

Between Humanitarianism and Diplomacy: British Relief, Indian Muslims, and the British-Ottoman Alliance, 1877–78

FATMANUR SAMASTI*

Abstract

This article examines the intersection of humanitarianism and diplomacy during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, focusing on the role of the Muslims of the Raj as a motivating factor behind the initiation of the “civil” British relief campaigns for war-affected Ottoman soldiers and civilians. It argues that the mobilisation of Indian Muslim opinion served as a crucial instrument in shaping the British-Ottoman alliance and the politics of public diplomacy for both sides. Drawing upon parliamentary debates, archival correspondence, and contemporary newspapers, the study situates Ottoman-British relief cooperation within a broader framework of public diplomacy, transimperial networks, and imperial anxiety regarding the Caliphate. The article contributes to the scholarship on late Ottoman diplomacy by highlighting the strategic interplay between philanthropy, Islamic solidarity, and British colonial governance. Moreover, it reassesses the chronology of Hamidian public diplomacy by locating the entry of humanitarian discourse at the very outset of the Hamidian era, during the crisis of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.

Keywords: Humanitarianism, Public diplomacy, Russo-Turkish War (1877-78), Abdülhamid II, Ottoman Empire, British relief, Indian Muslims, Caliphate.

İnsancıl Söylem ve Diplomasi Arasında: Britanya Yardım Kampanyaları, Hint Müslümanları ve Britanya-Osmanlı İttifakı (1877-78)

Öz

Bu makale, 1877-78 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı sırasında insancıl söylem ile diplomasi arasındaki kesişimi incelemekte ve Britanya Hindistanı müslümanlarının (Muslims of the Raj), savaşın etkilediği Osmanlı askerleri ve sivillerine yönelik başlatılan “sivil”

* PhD Candidate, İstanbul Medeniyet University, Institute of Graduate Studies, Department of History / Doktora Öğrencisi, İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Tarih Bölümü. İstanbul, Türkiye. ORCID: 0009-0007-1009-8338. e-posta: fatmanurs@gmail.com

DOI: 10.26570/isad.1860305 • Geliş/Received 10.01.2026 • Kabul/Accepted 25.04.2026

Atıf/Citation Samastı, Fatmanur, “Between Humanitarianism and Diplomacy: British Relief, Indian Muslims, and the British-Ottoman Alliance, 1877–78”, *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 56 (2026): 147-178.

Britanya yardım kampanyalarının şekillenmesindeki rolüne odaklanmaktadır. Çalışma, Hint müslüman kamuoyunun seferber edilmesinin, Britanya-Osmanlı ittifakının şekillenmesinde ve her iki taraf açısından kamu diplomasisi politikalarının oluşumunda belirleyici bir araç işlevi gördüğünü ileri sürmektedir. Parlamento tartışmaları, arşiv yazışmaları ve dönemin basınına dayanan bu araştırma, Osmanlı-Britanya yardım iş birliğini kamu diplomasisi, imparatorluklar arası (transimperial) ağlar ve hilafet meselesine ilişkin imparatorluk düzeyindeki kaygılar çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Makale, hayırseverlik, İslami dayanışma ve Britanya sömürge yönetimi arasındaki stratejik etkileşimi görünür kılarak geç Osmanlı diplomasisi literatürüne katkıda bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca çalışma, Hamidiye dönemi kamu diplomasisinin kronolojisini yeniden değerlendirek, insancıl söylemin Osmanlı diplomatik pratiğine girişini 1877-78 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı'nın yarattığı kriz bağlamında, Hamidiye döneminin en erken safhasına tarihlendirmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İnsancıl söylem, Kamu diplomasisi, Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı (1877-78), II. Abdülhamid, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Britanya yardım faaliyetleri, Hint müslümanları, Hilafet.

Introduction

Humanitarian crises—especially those caused by wars—have repeatedly required international responses, often blurring the boundaries between civil initiatives and state interests. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, in particular, witnessed the mobilisation of numerous public and private aid organisations around the world, providing assistance to soldiers and civilians affected by the conflict within Ottoman territories.¹

This article examines the intersection of humanitarian aid and diplomacy during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 by focusing on the instrumentalisation of Indian Muslim public opinion under the British Raj (British colonial rule in India).² I argue that the mobilisation of Muslim sentiment in India constituted a decisive factor influencing the British Conservative government's efforts to organise and promote “civil” relief campaigns, such as the Turkish

1 Most of this aid was categorised in the Ottoman archives under the files titled “relief to the wounded soldiers and the army.” Examples reflecting the wide geographical origins of this relief include contributions from Pest Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), HR. SYS. 1215/1–1 to 38, Vienna (HR. SYS. 1215/1–41, 64), Paris (HR. SYS. 1215/1–54, 56), Athens (HR. SYS. 1215/1–304–5), Trieste (HR. SYS. 1215/1–109), Berlin (HR. SYS. 1215/1–625), Rome (HR. SYS. 1215/1–270), and Hamburg (HR. SYS. 1215/1–277). Separate files exist specifically for Indian aid; for selected examples, see BOA, HR. SYS. 1215/1–78, 79, 264, 279, 281; and BOA, YPRK. HR. 1/23 (H. 17-03-1294).

2 This article draws on the author's doctoral research on Anglo-Ottoman humanitarian diplomacy during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, which examines British relief organisations—particularly the Turkish Compassionate Fund—within the broader framework of philanthropy, humanitarianism, and public diplomacy.

Compassionate Fund and the Stafford House Committee, in response to the humanitarian crisis affecting Ottoman soldiers and civilians during and after the war. British anxieties regarding the loyalty of South Asian Muslims, and particularly fears concerning the potential influence of the Ottoman Sultan in his capacity as Caliph, emerged as key drivers of this form of humanitarian diplomacy, which departed from the more familiar pattern of British war relief directed toward Christian victimhood.

Moreover, the article positions the Sublime Porte as an active agent in the instrumentalisation of Indian public support as part of broader efforts to sustain the British-Ottoman alliance. Rather than presenting these developments as a radical departure, the study suggests that the humanitarian initiatives of this period constituted a formative phase in which existing Ottoman diplomatic practices engaged more visibly with European humanitarian discourse. By emphasising the role of Indian Muslims, the article situates these developments within the wider context of Anglo-Ottoman relations and the political dimensions of humanitarian initiatives, demonstrating how wartime relief campaigns functioned as instruments of public diplomacy.

Neither public diplomacy nor humanitarian practices were new to the Ottoman Empire. Rather than marking their point of origin, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 can be understood as a formative moment for the Sublime Porte in which these existing traditions engaged more visibly with the emerging European discourse of war and humanitarianism. This phase witnessed an increased use of humanitarian rhetoric, including depiction of wartime suffering intended to evoke humanitarian sentiment and to support newly established relief organisations, aimed at institutionalising wartime aid. In this sense, I position the Ottoman engagement with European humanitarian discourse during this war as an early reflection of broader non-Western appropriations of Eurocentric international norms, as Aydın has suggested regarding late nineteenth-century intellectual and political transformations.³

The role of Indian Muslims has been widely discussed in the literature on the Caliphate, Hamidian Pan-Islamism, and Ottoman public diplomacy. Similarly, humanitarian discourses especially in the context of the Eastern crisis have been examined in a separate body of scholarship.⁴

3 For discussions on how non-Western actors appropriated Eurocentric discourses to articulate counter-claims within the international order, see Aydın, “Beyond Civilization” 207–212, 221–222.

4 For discussions on the emergence of Pan-Islamic thought, see Aydın, “Beyond Civilization”; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*; Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*; and Özcan, *Pan-Islamism*. For studies on nineteenth-century humanitarianism and

More recently, scholars have also drawn attention to the role of expanding communication and transportation networks in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly steam and print, in shaping new forms of transimperial Muslim awareness, which would later become more visible within Hamidian diplomacy.⁵

This article brings these strands together by examining how Indian Muslim mobilisation and the European humanitarian discourse intersected during the Eastern Crisis. At a moment when anti-Ottoman sentiment reached its peak in European public opinion, largely shaped by William Gladstone's "Bulgarian Horrors" agitation, the British-Ottoman alliance did not collapse.⁶ Instead, it was sustained through a joint public diplomacy effort that mobilised humanitarian discourse as a counter-discourse to the Bulgarian atrocities agitation. I argue that the British Conservative government's policy of non-intervention was reinforced by this coordinated campaign. Both the Ottoman Porte and British actors sought to instrumentalise public diplomacy and humanitarian sentiment. One of the central motivations for this attempt was concerns related to the Muslims of India.

By restoring agency to the Ottoman Porte, this article demonstrates, first, how the Porte recognised and utilised its extraterritorial potential within late nineteenth-century European humanitarian discourse as a diplomatic tool and, second, how British actors perceived the risk of losing control once Ottoman public diplomacy began to resonate among Indian Muslims.

Drawing upon Ottoman archival documents; the memoirs and correspondence of Austin Henry Layard, British ambassador to the Ottoman Porte under Disraeli's Conservative government; British parliamentary debates; diplomatic correspondence; and press publications, this article

humanitarian politics, see Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Gill, *Calculating Compassion*; and Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism*.

5 Koçyigit, "The Caliphate and Its Dissenters," 28.

6 From 1868 to 1874, Britain was governed by William Ewart Gladstone's Liberal Party, which was known for its anti-Turkish stance. Before and after Gladstone's government, the Conservative Party led by Benjamin Disraeli—who favored alliance with the Ottomans—dominated British politics. The terms "Bulgarian Horrors/Atrocities" and "Bulgarian atrocities agitation" are used here as a historiographical reference to the political and discursive campaign initiated by William Gladstone following the events of 1876. See Gill, *Calculating Compassion*; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; and Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*. For a detailed history about how the Eastern crisis split Britain into two camps symbolised by the names of Disraeli and Gladstone, and the public agitation over "Bulgarian atrocities," see Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*.

argues that humanitarian campaigns functioned as both moral and political instruments of communication in the complex alliance between the two empires. Before turning to the Indian dimension—which forms the core contribution of the article—the next sections establish the humanitarian discourses and political background within which these British-Ottoman relief campaigns emerged.

Humanitarianism, War and the Eastern Crisis

Humanitarianism and humanitarian interventions have been widely studied in recent decades, with increasing attention paid to the biased and political nature of nineteenth-century practices.⁷ Davide Rodogno traces the emergence of “humanitarian interventions” to the military actions of the Great Powers against the Ottoman Empire, focusing primarily on Great Britain and France, while also taking into account the role of Russia. He argues that, from support for the Greek rebellion onwards, European interventions were selective and politically motivated, often prepared and bolstered through press campaigns that portrayed Ottoman violence against Christians as requiring “humanitarian” action.⁸

War and humanitarianism also generated their own institutions, most notably the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), inspired by Henry Dunant’s experience at the battle of Solferino in 1859 and formally established in 1863–64. In her “archaeology” of international

7 For a comprehensive volume on the conceptual framing, development, principles, professionalisation, and field practice of “humanitarian diplomacy” (in its non-discursive, practitioner-oriented sense), see Kavak (ed.), *Understanding Humanitarian Diplomacy*. For a discussion acknowledging the inevitability of political participation and donor foreign-policy priorities within humanitarian action, see Kireççi, “Humanitarianism, Philanthropy, and Humanitarian Diplomacy,” in the same volume, 15.

8 Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 2-3, 9-35, 158. Rodogno discusses in this section the impact of the arguments presented by British campaigners during the Bulgarian crisis, which sought to legitimise intervention against the Ottomans. Rodogno’s approach to humanitarian interventions emphasises the biased and selective character of nineteenth-century humanitarianism, presenting the period of non-intervention during the Great Eastern Crisis as a case in which all the necessary humanitarian conditions—massacres, atrocities, and strong public campaigns—were present, yet strategic and security concerns outweighed humanitarian imperatives, which calculus later became a subject of criticism. Subsequent scholarship has also pointed to later interpretations that considered Russia’s 1877 intervention—though clearly motivated by territorial and political ambitions beyond humanitarianism—as an early example of “humanitarian intervention.” See Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 161-163. Unlike Rodogno, Heraclides and Dialla do not question the pre-intervention campaigns or the partial nature of these actions but rather focus on documenting the historical evolution of humanitarian intervention.

humanitarianism, Salvatici situates this development within a broader intellectual transformation. She argues that from the late eighteenth century onwards, partly under the influence of Enlightenment thought, sensitivity to the suffering of others gained new visibility in intellectual and cultural production; missionary and colonial relief activities followed this shift, while wartime humanitarianism's beginning, in her periodisation, can be dated to 1864 with the establishment of the Red Cross.⁹

Victorian Britain emerged as a central actor in this field: domestically advancing philanthropy in response to industrial social problems and internationally positioning itself as a professional humanitarian power.¹⁰ British humanitarianism in this period was not limited to philanthropy in peacetime; Britain also projected itself as a leading actor in war relief. During the Crimean War, emblematic figures and public narratives mobilised strong campaigns, while in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, British engagement in relief work became even more visible.¹¹ Numerous committees were established to assist wounded soldiers, and the press played a decisive role in generating emotional involvement.

In a similar fashion to Rodogno's argument on "humanitarian interventions," Rebecca Gill reads late nineteenth-century British war relief as a selective and religiously coded practice of producing a "victim nation." In the Balkan context, British relief campaigns helped to define and recognise Christian sufferers, and thus functioned as a

9 Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism*, 6, 16-18, 50-57. For further information about the foundation of the Red Cross Society, see Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*. The original Geneva Convention was signed by twelve states in 1864 and sixteen states in 1867 to protect medical services, Hutchinson, 56. For a famine-centred periodisation of humanitarianism, see: Götz, Brewis, and Werther, *Humanitarianism in the Modern World*, 24-67. Here, evolution of humanitarian relief is traced through cases such as the Great Irish Famine (1840s), the Soviet Russian famine (1921–23), and the Ethiopian famine (1980s), identifying a shift from the ad-hoc efforts of the nineteenth century, to planned and scalable organised relief in the early twentieth century and "expressive" humanitarianism from the mid-twentieth century onwards (especially after 1968). The main argument advanced is that the historical transformation of humanitarian relief was shaped less by geopolitical turning points and more by moral-economic developments and cultural/social factors.

10 Victorian philanthropy has been a field of interest from different perspectives. See Prochaska, "Victorian England"; Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion*; Prochaska, "Victorian England".

11 Gill, *Calculating Compassion*, 25-39. While the Crimean war was among the first scenes of British war relief, the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War was among the first organised committees, founded during the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War. Gill summarises the role of press accounts and relief attempts under this subheading "July 1870: Britain remains neutral, but the press goes to war . . ." 35.

form of implicit diplomatic nation-making. Relief workers and the press competed to define “victims” and “aggressors,” particularly in agitation around Bulgarian atrocities, and thereby shaped the contours of this humanitarian campaign.¹² Gill positions the Turkish Compassionate Fund as an example that reflects this complex and contested structure: although officially founded “for fugitives of all faiths,” in practice it mainly assisted displaced Muslim communities, and Gill interprets such campaigns as aligned with conservative, status-quo-oriented British voices resisting Russian expansionism.¹³

With developments in the press and contemporary journalism, the circulation of vivid battlefield descriptions and the competition between newspapers to provide the most striking accounts generated public sympathy “almost as if our own flesh and blood had been sufferers.”¹⁴ Humanitarian relief, reinforced by this supportive public opinion, thus became easier for states to undertake, as the press itself helped produce the moral legitimacy for such interventions.¹⁵

Historical Background

Straits, India, and Suez in British Strategy. Britain’s attitude toward the Ottoman Empire during the late eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century centred around countering Russian expansion.¹⁶ The Ottoman Empire served as a crucial bulwark against Russian power in the eastern Mediterranean, preventing its expansion toward the Gulf and India.¹⁷ Specifically, the vital role of the Straits in safeguarding the colonial route, and later the Suez Canal, was among the primary motivations British politicians had for securing the empire’s maritime supremacy.¹⁸ Preserving

12 Gill, *Calculating Compassion*, 5-7, 20, 77-78, 95-98, 101-111.

13 Gill, *Calculating Compassion*, 103-108.

14 Gill, *Calculating Compassion*, 37, quoting a contemporary newspaper correspondent during the Franco-Prussian War.

15 While tracing the genealogy of the foundation and early development of the Red Cross, Hutchinson draws attention to the 1867 “vision book” on war and charity written by Moynier and Appia, prepared after the committee realised that Dunant’s *A Memory of Solferino* would not be sufficient to mobilise public support. Hutchinson shows that addressing philanthropic emotions through vivid battlefield scenes was consciously deployed as a public-relations strategy, and that the publication of battlefield imagery can therefore be attributed, from this point on, to the PR strategy of the early ICRC societies. Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity*, 2, 66-69.

16 Goldstein, “Religion and British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire,” 85.

17 Karpas, *Politicization of Islam*, 140.

18 Ediz, “The Turkish Straits in British Strategy,” 50-52. Ediz argues that British strategy of the period was not merely conditioned by geography, but was structurally

the Ottoman existence was not only a bulwark against Russia; securing other Great Powers' interests in the Ottoman Empire functioned to preserve Britain's commercial supremacy. By the late 1870s, however, the political and public environment had changed, and British-Ottoman relations became shaped by both these strategic interests and moral controversy.

The Moral Fracture of 1876. The Paris Treaty signed after the Crimean War granted European powers the right to protect the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire and, under extreme circumstances, to intervene—thus maintaining their continued interest in the Balkans after 1856.¹⁹ After a twenty-year period with no major conflicts (1856–1875), the Balkan crisis, whose roots stretched back to the Greek rebellion at the beginning of the century, re-emerged in the mid-1870s.²⁰ This relatively calm period also witnessed the strengthening of Pan-Slavist ideology, which had become the basis of Russian-led uprisings in the region.²¹ By late 1876, the Great Powers were struggling to find a solution to the Bulgarian crisis, fuelled by Russian claims regarding the rights of Christians under Ottoman rule. The “Bulgarian atrocities” debate of 1876 inflamed British public opinion and divided Liberals and Conservatives over the Empire's moral standing.²² William Gladstone's pamphlet *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* denounced Ottoman actions and portrayed the Empire as irredeemably barbaric, while Benjamin Disraeli's government attempted to maintain strategic neutrality.²³

In addition to the “Bulgarian Horrors” campaign, which had strained British-Ottoman relations, the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869

determined by the geographical reality of the Straits. He shows that Britain alternated between closure (to contain Russia) and freedom of passage (to safeguard imperial maritime supremacy) depending on historical context, ultimately inviting us to reframe the “Eastern Question” “not only as a diplomatic puzzle but as a geopolitical one rooted in immutable geography.”

19 Jelavich, *Balkan Tarihi*, I, 311.

20 Jelavich, *Balkan Tarihi*, I, 381–382

21 Jelavich, *Balkan Tarihi*, I, 382–387.

22 For a detailed analysis of the British press during this period, ranging from the Conservative organs supporting the Ottoman case to the Gladstone-led Liberal agitation, as well as the shifting editorial policy of *The Times* and the erosion of British public trust that began prior to the agitation campaign due to the 1875 Ottoman moratorium, see Satır, “1853–1856 Kırım Savaşı.”

23 Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors*, 1876. Gladstone's pamphlet was sent to the Sublime Porte by the embassy in London on 22 March 1877, and the Ottoman Embassy in London informed the Sublime Porte about the parliamentary debates in February and May regarding the Bulgarian atrocities and the pressures exerted by Gladstone; BOA HR.SFR. (3) 244/32, (22 March 1877); BOA HR.SFR.(3) 245/30 (10 May 1877); BOA HR.SFR.(3) 243/79 (17 Feb. 1877).

marked a new phase in imperial communications and reshaped the geography of Anglo-Ottoman strategic interdependence. Control of the canal secured Britain's lifeline to India but also heightened its dependence on stable Ottoman rule in Egypt and the Levant. Under Disraeli, Britain's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal Company further reinforced the strategic logic behind continued cooperation with the Ottoman Empire.²⁴ This geopolitical setting helps explain why, despite mounting anti-Ottoman sentiment in Europe, British policy during the war continued to prioritise the preservation of the Ottoman alliance.

Gladstone's "Bulgarian Horrors" campaign and the parliamentary debates that followed left a lasting imprint on British politics; diplomatic difficulties ensued. After Russia declared war in 1877, the Conservative government's non-intervention decision was harshly criticised by Liberal opposition and by the press, which continued to circulate reports of Ottoman irregulars committing atrocities.²⁵ This public outrage established the expectation of a "humanitarian intervention," in Rodogno's terms, in which moral outrage justified European interference.²⁶

Relief as Counter-Diplomacy. In this context, Disraeli's cabinet quietly supported the maintenance of Ottoman integrity through humanitarian diplomacy. Anti-Ottoman sentiment in Europe framed the Ottomans as perpetrators of atrocities; yet, with the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, the British public also encountered a different narrative, in which Muslim communities were cast as victims and humanitarian appeals began to be directed toward their needs.

The war and large-scale displacement created significant humanitarian needs.²⁷ A major relief campaign was launched across Britain and its colonies, initiated by leading bureaucrats, amplified by the press, and supported by both elites and ordinary citizens. Within Ottoman territories, British aid was visible in various forms, especially during the 1877–78 conflict, including assistance for wounded soldiers and noncombatants.²⁸

24 Goldstein, "Religion and British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire," 85–86.

25 For some examples of debates around the Bulgarian atrocities, see Hansard, House of Commons Debates, vol. 230 (17 July 1876); vol. 231 (31 July 1876); vol. 231 (7 August 1876); vol. 231 (11 August 1876); vol. 232 (8 February 1877); vol. 233 (27 March 1877); vol. 234 (10 May 1877).

26 Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 158.

27 Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan entanglements*, 171–172.

28 For representative studies of British relief campaigns during the Russo-Turkish War, see Gill, *Calculating Compassion*; Dinçyürek, *A "compassionate" Episode*; and Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers*.

Several British organisations were involved in relief efforts, including the British Red Cross, the Stafford House Committee, and the Turkish Compassionate Fund established by leading Victorian philanthropist Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts. A Ladies' Committee founded by Lady Layard, the wife of the British Ambassador to Istanbul, Sir Austin Henry Layard, also played a prominent role in coordinating the campaigns. These organisations operated in close cooperation to provide aid and logistical support.

The Stafford House Committee and the Turkish Compassionate Fund (TCF) stand out for their assistance to wounded soldiers and Muslim refugees.²⁹ The TCF, claiming to support civilian non-combatants of all faiths and focusing mostly on Muslim refugees, does not fit neatly within the dominant humanitarian framework based on selective Christian victimhood. This tension suggests that British Conservative policies and Ottoman diplomatic initiatives should therefore be examined together to explain the distinct character of this humanitarian moment.

Scholarship has largely focused on the factors leading to the collapse of the British-Ottoman alliance, while paying comparatively little attention to the preservation efforts of the Conservative government between 1876 and 1880.³⁰ The humanitarian diplomacy of 1877–78 can be read as one of the last attempts to preserve Anglo-Ottoman cooperation through the language of public morality and public diplomacy. The Turkish Compassionate Fund, with its deliberate use of moral rhetoric, sought to project an image of friendship and shared humanitarian values at a moment when political trust was rapidly eroding.³¹ In this context, the role of Muslim India and the Ottoman Porte's ability to mobilise this public emerges as a central component of this effort.

29 For primary printed reports of the campaigns and their financial administration, see Dunstan, *The Turkish Compassionate Fund; Stafford House Committee, Report and Record of the Operations*. For contemporary documentation and related evidence see, İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri*, 68–78; Küneralp, *The Private Letters of Sir Austin Henry Layard*; and contemporary British newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Illustrated London News*, *British and Ottoman Archival Sources*.

30 For studies focusing on the deterioration of British-Ottoman relations in the late nineteenth century, see Gürpınar, "The Rise and Fall of Turcophlism"; Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*; Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*.

31 Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts played a significant role in ensuring the campaign's popular appeal and moral legitimacy among the British public. For biographical studies of Burdett-Coutts, see Healey, *Lady Unknown*; Patterson, *Angela Burdett-Coutts and The Victorians*; Orton, *Made of Gold*.

Mobilising Indian Muslim Public Opinion: Humanitarian Diplomacy and the Anglo-Ottoman Alliance

The impact of Indian and Afghan Muslims on late nineteenth-century Ottoman diplomacy has generally been discussed in relation to later periods of Pan-Islamism.³² The Ottoman presence and recognition in the Indian subcontinent did not, of course, begin in the nineteenth century; rather, the relationship between the two regions was historically complex. Early diplomatic initiatives shaped by Turkic cultural ties and shared anti-Safavid sentiment has been one of the main approaches to these deeply rooted relations.³³ However, recent literature challenges the longevity of this Sunni solidarity. As Saçmalı demonstrates, by the mid-seventeenth century, the Mughal and Ottoman empires were experiencing a “co-sectarian rivalry” and a powerful Sunni neighbor was perceived as a direct threat to the Ottoman Sultan’s exclusive claims to the universal Caliphate.³⁴ Nevertheless, by the late nineteenth century, under British colonial rule and in the absence of a sovereign Mughal rival, this dynamic transformed once again. The weakening of the Ottoman Empire, especially during the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78), further heightened both anxiety and devotion among Indian Muslims, prompting visible waves of support for the Ottoman cause and marking a formative moment for the Pan-Islamic movement.

I argue that this period also produced early tensions within the British Empire concerning the Sultan’s influence on South Asian Muslims. Although British history—again especially after the Great Mutiny of 1857—had shown the advantages of the Anglo-Ottoman alliance in maintaining Muslim obedience, the Sublime Porte’s effective public-diplomacy campaign during the Balkan crisis introduced a new sense of risk and competition.³⁵ Indian relief support for the Ottoman Empire thus became a display of strength, religious solidarity, and diplomacy.

32 For later discussions of Pan-Islamism in the context of the British Empire and Indian Muslims, see Özcan, *Pan-Islamizm*; Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*; Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*.

33 For a summary of the early diplomatic initiatives shaped by Turkic cultural ties and shared anti-Safavid sentiment between the Mughals and Ottomans, see Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, 229–230; on the cultural significance of the Turkish heritage, see Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, 232–237.

34 Saçmalı, “The Safavid Buffer,” 393–394. For a specific example of this rivalry illustrated by the diplomatic language crisis between Sultan Murad IV and Shah Jahan, see Bayram, “Osmanlı–Babürlü Diplomatik İlişkilerine Dair Mektuplar,” 471–474; Saçmalı, “The Safavid Buffer,” 404.

35 “Public diplomacy” is used here deliberately, with awareness that many of the practices associated with the term predate its modern coinage. As Jan Melissen suggests,

I emphasise this period as a key moment that triggered a growing tension within Britain itself—between political pragmatism and public morality—arising from the increasing influence of the Ottoman Caliphate over the Muslim subjects of the British Raj. This internal anxiety shaped debates over Britain’s Eastern policy and humanitarian stance during the Russo-Turkish War. This interpretation diverges from the existing literature, which largely confines the discussion of Pan-Islamism to later decades.

To reflect the agency and motivations of both Britain and the Ottoman Porte regarding the Muslim subjects of the British Raj during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, I divide the following analysis into two parts. The first examines the Ottoman discovery of its extraterritorial potential and the activation of this influence through the war. This argument does not suggest that the Ottoman Empire was previously unaware of its extraterritorial authority. Rather, it highlights how, during the Russo-Turkish War, this existing capacity was reactivated and reframed through the language of humanitarian diplomacy and public opinion. The second addresses Britain’s concerns, which shaped its cautious policy—transforming an initial expectation of intervention against the Ottomans into a form of humanitarian assistance legitimised through public opinion.

Ottoman Agency and Extraterritorial Influence

Reactivation of Existing Networks. The Crimean War marked a significant turning point for Indian Muslims to express their sentiments toward the Ottoman Empire. According to Özcan, this war, in which the Ottomans fought alongside Britain, created a favorable environment for Muslims living under British rule to articulate their views more openly. It also presented Britain with an opportunity to gain the sympathy of Indian Muslims by supporting a Muslim state.³⁶ Earlier examples of situations in which Britain benefited from the role of the Caliph in securing the loyalty of its Muslim subjects also exist.³⁷ Moreover, beyond being a

it may be understood as “an old wine in new bottles.” See Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy*, 3; Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power.” Without using the term, historians of the late Ottoman period have already examined various dimensions of public diplomacy and particularly Abdülhamid II’s efforts to secure public support both within and beyond the Empire. For important theoretical discussions on the Ottoman case, see Deringil, *İktidarın Sembolleri*; Stephanov, *Ruler Visibility*; Deringil, “II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Dış İlişkilerinde ‘İmaj’ Saplantısı”; Davison, *Ottoman Public Relations* and “The Westernization of Ottoman Diplomacy”; Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*; and Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyal Devlet* and “Philanthropic Activity”

36 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 41.

37 Earlier instances of Ottoman mediation on behalf of British interests in India date back to the late eighteenth century. During the decline of the Mughal Empire, Tipu

natural outcome of the British-Ottoman alliance, British policies in this context have also been interpreted as a deliberate attempt to strengthen the position of the Caliph among Indian Muslims, with the dual aim of securing the obedience of Britain's Indian subjects and forming an Anglo-Islamic alignment against Russia.³⁸

The special role of the Crimean War in situating the Sultan-Caliph as a fruitful tool to influence Indian public opinion proved advantageous for the British, who only a few years later would face the Great Mutiny of 1857. The Great Mutiny, also known as the Indian Rebellion or Sepoy Mutiny, represented a watershed moment in the relations between Indian Muslims and the British administration. The uprisings and the discontent among Muslim Indians alarmed British officials, who had recognised—or actively contributed to—Indian Muslims' favorable sentiments toward the Ottoman Caliph, and sought to strategically use this affinity to maintain the stability of the British Raj. To suppress the rebellion, they requested Ottoman support. British authorities asked Sultan Abdülmecid for a message to Indian Muslims, reminding them of Britain's earlier alliance with the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War and assuring them that Britain was not an enemy of Islam. This communication, accompanied by permission for British troops to pass through Egypt, symbolised a diplomatic exchange of legitimacy—an acknowledgment of the Ottoman Caliph's influence on the loyalty of Muslims in British India.³⁹ Moreover, the theological debate among the Indian *'ulamā'* on whether armed resistance against British rule was religiously permissible was largely settled in accordance with the Ottoman Sultan's position. A notable example is the speech delivered by Mevlana Fazlı Ali at a conference of the Calcutta Muslim Literary Society, where he argued that waging *jihād* against the British was inappropriate, as they were allies of the Sultan.⁴⁰ In this way, Britain effectively capitalised on the advantages of its alliance with the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹

Sultan of Mysore sought support from the Ottoman Caliph against British expansion, but the Sultan of Istanbul advised him to pursue peaceful relations with Britain—a symbolic indication of the Caliphate's perceived authority and its early role in Anglo-Indian diplomacy. Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 37.

38 Ali, "The Ottoman Caliphate," 740-741. Ali evaluates these early examples—strengthened after the Crimean War—of the British use of the Caliphate for their own political interests by exerting pressure on the Ottomans to influence Muslim rulers of India by deliberately magnifying the position of Caliph.

39 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 43.

40 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 49.

41 For an interesting reflection from a member of the Indian Muslim elite, the Prime Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Sir Salar Jung, referring to his late father's

Bolstering and Employing the Potential. In earlier cases, the role of the Ottoman Caliph in shaping public opinion in the British Raj among South Asian Muslims can largely be understood as a compelled response to British demands.⁴² From this point on, however, this article traces forms of Ottoman agency — particularly during the Russo-Turkish War — that went beyond British expectations.⁴³ Rather than representing a discovery of extraterritorial influence, the Russo-Turkish War marked a moment in which the Ottoman Porte more consciously reactivated and rearticulated its existing extraterritorial connections with Muslim communities beyond its borders. In this context, the Porte drew on emerging European practices of public agitation and humanitarian mobilisation, adapting elements of contemporary anti-Ottoman campaigns to make this influence more visible and diplomatically effective. The emergence of special British relief campaigns in the late nineteenth century should therefore be understood in relation to this dynamic.

In his article, Faiz Ahmed offers a fresh perspective on the relationship between Indian Muslims and British-Ottoman relations in the late nineteenth century, with a focus on the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–78. Ahmed explores the involvement of Afghans and Indian Muslims as central figures in the power struggles between the Ottoman and British Empires. By examining a series of disputes related to consular matters and jurisdictional conflicts in South and Central Asia, he sheds light on how Ottoman diplomacy began to expand its extraterritorial reach beyond its formal borders. Ahmed argues that between the late 1870s and the onset

remarks, suggested that the Caliphate had helped “to check the spread of the Mutiny [and] rally round the English the Mussalman races of India,” and that in this sense the Ottoman debt to Britain for the Crimean War had been “paid in full.” Ali, “The Ottoman Caliphate,” 742.

42 It is worth noting that earlier forms of caliphal connection had already suggested this potential. Indian Muslim appeals to the Caliphate as a source of authority including, for example, Shah Muhammad Ishaq’s transfer to Mecca to reinforce Ottoman caliphal legitimacy, as well as early Muslim appeals shaped by fears of Christianisation after the 1830s, suggest that such extraterritorial connections predated Abdülhamid II. See Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 39–41, 53–78; Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 218–220. Early episodes such as the Tipu affair and especially the 1857 Rebellion further revealed, to British and Ottoman actors alike, the possible political uses of caliphal influence in India. As Qureshi asks, “if the Sultan’s influence could prevent participation in rebellion, could it not inspire a rebellion itself?” Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 243. In this sense, the argument here concerns less the discovery of a new potential than a shift in how an already recognised potential began to be read and activated.

43 The first Ottoman consulates in the region—in Calcutta and Bombay in 1849—were established primarily to support and regulate merchants of the Porte travelling from the Hijaz to India. BOA, A.AMD. 4-25, (H-28-05-1264), also Özcan, 54–80.

of the First World War, the Ottoman government actively pursued its own extraterritorial privileges, rather than relying solely on military or economic power. This pursuit often led to diplomatic and legal frictions with its former ally, the British Crown, particularly concerning Afghans and Indian Muslims.⁴⁴

The Afghanistan Mission led by Ahmed Hulusi Efendi stands as an illustration of Abdülhamid II's early efforts to seek political outcomes grounded in religious unity. At a time when Afghanistan served as a geopolitical buffer between Russia and Britain in the British Raj, the Amir's policy of balancing between the two imperial powers alarmed the British side. The outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War thus offered the British an opportunity to prevent Afghanistan from drifting toward Russia. As Wasti confirms through an analysis of the correspondence of the period, the Ottoman mission emerged as a result of British initiative and strategic calculation: Layard first proposed the delegation and Disraeli ultimately approved it, with the expectation of bolstering the Sultan-Caliph's position and consolidating Muslim resistance to Russia.⁴⁵ Initiated and closely managed by the British, the mission was presented as a call for *jihād* against Russia in defence of Islam. Ahmed Hulusi Efendi sought the backing of leading figures—the Emir of Afghanistan and the religious authority of the *akhünd*—for this cause.⁴⁶ The mission reports conclude by underscoring its failure to secure the desired political unity against Russia—largely due to the Emir of Afghanistan's and the *akhünd*'s cautious and insecure attitudes vis-à-vis the British.

Even though the mission did not succeed as a call for *jihād*, Ahmed later highlights its legal implications, arguing that the Ottoman Empire exercised agency in shaping legal developments in the region.⁴⁷ By shifting the focus to relief organisations, the article argues, the mission nevertheless contributed to the gradual formation of public support within the framework of Hamidian humanitarian diplomacy, even in the absence

44 Ahmed, "Contested Subjects," 346.

45 Wasti, "The 1877 Ottoman Mission to Afghanistan," 957. Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 128–132. Özcan presents a detailed discussion of the tensions among British Conservative politicians who sought to exploit the influence of the Caliph, particularly during the Russo-Turkish War, in the months preceding the Treaty of Berlin.

46 For the detailed reports of this mission, see BOA, Y.PRK.A., 2-20, (H-06-11-1295). See also Baysun, "Şirvanî-zade Ahmed Hulusî Efendi'nin Efganistan Elçiliğine Âid Vesikalar"; Wasti, "The 1877 Ottoman Mission to Afghanistan." For a focused analysis of one of the leaders of Afghanistan, Sir Syed Ahmed, who had been a key contact for this mission see Wasti, "Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Turks."

47 Ahmed, "Istanbul and Kabul in Courtly Contact."

of the political results originally sought.⁴⁸ The reports from the mission reflect the intensive efforts to publicise the relief appeals and mobilise key Muslim actors in the wider region. In one Ottoman Foreign Ministry report, it is noted that Mestan Efendi—sent by the sheikh of the Abdülkadir Geylânî lodge in Baghdad—had 1,200 printed proclamations prepared and distributed across towns and cities in India, plastering them on the walls of major mosques, and that this campaign was already producing visible effect: Kâdirî sheikhs in Hyderabad reported collecting 55,000 rupees within days (with expectations to exceed 100,000), while, in Calcutta, a Mevlevî-backed relief drive was likewise reported as being underway.⁴⁹

Although neither Muslim solidarity nor appeals to public sentiment were new to Ottoman political practice, the 1876 “Bulgarian Atrocities” agitation operated as a critical pedagogical moment. It revealed, through Britain itself, the political efficacy of mobilising humanitarian feeling and “victimhood” as a technology of public opinion. European agitation over the “Bulgarian Atrocities” served as an early model for shaping public opinion under the guise of humanitarian concern. The Ottoman state did not simply “learn” from this experience, but rather adapted and rearticulated an existing repertoire of political communication in light of the effectiveness of European humanitarian agitation. In this context, the Ottoman Porte made use of the genuinely harsh and cruel conditions produced by the Russian invasion, particularly the suffering of Muslim populations, to mobilise humanitarian sentiment. It employed humanitarian causes and Muslim solidarity as deliberate instruments of diplomacy. These practices became increasingly prominent in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As Deringil shows, these practices became more systematised especially after 1880. Abdülhamid began to use non-Ottoman Muslim communities as a deliberate bargaining mechanism in foreign policy. From this period onward, the language of the caliphate; the practical significance of the *hajj*;

48 Koçyiğit similarly reads this mission as revealing how steam transport and print culture widened public awareness of the Caliphate beyond Ottoman borders. See Koçyiğit, “The Caliphate and Its Dissenters,” 46.

49 BOA, YPRK. HR. 1-16, Nr: 343. (H-15-12-1293). As Schimmel notes, Sufi networks, particularly the Naqshbandiyya, formed a durable element of Indo-Muslim society and preserved their influence well beyond the Mughal zenith. She also underlines the long-standing connections of Babur and his descendants with these religious networks and long-lasting influence of Sufi orders even after the fall of the Mughal Empire. See Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, 107-108, 110, 127-136. For an example of wider spiritual ties, including the Qadiriyya and Dara Shikoh’s (son of Shah Jahan) symbolic gifts to the tombs of Abdülkadir Geylânî and Abu Hanîfa, see Bayram, “Osmanlı-Bâbürlü Diplomatik İlişkilerine Dair Mektuplar,” 474-475.

and symbolic repertoires of gift, honour, and ritual became concrete tools through which the Sultan could make himself present among Muslims living under non-Muslim imperial rule. In other words, Pan-Islamism acquired a functional diplomatic meaning and was no longer merely a rhetorical self-representation.⁵⁰

In this sense, the 1877 mission discussed in this section can be read as an earlier and less systematised stage of this development. The way the Porte observed and adapted elements of the public agitation generated by the “Bulgarian Atrocities” debate in Britain, and the way it tried to mobilise Muslim sentiment and charitable networks during the Russo-Turkish War, show that this repertoire was still in formation and experimental in practice. What Abdülhamid would later more consciously systematise in the 1880s was already being tested here in an early form.

Religious and Ideological Drivers. The Ottoman state not only focused on the humanitarian potential of this extraterritorial community but also actively sought to cultivate it. Religious sentiment formed one of the most powerful drivers of Indian aid and sympathy for the Ottoman Empire. Religious leaders and scholars invoked Qur’anic principles and the moral duty of solidarity to mobilise support. The bond between Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Caliphate, rooted in centuries of shared legitimacy, was further strengthened under Abdülhamid II, who transformed the Caliphate into a central pillar of his diplomatic strategy.

Concepts such as *ittihad-ı İslam* (union of Islam) and *uhuvvet-i din* (brotherhood of faith) appeared frequently in Ottoman and Indian correspondence, expressing solidarity against imperial domination. The idea of unity among Muslims—described as “Pan-Islamism” in Western sources—became both a political instrument and a moral imperative.⁵¹ Publications such as *Basiret* and *İbret* in Istanbul, and Urdu journals in India, disseminated this discourse to rally public support for the Ottoman cause.⁵²

By the mid-1870s, enthusiasm for the Ottoman Empire had reached its peak among Indian Muslims. Urdu literature and travel writings portrayed the Sultan as the protector of the *umma*, while translations and cultural exchanges deepened identification with the Ottoman state.⁵³ These

50 Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State,” 350–354. For discussions of how the Mahdi uprising and British occupation of Egypt reshaped Ottoman perceptions of imperial rivalry and transformed caliphal concerns into more urgent questions of political survival, see Koçyiğit, “The Ottoman State’s Perception,” 103–104.

51 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 54–55, 73.

52 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 68–70.

53 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 182–183.

interactions operated through emerging forms of public communication and print networks, linking faith, emotion, and diplomacy in ways that made Ottoman influence more visible across imperial boundaries.

At the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, Indian Muslims demonstrated striking unity: petitions and protests urged the British and Indian governments to support the Ottomans, and collective prayers were held across Indian cities.⁵⁴ This convergence of moral sympathy and political interest allowed Abdülhamid II—and the British Conservatives who valued their alliance with him—to extend cooperation despite mutual anxieties. The relief campaigns and the vivid reports of Russian atrocities became crucial tools for shaping Muslim public opinion. As Qureshi notes, after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, anxieties regarding the survival and independence of Islam became almost universal among Muslim populations.⁵⁵ In this sense, Hamidian diplomacy—rooted in the Russian war and centred on the imminent threat posed to Islam—proved both timely and effective.

The religious ethics of giving also played a vital role in sustaining this emotional bond. As Amy Singer notes, beneficent giving has occupied a central place in shaping Islamic societies since the earliest period; the *ḥadīth* and the Qurʾān provide the framework for *ṣadaqa* (voluntary charity) and *zakāt* (obligatory alms), both of which reinforce communal solidarity and the moral duty to aid the afflicted.⁵⁶ These long-standing traditions offered a familiar religious language through which Indian Muslims could interpret their financial and moral support for the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-Turkish War.

Seen in this light, the Indian contributions to Ottoman relief during 1877–78 reflected not merely political sympathy but the continuity of Islamic ethical practice. The blending of charity, faith, and diplomacy transformed benevolence itself into a tool of public diplomacy—an early form of what Abdülhamid II would later institutionalise across the Muslim world.

54 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 121–122. The Friday gatherings to support the Ottoman Empire in India were also reflected in the British Press and will be discussed in the context of the tensions within the British Empire. *The Times of India*, 8 August, 1877.

55 For later manifestations of this increased awareness and mobilisation among South Asian Muslims, particularly after the Ottoman victories at Thessaly (1897) and during the Balkan Wars (1912–13), including the well-known Indian medical mission to Istanbul, see Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, 241–242; Wasti, “The Indian Red Crescent Mission to the Balkan Wars.”

56 Singer, “Giving Practices in Islamic Societies,” 341–346.

Indian Relief and Muslim Solidarity. As this extraterritorial humanitarian potential began to be recognised, the Ottomans increasingly leveraged Islam, Muslim sentiment, and charitable activism as tools to assert influence beyond their own borders, even in territories under direct British rule. Collaboration with Britain, however, remained indispensable, as most donations and financial transfers from India to Istanbul had to pass through British-controlled banks and channels of commerce.⁵⁷

Under British rule, India formed a significant part of the broader British relief efforts. Building upon the religious mobilisation discussed earlier, Indian Muslims demonstrated their solidarity through successful relief appeals. Ottoman consular and diplomatic networks facilitated the transfer of aid and Ottoman archival records contain numerous entries explicitly documenting Indian contributions.⁵⁸

According to the *Stafford House Committee Report*, by May 1877, £5,300 out of £12,045 in total subscriptions originated from India, sent by Sir Salar Jung, the Prime Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad.⁵⁹ The Ottoman ambassador in London, Musurus Pasha, in his correspondence regarding the committee's expenditures, noted that there were no other committees in England receiving contributions from India for the Ottoman wounded.⁶⁰ Ottoman consular correspondence between Bombay, the Sublime Porte, and the London embassy shows that these Indian subscriptions were transferred from the National Bank of India to the Ottoman Bank in London.⁶¹

The immediate response of Indian Muslims can also be traced through archival documents, including dispatches from the Ottoman consul in India detailing efforts to mobilise regional support and negotiations with influential Muslim figures.⁶² A letter from Kelb Ali Khan in Bombay to

57 A study by Y. Doğan Çetinkaya about the route of Indian aid collected by the Indian Caliphate Movement during Turkey's War of Independence emphasises the importance of the consent of the British government in this aid's arrival to Turkey. Çetinkaya, "Hint Hilafet Hareketi'nin Para Yardımı."

58 Defter-i İâne-yi Hindiyye, İstanbul University Rare Collection, No: 79834.

59 Stafford House Committee, *Report and Record of the Operations*, 2.

60 Telegram No. 6760/355, Musurus Pasha to Safvet Pasha, 6 July, 1877, in Kunalalp, no:446, 259-260.

61 BOA, HR. SYS. 1214/1-159, 1214/1-160, 1214/1-161, 1214/1-169, 1214/1-172. These telegrams include subscription receipts and calculations reported by the Ottoman consul in Bombay, Hüseyin Efendi. In documents BOA HR.SYS 1214/1-168 and 169, he provides a monthly summary of collected funds, noting a total of £7,510 left at the consulate for transfer through the Foreign Office, before departing for a subsequent mission to Kabul.

62 BOA, Y.PRK.HR. 1/16 (H-15-12-1293). My summary of the document: "Hind'in ekser cihetlerinde iane toplama girişimlerinin arzu ettiği gibi ilerlememesi üzerine

the Porte serves as an example of such independent initiatives, providing precise information on the sums collected, the dates, and the local committees responsible.⁶³

Press coverage further amplified these efforts. The rapid expansion of vernacular press and telegraphic communication in India throughout the nineteenth century enabled the wide circulation of war-related information and contributed to the formation of a transimperial Muslim public awareness.⁶⁴ While this article does not aim to reconstruct Indian Muslim opinion from vernacular sources, it examines how such mobilisation was perceived, repeated and utilised within Ottoman and British frameworks.

The Times of India regularly published extracts from London-based newspapers, including daily war accounts and subscription lists. The news of Ottoman victories at Plevna and Shipka in August 1877—especially the triumph of Osman Pasha—sparked widespread public enthusiasm and heartfelt demonstrations of sympathy across diverse segments of Indian society.⁶⁵ The victory at Plevna alone occupied nearly half of *The Times of India*'s content on 24 August 1877.⁶⁶

The *Punjabi Akbar* of 7 July published a list of subscribers to the Turkish Relief Fund in Hyderabad, reporting contributions of 25,000 rupees from the Nizam and 6,000 from Sir Salar Jung. *The Times of India* portrayed

‘mutebaran-ı İslamî’ ile işbirliği yaparak şehbenderliğe insanları davet edip ianeye dair duyuru yapılması, bazı ileri gelen isimlerin evlerinde toplanmalar (şeyh Süleyman Efendi örneği) yaparak yardım çağrısında bulunması gibi gayretlerle her bir girişimde kaç rupi toplandığını da bildiren Hariciye nezareti canibi muallim nakibine bildiren yazı. Serşehbender Ali Osman...”

63 BOA, HR. SYS. 2941/18, (16 May 1877). Kelb Ali Khan, known for his charitable contributions during his Hajj visit to Hicaz, represented the interests of Indian Muslims and held a position of authority (*nevvab*) in Râmpûr. He exemplified the Indian Muslim community's interest in charitable works, particularly for the restoration of the *hajj* route, and their increased support for the Ottoman Empire during challenging times such as the Ottoman-Russian wars. See Korucu Üçüncü, “XX. Yüzyıla Kadar Hicaz'da Hindistanlı Müslümanlar,” 184.

64 Discussing the circulation of war news in the vernacular press, Koçyiğit shows that the number of vernacular newspapers in India increased dramatically from only six in 1835 to nearly one hundred in northern India by 1878, and over three hundred by 1880. Supported by telegraphic communication, these publications enabled the daily transmission of developments in the Russo-Turkish War to Indian Muslim audiences. See Koçyiğit, “The Caliphate and Its Dissenters,” 28.

65 *The Times of India*, 8 August 1877. The first declaration of losses from the Russian side were published on this date. Reporting on thanksgiving gatherings in Calcutta mosques for Turkish victories, the same issue noted that the community of Madras had contributed over half a lakh of rupees, which was estimated as roughly half of the total raised for the Turkish relief fund.

66 *The Times of India*, 24 August 1877.

these as remarkable sums, while the *Punjabi Akbar* framed them as modest compared to the total of 65,000 rupees raised in Hyderabad.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, *The Times of India* also highlighted generous British donations—such as the Duke of Portland’s £1,000 contribution to the Stafford House Committee—as models to inspire “the wealthy Mohammedans” of India.⁶⁸

The Language of Gratitude. By the late nineteenth century, the flow of aid and moral support from South Asia under British rule had become vital to the Ottoman Empire’s survival. Although Britain refrained from direct military intervention in the conflicts of 1876–1878, its endorsement of civilian relief initiatives in Europe—and its tolerance of Muslim fundraising in India—indirectly bolstered the Ottoman cause. The organised efforts of religious and community leaders in India to rally public sympathy through fundraising and demonstrations reflected both religious solidarity and political consciousness. These campaigns not only strengthened the larger British relief framework but also exceeded imperial expectations, revealing British unease about the growing moral authority of the Caliphate.⁶⁹

A telegram dated 6 July 1877 from Musurus Pasha to Safvet Pasha confirmed that £7,400 of the total £15,942 collected by the Stafford House Committee originated from India, noting the breakdown of expenditures and transfers.⁷⁰

Equally important was how the Sublime Porte publicised and ritualised Indian aid. Musurus’s reports regarding the attitudes of Britain’s Indian Muslim subjects, did more than register the political climate in London; they made Indian Muslim support visible in ways that Ottoman officials could subsequently draw upon politically.⁷¹ Archival material records

67 *The Times of India*, 14 August 1877.

68 *The Times of India*, 7 August 1877.

69 Cemil Aydın points to the early tensions of this period, noting that the reign of Abdülhamid II coincided with the crisis of European imperial expansion and even in its early years was associated with Pan-Islamic initiatives, although the Sultan continued to pursue a largely cooperative diplomacy with Western powers. Aydın, “Beyond Civilization,” 207.

70 Kunalp and Tokay, *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on ‘the Eastern Question’*, no:446, 259–261. This was also reported in the Stafford House Committee’s report; by May, £5,300 of £12,045 was from India. By the end of operations, the total sum of subscriptions for the Turkish soldiers was declared to be £43,720 without referring the portion coming from India this time. Stafford House Committee, *Report and Record of the Operations*, 2, 4. Here, I want to point the importance given by the Ottomans to the proportion of Indian aid.

71 While the dispatches cited here are treated primarily as diplomatic reporting, they may also be read in light of broader Ottoman efforts to engage European public

multiple instances in which Musurus underlined the positive, even emotionally charged, sympathies expressed by Indian Muslims towards the Ottoman cause.⁷² Through formal expressions of gratitude and the awarding of medals, the Ottoman Empire converted these acts into visible symbols of its moral and political influence. A separate record, *Defter-i İlane-yi Hindiyye*, compiled at the time, listed and categorised the Indian donations: assistance for wounded soldiers, major contributions from Indian *amîrs* and notables, and remittances from across the subcontinent.⁷³ As recorded in the *Defter*, these massive financial transfers were systematically coordinated and channeled through the bureaucratic apparatus of the Sublime Porte and the networks of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. The total amounted to 124,843 Ottoman liras—over 10 million rupees—including cash, medical supplies, and even payments toward the empire’s foreign debts in the form of stocks.⁷⁴ The introduction of this volume emphasised the deliberate effort to collect and organise scattered receipts, noting the decision to send copies of these records back to India “for appropriate demonstrations.”⁷⁵

The inclusion of payments directed toward the Empire’s foreign debt is particularly revealing, suggesting that these contributions were understood not merely as humanitarian relief but also as support for the political and financial survival of the Ottoman state. Equally revealing is the decision to send copies of the records back to India “for appropriate demonstrations.” As Çabuk and Kartal note, delays in issuing receipts often generated suspicion and hindered fundraising efforts among Indian Muslims.⁷⁶ The circulation of these records therefore suggests that the *Defter* was intended not only as an internal register but also as a means of trust-building, and a communication tool for publicising support. By meticulously organising and publicly exhibiting the records, the Ottoman state aimed to ensure transparency, maintain the momentum

opinion through the press and informal networks. See Davison, *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy*; Şafak, “Bir Tanzimat diplomati”; and Kunalalp, “Bir Osmanlı Diplomati.”

72 For examples of such reports, see BOA, HR.SFR.3/246-12 (5 July 1877), a report on a *Times* article reflecting the sympathetic emotions of Indian Muslims toward the Ottomans; and BOA, HR.SYS/590-2 (8 August 1877), a file comprising multiple documents demonstrating Indian Muslim sympathies for the Ottoman cause.

73 *Defter-i İlane-yi Hindiyye*, İstanbul University Rare Collection, No: 79834.

74 Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 121, 124; Çabuk-Kartal, “93 Harbi’nde Hindistan Müslümanlarının Osmanlı Devleti’ne Yardımları,” 567.

75 Introduction page of the *Defter-i İlane-yi Hindiyye*.

76 Çabuk-Kartal, “93 Harbi’nde Hindistan Müslümanlarının Osmanlı Devleti’ne Yardımları,” 567.

of the campaigns, and publicly honour the contributors. In this way, the Porte transformed transnational philanthropy into a visible narrative of caliphal legitimacy.

Abdülhamid II's gratitude was also tangibly expressed through the distribution of medals and official messages. The Afghanistan mission also involved a call for relief support and the delivery of these tokens of appreciation to key figures and organisations in India. Letters preserved in the Ottoman archives reveal Indian recipients' deep appreciation for such honours.⁷⁷ Ahmed Hulusi Efendi was tasked with delivering gratitude messages—letters from the Sultan—while also meeting Amir Ali Khan of Afghanistan to encourage coordinated resistance against Russia. In his reports to the Porte, he mentioned presenting the Sultan's messages and attached a copy of one letter as evidence of the positive reception.⁷⁸

These symbolic gestures reveal the agency of the recipients as well as the strategic sophistication of Ottoman gratitude. Through the moral language of appreciation and the ceremonial circulation of medals, the empire redefined generosity as diplomacy. The *Defter-i İlane-yi Hindiyeye* and related correspondence thus not only documented benevolence but publicly framed it in ways that turned compassion into a resource of imperial legitimacy.⁷⁹ Relief campaigns throughout Muslim Asia thus became tools for showcasing the Sultan's authority and for reinforcing the image of a united Islamic world.

British Concerns: Caliphal Anxiety, Russian Expansion, and Indian Public Opinion

In the previous section, I discussed how the Sultan's influence over South Asian Muslims could operate to Britain's advantage, and how the Sultan began to act beyond British expectations by independently activating this extraterritorial potential. This section examines how that very possibility, once noticed, generated new anxieties on the British side. Two interconnected fears dominated British thinking: the prospect of Russian expansion through Ottoman territories, which threatened vital imperial routes; and the expanding political reach of the Caliphate, whose

⁷⁷ Özcan, *Panislamizm*, 134.

⁷⁸ BOA. Y.A. HUS. 159/14, (H- 1-08-1294)

⁷⁹ Especially in Faiz Ahmed's study on Ottoman medals in India, the British Raj authorities' concern over these decorations serves as an important illustration of the symbolic power attached to such grants in the Indian context. See Ahmed, "Meddling with Medals." Also see Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz*, for a genealogy of the Ottoman tradition of medals and orders, which gained remarkable momentum toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Hamidian diplomacy increasingly appealed to Muslim sentiment across the colonies.⁸⁰ The growing role of public opinion—strengthened by Ottoman initiatives and the discourse of *ittihad-i İslam*—intensified these concerns in London.⁸¹

From the early days of the war, Indian Muslims had expressed open support for the Ottoman cause. A speech delivered in Parliament by Mr. Benett-Stanford discussing the British relief subscriptions revealed both admiration and unease: while acknowledging Indian Muslims' sympathy for the Sultan, he warned of the potential political consequences. He noted that India contained roughly 42 million Muslims, at least 40 million of whom regarded the Sultan as the head of their faith. Quoting Sir Edward Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks*, he emphasised that the Caliph's spiritual authority transcended race and nationality. Benett-Stanford reminded Parliament that nearly one-fourth of Britain's native troops were Muslims and urged that the government should "think twice before stirring up their religious feeling."⁸² A few days earlier, Jacob Bright had cited another MP's statement describing the "connection between India and Turkey as a political nightmare."⁸³ These parliamentary remarks captured a shared anxiety—that Russia's territorial advance through Persia or the Euphrates Valley might not only endanger British routes to India but also awaken the Islamic loyalties of Britain's own colonial subjects.⁸⁴

A correspondent for *The Englishman's Week* provided a vivid field account confirming these concerns. Reporting on the gatherings in Calcutta after news of Ottoman victories reached India, he wrote:

If any of those gentlemen in England, from Sir George Campbell downwards, who have been so confidently expressing their opinions that the Mahomedans in India take no interest in the present war, had happened to see the mosques in Calcutta on Thursday evening, or Friday morning, when thanksgivings were being offered up for the Turkish victories, I think that they would have changed their opinion. I visited some half-dozen of the principal mosques, and every one of them was crowded

80 Karpas, *The Politicization of Islam*, 211.

81 This anxiety was not one-sided. As later developments in the early 1880s demonstrate, the Ottoman state also perceived British policies as a potential threat to its caliphal authority, particularly in the context of the Mahdist uprising and British expansion in Egypt. For the Ottoman perception of the Mahdist uprising as linked to British policies, see Koçyiğit, "The Ottoman State's Perception."

82 Hansard, HC Debates, Vol. 234, (14 May 1877)

83 Hansard, HC Debates, Vol. 234 (10 May 1877)

84 Hansard, HC Debates Vol. 234: (14 May 1877)

by an eager but reverent crowd. Not, as the detractors of the Mahomedans in England would have us believe, of political agitators and men who had something to gain by getting up a spurious show of enthusiasm amongst their co-religionists, but of men of the lower classes, khitmatgars, hackney carriage drivers, petty tradesmen, and others. To anyone who has studied Indian character, it was evident that it was genuine display of feeling. The collections made at the doors for the wounded Turks and widows must have been something considerable.⁸⁵

Such reports strengthened the perception among British officials that the Sultan's moral and spiritual influence could extend far beyond Ottoman borders—into the very heart of the British Raj.

Layard's Warnings on the Double Threat. On 13 June 1877, in the second month of the war, Ambassador Henry Layard wrote to Lord Derby proposing a coordinated plan with Germany and Austria to prevent the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire should Russia impose harsh terms. He warned that abandoning Turkey would not only lead to its dissolution but also diminish Britain's leverage in Asia.⁸⁶ Layard highlighted the Sultan's influence among Muslims in Central Asia and cautioned that any call for *jihād* could have serious repercussions for British rule in India. To him, maintaining Turkish alignment with Britain was essential to keeping Muslim populations across Asia opposed to Russian encroachment.⁸⁷

That same day, Layard also wrote to Lord Cowley, the former British ambassador to Paris, urging him to enlighten public opinion about the dangers of Russian annexation in Armenia. He warned that Russian possession of Armenia would grant them control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, enabling Russia to threaten British access to India.⁸⁸

Layard further communicated with Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, regarding the Sultan's plans to rally Muslims in Central Asia. He mentioned the Sultan's consideration of forming a "Muslim League" or confederation of states to defend Islam against Russia and reported that the Sultan had requested an official *fetva* of excommunication from the *Şeyhülislam* against anyone aiding Shere Ali, the Amir of Afghanistan, who opposed England.⁸⁹ Layard reiterated his warnings about the annexation of Armenia by Russia and the desire to influence public opinion, given

⁸⁵ *The Times of India*, 8 August 1877.

⁸⁶ Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 59.

⁸⁷ Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 54–55.

⁸⁸ Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 58.

⁸⁹ Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 59–61.

that “unfortunately, the public opinion has been so fatally misled in England,” and further warned that governmental inaction would leave Britain vulnerable politically and militarily.⁹⁰

Throughout June 1877, Layard’s correspondence reflected this tension through repeated warnings about the Russian threat, the importance of maintaining Britain’s routes to India, and the necessity of preserving the alliance with the Ottoman Sultan to reach Muslim populations across the subcontinent. Moreover, the Sultan’s envoys and their activities were extensively discussed with British representatives.⁹¹ British policymakers increasingly perceived the Ottoman Caliphate not merely as a spiritual authority but as a transimperial force capable of mobilising colonial Muslims beyond political borders—a perception that would intensify in the following decades.⁹²

British Relief as a Dual Instrument. The British relief campaigns during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 served a twofold purpose. Ostensibly humanitarian, they also functioned as instruments of imperial communication and control. The campaigns, while presented as “civil” and non-governmental, allowed Britain to project benevolence both to Europe and to its Muslim subjects.

Layard’s reflections in his memoirs reveal this dual logic. He noted that the history of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, apart from all other benefits and the effective demonstration of English philanthropy above religious prejudices, demonstrated the Fund’s advantages for British interests through the impression it produced upon Muslims, especially the Muslims of India, who were sympathetic to their co-religionists.⁹³

Thus, the justification for British relief campaigns lay, for the leading figures of the day, between compassion and calculation. Humanitarian diplomacy and addressing public opinion became a shared language between the British and Ottoman empires, through which both sought legitimacy and influence over transimperial Muslim publics.

90 Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 61.

91 The envoy Ahmed Hulusi Efendi and his affairs, as well as the sheikhs and prominent figures in Afghanistan, were discussed with Lord Lytton. Layard warned the British governor in India to be watchful and make every preparation possible for the envoys. For other examples, see Kuneralp, *The Private Letters*, 78–80, 99–101.

92 For later historiographical and bibliographical discussions on the Caliphate and Pan-Islamic politics, see Khan, “The Caliphate Question”; and Ardiç, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Hilafet Tartışmaları.”

93 Kuneralp, *The Queen’s Ambassador*, 141–143, 261.

Conclusion

Although the extraterritorial potential of Muslim solidarity was not invented by Abdülhamid II, the 1877–78 moment became a significant turning point. Earlier forms of contact, awareness, and religiously had certainly framed connections with Muslim communities beyond Ottoman borders, yet these relations remained more fragmented, symbolic, episodic, or less systematically mobilised as political instruments. During the Russo-Turkish War, however, this potential was more explicitly articulated and mobilised through the emerging European humanitarian discourse, which gave it a new visibility and diplomatic function.

Abdülhamid's later policies did not represent a radical invention, but rather the professionalisation and centralisation of this repertoire. In this sense, the 1877 mission can be understood as an early rehearsal: a moment in which the Ottoman state experimented with tools that would later be consciously systematised. The war, and the Bulgarian-related agitation in Britain, revealed that humanitarian language could be mobilised as a diplomatic instrument—something the Hamidian regime would later deploy in more structured ways, evolving into a more systematic and security-oriented form of caliphal and Pan-Islamic politics.

While appreciating the importance of developments in communication and print culture, as Koçyiğit has shown, this article suggests an additional dimension to that transformation. Not only accelerated flows of information through steam, telegraph, and print prepared the ground for later Pan-Islamic politics; the conjuncture of British relief campaigns and Ottoman engagement with such European humanitarian discourse also introduced new public-diplomatic methodologies. The language of atrocity, victimhood, and humanitarian relief did not merely communicate Muslim solidarity; it helped organise and politicise it in new ways, contributing to some of the earliest large-scale forms of Muslim mobilisation that later Hamidian policies would systematise.

This article has shown that the Sublime Porte did not merely mobilise South Asian Muslims as a constituency of sympathy, but strategically used them as diplomatic leverage to keep Britain aligned at a moment when the “Bulgarian atrocities” agitation had rendered the Ottoman Empire morally vulnerable in Europe. Working in tandem with British Conservative diplomacy, the Ottoman government recognised the operational value of humanitarian discourse and the political utility of framing Muslim suffering in the Russo-Turkish War in ways that could resonate within Britain's own imperial public sphere.

In this configuration, Ottoman and British actors enacted one of the final-phase coordinated moves of their relationship: philanthropy became a shared instrument through which non-intervention could be sustained, the alliance extended, and Muslim India positioned as the central component of this counter-humanitarian politics.

From the British perspective, Indian Muslim loyalty was both an asset and a liability, strengthening imperial influence while exposing its fragility. The Turkish Compassionate Fund and other relief initiatives were not merely charitable acts, but instruments of imperial management, balancing the moral narrative of the Caliphate with British geopolitical needs. Through these campaigns, Disraeli's government turned benevolence into a mode of diplomacy, while Abdülhamid reciprocated by transforming gratitude and Islamic solidarity into tools of Ottoman visibility and leverage within this alliance.

This dynamic was not one-sided: in the early 1880s, the Ottoman state also started to perceive British expansion and interventions as potential threats to its caliphal authority. The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 crystallised this shift, marking a rupture in the older strategic assumptions that had made cooperation possible in 1877–78. Seen in this light, the humanitarian diplomacy of the war appears not only as an early phase of Hamidian experimentation, but also as one of the final moments before Anglo-Ottoman rivalry assumed a more openly imperial form.

The Sublime Porte employed public diplomacy through envoys, religious leaders, and the press to mobilise extraterritorial Muslim opinion. The global position of South Asian Muslims enabled the Ottoman Empire to exercise a significant degree of agency in shaping the humanitarian politics of the late nineteenth century. This agency was both supported and quietly feared by the British Conservative government, which needed Ottoman cooperation to counter anti-Ottoman sentiment, yet remained alert to the risk that Hamidian diplomacy in India might begin to operate beyond London's control.

Seen from this perspective, the Ottoman experience of 1877–78 suggests that engagements with European moral and humanitarian discourses were already being shaped as strategic resources by non-European actors well before the fully articulated Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian critiques of the early twentieth century.

Ultimately, the interplay between the Ottoman and British relief campaigns demonstrates the layered meanings and multifaceted utility of philanthropy and humanitarianism in the nineteenth century. It served as a shared diplomatic language through which empires negotiated public

sentiment. Seen in this light, the Ottoman response did not merely counter the Bulgarian atrocities agitation, but appropriated European humanitarian language itself, reversing the logic of victimhood and turning humanitarian discourse into a diplomatic resource. Even in the role of a receiver, the Ottoman Empire's orchestration of gratitude and public diplomacy reveals a form of diplomatic agency that compels us to reconsider the role of non-European actors in shaping the moral and political language of nineteenth century international relations.

Bibliography

Archives / Official Documents

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA).

Periodicals

The Times (London)

The Morning Post (London)

The Times of India (Bombay)

The Englishman's Week (Calcutta)

Basiret and Takvim-i Vekayi (Istanbul)

Parliamentary Debates

Hansard Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1877–78.

Published Sources

Ahmed, Faiz, "Contested Subjects: Ottoman and British Jurisdictional Quarrels in re Afghans and Indian Muslims." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3/2 (2016): 325–346.

Ahmed, Faiz, "Meddling with Medals, Defending the Dead: Late Ottoman Soft Power from South Asia to North America." *The International History Review* 43/5 (2021): 1041–1059.

Ahmed, Faiz, "Istanbul and Kabul in Courtly Contact: The Question of Exchange between the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 45/45 (2015): 265–296.

Ali, Shamshad, "The Ottoman Caliphate and British Imperialism in India." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 54 (1993): 739–747.

Anderson, Dorothy, *The Balkan Volunteers*. London: Hutchinson, 1968.

Ardıç, Nurullah, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Hilafet Tartışmaları: Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 15/29 (2017): 301–328.

Aydın, Cemil, "Beyond Civilization: Pan-Islamism, Pan-Asianism and the Revolt against the West", *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 4/2 (2006): 204–23. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26265834>.

Bayram, Fatih, "Sarı Abdullah Münşeâtında Osmanlı-Bâbürlü Diplomatik İlişkilerine Dair Mektuplar", *XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Osmanlı Tarihi ve Medeniyeti), Türk Tarih Kurum Yayınları, 3: 467–478.

Baysun, M. Cavid, "Şirvanî-zade Ahmed Hulûsî Efendi'nin Efganistan Elçiliğine Âid Vesikalar". *Tarih Dergisi* 4/7 (1953): 147–158.

Çabuk, M., Kartal, A. "93 Harbi'nde Hindistan Müslümanlarının Osmanlı Devleti'ne Yardımları", *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 16/2 (2019): 555–575.

Çetinkaya, Y. Doğan, "Hint Hilafet Hareketi'nin Para Yardımı ve 'İngiliz izni'", *Toplumsal Tarih* 341 (2022): 44–51.

Davison, Roderic H. "Ottoman Public Relations and the Westernization of Ottoman Diplomacy." In *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923: The Impact of the West*, 166–179. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

- Davison, Roderic H, *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms*. Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1999.
- Deringil, Selim, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Dış İlişkilerinde 'İmaj' Saplantısı." *Sultan II. Abdülhamid ve Devri Semineri: Bildiriler (27-29 Mayıs 1992)*. Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1994.
- Deringil, Selim, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, Çev. G. Çağal Güven, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007.
- Deringil, Selim, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23/3 (1991): 345-359.
- Deringil, Selim, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, London-New York, 1998.
- Dunstan, H. Mainwaring, *The Turkish Compassionate Fund: An Account of Its Origin, Working, and Results*, ed. W. Burdett-Coutts, London: Remington and Co., 1883.
- Ediz, İsmail, "The Turkish Straits in British Strategy (1774-1923): Geography Balancing the Ottoman Empire, Britain, and Russia", *Kadim 10* (2025): 49-83.
- Eldem, Edhem. *İftihar ve imtiyaz: Osmanlı Nişan ve Madalyaları Tarihi*, Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2004.
- Farooqi, Naimur Rahman, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations, A Study of Political & Diplomatic Relations between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748*, Delhi: İdarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1989.
- Farooqi, Suraiya, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000.
- Gill, Rebecca, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.
- Gladstone, William E, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, London: John Murray, 1876.
- Goldstein, Erik, "Religion and British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire, 1875-1923." K. Robbins - J. Fisher, eds., *Religion and diplomacy: religion and British foreign policy, 1815 to 1941*, 85-94, Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2009.
- Götz, Norbert - Georgina Brewis - Steffen Werther, *Humanitarianism in the Modern World: The Moral Economy of Famine Relief*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Gürpınar, Doğan, "The Rise and Fall of Turcophilism in Nineteenth-Century British Discourses: Visions of the Turk, 'Young' and 'Old'". *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 39/3 (2012): 346-371.
- Hatip Dinçyürek, Sena. A "compassionate" Episode in Anglo-Ottoman History: British Relief to the 93 Refugees (1877-1878). Istanbul: Libra Yayınları, 2013.
- Healey, Edna, *Lady Unknown: The life of Angela Burdett-Coutts*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978.
- Heraclides Alexis., Dialla, Ada, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*, Manchester University Press, 2015.
- Hutchinson, John F., *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross*. Abingdon, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.
- Himmelfarb, Gertrude, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- İpek, Nedim, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk göçleri (1877-1890)*. Ankara, Türkiye: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999.
- Jelavich, Barbara, *Balkan Tarihi: 18 ve 19. Yüzyıllar*. Çev. İhsan Durdu - Haşim Koç - Gülçin Tunalı Koç, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013.
- Jelavich, Barbara, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Jelavich, Barbara, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements: 1806-1914*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- Kardaş, Zekai, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Hint Müslümanları ilişkilerinde Hilafet Hareketinin Rolü." *Şarkiyat Mecmuası* 41 (2022): 441–451.
- Karpat, Kemal H, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Kavak, Hafize Zehra, ed. *Understanding Humanitarian Diplomacy: Principles and Practice*, London: Routledge, 2024.
- Khan, Saad Omar, "The 'Caliphate Question': British Views and Policy Toward Pan-Islamic Politics and the End of the Ottoman Caliphate." *American Journal of Islam and Society* 24/4 (2007): 1–25.
- Kireççi, Mehmet Akif, "Humanitarianism, Philanthropy, and Humanitarian Diplomacy," Kavak, ed. *Understanding Humanitarian Diplomacy: Principles and Practice*, 1–15. London: Routledge, 2024.
- Koçyiğit, Ömer, "The Ottoman State's Perception about the Sudanese Mahdi Uprising", *International Journal of Turcologia*, 9-18, (2014): 101-137.
- Koçyiğit, Ömer, "The Caliphate and Its Dissenters", In *Challenging the Caliphate: Wahhabism and Mahdism in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2026. 25–130.
- Korucu Üçüncü, Büşra, "XX. Yüzyıla Kadar Hicaz'da Hindistanlı Müslümanlar." *İçtimaiyat Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5/2 (2021): 179–191.
- Kuneralp, Sinan, ed. *The Queen's Ambassador to the Sultan: Memoirs of Sir Henry A. Layard's Constantinople Embassy 1877–1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2009.
- Kuneralp, Sinan, and G. Tokay, eds. *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on "The Eastern Question": The Balkan Crisis (1875–1878). Part IV: The Turco-Russian War: May 1877–January 1878*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2014.
- Kuneralp, Sinan, ed. *The Private Letters of Sir Austen Henry Layard during His Constantinople Embassy 1877–1880*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2018.
- Kuneralp, Sinan, ed. *The Private Letters of Sir Austin Henry Layard*, İstanbul: Isis Press, 2009.
- Kuneralp, Sinan, "Bir Osmanlı Diplomatı Kostaki Musurus Paşa", *Belleten*, 34/135 (1970): 421-435.
- Melissen, Jan, ed. *The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Nye, Joseph S, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 94–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097996>.
- Orton, Richard, *Made of Gold: A Biography of Angela Burdett-Coutts*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983.
- Özbek, Nadir, "Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism, and the Hamidian Regime, 1876–1909", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37/1 (2005): 59–81.
- Özbek, Nadir, ed. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda sosyal devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet (1876–1914)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002.
- Özçelik, Tuğrul, *Basiret Gazetesi Penceresinden 93 Harbi'nde İstanbul'da Rumeli Göçmenleri*, İstanbul: DBY Yayınları, 2022.
- Özcan, Azmi, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877–1924)*, Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Özcan, Azmi, *Panislamizm: Osmanlı Devleti, Hindistan Müslümanları ve İngiltere (1877–1924)*, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM) Yayınları, 2020.
- Patterson, Clara Burdett, *Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1953.
- Prochaska, Frank, "Victorian England: The Age of Societies." In D. Cannadine and J. Pellew, eds., *History and Philanthropy: Past, Present and Future*, 19-32. London: University of London Press, 2008.
- Qureshi, M. Naeem, *Pan-Islam in British Indian politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Qureshi, Ishtiaq Husain, *Ulema in Politics*, Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House, 1972.
- Rodogno, Davide. *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

- Saçmal, Muhammet Habib, "The Safavid Buffer: Co-Sectarian Rivalry in Early Modern Ottoman Diplomacy with Sunni Asia", *Journal of Early Modern History* 28/5 (2024): 392-414
- Salvatici, Silvia, *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755-1989: In the Name of Others*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.
- Satır, Oğuz, "1853-1856 Kırım Savaşı ve 1876 Bulgar Krizi Işığında Şark Meselesi'nin İngiliz Kamuoyuna Yansıması" (yüksek lisans tezi), 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2018.
- Schimmell, Annemarie, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*, London: Reaktion Books, 2004.
- Seton-Watson, Robert William, *Disraeli, Gladstone & the Eastern Question*, Routledge, 2004.
- Singer, Amy, *Charity in Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Singer, Amy, "Giving Practices in Islamic Societies." *Social Research* 8/2 (2013): 341-358. doi:10.1353/sor.2013.0002.x.
- Stafford House Committee for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Turkish Soldiers. *Report and Record of the Operations of the Stafford House Committee for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Turkish Soldiers: Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78*. London: Forgotten Books, 2015.
- Stephanov, Darin, *Ruler Visibility and Popular Belonging in the Ottoman Empire, 1808-1908*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.
- Şafak, Nurdan, "Bir Tanzimat diplomatı Kostaki Musurus Paşa (1807-1891)" (doktora tezi), Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2006.
- Şahin, Hilal, "Osmanlı Devleti ile Hindistan Müslümanlarının Tarihî Bağı ve 'Hindistan Hilafet Hareketi', *Kafkas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 24 (2019): 865-888.
- Şimşir, Bilal N., *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri: Belgeler = Emigrations Turques des Balkans: Documents = Turkish Emigrations from the Balkans: Documents I*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1989.
- Wasti, S. Tanvir, "Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the Turks", *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, 4 (2010): 529-542.
- Wasti, S. Tanvir, "The Indian Red Crescent Mission to the Balkan Wars", *Middle Eastern Studies* 45/3 (2009): 393-406.
- Wasti, S. Tanvir, "The 1877 Ottoman Mission to Afghanistan", *Middle Eastern Studies* 30/4 (1994): 956-62.