

THE LEGITIMACY OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

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Several researches especially about the emergence of the Armenian question have been so far made. They have been concentrated mainly on this matter from political and historical point of view. They have usually dealt with the state of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before and during the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1877-78, the treaty of St. Stephano and that of Berlin in 1878¹. This is the usual course one would attempt to do research on such a topic, but in my opinion there is something missed or ignored to examine. The point necessary to add is that the name of the Armenians has been for the first time inserted in an international treaty of St. Stephano and then that of Berlin in 1878. Both treaties have mentioned that the Porte engages to guarantee the security of the Armenians against the Kurds and the Circassians. All historians dealing with this subject have analyzed the stages which played an important role in the emergence of the Armenian question, but failed to question what the Kurds and Circassians had done to the Armenians, which led especially the Russians in St. Stephano or the delegates in the Berlin Congress to have felt themselves bound to put such articles in these treaties. The articles in the treaties have meant that the Kurds and Circassians committed every

1. D.E. Lee, *Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878*, (London, 1934), pp. 44-124; W.N. Medlicott, *The Congress of Berlin and After, a Diplomatic History of Near Eastern Settlement 1878-1880*, (London, 1938), pp. 101-125 and 290-346; Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, (İstanbul, 1976), pp. 200-273; Cevdet Küçük, *Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Ermeni Meselesinin Ortaya Çıkışı 1878-1897*, (İstanbul, 1986), pp. 1-16; B. Şimşir, *The Genesis of the Armenian Question*, (Ankara, n.d.) and *The British Documents of Ottoman Armenians*, (Ankara, 1982), Vol. I, introduction; Musa Şaşmaz, *British Policy and the Application of Reforms for Armenians in eastern Anatolia 1877-1897*, (Ankara, T.T.K., 1997) in print, pp. 1-21; R.S. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians, Victims of Great Power Diplomacy*, (London, 1987), pp. 27-56; K. Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, (Ankara, 1983), p. 112f., and M.K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire*, (London, 1977), pp. 5-8.

kind of ravages and massacres against the Armenians, and the delegates were therefore expelled to insert a relevant article in each treaty.

The first aim of writing this paper is to analyze what the Kurds and Circassians had or had not done to the Armenians which caused the insertion of an article on behalf of the Armenians and at the expense of the Kurds and Circassians at least morally. The second aim is to reveal the expectations of the armenian clergy submitted to the Foreign Offices of the European Powers and to the Berlin Congress in the form of reform projects for the Armenians.

Let's now explain the details taking place before and during the war in 1877-78 which led to the emergence of the Armenian question. During the İstanbul Conference, the British Foreign Minister, Lord Derby, through his ambassador Eliot at İstanbul, asked the Porte that in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey, the British Government would find it impossible to interfere in defense of the Ottoman Empire. It appears that some other advice of the British Government was given to the Porte to accept the armistice granting the autonomy to Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina².

The newly replaced Sultan Abdulhamid the Second seems to have intended not only to take full advantage of the victory, but also to eliminate the interference of the Great Powers. He did not, therefore, listen to the advice of the British Government and assembled the Parliament and rejected by the unanimous votes of the members the armistice terms imposed on him by the Great Powers³.

The Ottoman-Russian war broke out on 24 April 1877. But before the war, Russia had already concluded a convention with Austria on 1 January by which Serbia and Montenegro declared to be treated as neutral and a supplementary convention on 18 March determined the territorial changes upon which the two Powers would insist if the dissolution of the Ottoman empire followed. The Brit-

2. M.D. Stojanovic, *The Great Powers and the Balkans 1875-1878*, (Cambridge, 1939), p. 95f; R.W. Seton Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, (London, 1935), p. 62; A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918*, (Oxford, 1954), pp. 228-254; William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire 1801-1913*, (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 358-398 and Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa, *Mirat-ı Hakikat*, (İstanbul, 1980), Vol. I, pp. 100-101.

3. Mehmed Nafiz, *Şark Meselesi Bidayet-i Zuhurundan Zamanımıza Kadar*, (İstanbul, 1328), p. 289.

ish government made it clear that it would observe neutrality in case of war as long as the British interests were respected⁴. Those interests were; keeping open the Suez Canal, unoccupation of either İstanbul or Egypt, no changes in the present international regulations of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and the protection of the Iranian Gulf⁵.

The Russian army in cooperation with the Romanian army according to a convention concluded on April 16 between both parties for the defense and maintenance of the integrity of Romania, passed the Romanian soil. They then crossed the Danube without meeting much opposition from the Turks until Plevne where they suffered a serious check from Osman Pasha, but his resistance came to an end on 10 December because of the starvation⁶.

Plevne was the greatest obstacle to the Russian advance to İstanbul. When it was overcome, they were on their way to İstanbul. It alarmed the British government on 13 December to take a strong stand at any cost to defend İstanbul and Dardanelles from the Russian occupation for temporary of merely military purposes. This warning note addressed to the Russian ambassador at London was not met and this obliged the British government to take measures of precaution. even the Queen urged Disraeli to be firm and added that England would never stand to become subservient to Russia⁷. Disraeli threatened to resign in a cabinet meeting on 17 January if his policy, which was to send the British fleet to Dardanelles and İstanbul, was opposed by Derby and Salisbury. Disraeli won his point and the fleet was accordingly ordered to enter Dardanelles on 23 January, but a report received from Layard on 24 January pointed out that the Russians would not include in their peace terms new provisions about the Straits but would leave the position as it had been regulated by the European agreements. The order was then rescinded⁸.

4. *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1866-1919*, (Cambridge, 1923), p. 117.

5. R. Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question 1875-1878*, (Oxford, 1979), p. 281.

6. J.A.R. Marriot, *The eastern Question and Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, (Oxford, 1917), p. 296 and Cevdet Paşa, *Tezakir*, 4 Vols., (Ankara, 1986), Vol. IV, pp. 176-194.

7. William W. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, (New York, 1966), p. 296 and Lady G. Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, 3 Vols., (London, 1921), Vol. II, pp. 162-167.

8. M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923, a Study of International Relations*, (London, 1972), pp. 198.

The British Government was also concerned with the affairs of Eastern Anatolia and therefore sent military attaches to the Ottoman army and also the consuls to Eastern Anatolia to report thence about the state of that country⁹ on hearing of the gloomy news on Armenians being killed. Derby then asked Layard to send Mr. Rassam to Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Van to report about the alleged cruelties of the Kurds against the Christians. Accordingly, Consul Rassam visited Diyarbakir and Van. He found the Christians in Diyarbakir living in a reasonably peaceful life as opposed to those in Van. He complained to the authorities about the situation in which Armenians lived. Both valis of these two provinces considered by him to be excellent, for last 8 or 10 months had no proper troops to enable them to put down the Kurdish excesses. They had to depend merely on the assistance of the local police who sometimes did not pay any attention to the theft and burglary, because they were less paid, so the Kurdish tribes did not conform to the law of conscription and to the rules of the government as a result of which Muslims as well as Christians suffered from the ravages of the Kurds¹⁰.

The military attaches complained about the Ottoman irregulars from time to time entering into the Russian soil and plundering Russian villages. When mentioning these to İsmail Pasha, he punished those severely caught in the act of plundering in the presence of the British representatives¹¹.

The Ottoman army had won some successes in the Caucasus by the command of Ahmed Muhtar Pasha in the summer of 1877, nevertheless from October 2 onwards the Ottoman forces could not resist the Russian attacks and on 18 November Kars was evacuated. The Ottoman troops thereafter began to retreat and were pursued by the Cossacks, and almost all were captured or killed. All the Russian attempts to Batum and Erzurum had been failed. It was only after the signature of the armistice at Edirne that the Ottomans handed over Batum and Erzurum to the Russians¹².

The war in Anatolia has been subject to little discussion among the Great Powers, since they had less interest in Eastern Anatolia than in the Balkans and the capital. However, the Anatolian front is

9. Abbot to Derby, 20 June 1877, Parliamentary Papers (Hereafter cited as Turkey), Turkey, no 1 (1878).

10. Rassam to Layard, 15 October 1877, FO 78/2591.

11. Layard to Derby, 29 August 1877, FO 78/2584.

12. Mehmed Nafiz, *Şark Meselesi*, pp. 298-299 and H. Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917*, (New York, 1967), pp. 456.

highly significant in terms of explaining, in detail, the position and the activities of the Armenians and Kurds during the war, which led to the emergence of the Armenian question.

But, firstly, the Kurds in Iran and Eastern Anatolia, when the defeat of the Ottoman army began in Anatolian and the Balkan fronts, tried to take advantage of the inefficiency of the Ottoman authority in the area. They made preparations to assemble an army for the purpose of plundering the Christian villages on both sides of the border. Mainly the Iranian Kurds in late June under the chief of Sheyh Celaleddin from Iran crossed the border and committed great excesses upon the inhabitants, Muslims and Christians in Van province. Even he threatened Van, so the Vali Hasan Pasha had to secure his own safety by keeping secret and changing constantly the place he slept in¹³. According to information the Patriarch received 25 villages were pillaged by these Kurds around Van. On being heard the Porte ordered a sufficient number of troops to be sent for the protection of the population and to put an end to the Kurdish excesses¹⁴. Nevertheless, they continued to plunder, while they were on their way back to Iran, around Elbag 20 villages of the Armenians and of the Nestorians. The Ottoman General Consul in Tebriz accused the Iranian government of allowing its Kurds to act in such a manner¹⁵. There were also abuses of the Ottoman Kurds (mainly those from Shikak Tribes), who once plundered villages on the road from Van to Bayazid without distinction of the villages of whether they were Muslim or Christian. They robbed the people of their belongings¹⁶.

Again, another Kurdish attack took place in Bayazid. This time they were not the Iranian Kurds, but the irregular Kurds in the army killing in that district the noncombatants both Muslims and Christians, as was reported by a Protestant Armenian, several Turks of Bayazid took into their houses many Christians to protect them from the fury of the Kurds. Some of the Muslims were also among the victims of the Kurds. As the latter left the town the Christians were escorted by the Muslims to Faik Pasha's camp, where they were looked after and cared for¹⁷. Finally the Ottoman troops brought up their cannon and demolished the barracks of these irreg-

13. Layard to Derby, 10 July 1877, FO 78/2576.

14. Layard to Derby, 4 July 1877, FO 78/2576.

15. Abboy to Derby, 11 July 1877, Turkey, no 1 (1878).

16. Zohrap to Derby, 12 August 1877 FO 195/1140.

17. Zohrap to Derby, 21 August 1877, FO 195/1140.

ular Kurds by killing 36 of them. The remaining Kurds in the army who came from Van were disarmed and dismissed to their country¹⁸. These were the only information one could gather about the Kurdish excesses during the war. Even the book, namely "**Genotsid Armiyan v Osmanskoy Imperii**" written by an Armenian, lists only two documents regarding to the Armenian 'genocide' for the years 1877 and 1878. It should be doubted whether these acts of the Kurds were justifiable with the fine to be imposed on the Kurds through the treaties of St. Stephano and of Berlin¹⁹.

The Circassian and other Caucasian people had immigrated to the Ottoman lands from 1863 to 1867. They were settled in the Balkans and in Western Anatolia as well as in Cyprus. according to a convention signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire it was agreed that they should be settled at such a distance from boundary between two countries as would preclude them from attempting any disorders affecting Russian frontier. In consequence almost all Circassians were located in districts to the west of Sivas. So one could not often find the settlement of Circassians in the east of Sivas as many as they could be able to cause such a great outcry among the Armenians and the Europeans²⁰. As indicated above, some Kurdish irregulars acted irresponsibly and committed ravages and excesses against the Armenians and Muslims equally. The Ottoman government acted quickly to stop them. The Armenians did however retaliate in several ways. The ravages of the Armenians were not taken into account, but only those of the Kurds. It was therefore unfair to punish the Kurds but not the Armenians. It is also groundless that the Russians as well as other European Powers inserted an article in the treaties of St. Stephano and Berlin only taking into account the ravages of the Kurds and the Circassians. As far as the British documents were concerned, the Circassians did nothing wrong, or were able to do anything wrong because they were far from the places populated by the Armenians and created no disturbances against the Armenians.

During the war the local Armenians and Muslims suffered from the Kurds as well as from the cruelties of the Russians. The Armenians did not stay idle. The Muslims too suffered equally

18. Zohrap to Derby, 2 July 187, FO 194/1140 and also Layard to Derby, 10 August 1877, FO 78/2580.

19. M.G. Nersisyana, *Genotsid Armiyan v Osmanskoy Imperii, Sbornik, Dokumentov i Materialov*, (Erevan, 1982), pp. 4-5.

20. For it, see Taylor to Lord Lyons, no 26, 5 August 1867, FO 97/424.

from the Armenians. The Armenian General Melikoff in the Russian army assembled the leading people of the occupied villages and asked them to take refuge under the shelter of the Czar²¹. Those refusing to collaborate with the Russians were either cut down or treated badly by the Russian irregulars. The Russians also forced the inhabitants on their retreat to accompany with them. The inhabitants of Uchkilise (Echmiyazin) were ill-treated on refusing to accompany with the Russians on their retreat. The Archimandrite of Uchkilise was garroted and carried off by the Russians, because he had refused to call upon the Armenians to rise against the Sultan; the Armenian monastery was burnt, and a valuable collection of Armenian ecclesiastical manuscripts belonging to it removed. On hearing this news the Patriarch manifested that these outrages made the Armenians, more than ever, indisposed to join and sympathize with Russia²².

The forcibly carried off Armenians was the main topic that occupied the diplomatic correspondence between Britain, the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Especially, when an Armenian escape from the Russian territory brought the news that the Armenians who were forced to abandon their homes were reduced to a state of destitution and obliged to beg their livelihood, it attracted the attention of Britain that Derby tried to get them repatriated to their Ottoman homelands through the representation of his ambassador at St. Petersburg. He, however, seems to have been unsuccessful in obtaining their repatriation.

Even the Ottoman General attempted to solve this problem by asking the British military attaches to act as a mediator between him and the Russian General Dergusakoff on behalf of the oppressed Christians. The Russian General nevertheless failed to meet the demand, because he considered it to be over his jurisdiction. The able-bodied and young men of the forcibly taken away Christians from the Ottoman territory were used as a barricade to protect the Russian villages from the Ottoman raids. The great number of them were left to starve²³.

The Armenians, in general, when the war broke out, supported the Ottoman army to succeed and were not sympathized with the

21. H.M. Hozier, *The Russo-Turkish War: Including an Account of the Rise and the Decline of the Ottoman Power and the Armenian Question*, (London, n.d.), pp. 828.

22. Layard to Derby, 24 July 1877, FO 78/2578.

23. Layard to Derby, 21 September 1877, FO 78/2586.

Russians though the Russians claimed that they were fighting in the name of the oppressed Christians under the Ottoman rule. However, it found no echo amongst the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, because they apparently enjoyed their life in a better position than their Muslim companions. In order to show the Armenian support for the Ottoman success, an incident occurred in front of an English special correspondent attached to the staff of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha. Charles Williams described the reaction of an Armenian on his hearing of the success of the Ottoman army in September 1877 that "*Among the radiant faces near the Mushir's tent was none brighter than that of my Armenian servant. He was throwing up his fez and dancing with delight. I said to him, How is this, Christopher, when you are one of the oppressed race that the Russians are seeking to deliver'. He did not understand. Then I asked him if he did not want the Russians to succeed. He replied that the Russians were as bad as bad could be*"²⁴. There is no doubt that this was the feeling of an ordinary Armenian about the Russians. One of the principal grounds of their dislike to Czar was the certainty of having to serve as soldiers in the Russian army. They were moreover aware that they were living more humanly than their brethren in the other side of the border.

The above sentiment of the ordinary Armenian prevailed also among the Armenian clergy and intellectuals in İstanbul. The Ottoman government was so popular that the Armenian Patriarch expressed several times his loyalty to the Sultan. In answer to an appeal from the Sultan concerning the enlistment of the Christians in the civic guard, the general assembly of the Armenian community under the presidency of the Patriarch met on 7 December, 1877, and decided unanimously to enroll themselves in the civic guard for the protection of the country²⁵. The Patriarch of the Catholic Armenians, Hassoun, also mentioned his thanks to the Porte and especially Muhtar Pasha for the protection of the Armenians against the Kurds. He further stated that wherever the regular troops were themselves present, the disorders ceased, and the acts of the Kurds were repressed. The large proportion of the animals carried off by the Kurds were recovered and restored to their Armenian owners

24. Charles Williams, *The Armenian Campaign, a Diary of the Campaign of 1877 in Armenia and Kurdistan*, (London, 1878), pp. 283 and D.E. Lee, *Great Britain and Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878*, pp. 42-43.

25. Layard to Derby, no 1459, 8 December 1877, FO 78/2593; Bilal Şimşir, *The Genesis of the Armenian Question*, pp. 7 and *British Document on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. I, pp. XV.

thanks to the attempts of the Ottoman military authorities. He finally proclaimed to Layard that when the time came he would serve the Ottoman government²⁶.

This Armenian policy continued until Plevne was fallen, and Kars, Bayazid, Ardahan and some part of the Erzurum province were captured by the Russians. The same Armenian assembly with a large number of Armenian clergy then reversed the decision as against the votes they had taken ten days ago as to the enrollment of the Christians in the civic guard²⁷.

This marked the beginning of a new era for the Armenians abandoning their traditional policy of maintaining friendly relations with the Ottoman government and the Muslims, and replacing it by hatred towards the Muslims and their institutions. They afterwards turned their eyes to the foreign Powers, viz., Russia and Britain, with the hope that they would be assisted in their future endeavors to found their national state.

The change of policy at once met with an immense echo leading some of the Armenians to collaborate with the Russians in the occupied provinces of Anatolia, and others to quit the Ottoman territory to join in the Russian army so as to fight against the Ottoman forces. There were the Russian officers of Armenian origin, such as Major Kamsaragan, Generals Loris Melikoff, Der Ghougasoff and Lazaroff²⁸, who encouraged the local Armenians to enter Russian service and played a certain role in obtaining their collaboration. General Lazaroff at Kars and Major Kamsaragan, the late Acting Russian Consul in Erzurum holding the post of Chief of Police in Erzurum during the Russian occupation, together with his assistant, Lieutenant Nicolosoff, also an Armenian, enlisted several Armenians into the local police who took advantage of the opportunity to abuse and maltreat the Muslims²⁹.

The Armenians sometimes became so overbearing to the Muslims, and the Russians paid so little attention to the complaints of the latter that they took up arms and revolted in Kars against the cruelty and oppression. Loris Melikoff proceeded with a number of

26. Layard to Derby, 27 August 1877 FO 78/2584.

27. Layard to Derby, 18 August 1877, FO 78/2594.

28. Serkis Atamian, *The Armenian Community, the Historical Development of a Social and Ideological Conflict*, (New York, 1955), pp. 64.

29. Trotter to Salisbury, 13 November 1878, FO 195/1211.

troops to put down the revolt in January 1878³⁰. When the time came for the withdrawal of the Russian troops, Layard realizing that the state of affairs was so critical in Eastern Anatolia that the Muslims might revenge themselves on the Armenians, urgently asked Salisbury to send 'a good consul' to Erzurum province without loss of time³¹.

While the Russians removed every obstacle to march into the Ottoman capital, Server Pasha, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, on 12 December, asked Musurus Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador in London, for mediation³², to appeal to the Great Powers. The German emperor declined to accede to the Sultan's request for mediation³³. The British government on 24 December expressed its willingness to mediate after the urgent representation was made by the Porte and the desire expressed by the Sultan for peace. Derby accordingly asked Layard whether or not the Sultan was really disposed that such an inquiry should be made by Britain³⁴. Layard in reply on 25 December reported the Grand Vizier's words that the Porte had so far received no answers to his appeals to the Powers for their mediation³⁵. The Grand Vizier, therefore, signified the readiness to ask for peace with the mediation of the British government. The Grand Vizier then applied to the Russian government that the Porte wished to see the war stopped. Prince Gortchakoff in his reply said that "*Russia desired nothing better than to arrive at peace*" and added that "*for this purpose the Porte should address itself to the Russian imperial commanders-in chief in Europe and Asia, who will state the conditions of the armistice*"³⁶. The Russians were simply wasting time to extend their occupation as much as possible and on 10 January the Ottoman commanders addressed themselves to the Russian Generals in Roumelia, who informed them in reply that they did know nothing of an armistice³⁷. The Sultan, therefore, sent a telegram to the Russian Emperor on 15 January and expressed his desire for the termination of the war. The emperor replied that he fully participated in the Sultan's regrets for the war, and for this reason he stated that he charged the Grand Duke Nicholas with the negotiations of an armistice and of the conditions

30. Biliotti to Derby, 9 January 1878, FO 195/1187.

31. Layard to Salisbury, tel, 15 September 1878, FO 881/3776.

32. Server Pasha to Musurus Pasha, tel, 12 December 1877, Turkey, no 2 (1878).

33. Odo Russell to Derby, 16 December 1877, Turkey, no 2 (1878).

34. Derby to Layard, 24 December 1877, Turkey, no 2 (1878).

35. Layard to Derby, tel, 25 December 1877, Turkey, no 2 (1878).

36. Loftuus to Derby, tel, 29 December 1877, Turkey, no 2 (1878).

37. Derby to Loftus, 10 January 1878, Turke, no 2 (1878).

of peace, but added that he could not consent to the suspension of the military operations during the negotiations³⁸. It meant that the Russians had no aim of ending the war under these circumstances, but that they intended to expand their occupation as far as Adrianople, Dardanelles and probably İstanbul.

In the meantime the news were coming into the British Foreign Office that Adrianople and Gallipoli were on the brink of the Russian occupation³⁹. Towards the end of January, Adrianople was fallen into the Russian hand and the advance of the Russians upon Chatalcha increased number of fugitives and confusion and panic in İstanbul⁴⁰.

The alarming march of the Russian army to İstanbul and Gallipoli compelled the British government to send her fleet to İstanbul on 25 January, but having learnt that the Porte had accepted the conditions of peace proposed by Russia, immediately ordered it's fleet to return to Besika Bay⁴¹. The basis of peace then became known to Britain. according to the armistice terms, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro became independent, and an autonomous administration was sufficiently guaranteed to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ottoman Empire and Russia were agreed to come to separate understanding as to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus⁴². These terms were accepted by the Porte and the armistice was signed in Adrianople on 31 January⁴³.

Though the armistice was reached, the Russian advance continued in the first week of February. The Queen pressed strongly for a determined opposition to Russia even if this led to war. The Cabinet decided on 8 February to send up the fleet from Besika Bay to İstanbul. The refusal of the Porte to grant a firman for its passage, delayed its movement for several hours. Admiral Hornby in command of the fleet returned with his ships to Besika Bay. The trouble was that the Sultan was warned by the Russians that if the British fleet came up, they would occupy the capital. The Sultan was, therefore, anxious to avoid the appearance of the fleet. However, the definite orders were sent on 13 February to the Admiral to enter the Straits with or without the approval of the Sultan. The fleet

38. Loftus to Derby, tel, 15 October 1877, Turkey, no 3 (1878).

39. Layard to Derby, tel, 17 and 21 January 1878, FO 78/424/66.

40. Layard to Derby, tel, 29 January 1878, Turkey, no 5 (1878).

41. Server Pasha to Musurus Pasha, tel, 27 January 1878, Turkey, no 1 (1878).

42. Layard to Derby, tel, 1 February 1878, FO 882/3598. The terms of the armistice were also published in *The Times* of 9 February, 1878.

43. Layard to Derby, tel, 31 January 1878, Turkey, no 7 (1878).

thereafter reached the Golden Horn, thence to Mudania⁴⁴. The Russians did not advance beyond the town of St. Stephano.

The treaty of St. Stephano was signed on 3 March⁴⁵, according to the treaty, it included, in Europe, the foundation of a greater Bulgaria, the recognition of the integrity of Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania, the introduction of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it also provided, in Anatolia, the acquisition by Russia of Kars, Ardahan and Batum.

The article 16 of the treaty was related to the Armenians that "*As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupied in Armenia and which is to be restored to Turkey might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries the Porte engages to carry into effect without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassian*".

For the first time the name of the Armenians in history was cited in an international treaty. It is interesting to note that when the peace terms of the armistice of Adrianople were looked through it can simply be noticed that there is no term mentioned in the armistice as to the Armenians, but in the treaty.

The traditional British policy in the second half of the 19th century based on the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire undoubtedly had a link with the British interests in India. If Russia possessed the great fortresses of eastern Anatolia it would give Russia such advantages in any future war with Turkey or Iran and the virtual command of the whole of Western Asia. In such a situation, the British prestige in Central Asia and India would be badly shaken. It was, therefore, considered essential for Britain to keep the complete command of the valleys of Tigris and Euphrates in the hands of the Porte. If these valleys were held by Russia this area was no longer considered secure to Britain.

44. E. Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, (London, 1891), Vol. IV, no 515 and D.E. Lee, "The Proposed Mediterranean League of 1878", *Journal of Modern History*, 3 (1931), p. 39.

45. For the treaty of St. Stephano, Layard to Derby, 6 March 1878, FO 424/68; Count Schouvaloff to Derby, 23 March 1878, Turkey, no 22 (1878); *Accounts and Papers*, 38, 1878, LXXXIII, 4124; Anderson, *Eastern Question*, pp. 200-201; Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the eastern Question, pp. 315 and Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, Vol. II, pp. 195-197.

As soon as the terms of the treaty of St. Stephano were communicated to the Powers at the end of March it was forthwith encountered with the protest of Britain. The latter afterwards tried to come to an agreement with Austria and Italy to prevent Russia winning the great advantage of a military occupation before the meeting of the European conference, and to obtain for Britain the aid and support of one or more of the Great Powers in averting a final settlement rendering Russia a commanding influence in the East. When Depretis and his government fell, Italy was compelled temporarily to withdraw from the diplomatic negotiations. The project was, therefore, dropped without further comment⁴⁶.

Britain, in April, on the one hand, aimed at coming to a concurrence with Russia on the treaty terms before the conference, on the other called the Indian troops to Malta, if necessary, into action in the Balkans or Anatolia. The British government insisted on Russia leaving a considerable territory to the Ottoman Empire as would place her not at the Russia's mercy and would also give her the control of İstanbul, the Black Sea and the route through Mesopotamia to the Iranian Gulf. It was furthermore found necessary that Russia had to abandon the plan of establishing a big Bulgaria, and to relinquish or neutralize her conquest in Anatolia in some other ways. Russia was indeed willing to sacrifice some or her gains in Europe, but she was very stiff about Kars and Batum⁴⁷. The agreement was signed with Russia on 30 May on the terms that Russia accepted the British plan decreasing the Russian influence in Europe and making the big Bulgaria smaller. As for the terms relating to Anatolia it seems that Britain intentionally conceded to Russia to possess Kars, Ardahan and Batum, which would compel the Porte to sign the Cyprus Convention. Otherwise, the Porte might not sign it.

As soon as the terms of the Cyprus Convention came to the agenda of the British Government not later than 11 May, the latter pressed the Porte to do all in its power to satisfy the Armenians so that they would not seek the protection of Russia. Layard for this purpose asked Sadık Pasha, the Grand Vizier, to send a special Commissioner, Ali Şefik Beg, to Eastern Anatolia to examine and redress the grievances of the Armenians⁴⁸.

46. Lee, *Proposed Mediterranean League*, pp. 42-43.

47. W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, (London, 1929), 6 Vols., Vol. II, pp. 1160-61.

48. Layard to Derby, 27 August 1877, FO 78/2584.

The correspondence were going on between Queen, Disraeli and Layard for some time past as to the British plan to use Cyprus as a British base to secure the route to India, keep an eye on the Straits and İstanbul, prevent further Russian advance into Anatolia, and protect Egypt from any occupation. Cyprus was accordingly chosen from the possibilities of Crete, Lemnos, Alexandretta, Scanderoon, Haifa and Accre⁴⁹.

The British Cabinet gave its approval on May 16 to the draft agreement. The British government prepared a proposal to be sent to Layard for the presentation to the Porte. The dispatch of this proposal to Layard was, however, postponed until May 30⁵⁰. The new proposal was set out, defining the conditions necessary for the defense of Asiatic territories against further Russian aggression. These conditions were that Britain was to be assured of the intention of the Porte to introduce the necessary reforms into the provinces inhabited by the Christians⁵¹, the proposal, in particular, mentioned that Britain had a right to insist on satisfactory arrangements for the purposes, and that Cyprus would be occupied by Britain in order to enable her efficiently to carry out the proposed engagement although the territory would still continue to be part of the Ottoman Empire. The only administration and occupation of the Island would be assigned to Britain in return for the defense of the Sultan's Asiatic frontier against Russia, should Russia keep Kars, Ardahan and Batum, or any of those places. The British government knew, as the Ottomans did not, that Russia would keep them. The Porte was thus deceived by Britain which secretly approved of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of the Russian occupation of the provinces in Europe and Asia⁵².

Yet, the Sultan Abdulhamid had no other choice but to accept the British proposal, although he feared that Britain could in future use it as a pretext to get involved in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. However it seems to him more important to continue the existence of the Empire counted on the support and friendship

49. D.E. Lee, "Memorandum Concerning Cyprus 1878", *Journal of Modern History*, 3 (1931), pp. 238-240.

50. Nazım Ziya, *Kıbrıs'ın İngiltere'ye Geçışı ve Adada Kurulan İngiliz İdaresi*, (Ankara, 1975), pp. 34.

51. Salisbury to Layard, 10 May 1878, Turkey, no 36 (1878).

52. For the criticism of the British policy in 1878, see R.H. Davison, "The Ottoman Empire and the Congress of Berlin", *Der Berliner Kongress von 1878*, Edited by Melville, R. & H.J. Schroder, (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 205-223.

of Britain in the forthcoming Congress, so he agreed to sign the proposal of the Cyprus Convention of June 4⁵³.

Britain, before the Congress, entered into secret agreements not only with the Ottoman Empire, but also with Russia on 30 May and with Austria on 6 June. She played triple standards by means of supporting one against another at the expense of the Ottoman territory. So it is pretty clear that the shape of the Ottoman Empire was determined with her secret agreements before the Congress in a sense ratifying the British demands in return for the Ottoman lands.

The Congress of Berlin began in this atmosphere on 13 June to discuss the terms of the preliminary treaty. The plenipotentiaries of the seven European Powers attended the Congress presided over by Bismarck. Britain was represented by Earl of Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury and Lord Odo Russell. Among the plenipotentiaries for the Ottoman Empire were Caratheodory Pasha, Mehmed Ali Pasha and Sadullah Beg⁵⁴. It is, perhaps, interesting to note that the Ottoman plenipotentiaries in the Congress did not know anything about the Cyprus Convention until 3 July. The Great Powers were mainly engaged in discussing the articles concerning European territories of the Ottoman Empire which were more important to them than those relating to Anatolia. That is why they spared most of their time in the Congress to the discussion of these articles relating to the European territories. The article 16 of the treaty of St. Stephano was begun to negotiate on the 12th protocol of the meeting on 4 July by the proposal of Salisbury. He suggested that he would be prepared to accept the last three lines of the article 16, which were related to the ameliorations and reforms to be granted to the Armenians, provided that the Congress agreed to the suppression of the three lines, which would appear to make the evacuation of the Russian troops dependent on the concession of the reforms by the Porte. Otherwise, he would propose ultimately a special article for the Armenians.

Count Schouvaloff, without insisting on a discussion for which he seems not to have been prepared, expressed his fear that the

53. For the Cyprus Convention, see Layard to Salisbury, 5 June 1878, Turkey, no 36 (1878) and Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, Vol. IV, no 524 and Gabriel Efendi Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, (Paris, 1897-1903), Vol. III, pp. 522-525.

54. Reşat Ekrem, *Osmanlı Muahedeleri ve Kapitülasyonlar 1300-1920*, (İstanbul, 1934), pp. 224.

evacuation of the Russian troops would be the signal for serious disturbances if it took place before the establishment of the promised reforms, and suggested all discussion about the question of Armenia to adjourn until the Congress took this question more entirely into consideration⁵⁵. His proposal was accepted and the modification of the article about the Armenians was adjourned to one of the next meetings.

Again, on 6 July, by a proposal of Salisbury distributed to the plenipotentiaries, he asked for the suppression of the first lines of the article 16 up to the word "*countries*", that was "*As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupied in Armenia and which was to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries*", and would wish at the end to add the following phrase: "*She will come to an ulterior agreement with the six other Signatory Powers as to the scope of this agreement, and the measures necessary to put it into execution*". He further added that the interest of the Armenians ought to be secured, and stated that the object of his proposal would hold out to them hopes of immediate ameliorations simultaneously with future progress.

Caratheodory Pasha, while admitting that the unsubjected tribes had caused serious disorders, but insisted that the Porte had taken measures to put an end to them immediately on being informed thereof. He expressed his desire that the credit should be given to the Porte for the measures to be adopted, and that the following words should be added to the paragraph: "*The Porte will communicate to the six Powers the result of the measures which have already been taken in that respect*". This addition, while satisfying the Ottoman Government would complete the sense of the text presented by Salisbury. Schouvaloff proclaimed that he preferred Salisbury's proposal, but considered useless to mention the measures taken by the Porte but not put into execution. The President Bismarck then observed that it was difficult to execute repressive measures among the independent tribes, and raised doubts as to the practical efficacy of the article proposed by Salisbury. Caratheodo-

55. Salisbury to Secretary Cross (The 12th Meeting of the Congress), 4 July 1878, FO 78/2899 also in FO 97/526 and *Correspondence Relating to the Congress at Berlin with the Protocols of the Congress*, Turkey, no 39 (1878), pp. 138-140 also in Gabriel Efendi Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, Vol. V, pp. 1-175.

ry Pasha pressed for the inclusion of the addition. However, Salisbury asked to adjourn the discussion in order to make some modifications in the original text⁵⁶.

The article 16 of St. Stephano on 8 July was put into the final shape after the ulterior discussions between the British and Ottoman plenipotentiaries about the wording of this article. They both appear to have concerted the draft which was also assented by the Congress⁵⁷. "*The Porte engages to realize, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians. She will periodically render account of the measures taken with this intent to the Powers, who will supersede them*"⁵⁸.

This article satisfied neither the Armenian delegation nor the Ottoman government, but only the British government. The article showed that Britain was interested neither in the Armenians nor in the Ottomans in the name of friendship, but only in the territory they lived.

The differences between the article 16 of St. Stephano and the article 61 of the Berlin Congress were that the supervision over the implementation of the reforms was taken away from Russia and given to the Signatory Powers, in particular, Britain because of her engagement in the Cyprus Convention, that the evacuation of the Russian army from the occupied lands in the article 16 of St. Stephano was subjected to the execution of the reforms, but in the article 61 of the Berlin Congress it was the opposite one that the beginning of the execution of reforms was made liable to the withdrawal of the Russian army, and that the article 61 also led the Armenians to leave the Russian protection and seek that of the other European Powers especially Britain.

Broadly speaking, the terms of the treaty of Berlin were precisely in line with the previous arrangements made between Britain and Russia, and also between Britain and Austria. The Ottoman Empire gained some territory in Eastern Roumelia, the valley of

56. Salisbury to Secretary Cross (The 14th Meeting of the Congress), 10 July 1878, FO 97/526.

57. Salisbury to Secretary Cross (The 15th Meeting of the Congress), 13 July 1878, FO 97/526.

58. *Mecmua-i Muahedat*, (İstanbul, 1289), Vol. V. s. 139.

Eleshkird and the town of Bayazid, and lost Cyprus, Egypt, Tunisia, Kars, Ardahan and Batum to the other Powers. Batum became a free port for the interest and use of the Powers. Despite all these losses on the part of the Ottoman Empire, the Signatory Powers would furthermore use in future the terms of the treaty of Berlin as a means of interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

One of the results of the treaty of Berlin was the emergence of the Armenian question to be lasted until the end of the Ottoman Empire. But, before giving details, one should examine the awakening of the nationalist movement in the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. The first national activities began to emerge in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, since it was nearer to Western Europe and was easily affected by the ideological changes taking place in Western Europe where many students had been sent to study. Following the completion they returned to their country. They then began to imitate and put into practice of what they had learnt and brought from Western Europe. One of the ideology they had transferred was undoubtedly the idea of nationalism which, later on, brought about in the Balkans the incidents and uprisings to overthrow the Ottoman supremacy and replace it by their own national supremacy. Revolts and uprisings in the Balkans in the 19th century followed one after another as a result of these movements. Some of the non-Muslim *millet*s in the Balkans gained their independence and some made a considerable progress for it until the war in 1877.

As for the comparison of the Christians in the Balkans with the Armenians, it presented a totally different picture that the Christians in the Balkans stood more favorably than the Armenians about the establishment of their own states. The population of the non-Muslim *millet*s in the Balkans in general exceeded that of the Muslims in number, so it gave the non-Muslims, to some extent, a right to establish their own national state, but the situation in eastern Anatolia was unlike those in the Balkans, since the population of the Armenians in the provinces over which they wished to found an Armenian State, comprised only one fifth on official Ottoman figures and one third on British consular estimates of the total population of the Eastern provinces. It was, therefore, considered by the Great Powers, especially, Great Britain that the establishment of an Armenian State over the majority of the Muslims would bring the catastrophic results to both Muslims and Armenians.

The most important event causing the emergence of the Armenian question was the Ottoman-Russian war. The Armenians, having seen the terms of Adrianople Armistice that almost provided the Balkan Christians in what they wished to achieve, tended to enter into a secret communication with Russia. For this purpose he sent three Armenian delegates, Kevork Ruscuklian, Ohannes Nuri-an and Stephan Arslanian, to the Grand Duke Nicholas, the commander of the Russian army and to the General Ignatiev, the former Russian Ambassador at Istanbul. They mentioned the allegiance of the Ottoman Armenians to the Czar and asked him for the Russian favor. The Grand Duke Nicholas and Ignatiev in return pledged that the treaty in preparation would include a clause concerning the Armenians⁵⁹. Thus, the article 16 of St. Stephano was created to guarantee the security of the Armenians against the Kurds and Circassians.

The Armenians, knowing that Russia had stipulated an article in the preliminaries of peace for the administrative reforms in Armenia, were greatly irritated against the Patriarch having put Russia against them by giving his support to the Ottoman government and they therefore threatened to stone him. By the Russian occupation of Eastern Anatolia a large number of Ottoman Armenians had been transferred to Russian rule and the grant of autonomous government to be given to the Christian population of the Balkans according to the treaty of St. Stephano led them to demand the same privilege. For this purpose the Armenians then began to claim to be placed upon the same footing as the Balkan Christians when hearing that the terms of St. Stephano were to be renegotiated. The Armenian Patriarch was quick to threaten Layard if they could not obtain what they asked through the intervention of Europe, he asserted that they would place themselves completely in the hands of Russia, and even prefer annexation to her to remaining under Ottoman rule. So he hoped that the demands of the Armenians for an autonomous government would be taken into favorable consideration of the Congress, and that Europe would insist on the formation of a self-governing Armenian province.

When Layard asked the Patriarch what he understood by '*Armenia*', and what part of Anatolia he considered ought to be included in the autonomous province. He replied that it should contain the provinces of Van and Sivas, the greater part of the province of Diy-

59. Uras, *Tarihçe Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, pp. 200-217.

arbakir and the ancient kingdom of Cilicia. Layard then pointed out to the Patriarch that what he asked was indeed a large slice out of the territories remaining to the Sultan in Anatolia and that in these provinces a very large majority of the population consisted of Muslims. The Patriarch did not deny that such was the case; but he maintained that the Muslims themselves were greatly dissatisfied with the rule of the Porte and would willingly accept a Christian government which would afford them protection for their lives and property. However, Layard told the Patriarch that he did not think it likely that the Congress would entertain so vast a project as mentioned above. Then, the Patriarch warned Layard that if the Congress did not listen to the Armenian demands, the Armenians in the Eastern provinces would rise, within a short time, against the Ottoman rule. He finally pointed out that his people were determined no longer to submit to the Ottoman rule, and that he could not oppose himself to their wishes⁶⁰. The Patriarch like most of the Armenians believed that such an autonomous state as the *Armenia* of the Patriarch was not in a position to preserve even its semi-independence since a state whose rulers represented the minority was not likely to last for a long time. Even if the majority, the Muslim population, allowed the Armenians to found their national state, the Russians from the north and the Muslims from the west would not give them any chance to exist. In other words, Armenia would be annexed by either Russia or the Ottoman Empire.

Although such was the case, both the Patriarch, and the leading members of the Armenian community expected that Armenia could be founded through the direct intervention of the Great Powers. So they were engaged in framing a constitution or *reglement organique*, for the new Armenian *autonomous province*, which they intended to submit to the Congress, and which they expected Britain would support.

The right of giving self-government to the Christians in the Balkans caused the Armenians to demand the same privileges for themselves in Anatolia. They clearly believed that they saw no difficulty in constructing an Armenian State, but admitted that there might be some objections to including Cilicia within it. Layard did not give much encouragement to the scheme for the restoration of the ancient Kingdom of Tigranes and to a constitution for it⁶¹.

60. Layard to Derby, 18 March 1878, no 365, FO 78/2782.

61. Layard to Derby, Confidential, 20 March 1878, no 383, FO 78/2782.

Then, the Patriarch frequently sent Salisbury letters and memorandums, in one of which he, on 13 April, complained about the position of the Armenians still inferior to the Muslims⁶². In short, he implied that the Armenians could no longer coexist with the Muslims in the present situation on two grounds that the bigoted and reactionary Muslims from the Balkans were forced to settle down in Anatolia bringing with them their hatred and vindictiveness against the Christians, and that the Armenians living in the provinces close to Russia would see their compatriots in the territories ceded to Russia enjoying a new life under a Christian administration, and would find their own situation intolerable. The Armenian Patriarch, therefore, requested Salisbury to back the Armenian project for an independent Armenian administration.

The reasons put forward to finding a ground for the establishment of an autonomous Armenian province by the help of the European Powers were not based on a historical fact but a political pretext. It is, however, true that when the Muslims were deported during the war, over half a million of them were exterminated by the administrators and soldiers of the Christian governments. No one including Gladstone, the champion of the oppressed people, did say anything to the Russians, Serbians and the Bulgarians, on humanitarian ground, to stop the excesses committed against the local Muslims of the Balkans despite the constant appeals to the Great Powers of the Porte. The Muslim refugees may naturally have felt hatred to the Christians, but they would not be allowed by the Powers to settle down to the east side of Sivas province as observed in the exodus of the Circassians and Abhazas in 1863-67.

Though Nerses claimed that the Ottoman Armenians would be envious of their brothers under Russian control, such was not indeed the case, because, only three weeks after the Patriarch sent his memorandum to Salisbury, the Russians occupied the town of Livan in Batum. The Armenian community in that town dispatched telegrams to the foreign consuls in Trabzon saying that "*The Russians soldiers and their officers tread under foot the honor of our families; there being no longer any security for life, property, and honor, we are bewildered. If, in the name of Christianity, you want to interfere on our behalf, save us from Russian oppression. Having shut up our houses, abandoned our country, our landed and other property, we proceed with our children and wives to other parts of*

62. Nerses to Salisbury, Memorandum, 13 April 1878, FO 424/70.

the Ottoman dominions. It being beyond doubt that similar acts can not be tolerated by any nation"⁶³.

Nerses himself constantly urging Layard to take energetic steps for the support of the Armenian cause, found it worthy of making campaign in the European capitals to put the Armenian sympathizers into action. So, he decided to send a deputation consisting of the ex-Armenian Patriarch Khrimian, Horen Narbey, Minez Ceraz and Istephan to the European capitals. They visited St. Petersburg, Rome, Paris, London and Berlin. They were well-received and listened to in the Foreign Offices of the Powers which promised to support the Armenian cause in the Congress.

Horen Narbey visited the Czar Alexander II in the middle of March and presented to him a project which set out the establishment of an autonomous Armenian province similar to that in Lebanon. Horen Narbey having received the support of the Czar and the Russian Government came to join the rest of the Armenian deputation just before the Congress in Berlin. The members of the deputation under the presidency of Khrimian on 8 April to plead the Armenian cause with the French government visited the French Foreign Minister, M. Waddington, who treated him with kindness and respect, and who assured him, in general terms of the sympathy of the French Government with the Armenians. Waddington, however, pointed out to Khrimian that Armenia was beyond the reach of the Western Powers, and suggested bringing forward some definite and practical plan for the better government of their country. The following day Khrimian and Nubar Pasha, the ex-Minister of the Khedive of Egypt came to see the British ambassador at Paris to talk about the Armenian cause, but Khrimian failed to achieve anything in Paris. The Armenian deputation then left Paris on 10 April for London⁶⁴.

The Times reported, on 13 April, the arrival of the ex-Patriarch Khrimian at Charring Cross Station on 11 April. He was received by some of the leading members of the Armenian community in London. During their stay in Britain they held a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury to plead their cause⁶⁵. It is not known whether the Archbishop promised to give his support for it. Khrimian may have also had a meeting with the British Foreign Minister,

63. Biliotti to Salisbury, 7 May 1878, FO 195/1187.

64. Lyons to Salisbury, 9 April 1878, no 338, FO 881/3625.

65. *The Times* of 13 April 1878.

but there is no trace of such meeting taken place between them. However, what is certainly known is that while Khrimian in London he presented to Salisbury an administrative project for the foundation of *an autonomous Armenian province*, a copy of which can be found in the Public Record Office of Britain⁶⁶. He had also brought some other reports from İstanbul as to the Kurdish atrocities to be given to the British Foreign Office. We do not know if they were also submitted to the Foreign Office. Khrimian also got in touch with the leading Armenians of London and Manchester to which they had immigrated from Anatolia for commercial reasons. He mainly stayed at the Armenian Association at Lancaster Gate from which he addressed his letters to the British Foreign Office and to the other Armenians in other cities of Britain for instance in Manchester there was Karakin Papazian, the president of the Armenian Committee, who was asked by the Patriarch Nerses to assist Khrimian in his endeavors.

It is important to know at this stage the desire of the Armenians which Khrimian spelt out in his administrative project presented on 4 June 1878 to Salisbury. As can be understood from the text of this project, almost the same document with an appendix of the population of 'Armenia' based on the Patriarch's estimate and of the map of Armenia⁶⁷ was apparently submitted to the Berlin Congress by the Armenian delegation. It was the first document explaining the desire of the Armenians in detail. According to this administrative project of the Patriarch, the ottoman Armenia was composed of the sancaks (sub-provinces) of Trabzon, Gümüşhane, Erzurum, Erzincan, Muş, Van, Harput with the exception of the kazas (districts) situated in the west of the Euphrates, Ergane and a part of Bayazid sancak (sub-province). It included the country between the frontiers of Russia and İran, the Black Sea and the line of demarcation beginning from Tirebolu to the south of Eğin, from the descending of Euphrates to the junction of the river of Kızılçubuk.

Armenia was to be administered by a vali (governor-general) nominated by the Porte and approved by the European Powers for a fixed period of five years. He would reside in Erzurum and appoint with full executive powers officials responsible for the maintenance of public order and security, and the collection of the taxes under his supervision throughout the whole province. He would be re-

66. Khrimian to Salisbury, Memorandum, 4 June 1878, FO 78/2891.

67. Uras, *Tarihte ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, pp. 227-232.

sponsible for the administrative agents, judicial institutions, convoke and preside over the general council and also superintend all the administrative machinery of the province.

There would be a central administrative council presided over by the vali and consisting of director of the finance, director of the public works, a legal advisor, commander of public force, the inspectors for the Christian schools and a Muslim inspector. These inspectors would be appointed by the vali on the presentation of the kadı (judge of the Muslim religious court) of the province.

The province would be divided into the sancaks and sancaks into the kazas. The governors of the sancaks and the sub-governors of the kazas would be nominated by the vali. They would represent him in all the sub-divisions of the province and would be aided in their administration by two advisors also elected by the vali.

As the provincial government would be in charge of the maintenance of the public order and security in the province, a sum equivalent to 20% of the general revenue of the province would be paid into the state treasury. The rest of the revenue, after the necessary allocations made for civil administration, judiciary, maintenance of militia and gendarmerie, would be distributed as follows; 80% was for the roads, the preservation of communication, public works and other utilities; 20% was to be allocated to the building, repair and preservation of the schools. The remaining sum was to be distributed to the Muslim and Armenian schools in each city in proportion to the numbers of Muslims and Armenians.

A kadı would be appointed by the Sultan to inspect the sheri (Muslim religious) courts confined to hearing cases involving Muslims throughout the province. All other criminal, civil and commercial cases whether between Christians or between Muslims and Christians would be judged by the ordinary tribunals composed of three judges, one of them would function the duty of the president. The judges and the president over them would be appointed by the vali. Justice of peace was to be heard by the kaymakam (subgovernor) and his advisors. A special reglement would determine the quantity of the competence and the powers of the sheri courts and ordinary tribunals as well as the judges of peace. Civil and criminal codes would be elaborated in conformity with the modern principles of the justice of Europe.

The public force was to be executed by the militia and the gendarmerie. The former was to be chosen from the Armenians and from the elements of non-Armenian residents in the province for at least five years, with the exception of Kurds, Circassians and other nomadic tribes. The latter would be occupied with the maintenance of order and security throughout the province, would be commanded by a chief of gendarmerie nominated by the vali upon the proposition of the general commander of the public forces of the province, and would be immediately placed under his orders. The militia would be under the orders of the commander of the public forces and responsible for assisting the gendarmerie in the performance of its duties. The police force under normal circumstances would include 4,000 armed men, and the Ottoman Imperial government would not have the authority to send them to fortified places or to distribute them as it could in the other public forces.

The general council would be formed from two representatives of the Muslims and from two representatives of the Armenians chosen by the Muslim and the Christian population of the kazas. These representatives would remain in the chief city of the sancak to select two advisors in the sancaks one Christian and another Muslim.

All the inhabitants of the province over 25 years of age either having income tax or paying direct taxes of whatever amount, leaders of the *millets*, teachers and schoolmasters would elect and be eligible for candidacy. One leader for each *millet* would be represented as member in the council. The council would meet at least once a year in the capital of the province to examine the budget of the province, and the collection and the distribution of taxes. An annual report to a general council on the financial situation of the province would be presented by the vali. The vali would also fix, every five years, the amount of money to be given to the Porte according to the above arrangements.

An international commission within three months of the signature of the protocol would be nominated by the guarantor Powers to supervise the execution of this project.

In respond to Khrimian's project, Salisbury, on 10 June thanked him for it and promised to give due consideration of the British Government⁶⁸.

68. Salisbury to Khriimian, 10 June 1878, FO 881/3720.

With the same content, an article⁶⁹ was published on 6 July in the Times to mislead the public opinion. It alleged that the bulk of the population everywhere in Eastern Anatolia was not Kurds, Lazs, Georgians or Turcomans, but Armenians forming either half or nearly half of the whole population, that while the Kurds were nearly nomads, the Lazs and Georgians, small tribes of mountaineers inhabiting comparatively limited area, the Turcomans wandering shepherds, the Christians of this region were the only civilized, peaceable and industrious people to have a right to administrate the country. The author of the article concluded that "*it is untrue that the Armenians have no desire for autonomy, they have repeatedly proved their desire for it. What they ask is such a distinct administrative organization for the country*".

Khrimian was requested to work hard to win the support of the British people. The pro-Armenians were furthermore urged to write articles in the newspapers and have meetings with the British people to let them know the sufferings of the Armenians from the Kurds and Circassians and to press the British Foreign Office to advocate the Armenian cause in the Congress.

The Ottoman ambassador in London on 2 July dispatched a letter to the Ottoman Foreign Office about a meeting organized by the Anglo-Armenian Association in London to back up the Armenian cause⁷⁰. It is not surprising that the Armenians found quite a lot of strong supporters of their cause in Britain as a result of their campaign. The most distinguished one of them was undoubtedly James Bryce, M.P. for Aberdeen and also traveler, who frequently wrote articles in the newspapers in addition to his famous book "**Transcaucasia and Ararat**", which seems to have an enormous influence on public opinion in Britain that had three editions within two years, 1877 and 1878. He tried to persuade the public opinion with his biased pro-Armenian concepts.

The reasons for the pro-Armenians in Britain standing behind the Armenian cause were based primarily on religious, political and humanitarian grounds. Any ordinary news about the Armenians were over-exaggerated in the books and in the press. It undoubtedly affected the feelings of the British people from the religious and political points of view. So the latter felt, day by day, closer to the

69. *The Times* of 6 July 1878.

70. Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (OBE), Vol. III, no 8.

Armenians and more hatred to the Muslims. The Archbishop of Canterbury, later on, endeavored to take advantage of the friendly relations prevailing between two people by offering the Armenians to convert themselves to the Protestantism⁷¹, so did the Liberal Party and Gladstone use the Armenian issue as an internal political instrument against Disraeli.

Khrimian and his companions did their best to gain the support of the British people and of the Foreign Office for their cause in the Congress. It is not known when the deputation left Britain for Berlin. What is, however, certain is that they were in Berlin on 15 June with the hope that the Congress would result in rendering the Armenians an autonomy in Eastern Anatolia.

Besides the project of the Armenian Patriarch, another one was drawn up by Nubar Pasha with the intention of submitting to the Congress⁷². Though Nubar's project was obstructed by the Patriarch and was not allowed to be submitted to the representatives of the Powers in Berlin, it is important to make some comparisons between these two projects, because one had different dimensions from another.

Nubar's intention was merely concentrated on the improvement of the country inhabited by the Armenians. His scheme was not seeking an autonomous Armenian province as opposed to that of the Patriarch, so he was not inclined to give any information about the borders of the so-called Armenia. However, both projects were in agreement with the appointment of an Armenian vali on the ground that the question primarily concerned the Armenians. About the way in which an Armenian vali would be appointed, Nubar suggested that the vali should be nominated by the Powers and approved by the Porte but *vice versa* in that of the Patriarch. As the complaints were concentrated mainly on the attacks and depredations of the Kurds, he suggested that a gendarmarie should be established to bring the Kurds into submission and obedience, and be responsible for the preservation of law and order. This force was composed of Muslims and Christians without discrimination of race and religion. Nubar's project was prepared to bring two communities together, but that of the Patriarch almost excluded Muslims from taking part in the gendarmerie on account of baseless

71. OBE, Vol. IV, no 25.

72. For Nubar's project of reforms, see Uras, *Tarihçe Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meslesi*, pp. 220-225.

reasons, such as being Kurds, Circassians or nomadic tribes. Due to this discriminative nature the Patriarch's project might most likely result in the acceleration of the communal conflicts.

Concerning the judicial system Nubar found it absolutely essential that the judges appointed to the courts to be established should have no connection whatever with the government business, because the judicial system was reckoned as the controller and regulator of the government. There was to be the investigating committee to decide the duties of the courts and the extent of the powers they would possess to deal with the trial of the public officials accused of corrupt practices in the course of their duties. The vali was also to invite persons from foreign nationality to assist him in questions concerning the judicial system.

Another reform mentioned was concerned with the property tax and the tithes as well as the method of their collection. He believed that if the property tax was calculated in accordance with the size of the estate, its type and quality, it would increase the revenue of the provinces deposited in the government treasury to be used in the expenses of the officials in charge of the execution of the reforms. The distribution of the revenue on the local needs would be conducted by the general and local councils formed by the vali and kaymakam from the most worthy of the leading local citizens. These councils would have no right to interfere with the administrative and judicial matters. In the Patriarch's project, all the courts except for the Sheri' courts would be under the total control of the vali, but the Nubar's project was to reorganize the justice free from the control of the administrators. The dominant control of justice was to be in the hands of the Sultan and of the foreign officials, but not of the vali. With regard to the revenue of the province the Patriarch scheme limited the use of the provincial revenue by the Imperial government, but that of Nubar allowed the vali to use this revenue with the permission of the Porte. Although Nubar's project was more practicable than that of Patriarch, the latter was found favorable by the Armenian delegation in Berlin. They therefore campaigned for the acceptance of the Patriarch's project in the Congress and finally succeeded in submitting it to Bismarck.

In short, it was manifest with the Cyprus Convention that the British government showed its unwillingness to support the Armenian project about the establishment of an autonomous Armenian

province. The Armenian Patriarch then tried to change his words that the Armenians did not demand any annexation to a foreign power nor to become an independent state only live happily under the sovereign of the Sultan. He asked Layard to conserve his project in this spirit, and begged him to telegraph Salisbury that unless Armenian functionaries were employed to reorganize the province the scheme was bound to fail⁷³. Ten days later, on 10 July, Nerses now requested Layard in vain to obtain at least some specific mention of the Armenians in the definitive peace treaty, since he could not persuade the Congress to accept the Armenian constitution, the only hope left to the Armenians was the protection of Britain hereafter in case of need⁷⁴.

The discussions in Berlin about the future of the Armenians were not going on more favorably to them than those between himself and Layard. The Great Powers gave almost no importance to the Armenian cause. The article 16 of the treaty of St. Stephano was changed as the article 61 of the Berlin treaty far from satisfying the Armenians who protested the decision of the Congress and left Berlin for Istanbul without achieving anything in view.

73. Layard to Salisbury, no 637 tel, 1 July 1878, FO 881/3726.

74. Layard to Salisbury, tel, 10 July 1878, FO 881/3726.