

The Reports and the Testimonies
About Russian - Circassian War and the Circassian Genocide



Grand Duke Michael: “We wouldn’t leave our duties thinking that Mountaineers are not surrendering. To wipe out the half, the other half needed to be destroyed.”

Caucasia Armies General Staff Head Milyutin: “We should send the Mountaineers by force to the places we want. If we need, we should deport/exile them to Don region. Our main goal is to settle Russians in the regions on the skirts of Caucasian Mountains. But we shouldn’t let the Mountaineers know about this.”

In the letter **Earl Yevdokimov** sent to the Ministry of War in October 1863 he said: “Now we have to clean the coastal strip as part of our plan for the conquest of West Caucasia” (*from the State History Archives*).

Russian Historian Sulujiyen: “We wouldn’t abandon our cause just because Mountaineers are not surrendering. Half of them needed to be crushed in order to take their weapons. Many tribes were totally annihilated during the bloody war. In addition, many mothers were killing their kids in order not to give them to us.”

Russian Historian Zaharyan: “Circassians do not like us. We exiled them from their free meadowlands. We destroyed their houses and many tribes were totally destroyed.”

Russian Historian Y.D. Felisin: “This was a real and brutal war. Hundreds of Circassian villages were set on fire. We let our horses run over their crops and gardens to destroy them, in the end it turned into a ruin.”

Earl Lev Tolstoy: “To enter the villages in the darkness became our usual thing. Russian soldiers were entering the houses one by one under the darkness of the night. This and following scenes were such horror scenes that none of the reporters were courageous enough to report them.”

From the Oppositional group N. N. Rayevski: “The things we did in Caucasia were very similar to the negative things that Spaniards did during the war in American lands. I wish God almighty would not leave any blood marks in Russian history.”

In the congratulating message **Czar II. Alexander** sent to Earl Yevdokimov: "You cleaned up and destroyed the rebellious autochthon nations in West Caucasia in the last 3 years. We can recover the cost of this long bloody war from this fertile land in a very short time."

"A Russian detachment having captured the village of Toobah on the Soobashi river, inhabited by about a hundred Abadzekh (a tribe of Circassians), and after these had surrendered themselves prisoners, they were all massacred by the Russian Troops. Among the victims were two women in an advanced state of pregnancy and five children. The detachment in question belongs to Count Evdokimoff's (*Yevdokimov*) Army, and is said to have advanced from the Pshish valley.

As the Russian troops gain ground on the Coast, the natives are not allowed to remain there on any terms, but are compelled either to transfer themselves to the plains of the Kouban or emigrate to Turkey" (*F.O. 9-424, no 2, Dickson to Russell, Soukoum Kale, 17 March 1864*).

Jan Karol: "The Russian conquest of Caucasia is a terrible example of our barbarian times. It took 60 years of military terror and massacre to break the resistance of the Caucasian Mountaineers."

Hakurat S.Y.- Lichkov L.S in their book entitled *Adygheya*: "Czarist administration deported/exiled hundreds of thousands of Circassians from their homeland Caucasia. They expelled Mountaineer nations from their homeland by way of a bloody war."

Grand Duke Michael: At the end of the war, when Grand Duke Michael came to Caucasia, Circassian Elders visited him and they said that they were defeated, and they demanded to be allowed to live in their lands accepting Russian administration. The answer Grand Duke Michael gave was: "I give you a month. In one month, you either go to the land that will be shown to you beyond Kuban, or you go to the land of the Ottoman Empire. The villagers and mountaineers who are not leaving for the coastal region in one month will be treated as prisoners of war."

Russian St. Petersburg Newspaper: "They started escaping through the coasts which were immortalized by their resistance and defence. There is no more Circassia. Our soldiers will clean out the remainders in the mountains very soon and the war will be over in a short time."

Dekabrist Lorser: "Zass, near his encampment, on top of a specially prepared small hill, fixed Circassian heads on top of lances, with their beards flying in the air. It was very disturbing to see this scene. One day Zass, agreed to remove the heads from the lances after the request of a guest lady. We were also his guests at the time. When I entered the study room of the General, I was struck by a strong, disgusting smell. Smiling, Zass told us that there were boxes in which the heads were placed under his bed. Then he pulled a big box in which there were couple big-eyed, horribly looking heads. I asked him why he keeps them there. He replied: "I boil them, clean them, and send them to my professor friends in Berlin for the study of anatomy".

Russian-Kazakh women were walking in the battlefields and cutting the heads of Circassian men, after the war is over. Originally German, General Zass was paying them a good amount of money for doing that. Until he was warned by his supervisors to give up this, Zass continued to boil, clean and send many heads to Berlin.



General Zass

Tercüman-ı Ahval ve Tasvir-i Efkar Newspapers: “Russians destroyed all of Caucasia. They set the villages on fire. They were exiling the autochthon people from their homelands after the war.”

French reporter A. Fonvill: “Sailors were acquisitive. They were letting 200-300 people in to the ships that have a capacity of 50-60. The people left with a little bread and water. In 5-6 days these were all consumed and then they caught epidemic illnesses from starvation, they were dying in the way to Ottoman Empire, and those who die were dumped into the sea. The ship that started the trip with 600 people ended up with only 370 people alive.”

The Ubykh and Fighett tribes are... fast embarking for Trabzon. In fact, after their land had been laid waste by fire and sword, migration to Turkey is the only alternative allowed to these mountaineers who refuse to transfer themselves to the Kouban steppes and contribute periodically to the militia (*F.O. 881-1259*,

Dickson to Russell, Soukoum Kale, 13 April 1864)

Most of the Abkhaz have been plundered of everything by the Russians before embarking and have barely been allowed to bring with them the strict necessities of life for a short period. In many villages, and especially in the district of Zibeldah, their houses have been wantonly burnt by the Cossak soldiery and their cattle and other property forcibl taken away or sold under compulsion to Russian traders at a nominal price. (*F.O. 97-424, # 13, Palgrave to Stanley, Trabzon, 16 May 1867*)

Polish Colonel Teophil Lapinsky: “The situation of the exiled people was turning into a catastrophe. Hunger and epidemics were at their peak. The group who came to Trabzon decreased from 100,000 to 70,000 people. 70,000 people arrived at Samsun. The dead toll per day was about 500 people. This number was about 400 in Trabzon. 300 people in Gerede Camp, the daily death toll in Akcakale and Saridere is about 120-150 people. **Italian Dr. Barozzi** in his report makes the following important note: People are trying to stay alive for long time with herbs, plant roots and bread crumbs.”

Russian researcher A. P. Berge: I will never forget the 17,000 people I saw at the Novorossisk Bay. I am sure those who saw their situation couldn't bear it and would definitely collapse no matter what religion they belonged to, Christians, Muslims, or atheists. In the cold winter, in the snow, without a house, without food, and without any proper clothing, these people were in the hands of typhoid, typhus and chicken pox diseases. The babies were searching for milk in their mother's dead body. This terrible black page in the Russian history caused great harm to the Adygean history. The exile caused an interruption in the history of social, economic and cultural developments and in the process of becoming one political union/confederation."

English Delegate Earl Napier: "Slavs and other Christians were being settled in the lands that is emptied from Circassians."

English Consul Gifford Palgrave: "I traveled through all of Abkhazia on the day of April 17th, 1867. It is very painful to witness the destruction of the land of Abkhazia and to witness the annihilation of Abkhazian people whose only guilt is to be non-Russian."

English Consul R.H. Lang: "When 2718 people who left from Samsun to come to Cyprus arrived, 853 of them were dead and the others were not very different from being dead. The daily dead toll is about 30-50."

From the speech of the English Member of Parliament M. Anstey: "I blame Lord Palmerston for betrayal of Circassia, which is made English-adherent and which is to have trading relations with England. You also betrayed England by surrendering Independent North Caucasia to Russia while you knew about our interests in India."

8 Years later while **Lord Palmerston** was talking at the same parliament: "Dear Lords, it is true that we left Circassians alone with their terrible misfortune. Yet we wanted help from them and we used them."

Pinson: "The death percentage of Circassians along the Black Sea coasts is about 50%. 53,000 people died just in Trabzon alone. We don't know how many ships, which are "Floating graves" had sunk. The number of families exiled from Caucasia to Balkan region is about 70,000. Edirne: 6.000, Silistre-Vidin: 13.000, Niche - Sofia: 12.000, Dobruca-Kosovo-Pristina-Svista: 42.000 families. Total about 350.000 people. Death percentage is less and is about 15-20%."

Y. Abramov in his book entitled *Caucasian Mountaineers*: "There are no words to describe the situation of the Mountaineers in those days. Thousands of them died in the roads, thousands of them died due to illness and hunger. The coastal regions were full with people who are dead or on the verge of dying. The babies who are searching for milk in their mother's cold dead body, mothers who didn't leave their kids from their laps even they are already dead from cold, and people who are dead while they got closer just to keep warm, are examples of the scenes that were normal in the coasts of the Black Sea."

Russian I. Dzarov : "Half of those who left to go to Ottoman Empire died before they reached there. Such a state of wretchedness is rare in the history of the humankind."

ADDRESS OF THE CIRCASSIAN DEPUTIES (HADJI HAYDEN HASSAN and KUSTAR OGLI ISMAEL) TO THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND, LONDON, 26 AUGUST 1862 (published in *Supplement to the FREE PRESS, Journal of the Foreign Affairs Committees*) January 7, 1863

"As Your Majesty is aware, since the world existed, no nation has attempted to conquer our country. Russia only some time ago, under the pretence that she got our country by treaty from the Ottoman Government, invaded us with an overwhelming force, and began against us a war of extermination, which she has waged for

not all die to a man before reaching the encampment prepared for their reception”

T. Millengen

ENCLOSURE

SUMMARY OF THE INTELLIGENCE RECEIVED DURING THE WEEK AT THE BOARD OF HEALTH OFFICE

July 1st – A Turkish cutter arrive din port, from Heraclea, with 80 Circassian recruits.

July 2nd – The *Taif* came from Samsoun, with 2200 Circassians; 30 sick, 11 deaths. This steam-frigate towed in two vessels; the first with 700, the second with 535 passengers, of whom 150 sick – 44 deaths. Sent down to Gallipoli, where they are to settle.

The *Tounah*, from Trebisond, with 1600 passengers, of whom 60 died at sea, and 62 sick...

A ship towed in by *the Tounah* had 550 passengers, 15 of whom died at sea, 35 sick.

The Shahper from Trebisond, 750 passengers.

July 5th – The *Malakoff* with 1468 passengers, 34 deaths, 38 sick.

July 6th – A telegram from Gallipoli announces the landing of 3340 Circassians.

The total of the immigrants hitherto landed on various points of the coast of the Sea of Marmora, 21,703.

Letter dated Samsoun 30th ult., report 100,000 immigrants, and 300 deaths daily.

Fresh arrivals from Circassia balance the departures.

Reports from Batoom, 26th ult., announce the arrival of 8500 Circassians from Ardilar.

June 30th, Varna. 530 Circassian passengers from Theodosia.

A report from Widdin says that the 35,000 emigrants had been distributed between Zohmpalanka, Sofia, and Nich, 664 deaths after their departure from Widdin.

They spread typhus and small-pox wherever they settle. Nearly 200 men from the crews of Turkish vessels which convey the emigrants, have had the typhus fever, and have been sent to the Naval hospital. This circumstance does not deter the Government from sending as before the vessels appointed to transport the immigrants.

The response of **Shutsejuko Tseyko** to Czar II. Alexander (*Czar II. Alexander came to Caucasia in 1861, and he stipulated Circassians to surrender without any resistance and come down from mountain areas to low lands*):

“May be Caucasia will be Russian, but as long as there is blood flowing in Circassians vessels, they won’t be slaves of Russian Czar and we won’t surrender our homeland as long as we live. Dying is better than living as slaves. We won’t let our ancestor’s great warrior glory be stained. **“Ye tl’ln Ye tl’en - Either be a hero, or die”**

forty years, and which she is still waging, at the cost of many thousands of human lives.

The Ottoman Government, never having possessed our country, had no right whatever to give us over to the Russians. There is no other affinity between us and the Ottomans than the similarity of creed and faith which makes us both look upon the Sultan as the successor of our Prophet.

The tyranny of the Russians was not confined to capturing our cattle, burning our dwellings, and temples, and other unheard-of atrocities, but in order to starve us on the mountains they destroyed all our growing crops in the plain, and captured our land. In fact, they have treated us in an unbearable and barbarous manner, unprecedented in the annals of war. Driven to despair, we resolved to make a last firm stand against our enemies with all the energy we possessed, and the war was carried on with fresh vigour, eight months ago, causing the sacrifice of twenty-five thousand human lives, on both sides, and an immense destruction of property. While we are on one side repelling our enemies, and on the other trying to improve the government of our country, Russia by brute force, is trying to conquer us; on the neutral Black Sea she is capturing, whenever she can, every ship carrying any of our countrymen, so that we have no home on land, no means of traveling or refuge by sea. Still we would rather die than submit to the yoke of Russia. If we were to emigrate, abandoning our homes, for ages protected by our forefathers, who shed their blood for them, our poverty would prove a great obstacle to our doing so; in fact, how could we take away our own wives and children, and the widows, orphans, and helpless relations of those slain in this war? Such an undertaking would decimate the emigrants, and blot it out for ever our Circassian name from the face of the earth.”

OUTRAGE ON THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND BY THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE CAUCASUS, *THE FREE PRESS, Journal of the Foreign Affairs Committees. June 3, 1863*

“A scene of cannibalism has been enacted at the village of Hafifa in the country of the Chapsoughs. The men of that village were at the frontier for the service of the outposts. Taking advantage of their absence, the soldiers of the Czar fell on the rest of the population, which was defenseless, and killed, burnt, and pillage them. Among the number of the victims were eighteen old women, eight children, and six old men. On the back of one of the slaughtered women there was left a board bearing these words: ‘Go and complain to the Kraalitz (Queen) of England, to whom your Deputies went to demand assistance’. On the body of a little boy was found this inscription: ‘Remain here instead of going to sell yourself to your protectors, the Turks’. Finally, on the corpse of an old man, the eyes of which had been put out, was read: ‘Go and rejoin your Deputies, you will find some good oculists at Paris’ – *Courier d’Orient*

LETTER FROM CIRCASSIANS TO DAOUD BEY (DAVID URQUHART):

THE FREE PRESS, Journal of the Foreign Affairs Committees. December 2, 1863

“The Russians, jeering and deriding us, have begun to be more violent and oppressive, and, hearing of the arrival of the above things, they pushed forward some troops, and surrounded two hundred houses belonging to our people, and even also to our neighbours, by night, and killed the men and took the women and children prisoners; and the number of persons they killed amounted to one thousand and eighty, and those whom they took prisoners to one thousand three hundred.”

THE FREE PRESS, Journal of the Foreign Affairs Committees.

3 August, 1864

"THE EXPULSION OF THE CIRCASSIANS

The following letter having been refused insertion in the *TIMES*, we make room for it, as one of the documents connected with the operations of the Circassian Committee:

Reception of the Circassians in Turkey, Constantinople, July 7, 1864

My Dear Sir,

I confidently hope that my letters to you and Viscount Stratford De Redcliffe safely and in due time, reached their destination, as well as the copy of the documents therein enclosed. I was anxious – knowing how strong an impression **Dr. Barozzi's** official report from Samsoun had produced throughout England – to forward the one he presented, on his return from his sanitary mission, to the Board of Health; convinced as I am that the facts he has brought to light are such as not only to keep up, but increase tenfold, the interest displayed in favour of the Circassian exiles.

I deeply regret, however... that the author of this able report should have made himself liable in a most serious reproach; that of having, when enumerating the various causes which engendered the diseases which have occasioned and still continue to occasion the most awful mortality, among the Circassians, not said one word concerning the principal among these causes – i.e., the barbarous treatment these exiles met with on the part of the Russian military authorities previously to their embarkation for Turkey.

The limits of a letter do not permit me to unfold the tale of horrors perpetuated under the auspices of the Grand Duke Mikhail, in Circassia, by Generals Balibitch and Eudikimoff. The narrative of the sufferings its inhabitants had to undergo after the conquest of the country by Russia, might fill several volumes. The question to be dealt with, at present, is, whether the measures adopted by the Russian Generals to accomplish the 'pacification' of the conquered provinces, were not calculated to occasion the diseases which have already destroyed upwards of two hundred thousand of their inhabitants, and continue yet to decimate the ranks of the survivors, after finding a refuge in Turkey?

These measures of pacification were as follows: -- Wheresoever the Russians made themselves masters of a district, the principal inhabitants were summoned to present themselves before the commander of the troops, and were told by him that the Emperor, instead of consenting to the general extermination they had merited, graciously ordered the evacuation of their country and left to their own judgment the alternative of either migrating with their families to the steppes beyond the Kouban, where lands would be allotted to them; or of taking their departure for Turkey. Three days, they were told, were granted to them to come to a decision, and to make preparations for the journey. On the fourth day fire was set to their dwellings, and their inhabitants who had manifested the intention of seeking an asylum in Turkey, were forthwith marched down to the nearest point of the coast. On their reaching the spot, a military cordon surrounded the encampment to prevent any further communication with the interior. The men-of-war and other sailing ships – which as it is officially stated in Lord Napier's dispatch, had been, at the Grand Duke Michael's request, placed at his entire disposal, in order to facilitate the Circassian emigration – having never existed but on paper, the thousands of individuals congregated on the beach were doomed to remain there exposed to the inclemency of the elements for weeks and months, waiting for the providential arrival of a vessel from Turkey. The scanty supply of provisions they had brought with them, once exhausted, hunger drove them to have recourse for subsistence to roots and the bark of trees within their reach. Hundreds of women and children died from either starvation or from the effects of a food so noxious to the constitution; for in no instance was the slightest assistance afforded by the Russian authorities. It stands to reason that the mortality grew from day to day at the most frightful rate, and that the survivors were, at the moment of their embarkation, looking more like walking specters than living beings. Of course, when a mass of individuals, reduced to so sad a condition, congregates on board a vessel hardly capable of carrying one-tenth of their number, and sea-water is the only liquid within their reach, the inevitable consequence will be an awful increase of mortality, and contagion will spread like wildfire. It is a matter of surprise that they did

Sources

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