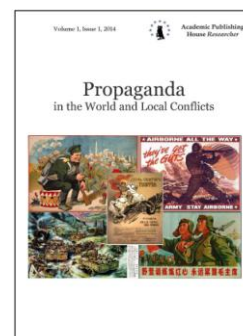


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Articles and Statements

The Advocacy Activities of the Foreign Emissaries in the North-Western Caucasus

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Abstract

The article deals with advocacy of foreign agents in the North-Western Caucasus during the Caucasian war (1801–1864). Certain attention is paid to the external political reasons of emissaries' participation in the Caucasian War.

The documents of regional archives, namely from the State Archives of the Krasnodar region, as well as modern scientific literature served as materials for this article. A part of the archival sources is introduced for the first time.

The conclusion states that emissaries carried out diverse advocacy activities against the Russian Empire in the North-West Caucasus. Their work manifested in the spread of proclamations, instigating the Highlanders to fight against Russia, spread of false information and instructors' activities. The emissaries also took part in combat.

Keywords: propaganda, foreign agents, the Caucasian war, the North-West Caucasus.

1. Introduction

The study of the intelligence agencies activity during both wartime and peacetime traditionally causes interest. In this article we would like to pay attention to the activity of foreign emissaries on the territory of the Black Sea coast and methods used to counter them.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. The documents of regional archives, namely from the State Archives of the Krasnodar region, as well as modern scientific publications served as materials for this article. A part of the archival sources is introduced for the first time.

2.2. The methodological bases of the research are the principles of objectivity and historicism, assuming an unbiased approach to the analysis of the studied problem, a critical attitude to the sources, drawing conclusions by analyzing the facts, as well as presenting events and their development in the context of the historical period. This is especially important in considering foreign agents activities and methods used to counter them. In this work we applied scientific methods: logical, comparative factor analysis, etc., as well as statistical and typological special research methods.

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3. Discussion

The conquest of the Black Sea coast is still insufficiently studied in Russian historiography, and the subversive activities of the emissaries are considered only fragmentally. The goals and milestones of annexation of the Black Sea coast area to the Russian State were not studied in Russian historiography until recent years, while we assume the study of the history of this process to be important and relevant. Insufficient study of the research problems of the Caucasian war resulted in a distorted understanding of the objectives, stages and methods of this war as well as its regional specifics. In our opinion this led to a distortion of the Caucasian War history.

This topic in the general context of the history of the Black Sea coast, the Black Sea region and the Caucasian war was studied by A.V. Shishov ([Shishov, 2005](#)), A.D. Panesh ([Panesh, 2007](#)), Y.A. Gordin ([Gordin, 2000](#)) and others in modern Russia. However, the most valuable ones for our research are the works of A.A. Cherkasov, V.I. Voroshilov ([Voroshilov, 2006](#)) and V.V. Degoev ([Degoev, 2009](#)).

In his monograph V.I. Voroshilov briefly described the course of the Caucasian War on the territory of Sochi. The work describes the landing operations and the construction of 4 fortifications. However, some of the author's conclusions are disputable. Thus, the author supports the common in the Soviet period point of view on the Highlanders' liberation war against Russia.

The work "Caucasus and the Great Powers in 1828–1864. Politics, war, diplomacy" by V.V. Degoev is the most complete study of the geopolitical factors during the Caucasian War today. This fundamental monograph contains huge national and also foreign factual material. The study presents a comprehensive idea of the importance of the Caucasus for Russia and other countries, mainly Turkey and England.

The work of A. D. Panesh investigates the role and place of the Circassian issue in the complex system of international relations of the nineteenth century. The main attention is drawn to the confrontation of Russia, Turkey and England in the North-West Caucasus. It also considers Shamil's Imamate activities in the context of the Russian policy in the Caucasus.

The way of life of a Russian soldier is described in the works of the following authors: S.V. Volkov ([Volkov, 2003](#)), V.G. Danchenko ([Danchenko, 2006](#)), A.M. Zaionchkovskii ([Zaionchkovskii, 2002](#)) et al.

Training, education, military service, welfare, living, social image, ideology, morality, duty, honor, etc. of a Russian officer are introduced in detail in the work "Russian officer corps" by S.V. Volkov. This study helps to evaluate the training of the Russian officers who took part in combat actions in the Caucasus.

In his monograph V.G. Danchenko discussed in details the Russian marines' history, including the preparations for landing operations, tactics of the units, landing techniques, etc. Certain attention is paid to the role of the Black Sea sailors (especially of M. P. Lazarev) in the development of naval landing theory.

The work of A.T. Urushadze ([Urushadze, 2013](#)), published in "Russkiy Arkhiv" magazine in 2013 contributed to understanding the historical sources range.

In 2014 a group of scientists under the guidance of A. Cherkasov attempted to study the Caucasian war through the prism of the publications of the pre-revolutionary magazine "Voennyi Sbornik". Having considered all genres of publications in the central military magazine of the Russian Empire, the authors concluded that this study helps to comprehend the nature of the conflict in the Caucasus. In addition, the study of the magazine publications contributed to the understanding of defensive and offensive operations as well as tactics, guerrilla warfare, etc. ([Cherkasov et al., 2014](#)).

4. Results

Russian-Circassian relations at the end of XVIII – the first third of the XIX century were full of events. It is known that in 1785 in the northwest Caucasus, the Adyghs' public and religious apparatus was violently destructed ([Cherkasov et al., 2016](#)). This was due to the emergence of the Turkish fortress of Anapa on the Adygh territory and the rebellion of Shiekh Mansour in Chechnya. As a result of these global changes in the Circassian world, the most numerous Circassian tribes (Natukhai, Shapsugs and Abadzekhs) turned from aristocratic to democratic, and Islam was spread by force on their territories, earlier being forbidden. It should be noted that Turkey's goal was to

spread its influence, as they needed a bridgehead for further combat operations against Russia. However, a series of military defeats of Turkey resulted in their acceptance of the Russian lands on the Eastern coast of the Black Sea from the estuary of the Kuban to the estuary of the Rioni river by the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. Thus, the Turkish influence from Anapa on Adyghs stopped completely.

These events dramatically changed the mood within Adygeyan democratic society toward passivity and increased the attempts of the Circassian aristocrats to regain power over the common people (Cherkasov et al., 2014a). It is worth mentioning that the process of incorporating of the Circassian neighbors (Abkhazia) to the Russian Empire took place during this period as well as the establishment of a Russian outpost – the Djiget Gagra fortress in 1830.

However, during its advancement on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus Russia faced foreign policy problems. Despite Turkey and Britain's recognition of the Russian authority over the designated areas, both of these states have sought by all means to prevent full strengthening of the Russian Empire in the North-West Caucasus. Both England and Turkey had their own compelling reasons.

Thus, Turkey feared the complete subordination of the Caucasus to Russia, followed by the further advancement of the Russians from Caucasus territory to Persia and the Middle East. In addition, Russia sought to turn the Black Sea into purely Russian and establish control over the Black Sea straits, which would threaten the existence of the state of Turkey. Persia made claims against Russia for the Caucasus region, but the two consecutive Russian-Persian wars (1804–1813 and 1826–1828) led to Persia's military defeat.

England pursued almost the same goal, because Russia's advancement in the south-east threatened the British territories in Asia (India, Pakistan, etc.). The United Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire began to provide covert help to the North-West Caucasus Highlanders (supporting them openly meant the failure of international agreements). Thus, the emissaries' participation in the events in the North-West Caucasus was influenced by foreign factors and not by the reluctance of emissaries to take part in life and destiny of the Circassian people.

Turkey could not act openly against the Russian Empire. As a consequence, the emissaries arrived in the North-West Caucasus. All activities of the emissaries were made to conduct advocacy for destabilizing the situation.

In September 1831, according to Russian agents, a Circassian Hanuk arrived from Constantinople to the Circassians, bringing "a lot of letters addressed to Shapsugs, Abadzekhs and Natukhai from the Turkish sultan" (GAKK. F. 249. Op. 1. D. 1165. L. 1).

The first case of the appearance of the British emissaries on the territory of the Black Sea coast was recorded in July 1834, when the British emissaries D. Urquhart and Captain Lyons visited Circassia (Panesh, 2007: 106). Since then, the emissaries' activity in the Black Sea region became permanent.

In the summer of 1836 the British schooner "Vixen", smuggling weapons, was detained by the Russian military brig "Ajax" off the coast of Circassia (Sudzhuk-Calais bay (Gelendzhik)) (Voroshilov, 2006: 171). British newspapers immediately burst into indignation against Russia accusing it of violation of navigation in the Black Sea. Britons even developed and published the so-called "The Circassia Declaration of Independence" in which the Highlanders of the Caucasus asked England and Turkey to support their fight against Russia (Panesh, 2007: 109). This Declaration was published in the "Portfolio", the official gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, and Cherkessia was marked as an independent country on the map (Voroshilov, 2006: 171). At the same time sending "Vixen" to the region was an English provocation. This operation was carried out with the personal approval of Lord Palmerston – the British Foreign Affairs Minister. Direct preparations were carried out by Urquhart, and the role of executor was performed by James Bell, the "merchant". It was him whom the Russian authorities detained on board of the "Vixen". The situation with the detained British schooner, with smuggled weapons on board caused an acute crisis in Russian-British relations. Even Austria, France and some other countries were involved in this conflict. Russophobic sentiments were widely spread in London. The British even tried to hold military demonstration in the Black Sea, but the Turkish authorities did not go in the wake of his ally and refused to allow the British fleet to pass through the Black sea straits (Degoev, 2009: 87).

Both sides of the conflict, using gaps in international law as well as in their own legislations, tried to justify the legitimacy of their claims (Degoev, 2009: 70-102). As a result of this more than a year long confrontation, Russia came out victorious. The "Vixen" schooner was credited in the Black Sea Fleet and its crew with J. Bell was sent to Istanbul.

The emissaries of Great Britain and Poland worked on the territory of the Black Sea coast and Zakubanye region during the war. The Great Britain unofficially engaged in the containment of Russia in the Caucasus region and the Polish pursued their own goal – the independence of Poland.

The first measure the Russian administration undertook on the acquired territories was the establishment of a number of military fortifications. Facing the hostility of the Highlanders, the Russian administration changed the nature of their work and started trade with the Natuhaevtsi and the Shapsugs. However, the economic strengthening of these tribes provoked repressions by the more warlike tribe of Ubykhs. As a result, the trade relations almost completely ceased to exist. In 1837–1840 a Russian chain of fortifications was built on the coastal territory to establish contact with the local tribes and to terminate smuggling.

The emissaries often had a serious influence on the vital decisions of the Highlanders. For example, in 1836, during the gathering of the tribe representatives of the Natukhai and Shapsugs, near the Vardan tract, during which their accession to Russia was supposed to be decided, James Bell, the English emissary and his assistant arrived, giving a "certificate" and the banner of the King of England to the Highlanders and promising the protection of the United Kingdom and the Egyptian Pasha, as well as military assistance (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 20. L. 2). As a result, the Circassians refused to accept Russian citizenship.

Along with Bell, another British agent John Longworth landed on the Dzhiget shore, near Abkhazia. Longworth as well as Bell presented "certificates" to the Highlanders, in which the Highlanders were called to war with Russia and were promised military assistance. The English emissary was received with great honors by the Djigets and was escorted to J. Bell in Gelendzhik (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 36).

The written statement and certificate obliged the Highlanders to come to Russians with a promise to stop raids on the border with Cherkessia, demanding Russians on their part to cease hostilities and demanding Russia, having no power over them, to acknowledge the independence of Circassia along with England and other countries. The British stated that if Russians do not cease hostilities "notify them that the allied fleet of the European powers and the Egyptian Sultan Pasha of 300 ships with landing troops and necessary ammunition will sail to Constantinople through Nago-Ishmael" (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 37ob.-38).

May 15, 1836 deputies from Shapsugs and Natukhai arrived in Gelendzhik with a written offer to general Velyaminov and it was namely a determined denial of obedience and an announcement that the king of England took over the mediation between them and Russia (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 37ob.).

In the autumn of 1836 several Turkish ships with military supplies approached the Circassian shore, one of them carried the documents to the British agents. Upon receiving the documents the agents started to call a meeting among the Trans-Kuban Circassians through the Natukhai elders. The idea of the meeting was the establishment of the universal Circassian alliance against the Russians. The first attempt to create such a union was unsuccessful, as the mountain Shapsugs (Big Shapsug), entered into a quarrel with the coastal Shapsugs (Small Shapsug) and Natukhai, and this event broke up the meeting (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 38).

Another activity of emissaries was the recruiting of the deserters, mostly Polish. The first experience of such a recruitment was not successful, as the Circassians immediately turned deserters into slaves and sold them to Turkey for copper mines labor. However, with the strengthening of the Russian cruising and difficulties in selling deserters into slavery, their number among the Circassians increased dramatically, including those who were free, and participated in combat on the side of the Highlanders (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 39).

Faced with the subversive work of emissaries, the Russian administration was forced to react. Thus, on July 16, 1838 the War Department of the Russian Empire authorized the issuance of a reward for the capture or elimination of emissaries, with the limit of 1 thousand chervontsi for one emissary (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 32). In exceptional cases, the cost for an emissary increased. For example, on June 7, 1839 the reward for dead or alive J. Bell was 3 thousand roubles, and for his interpreter – 2 thousand roubles (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 62).

Several organizations were engaged in gathering information on the emissaries' whereabouts. Among them there were the headquarters of the Separate Caucasus Corps, as well as the Russian Imperial mission in Constantinople. These organizations often provided very valuable and prompt information. Thus, according to a separate Caucasian Corps Staff, on January 22, 1839, 3 British engineers were planning to go to Circassia, met Langworth in Istanbul daily, who already had been there (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 16. L. 59-59ob.).

Advocacy materials, weapons, food supply, finance, equipment, etc. were sent to Circassia through the British agents. It was smuggled on chartered ships. Russian administration made considerable efforts to prevent smuggling. Thus, on March 29, 1841, Anrep, the Major General of the Ministry of War, who was acting the duties of the Black Sea coast Chief at that time, received a report informing that the Polish immigrant volunteers formed squads of up to 200 people all over Europe for landing on the coast territory and prepared to attack the Russian fortifications (AOAGS. F. 348. Op. 1. D. 6. L. 38-39). The scouts informed that the Polish were sponsored by the British. The Russian administration was particularly alarmed of the Polish artillery (it could cause serious harm to the fortifications of the Black Sea coast). In addition, the presence of Polish troops could be widely used in the advocacy activity on the territory of Circassia. All measures were taken to prevent the landing of the Polish, and as a result, the Polish troops never appeared on the territory of the Black Sea coast.

On July 5, 1845, the Chief of the Black Sea coast got a report from his assistant, stating that the emissary Ivan Ilinskii, a very enterprising young man, who had served in the French Legion in Africa, as well as in Portuguese and Spanish troops, was sent from Paris to Constantinople and then headed to the Caucasus (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 1). According to the other report, on April 22, Zvarkovsky, a Polish emissary, paid a visit to Suleiman Effendi (Shamil's representative) on the river Bugudyr (Trans-Kuban region) requesting a permission to redeem the prisoners and deserters from Polish owners. The author did not exclude that Ilyinsky and Zvarkovsky could be one and the same person (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 10b, 3).

In June-July 1845 Zvarkovsky came from Turkey and was in the Malozomeytsy land, but taken as a Russian spy, moved to the Shapsug land where he met Suleiman Effendi, who was sent by Shamil, and tried to acquire his trust, but Effendi still saw him as a Russian spy. Zvarkovsky had refuge in the Govgery aul, and stayed in the house of Tevtuh, one of the locals. One night, sitting by the window, he was shot with two bullets and believing himself to be close to death he asked for an interpreter and sent for Suleiman Effendi. Through an interpreter Zvarkovsky announced his title and the reason of his presence in the mountains and it was an order to Shamil. He added that two noble Polish were in service in the Caucasus in the troops, under the guise of sutlers, and soon two more emissaries would arrive from Turkey (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 5). The goal was to try to deceive the Polish with the dream of the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland. Such a full message indicated that the spy was in the closest circle of the Polish emissary.

Zvarkovsky urged the Highlanders to continue their attacks on Russians, and not to accept resignation (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 7).

In October the scouts reported that Zvarkovsky recovered from his wounds and moved to the river Suko of the eponymous aul, from where he expected to leave for Turkey. According to the scout reports, the emissary feared for his life, hired people to guard his house at night, and did not even trust these people, every day bringing them to swear that they would faithfully protect his hideout. It was the fear for his life that urged Zvarkovsky to leave the land of the Circassians (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 23-23ob.).

At the same time the scouts found out that Ilinskii and Zvarkovsky was the same person. He was wounded for his bold demands to release Polish prisoners who were enslaved by the Chechens (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 26ob.).

Zvarkovsky staged his death in December 1845. Scouts informed that the Polish emissary Zvarkovsky wanted to reach a chekterma (merchant ship) illegally with several of his fellow countrymen and Natukhai, sailed from the estuary of the Vulcan river to the ship, but a sudden storm overturned the vehicle, resulting in death of Zvarkovsky and all the other passengers. His beached body was found and buried a few days later (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 68-68ob.).

However, at the end of February 1846 it was known that Zvarkovsky safely reached Turkey (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 90). He reached Constantinople on a smuggled chekterma¹ with 280 passengers on board, mostly girl captives (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 91).

Around the same time, it was found out that Zvarkovsky had another alias – Lenoir (in 1844 he made his way from Constantinople with a recommendation letter to the agent of Shamil (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 108).

A few months later, in June 1846 a representative of the Russian Imperial mission in Constantinople, reported that on 2 June the Polish emissary Adam Vysotsky (gunpowder production expert) secretly left for the Circassian shore. His features: approximately 45 years old, dark skinned, of medium height (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 100).

Despite the pursuit of a merchant vessel with Vysotsky on board by the "Pshad" corvette and the "Enem" brig, he was able to get to the shore safely. He was accompanied by another Polish man and a translator. Emissaries lived in the aul Haji Berzek-Keranduk. Vysotsky brought a lot of tools and instruments for the production of gunpowder, weapons and different firearm missiles. He promised the Highlanders to show them how to mine metal and salt. Vysotsky and his companion called themselves British. He was going to travel around the region, as Bell did, and offer his services to the people to help in their fight against Russians (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 114-114ob.).

Vysotsky was heading from Ubykhs to Shapsugs, and then to the Natuhaevtsi (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 114ob.).

In January 1847, the scouts reported that the Polish emissary Adam Vysotsky was found dead in the woods near the aul of Haji Keranduka Berzek, shot in the mouth from his own two-barreled gun on January 3 (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 133).

The Highlanders suspected the owner of aul, Haji Berzek-Keranduk in murdering Adam Vysotsky, who lived in his aul. Keranduk committed a murder driven by a desire to obtain Vysotsky's possessions. Two other people that accompanied him managed to escape to the mountains through Abkhazia disguised as servants (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 153).

In the future, the scouts provided more detailed information about the circumstances of the case. Before his death, Vysotsky lived at Berzek's where on the eve of last new year fell ill with a severe headache and some Armenian named Papa Dzhan, who was trading with the Ubykhs gave Vysotsky a medication. The Highlanders said that he was driven mad from this drug and after he was found dead in a ravine. They wanted to kill the Armenian, but he fled in an unknown direction (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 154-154ob.). Thus, with a considerable degree of probability it can be stated that the Polish emissary was eliminated on the territory of the Black Sea coast.

It should be noted that in addition to advocacy among the Highlanders, the Polish emissaries were also engaged in advocacy among the soldiers and officers of Polish nationality in the Russian fortifications, which influenced them to become deserters. So, in 1840, the Polish Annufriy Gartner escaped from the fortifications and began to cooperate with the Highlanders. In 1845, the former soldier was caught and convicted. In addition, a part of the Polish emissaries acted under the guise of traders, army sutlers, etc. (Karataev, 2014)

At the same time in the Russian Imperial mission in Constantinople it was known that a group of 15 to 20 Polish and foreign emissaries was trying to reach the Caucasian coast. The Russian mission notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey about it (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 137).

In February 1847 the Polish emissaries Yakusky, Mirevsky, Olevskii, Dambrinsky and Cheshevsky managed to reach Abkhazia during the summer of 1846 despite the counteractions of the Russian military administration (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 146).

In other words, the situation remained difficult in the North-West Caucasus. In 1847, it was found that many sheikhs came from Trans-Kuban communities and penetrated into the lands of the Ubykhs, in Abkhazia and even in the Free Svanetia, preaching Sharia law, Tariqa and calling for a general uprising against the Russian administration and that their teaching was widely spread (GAKK. F. 260. Op. 1. D. 559. L. 185).

¹ A small sailing boat.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion states that emissaries carried out diverse advocacy activities against the Russian Empire in the North-West Caucasus. Their work manifested in the spread of proclamations, instigating the Highlanders to fight against Russia, spread of false information and instructors' activities. The emissaries also took part in combat.

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