



RECEP TAYYIP  
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RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN UNIVERSITY

## II. INTERNATIONAL EASTERN BLACK SEA SYMPOSIUM

(Türkiye & Russia in Terms of Historical,  
Diplomatic and Geopolitical Perspectives)

Editor

Assist. Prof. Dr. Burak KOLOT

27-28 April 2026





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SYMPOSIUM

(Türkiye & Russia in Terms of Historical,  
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University Publications

Book of Abstracts of the 2nd International Eastern Black Sea Symposium  
(*Türkiye & Russia in Terms of Historical, Diplomatic and Geopolitical Perspectives*)

Graphic Design & Layout  
Öznur YILDIRIM

E-ISBN:978-605-9072-31-1

Publication No.:39

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University Publications

Fener Neighborhood, Zihni Derin Campus  
Printing House and Press Unit  
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## II. INTERNATIONAL EASTERN BLACK SEA SYMPOSIUM

(Türkiye & Russia in Terms of Historical,  
Diplomatic and Geopolitical Perspectives)

Rize, 27-28 April, 2026

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# PROGRAM OF THE II INTERNATIONAL EASTERN BLACK SEA SYMPOSIUM:

Türkiye & Russia in Terms of Historical, Diplomatic and Geopolitical Perspectives

**April 27, 2026 - Monday**

09:30 - 10:00 | Opening Remarks and Protocol Speeches

- Assist. Prof. Dr. Burak KOLOT (*On behalf of the Organizing Committee*)
- Prof. Dr. Ahmet YANIK, *Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University*
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- İhsan Selim BAYDAŞ, *Governor of Rize*

10:00 - 11:30 | Opening Panel

**Moderator:** Assist. Prof. Dr. Burak KOLOT

- Prof. Dr. Denis KOZLOV (Russian Federation) - **Cooperation and Rivalry between the Russian and Ottoman Empires: Problems and Prospects for Research**
- Prof. Dr. Mahir AYDIN (Türkiye) - **The Black Sea: A Shared Sea**
- Prof. Dr. Lana RAVANDI-FADAI (Russian Federation) - **The Black Sea as a Geopolitical Interface: Regional Power Balances from an Iranian Perspective**

**12.00 - 13.00 | Lunch Break**

13:30 - 15:00 | Session I

**Theme:** *The Straits and Naval Warfare (First World War)*

**Moderator:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hüsrev TABAK

- Andrey BOLDYREV (Russian Federation) - **The Bosphorus and Dardanelles in Russia's Military Plans at the Beginning of the 20th Century**
- Denis KOZLOV (Russian Federation) - **The Bosphorus "Mine Blockade" in 1916-1917: Organization, Results, and Lessons Learned**
- Mahir AYDIN (Türkiye) - **Fortresses Closing the Black Sea Strait**
- Yunus Emre AYDIN (Türkiye) - **The Ottoman Navy in the Black Sea During the First World War**

**15:00 - 15:15 | Coffee Break**

15:15 - 16:45 | Session II

**Theme:** *Diplomacy, Power Struggles, and International Competition*

**Moderator:** Assist. Prof. Dr. Çağrı ADİL

- Nebi GÜMÜŞ (Türkiye) - **The Ottoman Empire's Struggle for Supremacy with Russia in the Eastern Black Sea and Georgia**
- Nadezhda VASILEVA (Bulgaria)- **British Strategy in the Black Sea after the Treaty of Berlin (1878-1887): Lord Salisbury and the Eastern Rumelia Settlement**
- Semih SEFER (Türkiye) - **External Debt as a Means of Coercion: A Political and Diplomatic Analysis of Russia's Note of 1896**
- Serkan KEÇECİ (Türkiye) - **Preventing Ottoman-Iranian Cooperation: The Black Sea Dimension of Russian Diplomacy**
- Lana RAVANDI-FADAI (Russian Federation) - **Iran within the Russian-Ottoman System: The Black Sea Vector of Diplomatic Contacts in the 18th-19th Centuries**



**April 28, 2026 - Tuesday**

09:00 - 10:30 | Session III

**Theme:** *Archival Sources in the History of Russo-Turkish Relations*

**Moderator:** *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa TANRIVERDİ*

- Sergey NELIPOVICH (Russian Federation) - **Ottoman XV Corps in Galicia, 1916: What Will Foreign Archives Tell Us?**
- Vasilisa DENISOVA (Russian Federation) - **Documents on the History of Turkey in the Collections of the Military - Scientific Archive (VUA)**
- Andrey RYZHENKOV & Aleksandr KAMNEV (Russian Federation) - **Unpublished Sources on the Black Sea Period of M.V. Frunze's Turkish Mission**
- Elena NAZEMTSEVA (Russian Federation) - **The Ottoman Empire's Policy in Xinjiang during World War I and Russian Historiography**
- Gela GUNIAVA (Georgia) - **Status of Georgia and the Northern Black Sea Region as Reflected in an Ottoman Historical Document on the Preliminary Peace Negotiations between Russia and the Ottomans in 1790**

10:30 - 10:45 | Coffee Break

10:45 - 12:15 | Session IV

**Theme:** *Society, Migration, and Regional Dynamics (with a Focus on the Eastern Black Sea)*

**Moderator:** *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Seven ERDOĞAN*

- Burak KOLOT (Türkiye) - **From the 1916 Russian Occupation to the White Russian Refugees: The Transformation and Reconfiguration of Social Perceptions in the Eastern Black Sea Region**
- Mustafa TANRIVERDİ (Türkiye) - **The Role of Muhacirs in The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Influence in The Eastern Black Sea**
- Resul TURAN (Türkiye) - **A People Divided by the Border: History, Identity and Memory of the Laz**
- Fakhri VALEHOGHLU HAJILAR (Azerbaijan) - **The Political and Diplomatic Activities of Azerbaijan's First Diplomatic Mission in Batumi**

12:30 - 14:00 | Lunch Break

14:15 - 15:45 | Session V

**Theme:** *Geopolitics, Regional Systems, and Broader Perspectives*

**Moderator:** *Assist. Prof. Dr. Rabia KALFAOĞLU*

- İsmail KÖSE (Türkiye) - **Soviet Efforts to be Hegemon in Eastern Mediterranean During Cold War: Foundation of Pyady Eskadra**
- Nikita GUSEV (Russian Federation) - **Negotiations on the Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention as an Attempt to Preserve Peace in the Black Sea Region**
- Sergey VINOGRADOV (Russian Federation) - **... She was literally underwater, with only her turrets and superstructures visible": The Battleship "Tri Sviatitelia" in a Storm on November 4-7, 1914, while Returning from a Naval Raid to Zunguldak**
- Maksim GUTENEV (Russian Federation) - **Science Diplomacy in Russian-Turkish Relations: From the Black Sea to the Arctic**

15:45 - 16:00 | Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:30 | Closing Session / General Evaluation and Discussion

**April 29, 2026 - Wednesday**

09:30 - 19:00 | Excursion Program

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## SESSION I

### The Straits and Naval Warfare (First World War)

# The Bosphorus and Dardanelles in Russia's Military Plans at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Andrey BOLDYREV<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The report examines Russia's efforts to capture the Bosphorus and Dardanelles in 1905-1907. In the period following the end of the Russo-Japanese War, preparations for the Bosphorus Expedition temporarily ceased to be a priority for the Russian government due to the overall weakening of the Russian armed forces. At the same time, there were different approaches to resolving the straits issue within the government. One group believed it was inadvisable to prepare for the seizure of the straits, as Russia was not threatened. Others, recognizing the untimely nature of a military solution to the straits issue, believed it would be advisable to be prepared for such a solution should the situation in the Middle East worsen. At the same time, the idea of preparing an expedition was not forgotten. Subsequently, the deteriorating situation in the Middle East in late 1907 and early 1908 raised the question of the need to resume the Bosphorus expedition

**Keywords:** Bosphorus Expedition, Straits Question, Russian Strategic Planning, Middle Eastern Crisis, Russian-Ottoman Relations.

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<sup>1</sup> PhD (History), Senior Researcher, Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, Moscow; [boldirew.andrei2011@yandex.ru](mailto:boldirew.andrei2011@yandex.ru)

# The Bosphorus “Mine Blockade” in 1916-1917: Organization, Results, and Lessons Learned

Denis KOZLOV<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** The massive minelaying operations in the Bosphorus Strait area carried out by the Black Sea Fleet during the final campaigns of the First World War are rightly considered one of the outstanding achievements of the Russian school of naval art. Moreover, which happens quite rarely, the successes of the Russian Navy in the field of the “mine blockade” of the Bosphorus are highly valued not only by domestic, but also by foreign naval authorities. The 110th anniversary of the start of the large-scale mine-laying operation by a group of mixed forces under the command of the Black Sea Fleet commander, Vice-Admiral A.V. Kolchak, provides an opportunity to once again revisit this striking historical event, analyze the results of the “mine obstruction” of the strait, and assess the impact of its experience on the development of the naval theory and practice. The report describes the concept, preparation, implementation, results and lessons of the Russian fleet’s active minefields in the pre-strait zone during the campaigns of 1916 and 1917, the impact of the Bosphorus “mine blockade” on the operational situation in the Black Sea theater of naval operations of the Great War, and the evolution of forms and methods of operations to disrupt enemy sea supply.

**Keywords:** World War I, Black Sea theatre of naval operations, disruption of sea supply, mine laying, blockade of the Bosphorus.

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## Fortresses Closing the Black Sea Strait

Mahir AYDIN<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** The Black Sea, situated between Eastern Europe and Western Asia, holds great significance not only for the countries bordering it but also for those connected to it through transportation routes. During the period in which it became an “internal sea” of the Ottoman Empire, there was relatively little to be said about it for nearly 300 years. However, this situation began to change with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, bringing new strategic considerations both for the Black Sea and for the imperial capital, Istanbul.

The waterway known today as the Bosphorus was historically referred to as the Black Sea Strait, while the Dardanelles was called the Mediterranean Strait. In response to this new strategic context, a reorganization aimed at the defense of Istanbul was undertaken along the Black Sea Strait. Fortresses and artillery batteries were constructed near existing lighthouses and at strategically necessary locations. As a result of this restructuring, seven fortifications were established: Anadolu Feneri, Büyük Liman, Rumeli Feneri, Poyraz Limanı, Garipçe, Kilyos, and Revancık.

These fortifications, however, were relatively modest in scale compared to conventional perceptions of castles or fortresses. This can primarily be explained by their function and strategic positioning. Moreover, this period marks the early phase of a transformation in which traditional fortress-based defense systems were beginning to lose their significance. Subsequently, twelve additional artillery batteries were constructed between these fortresses. Due to their locations, each of these batteries offers a distinct vantage point over the strait. These include: Rumeli Kavağı Fortress, Anadolu Kavağı, Tarabya, Telli Dalyan, Yuşa Yortu, Kireç Burnu, Papaz Burnu, Kılburun, Kısır Kaya, Kara Burun, Mezar Burnu, and Köybaşı.

In parallel with this information, our discussion of the early nineteenth century will not remain limited to these structural elements alone. The more crucial dimension lies in the impact and balance of interstate political dynamics shaped around the axes of the Black Sea and Istanbul. In this context, Russia’s position - compared to other powers - acquired a particularly “fragile” character and came to represent a clear “red line.”

**Keywords:** Black Sea, Bosphorus Defense System, Ottoman Coastal Fortifications, Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), Russian Strategic Interests.

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3 Prof. Dr., Faculty of Letters, Department of History, Istanbul University; [mahiraydin2023@gmail.com](mailto:mahiraydin2023@gmail.com)

# The Ottoman Navy in the Black Sea During the First World War

Yunus Emre AYDIN<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract:** The First World War (1914-1918), a global power struggle primarily between the Entente Powers (Britain, France and Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire), was shaped not only by land battles but also by strategic competition at sea. In this context, the Black Sea became a decisive front between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, both militarily and logistically. The Ottoman Empire, which had declared its neutrality from the outset of the war, allowed the German cruisers Goeben and Breslau, fleeing the Entente Powers, to seek refuge within its waters. These ships, named Yavuz and Midilli, set sail for the Black Sea as part of the Ottoman fleet and, on 29 October 1914, bombarded Russian ports in the Black Sea such as Odessa, Sevastopol and Novorossiysk. Following this incident, the Russian Empire declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Russia and the Ottoman Empire faced off on the Caucasus Front, and the Russians advanced into Eastern Anatolia and the Eastern Black Sea region, capturing cities such as Trabzon, Rize, Bitlis and Van. Whilst the Russian navy played a significant role in the Russian advance in the Eastern Black Sea, the Ottoman navy's inability to protect the coastal lines and logistical supply routes profoundly affected the military balance in the Eastern Black Sea. Although Trabzon in particular, served as a key hub in the Ottoman defense system-acting both as a supply center and a strategic port city-it became isolated because of the Russian navy's coastal bombardments and its seizure of control of the seas, leaving it vulnerable to Russian occupation in 1916. This study examines, within a comprehensive analytical framework, the impact of the Ottoman navy-which was reshaped under German influence-on the balance of naval power in the Black Sea and its role in the fall of Trabzon, based on Ottoman archival documents.

**Keywords:** Ottoman, Russia, World War I, Navy, Black Sea.

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## SESSION II

Diplomacy, Power Struggles,  
and International Competition

# The Ottoman Empire's Struggle for Supremacy with Russia in the Eastern Black Sea and Georgia

Nebi GÜMÜŞ<sup>5</sup>

**Abstract:** The eastern Black Sea coasts have held great importance throughout history, both in terms of trade routes and military strategy. Following the conquest of Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire succeeded in turning the Black Sea into an “Ottoman Lake” by the 15th century, having captured Sukhumi, Trebizond and Feodosia. From the 17th century onwards, Russia began to emerge as a rival to the Ottoman Empire in the region through its policy of expansion into the Black Sea. Georgia was selected by Russia as a potential ally. The most significant development against the Ottomans regarding control of the Eastern Black Sea occurred in 1783, when Russia both annexed Crimea and signed a protectorate agreement with Eastern Georgia. The protectorate agreement culminated shortly afterwards, at the beginning of 1801, with the occupation and annexation of Tbilisi. The Ottoman Empire, however, failed to develop a successful policy against Russia in both the northern and eastern parts of the Black Sea. Having been forced to withdraw also from Georgia following its withdrawal from Crimea, the Ottomans ceded Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe and Batumi to Russia, thereby losing its dominance in the Eastern Black Sea region before the end of the 19th century.

**Keywords:** Eastern Black Sea, Ottoman Empire, Russian Expansion, Georgia, Russo-Ottoman Relations.

# British Strategy in the Black Sea after the Treaty of Berlin (1878-1887): Lord Salisbury and the Eastern Rumelia Settlement

Nadezhda VASILEVA<sup>6</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper examines Lord Salisbury's strategic policy in the Near East following the Treaty of Berlin (1878), focusing on British policy toward the Ottoman Empire, the Black Sea region, and the Straits within the broader context of Anglo-Russian rivalry. By analyzing Salisbury's memorandum of 1 April 1878, Salisbury-Shuvalov Memorandum of 30 May 1878, the Batumi question, Cyprus Convention and the settlement of Eastern Rumelia, the study explores how British diplomacy sought to establish and maintain influence in the Black Sea region.

Russian gains following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 were interpreted in London not only as a regional challenge but also as a development with wider geopolitical implications for British imperial security. Therefore, for Salisbury, strengthening the Ottoman Empire became essential, as he regarded it as the principal barrier against Russian advancement toward the Straits, as well as Russian domination of the Black Sea. Within this framework, the creation of Eastern Rumelia in the Balkans as a diplomatic and geopolitical buffer was orchestrated by Salisbury in order to protect the Straits, Ottoman Asian territories and limit Russian influence in the Black Sea-Balkans-Anatolia triangle. The province became an important instrument of British containment policy toward Russia in the Black Sea region.

By examining Salisbury's policy between 1878 and 1887, the paper highlights how nineteenth-century British diplomacy sought to manage imperial rivalry and preserve its strategic interests in the Black Sea region. The study is based both on published and unpublished diplomatic and private correspondence.

**Keywords:** Black Sea Geopolitics, Anglo-Russian Rivalry, Eastern Rumelia, Ottoman-Russian Relations, Straits Question.

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6 PhD (History), Institute for Historical Studies, BAS; [nadejda\\_v.vasileva@abv.bg](mailto:nadejda_v.vasileva@abv.bg)

# External Debt as a Means of Coercion: A Political and Diplomatic Analysis of Russia's Note of 1896

Semih SEFER<sup>7</sup>

**Abstract:** From the second half of the 19th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire's external borrowing process ceased to be merely a financial matter and became an area open to diplomatic and political intervention by the great powers. Ottoman Public Debt Administration, established by the Muharrem Decree of 1881, aimed to restructure the Ottoman finances but also brought with it debates on state sovereignty in terms of international law. This study aims to examine intervention practices carried out through public debt, focusing on the diplomatic note presented by Russia to the Ottoman Government in 1896.

The Russian Note is noteworthy in that it contains the threat of establishing an international financial commission based on the 18th Protocol of the Berlin Congress against the possibility of the Ottoman State intervening in the revenues of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. In this respect, the document clearly reveals the transformation of external debts into a means of diplomatic pressure by creditor states. The study analyses how financial control became an instrument of influence in the context of great power competition, evaluating the intervention debates in international law literature alongside the political function of European financial markets. Furthermore, it is argued that during a period when railway investments were financed through the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, Russia, concerned about the security of the Black Sea and its environs in the face of German policies, created an important diplomatic threshold with its note, reinforcing the internationalization of the Ottoman external debt regime and limiting its financial sovereignty.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Public Debt Administration, Russian Note of 1896, Financial Sovereignty, Great Power Intervention, Ottoman External Debt.

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# Preventing Ottoman-Iranian Cooperation: The Black Sea Dimension of Russian Diplomacy

Serkan KEÇECİ<sup>8</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper argues that Russian naval and maritime dominance in the Black Sea played a decisive but underappreciated role in preventing meaningful strategic cooperation between the Ottoman Empire and Iran during the wars of the 1820s. While the failure of an Ottoman-Iranian alliance is usually explained through diplomatic mistrust, dynastic politics, or religious rivalry, this study highlights how maritime coercion by Russia structurally constrained Ottoman strategic choices and indirectly shaped Iranian decision-making. Drawing on Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian archival perspectives, the paper reframes the Black Sea as a diplomatic theatre rather than merely a naval one. Russian sea power enabled St Petersburg to threaten the Anatolian coastline, control supply routes, and project force deep into Ottoman territory. This maritime pressure forced Istanbul to prioritize its northern and western vulnerabilities, reducing its ability to coordinate military planning with Tehran during the Irano-Ottoman War (1821-23) and the subsequent Russo-Iranian and Russo-Ottoman wars. The result was a strategic separation of the two southern empires that Russia consistently exploited.

The paper further demonstrates how naval supremacy amplified Russia's diplomatic leverage. The presence of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea transformed negotiations by creating a constant threat of escalation, encouraging Ottoman caution and limiting the scope of Ottoman-Iranian cooperation to sporadic and ineffective initiatives. Maritime coercion thus functioned as a silent but powerful diplomatic instrument that complemented Russia's fiscal-military superiority and its ability to wage sequential wars against its rivals. By integrating maritime history with diplomatic and geopolitical analysis, this paper contributes to a broader reassessment of the Eastern Question and the imperial struggle for the Caucasus. It argues that the Black Sea was not a peripheral theatre but a central arena where sea power reshaped alliances, constrained diplomacy, and decisively influenced the balance of power between the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian empires.

**Keywords:** Black Sea geopolitics; Russia imperial diplomacy; Ottoman Empire-Iran relations; Naval power and coercive diplomacy; The Eastern Question.

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# Iran within the Russian-Ottoman System: The Black Sea Vector of Diplomatic Contacts in the 18th-19th Centuries

Lana RAVANDI-FADAI<sup>9</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper examines the role of the Black Sea region as a diplomatic and geopolitical interface within the triangular system of relations between the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran in the 18th-19th centuries. While existing scholarship has largely focused on bilateral interactions - particularly Russian-Ottoman rivalry and Russo-Iranian relations - this study proposes to reconsider the Black Sea not merely as a zone of military confrontation, but as a dynamic contact space that facilitated diplomatic communication, mobility, and imperial mediation.

The paper argues that the Black Sea functioned as an infrastructural corridor linking imperial peripheries, enabling the circulation of diplomatic missions, information, and political influence between St. Petersburg, Istanbul, and Tehran. Special attention is paid to the Caucasus and the eastern Black Sea littoral as key transit zones where imperial interests intersected and where Ottoman mediation often played a significant, yet understudied, role in shaping Russo-Iranian interactions.

By integrating the Iranian dimension into the analysis of Black Sea diplomacy, this study challenges the conventional binary frameworks and highlights the interconnected nature of imperial politics across the region. The paper contributes to a broader understanding of the Black Sea as a space of entangled imperial networks rather than a simple frontier of conflict and emphasizes the importance of multi-directional diplomatic flows in shaping regional power dynamics.

**Keywords:** Black Sea; imperial diplomacy; Russian-Ottoman relations; Iran; transregional networks.

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## SESSION III

### Archival Sources in the History of Russo-Turkish Relations

## Ottoman XV. Corps in Galicia, 1916: What Will Foreign Archives Tell Us?

Sergey NELIPOVICH<sup>10</sup>

**Abstract:** The opening of Turkish documents from the First World War to the public has sparked a surge of interest among historians in this topic. At the same time, archives outside of Turkey also contain documents about the Ottoman army's participation in the Great War of 1914-1918 on various fronts.

In August 1916, the Ottoman XV Corps (19th and 20th Divisions) arrived in Galicia, where they participated in repelling the Russian armies of the Southwestern Front until January 1917. The documents related to the battles of this corps are stored in several archives outside of Turkey:

Austrian State Archives - Military Archives: documents on the number, subordination, supply, maintenance and medical services of the corps are stored in the funds of the General Army Command (Quartermaster Department, liaison officers, Orders of battles) and the New Military Acts (2nd and 12th Armies, 9th Quartermaster Department, and medical services of the 19th and 20th Divisions);

German Federal Archives - Military Archives: documents on military operations and trophies (South Army Fund - military action journals with attachments);

Bavarian Main State Archives - Department IV (Germany): daily reports on corps losses, combat reports (South Army Fund);

The State Military History Archive of Bulgaria: reports and monthly summaries by the military attaché in Constantinople on the actions of the Ottoman forces on all fronts, orders of battles, and correspondence between Enver Pasha and the Chief of Staff of the Bulgarian Army on the recruitment of Balkan volunteers for the Ottoman forces;

Russian State Military History Archive: materials on the actions and losses of Russian troops in battles against the XV Corps, on captured prisoners, and interrogation protocols of captured Ottoman soldiers (funds of the 7th Army, the 3rd Caucasian and 16th Army Corps, and their divisions and regiments).

These documents expand our knowledge of the combat activities and daily life of the XV Corps in Galicia, helping to clarify and establish the circumstances of the battles in the autumn campaign of 1916 on the Russian Front. Additionally, a rich collection of photographs is housed in the Austrian National Library.

**Keywords:** Ottoman XV Corps, Galician Front, First World War, Russian Front, Military Archives.

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## Documents on the History of Turkey in the Collections of the Military - Scientific Archive (VUA)

Vasilisa DENISOVA<sup>11</sup>

**Abstract:** The report is devoted to an overview of a unique set of documents on the history of Turkey, stored in the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) as part of the funds of the Military Scientific Archive (VUA). Special attention is paid to the maintenance of the 450 foundations (Turkey), which has 918 cases for the period from 1700 to 1917. The report examines the structure of the fund, which includes two main sections: materials on the Turkish army and the internal political situation, as well as an extensive block of geographical, statistical and ethnographic information. The information potential of these documents is analyzed as a valuable source not only for studying military history, but also for understanding the economic development, geography, infrastructure, and ethnic composition of the Ottoman Empire. The conclusion is made about the high importance and full accessibility of these materials for modern researchers.

**Keywords:** RGVIA, Military - scientific archive, Ottoman Empire, historical sources.

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# Unpublished Sources on the Black Sea Period of M.V. Frunze's Turkish Mission

A.S. RYZHENKOV<sup>12</sup>, A.S. KAMNEV<sup>13</sup>

**Abstract:** The report is devoted to the analysis of a body of sources concerning the stay of the Soviet diplomatic mission headed by M.V. Frunze in the eastern part of Turkey's Black Sea region. Frunze's embassy was the first major Soviet delegation to arrive in Anatolia during the Turkish War of National Liberation and operated from November 1921 to January 1922. However, documents relating to Frunze's activities in Turkey, preserved in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, remained classified for a long time.

During the trip, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR pursued political goals (demonstrating the desire of Ukraine and the Soviet republics in general for friendship with Turkey at a difficult moment; concluding an agreement on consular representation; assessing the national factor in Turkey; counteracting Turkey's cooling relations with Soviet Russia and its rapprochement with the Entente; strengthening Soviet influence on the Turkish population), military goals (providing military assistance to Turkey in the war; assessing Turkey's military potential by a military specialist; concluding a convention on prisoners of war), and economic goals (providing financial aid; concluding a Ukrainian-Turkish trade agreement; developing economic relations and countering French influence in the Turkish economy).

Within the framework of the report, the authors focus specifically on the events of the Black Sea segment of the mission. Archival documents related to the activities of M.V. Frunze's embassy (official correspondence, reports, memoranda, etc.), as well as personal sources, convey important information about the direct activities of the Soviet embassy in this region and its contacts with the Turkish population, the economic and political situation, the state of the region's transport system, and the everyday life of local residents.

**Keywords:** Soviet foreign policy; Kemalism; Soviet-Turkish relations; Turkish War of National Liberation; M.V. Frunze; Black Sea region; Soviet-Turkish relations in the Black Sea region.

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# The Ottoman Empire's Policy in Xinjiang during World War I in Russian Historiography

Elena NAZEMTSEVA<sup>14</sup>

**Abstract:** World War I exposed and exacerbated many contradictions in Russian society, plunged the country into a profound socioeconomic and political crisis, and diverted the government's attention from Central Asia and the Far East. Defeats at the front led to a decline in Russia's military and political prestige in Central Asia, including Xinjiang. At the same time, the Ottoman and German empires sharply increased their activity in the province. The Muslim population of Xinjiang sympathized with the Ottoman Empire, and in mosques they prayed for the victory of Turkish arms. The Russian and British consulates in Kashgar were forced to jointly pressure local Chinese authorities, seeking to curb the activities of Turkish and German agents.

In Russian historiography, the history of Xinjiang was studied only in works classified as "secret" throughout the Soviet period. The declassification of Russian archival materials in the 1990s facilitated active study of the region's history. However, while the primary focus has been on events from the second half of the 19th century and the 1920s to 1949, the history of Xinjiang in the early 20th century has received little study. The Porte's Xinjiang policy during this period has received only brief mentions in a few Russian studies, primarily focusing on the activities of Turkish intelligence and its influence on the Turkestan uprising of 1916.

The report will present Russian academic centers researching the history of Xinjiang, analyzing key works, their source material, and ideological and conceptual foundations. Particular attention will be given to understudied and completely unknown issues in this area.

**Keywords:** Xinjiang, First World War, Ottoman Policy, Russian Influence, Central Asia.

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# Status of Georgia and the Northern Black Sea Region as Reflected in an Ottoman Historical Document on the Preliminary Peace Negotiations between Russia and the Ottomans in 1790

Gela GUNIAVA<sup>15</sup>

**Abstract:** This study analyzes an Ottoman historical document related to the preliminary peace negotiations of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1787-1791. The document is a report written by an Ottoman official and submitted to the Defterdar Effendi and the Reysülkütab Effendi. It describes the progress of negotiations with the representative of the Russian Empire, Grigory Potemkin.

The report mainly discusses disputed territories in the Northern Black Sea region and the positions of the Russian and Ottoman Empire regarding these lands. It also briefly mentions the political situation of Georgia. Although the negotiations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1790 are well known in historical research, the issue of Georgia within these negotiations has received less attention.

The analyzed Ottoman document generally corresponds with the views presented in modern historical scholarship about the Northern Black Sea region. At the same time, it provides additional information about the course of the negotiations. According to the document, Russia would refrain from interfering in Georgian affairs. However, Eastern Georgia had already been placed under Russian protection by the Treaty of Georgievsk in 1783.

Similar information can also be found in reports written by Russian officials Andrey Osterman and Alexander Bezborodko in December 1788, as well as in a note sent by Catherine II to Bezborodko in 1789. These documents largely correspond to the information presented in the Ottoman report and reflect a similar understanding of the political status of Eastern Georgia during the negotiations.

**Keywords:** Russo-Ottoman War (1787-1791), Peace Negotiations, Northern Black Sea Region, Eastern Georgia, Russo-Ottoman Relations.

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**SESSION IV**  
**Society, Migration, and Regional Dynamics**  
**(with a Focus on the Eastern Black Sea)**

# From the 1916 Russian Occupation to the White Russian Refugees: The Transformation and Reconfiguration of Social Perceptions in the Eastern Black Sea Region

Burak KOLOT<sup>16</sup>

**Abstract:** During the First World War, the advance of the Russian army into the Eastern Black Sea coast in 1916 led to large-scale population movements and a profound disruption of social order, particularly among the Muslim population in Trabzon and Rize. The withdrawal of Ottoman authority and the establishment of Russian military administration radically altered everyday life and established social relations in the region. This process became embedded in local memory as a deep trauma, expressed through concepts such as *muhacirlik* (forced migration) and *kaçkaç* (mass flight). However, this perception did not remain static. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the dissolution of Russian military presence and, especially, the arrival of White Russian refugees - defeated in the Russian Civil War - at Black Sea ports in the 1920s led to a significant transformation in these perceptions.

This paper aims to analyze the transformation in how the Russian presence was perceived by local society in the Eastern Black Sea between 1916 and 1922 by combining approaches from ontological security and collective memory studies. Drawing on oral narratives, memoirs, folklore compilations, and contemporary sources collected from the Trabzon and Rize regions, the study examines how the figure of the Russian was reinterpreted within local narratives. In this context, it demonstrates that the image of the Russian was redefined within a short period of time across different categories, such as “occupying enemy,” “disintegrating soldier,” and “refugee outsider.”

The study seeks to show that moments of rupture - such as war, occupation, and forced migration - produce not only political and military consequences but also complex processes of perception that reshape the figure of the “enemy” within collective memory. In this respect, the paper offers an interdisciplinary contribution by addressing the First World War experience in the Eastern Black Sea not only from a military-historical perspective but also within the framework of social memory and identity transformation.

**Keywords:** Ontological Security, Collective Memory, Russian Occupation (1916), Eastern Black Sea, White Russian Refugees.

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# The Role of Muhacirs in The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Influence in The Eastern Black Sea

Mustafa TANRIVERDİ<sup>17</sup>

**Abstract:** Following its annexation of Crimea, the Russian Empire began formulating plans to secure its military advance in the North Caucasus. The Caucasian War, which lasted for more than half a century as part of Russia's objective to dominate the eastern shores of the Black Sea, approached its conclusion in 1859 with the capture of Imam Shamil. This development, in turn, revealed the intention of the local population to migrate to Ottoman territories. Circassian tribes inhabiting the eastern Black Sea coast, unwilling to submit to Russian authority, crossed into Ottoman lands as muhacirs. This movement constituted the first large-scale wave of migration into the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman government was unable to fully cope with this massive influx. Russia's opposition to the settlement of muhacirs in regions close to its borders further exacerbated the difficulties associated with their resettlement. Consequently, some muhacirs, finding themselves in dire conditions, expressed a desire to return to their homelands. However, this was not easily achievable. Russia initially resisted such intentions, primarily because Cossack settlers had already been placed in the lands abandoned by the muhacirs. At the same time, Russia was concerned that the muhacirs were entirely under Ottoman control, as they could potentially take up arms against the Russian army in the event of a war.

From the Ottoman perspective, muhacirs represented a significant military resource, particularly in meeting the army's need for cavalry forces. For the muhacirs themselves, the possibility of returning to their homelands through armed struggle, supported by the Ottoman army, remained a tangible prospect. The defection of Musa Kundukhov to the Ottoman side with 5,000 cavalymen, as well as the appointment of Imam Shamil's son, Gazi Muhammad, to lead local militia forces, are noteworthy examples demonstrating the scale of the expected military contribution from muhacirs. During this period, many muhacirs sought to serve in the Ottoman army, motivated not only by military considerations but also by aspirations for status and influence within their communities.

In conclusion, prior to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, a considerable number of muhacirs were employed within the Ottoman military. This study aims to examine the impact of post-1861 migration on both empires and how it was perceived in terms of regional security. The primary sources of this research consist of documents from the Russian State Historical Archive, the Russian State Military Historical Archive, and the Ottoman Archives.

**Keywords:** Black Sea, Russia, Caucasus, Musa Kunduhov, Gazi Muhammad.

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## A People Divided by the Border: History, Identity and Memory of the Laz

Resul TURAN<sup>18</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper aims to examine the transformation of the Laz people, one of the autochthonous peoples of the Eastern Black Sea region, under the rule of the Russian Empire and its successor, the Soviet Union, based on Turkish and Russian sources. The border, which began to take shape after the 1828-1829 Ottoman-Russian War, sharpened with the 1877-1878 War, and was finally established in 1921, divided the Laz population into two. In the process that began with the Tsarist Russian advance in the Caucasus, the Russian administration's interest in the Laz population will be addressed through reconnaissance expeditions, intelligence reports, and military mapping activities carried out in the region. The scientific and intelligence studies conducted by Russian scientists and military personnel enabled the collection of extensive data on the ethnic structure, settlement patterns, and loyalty of the Laz population to the Ottoman Empire. Russia's strategy of not only controlling the Laz within its own borders but also those remaining on the Ottoman side, with the aim of eventually uniting them with their co-ethnics in Russia, constituted a significant dimension of the struggle for influence in the region. Furthermore, the population on the border experienced cultural transformation as a result of political and ideological changes. The paper aims to analyze comparatively the transformation of the Laz population on both sides of the border under different political regimes.

**Keywords:** Laz People, Turkish-Russian Relations, Border Studies, Caucasus, Black Sea.

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# The Political and Diplomatic Activities of Azerbaijan's First Diplomatic Mission in Batumi

Fakhri VALEHOGHLU-HAJILAR<sup>19</sup>

**Abstract:** This article examines the political and diplomatic activities of Azerbaijan's first diplomatic mission in Batumi during the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920). In November 1918, the Azerbaijani government decided to establish a consulate in the Black Sea city of Batumi, primarily due to the strategic importance of the Adjara region for the South Caucasus and Batumi's role as a major transit port for Azerbaijan's trade with the Ottoman Empire and Western countries.

At the time of its establishment, Batumi was under Ottoman control, and Mahmud bey Efendiyev, the chief quarantine physician, was appointed consul. However, when the Azerbaijani consulate officially began its activities on 1 January 1919, the city had already come under British control. From May 1919 onward, Efendiyev served as Consul General and actively worked to safeguard Azerbaijan's political and economic interests in the region.

Efendiyev closely monitored political and social developments in Batumi, Adjara, and surrounding areas, regularly reporting to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also maintained close relations with the Turkish-Muslim community of Batumi. The consulate played a significant role in dispatch of Azerbaijani goods through the Batumi port.

Efendiyev continued to perform his duties even after the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan, until Batumi came under the control of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Following the transfer of Adjara to Georgian authority, the activities of the Azerbaijani General Consulate in Batumi were terminated on 8 July 1920.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Batumi Consulate, Mahmud Bey Efendiyev, South Caucasus Diplomacy, Black Sea Trade.

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## SESSION V

Geopolitics, Regional Systems,  
and Broader Perspectives

# Soviet Efforts to be Hegemon in Eastern Mediterranean During Cold War: Foundation of Pyadyy Eskadra

İsmail KÖSE<sup>20</sup>

**Abstract:** Sea power is the *sine qua non* necessity to be a hegemonic power. Sea power policy of Russia had a great impetus with Tsar Peter-I and since then had a fluctuating development process. Soviet rulers very-well aware of that fact, since the first years of the Cold War, tried to compete with Western Bloc in the world seas especially on Mediterranean Sea where they are recognized as their sphere of interest. Due to problems occurred because of the shortages in the Soviet System, Soviets faced with grave challenges, tried to generate some ship building programs in order to lower that gap. The passage regime in the Turkish Straits which has been put into use by Montreux Convention, affected Soviet Mediterranean policy directly, Soviets struggled to solve that problem by establishing bases on coastline countries. Soviet Mediterranean Fleet *Pyadyy Eskadra* has been established under above conditions. The aim was to achieve Soviet hegemony in the Mediterranean. Soon after the deployment of *Pyadyy Eskadra*, Soviets struggled to transform emerging crisis in the south and southeastern Mediterranean coastline countries to empower their basis. Turkey's policy to liberally comment and implement Montreux, contributed continuance of Soviet organic existence in the Mediterranean. The most challenging long-lasting problem of Soviet Mediterranean Fleet *Pyadyy Eskadra* was absence of aircraft carrier. Despite aircraft carrier passage has been prohibited by Montreux, Turkey permitted Soviet aircraft carriers' one way north-south passages which were built in the Black Sea shipyards and named with different classes. In this paper, considering Cold War rivalry conditions, Soviet Mediterranean Fleet *Pyadyy Eskadra*, Turkish Straits' passage regime and US Mediterranean policies will be analyzed.

**Keywords:** Pyadyy Eskadra, Aircraft Carrier, Rivalry, Sea Power, Turkish Straits.

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# Negotiations on the Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention as an Attempt to Preserve Peace in the Black Sea Region

Nikita GUSEV<sup>21</sup>

**Abstract:** This report examines the negotiations on the Russo-Bulgarian military convention of 1908-1910 and their place in the system of Balkan international relations on the eve of the Balkan Wars. Drawing on diplomatic correspondence and draft agreements, it analyzes how Russian diplomacy sought to use cooperation with Bulgaria as a means of stabilizing the Black Sea and Balkan regions.

The focus is on the initiative of the Russian diplomatic and military leadership to draft a secret agreement on joint Russo-Bulgarian action in the event of war with the Ottoman Empire. The documents show that one of Russia's main aims was to strengthen its political influence in the Balkans while retaining the ability to regulate Bulgaria's role in any future conflict with Turkey. From the Russian perspective, a military agreement could serve as an instrument for restraining Bulgaria from independent and premature actions that might destabilize the region. At the same time, the Bulgarian political elite viewed the proposed convention as a means of securing Russian support for the realization of its national program, especially the unification of Bulgarian lands and the settlement of the Macedonian question.

The report argues that the divergence of strategic aims between the two sides became the principal obstacle to the conclusion of the convention. Russia sought to preserve control over developments in the Balkans and to avoid an untimely war with Turkey, whereas Bulgaria regarded the agreement as a potential instrument for accelerating the solution of its national question. The Macedonian issue and the prospect of the Ottoman Empire's disintegration made these negotiations a significant factor in Balkan politics.

Ultimately, conflicting interests and Russia's fear of being drawn into war caused the talks to collapse. Nonetheless, the negotiations themselves reveal an attempt to use diplomatic and military mechanisms to preserve relative stability in the Black Sea region on the eve of major international crises.

**Keywords:** Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention, Balkan Politics, Russian Diplomacy, Macedonian Question, Ottoman Empire.

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## ... She was literally underwater, with only her turrets and superstructures visible”: The Battleship “Tri Sviatitelia” in a Storm on November 4-7, 1914, while Returning from a Naval Raid to Zunguldak

Sergey VINOGRADOV<sup>22</sup>

**Abstract:** World War I began in the Black Sea on October 29, 1914, with an attack by Ottoman naval ships on Russian ports. In response, a strong Russian naval task force departed Sevastopol on November 4 for Zunguldak to conduct a bombardment. The main Russian force consisted of five pre-dreadnought battleships, including the battleship “Tri Svyatelia”. On the morning of November 6, a battleship and a cruiser from the Russian detachment bombarded the port facilities at Zunguldak, after which the entire group headed back to Sevastopol. On this return journey, the Russian ships faced a severe test: a severe storm, reaching Force 8, which the “Tri Svyatelia”, the lowest-sided of all the Russian capital ships, weathered with great difficulty. Heavy waves rolled freely over her upper deck, their impacts smashing several important deck structures. The ship took on a large amount of water through the resulting openings and had great difficulty pumping it overboard. The “Tri Svyatelietya’s” bow dug deep into the oncoming high waves and was repeatedly unable to maintain its position in the line. During the night of November 6-7, the ship slowed twice and was forced to fall behind the main force to repair the damage it had sustained. This dramatic battle for the ship’s survival, which was practically on the brink of sinking, was waged with the utmost effort by the crew and culminated in victory on the morning of November 7 - the “Tri Svyatelietya” returned to Sevastopol under its own power and was saved for the fleet.

**Keywords:** World War I, naval actions in the Black Sea, operations of the Russian and Ottoman fleets, the battleship “Tri Sviatitelia”.

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## Science Diplomacy in Russian-Turkish Relations: From the Black Sea to the Arctic

Maksim GUTENEV<sup>23</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper examines science diplomacy as a mechanism for sustaining stable dialogue in Russian-Turkish relations amid the ongoing transformation of the international system. The Black Sea region is approached as a space of complex strategic interdependence, where security concerns coexist with intensive economic and technological cooperation. In such a setting, particular importance is attached to forms of interaction capable of reducing uncertainty and enhancing the predictability of interstate relations. Drawing on examples from nuclear energy cooperation (the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant project), space research, renewable energy development, and academic training, the paper argues that long-term scientific and technological projects create a durable institutional infrastructure of interaction. In the international-political dimension, this infrastructure acquires a stabilizing function, helping to preserve communication channels and mitigate escalation risks even during periods of political turbulence.

Special attention is paid to the potential extension of this model of cooperation beyond the traditional southern context toward the Arctic. Turkey's engagement with Arctic-related issues may be seen as a natural development of already institutionalized scientific and technological ties: accumulated experience and trust built through joint projects create conditions for their gradual expansion into new geographical and functional domains. In this sense, the northern dimension represents not a departure from the Black Sea context, but its functional continuation.

The paper concludes that science diplomacy can simultaneously perform a stabilizing role in the Black Sea region and contribute to new trajectories of cooperation in the broader Eurasian space, including the Arctic.

**Keywords:** Science Diplomacy, Russian-Turkish Relations, Black Sea Region, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, Arctic Cooperation.

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