

**BRITISH POLICY AND THE APPLICATION OF REFORMS FOR
THE ARMENIANS IN EASTERN ANATOLIA 1877-1897**

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Hasret DİKİCİ*

Musa Şaşmaz deals with the Armenian Question from an international relations perspective in his book. He mainly concentrates on the policies of Britain in the context of reforms applied to the Armenians in the Eastern Anatolia. He points out that he does not deal with the Armenian disturbances, rather he deals with the causes of the events.

In the first chapter, he analyses the way in which the reform question emerged and what kind of role Britain played in this respect. The author begins his study with the treaties of San Stephano and Berlin, and specifically focuses on the Article 16 and Article 61 respectively. Then Musa Şaşmaz turns to Britain and questions why not the other European powers, but Britain was interested in this issue.

In the second chapter, Şaşmaz investigates the Reform Question in terms of the British-Ottoman relations in the years between 1878-1880. In this period, discussions between Britain and Ottoman Empire started on the reform scheme. How the commissioners would be sent to the Eastern Anatolia was planned afterwards. With a closer look, the author particularly explain the activities of two Imperial Commissions in Erzurum, Van, Diyarbakır, Harput and Sivas. These commissions had aimed to find out the the needs of the country for reform and to draw a programme in accordance. The mission of Baker Paşa is paid special attention in the context of the reforms.

The third chapter broadens the agenda of the book in the sense that this chapter deals with an international coalition. In this chapter, it deals with how Britain tried to convince Russia and France for a coalition in order to make the reforms applicable for the Armenians. This process corresponds to the years between

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1880 and 1894. The author reviews the reforms applied in Eastern Anatolia between these years at the end of the chapter.

The settlement of the reform question is scrutinized in the next chapter. Britain had attempted to bring together the above mentioned international coalition in order to present a reform package to the Ottoman Empire. This diplomatic process went on with the replies of the Porte towards the reform proposals. Then an agreement was reached on the 6 points and the final shape of the reform schedule was discussed also in this chapter.

In the final chapter, Şaşmaz concentrates on the application of the reforms in a two-year-time period. First of all, the author begins with the appointment of the Inspector-General of Reforms, and takes a further look to his mission to carry out the reforms. The author concludes the book with the execution of the articles concerning the Commission of Control, Administrative Reforms, Reorganization of the Communes, the Police and the Gendarmerie, Judicial Matters, Taxation, Control of Kurds and Other Matters.

Although the book is a historical study dealing with 19th century Armenian Question, it is also significant in the sense that it provides an international relations dimension, and it's contents provide a connection with the current issues related to the Turco-Armenian relations.