

The Crimean War and Its Impact on International Relations Until 1856 AD

Hanin Rafea Odah¹, Dr. Abbas Mohammed Jamil Al-Agha²

Abstract

The Crimean Peninsula is the peninsula where one of the most significant world wars began, which had a direct and profound impact on the main party in this war, the Ottoman Empire, and on the European countries that caused this war, especially Russia, the country with great ambitions and interests in this region. Therefore, the Crimean War is a major turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire and the history of its peoples, in which they found the appropriate opportunity to be liberated from the Ottoman control in order to achieve their independence, like Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro.

Keywords: World War - Ottoman Empire - Crimean War - International Relations.

Introduction

Because of the international imbalance caused by the Crimean War in the relations between European countries and its repercussions on the global scene and because of the important historical stage it constitutes in the history of the Ottoman Empire and its peoples, our choice of this topic as the title of the study came to highlight the nature of this war and its direct and indirect causes, and its most important consequences, in addition to the personal desire and curiosity that prompted us to reveal the nature of Ottoman-European relations during this historical period.

The nature of the research required dividing it into an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter was entitled (The Crimean War: What it is and its causes), while the second chapter dealt with (The impact of the war on Ottoman-European relations and the international position on it), while the last chapter was entitled (The final settlement of the Crimean War).

The Crimean War: What it is and its causes

Before going into details, it is worth reviewing the facts that are indispensable to understand the nature and reasons for the outbreak of that war that broke out initially between the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia (Kazem, 2006: 18). The first is the fact that the Ottoman Empire began to lose its luster in the late seventeenth century, and its powers were diminished in the face of the growing powers of Europe, which could have eliminated the Ottomans if they had enhanced their efforts, had they not disagreed about the method of dividing the Ottoman Empire, towards which their approaches contradicted according to the interests of each of them, beginning the first stages of what was known as the Eastern Question (Qassem and Hosni, 1922: 219). The competition between the major European powers prevented them from dealing with international issues, each

¹ Anbar University, College of Basic Education / Haditha, hanin.rafea@uoanbar.edu.iq

² General Directorate of Nineveh Education, abassmohammedaghs@gmail.com

European country tried to exploit to its advantage and to dominate its European counterparts, especially with regard to the Ottoman Empire, which was distinguished by its geographical location, the diversity of its wealth, and its religious, demographic, and geostrategic importance (Al-Obeidi, 2003:).

History is also full of competition between the major European powers that were only concerned with their own interests, especially Britain and Russia, whose competition was a traditional foreign policy for the two countries (Ahmed, 1985: 34-73). France also has its reasons for interfering with Russia, which harmed it shortly after the overthrow of Napoleon (Al-Shuwaili, 2006: 82-84), also, France's relations with Britain were not without boycotts, just as Russia, with its expansionist policies and endless ambition, consumed Britain, France, and other European powers (Nawar and Jamal Al-Din, 1999: 350-351), and here it is worth noting that the areas of Anglo-Russian competition were multiple, and that the Ottoman Empire was one of its channels, especially since Russia continued its attempts to accelerate the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the rest of the European powers (Mustafa, 1993: 207-208), and finally, what motivated Britain and France to fight Russia is that Europe, which was sensing the danger of Russia, was against it and was ready to support Britain and France in opposing it (Hajar, 1989: 69-73).

This is what actually angered Britain, especially after Russia presented its partition project to the European countries, using religion as an excuse to declare war on the Ottoman Empire, because by virtue of its embrace of the Orthodox Christian doctrine, it found itself worthy of inheriting the Byzantine state, and its tsars aspired to control Constantinople, which the Ottomans conquered in 1453, and its geographical, material and strategic interests required it to intensify its pressure on the state that controls the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, either by eliminating it, or penetrating into its parts to direct its policies, or at least guaranteeing the freedom of passage for its commercial and military ships at all times through these passages, and closing them to ships hostile to Russia (Zakhoyi, 2005: 7-8).

We must not forget the fact that Russia is the most ambitious European country in the Balkans, especially after its influence increased after the Vienna Conference (Vienna Conference: a conference that was held on September 16, 1814 in the Austrian city of Vienna in order to solve many and complex problems of the European continent after the First Treaty of Paris, the number of delegations participating in the conference reached 216, led by Tsar Alexander I of Russia, King of Prussia Frederick Guillaume III, Emperor Francis I of Austria, and its Foreign Minister Metternich. A committee was formed at the conference consisting of England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and then France joined its ranks in order to study the issues raised at the conference, discuss them, and draw a new map for Europe. Other committees were also established, including the Statistics Committee, which specialized in enumerating the population in the lands that were to be given to the Allies, and the German Committee to study the affairs of Germany and draw up a constitution for it. The most important decisions that came from the conference were that France would be restored to its borders before the French Revolution and that it would be allowed to keep the city of Avignon, as well as that the English king would obtain the lands of the German province of Hanover and recognize Russia's sovereignty over the lands of Bessarabia.) (Nawar and al-Na'I, 2009: 138-144) (Hawi, 2004).

Therefore, its policy during the nineteenth century tended to work to weaken the Ottoman Empire, by fighting it and supporting the Balkan peoples in their liberation revolutions against it (Dolina, 1999: 129). This is what prompted the Russian Tsar in the year 1853 to think about ending the entire Eastern Question, so he presented to the British ambassador in Russia a project to divide the Ottoman Empire, Russia would take the straits, in exchange for Britain's seizure of Egypt, Rhodes, and Cyprus. However, Britain rejected the idea as it found an increase in Russia's influence in the Mediterranean region (Al-Jamal and Ibrahim, 2000: 216).

At that time, Russia began to fabricate pretexts to implement its project and found the religious factor to be the best way to do so, especially since, according to previous agreements with the Ottomans, it was concerned with the affairs of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire, and it found in the issue of managing pilgrimage places in Quds an apparent reason, especially since it aspired through it to give priority to the influence of its sect on the Catholic and Protestant sects, which are under the protection of France and Britain. Either the state agrees to manage the places of pilgrimage, this would be a blow to Anglo-French influence, and so all of Europe, or if it refused, Russia would fight it to implement the agenda of occupying the Straits (Brockelmann, 1968: 567-569).

Also, Napoleon III's France had shown its support for liberal and nationalist trends, which troubled Russia because of its fear of the aspirations of Poland and the Russians themselves, in addition to the influence achieved by the Catholics under France's protection in the Christian Holy Lands in 1852 at the expense of the influence of the Orthodox (Nawar and Jamal Al-Din, 1999: 354)

Russia sent a diplomatic mission headed by Menshikov on February 10, 1853, pretending to want to resolve the problem of the administration of the holy places. However, its behavior was accompanied by provocation even before its arrival to the Ottoman Empire, because it reviewed the Russian armies on the Ottoman borders, which indicated its hostility and threat from the beginning, which appeared most clearly in Menshikov's hostile behavior in his negotiations with Ottoman politicians (al-mihami, 1981:493-494), and the desire not to resolve the religious problem but to place the Ottoman state under Russian protection, which worried Britain and France, who feared his success in forcing the Ottoman Empire to sign a protection treaty similar to the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi (Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty: is the treaty that was concluded between the Ottoman Empire and Russia on June 8, 1833. It is considered an offensive-defensive alliance treaty, as it was held in the village of Hünkâr İskelesi, near Istanbul. The duration of this treaty was eight years, it included a secret article in which it stipulated that the Sublime Porte, upon the request of the Russian Emperor, would close the Dardanelles Strait to armed ships of foreign powers. In this treaty, the Russians achieved great success, represented by opening the Black Sea straits to their warships) (Creasy, 2019: 638; Hassoun,1982:105) (Omar,2000:103-105).

At that time, the two countries became active diplomatically and militarily to confront any emergency that threatened their influence in the Ottoman Empire, whether diplomatically or militarily (Abu al-Fadl, N.d.: 182-190), which encouraged the Ottomans not to submit to his wishes, and although they showed a willingness to resolve the problem of the administration of the Holy Places in a compromise solution, they refused to enter into negotiations with him about some parts of the Balkans under the pretext of the need to inform the major European countries before that. They also rejected his request to conclude a treaty similar to the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi (Omar, 2000: 105).

Thus, the Ottomans succeeded, through the harmony of their policy with Britain and France, in gaining the support from them, especially after Menshikov gave the Sultan (Nawar, N.d.: 173) until May 10, 1853, after which Russia would be free to act as it wished to secure its interests. (al-mihami,1981:495)

For this reason, the greatest leadership was assigned to Rashid Pasha (Rashid Pasha (1800-1858): An Ottoman minister and politician, and considered one of the most prominent diplomatic figures in the Ottoman Empire. He was born in Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire sent him to the Morea after he was promoted to the rank of Bash Caliph (Bashkatib). He then sent an ambassador to Paris to resolve the issue of Egypt, while he was not more than thirty years old. In addition, he gained a share of fame after returning criminals who appeared after the great disorder in Hungary in 1849. He held several positions, including: the position of leader six times and foreign minister four times. He was appointed governor of Edirne, and he founded the first Ottoman newspaper in

Astana, which was Takvim-i Vekayi) (Zaidan, 2012: 248-249). His cabinet included the most hostile Ottoman politicians to Russia. Menshikov was informed on May 17, 1853, of the new Council of Ministers' decision to reject Russian demands, so the Russian ambassador announced the severing of his country's relations with the Sublime Porte, and left Istanbul on a boat on May 18, threatening the Ottoman Empire with the occupation of the Emirates of Wallachia and Bagdan by Russian soldiers (Wallachia and Bagdan: two states located north of the Danube River and surrounded by three major countries: Poland, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Southern Wallachia was subjected to the control of The Ottoman Empire at the end of the fourteenth century is called Wallachia. As for Bagdan, is called Moldova, which is located in the far north-east of Romania. The two states form a link between trade in the Balkans and the Ottoman capital, Istanbul. The lands of the two states also became a crossing point for the trade of the Ottoman Empire after it imposed its control over them at the end of the fourteenth century.) (Horizons of Culture, 2018: 46-47) (Omar, 2000: 105-106), and the Russian forces crossed the Prut River towards the two Danube states, which they occupied on July 3, 1853, beginning the Crimean War (Disraeli, 1855:279:280).

The impact of the war on Ottoman-European relations and the international position on them

The international balance and the special interests of each country played a dangerous role in determining the positions of the great European powers on the Crimean War, led by Britain and France, which had great influence in the Ottoman Empire and were greatly threatened by Russia, so they worked to prevent it from reaching the Near East region (Hopkins 1896: 145-147), and here we must emphasize that the Anglo-Russian rivalry was intense in the region and was even the general feature of the relations of the two countries (Al-Dulaimi, 2005:48), and that Britain's agenda with regard to the Ottoman Empire revolved around keeping it weak until the opportunity arises to pounce on it at the appropriate time, to obtain the largest share of it in a way that secures its colonial interests, especially since Britain has crawled towards the Arabian Gulf since it set foot in India, and has become the most prominent player in the Eastern Question (Al -Sayyad, 2006:106-108).

As for France, it had friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire, and the most prominent reason for the Crimean War came from its increasing religious influence in the Ottoman Empire after the Sultan granted the French government some rights to the holy places in Palestine, in addition to the commercial and consular privileges that French nationals enjoyed within the Ottoman Empire (Hajar, 1989:73-77), and there is a special factor associated with the French Emperor Napoleon III, who was looking to gain the support of the Catholic party in France by controlling the administration of the holy places, in addition to his desire to get France out of its isolation resulting from the Vienna Conference settlements, and to play a political role consistent with its imperial horizons (Frémaux, 1991: 66-67; Al-Sobky, 1985: 316-318), French public opinion, which was sympathetic to Poland under the yoke of the Russians, played a significant role in its position on the Crimean War (Hatoum, 1976).

This is also the case with the Empire of Austria-Hungary, which had its traditional ambitions in the Balkans, and was therefore a strong competitor to Russia's aspirations there, but Russia was neutral by entrusting the administration of the two Danube provinces to it during the war (Nawar and Jamal Al-Din, 1999: 355), while other European countries generally adopted positions supportive of the Anglo-French position, or neutral, with the exception of Piedmont, whose aspirations for Italian unity forced it to join the Anglo-French alliance, in the hope that it would thus consolidate its position in a way that would allow it to achieve its aspirations (Ramadan, 1997: 97). As for the Balkan Christians, most of them sympathized with Russia, which they saw as their protector against the Ottomans (Kazem, 2006: 21).

Chronicles of war

The Ottoman Sultan issued a warning to Russia of the necessity of evacuating the two provinces, otherwise he would be forced to declare war on them, and the Ottoman armies advanced under the leadership of Omar Pasha (Omar Pasha: He was born to an Austrian father in Blaski on the borders of Bosnia in 1806, and his father enrolled him in the military school in Born, after which he was recruited into one of the Austrian soldiers' divisions and rose to the rank of assistant in road and bridge surveying. Then, at the age of twenty-eight, he headed to Ottoman Bosnia and entered the Islamic religion and called himself Omar after his name was Michael. He was also among the soldiers of the campaign that the Ottoman Empire sent to fight Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt in the Levant, then he was appointed as a military commander in one of the provinces of the Levant. He also participated in the Crimean War, in addition to being assigned by the Sublime Porte to put down the revolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he obtained the rank of minister after leaving military work) (Mardam Bey, 1971: 302-303) who was able to achieve important victories over the Russian army, expel it beyond the Danube, and defeat it in the Caucasus (al-mihami, 1981:497-498). The French and British fleets also arrived in the Bosphorus Strait to intervene on the side of the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian fleet attacked the Ottoman Sinop port (Sinop: a city located in northern Anatolia on the Black Sea, and was founded in the seventh century B.C by King Pontus, and it was seized by the Romans under the leadership of Lucius to flourish commercially and politically during the Byzantine era. It also witnessed the outbreak of a fierce battle between the Ottoman and Russian fleets on November 30, 1853, ending with the Ottoman fleet suffering heavy losses in lives and money, and today it is considered one of the Turkish ports) (Muhammad, 2013: 184) on the Black Sea, and destroyed the Ottoman ships present in it after a fierce battle in November 1853, and despite Britain and France announcing their accession to the side of the Ottoman Empire, Russia did not back down from its position, which forced both parties to declare war against it (Assaf, 1955:121).

The Allies began their attack on the Crimean Peninsula, with the aim of eliminating the Russian naval power. Sevastopol, the Russian naval base on the peninsula, was attacked on February 6, 1854 (Omar, 2000: 115). The Allies besieged it for a whole year, during which they faced great difficulties, due to the cold weather, as well as the outbreak of a cholera epidemic among the Allies, and after a series of battles between the two sides, the port of Sevastopol fell (Севастóполь) which is one of the cities of the Crimean Peninsula, disputed between Russia and Ukraine, overlooking the Black Sea. It is always famous as the city of Russian military glory. It has enormous importance in Russia's military history and is currently the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Despite its location in the territory of Ukraine, Moscow has strongly refused to withdraw the Russian fleet from the city, until it was annexed to Russia in 2014. The city's population is 342,451 according to 2001 statistics, and the city has been growing very rapidly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. (<https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84>).

On September 9, 1855, the Russians were defeated (Zakhoyi, 2005: 7-8), but Russia tipped the balance on the Caucasus front after they captured the city of Kars, and thus the war began to end. (http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8_%D8%A7)

Especially after the heavy losses suffered by all parties, as well as the death of the Russian Tsar Nicholas I, and the coming of Alexander II, who felt the severity of the war and the economic hardships that the country suffered (Zakhoyi, 2005:8), and his receipt of a warning from Austria in early 1856 of the necessity of ending the war, and its offering of conditions for peace with the Allies, all of which hastened its end (Hajar, 1989:83).

Then, after achieving their goal of destroying the Russian fleet and preventing Russia from carrying out any activities in the Mediterranean basin, the French and British became convinced that they had achieved their goals in the war (Khalil, 2003:98), especially after differences of opinion emerged between France and Britain that greatly weakened their position, so everyone agreed to reconciliation. (<http://www.details/english,inmiddlea.hodg>).

The final settlement of the Crimean War

The peace conference was held in Paris on March 30, 1856 (Khalil, 2003:97), and resulted in the conclusion of the Paris Treaty, which included several important points, the most important of which was freedom of navigation on the Danube River, the formation of an international committee to supervise this, the recognition of Ottoman sovereignty over the straits, and the declaration of the neutrality of the Black Sea, and respecting the independence of the Ottoman Empire and not interfering in its affairs, in exchange for a pledge to improve the conditions of Christian subjects in the Balkans (Yaghi, 1998: 156). It also included the Sultan's recognition of complete equality between his subjects regardless of their religions and sects, meaning that no foreign country has the right to interfere in the affairs of the Sultan's subjects (al-Amawi, 2005: 39-40). Other provisions included in the treaty included acceptance of the principle of arbitration in the event of a dispute between the Ottoman Empire and other countries, freedom of navigation on the Tuna River, and the return of Sevastopol to Russia, in exchange for the return of Kars to the Ottoman Empire (Qassem and Hosni, 1922: 216-217), and the restoration of the Danube states' autonomy under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultan, on the condition that they remain under the joint guarantee of the major powers that promised not to interfere in their affairs in the future, in addition to Serbia maintaining its autonomy under the sovereignty of the Sultan, and in accordance with the joint guarantee on the part of the states, the Ottomans reserved the right to place garrisons in Serbian lands, and the statement issued by the Paris Conference of 1856 laid the foundations and international rules for the naval blockade, and stipulated the prohibition of piracy. (https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%85).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that we noticed that many factors caused that war, which was more about settling accounts for major powers than out of concern for the interests of the Ottomans, and that the religious factor was nothing but a propaganda reason to create crises and win public opinion.

The Crimean War also showed Russia's weakness even if Europe united against it, and this is exactly what happened to the Russians, who lost their role significantly in European issues after that. In this context, the Russian-Austrian alliance based on fighting the liberal and nationalist movements was shattered, which greatly weakened the position of the Austrian Empire. It led to radical changes in the map of Europe after a short time.

The Ottomans, in turn, to win European public opinion, issued a set of reforms and regulations, including what was known as "Hatt-i humayun". The statement issued by the Paris Conference of 1856 laid the foundations and international rules for the naval blockade, and stipulated the prohibition of piracy.

In the end, it turns out that the religious factor was not a fundamental factor in the outbreak of the Crimean War, but rather it was a pretext taken by Russia to declare war against the Ottoman Empire, in order to achieve its ambitions within the territories of this state, so it presented a project to divide the properties of the Ottoman Empire to France and Britain, but these two countries rejected the Russian project, not because they wanted to support the Ottoman Empire and preserve its properties, but rather it was based on a

British and French desire to keep the Ottoman Empire weak, so that they can control the territories subject to them in the coming stages.

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