

## IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF CIRCASSIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ON BRITISH DOCUMENTS 1857-1864

*Dr. Musa ŞAŞMAZ\**

Following the end of the Crimean war, the representatives of the governments which took part in the war came together in Paris to determine the terms of peace. Since the British government's endeavours during the war to persuade the Circassians to cooperate had led to no positive result, it wished to take revenge on the Circassians and deliberately inserted no stipulations in the treaty which could stop the Russians from occupying Circassia again.<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that the plenipotentiaries representing Britain and France did not allow the Ottoman representatives to insert such an article in the treaty. It appears unlikely that the Ottomans were powerful enough to be able to insert in themselves in order to keep the Russians away from Circassia, unless Britain and France supported the Ottomans on this matter. When the treaty of Paris was signed there were no stipulations which prevented Russians from re-occupying Circassia. Not even a year elapsed after the establishment of the so-called peace, the Russians planned to occupy the lands in the Caucasia again which they had lost to the Ottomans in the war. In February 1857 the British Ambassador Lord Stratford de Redcliffe received an information that the Circassians, apprehensive of being attacked by Russia in the spring, were beating about the bush to obtain some prospect of assistance from foreign sources, if not from governments, at least from individuals. The British Ambassador preferred paying no attention to this call and

---

\* Academic staff of Nigde University

1. The Earl of Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, no 597, 6 July 1857, FO 881/1443.

stated that he could not be expected, under existing circumstances, to lend an ear to any clandestine scheme hostile to Russia. At that time the prospects of Circassia seem to have been desperate. For anyone who took an interest in that country there was no sentiment but concern. This was the general picture one could draw for circassia. The Ambassador acknowledged that about 150 individuals of various nations consented to engage, if called upon, and that among them were some of the Poles being under Count Zamoyski's command<sup>2</sup>. Two days later, the project of sending aid to Circassia by means of enterprising individuals engaged for the purpose was, to a certain extent, in course of execution. An English steam-vessel in the employment of a merchant named Weare was chartered for a place called Vardum on the coast of Circassia between Anapa and Sukumkale. A number of fighters including about forty Poles and six or eight officers with arms and ammunition were embarked in aid of the Circassians in a ship which took in tow another vessel laden with salt. Engagements had been made with a Circassian emissary to whom a sum of 70 thousand piastres was sent.<sup>3</sup> In reply to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's dispatches of 14 and 16 February 1857, The Earl of Clarendon stated that the British government would be no party to the expectations and desired to give the Circassians no encouragement. The failure of the British government to persuade the Circassians to cooperate was the main reason which played the most decisive role in adopting such an inhuman policy. The Earl of Clarendon tried to justify his policy by saying that during the time when Britain was at war with Russia she received no assistance of any kind from the Circassians and that he considered it to be improper to afford underhand assistance to people who did nothing. He also warned Mr. Weare and all other British subjects to engage in this enterprise at their own risk.<sup>4</sup>

In June 1857, the Russians signaled that they would resume operations against Circassia on a very large scale. Meanwhile, they strengthened all their positions on the Kuban and the Laba, and, moreover, concentrated large bodies of troops on three distinct points: at Tam at the head of the River Laba, at Kurjipse on the La-

---

2. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to Earl of Clarendon, no 145, 14 February 1857, FO 881/1443.

3. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, no 152, 16 February 1857, FO 881/1443.

4. The Earl of Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, no 180, 28 February 1857, FO 881/1443.

gochu tributary to the Kuban, and at Atakum in the Shapsugh district. These positions corresponded to the middle point and to each of these camps they constantly sent out skirmishing columns, doing great damage to the Circassians who tried to defend themselves as best they could. But the Circassians believed that as soon as the season permitted, the Russians would advance simultaneously from these three points, as well as from the Fort Gagri on the Black Sea, which they would again occupy endeavouring to establish themselves in the heart of the country. In June, the Russian Forces collected on the Kuban were estimated at over 80,000 and the Circassians despaired at the prospects of being able to resist such a combined attack successfully.<sup>5</sup>

The representatives of 37 Circassian tribes, therefore, prepared a petition to be addressed to the Queen of England. This petition was sent to her confidentially through the British Embassy in Istanbul. In this petition the Circassians demanded, not only from Britain, but also from all the rulers of Europe, an assistance or benefit in order that they be relieved from hostilities between themselves and the Russians. They complained about the situation in which they were placed and said that, although all the rulers of Europe at that time enjoyed peace and had agreed to the cessation of hostilities and slaughter, the Russians surrounded the Circassians with a huge power, built forts in Circassia and caused bloods to flow like rivers in the mutual encounters. To the Circassians, this course arose out of the Russians' tyranny, perfidy and arrogance. What the Circassians appealed to the Queen was, in summary, to place the country itself in their hands in the same manner as in other countries, and to claim her protection against the perfidy of the Russians.<sup>6</sup>

The British Foreign Minister, the Earl of Clarendon, in reply to the demand of the Circassians pointed out that if the war had continued and the scene of operations had been transferred to the east coast of the Black Sea, and if consequence thereof Britain had become masters of Circassia as of Sivastopol, the British government in such a situation might have imposed upon the Russians as a condition of peace, an acknowledgement of the Circassians or even if the Circassians had, as a cooperation with the allies, specifically

---

5. Dr. Sarrel to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, 17 June 1857, FO 881/1443.

6. For the petition of the Circassians of May-June, 1857, see Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, no 555, 22 June 1857, FO 881/1443.

Britain, carried more active hostilities than usual against the Russians, and if such hostilities had been concerted with Britain, the allies should have had some ground on which to rest a demand in favour of the Circassians. He further said that since no allied troops operated in Circassia and the Circassians remained more quiet than usual during the operations in the Crimea, the allies had no ground on which to demand any stipulations about the Circassians in the treaty of peace, nor would Russia have had any reason for consenting such stipulations. Since no such stipulations were inserted in the treaty, the British government thought that neither Britain nor any allied member had any ground of right on which they could rest any demand on Russia with respect to the hostilities between her and the Circassians, and that such a demand could not be enforced without going to war with Russia. He continued, although the British government regretted any evil that might befall the Circassians, the people of Britain could not be asked to undertake the burdens and sacrifices of a war with Russia, for the purpose of assisting the people of Circassia.<sup>7</sup>

In the second half of the year 1857, the Russian pressure on the Circassians increased and became unbearable.<sup>8</sup> The Russians eventually left no choice to them and this led to their quitting the Caucasus gradually. The Circassians had but to take up their abode in Ottoman dominions. The first quitting of the Circassians began in January 1858. The Acting Consul Stevens, in Trabzon, reported the arrival of some 50 Circassian immigrants.<sup>9</sup> In October of the same year, Consul Eldridge from Kertch reported that 57 Circassian families numbering about 400 persons of both sexes chiefly from the province of the Upper Kuban had arrived at that port. The Russians stated that they had left their homes, in order to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. It seemed to the British Consul very strange that it was the first time so large a number of pilgrims had left the Caucasus together by way of Kertch.<sup>10</sup> On 10 November 1858, Eldridge again reported the arrival at Kertch of another party of 250 pilgrims and their leave in an English steamer for Istanbul. He also informed

---

7. The Earl of Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, no 597, 6 July 1857, FO 881/1443.

8. For the Russian military activities in Caucasia in general after 1857, see John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, (London, 1908), pp.458-482 and Shauket Mufti, *Heroes and Emperors in Circassian History*, (Beirut, 1944), pp. 235-253.

9. Alison to Earl Russell, no 101, 28 January 1858, FO 881/3065.

10. Eldridge to Earl Russell, no 50, 23 October 1858, FO 881/3065.

of others on their way to Kertch, but the Consul was assured that these so-called pilgrims were in reality emigrants whom the Russian government had induced to leave their country, in order to free itself from semi-hostile tribes on the Circassian frontier. In the same dispatch, it was reported that 400 Circassians had been transported from Sukumkale to Trabzon in a Russian steam-vessel in charge of a person wearing the Russian uniform<sup>11</sup>. the Porte to send them on to Istanbul, as some land in Rumelia had been assigned to them, and they were accordingly sent thither. He stated that some 5.000 of these people had decided to immigrate into Turkey, the Sultan having engaged to grant them lands, and accorded other advantages.<sup>12</sup>

In June 1859, Eldridge noted that large number of Circassians were arriving almost daily at Kercth from Taman, the Upper Kuban en route to Istanbul, that 3.00 families consisting at least of 15.000 souls, were on their way thither, and that the cause of their emigration was a proposal which had been made to them by the Russian government to retire into the interior of Russia, in order to make way for military colonies which were to be established in their country. Rather than accede, they had preferred to immigrate to Turkey.<sup>13</sup>

On 17 November 1860, C.H. Dickson from Sukumkale<sup>14</sup> stated that a number of Circassians immigrating to Istanbul and other ports of the Ottoman Empire were continuing to arrive at Sukumkale from Kertch or Sucukkale and that the boats of the Russian steam navigation and trading company on their voyage between Sukumkale and Trabzon conveyed, within the autumn of 1860, over 2500 families and some 500 more arrived at Sukumkale by land via Cebelda. The latter belonged to the tribes bordering on the Caucasion line or great military boundary. At that time although the immigration was taking place and other seductive and evil influences were continually exercised by the Russians to persuade the Circassians and their chiefs to leave Circassia, it was rumoured that the remaining population was preparing for a vigorous resistance expecting to preserve its independence for several years to come.

---

11. Eldridge to Earl Russell, no 56, 10 November 1858, FO 881/3065.

12. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 61, 21 November 1858, FO 881/3065.

13. Eldridge to Earl Russell, no 25, 15 June 1859, FO 881/3065.

14. Dickson to John Russell, no 6 Confidential, 17 November 1860, FO 87/424.

It was added, with reference to the last subject, that Field Marshall Prince Baryatinsky had lately inspected the force forming the right flank of the Army of the Caucasus which amounted to about 40,000 men. The bulk of this force had been stationed on the fortified line extending from Ekaterinodar along the Atakum down to the Bay of Sucukkale with a view to the subjugation of the Shapsugh tribes in the first instance, and was to operate by three chains of forts in course of construction gradually, the one proceeding from Ekaterinodar, the second from Nikolaeusk on the Atakum River, and the third one after being carried through the heart of the country was to terminate on the coast and probably unite at the Tenginsk Fort a Shapsugh Bay.

The right flank was commanded by Lieutenant Count Evdekimoff lately in command of the Lesghine army, Lieutenant General Philipson having been appointed chief of staff of the whole army in place of General Milutine who had been promoted to be adjunct to the Minister of War at Petersburg. Together with these preparations the Russians intensified their attacks on the Circassians and these attacks from Russian point of view continued successfully until the end of 1863, which only left the Ubikh tribe to conquer. At the beginning of October, the Abazas (Abazecks), much to the surprise of the Russians themselves, capitulated and on 4 November 1863, the chiefs of the Shapsuz tribe took the oath of allegiance to the Russian Emperor. In Ekaterinodar Count Sumarokoff Elston passed several days and nights in the camp of Abazas, who promised him that they would do all in their power to persuade the Ubikhs to lay down their arms. If they failed, they would then assist the Russians to conquer them. This however was not expected to happen, as General Count Evdekimoff had issued an order to the effect that the whole Abaza (Abazeck) tribe must immigrate to Turkey before the spring of 1864, and had signed a contract with two merchants of Kertch to convey them to Samsun at five roubles a head, the Russian government paying three roubles, the remaining two roubles having to be paid either in money, produce or cattle by the Circassians.

On 5 November 1863, a courier was dispatched from the mountains to Count Evdekimoff in Ekaterinodar, informing him that the Russian troops were close upon Djoinba and requesting to know that his wishes were as to its being taken. The answer sent was to take the town immediately so that Grand Duke Michael

could receive the news and congratulations on his arrival in Stauro-pal. It was carried out accordingly. A private letter dated 24 November addressed to the British Consul Charles Clipperton, at Kertch revealed that the Russian troops had advanced to the heights above the Tupse River at about 18 miles from the Black Sea. Rather severe fighting appears to have taken place on 10, 11 and 12 November 1863. The Circassians supposed to be commanded by foreign officers, abandoned their several rifled guns which were later found in a ravine by the Russians.

In late December, both the Russian Imperial government and the troops were busy with the war-like preparations and the troops were expected to march to the shores of the Black Sea shortly and to use his own words "*pour la fin de cet hiver il ne sera plus question de guerre au Caucase*". The governor of Kertch, Admiral Spitzen informed Chipperton of the increase of the army to one and a half million men by the spring of 1864, in addition to 450 thousand Cossacks and the militia. Forty divisions, each of sixteen thousand men of infantry alone, had already been formed and were being actively drilled for service around December 1863. The entire Russian army was to be divided into two grand corps, the North and the South. The headquarters of the South was at Kertch.<sup>15</sup> In February 1864, the Russians were taking further steps on the Circassian coast of Sukumkale to carry on with the war with renewed energy. A staff officer from Tiflis, therefore, came to Sukumkale with the aim of reconnoitring Sochy from the sea which was intended to be occupied in the spring. An expeditionary force of some 9,000 men, consisting partly of contingents from the army in the Transcaucasian provinces and partly of the garrison troops of Sukumkale, would endeavour to proceed overland from Gagri. Meanwhile, the troops practised daily with the improved rifles lately supplied to them, while all the bakeries were actively employed in preparation of large quantities of biscuits. The Consul Dickson saw that the position of the Circassians was hopeless if they were to overcome all these preparations. The only hope for the Circassians Dickson could foresee was that they focused their hopes in a forthcoming European war with Russia rather than continue to offer open and armed resistance which, as the experience of the past had taught, would only entail upon them increased se-

---

15. Charles Clipperton to Earl Russell, no34 Confidential, 21 December 1863, FO 881/3065.

verities without the chance of final success. This was the only opinion shared and urged by many. The immigration of Abazeck and subsequently of the Shapsugh, famine, the cattle murrain considerably weakened the power even of the Ubikh. In addition to these misfortunates, there was absence of any political chosion between the northern tribes or such remnants thereof, and those inhabiting other parts of the Caucasus, and indeed an utter impossibility of bringing about such a consummation. Moreover, there existed amongst the Circassians blood feuds, which further prevented them from uniting in a common cause.<sup>16</sup>

As time went by, the Russian advances were brought forward and, in March 1864, a Russian detachment having captured the village of Tubehe on the Subahi river, inhabited by about 100 Abazeck, massacred after these had surrendered themselves prisoners. Amongst the victims were two women in an advanced state of pregnancy and five children. The detachment in question belonged to Count Evdekimoff's army which had advanced from the Pshich valley. In the meantime, military preparations were going on for the forthcoming expedition and prosecuting the war on the Circassian coast with renewed energy. By March 1864, the Russians meant to establish a military cordon along the whole line of the coast through the occupation of Sochy and other important points, as had been the case prior to the war of Crimea. An expeditionary force consisting of contingents from the Transcaucasion provinces commanded by the Grand Duke Michael in person was prepared to assemble in a short time.<sup>17</sup> It was observed that the Russian troops then gained ground on the coast and the natives were not allowed to remain there on any terms, but were compelled either to transfer themselves to the plains of the Kuban or immigrate to Ottoman dominions.<sup>18</sup>

Grand Duke Michael, Lieuetenant of the Emperor residing at Tiflis, had issued orders in March 1864 to Count Evdekimoff, commanding the right wing of the army in the Caucasus, to make all preparations necessary, both by sea and land around subashi were some Circassians who had not surrendered, amounting to about

---

16. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 1 Confidential, 22 February 1864, FO 881/1259, FO 881/3065 and FO 97/424.

17. Murray to Earl Russell, no 13, 29 March 1864, FO 97/424.

18. Dickson to Earl Russel, no 2 Confidential, 17 March 1864, FO 881/1259 and 881/3065.



2.00 families, had gathered together, but not to attack until Evdekimoff and his staff were advised and could be present in person. These orders were carried out accordingly and General Evdekimoff left for Tiflis to accompany Grand Duke Michael to the battle-field. Two days after the departure of General Evdekimoff, General Heyman being left in command pushed his troops forward and finding a most favourable opportunity for an attack, stormed the Circassian posts of Vardan and Sochy and compelled them to surrender with little or no loss on either side. These places capitulated between 4 and 6 April.<sup>19</sup> He then telegraphed the event to St. Petersburg and Tiflis, much to the surprise of Grand Duke Michael and General Evdekimoff. While Heyman was fighting with the Circassians in Vardan and Sochy, Grand Duke Michael was on his way from Poti to Sukumkale followed by five battalions from Georgia and Gurya. The Grand Duke appears to have been forestalled in his contemplated attack on Sochy, by the unexpected operation of General Heyman's division, which after a trifling engagement at Subashi, advanced in that quarter without encountering further resistance. This event occasioned some disappointment, since the honour of conquering the Ubikh had been reserved for him, the same being deemed tantamount to the annihilation of Circassian independence in the Western Caucasus, even as the capture of Gunif by his predecessor proved to be a crowning success in the Eastern Caucasus. But Count Evdekimoff, reckoned one of the most experienced as well as merciless generals in the Caucasus, who had had for the last two years the arduous command of the right wing of the Russian army, after succeeding in his war of extermination, doubtlessly appeared reluctant to pause and relinquish to others the merit of completing his task.<sup>20</sup>

After all the Russian success within the last six months, up to April 1864, the only Circassian resistance left unbroken, except for those of small groups up on the hills, was commanded by Prince Sherwashidza generally known as Michael Bey, reigning Abhasia. If the Russians crushed his resistance, they expected that there would be no more war in the Caucasus. The Russians, before the Abhasians, proceeded to defeat small groups of Circassians waiting on the hills and still threatening its army, Several engagements be-

---

19. Murray to Earl Russell, no 20A, 29 April 1864, FO 881/1259 and Stevens to Bulwer, no 9, 15 April 1864, FO 881/1259.

20. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 3 Confidential, 13 April 1864, FO 97/424.

tween these Circasian tribes and the Russians happened between April and July 1864. For instance, one of them at Ahcipsu, at the end of May 1864, took place between some of the natives of this district and the division under Major General Shatiloff. The position of the Russians appears to have been formidable as a small body of mountaineers tried to defend their land and people with remarkable tenacity, inflicting considerable injury on their enemy, by merely rolling stones, as the Russian forces advanced to the top. In this fighting, the Russian casualties amounted to 66 including two officers killed, a major and Prince Shahin Marshani of Cebel-da. The latter died at the hands of some members of his family with whom he was at feud, the Prince being a dweller of Ahcipsu, as well as of other parts of Circassia. Such of the Circassians that took part in this engagement had then to join the daily increasing exodus to Turkey. Meanwhile, the rest of the Russian expeditionary force with Duke Michael tried to complete the occupation of Circassia and to the purpose he was in late May on an expedition in the Msinta valley in which he received and met no resistance.<sup>21</sup>

At Agibugu, in Ahcipsu, near the sources of the River Psu, not more than 700 Circassians consisting of Ahcipsu, Fihett and Pshu tribes engaged in fighting the Russian forces. As they deemed that their stronghold was unassailable, they fancied making a successful stand against the overwhelming numbers of enemies surrounding them. For these Circassians, a strong column commanded by General Heyman advanced from Sochy, in addition to the force dispatched from Sukumkale. The whole Russian army around Agibugu amounted to 23 battalions, 10 light field pieces, Cossacks and militias making altogether a rough total of 19000. The engagement took place between two parties. The loss of Circassians was reckoned at 44. The Russian army's operating columns then assembled in the middle of Ahcipsu. The Russian army, after its success, engaged in road-making and watching the exodus of the defeated Circassians. Another encounter occurred in June 1864 at Aul, near Tupse, the inmates of which refused either to emigrate to the Kuban or immigrate to Turkey. General Heyman thereafter despatched the 6th compaines to dislodge them. Heyman lost 35 of his soldiers in clashes, but recovered a rifled cannon of 18 pounds calibre belonging to the mountaineers while another one was raised from the bottom of the Msinta river. Both were said to have been manufactured

---

21. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 5 Confidential, 24 May 1864, FO 97/424.

in Britain. Following the fighting between Russians and the tribes of Ahcipsu, Fihgett and of Pshu, they were ordered in late June 1864, to quit the country and were forced to assemble on the shores. According to a conjectural estimate, the number of these immigrants amounted to 22000.<sup>22</sup>

Probably as a last hope, towards the end of the Circassian struggle, in April 1864, a Circassian delegation wrote another letter to appeal to the Queen of England. In this letter, the delegation stated that, within the last two years, a famine caused by a drought and the ravages committed by the Russians had occasioned the weakness of their people and that many lives had been lost in battle, from hunger in the mountains, from destitution on the sea-coast and from want of skill at sea. They, therefore, invoked the mediation and precious assistance of the British government and people, in order to repel the brutal attacks of the Russian government on their country, by which they aimed at saving their country and their people. But if the British government considered it impossible to afford this help for the preservation of their country, they demanded facilities to be afforded for removing, to a place of safety, their miserable children and women who perished under the brutal attacks of the enemy.<sup>23</sup> To this appeal the British government gave no positive reply. So the Circassians were left no alternative but immigration either to the steppes of the Kuban or the lands of the Sultan.

While the occupation of Circassia by the Russian army continued the Circassians probably being aware of the final result started to immigrate to Turkey to save the lives of their families. After each town or stronghold was brutally occupied, the Circassians of the occupied towns were compelled to assemble on the shores of the Black Sea. These people were subjected to waiting there with their families and animals until the transports were made ready by the Ottoman and Russian governments<sup>24</sup>. This lasted usually two-three months.<sup>25</sup> While they were on the coast, the condition of these

---

22. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 6 Confidential, 29 June 1864, FO 97/424.

23. For this letter, see the enclosure in Bulwer to Earl Russell, no 54, 12 April 1864, FO 881/1259 and FO 881/3065.

24. Napier to Earl Russell, no 232, 9 May 1864, FO 97/424. Although nothing is mentioned in the British documents it is said that the Ottoman authorities encouraged the Circassians to immigrate to Turkey in some secondary literature, for example, in James Bryce, *Trans-Caucasia and Ararat*, (London, 1878), p. 58 and Shauket Mufti, *Heroes and Emperors in Circassian History*, p. 262.

25. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 2 Confidential, 17 March 1864, FO 97/424. and Murray to Earl Russell, no 13, 29 March 1864, FO 97/424.

poor people was described by eye-witnesses as most distressing. In the hurry of departure, the overcrowding of boats was so little heeded as to lead to frequent disasters, while such of their horses and cattle as war spared were being sold for a few paper roubles, In some instances, the immigrants, fearing that the Russians could see their weapons which might be heirlooms in the family for centuries, either exchanged hands with enemy or flung them into the sea. When the Circassians surrendered, they were given two political choices: the first was to go and settle in the Kuban steppes and contribute periodically to the Russian militia, and the second was to immigrate to Turkey.<sup>26</sup> It appears that the overwhelming majority of the Circassians rather opted for immigrating to Turkey than resettling in the plains of Kuban.

Following the evacuation of the Circassians off their lands, the Russian authorities forthwith began to engage in reconnoitring and dividing the land which they had recently gained possession of. They offered grants of land and privileges to the Azoff Cossacks who might desire to settle there. Every encouragement was held out to them for settling in the occupied lands with those of both Orthodox Russian and sea-faring population.<sup>27</sup> The government employees serving ten years in the Caucasus were also entitled to claim an allotment of the land.<sup>28</sup> Immediately after the Caucasus had been subdued, orders were issued that the whole of the Circassian population should immigrate to Turkey. The execution of these orders started in the spring of 1864 in the most inhuman manner. The Russian government employees were sent to Kertch and different ports on the Circassian coast to superintend the immigration, but they took more to their interest than that of the Circassians, as they paid no attention whatever either to sanitary laws or to the ships being capable of conveying passengers. In most cases the vessels which were capable of carrying from 150 to 200 tons burden, crowds of Circassians from 1200 to 1800 in number were boarded in a most unhealthy state. It naturally caused famine, dirt and fever among the passengers. The Russian government paid three roubles for each person to sail on vessels and five roubles to steamers,<sup>29</sup> but sail on vessels had hitherto been only employed at very low

---

26. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 3 Confidential, 13 April 1864, FO 881/1259.

27. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 4 Confidential, 11 May 1864, FO 881/1259.

28. Murray to Earl Russell, no 20A, 29 April 1864, FO 881/1259.

29. The payment of the tickets seems to have been varied to time.

freights, as the owners of the steamers both at Istanbul and Odessa refused to have anything to do with carrying them.

As for the means by which the Circassians were carried from the Circassian coast to that of Turkey, sometimes Circassians themselves and sometimes Russian and Ottoman authorities provided boats for their conveyance to the Ottoman coast. For instance, in early March 1864, a small Ottoman steamer, the joint property of a Turk and an Armenian, came to Sukumkale from Trabzon without coals, but with an order from the Russian consul in Trabzon to the governor of Sukumkale to furnish the required supply. After it was coaled, the steamer proceeded to Tupsé escorted by a Russian war steamer, in order to embark such of these oppressed Circassians and take them to Trabzon.<sup>30</sup>

The Circassian immigration started mainly in 1863 and continued for years to come. The immigration of some Circassian tribes were registered by the British consuls in the area and reported to the British Foreign Office. By December 1863, all the tribes, except for the Ubikh tribe, had been defeated by the Russians. The tribes whose lands were taken by the enemy were driven to the coast to wait for the arrival of the vessels or steamers which would carry them. So, up to the month of December, it appears that large number of Circassian tribes might have immigrated to the Ottoman coasts and some were still on the coast waiting for their transports to come. The exact number of immigrants who were waiting on the coast or had already arrived was unknown. However, it is reported that in three days only, in the middle of February 1864, the fresh arrivals took place and circa 3,000 were landed and some 40,000 more were soon expected. This might give rough idea as to the extent of the immigrations.

In April 1864 when the lands of the Ubikh tribe were occupied, this tribe, numbering about 100,000, gathered on the beaches of the Black Sea.<sup>31</sup> Some of them somehow reached Trabzon in May and the number of immigrants in this city and in its vicinity thus increased to 27,000.<sup>32</sup> They were, generally speaking, poor and of an

---

30. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 2 Confidential, 17 March 1864, FO 997/424 and Murray to Earl Russell, no 13, 29 March 1864, FO 97/424.

31. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 7, 15 April 1864, FO 881/1259.

32. Stevens to Bulwer, no 9, 15 April 1864, FO 97/454. For the arrivals of the Circassian immigrants in April 1864, see an article in *The Times* of 25 April 1864.

indolent nature. They had little regard for cleanliness, which obviously prevented the ally of disease in their ranks, and made a frightful havoc amongst them. They lived huddled together, infecting one another. They sold the rations and clothings distributed to them by the local authorities and their children for a few piasters. They disinterred their dead at night to steal the calico wrappers covering the bodies and then abandonet the corpses in the open fields. In April and May 1864, they concealed several deaths from the local authorities with a view to continuing the receipt of rations of the deceased individuals and one corpse was discovered to have been hidden for eleven days in one of the immigrants' tents, other immigrants occupying the same covering without the slightest repugnance.<sup>33</sup>

The quarters in the vicinity of the cemeteries were rendered uninhabitable, owing to the careless manner in which the dead were buried and the offensive consequences thereof, and whole families abandoned their dwellings. The chief aqueduct feeding the fountains of the town was tainted after a circassian corpse was found floating therein. The streets and squares were in a wretched and filthy condition, provisions were scarce and dear, and fuel was wanting, all which augmented the misery while contributing to spread diseases. From December 1863 to February, the mortality rate exceeded 3.500. Of them Circassian immigrants were 3.00, Turks 470, Greeks 36, Armenians 17, Catholics 9 and European 6.<sup>34</sup>

Both their life styles and also the difficulties raised by the Russians during and after the war led them to spend all their energy. During this struggle against the enemy, they lost not only their courage and hope, but more importantly many members of their families.<sup>35</sup> In these conditions one may not expect them to have been very tidy or clean. THE reason for heavy loss of lives of the immigrants should be sought in the Russian treatment both during war and deportation which indeed weakened their bodies. They appeared exhausted and close to death when they embarked at the Ot-

---

33. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 8, 19 May 1864, FO 881/1259 and also for the state of the immigrants in May, see a long article "The Circassian Exodus" in *The Times* of 9 and 12 May 1864.

34. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 3, 17 February 1864, FO 881/1259.

35. For instance, a wanderer states that altogether two-thirds of the population of Circassia are computed to have been perished during the exodus, see *Notes on the Caucasus* by a Wanderer, (London, 1883), p. 21.

toman coasts. In addition, the inefficient and unorganized exodus of the immigrants may have worsened the situation. However, it should be borne in mind that the Ottomans accepted the assylum of the Circassians willingly and did all they could to help to ease their sufferings. In fact, any government would have but failed to cope with the problems brought by such a big exodus adequately. Despite all the aforesaid, the Ottoman government tried to take all necessary to prevent the death of hundreds of immigrants from disease, superinduced by famine and misery, which they had acquired previous to embarkation.<sup>36</sup> Another report prepared in December 1863 gave further information about the state of health amongst the immigrants. It noted that the state of health in Trabzon was greatly compromised, typhus, small pox and ocurog spread among them. The number of sick amounted to about 7.000. It is also reported that, within ten days, in the middle of December 1863, mortality among them was considerable, some 20 to 30 per day.<sup>37</sup> Later mortality amongst them, which had somewhat subsided, started increasing again in April 1864.<sup>38</sup>

Emin Pasha, the governor-general of Trabzon, did all he could to alleviate the condition of these unfortunate people, but the means at his disposal were very limited. Meanwhile, disease spread fearfully amongst the Circassians and natives, mortality especially from typhus, was on the increase. Panic was great and generalised, and every one made arrangements to quit the town. Of three European doctors in Trabzon, one, a French subject, died on 17 February 1864, another, a British subject, attached to the guarantina department, was unable to attend the sick.<sup>39</sup> The third one was Dr. Barozzi who probably did his utmost to ameliorate the state of public health, but a single individual was unable to attend to the various camps, not only because of long distances, but because he could not meet this huge demand. The situation in Trabzon and similar places demanded from the Porte the appointment of more doctors to cope with the problem, but the Porte appeared unlikely to meet the requirement.

The native residents especially those in contact with the Circassians, became infected and fell victims to typhus and other dis-

---

36. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 3, 17 February 1864, FO 881/1259.

37. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 35, 21 December 1863, FO 881/3065.

38. Stevens to Bulwer, no 9, 15 April 1864, FO 97/424.

39. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 3, 17 February 1864, FO 881/1259.

eases, because they were deprived of medical aid. The presence of the immigrants and the fear of contracting diseases completely paralyzed commerce. The depots of bread stuffs rapidly became small and in a report prepared by the British consul in Trabzon, on 15 April 1864, it was stated that there existed only twenty days consumption in the place. The governor-general required one thousand bushels daily for the immigrants. The mills were occupied by government, an private individuals could not get their corn to the mills. The situation was by government, and private individuals could not get their corn to the mills. The situation was expected to worsen, while Trabzon was threatened with famine as a result of the arrivals of newcomers numbering about tens of thousands.<sup>40</sup>

The conglomeration of vast quantities of such immigrants could indeed threaten the health and peace of any locality and the loss of life occasioned by their hazardous attempts to escape from their occupiers was shocking to humanity. The Ottoman government, with the purpose of alleviating their sufferings, resolved to send vessels to remove the immigrants thence and place them in different parts of the Empire.<sup>41</sup> Similar information to the abovementioned was sent to the British Foreign Office, one month after the previous one. In this dispatch, the number of immigrants was reported to rise. Those encamped only at Akchakale and Saradere were roughly 25.000. The mortality among them averaged 120 to 150 per diem. With the fresh arrivals, 35-40.000, Circassians were landed at Samsun and infected this place to an alarming extent. As many as 500 deaths were reported to occur within ten days. The bakers closed their ovens and quitted the town from fear. For several days, bread was wanting, which nearly led to an emeute in Samsun. Because of this urgency, Dr. Barozzi, from Trabzon, proceeded to Samsun to the assistance of the immigrants.

The Ottoman government, in order to prevent further health deterioration in Trabzon and Samsun, ordered a steam-frigate with a sailing frigate in tow and some smaller staying in Samsun to take the Circassians to embark immigrants for Varna direct. Through this measure it was intended to give a break, in which care of these immigrants in Trabzon and Samsun could be improved and remedies for the solution of their problems could be found, because it was re-

---

40. Stevens to Bulwer, no 9, 15 April 1864, FO 97/424.

41. H. Bulwer to Earl Russell, no 54, 12 April 1864, FO 881/1259.



ported that as many as 200,000 more were ready to quit their country, a Russia insisted on their leaving, by the end of May 1864.<sup>42</sup> If those waiting on the Circassian coast came to Trabzon and Samsun it was considered that it would be disastrous for both immigrants and native people. These immigrants were, therefore, destined to other parts of the Empire and were not allowed to stay in Trabzon ve Samsun. Another matter of which the Ottoman government was scared was that such a miserable state of things might lead to serious disorder before long and would undoubtedly create a furnace of infection directly when the warm weather set in. Doubtless, in such a situation, two important commercial towns and their peoples as well as the immigrants would suffer considerably. Bearing in mind these facts, the destination was directed to Varna.<sup>43</sup>

The members of the Ubikh tribe began to immigrate by May 1864 and completed the evacuation of their country in a short time. By the middle of June 1864, the number of immigrants present in Trabzon amounted to 70 thousand. Some ten thousand of them were partly shipped off by steamers to other Ottoman towns and partly sent into the interior of Anatolia. The remaining 60 thousand encamped at Akchakale and Saradere and continued to stay in the same miserable plight as before. Some 300 deaths among those at Akchakale and Saradere were occurred daily. The mortality amongst all immigrants, numbering above one hundred thousand, on some occasions reached 800 a day.<sup>44</sup>

A copy of a report prepared on 25 May 1864 by Dr. Barozzi, the sanitary inspector on service to the Ottoman Board of Health, spells out the situation in Samsun in which he found the town and the unfortunate immigrants. The report is really heart-breaking and shocking. I have therefore found it both informative and useful to include all the document as a whole. The report goes as follows: "*no words are adequate to describe the situation. Besides between 8,000 and 10,000 Circassians heaped up in the khans, the ruinous buildings and stables of the city, upwards of 30,000 individuals, coming from the encampments at Irmak and Dervend, encumber*

---

42. The Times announced on 27 May 1864 that, according to the *Invalide Russe*, the Grand Duke Michael had gone to Anapa, in order to facilitate another great immigration of Circassians.

43. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 8, 19 May 1864, FO 881/3065.

44. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 10, 18 June 1864, FO 97/424.

*the squares, obstruct the streets, invade enclosed grounds, penetrate everywhere you meet with the sick, the dying, and the death; on the foot of trees. The native population is in the utmost consternation, terror reigns over every one's mind. Every dwelling, every corner of the streets, every spot occupied by the immigrants, has become a hotbed of infection. A warehouse on the sea-side, a few steps distant from the quarantine office, hardly affording space enough for 30 persons, enclosed till the day before yesterday 207 individuals, all sick or dying. I undertook to empty this hotbed of pestilential foetus. Even the porters were refusing to venture to advance in the interior of this horrible hole. This fact may convey a faint idea of the deplorable state of the immigrants whom they have allowed to take up their abode in town. Nothing of what I saw at Trabzon admits of comparison with the frightful spectacle which the town of Samsun exhibits. The encampments present a picture hardly less revolting. From 40.000 to 50.000 individuals in the most absolute state of destitution, preyed upon by disease decimated by death, are cast there without shelter, without bread, and without sepulchre"<sup>45</sup>*

The report ended with a short note that the people needed biscuits rather than flour, because the ovens available were insufficient and that there were many individuals dying from starvation, and having been four days without receiving their rations.

The Ottoman local authorities in Trabzon and Samsun dispersed the immigrants and in September 1864 only a few hundred immigrants remained in Trabzon, but fear arose when the governor-general of Trabzon received information to the effect that 40.000 were preparing to come over before the winter. They had obtained a respite of six months from Russia to quit their country and the term expired by October 1864.<sup>46</sup> The influx of immigrants contin-

45. For a copy of the letter of 25 May 1864, see FO 97/424 and also *The Times*, 13 June 1864. In order to assist the Circassian immigrants and alleviate their miseries, a committee was formed and announced in *The Times* on 27 May 1864. The committee consisted of Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe as president, the Marquis of Clanricarde, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Zetland, Viscount Strangford, Lord Houghton, the Lord Mayor, Lord Richard Grosvenor, M.P., Arthur Kinnaid, M.P., Sir Justin Sheil, K.C.B., Sir Henry Rawlinson, K.C.B., Danby Seymour, M.P., Robert Hanbury, M.P., Thomas Hughes, Georges Seymour and Laurence Oliphant. On receipt of Dr. Barozzi's report, the committee at a meeting held on 11 June 1864, ordered that the money in hand should be sent at once to Dr. Millingen, the member of the committee set up in Istanbul, on account of the urgent necessity and that contributions were to be sent out as they came in, since every pound sent at once might save a life. *The Times* of 13 June 1864.

46. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 20, 24 September 1864, FO 97/424.

ued to arrive at the Black Sea ports of the Ottoman Empire throughout the last quarter of the year, 1864. It was announced in October from Samsun that four vessels with 2300 Circassians arrived at that port, and that they were expected to be followed by many more. The newcomers were only supposed to be a portion of Natokoch tribes living in the vicinity of Avafa, and were said to number altogether six thousand families.<sup>47</sup> One report from Poti indicated that 20 Jesghian families amounting to about 70 persons immigrated to Turkey on 14 October 1864. They had embarked at Poti on board the French boat "Aigle".<sup>48</sup> The members of the board of health, especially in Samsun, strongly urged the Ottoman government not to allow these new immigrants to locate themselves at Samsun, where both inhabitants and Circassians had already suffered so much from privation and disease, but to convey them forthwith to the places destined for their settlement.<sup>49</sup> During the last ten months, and up to October 1864, as far as Trabzon and Samsun were concerned, the deaths were computed at a hundred thousand, of which sixty thousand were at Samsun and forty thousands at Trabzon. The total number which landed on the coast of Trabzon between November 1863 and September 1864 was roughly estimated at 220,000 of which some ten thousand were sold as slaves, so the mortality amounted to as near as fifty percent.<sup>50</sup>

Another report dated from October 1864 showed that the Chechens occupying the eastern slopes of the Caucasus were about to immigrate into Turkey by land. They numbered 180,000 souls approximately and intended to bring with them their flocks and cattle. Of them, 150 families had already arrived and settled in the province of Erzurum. In addition, a few Abhasian tribes were occasionally using every means to come over to Batum but sometimes without success.<sup>51</sup>

47. Dickson to W. Stuart, 11 October 1864, FO 97/424.

48. Dickson to Earl Russell, no 9 Confidential, 18 October 1864, FO 97/424.

49. Dickson to W. Stuart, 11 October 1864, FO 97/424.

50. Stevens to Earl Russell, no 20, 24 September 1864, FO 97/424. One of the visitors who after the Circassian immigration made journey to the Caucasus estimated the number of immigrating Circassians to Turkey at not less than 400,000 souls, Baron Max von Thielmann, *Journey in the Caucasus, Persia, and Turkey in Asia*, (London, 1875), p. 19. The same number is also mentioned in A. Sanders, *Kaukasien, Nordkaukasien, Aserbeidschan, Armenien, Georgien*, (München, 1942), p.268. Moreover, A Sanders states that about one hundred thousand Circassians preferred staying in Circassia that immigrating to Turkey. According to the Russian census of 1897 their numbers under Kabardians as 98,561 and under other Circassians as 46,286 are given. B. Geiger, A.H. Kuipers, T. Halasi-Kun, K.H. Menges, *Peoples and Languages of the Caucasus, a Synopsis*, (The Hague, 1959), p. 18.

51. Dickson to W. Stuart, 9 October 1864, FO 97/424.

Trabzon and Samsun were the centres of arrival and distribution of the immigrants to various places in the Ottoman Empire: they came to Trabzon or Samsun and were then sent to other places. For instance, in late June 1864, some immigrants numbering about 3300 were dispatched to Kütahya and Çanakkale. They were first taken to Bursa, but in this town the medical officer insisted on their not entering the town as intended, because they had typhus and measles prevailed among them. All, including the sick, were therefore conveyed past outside, to guard against the contagion.<sup>52</sup> The number by mid July, 1864, exceeded 6000 with new arrivals at Geyve, in addition to those at Mudanya, There were also 15000 who had come to Bandırma to settle around Balıkesir. Those who passed through Bursa and those who settled around Balıkesir were in a deplorable state of raggedness, destitution and disease particularly typhus and small pox. Many had died during their sea-voyage and on shore. Mortality still prevailed among those who, being too weak to proceed to the interior, were stationed in the vicinity of Bursa and were joined by others in the same state, sent from Geyve. These people were supplied by the local authorities with a sufficient ration of bread and some medical aid.<sup>53</sup>

52. Sandison to earl Russell, no 15, 29 June 1864, FO 97/424.

53. Sandison to Bulwer, 20 July 1864, FO 97/424. The Times of 11 July 1864 published a letter dated on 23 June from Inebolu which described the condition of the Circassian immigrants there. The letter is as follows: *There are 5.000 Circassians here just now, and every week Government steamers, sailing vessels, and market caiques add to their number. To depict fully their awful state utterly baffles my power of description; it would, in fact, require the pen of a Defoe. Smallpox, typhus fever, and dysentery are making the most fearful ravages among them. The pasha did good service in causing the sheds for washing the dead, which had been erected in the heart of the town, to be removed to the suburbs; he also forbade all interments in the cemetery, and caused a special place of burial to be found outside. He likewise prohibited the women and children of the quarter from having any communication with the immigrants, and levied a muster of horses, mules, and asses to transport as many as possible into the interior. Many of the resident families remain shut up in their houses for fear of contagion; typhus fever has broken out among them, and I fear smallpox will speedily follow in its wake. As many as 150 inhabitants have caught pestilential disease. As for the Circassians, the number of deaths among them continues to increase daily; if they go on, indeed, in the same ratio not a quarter of those who are landed will ever reach Angora, which is their destination. Fortunately, there is plenty of flour, which is distributed daily by the authorities, otherwise the must all perish. With great difficulty we contrived to get some mutton, and a little beef is occasionally procured, but it is not fit for human food, for the animals are all diseased, and are strangled when they are no longer fit to stand. The Turkish women of the country who deemed it a work of mercy (sevab) were in the habit of coming indiscriminately to wash the bodies of the Circassian women who died; but this was very properly put a stop to by the Pasha, who set apart three or four specially for this sad task, and selected the Imma and another to perform the same melancholy duties for the men."*

On 23 September 1864 the British consul in İzmir reported some information about the state of immigrants: above 4000 Circassians had of late arrived at the port of İzmir for distribution in the districts of Manisa and Aydın. These immigrants had come to İzmir in the most deplorable condition, badly having the remains of typhoid fever upon them and a few cases of small pox, but most of them suffering from long standing dysentery. The result was about 90 daths on board and during the first two weeks of September 1864, about 160 deaths on shore. The only sustenance allowed by the government to these persons was about one and half loaves of black bread per diem. This sustenance was so insufficient that many hundreds more would fall victims to literal starvation, as it was impossible for invalids to be satisfied on this diet. Subscriptions organized by the governor-general and consuls were made for distribution of proper foods, medicines and clothes, and about 400 pounds had already been collected but, as the number of the Circassians was so large, this amount was insufficient. They had neither permanent houses nor agricultural implements nor seeds of their own. So it was feared that they would most probably become robbers in the end.<sup>54</sup>

As regards the Circassian settlement in the Sancak of Vidin in Bulgaria, the Russians viewed the conveyance of the immigrants to Varna much to the satisfaction of the Russian government, because they stated that the Ottoman authorities did not understand their own interests by placing the Circassians in the low lands around Varna. On the contrary, if they were sent to the Russian frontier in Eastern Anatolia, they would be the best and safest frontier guards, since the hatred they bore against the Russians was most inveterate. It was also the fact that, in case of necessity, they would always receive support and it seemed almost impossible for the Cossacks to compete with them.<sup>55</sup> The number of immigrants in the vicinity of Vidin was roughly 40.000 and 20.000 of them had been assigned lands from the waste and uncultivated ground of which there was abundance in that part of Bulgaria. The aggregate population, Muslims and Christians of the Sancak of Vidin amounted to 800.000 They had all been ordered to sow an additional quantity of grain for the subsistence of Circassians, in 1864. THE burden thus imposed upon them, taking into account their relative numbers, was consid-

---

54. Cumberbatch to Earl Russell, no 19, 23 September 1864, FO 97/424.

55. Clipperton to Earl Russell, no 19 Confidential, 19 My 1864, FO 97/424.

ered light, and the mutasarrıf pointed out that the indigenous population in Vidin had in many instances offered to increase the contribution voluntarily. So much for the assertion originating from the Russian agents, that the Bulgarians were seriously discontented at having the Circassians quartered among them. The conduct of the latter were however found generally inoffensive and neighbourly to the indigenous population<sup>56</sup> The Russians might be justified in their evaluation of the Ottoman policy of the Circassian settlement in Varna, in taking into account the defence of the country against Russia, but the main aim of the Ottomans in those times was not to strengthen the defence of the country against Russia, but to save the lives of these poor Circassians from disease, fever and starvation. When the matter was evaluated from this point of view, the Ottoman policy of the Circassian settlement in Varna, or any place where they had a better chance of staying alive would be supported in principle.

In June 1864 another group of immigrants totalling 2000 Circassians among whom diarrhoea and typhus prevailed, arrived at Uşak. They were lodged in khans and in the crowded habitations of the natives, but were afterwards distributed amongst the villages situated to the north-east of Uşak. Their contact with the inhabitants gave rise to complaint followed soon after by typhus. In the space of six months, from June to November 1864, there were 500 Muslims taken sick, of whom 200 died and 100 Christians of whom 20 died. Out of these 700 cases of sickness, only 3 manifested glandular swellings. Two of the three were affected with glandular swelling and died, the last one recovered. The towns and villages which had only been visited by the Circassians contained sickness. All the rest of the districts was perfectly healthy. In December 1864 there were only twelve persons ill and a special doctor was provided to safeguard the health of the indigenous people of Uşak and of the Circassians there.<sup>57</sup>

As is clear from the information given so far, the immigrants encamped in Samsun and Trabzon were gradually scattered all over the country. Some of them were dispatched to places in the Balkans, some were conveyed to the western towns of Anatolia and even to Cyprus and the Arabian peninsula. Those immigrants to be

---

56. Longworth to Bulwer, no 29, 15 July 1864, FO 97/424.

57. Dickson to W. Stuart, 14 December 1864, FO 97/424.

settled in the south were conveyed by ships, and were registered in Istanbul, together with their destinations. According to these registries, up to 20 September 1864, 74,206 Circassian immigrants passed through the Bosphorous, on their way to their final destinations. This number included: 3,494 slaves, 449 orphans and 1,568 military recruits making altogether 5511 persons landed at Istanbul in addition to 1393 deaths that occurred during the voyage. The remainder were distributed to the following places:

To	Bandırma	13630	Selanik	2134
	Mudanya	10498	Silivri	1600
	Gelibolu	4463	Çayağzı	3981
	Gemlik	2377	İzmit	6034
	Rodosto	13188	İzmir	4895
	Çavdarlı	2881	Çanakkale	1300
			<hr/>	
		TOTAL		66981
	Landed at Istanbul		5511	
	Deaths during voyage		1393	
	Differences arising from want of precision in the statements made to the health office			321
			<hr/>	
		TOTAL		74206

Out of this number, 3724 persons suffered from ill-health on their arrival at Istanbul. The mortality during the voyage was great, as was the case in other cases. In a voyage made from Samsun to Selanik by the Ottoman steamer "Hüdaverdi", in August 1864, 180 persons died out of 600 passengers. The crew of the vessels employed in conveying Circassian immigrants also suffered very severely.<sup>58</sup> In another voyage from Samsun to Çanakkale, in November 1864, a similar incident occurred. The physician of Çanakkale announced, on 12 November 1864, the arrival of the ship "Marria Despina" in tow of two other vessels laden with 1130 Circassians from Samsun, the original number shipped was 1800 and during the voyage, which lasted 35 days, 670 died from disease, exhaustion, hunger and mainly from overcrowding.<sup>59</sup>

58. Dickson to W. Stuart, 9 October 1864, FO 97/424.

59. Dickson to W. Stuart, 5 December 1864, FO 97/424.

I shall now detail a horrible story of the voyage of the immigrants from Istanbul to Cyprus. On 22 September 1864, a convoy consisting of three vessels in tow of the Hellenic Steam-Tug "Samson" commanded by Athausi Phoca left Istanbul with a party of Circassians destined for Cyprus. These Circassians had come from Samsun and were distributed in Istanbul as follows: The Ottoman Brig "Revan-i Ticaret" of 9600 kilos burden, commanded by Hüseyin Osman carried 824 Circassians; the Ottoman Brig "Hıfz-ı Rahman" of 10.000 kilos burden, commanded by Osman Mehmed ali 862; and the Wallachian Brig "Aufdromachi", commanded by James Traulos, 480 Circassian immigrants, making a party of 2346, in all.

On arrival at Cyprus, the commanders of the sailing vessels declared, at the interrogatory made to them by the health office of Larnaka, that they did not know how many Circassians they had on board, but that their health, in general, was good considering the sufferings they had experienced from hunger and thirst. The commander of the Steam-Tug "Samson", on the other hand, declared that he knew nothing about what might have occurred on board of the three other vessels, which, he stated, he had merely taken in tow and had never visited. When the Circassians were landed, the health officers found that their numbers amounted to 1362, and that of these 826 were ill, and 19 dead. By comparing the number embarked at Istanbul (2346) persons) with that landed at Cyprus (1362 persons), the board of health were surprised to find a disappearance of 984 statements, and this error probably arose out of the disorderly manner in which the system of Circassian immigration was conducted. Yet such was far from the case in this instance, for several reports simultaneously received at the board of health, from different sources, stated that 43 Circassian dead bodies had been ashed on the shore at Larnaka, 100 at Limasol and 16 at Samons, and that, moreover, the commander of an Ottoman steamer had declared at the health office of Rhodes, that he had noticed many dead human bodies floating at sea off that Island, In addition to the gravity of these circumstances, he stated that some of these bodies had been decapitated, some bearing stab-wounds, some marks of having been strangled and most of them had been mutilated. Furthermore, Captain Buscia, the commander of a Russian vessel conjointly with his crew, declared on oath at the French Consulate at Larnaka that, while at sea, having come along side of the above-named vessels, he observed that living Circassians were thrown over board and



struggled, while in the water. These details clearly indicated that some tragical events had occurred on board the vessels, and that the commanders had concerted together to conceal the truth from the authorities. On their arrivals at Larnaka, moreover, the quarantine officer of this town had informed the board of health that the immigrants were in a most wretched condition, owing to their crowded state while on board, to want of food, and to their having been compelled to drink seawater during the voyage. Among them cases of small-pox, but not of typhus, were noticed.<sup>60</sup>

The news of the deaths of 984 Circassians during the journey from Samsun to Cyprus became subject to an article in the *Journal de Constantinople*, on 9 November 1864. As soon as this was heard of by the Ottoman authorities, a commission was set up to investigate the report drawn up by the board of health, on 25 October 1864, and the news mentioned in the *Journal* on the subject of the Circassians sent to Cyprus indicated that 984 of them had died during the journey. The commission prepared its report after investigation and pointed out that the disaster which had happened was exaggerated and that there had been deaths, but no mutilated bodies, thrown into the sea. According to this report, only one person threw himself over board, the provisions were never wanting, the supply of fresh water was frequently renewed during the voyage and the stock of biscuits was more than sufficient, since 28 untouched bags had been brought back to Istanbul. The commission emphasized that the deaths had resulted from the consequence of sickness and not from hunger or thirst. According to the report of the commission,

The number of Circassian immigrants which sailed from Samsun was	2718
Died between Samsun and Istanbul	202
Transhipped at Istanbul	528
	Total 730
When 730 is deducted from the whole number in Samsun, it remains	1988
Died between Istanbul and Cyprus	637
Landed at Cyprus	1351 <sup>61</sup>

The British Consul at Larnaka, R.H. Lang, also gave some information in his report of 17 October, about the Circassians landed.

60. Dickson to W. Stuart, 4 November 1864, FO 97/424.

61. Dickson to W. Stuart, 5 December 1864, FO 97/424.

He observed that these losses had occurred on account of the lack of space in three ships which could carry a burden of maximum 300 tons, while 500 tons had been stowed on these vessels. So a voyage lasting two-three months reduced even the strongest to the weakness of a child. It seems more likely that some might have been thrown into the sea so that more space could be provided for the rest. As he observed, the holds were crowded to the extent that not even standing room was left. In such a voyage, no wonder such a big number had lost their lives.<sup>62</sup>

While immigration continued, the Ottoman Grand Vizier called the British Foreign Minister Russell's attention to the very serious difficulties the Porte was involved in by the continued immigration of large bodies of Circassians from Russia. In spite of every effort made, it was considered an impossibility for the Ottoman government to provide the means of transport necessary for conveying the great masses of people collected on the shores of the Black Sea to Turkey. The Grand Vizier demanded from Bulwer that the British government provide either a loan to the Porte or lend the Porte two or three government transports, or charter a few large British merchant steamers for a short time to ply between the coast of Circassia and Turkey, for the removal of the immigrants and their cattle. Without some such assistance, the Porte was compelled to crowd these poor people on board available vessels. The cattle which were essential to their well being had to be left behind sometimes. The consequence was, of course, great mortality amongst the immigrants reaching Turkey with nothing but a few things they could carry with them. The Ottoman government or the Ottoman peasantry in such a situation would eventually have to supply them with fresh cattle to begin life in their new settlements at great sacrifice. Due to these explanations, the Grand Vizier asked whether Britain could do anything to mitigate the sufferings of the Circassians and the diminish the pecuniary expenses these immigrants were causing on the resources of the Porte, it would be considered as an act of real generosity and humanity, and would be reviewed by Turkey as a service for which she would be sincerely grateful.<sup>63</sup>

---

62. For further information about the Circassians sent to Cyprus, see R. H. Lang to W. Stuart, 17 October 1864, FO 97/424. As to the loss of Circassian immigrants on their way to Cyprus, see also a letter of 12 November 1864 from Larnaka in *The Times* of 7 December 1864.

63. Bulwer to Earl Russell, no 77, 3 May 1864 and no 120, 25 May 1864, FO 97/424. An extract from the former dispatch of Bulwer was reproduced in *The Times* of 17 June 1864.

With reference to Bulwer's request mentioned in his letter of 25 May 1864, about the urgent employment of 2-3 commodious merchant steamers necessary to effect the transport of a large Circassian population into Turkey, together with their property, mainly cattle, Earl Russell, the British Foreign Minister, addressed on 3 June 1864 to the Treasury Chambers, Bulwer's desire together with Dickson's dispatches. Earl Russell was desirous and even encouraged to make the vessels available for such a service at once. He was cognizant that the treaty objections in force could render it unjustifiable to send into the Black Sea vessels belonging to the English naval service, but that the same objections were not applicable to merchants taken up by the British government, and Earl Russell therefore earnestly recommended to the Lord of the Treasury to sanction expenditure which would be occasioned by taking up and employing the transport of the Circassians and their properties.

Such a proceeding on the part of the British government, as Earl Russell was fully aware, would be unusual, but the circumstances under which it would be adopted were also of an unusual character. The sympathy felt in general towards a large population being forced to exile and the impossibility of their staying at home might persuade the British government to meet the payment of the expenditure incurred on for facilitating their safe transport to the country of their adoption.<sup>64</sup> In response to the Foreign Office's letter of 3 June, 1864, the Treasury Chambers pointed out that the employment of merchant steamers to this purpose was entirely a question of money and the money of the Ottoman government was not less available and effective than the money of the British government. The Treasury made in plain that vessels which once embarked bodies of Circassians with their cattle and took them into the charge of the British government would be dependent on the nature of the arrangements made by the Ottoman authorities at the port of arrival indication was given about the character of these arrangements and the nature of the responsibility the British government was to undertake by receiving those unfortunate persons under its care. The Treasury asked if the intention was that ships were to be taken up for the purpose, if so, it pointed out that the expense to meet would be enormous. It was also critical about the lack of information giving no hint at the meeting of the expenses, or even any estimate of the cost of the commitment. Furthermore, the

---

64. The Foreign Office to the Treasury Chambers, 3 June 1864, FO 97/424.

Treasury remarked that, even if these were overcome, the most important issue was that the preparations and reaching the scene would take weeks and that such a delay would jeopardize placing a confident reliance on the suggested means to meet the crisis.

The Treasury Chambers found many pretexts to Bulwer's letter, not to meet his simple desire that the British government was to send 2-3 steamers to carry the immigrants, by which the burden of the Porte would be lightened. The Chambers questioned the statements in Bulwer's letter, such as the extent of the pressure on the Porte's resources and the lack of any assurances on the part of the Ottoman government on the payment of the expenses or a loan to be given to it for the purpose in view. The Treasury Chambers considered it as a matter of regret that there should not be sufficient time and a more distinct plan which would enable the lords in the Chambers to comprehend the nature of the proposal. Because of the absence of a few unimportant particulars, the lords in the Chambers raised their objections to acting on Bulwer's desire. However, they stated that if Earl Russell desired to authorize Bulwer to lend immediate aid practicable in any manner on his responsibility, he would be free to instruct Bulwer to adopt such means as was in his opinion required by humanity and beneficial in their character provided that they did not involve any expenditure exceeding 5.000 pounds in all.<sup>65</sup>

On 8 June, Bulwer sent the Foreign Office, a telegraphic message to renew his plea for now 5 or 6 transports and stated that the payment of vessels would be made by the Porte. He also organized a committee under the control of the British Embassy in Istanbul to manage the affair and the payment of vessels.<sup>66</sup> Earl Russell wrote a letter to Bulwer stating he was doing all he could to comply with the wishes of the Porte. However, he warned that the British government would not guarantee the payment to be made by the Porte.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, Earl Russell continued his attempts to secure at least 5-6 vessels from the Admiralty, but the latter made it clear that they had neither government transports available for the service required by the Porte, nor funds at their disposal to take up freight. The Admiralty asked the British government to vote a large sum if the gov-

---

65. The Treasury Chambers to the Foreign Office, 4 June 1864, FO 97/424.

66. Bulwer to Earl Russell, no 120 Telegraphic, 8 June 1864, FO 97/424.

67. The Foreign Office to Bulwer, 10 June 1864, FO 97/424.

ernment wished the Admiralty to supply the required vessels. It appears that the Admiralty had no ships but planned to rent private vessels for the demand. This was calculated to cost a large amount of money which the Admiralty asked Parliament to vote. Otherwise, it was regarded as impossible for the Admiralty to send 5 or 6 vessels for the removal of the Circassians. Since the Admiralty did not foresee the money to be approved by the House, it pointed out that it would be happy to give every advice and assistance, if the Ottoman Embassy in London was desirous of taking up freight in England for the service in question.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the Admiralty accepted that it was prepared to help the Porte, if the latter sent money to its embassy in London. They would do the rest. Earl Russell dispatched to Bulwer the summary of the Admiralty's answer about the Porte's need of 5-6 transports.<sup>69</sup> So all the discussions and communications made between the Porte and the British government and between the offices in Britain did not result in any positive progress and the Porte's earnest desire to transport the Circassians safely and decently with the ships to be brought from Britain was rejected by the British officials simply because of the question of payment of the cost of the transports.

The attitude of the British government displayed on the subject of transports appeared to be quite strange, because the ostensible reason for not sending these transports was lack of financial guarantee. While the lives of thousands of Circassians were at risk, and indeed while thousands of them were dying daily, it is unimaginable that the British government refused to act on the Porte's plea to save the lives of Circassians on the ground that the Porte could not guarantee the payment of the cost of the transports. If the British government had sent the required ships thousands of Circassians would have survived in their voyages, according to the details given earlier. One wonders whether the British government did not send the ships on account of financial reasons or not. The rejection of the plea does not seem to have been based on this reason only. These must have been other reasons. Possibly one of them was that the Circassians, during the Crimean War had not tended to cooperate with the British government was not able to succeed in what it had in view, it savagely took its revenge on the Circassians by

---

68. The Admiralty to the Foreign Office, 11 June 1864, FO 97/424.

69. The Foreign Office to Bulwer, 11 June 1864, FO 97/424.

means of the treaty of Paris in which an article was intentionally inserted to stop the Russian aggression being redirected against Circassia, a fact which resulted in the renewal of the Russian invasion of Circassia by which thousands were killed fighting the traditional enemy as well as in their journeys and voyages. The British officials were to make them suffer more in revenge of the anti-British policy which the Circassians had followed during and after the Crimean War. The decision-makers in Britain, feeling hatred against the Circassians, seemed to be well-satisfied with what they had done to them. However, it should be mentioned that Bulwer, the British Ambassador at Istanbul and Earl Russell, the Foreign Minister, did their best to persuade the other officials especially in the Admiralty and the Chambers of Treasury, but they were eventually unsuccessful. So these two British officials in the Admiralty and in the Chambers of Treasury that were to blame, because they stood against the dispatch of steamers. The second reason could be the case of Russia. Britain did not want to harm her peaceful relations with Russia established through the treaty of Paris during which Britain was allied with France and the Ottoman Empire, and therefore felt strong enough against this formidable power. But in 1864, the war was over and no more allies existed. So risking a war with Russia on a mere humanitarian issue looked to Britain unnecessary and she was disinclined to confront Russia about a matter which would in any way bring no benefit or profit to her.

Earl Russell's endeavours and attempts continued. He secured 5.000 pounds worth of biscuits to be sent to either Istanbul or Samsun from Malta, on the condition that the Porte promised to pay the charge for freight.<sup>70</sup> He informed Bulwer of the news of the supplies of biscuits and asked Bulwer to receive the approval of the Porte as to the payment of the charges of freights of the goods from the Porte, which accepted its payment. Bulwer then instructed the Admiralty to convey the supply of biscuits for the value of 5.000 pounds to Istanbul.<sup>71</sup> The admiralty replied on 22 June 1864 that one of the ships namely "La Plata" conveying biscuits to Istanbul had left Malta for Istanbul with 30 tons of biscuits on 20 June 1864. The total biscuits costing 5.000 pounds were 600 tons which the British government promised to send to the Circassian immigrants.<sup>72</sup> The British Ambassador Bulwer reported the arrival of 30

---

70. The Foreign Office to Bulwer, no 171 Telegraphic, 15 June 1864, FO 97/424.

71. The Foreign Office to the Admiralty, 17 June 1864, FO 97/424.

72. The Admiralty to the Foreign Office, 22 June 1864, FO 97/424.

tons of biscuits by the steamer "La Plata" to Istanbul, on 28 June 1864. The biscuits were stored at Sepetci kiosk and the Porte without losing time, shipped a portion of them on board a steamer, which left Istanbul on 27 June, for Trabzon from whence it was to convey 500 Circassians to Kostence.<sup>73</sup> The biscuits sent were intended for distribution to the immigrants during their voyage.<sup>74</sup> From 20 June to 8 August 1864, as a result of the instruction of the British Foreign Office, the Admiralty reported to the British Foreign Office that the ships had conveyed the biscuits from Malta to Istanbul. The list of vessels in which the supplies were forwarded and the dates of their sailings were as follows:

Names of Ships	Dates		Amount of Biscuits Conveyed	
La Plata	20 June	1864	210	Bags of Biscuits
Arcadia	24 June	1864	500	"
Milan	24 June	1864	500	"
Balkee	4 July	1864	140	"
Brenda	4 July	1864	450	"
Rhom	9 July	1864	1700	"
Egyptian	22 July	1864	560	"
Gustavo Pastor (Belgian)	16 July	1864	900	"
Total	4960 Bags of Biscuits (Making about 600 tons) <sup>75</sup>			

In another report of the Admiralty addressed on 13 August 1864 to the British Foreign Office, it was stated that the dispatches of biscuits from Malta to Istanbul were completed for the Circassian exiles. They totalled 600 tons of biscuits amounting in value to 4999. 15 pounds. It was added to this sum 620 pounds for bags and 664 pounds for freight. The total expense, thus, incurred on by the Admiralty was 6284 pounds. As mentioned earlier, the British government promised to pay the maximum amount of 5000 pounds, so this amount was subtracted from 6284 and the remaining money, that is 1284 pounds, was to be paid by the Ottoman government. On 1 May 1865, the Ottoman Foreign minister, Ali

73. The Times of 30 September 1864 quoting from Levant Herald of 21 September reported that about 4,000 Circassians arrived at Kostence on vessels belonging to the Russian and Ottoman governments, until 21 September 1864.

74. Bulwver to Earl Russell, 28 June 1864, FO 97/424.

75. The Admiralty to the Foreign Office, 8 August 1864, FO 97/424.

Pasha, stated that the Imperial Bank of Ottoman was directed to remit to the Ottoman Ambassador in London for payment to the British Treasury the sum of 1284, 11 pounds which had been expended on account of freight for the biscuits supplied by the British government for the need of the Circassians.<sup>76</sup>

As may be inferred from the information given, the British government did nothing to force the Russian government to review its aggressive policy against the Circassians. This was also criticized by British statesmen at a public meeting held in London on 7 July 1864.<sup>77</sup> While the Circassian exodus were taking place the British ambassador at Istanbul, H. Bulwer, analyzed the immigration and tried to make the most of it, in accordance with the British interests, which were to prevent the Russians from expanding further south, since this would obviously threaten the British road to India. Although H. Bulwer appreciated the heroic struggle of the Circassians against the Russians, he criticized the Ottoman grant of hospitality to these unhappy exiles. His criticism of Ottoman policy was that the Ottomans preferred dividing the immigrants amongst different Turkish villages in various districts and allotting to four Turkish families on Circassian family. He considered it as the cheapest mode but the worst. He thought that it would add new miseries to the existing miseries of the Turkish peasant and that it would result in the extinguishment of the Circassians. He believed that the Circassians were invincible warriors and they therefore should not be divided, dissipated and finally lost. In his opinion, both the Ottoman Empire and Europe should favourably benefit from the warrior features of the Circassians by colonizing them in an area extending from the Black Sea towards Erzurum in which, he thought, they might repose from their misfortunes. If they settled there and converted into a sort of military colony, he envisaged that

---

76. Stuart to Earl Russell, 1 May 1865, FO 97/424. The committee in London under the presidency of Stratford de Redcliffe met for the last time on 30 March 1865 and concluded their labors. The total sum collected by this committee amounted to 2,067 pounds of which 2,000 was remitted to Dr. Millingen in Istanbul for the relief of the distressed Circassians. The committee expended the remaining money on advertisements and other necessary expenses. For this, see *The Times* of 3 April 1865.

77. The committee formed in London in May under Stratford de Redcliffe's chair held a public meeting at London Tavern to consider the condition of Circassian exiles and the measures to be taken for their relief. At the meeting the Chairman Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord Houghton, The Marquis of Clanricarde, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Mr. Beales, S. Morley and Mr. Stokes made long speeches in which the policy of Russia as well as of Britain as to the exiles of Circassians was bitterly criticized. For a copy of these speeches, see *The Times* of 8 July 1864.



they might furnish a new resource to the Ottoman army. Furthermore, he pointed out that these immigrants could be made most useful for the construction of a road from Trabzon to Erzurum. This object would be achieved easily, if their ultimate home was in its vicinity.

The execution of a plan of this kind in his simple calculation demanded at least the allocation of one and a half million sterling from the Ottoman government. It was clear that the Ottoman government was not in a position to afford this sum for this purpose. What was needed was to start a movement in Europe to aid the Ottomans. He suggested the formation of committees in London and Paris for raising a loan to this end. These committees would consist of Ottoman subjects of known character such as Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha to whom some European delegates might be annexed. This project of H. Bulwer was communicated to the French Ambassador at Istanbul, M de Moustier, who said that he himself had thought of something of the kind and they both agreed to address it to their governments.<sup>78</sup> Henry Bulwer's project for the colonization of a part of Anatolia by the immigrants was presented on 19 May 1864 to the French Foreign minister who equally approved of Henry Bulwer's views.<sup>79</sup> The British Foreign Minister Earl Russell gave his replies to the views of H. Bulwer that the British government concurred in his suggestions as to the best means of providing a permanent settlement for the Circassians and approved the course pursued by H. Bulwer on the matter.<sup>80</sup> The British and French governments, principally, appear to have agreed to the application of H. Bulwer's project, but they were apparently not inclined to meeting the expenses of its execution. The project was therefore thrown into a waste basket.

Another British criticism of the Ottomans is to be found in a document prepared by the British Consul at Cyprus, R.H. Lang.<sup>81</sup> It is related to the manner by which the Circassians were transported to Cyprus, viz., the vessels were overcrowded. His criticism seems unfair, because, as mentioned earlier, the Ottoman government used all available means at its disposal to save the Circassians both from the Russians and from disease. Furthermore, the Ottoman government decided to scatter them throughout the country so that

78. H. Bulwer to Early Russell, no 77, 3 May 1864, FO 881/1259 and FO 97/424.

79. Earl Cowley to Earl Russell, no 580, 19 May 1864, FO 881/1259.

80. Earl Russell to H. Bulwer, no 135, 25 May 1864, FO 881/1259 and also Earl Russell to Bulwer, no 158, 2 June 1864, FO 97/424.

81. R.H. Lang to W. Stuart, 17 October 1864, FO 97/424.

their miseries would be alleviated; the orphans, the boys and girls were usually offered homes, the sick were taken care of with all possible means, while reasonable rations were provided to them. However, if the Ottomans had had better means, most of the Circassians would not have been lost. The loss of lives was mainly due to overcrowding and, if the British government had supplied the 5-6 vessels which had been demanded by the Ottoman government, the loss of lives would undoubtedly have been minimum. The Consul's criticism could have been, in such a situation, fully justified. However, the Consul had no right to criticize the Ottoman government but his own, because the former deserved appreciation and the latter criticism in line with what each had done on this matter.

As for the criticism of the Russian policy, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, Napier, had a conversation with Prince Gorkakoff concerning the immigration of the Circassians, on 1 June 1864. Napier blamed Russia for the policy followed on this matter. He thought that the Russian government was morally bound to take every measure for the relief of the Circassians on the coast and for the regulation of their departure, in such a manner as to ease the burden, as much as possible, to the Porte, and that Russian authorities might contribute at least to the first expenses of the movement, to the provisioning, and to the transport of the immigrants. The Russian government was expected to do what was humane and reasonable for the immigrants, by whose departure an immense relief was afforded to the Russian Treasury, while burdening the Ottoman government.

In response to this, Prince Gorkakoff pointed to the efforts being made by the Grand duke Michael on the coast for their relief and to the regularity of their departure, but Gorkakoff repudiated all responsibility on the part of the Russian government to bear any part of the expense undertaken by the Porte. He also denied that the departure of the Circassians was of any advantage to Russia, which in this way lost a useful element and contended that the acquisition of these people by the Porte was advantageous to its military resources.<sup>82</sup>

There is scarcely any doubt that the Russian authorities, through the deportation of the Circassians, committed injustice and cruelty especially when it became more apparent that the Circassians had determined to immigrate. The most active measures

---

82. For a criticism of Russian policy, see Napier to Earl Russell, no 287 Confidential, 1 June 1864, FO 97/424.

ought to have been taken to moderate the movement to bring the people in successive parties to the coast, to support them there, to embark them with decency and comfort under the inspection of responsible functionaries to cooperate with the Ottoman authorities at the points destined previously for their debarkation, and to discharge them on Ottoman soil in a fair condition of discipline and health, so that they might not carry disorder and pestilence among a neighbouring and hospitable nation. There appears to be no evidence of any such precautions being taken. The Russian authorities seem to have considered that they had done everything when they threw open the roads to the shore and when they allowed the Circassians to go and the Ottoman coasting vessels to carry them off. The attention of the Russian government appears to have been aroused only by the commentaries of the foreign press. No voice of humanity of conscience, as informed by Napier, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, was spontaneously raised in the Russian newspapers at St. Petersburg or Moscow on behalf of courageous people who had been deprived of their independence and property, or might have inspired commiseration.

As opposed to the point made by Prince Gorchakoff, the Russians were obviously gainers by the measure, they got rid of an obstinate enemy in a formidable position by expelling the Circassians from the mountains and by the immigration of these tribes the Russians were spared a vast amount of expenditure in colonization and supervision of these most troublesome people. It was true that a certain amount of human productive power was lost to the Russian Empire, but there was no difficulty in procuring cultivators for the plains of the Kuban from other quarters. There were plenty of Cossacks ready to move anywhere at a moment's warning. It appears also erroneous to share Gorchakoff's view that the Ottoman government was the only gainer. As was also accepted by the Europeans, the Ottoman government acted on this matter with great, though generous, precipitation in countenancing and accepting the immigration of the Circassian people. They incurred upon the undeniable obligation of supporting and settling approximately 300-400 thousand mountaineers, little acquainted with any kind of productive industry, either agricultural or pastoral. Their arrival, for both themselves and the Ottomans, became a source of embarrassment and caused a huge expense to the Ottoman government. As often claimed, they might give the Porte a few thousands irregular horses at a pinch, but there was no scarcity of irregulars and they did not seem to be of much use in regular warfare against foreign powers

which the Porte had chiefly to dread. In short, the disadvantages to the Porte seemed to be certain; the benefits, at best contingent and distant.

The Russian policy towards the Circassians was not only criticized but also condemned at least by the Circassians, the Ottomans, and by the British people. Since the sources of this study were based mainly on British sources, it is important to mention the echo that the Russian policy made in the British Parliament. As far as I am able to ascertain, the subject was discussed several times in Parliament, in the summer of 1864. There was discussion about the affairs of Circassia, on 2 June 1864, when one of the M.Ps. asked Earl Russell if he would furnish the House with any information on the subject, especially with respect to what had been done by the Russian government to alleviate the sufferings which they had caused. Earl Russell professed that the details were very painful and feared that great barbarities had been committed.<sup>83</sup>

The statement of Earl Russell somehow reached Gorcakoff who protested about the language he had used to describe for the Russian policy concerning the immigration of Circassians. So it was explained to Gorcakoff that the term "barbarities" used by Earl Russell applied to the great mortality which had been taken place among the immigrating tribes, and not to the conduct of the Russian authorities.<sup>84</sup> Although Lord Napier made these explanations so as to defuse the tension between two countries, similar statements about Russian policy were repeated throughout the summer 1864, for instance, in the session of 26 July 1864, in which H. Seymour deplored the course pursued by Russia which had caused great sufferings and miseries on the Circassians. This view was advocated by Layard who, moreover, expressed his regret that Russia had committed great crimes by her acts of inhuman policy.<sup>85</sup>

The British sources give no further information about the immigrants who arrived in Turkey in 1863-64. However, it appears most likely that the ratio of mortality among the immigrants decreased as time elapsed, that they were accustomed to their new environments and conditions, and that they learned how to stay on their knees with or without the assistance of others around them, in time.

---

83. Hansard Papers, Vol. 175, p. 1947, 2 June 1864.

84. Napier to Earl Russell, 2 June 1864, FO 97/424.

85. Hansard Papers, Vol. 176, p. 2081, 26 July 1864.