

## PAPER DETAILS

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# The Condolence Message of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet in 1906: Critique of a Russian Red Archive Document

Osmanlı Karadeniz Donanmasının 1906'da Taziye Mesajı: Bir Rus Kızıl Arşiv Belgesinin Eleştirisi

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## Abstract

*According to a document kept in the Russian Red Archives, 28 officers of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet sent a letter of condolence and support to the parents of Lieutenant Schmidt who was executed in 1906 for rioting in Odesa and in the fleet. The subject document has been used in literature for many years without question. However, contextual, formatting, and logical errors and inconsistencies in the content of the above-mentioned document are remarkable. Besides this, when conditions and documents of the period are examined, it seems probable that the document was fabricated.*

**Key Words:** Schmidt, Ottoman Black Sea Fleet, 28 officers, Red archives/Krasnyyarkhiv/, execution

## Özet

*Rus Kızıl Arşivinde bulunan bir belgeye göre Odesa'da ve donanmada isyan çıkarmaktan 1906 yılında idam edilmiş Teğmen Schmidt'in ailesine Osmanlı Karadeniz Filosuna mensup 28 subay taziye ve destek mektubu göndermişlerdir. Bahse konu belge literatürde uzun yıllar tartışılmadan kullanılmıştır. Ancak anılan belgedeki şekil, format, mantık hataları ve içerikteki uyumsuzluklar dikkat çekicidir. Bunun yanında dönemin şartları ve belgeleri incelendiğinde belgenin üretildiği ihtimali ağırlık kazanmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Schmidt, Osmanlı Karadeniz Donanması, 28 subay, Kızıl arşiv/Krasnyyarkhiv/, idam

## Introduction

In most of the publications studying the effects of the Russian Revolution of 1905 on Turkey, it has been argued that one of the most important and concrete indicators of these effects is the letter<sup>1</sup> of condolence and support which

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1 H. M. Tsovikyan, "Vliyaniye Russkoi Revolyutsii 1905 godana Revolyutsionnoe Dvizhenie v Turtsii", *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, III, 1945, pp. 20-21.; E. Sarkisov, "Vliyanie Russkoy Revolyutsii 1905—1907 gg. Narazvitiye Revolyutsionno Godvizheniya v Turtsii", *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armianskoy SSR*, 12, 1955, p. 74-75.; I. M. Reisner, "Russkaya Revolyutsiya 1905-1907 gg i Probujdenie Azii", *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, 1955, II, p. 19.; A. F. Miller, "Mladoturskaya Revolyutsiya", compil., *Perveya Russkaya Revolyutsiya 1905-1907 gg i Mejdunarodnoe Dvijenie*, 1956, II, Moscow, pp. 328-329.

Ivar Spector, *The First Russian Revolution, Its Impact on Asia*, Printice Hall Inc., New Jersey 1962, pp.

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28 officers of the Ottoman Black Sea fleet sent to the family of executed revolutionist Lieutenant Petr Petrovich Schmidt<sup>2</sup>. The letter in question has been used as evidence of the fact that the execution of Lieutenant Schmidt. In other words, the revolutionary movements starting in Russia in 1905 caused a profound echo of sympathy within the Ottoman army staff officers<sup>3</sup>.

However, as far as we can see, the above-mentioned letter has never been questioned, nor have any doubts about its authenticity ever been expressed. The above-mentioned letter is attached to this study. In this study, the letter will be analyzed for its authenticity by using the content analysis method and within the context of the political and social conditions of the era.

### Content Analysis of the Document

The above-mentioned document is one of the official Soviet archive documents published in Moscow and Leningrad in 1925<sup>4</sup>. The documents, of which we managed to acquire copies, were prepared as printed documents. According to the document, a letter was written to the executed lieutenant's sister and son by the officers of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet<sup>5</sup>.

65-66.; H. Aliyev, "İzlistorii Burjuazno-Revoluçionnogo Dvijeniya v Turçii (Kone XIX- Naçalo XX vv.)", compil., Türkiye Tarihi Meseleleri, Azerbaycan SSR Elmler Akedemyası, Baku 1972, p. 48. H. Z. Aliyev, Turtsiya v Period Pravleniya Mladoturok (1908-1918 gg.), Izdatelystvo [Nauka] Glavnaya Redaktsiya Vostochnoy Literaturay, Moskva 1972, p. 80.

Y. A. Petrosyan, Sovyet Gözüyle Jöntürkler (trans. M. Beyham, & A. Hacıhasanoğlu), BilgiYayınevi, İstanbul 1974, p. 231-232.; V I Shpil'kova, Mladoturetskaya Revolyutsiya 1908-1909 gg, Izdatelstvo Nauka, Moskva 1977, p. 48.; H. Zafer Kars, 1908 Devriminin Halk Dinamiği, Kaynak Publishing, 2nd Edition, İstanbul 1997, pp. 101-103.; Murat Yaşar, "The Russian Revolution of 1905 in the Ottoman Empire", Unpublished Master Thesis, Bilkent University, International Relations, Ankara 2003, p. 40-41.

"Borba s AbdulhamidovskoiTiraniei", retrieved 29th January 2012, [http://www.turkey-info.ru/history/20century/abdulhamid\\_tirany.html](http://www.turkey-info.ru/history/20century/abdulhamid_tirany.html); "Turtsiyavovtoropolovine XIX – nachale XX veka", retrieved 29th January 2012, <http://www.bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=450131>

2 Lieutenant Petr Pyotr Petrovich Schmidt, leader of a revolutionist riot which occurred in Sivastopol in December, 1905, was executed on 19th March 1906 with his three friends. For further details see "Schmidt, Petr Petrovich", Sovetskaya Istoricheskaya Entsiklopediya, V. 16, Moskva, 1976, p. 304.

Vladimir Shigin, Neizvestnyy Leytenant Schmidt, Retrieved 29th January 2012, <http://nash-sovremennik.ru/p.php?y=2001&n=10&id=4>

3 For example see Tsovikyan... p. 20 "Shedding the blood of Russian sailors, workers and peasants in 1905 in Russia not been in vain, and for the Turkish advanced and progressive elements. They are every day watching the events in Sevastopol, Odessa, Moscow and other Russian cities. The execution by the imperial government of Lieutenant Schmidt for his 'daring' speech and participation in Sevastopol uprising, provoked among the Turkish army and navy enormous outrage and indignation. Unprecedented fact in the history of the revolutionary movement in Turkey.."

Spector... p. 66 "The letter clearly reflects the revolutionary sentiments of its authors[28 Ottoman officers].

4 Krasnyy Arkhiv[Red Archive] vol. 2(9), Moskva-Leningrad, 1925, pp. 52-54.

5 Documents have been translated by Dilek (Çetinkaya) Karabacak and Faik Ismailov, from the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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The letter is full of hard political discourse, such as “We swear, together with the Russian people, over the body of the hero Schmidt, that we will fight till the last drop of blood for the holy civil liberties in the name of which we have lost quite a few of our best citizens. We also pledge that we shall, by all means and measures, try to introduce the Turkish people to the events in Russia, so that joint efforts to win the right to live like human beings.”

The letter was perceived as written by 23 officers whose ranks were lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel and colonel. Apart from these officers, names of the deputy minister for the general education ministry, the formal royal interpreter, a naval doctor, a former chamberlain, and a mathematics teacher were written down in order to give the impression of the prestigious station of the signatories. The titles of “effendi” or “bey” were attached to all of the names. In addition to their ranks and professions, the ethnic origins of the signatories were mentioned. A breakdown by ethnicity reveals 13 *Circassians*, six *Turks*, two *Georgians*, two *Kurds*, two *Lazs*, two *Albanians*, and one *Arab*<sup>6</sup>.

In a note attached to the document, *Anna Petrovna*, Schmidt’s sister, was asked to keep the names of the signatories confidential. In the note, it was argued that the signatories could face severe penalties if their names were revealed.

According to the Red Archive documents, the above-mentioned letter and its attached note were presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman government by the Police Department on 21 April [4 May] 1906 in order to inform the Ottoman government<sup>7</sup>.

In connection with this subject, an article was published in *Milliyet* newspaper<sup>8</sup> in Istanbul one year after the publishing of *Krasnyy Arkhiv* documents with the main heading of “Historical revelation!” and the title “*Libertarians in the Turkish Army in 1906! 28 Officers of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet blessed the Freedom Martyr in Russia*”. According to this article, documents found in the archives after the fall of the Tsar showed that an official document was written to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 April 1906 by the secret police within which it was stated that Ottoman officers sent a support message to the family of a Lieutenant named *Petr Petrovich Schmidt* who was among the 11 people<sup>9</sup> executed as leaders of the *Potemkin Battleship mutiny*<sup>10</sup> in Odessa and that the letter

6 See for some mistakenly breakdowns by ethnicity: Spector, *ibid*, p. 66 ( 7 Turks, 1 Albanian).; Tsovikyan, *ibid*, p. 21 (7 Turks, 1 Albanian).; Kars, *ibid*, p.102 (3 Turks, 2 Armenians, 1 Albanians, no reference to Georgians).

7 *Krasnyy Arkhiv*... p. 52

8 “1906 senesinde Türk Ordusunda Hürriyetperverler.. OsmanlıKaradeniz Filosu Zabitlerinden yirmisekizi Rusya’daki Hürriyet şehidini takdis etmişler!”, *Milliyet*, April 22, 1926, p.2.

9 The claim that 11 people were executed at the same time with Lieutenant Schmidt could not be substantiated in any documents. All the documents are in congruence with the fact that Lieutenant Schmidt was executed with three of his friends.

10 Lieutenant Schmidt was not involved in the Battleship Potemkin Riot. Only a junior officer named Matuishenko was executed in connection with the Potemkin Riot. This execution

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containing this support message should have been forwarded to the Embassy of the Ottoman government. In the article published in *Milliyet*, it was said that although it was decided to execute Schmidt by “hanging” him, no one could be found to pull the rope of Schmidt, neither in the fleet nor the whole of Russia, and thus Schmidt was executed by “shooting”. In fact, “this way of execution gave rise to such a big rage that the officer who had given the order of fire to the platoon and the assistant officer who had read the order committed suicide.” According to the newspaper, the signatories of the condolence and support letter to the family of the revolutionist lieutenant Schmidt who was executed as such were Ottoman Empire officers who were “enemies of the reign of Ottomans”<sup>11</sup>.

The translation of the Krasnyy Arkhiv documents from Russia and the text published in *Milliyet* newspaper are generally compatible. However, although there was no declaration whether the decision to execute Schmidt by firing squad was given by the General Staff Office of the Tsar, the text in the newspaper leaned toward this interpretation.

We believe that this document was, in the academic sense, used for the first time in 1945 by H.M. Tsovikyan in his article “Effect of the Russian Revolution 1905 in the Revolutionary Movement in Turkey”<sup>12</sup>.

It was reported that the sister of Lieutenant Schmidt, Anna Petrovna, who was living in Leningrad during the time in which this article was written, stated to Tsovikyan, the author of the article, that she hadn’t received the letter in question<sup>13</sup>.

First of all, there is no photocopy or photograph of the alleged letter of condolence and of support. The Russian text with the printed letters which was put forth as evidence is problematic. The most important problematic areas in the text can be stated as follows.

It is not likely that the officers in the service of the Ottoman Empire in the year 1906 would write their ethnicity, such as *Turk*, *Circassian*, *Albanian*

was carried out because he returned long after the amnesty announced in 1907 (Robert Zebroski, “The Battleship Potemkin and its Discontents”, Naval Mutinities of the Twentieth Century, An International Perspective, Ed. by Christopher M. Bell and Bruce A. Elleman, 2003).

11 Although, Sultan Abdulhamid was criticized sharply in the Young Turk Publications of the period, there was not any opposition to the dynasty. Sultan Murad V, due to his death, and Crown Prince Reshad were mentioned with respect. Therefore, the opposition present at the time was against the Sultan himself, not against the dynasty. According to a document we have been examining related to the period, Ittihad Terakki, famous Young Turk organization was totally monarchist “despite their enmity against Sultan Hamid, There wasn’t any single republican among them. All were loyal to the dynasty” (Yılmaz Öztuna, Büyük Türkiye Tarihi, vol. 7, Ötüken Publishing, İstanbul, 1983, p. 219)

12 The article by Tsovikian was published as a whole text in the book by H. Zafer Kars, (1908 Devriminin Halk Dinamiği, 2nd edition, Kaynak Publishing, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 94-12). In his editorial book, Kars changed the ethnicity of the signatories of the letter in question in favor of the Armenians and against the Turks.

13 Tsovikyan... p. 21

and *Kurd*, along with their names and ranks in a document which they signed. Statements of ethnicity are not usual in the documents of that period of time. In fact, despite strong separatist movements, the Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire were known to see themselves as a part of the “*Islamic Ummah*”. What is stranger about this document is that although there were only 6 people who declared themselves *Turks* among the 28 signatories of the document, all the signatories argued that they would tell Schmidt’s case to the Turkish people. This is a clear contradiction. The Ottoman Empire was not a nation state in the year mentioned in the document. In 1906, the political name of the people of the Ottoman state was not “*Turetskiy narod [Turkish nation, people]*”, but “*imperial subject [tebaa-i şahâne]*”, regardless of whether or not they were Muslims. This issue is a clear anachronism.

In the Ottoman state, officers whose ranks were equal to or less than “*captain*” were called “*effendi*”, and officers whose ranks were “*major*”, “*lieutenant colonel*”, and “*colonel*” were called “*bey/sir*”. However, in the document of the *Krasnyy Arkhiv*, *Lieutenant Riza*, *Lieutenant Ali*, *Lieutenant Hamdi*, *Lieutenant Nahid*, *Lieutenant Hacı*, *Lieutenant Beşir*, *Lieutenant Muslin [Muslih]*, *Lieutenant Celal*, *Captain Fuad*, and *Captain Enver* signed the letter “*bey*” and *Squadron Commander Sefir* signed the letter as “*effendi*”, a clear contradiction of military custom at the time. These statements are diametrically opposed to the protocol rules and the military practices of that period.

In fact, the rank-holding officers did not use titles such as “*effendi*” or “*bey*” in their own correspondence during the period of time in question. Such titles were used only to address ranked officers or to mention them in speeches, dialogues or correspondences. On the other hand, since there wasn’t any practice involving last names during the period in question, people wrote their given names together with their fathers’ names. For example, *Lieutenant Riza* would declare and call himself “*Suleiman’s son Lieutenant Riza [Mülazım Rıza bin Suleiman]*”, not “*Lieutenant Riza Bey/Mülazım Rıza Bey]*”.

The expression of “*General Staff Lieutenant Muslin [Muslih]*” in the signed protest letter displays ignorance of the military’s professional development phases in the Ottoman Empire. Officers who graduated from an institution that gave a three-year education after Military Academy and provided general staff in the Ottoman Empire couldn’t be “*General Staff Lieutenant/Erkân-ı HarbiyeMülazımı]*”. At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the officers who completed their training in the *Imperial War College/Mekteb-i Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Şahâne]* graduated as “*General Staff Captain/Erkân-ı Harbiye Yüzbaşısı]*” in the Ottoman Empire.

It is not likely that *Lieutenant Schmidt* was executed by firing squad instead of being hanged because no one was found to be hangman of *Lieutenant Schmidt*. The biggest handicap of the *Krasnyy Arkhiv* document is the argument that there was no “*expert*” to execute by hanging a political prisoner in an envi-

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ronment where *Don Cossacks* killed innocent people without blinking their eyes to continue the Tsar's regime and there were fanatical political backers like the *Black Hundreds*<sup>14</sup>. In any of the serious and respectable resources we available, including the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, there was no record of the argument that Schmidt was killed by firing squad because no hangman was found. It has been a common practice that those sentenced to death for a military crime were executed by firing squad until recently.

On the other hand, the letter asked *Anna Petrovna* to protect the identities of the letter's signatories with great care because the signatories would be severely punished if their names were revealed. However, it was also stated that a copy of this letter was sent to "*Russ*" and "*Put*" newspapers. In this case, one assumes that the protesting officers believed they would not be harmed should their protest letters be published in the newspapers. This clearly seems a logical error.

The additional note attached to the letter stated that the letter would be brought to *Anna Petrovna* in person by someone trusted who had been sentenced to death in his absence by the Ottoman Sultan. However, in *Tsovikyan's* article, *Anna Petrovna* was said to have claimed that the letter sent to her by the Ottoman officers might be confiscated by officials of the Tsar in the post office<sup>15</sup>.

### Investigation of the context

Although there are records related to this period in the Ottoman State Archives, concerning the details, the number of which can be described as countless, no records could be found related to this subject in Hariciye Evrakı [Foreign Affairs Papers] and Sultan'ın Hususi Evrakı [Yıldız Confidential Papers].

Again, in the archives of the *Directorate of Maritime History Archive, İstanbul Naval Museum Command* which contains the records of Ottoman naval officers, 175 classified registration books were studied and not one of the naval officers whose names and ranks were mentioned in the alleged letter sent to the family of the executed Lieutenant was found for the period of time in question. Also, the *Imperial Naval Almanac* from 1901 contains all personnel on duty in the Ottoman navy by name, rank and place of employment, but not one of the names of the 28 alleged signatories was found in this Almanac<sup>16</sup>.

On the other hand, although the *Krasnyy Arkhiv* document did not contain any information about the fate of the 28 alleged signatories who were members of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet, *Tsovikyan's* article mentioned-above

14 See for details: Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, Harper Collins, 1993.

15 Tsovikyan... p. 21

16 Bahriye Salnamesi, Matbaa-i Bahriye, Dersaadet 1319, pp. 29-192.

and published in 1945, implied that these officers were probably killed by the regime of *Sultan Hamid*<sup>17</sup>.

There is no mention of this subject found in the archival documents of the period or in the oppositional press. After the revolution of 23 July 1908, the problems experienced by the victims of the despotic regime of *Sultan Abdulhamid* were brought to the agenda. An association called "*Sacrifice for the Nation /Fedakâran-ı Millet/*" was established in order to search for the rights of the political victims[mağdurin-ı siyasiyye] of the *ancien régime*, and a newspaper called "*Hukuk-ı Umumiye /Law of General People/*" was published<sup>18</sup>. Although many complaints from those people who were forced to leave their duties within the state and who were exiled during the despotic regime were published in this newspaper, there were no complaints published in this newspaper about people getting killed by the old regime. In the official publications of the Republic era, which had very negative evaluations of *Sultan Abdulhamid*, there were many negative comments and near insults of *Sultan Abdulhamid* and his regime, yet there were no claims that the Sultan had people in the opposition killed, apart from the controversial deaths of *Mithat Pasha* and *Damad Celaleddin Mahmud Pasha*<sup>19</sup>.

The subject of the victims of the despotic regime was brought many times into the agenda of the *Parliament of People /Meclis-i Mebusan/* and *Senate /Meclis-i Ayan/* after the declaration of the Second constitutional monarchy. In the sessions of the Parliament of People on 13 January 1909<sup>20</sup>, 19 May 1909<sup>21</sup>, 15 August 1909<sup>22</sup>, and 17 May 1911<sup>23</sup>, and in the session of the Senate on 25 May 1911<sup>24</sup>, the subject of "*political victims*" was discussed. In these discussions, compensation opportunities for those people who suffered such unfair treatment as exile or relocation during the despotic regime were evaluated. On 1 June

17 Tsovikyan... p. 21.: "It is still not possible to find out the fate of 28 Turkish officers - the authors of that document: it may be, they, like thousands of others, fell victim to the fast currents of the Bosphorus and found his grave at the bottom of the Sea of Marmara."

18 HasanTanerKerimoğlu, II. MeşrutiyetDönemindeGenelHaklarSavunusuYapanBirGazete: Hukuk-ı Umumiye, ÇağdaşTürkiyeTarihiAraştırmalarıDergisi, VIII/18-19, Spring-Autumn 2009, pp. 21-38.

19 Osmanlı İmparatorluğundan Türkiye Cumhuriyetine Nasıldı? Nasıl oldu?, Devlet Matbaası, İstanbul 1933, s. 2.; "Abdülhamit II", İnönü[Türk] Ansiklopedisi, vol. 1, İstanbul 1946, pp. 55-58.; Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi, vol. 1, kısım:2, 2nd ed., Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1964, s. 222.; Enver Ziya Karal, Osmanlı Tarihi-Birinci Meşrutiyet ve İstibdat Devirleri 1876-1907, vol. VIII, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 3th. Edition, Ankara 1988, pp. 245-268, 571-577.; Tarih III Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri, Kaynak Publishing, 4th ed., İstanbul 2005.

20 Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I,Volume:I,İçtima senesi:I,TBMM, Ankara, 1982, pp.162-163.

21 Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I,Volume:3,İçtima senesi:I,TBMM, Ankara,1982, pp.557-558.

22 Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I,Volume:6 İçtima senesi:I,TBMM,Ankara, [t.y.], pp. 433-436.

23 Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I,Volume:6,İçtima senesi:III,TBMM,Ankara,1991, pp.585-598

24 Meclis-i Ayan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I,Volume:3, İçtima senesi:III, TBMM, Ankara, 1989, pp. 323-325.

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1911, the “*Law on Support of victims of political action /mağdurin-i siyasiyyenin ikdarlarına mütedair kanun*” was enacted. This law provided some rights for those people who had been subjected to unfair treatment like exile or relocation during the old regime and for those people who were forced to leave the country within the framework of their fight against the despotic regime<sup>25</sup>. Although many details were mentioned about “*political victims*” in the text of the law and in the sessions, there was nothing mentioned about people in the opposition who were victims of political killings<sup>26</sup>.

In a contemporary source, the argument that *Sultan Abdulhamid* had people in the opposition killed was disproven by important persons of the opposition of the period of time in question<sup>27</sup>.

On the other hand, although the *Krasnyy Arkhiv* document argued that the letter written to the Russian revolutionaries by the 28 officers from the Black Sea Fleet was reported to Ottoman diplomatic representatives, there are no signs indicating that any kind of action was taken against these Ottoman officers.

In this context, one understands that 28 officers who allegedly sent messages of support did not face any judicial or extrajudicial sanctions.

Although one could argue that no action was taken because diplomatic representatives did not inform İstanbul about the existence of such a letter, it is highly unusual for those 28 officers, who allegedly undertook a serious opposition to the regime in that period of time, not to mention their attempt either in those years or in the following years. However, after the revolution of 23 July 1908, numerous allegations were put forward, many of which were fabricated by people who claimed to be in the opposition to the autocratic regime.

## Results

In conclusion, apart from the logical errors and format incompatibilities which we’ve pointed out above, the fact that no information about officers mentioned in the document was found in the archives of that period of time and the fact that there was no argument made either by the officers themselves, by their relatives or by their friends that they were subjected to judicial or extrajudicial sanctions as a result of their audacious attempt show that the document in question was, in fact, fabricated.

The fact that the document in question was published by *Krasnyy Arkhiv*

25 Meclis-i Âyan Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre.I, Volume:3, İçtima senesi:III, TBMM, Ankara, 1989, p. 324.

26 As expressed by an expert on the period mentioned, “...the theme in which the people were thrown into the sea was used against Abdulhamid very often, though no solid evidence could be revealed. (OrhanKoloğlu, İttihatçılarveMasonlar, Eylül Publishing, İstanbul 2002, p.39.)

27 İsmail Küçükkılınç, II.Meşrutiyette Halk Unsuru, Cedit Publishing, İstanbul 2011, pp. 218-220.

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in 1925, the year in which efforts<sup>28</sup> were intensified for the building of the idol of Lieutenant Schmidt by the Soviet Regime, the fact that the document in question was fully published with small additions including a hostile tone towards the Ottoman dynasty in a newspaper which was regarded as a spokesman of the new regime in Turkey, and the fact that these events coincided with the time in which the relations between Turkey and the Soviets were warm (it was spring due to their frustrations against the West at the time)<sup>29</sup> are reasons for the fabrication of this document.

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28 In this context, "The name of this adventurer with signs of megalomania named one of the embankments of the Neva in St. Petersburg, an island in the archipelago of Severnaya Zemlya, the peninsula in the north of Sakhalin." "Schmidt Peter Petrovich, Biograficheskiy ukazatel", retrieved 29th October 2011, [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_sh/shmidt\\_pp.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_sh/shmidt_pp.php) "Lieutenant Schmidt", written by Boris Pasternak, a famous Russian poet and author, in 1926, contributed greatly to the idolization of Lieutenant Schmidt in Soviet regime . For further details see: Valeriy Yarkho "Leytenant Shmidt i yego 'deti'", retrieved 19th January 2012, <http://his.1september.ru/articlef.php?ID=200601503>

29 Baskın Oran (Ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası (vol. I 1919-1980)*, 13th edition,, İletişim Publishing, İstanbul, 2008, pp. 314-316.

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#### Annex-A

#### "The Support Letter of 28 Officers of the Ottoman Black Sea Fleet to the family of Lieutenant Schmidt"<sup>30</sup>

To Citizens Anna Petrovna Izbash and Eugene Petrovich Schmidt;

The great Russian people have to say their last word. This murder echoes the terrible sweep around the world and caused an unprecedented crime. We are deeply grieved that the gallant Lieutenant Peter Schmidt was executed. His execution by 'hanging' was replaced by 'shooting' for lack of a professional hangman. Infamous Admiral Chuknin immortalized his name by killing him. Your brother and father is now immortal.

Full of resentment, we, the undersigned officers of the army and navy of the Ottoman Empire, gathered in the number of 28 people, send our regards to Ms. Izbash and Eugene Petrovich Schmidt and present you our deepest respect and friendship from the shores of the Bosphorus. Let be a consolation our sincere love for the deceased wrestler and his gallant comrades Sergei Chastnik, Alexander Gladkov and Nikita Antonenko, who are martyred for the happiness of their country. Our hearts will never forget the gallant officer of the Black Sea navy, Lieutenant Peter Schmidt. He is a hero of immortal independence and human rights, and he will be a teacher to our next generations.

We know how great is your grief and how insignificant, our consolation. But we still hope that, with this action, the Russian people will hear of those who sacrifice themselves for independence.

Our brother Eugene Petrovich and our sister Anna Petrovna, you must know that the words which Lieutenant Schmidt delivered over the corpses of the fighters in Sebastopol, have spread to all nooks and crannies of our empire and have been appreciated.

We swear, together with the Russian people, over the body of the hero Schmidt, that we will fight till the last drop of blood for the holy civil liberties in the name of which we have lost quite a few of our best citizens. We also pledge that we shall, by all means and measures, try to introduce the Turkish people to the events in Russia, so that joint efforts to win the right to live like human beings.

Most of us are natives of the Caucasus, and the love of our native land abandoned, we protest against this death penalty, which is a shame falling on the whole of Russia. We condemned officers who under the protection of bayonets, tortured and shot unarmed and innocent citizens in the streets and under the disguise of loyalty to the Romanov throne. Having lost any notion of duty and honor, these officers have disgraced themselves in the world. Outraged by the behavior of Semenov of Don Cossacks and his friends, we, orally and in writing, will tell our fellow Muslims of their 'great deeds'. We expect the glorious Russian army will throw them out of its ranks.

The European press was once indignant ferocity Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria, but we think that Russian Cossacks, and especially Dons and their leader Lieutenant Avramov, are more criminal because they killed their own brothers of Christians, regardless of their gender or age.

Believe us, dear friends Eugene Petrovich and Anna Petrovna; Lieutenant Schmidt will never die in our hearts. His legacy is immortal and will pass from generation to generation.

Together with the Russian people, we join our cry: "Down with the death penalty" and "Long live civil liberty".

30 Krasnyy Arkhiv[Red Archive] vol. 2(9), Moskva-Leningrad, 1925, pp. 52-54.

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