

The Crimean war of 1853-1856 and it's Consequences

- The Crimean war was a military conflict fought from October 1853 to February 1856 in which the Russian Empire lost to an alliance of the ottoman Empire, France, Britain and Sardinia.
- The immediate cause involved the right of the Christian minorities in the Holy land which was a part of the Ottoman Empire.

- The French promoted the right of the Roman Catholics, whilst Russia promoted growth of the Eastern orthodox church.
- The longer term causes involved the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the unwillingness of the Britain and France to allow Russia to gain territory and power over Ottoman expense.
- It has widely been noted that the causes in one case involving an argument over a key have never revealed a "greater confusion of purpose" yet they led to a war notes for its "notoriously incompetent in international butchery"

- This formal recognition signed at the Congress of Paris came after Russia accepted a humiliating defeat against the alliance of Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire and Sardinia. The treaty itself would address Russian expansionism, quashing dreams of a Russian empire equal to none, whilst at the same time confirming the importance of the Ottoman Empire in maintaining a very tentative balance of power in Europe.

The Crimean War which had begun in October 1853 lasted eighteen months and in that time had escalated into a series of fragmented battles and sieges, causing huge loss of life and highlighting wider issues and failures pertaining to leadership, military intervention, mortality rates, medicine and mismanagement.



IT'S CONSEQUENCES

- Whilst the Treaty of Paris marked an important step, with all sides recognising the need for a peaceful solution, the logistics of competing interests in negotiations made it more difficult to put into practice.

The main agreement did manage to create some tangible guidelines which included forcing Russia to demilitarise the Black Sea. This agreement was between the Tsar and the Sultan who maintained that no arsenal could be established on the coastline. For Russia this clause in particular proved to be a major blow, weakening its power base as it no longer could threaten the Ottoman Empire via its navy. This was thus an important step in scaling down the potential for escalating violence.

In addition, the treaty agreed the inclusion of the Ottoman Empire into the Concert of Europe which was essentially a representation of the balance of power on the continent, instigated back in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. As part of this, the European powers promised to comply with its independence and not compromise any Ottoman territory.

Russia on the other hand was forced to return the city of Kars and all other Ottoman territory which it had taken into its possession. The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were thus returned as Ottoman territory, later granted independence and eventually turned into modern-day Romania.

Russia was forced by the treaty to abandon its claim of a protectorate for Christians living in the Ottoman Empire, thus discarding the very premise which engaged Russia in war in the first place. In exchange, the alliance of powers agreed to restore the towns of Sevastopol, Balaklava, Kerch, Kinburn and many other areas back to Russia which had been occupied by the Allied troops during the war.

A major consequence of this agreement was the reopening of the Black Sea for international trade and commerce. The importance of resuming trade was a major consideration for all involved, so much so that an international commission was created on the premise of establishing a free and peaceful navigation of the Danube River for the purpose of commerce.

