

Propaganda through Travel Writing: Frederick Burnaby's Contribution to Great Game British Politics*

Gezi Anlatımı ile Propaganda: Frederick Burnaby'nin Büyük Oyun Dönemi İngiliz Siyasetine
Katkısı

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Abstract

In the second half of the nineteenth century, British-Russian relations were defined by war and conflict due to the former's desire to check and balance the latter's increasingly strong ambitions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In what has come to be known as the Great Game, the British tried to prevent essentially a possible Russian invasion of India. Such an invasion could be attained by the Russians either by the occupation of territory in Central Asia, thereby taking the land route to India, or by expansion into the Mediterranean Sea and from there to the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal. The British response to the threat on the land route was to try and create spheres of influence in the region before the Russians did, and, at the Mediterranean front, to support the territorial integrity of the weakened Ottoman Empire against Russian expansionism. Concurrent to these political developments, the practice of writing and publishing accounts of imperial adventure and/or travel was gaining increased popularity in Britain, as the political conditions were ripe enough for the reception of these works. Especially the adventure/travel accounts by pro-imperialist writers were highly popular among a reading audience which was expanding beyond class boundaries from the 1860s onwards. Therefore, in effect, this vein of travel writing also functioned as a channel of propaganda for pro-imperialist political views, especially those of Disrealite Tories in the 1870's. Frederic Burnaby, who was an officer of the British imperial army, a traveler-adventurer and a writer, was foremost among the pro-imperialist figures who propagated a Russophobic and Turcophilic tone in British popular politics at that time by his two accounts of travel: *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia* (1876) and *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (1877). In this article I will explore and illustrate the discursive strategies deployed by

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Burnaby towards the creation of a Russophobic-Turcophilic tone in these two works and show how they may have contributed to popular political propaganda during the Great Game.

Keywords: Frederick Burnaby, Great Game, travel writing, propaganda, British imperialism

Öz

On dokuzuncu yüzyılın ikinci yarısı boyunca Britanya-Rusya ilişkileri Rusya'nın Doğu Avrupa ve Orta Asya'da giderek güçlenen emeller beslemesi ve Britanya'nın da bu emelleri kontrol altına alıp dengelemek arzusunda olmasından dolayı savaş ve çatışma eksenlerinde gelişmişti. Zaman içerisinde Büyük Oyun (Great Game) olarak adlandırılan bu dönemde, Britanya'nın temel politikası Hindistan'ın Rusya tarafından muhtemel bir işgalini engellemeye çalışmak olmuştur. Rusya tarafından bu tür bir işgal ya Orta Asya'da toprak kazanarak Hindistan'a karadan ulaşılmasıyla, ya da Akdeniz'e ve oradan da Süveyş Kanalı yoluyla Hint Okyanusu'na geçilmesiyle mümkün olabilirdi. Britanya'nın bu tehdide karşı izlediği tutum Orta Asya'da Ruslardan önce kendi nüfuz bölgelerini oluşturmaya çalışmak ve Akdeniz cephesinde de zayıflamış olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun toprak bütünlüğünü Rus yayılmacılığına karşı muhafaza etmeye çalışmak olmuştur. Bu politik gelişmelerle eş zamanlı olarak Britanya'da emperyal macera ve/veya seyahat anlatımlarının yayımlanması giderek popüler hale gelmişti. Bilhassa da emperyalizm yanlısı yazarlar tarafından yazılan macera/seyahat anlatımları, 1860'lı yıllardan beri giderek sosyal sınıf sınırlarını da aşacak şekilde genişleyen okuyucu kitlesi arasında son derece popülerlik kazanmıştı. Bu nedenle, bu türden seyahat anlatımları 1870'li yıllarda görülen emperyalizm yanlısı politik görüşlerin, bilhassa da Disraeli liderliğindeki Tory partisinin görüşlerinin propagandasına da fiilen araç olmuştur. Britanya Kraliyet Ordusu'nda bir subay ve aynı zamanda da bir gezgin-maceracı ve yazar olan Frederic Burnaby, yazmış olduğu *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia* (1876) ve *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (1877) başlıklı iki seyahatnamesi ile Britanya'da dönemin popüler politika sahnesinde Rus-karşıtı ve Türk-yanlısı tutumun propagandasını yapmış olan emperyalizm yanlısı kişilerin başlıcalarındandır. Bu makalede Burnaby'nin bu iki eserde söz konusu Rus-karşıtı Türk-yanlısı tutumu yaratmak için kullandığı söylemsel stratejiler açıklanmakta ve örneklenmekte; ayrıca bu iki eserin Büyük Oyun döneminde yapılan popüler politik propaganda sürecine nasıl katkıda bulunmuş olabileceği gösterilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Frederick Burnaby, Büyük Oyun, seyahatname, propaganda, Britanya emperyalizmi

In the harsh winter of 1876-77, during his annual leave, a captain of the British Army was traveling across Anatolia, the heartland of the Ottoman Empire, at his own expense. Combined with his military discipline, Captain Frederick Burnaby also had an adventurous spirit which had taken him to Russian-controlled Central Asia in the previous winter. His objectives in taking the trip to Anatolia were, first, to see if the accusations directed by the European and more specifically British newspapers against the Ottoman Turks for cold-bloodedly and systematically massacring the Christian subjects of the Empire were based on reality¹; and second, to observe if the Ottoman state had the means and the strength to stand against a possible military attack by Russia², the new imperial

¹ Burnaby was obviously disturbed by the biased judgments of some writers of the British press, and had certainly read, before he came to Anatolia, William E. Gladstone's pamphlet entitled "Bulgarian Horrors"

power in Eurasia which considered itself as the protector and guardian of these Christian populations. What makes Burnaby's travels to Central Asia and Anatolia important from a literary and cultural studies perspective, however, is his writing of narrative accounts of each of these travels, namely *A Ride to Khiva* (1876), and *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (1877), respectively. The significance of these books, in turn, stems from the fact that they represented a political statement, one with a "Russophobe-Turcophile" (Hopkirk, 1992, p. 361) tone, and propagated it for a growing reading audience in Britain³ at a time in which the Eastern Question and the Great Game⁴, both set within the larger period of New Imperialism⁵, overlapped. In this respect, here I will explore and illustrate the discursive strategies deployed by Burnaby in these works, and show how they must have functioned as a channel of propaganda for the pro-imperialist politics represented by the Conservative Party in Britain, which was also the dominant political attitude in the late 1870's.

By the time Burnaby was traveling in the Ottoman heartland, Russia had begun to use racism and nationalism, in addition to religion, as instruments to unite all the Slavic peoples of the Balkans, then under Ottoman control, under Russian leadership (Okyar, 1984, pp. 64-65). Consequently, propaganda and agitation on the pretence that the Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire were maltreated and persecuted by the Ottoman Turks triggered troubles in the Balkans (Okyar, 1984, p. 65). Obviously inspired by the old 'divide and conquer' principle, the Russian policy was to send agents to the region and agitate the Christian populations there against Ottoman authority⁶. As Justin McCarthy reports:

(1876), in which the author blamed the Turks for all the violence in the Balkans. His personal observations and the information he collects from Christians across Turkey soon convince him about the exaggerated and fabricated nature of such stories as told by Gladstone and other pamphlet writers. To support this argument, in Appendix IV of *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (pp. 331-336), Burnaby presents an extract from an official dispatch sent by Sir Austen Henry Layard, the British Ambassador in Istanbul (1877-1880) to the Earl of Derby, dated May 30, 1877, in which the ambassador expresses his disapproval of some English journalists "who boast that they invented these stories with the object of 'writing down' Turkey" (pp. 334-335).

² Both Appendix B. (XVI.), entitled "Sir John Burgoyne on the Defences of Constantinople," and Appendix B. (XVII.), entitled "The Chekmagee Lines" in *On Horseback through Asia Minor* are reports by military experts, which contain strategic information for the prevention of a possible invasion of Istanbul by Russians.

³ For full-length accounts of the emergence and growing of a mass reading audience in Britain from the 1870's onwards as a result of concurrent technological, social, economic and political developments, see Altick, R. D. (1957). *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and Blake, A. (1989). *Reading Victorian Fiction: The Cultural Context and Ideological Content of the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. Houndmills: Macmillan.

⁴ The term 'Great Game,' which refers to the imperial rivalry between Britain and Russia in Central Asia was first introduced to popular reading audiences by nineteenth-century British novelist Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* (1901) (Hopkirk, 1992, p. 1).

⁵ New Imperialism refers to the period of aggressive territorial acquisition by European imperial powers roughly between early 1870's and World War I. During the period, Britain's major rivals were Russia, France and Germany. For detailed accounts of New Imperialism, see Cohen, B. J. (1973). *The Question of Imperialism: The Political Economy of Dominance and Dependence*. New York: Basic, and Smith, W. D. (1982). *European Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

⁶ Also see Appendix IV of *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (pp. 331-336), which is the extract from the correspondence between Sir Austen Henry Layard, and the Earl of Derby, dated May 30, 1877, for the former's explanation of the way Russian agents provoke tension in Ottoman territories.

In 1875, Serbs in Bosnia began a rebellion, intending to join the province to Serbia and Montenegro, with the active support of the two states. [...] However, the Ottoman army was able to put down the revolt. Serbia, thwarted by the Ottoman success, declared war, but it, too, was defeated by the Ottomans in 1876. Then events in Bulgaria took the stage. Bulgarian nationalists began a revolt in 1876. (1997, p. 339)

On the other hand, in Central Asia, Russians were annexing territory from the Turkic peoples under the pretence of bringing civilization to the Central Asian steppes. Britain's response to all this was to check and balance Russia's increasingly strong ambitions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In what has come to be known as the Great Game, the British tried to prevent essentially a possible Russian invasion of India (Hopkirk, 1992, p. 1-2; Mahajan, 2002, p. xi). Such an invasion could be attained by the Russians either by the occupation of territory in Central Asia, thereby taking the land route to India⁷, or by expansion into the Mediterranean Sea and from there to the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal. The British response to the threat on the land route was to try and create spheres of influence in the region before the Russians did, and, at the Mediterranean front, to support the territorial integrity of the weakened Ottoman Empire against Russian expansionism. In other words, the key concern from the perspective of British interests was neither Russia, nor the Ottoman Empire, but India.

The period in question coincides with Benjamin Disraeli's second premiership as the leader of the Tories from February 1874 to April 1880. With respect to the Great Game context, probably the most important developments during Disraeli's second term were his purchasing of the Suez Canal shares from the Khedive of Egypt in 1875,⁸ and his proclamation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of India in 1877. Both of these developments were proof that the main goal of the imperialist policies at the time was to enhance the British presence in India. This point has been elaborated upon by Sneh Mahajan who claimed that

[p]oliticians, officials and scribes, and following them historians, have used phrases like 'national interest', 'vital interests', 'British interests', 'imperial interests', 'Mediterranean interests', 'British interests in Constantinople', etc., in the context of British policy in the Mediterranean, the Near East and in the context generally of the Anglo-Russian setting in Asia. In fact [...] these were euphemisms for 'in the interest of defense of frontiers of India' or 'in the interest of the security of the route to India'. (2002, p. xi)

The consequence of this was the emergence and propagation of a tone in British politics which was antagonistic to the main threat to India, namely Russia, and sympathetic to the

⁷ The verbally drawn map of "the vast chessboard" called the Great Game as "stretch[ing] from the snow-capped Caucasus in the west, across the great deserts and mountain ranges of Central Asia, to Chinese Turkestan and Tibet in the east" by Peter Hopkirk would make it easier to visualize the situation (1992, p.2).

⁸ Benjamin Disraeli considered the Suez Canal as one of the most strategic locations to be possessed and secured because of the easy access it allowed to the Indian Ocean and to the Australia-Pacific region.

country which was standing between Russia and the routes to India, namely the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the terms Russophobic and Turcophilic; and hence the main concern of this article, which is to explicate how Burnaby's accounts of travel must have contributed to this Russophobic-Turcophilic effect.

It seems clear that in the universe of Burnaby's works, his propaganda is based on three main discursive narrative strategies, which sometimes overlap: 1) the counterposing of the attitudes towards the British in Russia and the Ottoman Empire respectively, and how British travelers are received in these countries, 2) the laying bare of Russia's intentions by document and testimony, and, 3) the foregrounding of a critique of the state of Orthodox Christianity, Russian civilization and the support they receive from the Liberal, especially Gladstonian circles in Britain, who provide misinformed and partial representation of contemporary events in Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Apparently, the way in which a traveling British officer is received in a given country had strong implications for Burnaby as to the general attitude of the people of that country and its government towards the Britain. For in both *A Ride to Khiva* and *On Horseback through Asia Minor*, he particularly dwells upon the circumstances under which he was given permission to enter and travel in his destinations. As a matter of fact, what triggered his mind to travel to Central Asia was a paragraph he saw in a newspaper "to the effect that the Government at St. Petersburg had given an order that no foreigner was to be allowed to travel in Russian Asia, and that an Englishman who had recently attempted a journey in that direction had been turned back by authorities" (Burnaby, 1876, p. 3). He goes on to explain his reaction to the paragraph as: "I have, unfortunately for my own interests, from my earliest childhood what my old nurse used to call a 'contradictorious' spirit, and it suddenly occurred to me, Why not go to Central Asia?" (1876, p. 3). After his three-and-a-half-day journey from London to St. Petersburg, the information he received from his British friends there was confirming the restrictions of travel. They told him he "might as well try to get to the moon" (1876, p. 27). Later, during his travel, Burnaby himself comments about his travel restrictions by noting that

[i]t was really extraordinary to see how much interest this paternal government in St. Petersburg took in my movements. Here I was travelling in a country where the rulers defend the despoliation of the inhabitants in Central Asia, and the annexation of their territory, on the ground that it is done for the purpose of Christianity and civilization. And yet the government of this civilized nation made as much fuss about my travelling in Central Asia as any mandarin at Peking, whose permission I might have had to ask for a journey through the Celestial Empire. (1876, p. 82)

The account of Burnaby's travel to Anatolia one year later, on the other hand, tells a different story with regard to his reception as a foreigner. Before leaving London he writes to the Turkish Ambassador to ask if there might be any objections to his travel, and to his letter he receives "the most courteous reply", which informs him that "every Englishman could travel where he liked in the Turkish Empire, and that nothing was required but the ordinary foreign office passport, one of which His Excellency enclosed"

(Burnaby, 1877, p. x). To build upon the effect created by this impressive first contact, later in the book Burnaby frequently informs the reader that “the hospitality of the Turkish nation is proverbial. The generosity of the Turks is equally great” (1877, p. 75), and that in Anatolia, “no matter where an Englishman may ask for shelter, he will never find a Mohammedan who will deny him admittance” (1877, p. 85). Burnaby is clearly fascinated by the Turkish custom and is eager to share his fascination with his British readers. Yet making a direct statement to that end would probably not be good for his assumed objectivity and impartiality. Therefore, he conveys his message indirectly by mentioning a story he hears about a fellow European Christian, one Mr. Thompson, who was offered a clean bed and food by a Turkish villager when there were not any vacant rooms at the inn he was hoping to stay. The English Consul who tells the story to Burnaby and whose status adds to the authoritativeness of his view asks: “the Turk was a Mohammedan, and Mr. Thompson a Christian; if the Turk had been in England, and found himself placed in a similar predicament to Mr. Thompson, do you think that there are many Englishmen who would have behaved so generously to an utter stranger?” (Burnaby, 1877, p. 73). Burnaby’s aim here is to impress his English readers by implying the moral superiority of the Turks even to themselves with regard to the specific virtues of hospitality and generosity, thereby creating a Turcophile tone as opposed to the one which accompanies his Russian experience. It follows that by counterposing the atmosphere of restriction and suspicion he had experienced in Russia with that of a welcoming Ottoman Anatolia, Burnaby’s works must have created a potentially hostile picture of the former country, whereas a friendly portrait of the latter was as much purposefully drawn in the minds of his readers.

Burnaby’s second strategy is to reveal to his readers Russia’s real intentions by document and testimony. As a matter of fact, this aspect of Burnaby’s travel accounts is probably the best proof of their propagandist nature. For travel accounts, Burnaby’s works contain a tremendous amount of reference to primary sources such as official reports, diplomatic letters, etc., as well as testimony from people, who he uses as mouthpiece. These help him make his point about the Russian threat. However, in order not to distract the reader from the main travel narrative, when it comes to documentation, he only uses brief quotations or paraphrases from these sources in the text, giving the full-text versions in the several appendices which typically occupy the last pages of both his books. To illustrate, Burnaby sets the political framework within which his *A Ride to Khiva* should be read at the very beginning, by quoting in the Preface from a work about the Russo-Indian Question published in St. Petersburg in the same year. The Russian author he was quoting from wrote: “Another advantage which we have gained consists in the fact that from our present position our power of threatening British India has become real, and ceased to be visionary. In this respect our Central Asian possessions serve only as an *étape* on the road to further advance, and as a halting place where we can rest and gather fresh strength” (Burnaby, 1876, p. v). In using this striking and alarming quotation at the very beginning, Burnaby’s obvious intention is to canalize the reader into reading the rest of his travel account with a Russophobic state of mind. Later in *A Ride to Khiva*, to make his readers visualize the Russian threat, he refers, for example, to several troop movements which show Russian generals’ annexation of territory in Central Asia in spite of prior assurances given to the British government (Burnaby, 1876, p. 157). As for testimony, Burnaby uses

the account of an interesting conversation between himself and two Russian ladies with whom he shares a carriage on the train from St. Petersburg to Moscow. The two ladies are on the train to collect money to be sent to Herzegovina to support the insurgents. Unaware of his nationality the ladies ask Burnaby to donate money, which, to avoid their suspicion, he does by giving a small amount. The lady who takes Burnaby's money thanks him in a very ironic way: "Thank you, brother. It will help to keep the sore open; the sooner the Turk falls to pieces the better. What is the good of our having a fleet on the Black Sea unless we can command the Dardanelles? The longer this affair continues in Herzegovina the more likely we are to reach Constantinople" (Burnaby, 1876, p. 36). One can easily assume that such a testimony must have had contributed to the propagation of a Russophobic-Turcophilic attitude in the minds of Burnaby's English readers. After all, only one year after Burnaby's visit to Russia, in 1877 they would be singing a patriotic anti-Russian propaganda song that would read:

We don't want to fight but by Jingo if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too,
We've fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,
The Russians shall not have Constantinople. ("MacDermott's War Song
(1877)")

Since the song "'By Jingo,'" also known as 'We don't want to fight' and 'The Dogs of War'" (Summerfield, 1989, p. 25) came to be the source of the term jingoism, the most well-known term to express extreme British patriotism, especially in the form of aggressive foreign policy, I would argue, Burnaby's documentation and use of testimony must have had significant contributions to the formation of this political attitude in late nineteenth-century British politics.

Similarly, in his account of travel in Anatolia, Burnaby uses documentation and testimony to the same effect. One example is his conversation with his host in Ankara, who comments on the role of Russian agents in the provocation of conflict in Ottoman territory. Burnaby's host complains that the Russian ambassador in İstanbul

is himself a prime mover in the secret societies which are agitating Europe. The Russian Government pretends to be alarmed at the secret societies, but it is the hot-bed of all the secret societies in the world. [Reference to an Official Dispatch in Appendix] You may depend on it [...] that the massacres which occurred in Bulgaria had been planned long before the outbreak. Our regular troops had been purposely sent to other parts of the empire. (1877, p. 66)

Further east in Anatolia, in Sivas, Burnaby reports to the reader the content of his conversation with the Governor of the city himself concerning the threat Russians pose to the Ottoman Empire, and hence to British interests:

⁹ The song was originally written by G. W. Hunt in 1877, but was performed before music-hall audiences, and therefore popularized, by G. H. Macdermott during a political crisis in 1877-1878 when the Russian fleet threatened to attack İstanbul. Thereafter, several other songs expressing "the righteousness of British predominance" came to be known as "jingo songs" (Summerfield, 1989, pp.25-26).

He now told me that twenty-five years ago the Turks and Christians got on very well together, but ever since the Crimean war the Russian government has been actively engaged in tampering the Armenian subjects of the Porte, and has been doing its best to sow the seeds of disaffection amongst the younger Armenians by promising to make them counts and dukes in the event of their rising in arms against the Porte. (1877, pp. 145-46)

Again, by providing this kind of information and knowing its implications for his reader, what Burnaby was doing was far beyond simply writing a travelogue. He was, in fact, involved in systematic and purposeful political propaganda through travel writing.

This fact can also be supported by the nature of the last strategy Burnaby used in the two books discussed here, that is the foregrounding of a critique of the state of Orthodox Christianity, Russian civilization and the support they received from the Liberal, especially Gladstonian, circles and press in Britain, who gave misinformed and partial representation of contemporary events in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. His main criticism of Orthodox Christianity and Russian civilization is focused on the abuse of 'Christianity' and the concept of 'Civilization' for political and imperial ambitions by the Russians. With reference to the earlier annexation of Khiva by Russians, for instance, Burnaby comments on the typical motivations of Russian generals in pursuing war. By these generals, he explains,

[a] life in Central Asia in time of peace is looked down upon with contempt. With everything to be gained by war and nothing by piece, we need not be surprised should every little pretext be sought for to provoke reprisals on the part of the native population. Europe then hears of the cruelties committed by the brutal fanatics in Central Asia, of Russian magnanimity, and of Mohammedan intolerance. [...] The lust for conquest is cloaked in a garb called Christianity. [...] Thousands of the natives who are mown down by that evangelical weapon, the breechloader; and one day we read in our morning newspapers that a territory larger than France and England has been added to the Tsar's dominions. (1876, pp. 96-97)

Later in the narrative, Burnaby gives the specific example of the treatment of the Turkomans of Khiva by the conquering Russian general. Here he relates the story of how the Russian general immediately requested part of the huge war indemnity to be paid by the Turkomans, which in fact was earlier decided to be paid within a fortnight. Burnaby reports that in order to

ascertain what chance there was of the payment being made [...] [t]his general gave an order to his soldiery not to spare sex or age. Men, women, and children at the breast were slain with ruthless barbarity. [...] And this, the Russians would have us believe, was done to further Christianity and civilization. This is the sort of Christianity which some people wish to see established in Constantinople. Would they like this kind of civilization next our Indian frontier? (1876, p. 260)

Similar criticism of the misinformation and partiality, especially in the British media, abounds in *On Horseback in Asia Minor*. Burnaby's host in Ankara, for instance, is unhappy about the one-sided account of the turmoil in Bulgaria given in British newspapers. So, he complains:

your newspapers always published the accounts of the Bulgarian women and children who were slaughtered, and never went into any particulars about the Turkish women who were massacred by the Bulgarians, or about our soldiers whose noses were cut off, and who were mutilated by the insurgents in the Herzegovina. A Turk values his nose quite as much as a Christian. (1877, p. 67)

Since one of the pre-defined purposes of Burnaby's travel in Anatolia is to see if the news about the maltreatment of the Christian populations who are living there are based on reality, in each city on his itinerary he talks with the Christians and inquires into the accusations of the impalement of the Christians, the news of which appear in British papers. However, the Christians in each city admit that they are on good terms with the Turks there, but in his next destination probably he would witness the maltreatment of Christians. As he proceeds from west to east, from İzmir to İstanbul, from İstanbul to Ankara, from Ankara to Sivas, from Sivas to Erzurum, and so forth he hears the same story, and eventually after inquiring about the truth of some accusations directed to the Turkish soldiers who allegedly outraged some Christian women near Erzurum, he writes: "Like many other statements which had been made to me by the so-called Christians in Anatolia, it turned out to be a fiction" (Burnaby, 1877, p. 157). To make his point more credible, in the matter of the impalement of Christians, he even reports the testimony of three American missionaries residing in Sivas, who, when asked the question were surprised and explained to Burnaby that "the Turks were by no means a cruel race; but that their system of administering justice was a bad one" (Burnaby, 1877, p. 143). After numerous such revelations of the other side of the story by document and testimony, Burnaby even gives advice to his readers by following which they can free themselves from the prejudices they have against the Turks: "People in this country who abuse the Turkish nation, and accuse them of every vice under the sun, would do well to leave off writing pamphlets and travel a little in Anatolia. [...] in many things writers who call themselves Christians might well take a lesson from the Turks in Asia Minor" (Burnaby, 1877, p. 75).

Having established his Russophobic-Turcophilic point to a great extent, towards the end of his account of travel in Anatolia, Burnaby now begins to openly criticize the Liberal circles, and Gladstone himself. In a 1876 pamphlet titled "Bulgarian Horrors" Gladstone had asked for a change of the British policy of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, into a policy of extinction of Turkish power in Eastern Europe, and their expulsion from the region "with their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage" (Gladstone, 1876, p. 38). Of course the retreat of the Turks from Eastern Europe automatically meant the establishment of Russian influence in the region in those days and Gladstone was not bothered by this. After all, according to him Russia was "the Torch-bearer of Civilization

and the Protector of the Unprotected” (Burnaby, 1877, p. 309). Apparently Burnaby was not unfamiliar with Gladstone’s pamphlet and he refers to it in *On Horseback in Asia Minor* with his following sarcastic response to Gladstone’s pro-Russian political views:

Why was the author of ‘Bulgarian Horrors’ silent when his own officials reported the crimes of the Russian soldiery? We have been told that Russia is the torch-bearer of civilization, and our military attaché at St. Petersburg [...] has stated that he believes the Muscovite soldiers are incapable of the atrocities laid to their charge. Mr. Gladstone has quoted this officer as an authority. It may be that our military attaché is ignorant of what took place during the Crimean War. He was a child in petticoats at the time. But Mr. Gladstone cannot assign extreme youth in his own case as an excuse for bad memory. (1877, p. 308)

As stated, all of the three strategies Burnaby used in his travel accounts were designed to create a Russophobic-Turcophilic effect in the minds of his readers, thereby contributing to the British pro-imperialist propaganda apparatus of the Great Game period. So much so that, the last paragraph of *On Horseback in Asia Minor* reads more like a paragraph from a propaganda pamphlet, rather than from a book of travel. At the end of this book Burnaby concludes that, “[a]n English contingent force of fifty thousand men could defend Constantinople against all the Russian armies. It is to be hoped that the Tzar has thrown down the gauntlet to England by taking action on his own part against the Sultan. We should accept the challenge, and draw our swords for Turkey” (1877, p. 328).

Of course, as far as propaganda is concerned, one question remains: Did Burnaby’s propaganda achieve the desired effect or not. The answer is ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. Yes, because on the eve of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1877, the Russophobic-Turcophilic tone appeared to be the dominant political attitude. As Mahajan puts it,

[i]t is extremely interesting that even the British public did an about-face on this issue. The people who had lapped up 200,000 copies of Gladstone’s first pamphlet on Bulgarian atrocities during September-October 1876, purchased only 7,000 copies of his second pamphlet which was published in January 1877. [...] The Russians no longer seemed to be the self-sacrificing apostles of ‘civilisation’ as was the case only four months earlier. Feelings against Russia became so intense that Gladstone had his windows broken for his pains. (2002, p. 41)

Of course, it is hard to directly link this change of heart of the British public with Burnaby’s works with solid evidence. The bonds between text and context are very rarely in recognisable and substantial form for any given case. Nonetheless, considering the popularity of Burnaby as “a hero of Victorian England” with “an unparalleled reputation,” which is still alive in our day, and that of his best-selling books of travel, *A Ride to Khiva* and *On Horseback through Asia Minor*, without which “no Victorian bookshelf was complete” (Champkin, 30 July 2000, p. 54), one can assume that his widely-circulated works must have influenced British public opinion.

On the other hand, in light of the aftermath of the war, the answer to the above question is ‘No.’ At least, in the sense that even though the Russophobic element was maintained in British politics, even to our day¹⁰, the Turcophilic element was in decline after the war. Ironically, in the Berlin Conference of 1878, the Ottoman Empire lost territory not only in Eastern Europe, to the satisfaction of Russia, but also in the Mediterranean, in the form of the annexation of Cyprus by the British. That signaled the overhauling of the policy of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire in British politics. Historically, within a few decades following the Turco-Russian war, the answer to the above question became a more definitive ‘No.’ True to the duplicity embedded in the nature of ‘politics,’¹¹ in the First World War, Britain attacked the Straits and temporarily occupied İstanbul, which she had vowed to protect from any invading force. During the war, let alone preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, Britain acted as the patron of Greece, which invaded a great part of Western Anatolia. Russia, on the other hand, had become Soviet Russia by that time and it contributed significantly to the Turkish War of Independence, which began in 1919 and eventually led to the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Fortunately for him, Burnaby did not live to see the u-turns in this political history. He was a soldier and an adventurer, who lost his life in 1885 when fighting in the Sudan as a member of the relief column sent to Khartoum to save General Gordon, and was buried in the desert (Hopkirk, 1992, p. 362). Yet his books remain as fine examples of the strong potential of the genre of travel writing as a tool for political propaganda.

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¹⁰ News of the poisoning, allegedly by Russian spies, of Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB agent, who died in London in November 2006 due to exposure to radioactive Polonium-210, led to the rise of another wave of Russophobia in Britain and resulted in “the spending [of] more time tracking Russian agents” by MI5, “with Russia accused of Cold War levels of espionage” (Cecil, 05 March 2009, p. 2).

¹¹ Before the 1870’s, as Summerfield (1989, p. 25) explains, the Ottoman Empire “had been regarded in less than sympathetic terms as a despotic ‘heathen’ power endangering the independence of the Balkan states.” Yet, when the British interests were threatened, the protection of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire became a “moral imperative” (Summerfield, 1989, p. 25).

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