



## RUSSIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF ODISHI (SAMEGRELO) IN THE 30S AND 60S OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ACCORDING TO THE DIARIES OF FOREIGN CONFIDANTS

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**Abstract:** In the travel diaries of foreign confidants we have found the reasons for the high degree of poverty and socio-economic decline described in Odishi's life in the structure of the conquest plan of a low political culture empire. The Russian Empire is waiting for an opportune moment in its ambush position to torture the Odishi principality with its socio-economic, demographic policies, de facto and de jure, and turn the ancient trade routes between Georgia and Europe and Asia, namely the Turkish Sea into the Black Sea. At least in part, it turned into a lake in Russia. Under these conditions, the empire fully described the natural resources of Odishi, made it a raw material supplement, and applied its demographic transformation as well.

**Keywords:** Odishi (Georgia), Black Sea, Russian Empire, Confidants

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### 1. Introduction

From the moment the Russian government came under the rule of Odishi in 1803, it aimed at the external, political improvement of the Russian government here which was seen only in the factors of the concession of its own imperial-colonial multifaceted interests in his favor. The empire considered it the first task to master the living space of Odishi - land, water, timber and other natural resources - and to calculate, specify and draw up its revenues in the common fund of the empire. The military-strategic importance of Odishi as the Eastern Black Sea, and its economic and political dominance over it, represented the realization of Russia's centuries-old dream (Eastern policy). But, the empire eventually established itself in the space of its colonialism with Russian specifics, for example, England and France carefully studied the conquering colonies economically, then prepared for the political conquest of the colonies and took appropriate steps and tried to involve the colonies in the developed society (The so-called capitalist formation - in Soviet terminology L.G.) Characteristic of some productive relations, Russia, on the contrary, first politically subjugated the colony, and then resorted to its socio-economic, demographic expansion so that no progress and prosperity was felt by the population. At that time, besides the Russian Empire, the states of Odishi were interested in Georgia and in particular in Odisha.

Given the convenient location of Georgia and the prospects of turning Odishi (Samegrelo) into the main transit center of Europe-Asia trade, they were constantly sent missions, so in 1819-1824 France, in particular the Prime Minister Richelieu sent Jacques François Gamba to learn about opportunities to use Georgia for the trade interests of their countries. In order for France, in the event of a favorable international political situation in the Caucasus, to take stock in a timely manner and take advantage of the prospects of turning Samegrelo into the future transit center of Europe-Asia trade.

The German state also sent Eduard Aichwald to Odisha in 1825-1826, Maurice Wagner in 1843-1846, Huxthausen in 1843, and the Russian Borozdin from 1854 in Samegrelo.

### 2. Material and Methods

In the 30s and 60s of the XIX century, the Russian Empire completely conquered Odishi, took over the military-strategic highway of this territory and was able to formulate it politically in the general body of the empire. Having studied the records of foreign travelers, based on their thorough analysis, using historical-comparative and objective methods, we exposed the colonial policy of the empire obsessed with geo-political bulimia. Past experience puts on the agenda the development of defense strategies to address the Russian state with imperial ambitions. In the 21st century, their



expansionist aspirations have not slowed down at all, as the neo-colonial ideology of modern Russia aims to remain the dominant force on the Eurasian continent, the coordinating force of the "historical unity" of various peoples. The study of the memoirs of Jacques François Gamba, Eduard Eichwald, August Huxthausen, Maurice Wagner, and Cornell Borozdin as the primary source of the travels of the foreign travelers reveals the danger posed to Georgia by the invader. (Moreover, the perception of danger remains valid today, on the way to the struggle for survival. This is evidenced by the Russian-occupied Georgia (Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region (Samachablo) territories).

### **3. Results**

All the confidential missions were part of the plan of these states, for example, as Gamba notes, he traveled to the Caucasus because it paved the way for "French merchants and industrialists who came to Georgia and the Caucasus in search of fortune" (Gamba, 1987). The travelers carefully studied the main transport route of Europe-Asia trade in the territory of Samegrelo. They described in detail the natural resources of Samegrelo. There are amazing pastures and vineyards, peaches, figs, pomegranates, a flock of sheep, pigs, mulberry trees, herds, corn, millet, first-rate tobacco that equals to the one of Virginia. "Krasnoye Derevo" - Taxusbaccata, which can be used in shipbuilding; ulmus, walnut, oak and dense bark. He collects information on golden sand grains brought from the Tskhenistskali to Phasis, sometimes accompanied by gold fragments, and "the soil is so fertile that many countries cannot even compare" (Gamba, 1987) When the empire unconditionally issued a verdict on Georgia, the continuation of which seemed to be an excessive burden on Russia, the facts described by Gamba spoke of a different reality.

Interesting are the consequences of Gamba's trip to Odisha, for example, on his initiative, the Transcaucasia Transit Privileges (October 8, 1821, on the Commercial Privileges Bill, drafted by Gamba, approved by Governor Ermolov, but approved by the Emperor). The empire abolished it in 1831.

After all, this was a confirmation of the fact that the Russian Empire was going to conquer the colony with a murky political morality, the invader did not think, by any measure, would bridge the local population living in extreme poverty and for this purpose tried to launch activations to revive trade and industry. The empire did not have any competence for this, nor any necessary feature for the metropolis - the attempt to express elementary care, neither at this stage nor after, really didn't exist nor will not appear in the future.

Edward Aikhwald's travel diaries are also an unusual source for deciphering the socio-economic demographic expansion of Odishi (Samegrelo) in the 30c end 60c of the 19th century. He, like Gambas, describes the minerals of Samegrelo, observes limestone belts, stalactites, volcanic masses. The waterfalls in Samegrelo resemble the Swiss

in traveler beauty, and by demonstrating this beauty in the value part of the tourist area, it focuses the customer's attention. He notices, for example, Dadiani's spring in the village of Salkhino, but a poor residence - the "Kibitkebi" - a few round, spinning huts that are no different from the peasants' huts scattered in the woods, from which women run away to hide from strangers.

A lone foreigner, if he dares to enter the hut, is in danger, because a jealous Megrelian shoots him without any thought, or throws a dagger at him (Aikhwaldi, 2005). The miserable life of the peasants, the particular poverty, according to Aikhwald, is caused by 1. the greedy nature of the poor masters and 2. the additional Russian taxes introduced. Peasants generally avoid all foreigners for not taking anything from them (Aikhwald, 2005).

Aikhwaldi is also interested in the condition of Redut-Kale (Kulevi). He notes that a particularly large number of goods are brought from Leipzig via Odessa and from Redut to Tbilisi via Kutaisi (Aikhwald, 2005).

Interesting diaries of Maurice Wagner (1813-1887), who visited Georgia in 1843-1846, i.e. 20 years have passed since the trip of Gamba and Aikhwald. He describes the action of a woman in a small Megrelian house. He e.g. The woman brought out corn bread for the man, then picked up a small child, hugged him, and stripped him naked to soothe him. When we analyze this description of Wagner, we see that many things have changed twenty years after Aikhwald's trip. The process of adaptation to Russian officials (towards foreigners in general) took place very quickly. The woman does not run away and does not shy away from showing her already naked breasts to strangers, while the husband is not jealous and looks at this picture absolutely calmly and quietly continues to dine as if he does not notice a stranger (Wagner, 2002). Russian expansionism in the context of indifference expressed in the local population.

The family is clearly divided as a social group, the material and spiritual condition of which is a reflection of the development of the socio-economic or political life of the country in general. The economy of the oppressed social strata, the family budget does not seem to improve, and the mentality (psychology) is depressed, in exchange for vigilant pursuit of events, the peasants become even more indifferent (a sense of futility) i.e. the events in the principality. Presence - the absence of time, which was a highly favorable precondition for the assimilation of Odishi into the Russian body. The people of Samegrelo, who came under the "protection" of the empire, have not yet benefited from any positive change, except for their reproductive (new life) function. Under Russian political pressure, "one of the corners of the earth blessed by God is not happy" (Wagner, 2002).

According to Maurice Wagner, there is no furniture in the Megrelian peasant family. In Samegrelo, full of corn, fat ghomi fields full of corn produced by the peasant-produced labor force belongs to Aznauri, Tavadi, Dadiani and Russian customs guards, border guards, Cossacks, they are ready to take the last hatch from the peasants

(Wagner, 2002).

Wagner emphasizes the importance of Phasis for navigation and considers it to be the border river of Asia and Europe" (Wagner, 2002). It beautifully resembles the American landscape, the impassable forests of the Mississippi and the Amazon (Wagner, 2002). "But perhaps the time will come when the inhabitants of Phasis will disappear and the Slavic settlers will cultivate these barren places and only the history will invent the Megrelian race and language. The case of these relaxed dreamers of Colchis will be worse than that of the Indian tribes of the Mississippi.

Instead of parrots, a cuckoo lives on the Phasis, a deaf bird that is as inept in learning Megrelian words as the Russian salad (Wagner, 2002). Of course, an unreasonably indifferent person never happens, there is always a reason to relax, maybe that reason is the resentment that followed the indiscriminate actions of Russian officials in Odishi, which led to frustration, a loss of confidence in the incompetent, disobedient Russian invader.

Wagner also visited Redut - Kale, but it was empty on his arrival, as the preferential transit has been canceled for the time being. The country of the Golden Fleece ... does not even grow under Russian domination. The people in this paradise ... are slaves, living in poverty, living in a beautiful land (Wagner, 2002).

As for the German traveler Huxthausen, he characterizes three different social strata of Odishi: princes, aristocrats and peasants. While visiting the Megrelian peasant family, he saw nothing that could be called furniture.

The information of the Russian Official Cornel Borozdin also confirms that there are vines at every step in Odisha (Borozdin, 1934). The best wines are made in Salkhino and Tsachkhuria, which is called "Ojaleshi" (Borozdin et al., 1927).

Borozdin also focuses on beekeeping on the river. On the bank of the river Churia, beautiful and delicious white honey, which has almost no honeycomb and is eaten directly (kipurchi) speaks with admiration (Borozdin et al., 1927). In Samegrelo there is a valuable variety of boxwood, spruce, fir and pine.

The descriptions of the Russian official are of recommendatory content and were aimed at the fact that the Empire 1. The natural resources of Samegrelo in time became a source of economic income; 2. The chance for the development of trade-industry was taken by itself before the European states attended it, so that Samegrelo itself could be involved in the trade of world trade at the initiative of Russia.

The records of foreign travelers also make it clear that the empire intensively paved the way for demographic transformation as well. Russia builds officers' barracks on the left bank of the Khobi River: "The garrison consists of six or seven hundred men. These are infantrymen, artillerymen and Cossacks" (Gamba, 1987). "Married soldiers rarely return to their homeland; they mostly live here in the regiment colony" (Huxthausen,

2011) The German traveler Maurice Wagner names the same eunuchs as the first Russian colony of Skopts in Rdu-Kale and Maran.

According to the French writer Alexandre Dumas-father (1803-1870) "Eunuchs ... carry boats in the Rioni during the winter, when the water dries up and the small ship can no longer move" (Dumas, 1970).

Intensive deployment of Russian troops in Odisha was to assimilate the local population with foreign colonists. "Perhaps the time will come when the inhabitants of Phasis will disappear and the Slavic settlers will cultivate these barren places, and only the history will invent the Megrelian race and language" (Wagner, 2002).

Very interesting is the document VI 58, 667-672, created in the Chancellery of the Caucasus Army in 1864. Districts bordering the eastern shore of the Black Sea - Samegrelo, Imereti Guria ... We will give brave and handy sailors, the document says: Russia is poor with such people, and without such people we will not be able to form a Black Sea Fleet. Turning Guria, Samegrelo, Imereti into a Russian province is really worthwhile. The preparation and implementation of the peasant reform to fulfill the mission of self-sacrifice and care for them will undoubtedly help us. Under no circumstances should we promote local elements. On the contrary, we should make every effort to completely evacuate these districts. To achieve the goals, pay special attention to Poti. Poti should become a Russian port city.

At this stage, these strategies did not prove to be an accelerating circumstance for the population, as it was a backward "deaf and dumb cuckoo".

And his political recklessness manifested itself in the suppression of the social and national liberation uprising of 1856-1857, which further fueled the name of Russia as an extreme despot empire. Rather than gaining any significant hand-to-hand benefit in the conquered territory, and the indifference of the peasant described in the books of impressions of foreign confidants, the sense of apathy is perhaps more evidence and a worthy answer to that crime. Which the peasantry under double oppression suffered because of the local nobility and especially the power of foreign colonists.

A Megrelian man eats food and does not even look at a foreigner. The immensely hospitable person from Odishi exactly points to a foreigner in Diogenes' posture: Go away, the sun; do not cover me! ... And a silent rebellion inspired by indifference was thought to be a slap in the face by the peasants in the first stage of the uprising of 1856-1857 - against the Georgian nobility, and in the second stage against the soldiers of the empire, where this time the extremely oppressed peasantry and dignity of the aristocracy acted together.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Thus, we found the reasons for the high degree of poverty and socio-economic decline in Odishi's life in the structure of the conquest plan of the low political culture empire. The Russian Empire is waiting for an opportune

moment in its ambush position, so that its socio-economic, demographic policy tortures it to become the de facto principality of Odishi and then de jure its own. And the ancient trade routes connecting Georgia and Europe to Asia, in particular, the Black Sea, which became the lake of Turkey, would at least partially be turned into the lake of Russia. Under these conditions, the empire fully described the natural resources of Odishi, turned it into a raw material supplement, and applied it to its demographic transformation as well.

**Author Contributions**

All tasks have been done by the single author.

**Conflict of Interest**

The author declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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