

The crimean war research paper examples

[Countries](#), [England](#)



\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

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1. [Epilogue](#) \n \t
2. [Cause](#) \n \t
3. [The War](#) \n \t
4. [Florence Nightingale](#) \n \t
5. [The Characteristics](#) \n \t
6. [The Aftermath](#) \n \t
7. [References:](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

The Crimean war which apparently began over a trivial control of the Orthodox Christians of the holy cities of Jerusalem and Nazareth was actually the culmination of a long power struggle in Europe. The aggressive expansionism of Russia coupled with its pledge to rule over the Ottoman Empire in order to gain control of the route to Asia and the consequent British fear of losing its business trades to Asia and to check Russian expansionism resulted in eruption of the Crimean war. Ultimately, the Russians had to meekly surrender to the Allied forces of Britain, France, Turkey and a neutral attitude of Austria. The war was also famous for the “Charge of the Light Brigade” and Florence Nightingale. A precursor to the modern warfare was seen for the first time during the Crimean war.

Epilogue

The Crimean war (October, 1853 – February, 1856) was a major conflict in the nineteenth century having been marked for several noteworthy events in

the world history of warfare. The countries which took part in it e. g. Russia, Britain, France, the Sardinia and the Ottoman Empire suffered huge human losses during the course of this war. Almost three quarters of a million soldiers were killed during the battle or lost their lives through diseases and two-thirds of them were Russians,(1) this notwithstanding the massive number of civilian casualties incurred through indiscriminate and widespread shelling of civilian shelters and homes, diseases spread by the armies which at times took epidemical proportion, massacres perpetuated on the entire communities and revenge killings in the name of organized ethnic cleansing.

Cause

The major cause of the Crimean war was the expansionist tendency of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia and occupation of Crimea in July, 1853 and territories under the control of Britain, France and Turkey. After Russians annihilated a naval fleet of Turkey which it considered as the 'The Sick man of Europe' in the Black Sea Britain being extremely suspicious of Russian intentions and France joined the war with Turkey in September, 1853 which conflagrated to a full-scale war. Britain believed that Russia might have ambitions of capturing British territory. Even before that Russia wanted to have control over the holy lands of Nazareth and Jerusalem. Russia used the pretext of protection of the Christian sites in the holy lands for the occupation of Danubian provinces. On 23 October, 1853 the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire formally declared war on Russia. Russia and the Ottoman Empire amassed soldiers on two fronts - the Caucasus and the Danubian fronts.

Nicholas felt that since Russia had helped in suppressing a revolution in 1848 in Hungary Austria would support Russia or at least remain neutral but

Austria feeling threatened by Russian expansionist tendency refused to side with Russia and instead supported Britain. In order to address the Eastern Question by putting an end to the Russian threat to Turkey the allies proposed several resolutions for a peaceful solution. They were(2) :

1. Russia was to give up its protectorate over Danubian principalities
2. It should abandon any plans of interfering with the Ottoman Empire on behalf of Orthodox Christians.
3. The Straits Convention of 1841 was to be revised
4. All nations were to be given free access to the river Danube

The Tsar refused to accept these four points. As a result the Crimean War started.

The War

The Crimean war raged on the black Sea and the Crimean peninsula(3) . During this time the naval troops of Britain and France sunk the Russian Naval fleet by trapping them and thus protected their approaches to Sevastopol, the main base to Crimea. The Crimean war is also famous for “ Charge of the Light Brigade”. In the Battle of Balakava (25 October, 1854) the British Light Cavalry Brigade was charged to attack a battery of Russian guns along a valley hemmed in by more Russian guns. The result was that 247 of the 673 soldiers were killed (4). The capture of Sevastopol was the last significant fight of the war.

Peace negotiations began in 1 February, 1856 by Nicholas I's son and successor, Alexander II. The Tsar and the Sultans also agreed not to establish any military base on the Black Sea Coast. The Black Sea clauses greatly

diminished Russia's powers and the naval threat it posed to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire regained the Russian protectorates of Moldavia and Wallachia. All the allies also pledged to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The final peace treaty or the Treaty of Paris was agreed between 28 February and 30 March, 1856. But the biggest loser was Austria. Having defied the Russians in the Balkans she lost her main ally and over the next few years found that Britain and France were no longer interested in helping her.

Florence Nightingale

The Crimean war is also notable for Florence Nightingale or the Lady with the Lamp. She was a famous English nurse. She rose to prominence during the Crimean war when she tended upon the wounded British soldiers. Even at night she used to look after the soldiers and their conditions and thus acquired the epithet " the Lady with the Lamp". As Florence arrived in November, 1854 at Selimiye Barracks of the British troops in Scutari along with 38 women volunteer nurses they were appalled by seeing conditions of the wounded soldiers. Supply of medicines was inadequate, hygiene of the soldiers was ignored and infections, some fatal, were very common. During her first winter at Scutari apart from soldiers who died in the battlefield ten times more died from illnesses such as Typhus, Cholera, Dysentery, Typhoid etc. Sanitation and ventilation in the Barracks hospital were so scanty that infections shot up considerably. However, after the arrival of Nightingale the death rate was reduced from 42% to 2% through her incessant efforts in improving sanitation, as was claimed by the 1911 first edition of the Dictionary of National Biography. But Nightingale herself believed that the

death rates were high due to malnutrition, poor supplies and overworking of the soldiers.

The Characteristics

The Crimean war was notable for poor quality of leadership on both sides. When the allied expedition landed at Old Fort which was 30 miles north of Sevastopol Russian Commander Menshikov showed his lack of leadership quality by failing to grab the opportunity to attack his vulnerable enemies. After the Allies started to move towards the port Menshikov attempted to stop them in the battle of the Alma, 20 September, 1854. The Crimean war was also significant for application of improved technology so that news of war reached homes quickly. The government of Lord Aberdeen in Britain fell due to vociferous public opinion aroused by the pathetic conditions of the soldiers during the war. The first use of synchronized watches to time an assault was achieved for the first time when on 8 September, 1855 the French launched a well-planned attack aimed at the Malakoff which was one of the two key strong points of Russian defense.

The Crimean war was truly a modern warfare fought with modern rifles, steamships and railways, war reporters and photographers directly on the scene, new technologies of warfare, important innovations in medical treatment of wounded soldiers, novel use of logistics and communications like the telegraphy. In contrast, in the early battles in the Crimea on the river Alma and at Balaklava the fighting reminded one of the Napoleonic wars. Again during the siege of Sevastopol where the most bitter and the crucial phase of the war was fought the concept of industrialized trench warfare was adopted. The Crimean war contributed to the abolition of serfdom in Russia.

Also, the hard realization dawned upon Russia after the Crimean war that they had much inferior technology vis-à-vis military weapons and military practices. Meanwhile, there was a dramatic progress in Russian military medicine. N. I. Pirogov developed plaster casts, anesthetics, much better and risk-free amputation methods etc.

The scale of the Crimean war was matched by a divergent population which was involved in it. In this broad canvas people who were less of military types and more of kings, queens, doctors, nurses, religious leaders, reporters and photographers, writers were associated. Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian author, served as an officer at the Caucasus, the Danube and the Crimea fronts during the Crimean war.

The Aftermath

The Crimean war was in a sense a watershed war in as much as the old conservative alliance between Russia and Austria broke down due to this war. Russia felt a deep sense of betrayal as the Christian nations had collaborated with the Turks. For the Turks this was a major war and for the first time the Muslim world of the Ottoman Empire gained access to western armies and technologies of warfare which in turn helped the nation in rapidly integrating into the global economy.

The Crimean war was fought by the participating nations with their own individual motives. For the Turks, it was to underline the authority of powers in the crumbling empire. It was also as much for defending the sovereignty of the Turks against Russia's forcible claims to represent the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire as for squashing the threat of Islamic revolution in the Turkish capital. For the British, though they openly claimed

that they wanted to defend the Turks against the constant threats by Russia in private they were getting apprehensive of Russia's ambitions to dominate over the Ottoman empire and thus spread their tentacles in Asia, in the process causing severe damage to Britain's trade relations with India and other Asian countries. For the French, Napoleon III saw the war as an opportunity to confirm his position of respect and influence. As for the Tsar of Russia, Nicholas I, who was more responsible than anyone for the Crimean war, it was his immensely inflated ego and arrogance generated out of his having been a tsar for twenty seven years that goaded him to the war. Also, he had a mistaken notion of the power of his neighboring countries and grossly miscalculated about the reactions of other powers. But he all along believed that he was fighting a religious war to defend the Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

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