Research Article

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Russian military perspectives on the Ottoman Empire during the Greek War of Independence

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Abstract: The refusal of Alexander I to declare war on the Ottoman Empire in support of the Greek Uprising in 1821 provided Russian military men with a possibility to reflect on the past Russian–Ottoman wars and prepare the best strategy for future confrontation. One of the aspects of this reflection was the growing interest of Russian military planners in the ethno-confessional composition and political attitudes of the local population in the territory of the prospective war theater. This article argues that increased attention to the population reflected the desire of the tsarist planners to avoid excesses of a "people's war" rather than to unleash its destructive potential. Despite a strong emotional response that the Greek War of Independence provoked among the Russian military, their perspectives on the Ottoman Empire during the 1820s were for the most part quite restrained and conservative.

Keywords: Greek War of Independence, Russian foreign policy, Ottoman Empire, Russian, Ottoman wars, ethnicity, violence

1 Introduction

On February 22, 1821, Alexander Ypsilanti and a detachment of Greek volunteers crossed the Russian–Ottoman border along the Pruth River into the vassal Ottoman principality of Moldavia, launching a decade-long struggle for Greek independence. A scion of a Greek Phanariot family, Alexander Ypsilanti, made a remarkable career in the Russian military during the Napoleonic wars and became major-general at the age of 25. In April 1820, Ypsilanti assumed the leadership of the secret Greek society *Philiki Etaireia* founded in 1814 by the Greek expatriates in Odessa with the purpose of liberating Greece from the Ottoman dominance.[1] Having entered the Moldavian capital Iași, Ypsilanti issued several fiery proclamations in which he called the Ottoman Greeks to rise against the sultan, asked the local population to assist this struggle, as well as alluded to the forthcoming Russian intervention. Alexander I's prompt disavowal of Ypsilanti's rebellion as well as the tensions between Ypsilanti and Tudor Vladimirescu, the leader of a parallel anti-elite uprising of Wallachian irregulars (*pandurs*), sealed the prompt defeat of Ypsilanti's movement. Nevertheless, the *Etaireia* undertaking triggered outbreaks of inter-confessional violence in

1 For a recent discussion of Ypsilanti's undertaking in English, see Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 186–239. On the creation and activities of Etaireia in Russia, see G. L. Arsh, Этеристское движение в России [The Etairist movement in Russia] (Moscow: Nauka, 1970); I. F. Iovva, *Бессарабия и греческое национально-освободительное движение* [Bessarabia and the Greek national-liberation movement] (Kishinev: Shtiintsa, 1974), 24–73. For a Romanian perspective on the events of 1821, see Dan Berindei, *L'Année révolutionnaire 1821 dans les Pays Roumains* (Bucharest: L'Académie de la République Socialiste de Roumaine, 1973).

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other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Spurred by the Ottoman reprisals, the Greek rebellion in Morea continued for the next 9 years, under the increasingly sympathetic eyes of the Europeans culminating in the establishment of an independent Greek kingdom in 1830–1832.[2]

Alexander Ypsilanti's venture provoked complex responses on the part of the Russian military. As the educated Russians more broadly, tsarist officers often viewed the Greek struggle for independence with sympathy and were disappointed with the failure of Alexander I to declare war to the Ottoman Empire in support of the Greeks.[3] As the revolutions of 1820–1821 in Spain and Italy, the Greek rebellion had a radicalizing impact upon some Russian military men and accelerated the formation of the Decembrist conspiracy. At the same time, close observers of the Etaireia undertaking in the principalities such as I. G. Burtsev and I. P. Liprandi were sharply critical of Ypsilanti's personal qualities and his conduct during the events of 1821.[4] A negative assessment of the Greek rebel leader reverberated with an ambiguous attitude of the Russian officers toward the partisan warfare that Ypsilanti sought to unleash in European Turkey. This ambiguity was part of the still broader reaction of the Old Regime tsarist military establishment to challenges of the revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare, and, specifically, to the increased importance of "the people" in modern war.

This article demonstrates that the idea of unleashing a "people's war" in the Balkans was overall quite foreign to the Russian military men during the 1820s. Publications, memoranda, and reports analyzed below admittedly demonstrate the growing interest of tsarist advisors and agents in the ethno-confessional composition and political attitudes of the population of the European Turkey. However, increased attention to the population reflected their desire to avoid excesses of a "people's war" rather than to unleash its destructive potential. In what follows, I place the early Russian theorization of partisan action within the context of the Russian responses to the challenges of the revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare and then demonstrate the essentially conservative approach of the tsarist strategists toward the role of the Balkan population in Russia's prospective war with the Ottoman Empire.

2 The Greek Uprising and early Russian theorization of partisan war

In early April 1821, 6 weeks after Ypsilanti and his followers crossed the Russian–Ottoman border, the famous partisan commander of 1812 D. V. Davydov published his *Theory of Partisan Action* that constituted an important landmark in the development of Russian military thought.[5] Davydov defined the scope of

2 For the most recent and the most comprehensive treatment of the Greek War of Independence in English, see Paschalis Kitromilides and Constantinos Tsoukalas, eds., *The Greek Revolution. A Critical Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2021).

3 On Russia and the Greek war of Independence, see Lucien Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27–40; Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 26–54; I. S. Dostian, *Русская общественная мысль и балканские народы. От Радищева до Декабристов* [Russian social-political thought and the Balkan peoples. From Radishchev to the Decembrists] (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 160–185, 222–289.

4 On Burtsov's manuscript called "The Uprising of Prince Ypsilanti in Moldavia and Wallachia," see Dostian, *Русская общественная мысль*, 269–282. Liprandi's critical assessments of Ypsilanti can be found in his manuscripts "Восстание пандур под предводительством Тодора Владимирески в 1821-м году и начало действия гетеристов в придунайских княжествах под начальством князя Александра Ипсиланти, и плачевный исход обоих в том же году [The Uprising of the Pandurs under the leadership of Tudor Vladimirescu in 1821 and the beginning of the action of the Etairists under the leadership of Alexander Ypsilanti, and their deplorable outcome in the same year]," and "Капитан Иоргаке Олимпиот. Действ. гетеристов в княжествах в 1821-м г. [Capitain Iordache Olimpiot. The action of the Etairists in the principalities in 1821]" in Andrei Oțetea, ed., *Documente privind istoria Romîniei. Răscoala din 1821* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1962), 5: 163–263, 363–408.

5 On Davydov, see Alexander Mikaberidze, *Russian Officer Corps of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1795–1815* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2005), 66–68.

partisan action (*partizanskaia voina*) as "the entire space between the rear of the enemy army and its base" and its goal as depriving the enemy army of "food and ammunition" as well as "creating obstacles for its retreat."[6] Davydov pointed to the actions of Protestant German commanders of small detachments during the Thirty Years' War as the origin of partisan warfare. In Davydov's account, operations of the Hungarian irregulars in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1747) and the struggle of the Spanish guerrilla fighters against the French army in 1809–1813 represented the next important stages in the development of the partisan action. At the same time, only in 1812, the partisan warfare became part of the general action of the fighting armies.[7]

Davydov argued that Russia was best placed to reap the advantages of the partisan action. He proceeded from the assumption that the relative quality of an army depended on how much it confirmed to the "innate abilities, qualities and customs of the people, from which it is formed." According to the Russian author, enlightenment, the softening of the public mores, affirmation of the right of private property, commerce, and luxury of Europe posed obstacles for the creation of the light troops in the European armies. By contrast, in Asia one found entire peoples of horsemen who "inherited a capacity for raids" not through agriculture, arts, or commerce, but by virtue of "constant roving for booty amidst vast deserts, cliffs and mountains, in constant struggle with their inhabitants." Their type of warfare consisted in "sudden strikes, indefatigable mobility and in the bold undertakings of clamorous crowds of horsemen."[8] The greatest military strength would result from a combination of a European army that would do the actual fighting and the troops of Asian peoples, who would "deprive the enemy of food and ammunition." By virtue of its geography, only Russia had "one of the most orderly armies" and, at the same time, commanded the Cossacks, who shared the qualities of the neighboring Asian peoples, and yet would obey their commanders in the manner of the European troops.[9]

According to Davydov, Russia's geographic extent further enhanced its advantage over the European nations at the time when war was no longer limited to the duels between commanders, sieges of frontier fortresses or endless maneuvering of compact masses of troops. Now "peoples rise against other peoples, the borders are quickly overwhelmed by huge armies and the military operations quickly envelop the center of one or the other belligerent countries." In such conditions, Russia's traditional disadvantage of having a particularly long and indefensible border was more than compensated by the country's depth and breadth, as the defeat of Napoleon's army amply demonstrated.[10] It made the provisioning of the enemy army particularly challenging: low density of population and the readiness of the inhabitants to destroy their properties and retreat into the forests prevented the invaders from securing local supplies, while "bold and indefatigable raids of the light troops" interrupted deliveries from afar.[11] Davydov was aware of the uneasiness of many Russian officers in 1812 about both the partisan warfare and the idea of retreating to the center of the country. He admitted that his proposed strategy was burdensome, and yet argued that it was better to sacrifice property than honor and independence.[12]

Although Davydov took part in the Russian–Ottoman war of 1806–1812, his thinking was clearly dominated by the experience of the Patriotic War of 1812 and may appear to be irrelevant to Russia's prospective confrontation with the Porte during the 1820s. After all, Russia's wars with the Ottoman Empire took place on the southern periphery and witnessed offensive action on Russia's part, whereas Davydov concerned himself with the defensive war in Russia's interior against a major European invading force. However, several characteristics of Davydov's approach would be shared by the authors who later

6 D. V. Davydov, *Опыт теории партизанского действия* [An essay on the theory of partisan action], in *Сочинения Давыдова* [The works of Davydov], ed. A. Smirdin (St. Petersburg: Krasheninnikov, 1848), 487–488.
7 Ibid., 511.
8 Ibid., 519.
9 Ibid., 520.
10 Ibid., 522–524.
11 Ibid., 527.
12 Ibid., 527–528.

examined the problem of partisan warfare in European Turkey. For one thing, Davydov viewed partisan war as part of the general action of the army. Much of his essay was devoted to establishing the principles of coordination between the regular forces and the partisan Cossack groups, whereby the latter positioned and repositioned themselves along a geometrical pattern defined by the front lines of the two opposing armies. In this respect, Davydov's partisan war was quite different from Spanish guerrilla of 1809–1813, in which the armed bands represented the only fighting force following the destruction of the regular Spanish army. By contrast, Russia's "Turkish campaigns" featured both the regular and the irregular troops, whose actions had to be coordinated as they had been in Russia in 1812.

Davydov's remarks on the relations between partisan groups and the local population were even more relevant for the context of the subsequent Russian–Ottoman wars. By arguing in favor of a defensive war in the Russian interior and insisting on the use of the irregular troops that were peculiar to Russia, Davydov effectively formulated a national military strategy. At the same time, he did not count on the population's unconditional and automatic support of his proposed partisan action. "The fear sawn by the invaders, their encouragement of spies, suppliers and *provocateurs* harmful for the defending army" could influence the people in such a way as to "make the entire occupied territory satisfy the military necessities of the invading army and become a source of recruits for it." The partisan action had to prevent this outcome by "offering to the inhabitants a point of view and a goal that satisfied their ambition and love of gain better than those offered by the enemy." According to Davydov, the capture of a trainload of grain, clothes, or army treasury could attract the local inhabitants to the camp of the partisans and under their banners.[13]

Davydov thus did not take the population's support for granted and instead viewed it as something that had to be won. What was true about Russia was even more true of the European Turkey, where the Russian troops did not always enjoy spontaneous support even among the coreligionists. On the other hand, for all Davydov's stress on the moral impact of partisan warfare upon the population, the latter did not figure very prominently in his discussion of the technical side of partisan action. Davydov's ideal partisan group was led by an officer of the regular army like himself and consisted of the Cossacks, who were irregulars distinct from both the regular troops and the civilian population in the areas of military operations. In other words, Davydov's partisan warfare remained distinct from a "national war." Although he included the Spanish guerilla of 1809–1813 into his discussion of the emergence of partisan warfare, he viewed it "more as the case of a people who rose for a revenge," rather than a partisan action as such.[14] This distinction reverberated with the early Russian practices of and reflections on the partisan warfare in European Turkey. Volunteer detachments created in the course of the "Turkish campaigns," both before and after 1812, represented irregular forces whose members, not unlike the Cossacks, were socially and ethnically distinct from the population amidst which they operated.[15]

Five years after the publication of Davydov's work, the subject of partisan warfare in European Turkey was discussed by A. N. Pushkin in his military review of the Ottoman Empire.[16] Pushkin's work

13 Ibid., 498–499.

14 Ibid., 510.

15 On the Russian use of Balkan irregulars during the Russian–Ottoman wars of the eighteenth century, see E. B. Shul'man, *Русско-молдавское боевое содружество, 1735–1739* [The Russian-Moldavian comradeship in arms, 1735–1739] (Kishinev: Shtiintsa, 1962); I. V. Semenova, *Россия и национально-освободительная борьба молдавского народа* против *османского ига в XVIII в.* [Russia and the national-liberation struggle of the Moldavian people against the Ottoman yoke in the 18th c.] (Kishinev: Shtiintsa, 1976). For the same practice during the war of 1828–1829, see Alexander Bitis, "The Russian Army's Use of Balkan Irregulars," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50.2 (2002): 536–557.

16 A distant relative of Russia's most important poet, Andrei Nikiforovich Pushkin was not yet 35 at the moment of the publication, and only a captain, yet he had already established himself a prolific military writer. His most significant publications were: "Взгляд на военное искусство древних, до изобретения огнестрельного оружия [A review of the ancient military art, prior to the invention of firearms]," *Sorevnovatel' prosveshcheniia i blagotvoreniia* [Competitor of education and charity] 24 (1823): 57–85, 169–201; *Краткие извлечения об образовании войск в Европе и об успехах огнестрельного искусства* [Short extracts on the formation of troops in Europe and on the successes of firearms] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo vospitatel'nogo doma, 1824); "О влиянии военных наук на образ войны в Европе [On the influence of military science on the European warfare]," *Sorevnovatel' prosveshcheniia i blagotvoreniia* 30 (1825): 225–298. His most

demonstrates how Davydov's theory of partisan warfare in a defensive war in the Russian interior could be relevant in Russia's "Turkish campaigns," despite their peripheral and offensive character. All it took was to ignore the centuries of the Ottoman presence in Southeastern Europe and view the Ottomans as invaders who remained fundamentally at odds with the local Christian population. According to Pushkin, the Ottoman Muslims were all "janissaries" and "foreign soldiers," who kept the "true inhabitants of Turkey, the Greeks and the Bulgarians," under "military rule." As Baron François de Tott before him, Pushkin considered the Ottomans "an army encamped in Europe rather than a nation."[17] In this situation, Russia's offensive wars against them were not an attempt to subjugate a nation, but rather an effort to "defeat the Turks and chase them out of Europe."[18] To achieve this goal, Pushkin, as Davydov, recommended to act by means of flying detachments on the flanks and in the rear of the enemy army in order to cut communications and supply lines. He also suggested following Duke of Wellington's example in turning into desert those areas through which the Ottoman forces were to advance.[19]

At the same time, Pushkin's discussion revealed the limits to the applicability of Davydov's theory of partisan action to European Turkey. Davydov recognized that the Cossacks remained inferior to the Asian horsemen, from whom they acquired the qualities that made them superior over the European light troops. Cossack inferiority to Asian cavalrymen was not a problem as long as the Russian army confronted an invading European force. However, Russian advantage turned into a disadvantage as soon as the Russian army faced the Ottomans who, in Pushkin's own admission, were highly capable of small war themselves. He even cited the observation of the Swiss military theorist in Russian service A. H. Jomini, who argued that the "Turkish troops inflicted nearly the same damage upon the Russians as the Cossacks did to other Europeans."

Pushkin's proposed solution to this problem consisted in combining the partisan warfare *a la* Davydov with a popular uprising. If the Ottomans outperformed the Russians in a small war, this happened because of insufficient attention to the native Christian inhabitants. Pushkin suggested that the Russian army not only had to protect them but also "arm them and incite for a national war."[20] Apart from hampering Ottoman communications and destroying supplies, the Russian partisans had to "infuse with courage the autochthonous inhabitants, oppressed by the Ottoman military despotism." Encouraged by flying detachments of Russian dragoons and mounted jaegers, the latter could "rise in different parts of the empire and become dangerous for their masters."[21] Pushkin's contribution thus demonstrates that partisan action was not limited to defensive war, in which it served to harass the enemy communications and prevent it from securing supplies and support from the population of the occupied zone. In contrast to Davydov, Pushkin saw partisan action as part of an offensive war, in which its role consisted in provoking a rising of population in the rear of the enemy army.

At the same time, despite the difference of geographical focus, Davydov and Pushkin shared a common frame of reference that characterized early Russian reflection on the place of the people in war. For them, just as for other military writers of the late Alexandrian and Nicholavean eras, partisan action and a "national" or "people's war" (*narodnaia voina*) constituted the two distinct although related types of warfare.[22] The partisans were regular or irregular troops waging "small war" in the rear of the main fighting

important work published a year later with the approval of the Military Scientific Committee of the Main Staff was *Записки о военном укреплении для употребления полевых офицеров* [Notes on military fortifications for the field army officers], 2 parts (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1827).

17 See François de Tott's statement that "the Turkish Government may always be considered an army encamped, the General of which issues orders, from his headquarters, to forage the Country." François de Tott, *Memoirs of Baron de Tott*. 2 vols. (London: G. G. J and J. Robinson, 1786), 2: 20.

18 A.N. Pushkin, "Взгляд на военное состояние Турецкой империи [A review of the military situation of the Turkish empire]," *Syn Otechestva* 107.9 (1826): 75–76.

19 Ibid., 109.11 (1826): 266–267.

20 Ibid., 267–268.

21 Ibid., 266.

22 Other contributors to the subject of partisan action in this period were I. P. Liprandi, I. V. Vuich, and A. E. Engel'gardt. See V. Taki, "From Partisan War to Ethnography of European Turkey: The Balkan Career of Ivan Liprandi, 1790–1880," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 58.3 (2016): 266–270.

armies and did so under the command of the regular officers. By contrast, a "people's war" was essentially a popular uprising against a foreign invader or occupying force, in which the inhabitants themselves would take up arms under the influence of patriotic sentiments. And while partisan action could be used to ignite "a people's war," most Russian military men of the post-Napoleonic period were not ready to follow Pushkin's advice to do so.

3 The tsarist military and the challenge of revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare

This conservative attitude was part of the general reaction of the Russian military establishment to the challenge of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Mass mobilization initiated by the French revolutionary government in 1793 necessarily helped to obliterate the earlier *de facto* distinction between the military and the civilian population by turning virtually all able-bodied men into potential soldiers. Rousseauistic concept of popular sovereignty helped revive the classical notion of citizen-soldier, which constituted one of the aspects of the democratization of warfare. Emigration of many French aristocratic officers and promotion of individuals of less distinguished social origins constituted another side of the same process.[23] Subsequent revolutionary and Napoleonic wars helped relativize the military-civilian distinction across Europe. On the one hand, temporary French dominance in a number of countries provoked local resistance in the form of irregular guerilla warfare, which witnessed considerable involvement of civilian population and blurred the distinction between combatants and noncombatants.[24] On the other hand, Napoleon's victories forced embattled European absolutist regimes to initiate military reforms to mobilize greater numbers of their able-bodied male subjects and thereby match the size of *la Grande Armée*.[25]

As a result, this period constituted the first important stage in the long process of transformation of the Old Regime war between relatively small professional armies led by aristocratic officers into a "total war" between massive armies of citizen-soldiers formed through a combination of the short-term universal military service and a system of national reserves.[26] Needless to say, the actual transformation of "the affair of kings" into war between peoples was not as linear and unproblematic as the above summary may lead one to assume. Thus, the defeat of Napoleon and the legitimist restoration in France, Italy, and Germany reasserted aristocratic monopoly on the officer positions and marked a temporary return to the principles of the regular warfare of the Old Regime type.[27] And yet, despite this temporary reversal of the revolutionary changes, the process initiated by the French Revolution continued. Even in those countries where the reassertion of the aristocratic predominance in the military proved to be particularly pronounced and enduring, the consciously conservative officers increasingly recognized the importance of "the people" in modern war.

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23 Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 95–102.

24 Ibid., 121–122, 156–158; Alan Forrest, "Insurgents and Counterinsurgents between Military and Civil Society from the 1790s to 1815," in Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhalt, and Hanna Smith, eds., *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 182–200; Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770–1870* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1998), 168–183.

25 The Prussian military reforms of 1807–1813 represent the most characteristic example of this reaction. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*, 190–194.

26 MacGregor Knox, "Mass Politics and Nationalism as Military Revolution: The French Revolution and After," in MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53–73.

27 Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 204–215; William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Forces and Society since 1000 AD* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 219–222.

How exactly the military establishments of particular European countries engaged with "the people" as the new factor of warfare depended, among other things, on the circumstances of their confrontation with Napoleonic France. Having suffered a particularly sudden and humiliating defeat in 1806, the Prussians were unsurprisingly the first among the Old Regime powers to make a step in the direction of mass citizen-army as well as the ones to give the definitive theoretic expression to the centrality of the people in war.[28] Elsewhere the transition was more gradual. In both Austria and in Russia, Napoleonic victories resulted in little more than a streamlining of the Old Regime military organization as well as in the creation of temporary militias that were disbanded after the critical danger had passed.[29] Only the defeats of the mid-nineteenth century forced both Vienna and St. Petersburg to follow Berlin's example, which made mass armies of citizen-soldiers the norm in Continental Europe.

Inasmuch as Imperial Russia was ultimately more successful in its confrontation with Napoleonic France than any other Continental European power, it lacked the incentive to embark on the military reform of the Prussian type that would result in the creation of national reserves and the introduction of universal military service. Instead, the ultimate victory over Napoleon validated Petrine military organization of the Old Regime type with its sharp separation between the army and the rest of the population.[30] The War of 1812 did include an element of irregular warfare and occasioned the blurring of the distinction between the combatants and noncombatants. However, this aspect of the confrontation with Napoleon impressed the contemporary military men rather negatively. It is important to understand that, unlike Leo Tolstoy, most Russian veterans of 1812 among the officers took a rather dim view of the "clout of people's war" because it contradicted the principles of regular warfare.[31] Imperial Russian officer corps thus proved particularly reluctant to embrace "the people" as the new factor of warfare and initiate the transition to the modern mass army of citizen-soldiers or endorse the methods of guerilla warfare.

The memoranda and reports of the tsarist military advisors and agents during the 1820s contain ample evidence of this conservative attitude.[32] The experience of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars made them realize the importance of "the people" as both the foundation of the army's strength and a potential source of resistance to it. Their first reaction to this new factor of warfare consisted in neutralizing the disruptive impact that "the people" could have on the military organization of the Old Regime type that the post-1815 Russian army remained. As a result, in the 7 years that separated the official break in the Russian–Ottoman relations in July 1821 and Nicholas I's declaration of war to Mahmud II in April 1828, the Russian war planners tried to assess the attitudes of the different groups of the Balkan population and at the same time find ways of avoiding a "people's war."

4 Russian military perspectives on the population of European Turkey after 1821

After Alexander I broke relations with the Porte, the Russian Main Staff unearthed and published the military topographical descriptions of the roads in European Turkey that were based on the data collected by colonel of the Main Staff Fedor Len, who was part of M. I. Kutuzov's embassy to Constantinople in

28 On Prussian military reforms of 1807–1813, see Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*, 190–194.

29 Ibid., 170–173, 201–204.

30 On the role of the victory over Napoleon in stalling Russian military reform, see William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600 – 1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 217–218.

31 Victor Taki, "Horrors of War: Representations of Violence in Russian Accounts of the European, Oriental and 'Patriotic' Wars," *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History* 15.2 (2014): 284–287.

32 For a general discussion of the Russian war planning during the 1820s, see Alexander Bitis, *Russia, and the Eastern Question: Army, Government, Society, 1815–1833* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 149–160, 176–188.

1793–1794.[33] These works did not offer a systematic discussion of the population statistics of Bulgaria or Rumelia. Nor could one find in them any precise data on the number of Christians and Muslims in the towns and villages that were located along the surveyed roads. Len clearly paid much more attention to the physical qualities of the roads and terrain, the width of rivers and the strength of the Ottoman fortresses. The local population interested the author mainly inasmuch as its relative density or scarcity signified the availability of scarcity of supplies. At the same time, Len did mention that particular village(s) or town(s) along the two roads that he had surveyed were "Greek," "Bulgarian," "Tatar," or "Turkish." The descriptions also occasionally indicated the number of houses in villages. Only at one point, Len mentioned between 30,000 and 50,000 "industrious Bulgarian Christians, devoted to Russia" living in the area between Aidos and Burgas and remarked that a descent of 10,000 Russian corps on Burgas "will suffice to incite these inhabitants against the Turks who oppress them."[34] On balance, the data presented in the two descriptions were clearly incomplete and had at least in part become outdated in the three decades that elapsed since the time of Kutuzov's embassy to the Porte.[35]

In the meantime, the head of staff of the Second Army P. D. Kiselev coordinated the efforts of several staff officers to collect and analyze the materials on all the previous Russian–Ottoman wars, which would help them formulate the best strategy.[36] Already in 1819, Kiselev penned a memorandum, in which he noted that despite frequent confrontations, the Ottoman territories remained poorly known, which hampered the progress of the Russian army during the war of 1806–1812.[37] Kiselev also evoked the old Balkan legend about the insurmountability of the Balkan range. To correct the situation Kiselev suggested dispatching Russian quartermaster officers of Greek and Moldavian origin with the commercial caravans going from Iasi and Bucharest to Constantinople. He also suggested appointing a military agent to the Russian mission in the Ottoman capital and increasing the number of consuls in European Turkey. Kiselev's memorandum stood at the origin of colonel F. F. Berg's mission some 7 years later (see below).

Future Russian Minister of Finance lieutenant-general E. F. Kankrin was one of the first to offer his considerations on the manner of conducting the upcoming war. Having served as the general-intendant of the Russian army in 1812–1815, Kankrin became interested in the subject of the "Turkish campaigns" still before the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence and already in August 1819 wrote to Kiselev a private letter praising his interest in the history of previous Russian–Ottoman wars. Kankrin lacked personal experience of fighting against the Ottomans, yet he noted that the veterans of Turkish campaigns rarely had sound ideas about the proper way of confronting this enemy. Kankrin's preliminary observations emphasized changes in the character of Russian–Ottoman wars. According to him, the early wars were a confrontation between two militias until the military reform of Peter the Great turned one of these militias into a European-style army. In the meantime, the theater of the wars moved from the Pontic steppe zone into the "semi-civilized region" of the

33 *Военно-топографическое описание дороги из Журжи и Рушука через Шумлу в Константинополь* [A military-topographic description of the road from Giurgiu and Rushchuk by way of Shumla to Constantinople] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1821); *Военно-топографическое описание дороги из города Галаца через Правады в Люле-Бургас, лежащий по дороге из Адрианополя в Константинополь* [A military-topographic description of the road from Galați by way of Pravadi to Lule-Burgas that stands on the road From Adrianople to Constantinople](St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1822); *Военно-топографическое описание береговой дороги Черного моря, от крепости Тульчи через Бабадаг, Мангалию, Варну, Бургас, Мидию в Константинополь* [A military-topographic description of the coastal road along the Black Sea from the fortress of Tulcha by way of Babadag, Mangalia, Varna, Burgas, Midia to Constantinople] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1822).

34 See *Военно-топографическое описание дороги из города Галаца через Правады* [A military-topographic description of the road from Galați by way of Pravadi], 33.

35 Ibid., 17, note. The anonymous editor(s) of the description corrected Len's data on the road from Machin to Bazarcik and Pravadi with the help of topographic survey of part of Bulgaria made during the war of 1809.

36 Dostian, *Русская общественная мысль*, 192–200.

37 Kiselev, "Необходимость и возможность в мирное время собирать топографические сведения о турецких владениях [On the necessity and the possibility of collecting topographical data on Turkish domains in peace time]," RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 4–5. On the Russian–Ottoman war of 1806–1812, see A. N. Petrov, *Война России с Турцией, 1806–1812* [The Russian-Turkish war of 1806–1812], 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: Voennaia tipografiia, 1885–1887).

European Turkey. Kankrin stressed the necessity of composing descriptions of this theater and of the moral state of the Ottoman "militia" including the "timariots, recruited Arnauts and the allied troops – Tatars, Kurds and other militiamen brought by the pashas for the most part from Asia."[38]

In a memorandum submitted after the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, Kankrin focused on the character of the war theater and the likely responses of the Muslim troops and population to the appearance of the Russian troops on the southern side of the Balkans. Perusal of the military-statistical data collected during the grand embassy of M. I. Kutuzov to Constantinople and the information supplied by F. F. Berg and M. M. Bogdanovich convinced Kankrin that the crossing of the Balkans by the Russian troops and their entry into Rumelia would cause a "national war." Some of the Turks from the villages and the countryside were likely to flee to the woods and mountains and become dangerous. Others would defend themselves in the towns and fortified castles, slowing down the Russian advance. The "best Turks" would gather in Adrianople and, if so allowed, in Constantinople; others would stay in order to protect their families, especially if they happen to live away from the war theater.[39]

Since the Turks constituted two-thirds of the population of many Rumelian towns, Kankrin suggested not to take or even blockade them without evident necessity. Instead, the Russian commanders had to try to secure the loyalty of these towns by taking the hostages (*amanats*). He also advised against inciting the Greeks in the territories with a numerous Turkish population and counseled not to accommodate the Russian garrisons in the houses of local inhabitants. The Russian commanders had to "seek to disarm the Turks in the occupied territories, calming them down by proclamations" and assurances that their "faith, property and the harems will remain untouched." Kankrin specially suggested "respecting the class of the ulema, who were virtually the only ones to possess real property in Turkey."[40] These measures had to be complemented by the organization of the new administration. According to Kankrin, the "Greek" side had to be represented by the clergy and the headmen. As far as the Muslims were concerned, the Russian commanders had to act through the judges (*kadis*) and the notables (*ayans*) and organize a divan in the main town of each occupied province (*sancak*). Kankrin also counseled against "mixing the administration of the Greeks with the administration of the Turks." He recognized that the organization of administration was "a difficult task, which did not promise quick successes, yet one could hope that many of the towns and villages would adopt a neutral stance."[41]

Although the capture of Constantinople never became the ultimate goal of the war, the Russian war planners could not bypass the question of what was to be done once the Russian army arrived under its walls. According to Kankrin, "a great force of desperate fugitives" was likely to assemble in Constantinople, which is why the Russian commander would be well-advised to postpone the taking of the Ottoman capital by several days in order "not to push these fugitives to the extreme" and give them the opportunity to move to Asia.[42] The author of another war plan, Colonel D. M. Buturlin, similarly guarded the future Russian commander-in-chief against the idea of taking the Ottoman capital by assault.[43] According to Buturlin, Constantinople's population would be strengthened by the better part of the inhabitants of Rumelia, who were likely to flee from the Russian invasion. "Exalted by despair" they could offer such a strong resistance that the Russians risked "losing all infantry without obtaining the smallest success."[44]

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38 Kankrin to Kiselev, 21 August 1819, quoted in I. N. Bozherianov, *Граф Егор Францевич Канкрин* [Count Egor Frantsevich Kankrin] (St. Petersburg, Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1897), 40; also published in *Voennyi sbornik* 100.12 (1874): 270–272.

39 Kankrin, "Военные соображения о походе против Турок в связи с продовольствием, основанные на секретных сведениях депо карт и на некоторых частных материалах [Military considerations on the campaign against the Turks with regards to provisioning based on the secret data of the map collection and some private materials]. 4 July 1821," RGVIA, f. VUA, op. 16, vol. 1, d. 4395, ll. 134–155.

40 Ibid., l. 140.

41 Ibid.

42 Kankrin, "Военные соображения," ll. 136–136.

43 Buturlin, "Mémoire sur le plan d'opération à suivre dans le cas d'une guerre avec la Turquie. 2 February 1822." RGVIA, f. VUA, op. 16, vol. 1, d. 4395, ll. 112–118. On Buturlin, see Dostian, *Русская общественная мысль*, 191–192.

44 Ibid., l. 116.

Alexander I's refusal to follow up in the official break in the Russian–Ottoman relations with a declaration of war necessarily discouraged the Russian generals from submitting more memoranda on the subject for the time being. However, Nicholas I who succeeded to the throne in December 1825 heeded the advice of the former Russian envoy to Constantinople G. A. Stroganov to "follow a strictly national and religious policy" and became determined to resolve the Eastern Question "inherited" from his elder brother.[45] The new emperor's declaration to this effect signaled the resumption of military-statistical work on the Ottoman Empire and provoked a new wave of memoranda and opinions on the best strategy to adopt in the possible war. Some of these memoranda treated the subject of relations between the Russian army and the Balkan population.

General quartermaster of the Main Staff Pavel Sukhtelen argued that it was necessary to "pay special attention to the observation of exemplary discipline" among the troops. He also pointed to the necessity of "encouraging the inhabitants to be loyal and cooperative by treating them with justice and kindness, making no exception for the Turks." According to Sukhtelen, such circumspection with respect to the Muslim population was useful in view of "recent revolutions (*perevoroty*) that recently took place in Constantinople." The inhabitants of the Muslim confession were to be treated on the par with the Christians, which presupposed not only a noninterference with their religious rites but also a protection "from the slightest oppression, making the commanders responsible for the strict fulfilment of this rule." These principles were to be announced in a proclamation in Greek, Turkish, and Moldavian following the occupation of Iaşi by the Russian troops.[46]

According to another advisor, general A. F. Lanzheron, strict discipline was particularly necessary in the Turkish campaigns. By contrast, indiscipline and pillage would reduce the provisions that the Russian troops could find in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia as well as deprive them of the "support and cooperation" of the Bulgarians on the right bank of the Danube and even "push them to take up arms against [the Russians] as happened in 1809."[47] Mindful of the dangers of antagonizing the Orthodox coreligionists, Lanzheron at the same time suggested taking advantage of their military qualities. A veteran of the Russian–Ottoman wars of 1787–1792 and 1806–1812, Lanzheron fell back on the experience of the latter in suggesting to "raise and arm the Serbs," who could "paralyze the Turks of Vidin, Niš and other of the places between the Danube and Bosnia."[48]

Otherwise, Lanzheron's plan for the war presupposed rather conventional "systematic" warfare aimed at reducing the Ottoman fortresses along the Danube. In order not to weaken the main army by the assignments of the garrisons to the captured fortresses, Lanzheron suggested erasing them altogether and "transporting all their Turkish inhabitants to Russia," yet leaving the Bulgarian population on their places.[49] This suggestion constituted the exact opposite of the Russian population policies in 1806–1812, when the garrisons and the Muslim inhabitants of the surrendered Ottoman fortresses were usually allowed to leave into the interior of Turkey, while the retreat of the Russian troops to the left side of the Danube at the end of each campaign would trigger the emigration of Bulgarian town dwellers and villagers into Wallachia and Moldavia.[50]

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45 S. S. Tatishchev, *Внешняя политика Николая Первого* [The foreign policy of Nicholas I] (St. Petersburg: Skorokhodov, 1887), 137.

46 Sukhtelen, "Общие предположения относительно распоряжений для движения и действия 2-ой армии за границу [General ideas concerning the orders for the expedition and action of the second army abroad]. 23 September 1826, Moscow," RGVIA, f. VUA, op. 16, vol. 1, d. 4395, l. 35.

47 Langeron, "Projet d'une guerre offensive des Russes contre les Turcs présente à l'Empereur Nicholas 1er en 1826," *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*. Supplement 1, 6 vols. (Bucharest: Socecu, 1886–1895), 3: 65.

48 Ibid., 69.

49 Ibid.

50 On the resettlement of Danubian Bulgarians into Wallachia Moldavia and Bessarabia at the concluding state of the war of 1806–1812, see Andrew Robarts, *Migration and Disease in the Black Sea Region. Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 45–46, 60–66.

For the most part, the military advisers of Alexander I and Nicholas I continued to treat the population of the European Turkey in very general terms and more or less consistently distinguished only between the Muslims or "Turks" and the Christians. However, one can trace the elements of a more elaborate approach that singled out particular ethnic groups within these broad categories. Thus, Lanzheron singled out the Nekrasovtsy, the Old Believer Don Cossacks who had emigrated from Russia to Turkey during the eighteenth century. Lanzheron described Nekrasovtsy as Russia's "fiercest and cruelest enemies" and argued that their great village Dunavets in the Danubian Delta had to be burned and its inhabitants destroyed.[51] For his part, Sukhtelen suggested paying special attention to the other two groups of recent émigrés from Russia, namely, the Tatars and the Zaporozhian Cossacks who likewise lived near the mouth of the Danube. According to Sukhtelen, the Russian command had to "try to attract these groups by the promise of protection and even the permission to settle on the left bank of the Danube."[52]

The military intelligence agent of the Second Army colonel I. P. Liprandi likewise argued that it was possible to attract both the Zaporozhians and the Nekrasovtsy to Russia's side.[53] Liprandi noted that the emigration to the Marmara littoral in the course of the war of 1806–1812 as well as the participation in the struggle with the Greek insurgents had considerably weakened these two groups. To replenish their ranks, both the Nekrasovtsy and the Zaporozhians accepted many fugitive serfs and deserters from the Russian army. According to Liprandi, one could convince these groups not to help the Turks by "caressing them, pardoning the deserters and the fugitives as well as preserving, if only temporarily, their savage liberties."[54] Liprandi also noted the change in the attitude of the Bulgarians after 1812, who became "less savage than they used to be," while their prejudice against the Russians (for the destructions during the war of 1806–1812) abated. According to Liprandi, "on condition of the maintenance of discipline among the Russian troops one could hope that they will not be abandoning their homes and will even contribute to the success of our arms."[55]

The temporary resumption of the diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey after the conclusion of the convention of Akkerman on 25 September 1826 led to the appointment of A. I. Ribop'ier as the Russian envoy to Constantinople. Alongside the diplomats, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs dispatched to the Ottoman capital a military mission headed by colonel F. F. Berg and including staff captains A. O. Diugamel and P. A. Tuchkov, and sub lieutenant A. I. Verigin.[56] Their task was to collect the military-statistical information on the Ottoman Empire for the eventuality of the war. Among the matters of purely military intelligence, Nicholas I's Chief of Staff I. I. Dibich ordered Berg to find out "to what degree one could expect an adversary zeal (*protivnago nam userdiia*) on the part of the Turkish people in case of war with Russia as well as the attitudes and resources of Christian inhabitants of the northern part of Turkey."[57] In winter 1826–1827, the members of the mission surveyed the roads in Rumelia furnishing important information on the possible routes of advance of the Russian army.[58] Berg also sent Nicholas I and his ministers his

51 Langeron, "Projet d'une guerre offensive," 68.

52 Sukhtelen, "Общие предположения относительно распоряжений для движения и действия 2-ой армии за границу [General ideas concerning the orders for the expedition and action of the second army abroad]. 23 September 1826, Moscow," RGVIA, f. VUA, op. 16, vol. 1, d. 4395, l. 36.

53 On Liprandi, see Victor Taki, "From Partisan War to Ethnography of European Turkey: The Balkan Career of Ivan Liprandi, 1790 – 1880," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 58.3 (2016): 257–285.

54 Liprandi, "Краткое обозрение Молдавии, Валахии и других прилегающих земель в военном отношении с присовокуплением о приготовлениях Турок от 20 марта 1828 [Brief military survey of Moldavia, Wallachia and other adjacent territories, with an addendum on the military preparations of the Turks, 20 March 1828]," 3 April 1828, RGIA, f. 673, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 8–9.

55 Ibid., ll. 7–8.

56 On Berg, later governor-general of Finland, Viceroy of Poland and Field marshal, see S. V. Sergeev and E. I. Dolgov, Военные топографы русской армии [Military topographers of the Russian army] (Moscow: SiDi Press, 2001), 469–470.

57 I.I. Dibich, "Проект инструкции полковнику кавалеру Берг [Draft instruction to Colonel Cavalier Berg], St. Petersburg, 15 July 1826," RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 4, ll, 1–2.

58 See Berg to Nesselrode, 10 February 1827, Pera, RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 5, ll, 17–19. See also A. O. Diugamel, Автобиография [Autobiography] (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1885), 13–17. Diugamel, Tuchkov, and Verigin published their findings.

observations on the general state of the Ottoman Empire that undoubtedly helped to shape the emperor's perception of Russia's southern neighbor for the rest of his reign.

The Russian agent was critical of the recent destruction of the janissary corps by Mahmud II as well as of the Ottoman military modernization. In his reports to Russian Vice-Chancellor K. V. Nesselrode, Berg wrote about the state of "general terror" that the "Auspicious Event" of 14 June 1826 produced and noted the evasiveness with which the Turks responded to all the questions concerning the Janissaries, whose very name was officially prohibited.[59] Nevertheless, Berg recognized that "the public spirit in Turkey has undergone grand changes since the revolutions that marked the reign of Sultan Selim III." Whereas the first attempt to create a European-style army cost that sultan his life, now the people "seemed willing to support" the new military organization zealously pursued by the Ottoman government and "treated as a means of salvation what twenty years previously they had stubbornly rejected."[60]

At the same time, Berg remained unimpressed by the first measures that Mahmud II took in order to build a new army. The Russian agent argued that "two or three generations will have to pass before the new Turkish troops can master the learned combinations and actions of a major strategist."[61] Berg believed that the current situation of the Ottomans will oblige them to "seek their salvation in an intelligent defence of fortresses."[62] This characteristic of the Turkish military strategy dictated, according to Berg, the Russian choice of a decisive offensive strategy. Since the Ottomans were bound "to avoid grand battles and resort to small war," it was imperative for the Russians "to employ a mass of troops that would be big enough to guarantee the success in all directions without at the same time concentrating this mass of troops in one point because of the provisioning difficulties that would result therefrom."[63]

As many of his contemporaries, Berg recognized the "perseveration, energy and profound knowledge of one's country" that Mahmud II and his government revealed in the affair of destitution of the janissary corps. Yet he argued that it would be much more difficult for them to organize a regular army with the same success for number of reasons. First, such an army would never acquire the necessary permanence as long as the civil and financial administration remained in their current state and until a comprehensive reform of all the branches of administration was undertaken.[64] The accomplishment of such a task required a prolonged period of peace which could be purchased only by the great sacrifices on the part of the government. Next, in their first stage, the reforms of Mahmud II presupposed the destruction of "everything that constituted the strength of his subjects." According to Berg, the janissaries "had a national character" and with all their obvious shortcomings, could reassemble quickly after a military defeat. By contrast, a lost battle

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See A. O. Diugamel, *Военно-топографическое описание дороги, ведущей из Рущука через Осман-Базар, Стараreку и Сливно в Люлебургас* [A military-topographic description of the road from Rushchuk by way of Osman-Pazak, Starareka and Slivno to Luleburgas] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1827); Idem, *Военно-топографическое описание дороги ведущей от Систово через Тырново, Казан, Карнабад, Факи, деревню Гектепе, Визу и Сарай в Буюк-Дере* [A military-topographic description of the road from Sistovo by way of Tyrnovo, Kazan, Karnabad, Faki, the village of Gektepe, Viza and Sarai to Buyk-Dere] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1827); P. A. Tuchkov, *Военно-топографическое описание дорог: от Ески-Стамбула через Османпазар, Казан, Сливно, Ямболь до Адрианополя, и от онаго в Кирклисси, в Факи и в Люлебургас* [A Military-Topographic Description of the Roads from Eski-Stambul by Way of Osmanpazar, Kazan, Slivno, Iambol to Adrianople and From That City to Kirklissi, to Faki and Luleburgas] (St. Petersburg: Generalnyi Shtab, 1827); A. I. Verigin, *Военно-топографическое описание дорог: от гор. Туртукая через г. Карнабат, Факи, Кирклисси, Люлебургас, Чорлу, Силиврию до мес. Кючюк-Чекменджe* [A military-topographic description of the roads from the town of Turtukai by way of town Karnabat, Faki, Kirklissi, Luleburgas, Chorlu, Silivria to Kucuk-Chekmendzhe] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1827); Idem, *Военно-топографическое описание дороги: от гор. Тырново через мес. Габрова, г. Казанлык и Ески-Саару в Адрианополь* [A military-topographic description of the road from Tyrnovo by way of Gabrovo, Kazanlyk and Eski-Zagra to Adrianople] (St. Petersburg: General'nyi Shtab, 1827).

59 Berg to Nesselrode, 11 January 1827, Bucharest, RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 5, l. 14.

60 Berg to Nesselrode, 11 February 1827, Pera, ibid., l. 44.

61 Ibid., l. 48.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Berg to Nesselrode, 25 February 1827, Pera, ibid., l. 77.

was capable of destroying completely the recently established new army of the sultan which for a number of years would place the empire "at the mercy of combinations of European politics."[65]

Berg also noted that Mahmud II was "impudent enough" to introduce the general conscription for the Muslim population immediately after the destruction of the janissaries, which "tipped the discontent and exasperated the people." In the absence of the population census, the local authorities were incapable of carrying out the recruitment in an orderly manner. As a result, the sultan's initial appeal for voluntary enrollment turned into a forced conscription, which the local governors implemented in order to prove their loyalty to the ruler.[66] The sorry state of the empire's finances further aggravated the situation. As a result, in Berg's estimation, it would take more than a generation for the Ottoman government to be able to maintain a regular army of some 100–120,000 troops.[67] Overall, Berg's early assessment of the Ottoman military modernization efforts indicated the poor compatibility of the traditional and the modern sources of strength and the danger of losing the former before acquiring the latter. His reports also implied that the people constituted the ultimate source of the country's military organization and that its modernization could not be successful unless the army retains its "national character."

Berg's reports are remarkable for their attention to the political attitudes of the Ottoman Muslims as shaped by the destruction of the Janissary corps and the military reforms of Mahmud II. Other military advisors of Alexander I and Nicholas I considered in this article displayed greater interest toward particular groups of the Balkan Christians (Nekrasovtsy, former Zaporozhian Cossacks, Serbs) and advised the tsar on ways to neutralize their hostility toward Russia or else to capitalize on their sympathy toward it. Overall, it is safe to say that population, its numbers, moral qualities, and political attitudes, began to occupy an ever-larger place in the reports and memoranda of the Russian military men written between the beginning of the Greek Uprising and the Russian–Ottoman War of 1828–1829. At the same time, this interest reflected their desire to keep "the people" out of the war, rather than unleash its great and destructive potential as some early advocates of the partisan action suggested. Such was the initial response of the Old Regime tsarist military to the challenge of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare.

5 Conclusion

Although the idea of raising the Balkan Christians for an all-out struggle against the Ottoman rule was not entirely absent in the writings of Russian officers during the 1820s, the tsarist military establishment was generally apprehensive of a prospect of a "people's war." Instead of mobilizing the Christians against the Muslims, the military councilors of Alexander I and Nicholas I generally preferred keeping both groups pacified in their places of residence. To prevent a rising of the Muslim population against Russia, they stressed the importance of sending them a reconciliatory and reassuring message as well as maintaining strict discipline among the troops. Conservative sensibilities of senior Russian military conditioned their choices during the war of 1828–1829.[68]

While the conflict witnessed some partisan action on the part of the Russians, this action aimed to prevent "a people's war" on the part of the local Muslim population rather than to mobilize the masses of Orthodox Bulgarians for a general uprising against the Ottoman rule. The overall Russian policy adopted in 1828–1829 consisted in dissuading the Muslim population from leaving their places of residence. The arming of Bulgarians took place only after Russian crossing of the Balkans in summer 1829 and remained minimal.[69] This conservatively waged war concluded in a similarly conservative peace treaty of Adrianople

65 Ibid., l. 78.
66 Ibid., ll. 74–75.
67 Ibid., l. 76.
68 On the Russian–Ottoman war of 1828–1829, see Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question*, 274–324.
69 See Bitis, "The Russian Army's Use of Balkan Irregulars;" Taki, "From Partisan War," 260–266.

that left the Ottoman control over Rumelia and the Danubian Bulgaria intact. Seven months after its conclusion, the Russian commander-in-chief Ivan Dibich promptly suppressed a rising against prospective reimposition of the Ottoman rule that was attempted by one of the leaders of the Bulgarian volunteer detachments Georgi Mamarchev and his 500 followers.[70]

The same conservative approach ultimately characterized the population policies of the Russian authorities in the occupied territories in 1829–1830. As was the case of the peace settlements that concluded the Russian–Ottoman wars of 1768–1774, 1787–1792, and 1806–1812, the peace treaty of Adrianople stipulated the right of resettlement for those subjects of the two powers, who in the course of the war demonstrated an attachment to the opposite side either by their actions or by opinion. Although many Bulgarians declared their desire to emigrate, the Russian authorities tried to limit their numbers to only those who actually served in the volunteer detachments and could thus reasonably fear Ottoman reprisals. This somewhat reduced the scale of Bulgarian resettlement to the Russian-controlled Bessarabia that actually took place in 1829–1830. A Russian consul was temporarily appointed in Adrianople to assure the remaining Bulgarian population of the peaceful intentions of the Ottoman government, which, in its turn issued several reconciliatory messages.[71] Clearly, in their approach to peace making, just as in their manner of waging war, Nicholas I and his commanders demonstrated a commitment to the principle of status quo that characterized the politics of the Restoration era.

Conflict of interest: Author states no conflict of interest.

70 Bitis, "The Russian Army's Use of Balkan Irregulars," 553.

71 Alexander Bitis, "The 1828-29 Russo-Turkish War and the Resettlement of Balkan Peoples to Novorossiia," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 53.4 (2005): 506–525.