkish relations in so far as they depended upon the Sultan were little more tolerable. The reason for this was that Turkish policy in regard to oppressed nationalities, particularly Macedonians and Armenians, continued to be as objectionable and hateful as ever. Any display of friendliness the Sultan made towards Great Britain was due to the fact that he believed that a very large percentage of his subjects were friendly to England and mindful of the services rendered by her in the past.[18] Alfred Stead was also aware of the hostile

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16 A.R. Bilinski, "Situation in Turkey", Fortnightly Review, LXXVIII (1902), 87-8.

17 "The Sultan's Jubilee", The Economist, LVIII (1900), 1238-9.

18 Annual Report for Turkey for 1907, Gooch and Temperley, op.cit., V, 43-4.

feeling between the two countries. Early in 1908 he said it would be difficult to find more hatred of Great Britain than was felt at Constantinople or more contempt for Turkey than was found in Great Britain.[19] Because of this antipathy one writer was certain that England defied the old Machiavellian maxim that an ambassador should be a "persona grata" to the Sovereign to whom he is accredited.[20]

An important factor in Turkish hostility towards Great Britain was the latter's association with Russia. After 1907 England and Russia became fast friends, having been driven into each others arms not so much by mutual love as by fear of Germany.[21] Consequently, England's anti-Russian policy directed towards Turkish protection had to be revised. British opinion was still confused by the historic question "Shall Russia be allowed to occup the Dardanelles?", while the Conservative party remembered that they had supported the Turks. It was impos-

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19 Alfred Stead, "Great Britain and Turkey", Fortnightly Review, LXXXIX (1908), 417.

20 S. Whitman, "England and Germany at Constantinople", Fortnightly Review, L XXXVII (1908), 775.

21 Reasons for Anglo-Russian rapprochement are explained in two letters from Nicholson to Hardinge, Dec. 4, 1907 and Jan. 2, 1908 in Gooch and Temperley, op. cit., VIII, 722-4.

sible to preserve the Turkish Empire with one hand and to destroy it with the other. The wobbling of Britain's policy naturally filled the Turks with misgivings as to the security of their Empire. It was all very well, as one writer pointed out, to argue that Anglo-French influence would keep Russian expansionism in check but not many Turks believed it. After all the British fleet could not keep Russia from encroaching on Kurdistan and British enmity precluded any decisive action on behalf of the Turks.[22] They had, therefore, adequate grounds for their apprehension. As many as five years earlier, Bryce felt that the acquisition by Russia of Armenia and north-eastern Asia Minor was an event that might happen at any time and that British public opinion was even at that time such that it would not support a war undertaken to aid the Turks against Russia.[23]

All other aspects of Turkish affairs were forced into the background by the Turkish Revolution of 1908. The Young Turk movement was one which embraced all subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire as they forced their Turkish nationalism upon Turks and non-Turks, Mohammedans and

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[22] P.P. Graves, Briton and Turk, p. 159.

[23] J.B.Bryce, "Turkey and Armenia", Quarterly Review, CXCV (1902), 615.

Christians alike. Their dream was of a great Turkish state embracing all the peoples ever claimed within the Ottoman Empire. In the intellectual sphere the Young Turks owed a large debt to France. It was among the Turkish exiles in Paris that the ideas of French democracy were first awakened and the idea of a definite organization suggested to the reformers. At the end of 1907, according to the French press, there was formed in Paris a secret revolutionary congress at which the Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, and others, resolved to work for the abdication of the Sultan and the establishment of a constitutional government.[24] Turkish exiles, of which there were countless numbers, were the natural medium for the spread of revolutionary ideas. In 1908 when they judged the moment auspicious the revolutionists made known their discontent in Constantinople and demanded a constitution. The Sultan was forced to cooperate and a new regime was inaugurated. The following year the Sultan's attempt at a counter revolution failed and he was arrested, deposed, and exiled to Salonika.[25]

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[24] C.R.Buxton, Turkey in Revolution (London:F. Unwin, 1909), pp. 42-3.

[25] For further details of the Revolution of 1908 see: W.M. Ramsay, Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1909); Sir E. Pears, Forty Years in Constantinople (London:H.Jenkins, 1916) and Life of Abdul Hamid.

The new Turkish regime which admired the British and their institutions and disliked the Germans as friends of Abdul Hamid received with enthusiasm the new British Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir George Lowther. As British influence rose and German fell the opportunity appeared for England to retrieve her dominant position at Constantinople. Most writers at the time and later agreed that British diplomacy lost its chance because her embassy was hostile to the Young Turks and her capitalists lacked enthusiasm because they doubted the stability of the new government.[26] Sir Edwin Pears placed the fault with the diplomats among whom it had become the fashion to be skeptical in all matters relating to the progress of the Turkish people. In the Young Turks they saw young, inexperienced, and largely uneducated men striving to attain ideals which England had held up to the world a century and more before. Even though they had lost some of their sympathy for these ideals, Pears felt the British government could have shown some friendly feeling towards inexperienced idealists instead of the cold distain with which she met the announcement.[27] The

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[26] Graves, op. cit., pp. 152-3 and The Times (July 31, 1908), p. 3.

[27] Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid, pp. 326-7.

newspapers continued to be marked by a distinct note of skepticism and doubt until the movement was seen to be general and the Sultan had apparently succumbed to its demands.[28] Then the new regime received applause and sympathetic assurances. The general agreement seemed to be that sympathy had always existed between the people of Great Britain and Turkey and that British grievances were held only against the Sultan and his rule. The British government now felt that reforms could be looked for from within.[29]

The Armenian question seemed to have solved itself upon the inauguration of the new government at Constantinople. The British Ambassador remarked how extraordinary it was that simultaneously with the disappearance of Palace rule there was almost a complete disappearance of the complaints from desperate Armenians. He accounted for it by the fact that the Kurds fearing the nature of the new government had ceased their outrages. Indeed, he noticed that in some places the Armenians, elated by their new freedom, had assumed as attitude provocative of further disturbances but the Young Turks and the Arme-

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[28] The Times (July 25, 1908), p. 11 and (July 27, 1908), p. 11.

[29] Ibid. (July 31, 1908), p. 13 and the Annual Report for Turkey for 1908 in Gooch and Temperley, op. cit., V, 305.

nian Patriarch successfully checked the excesses on both sides. Large numbers of Armenians began returning to their homes from across the frontiers whither they had fled and the main difficulty at the end of 1908 did not seem to be the prevention of further attacks by the Kurds but the restitution to the Armenians of their confiscated property.[30]

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[30] Annual Report for Turkey for 1908, Gooch and Temperley, op. cit., V, 305.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF BRITISH POLICY

Since 1878 the whole foundation of British policy had undergone marked changes. The Cyprus Convention, because it had never been fully implemented, had lost its significance. In fact, all that was left of the Convention was British occupation of the island. The Treaty of Berlin had been violated in practically all of its aspects and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 would finally bring to an end the Turkish Empire in Europe, which the Treaty had so carefully sought to preserve. Furthermore, Great Britain was no longer sure of her stand in relation to the Turkish Empire. The Conservatives remembered that they had supported the territorial integrity of the Empire while the Liberals remembered their outcry against the persecution of the Christian races under the Sultan's rule. Both parties had incorporated some of the ideals of the other and had lost sight of their original purpose. The Armenian question itself was lost in the tangle of more alarming disturbances on the European scene. While for a limited time the condition of the Armenian population was measurably improved the question remained of whether British interference had benefitted the Armenians or

only incited the Sultan to take revenge on them for the intrusion into his domestic affairs.

Much of the blame for England's uncertain policy in her relations with Turkey lay in the conflict between sentiment and politics. The Cabinet oscillated between "democratic action and diplomatic reaction", between "tender-minded radicals and tough-minded realpolitiks".[1] Pro-Turkish elements were stronger in government circles, which were closer in touch with imperialistic ideas, while the general public gave freer reign to their idealism and sympathies. One writer claimed that Englishmen stood in the humiliating position between easy skepticism and credulity or between dangerous excitement and apathy. Many paid their "conscience money" to Armenian relief funds, he said, and then turned to domestic duties where they saw their way more clearly.[2] The British Cabinet's position was not an easy one, however, because in time of crisis it had to appeal to the people for support and the measure of their support was generally proportionate to the understanding of their leaders' aims. It was not surprising, therefore, that the public did not have

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[1] George Young, Nationalism and War in the Near East, (London: Milford, 1915), pp. 57-8.

[2] Perris, The Eastern Crisis of 1897 and British Policy in the Near East, pp. 28-9.

a clear picture of the factors which governed British relations with Turkey when the Cabinet itself had lost sight of the fundamental principles of its foreign policy.

As a consequence of their failure to understand the Turks, the British knew little that was well informed about the revolution of 1908. The general attitude was that a complete victory had been won by the Young Turks. Basically this was true but there soon developed two parties in the government whose differences lay as much in personal feelings as in political principles. The Liberals, who were the original idealists, supported some form of "home rule" which would leave the provinces free to manage their own internal affairs, while, on the other hand, the Committee of Union and Progress felt that it was impossible to maintain unity without a strong centralized government. The former party which held most of the official positions in the new administration received the support of England. The latter, although largely a secret committee at first, gradually increased its power and it became evident that nationalistic principles had triumphed over those of liberalism.[3] Germany, who had supported the attempt of Abdul Hamid to overthrow the Young Turks, gave her support to the Committee of Union and Progress as it

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[3] Ramsay, Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey, pp. 7-8.

gained control of the government. Largely trained in the German army, the new leaders turned to Germany for assistance in reforming the Turkish militia and returned to the centralizing system of Abdul Hamid.[4] It was some time before the British government recognized the change in the aspirations of the reformers. Sir Edwin Pears, a journalist in Constantinople, admitted, however, that he and his colleagues were most indulgent to the Young Turks and that there existed a "practical conspiracy on the part of newspaper correspondents" not to let the worst of the situation be known.[5]

When constitutional government had been proclaimed at Constantinople, British policy had again become pro-Turkish as British ministers seized the opportunity to regain their influential position. While England had hailed the overthrow of the Sultan as the end of a hateful tyranny, she also welcomed it as the possible end of German ascendancy. Germany, however, was not prepared to relinquish her position and although the Young Turks had originally sought the friendship of England it soon became evident that their leaders had no use for liberal principles. Germany was the first to recognize and support the changed sympathies of the revolutionists so that when the First

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[4] Schmitt, Germany and England, p. 283.

[5] Graves, Briton and Turk, p. 153.

World War broke out, it was inevitable that Turkey should take the side of Germany. The friend that the Turks had found in England at the Congress of Berlin had thrown her, unintentionally to be sure, into the hands of the very power who hoped to profit most from her friendship. German ascendancy at Constantinople was, however, a planned policy so that British indecision as to whether to maintain her position at the cost of compromising her principles was the opportunity for rather than the cause of the establishment of German control.

The part that the Armenian question played in the formation of the anti-Turkish feeling prevalent in Great Britain was a large one. At the cost of subordinating her material and strategical interests to her humanitarian and religious principles, England had allowed to lapse her policy of acting the friend of Turkey in an effort to keep her from falling into the hands of a great European power.

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