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Visit of the cruiser «Chervona Ukraina» and the division of destroyers to Constantinople in 1928, based on materials from the Russian State Archives of the Navy and the Peter the Great Central Naval Museum

Abstract

The article analyzes the visit of the Soviet naval squadron, including the cruiser «Chervona Ukraina» and a destroyer division, to Constantinople in 1928. The study aims to comprehensively examine the political, diplomatic, and military-strategic context of this event, its goals, objectives, and significance for the development of Soviet-Turkish relations during the interwar period. It examines in detail the prerequisites and preparations for the visit, including the visit of the King of Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan, to the USSR and the arrival of the Turkish squadron in Sevastopol. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of Soviet-Turkish relations in the 1920s, based on mutual recognition and cooperation, as well as the desire of both countries to resist the influence of Western powers. It demonstrates how the visit of Soviet ships to Constantinople became an element of the strategy of «gunboat diplomacy» aimed at demonstrating power and strengthening the USSR's position in the Black Sea region. Based on archival materials from the Russian State Naval Archives (RSNA), this article provides a detailed picture of the preparation and conduct of the visit, including the squadron's composition, the official events plan, and the daily life and leisure activities of the Soviet sailors during their stay in the Turkish port. The paper analyzes the Turkish side's perception of the visit, including the reactions of officials and the local press, as well as the international reaction to the demonstration of Soviet naval power in the region. Information is provided on counterintelligence activities conducted by the Turkish side during the visit, instances of discontent among the Soviet squadron personnel related to financial and domestic issues, and the cultural program, which included excursions, sports competitions, and friendly matches. The study reveals that the Soviet squadron's visit to Constantinople in 1928 was not only an act of naval diplomacy but also an important political event aimed at strengthening Soviet-Turkish

relations, demonstrating strength, and promoting Soviet interests and influence in the region. Data on the activities of Russian ?migr?s in Constantinople and their contacts with the squadron's sailors are analyzed. It emphasizes that the voyage was a crucial step in preparing the Soviet fleet for foreign voyages and in developing cooperation between the navies of the two countries. The author concludes that this visit had a significant impact on deepening mutual understanding and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Turkey during the interwar period and marked a significant milestone in the development of Soviet foreign policy in the Black Sea-Mediterranean region.

Keywords

Light cruiser «Chervona Ukraina», destroyer, Soviet foreign policy, Constantinople, Turkey, Sevastopol, visit, Soviet-Turkish relations in the 1920s and 1930s, gunboat diplomacy, «friendly neutrality», naval power, interwar period, Peter the Great Central Naval Museum.

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