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RELIGIOUS FACTOR IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF GREAT STATES IN THE CAUCASUS

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Abstract
In modern times, Caucasian region is one of the hotspots in the world. Great states use various factors to maintain their geopolitical interests in the Caucasus today and along with politic, ethnic, military ones, religion factor is still one of the important factors in this struggle. Today, some conflicts existing in this region have political and some of them have also religious characteristics.
The article has been dedicated to the geopolitical struggle for domination in the Caucasus among Russia, other regional states, Britain, and France late in the 18th-first half of the 19th century. Russia, which had been actively involved in the Caucasus since the early 18th century, managed by the end of it to squeeze the Ottoman Empire out of the Northern Black Sea littoral and the Northern Caucasus. The British Empire, Russia's uncompromising rival, sought ways and means to check Russia's progress in the Caucasus. London pinned its hopes on Scottish missionaries prepared to move to the region from Edinburgh.
Keywords: Caucasus, geopolitics, religious factor, missioners, German nation.

Introduction

Representations of some European countries are carrying out wide religious propaganda in the Caucasus. For example, there are dozens of

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religious organizations of Western Europe countries and Russia which are operating actively in Azerbaijan. Their propaganda is basically being carried among Muslim population of Azerbaijan. Simultaneously, there is a competition between catholic, protestant and Russian-orthodox churches. It is difficult to predict the results of this propaganda carrying out for certain geopolitical gains. It will be useful to have a look at the close history of great states' geopolitical struggle in the Caucasus to be insured from negative consequences of Christian missionaries' activities.

For over one hundred years, relations between the Caucasus and Russia were shaped by socioeconomic, religious, political, and ethno-demographic logic; at all times, however, the logic of geopolitics remained important or, most likely, all-important. It is obvious that the science of geopolitics dates back to the latter half of the 19th century, which explains why the geopolitical factors of Russia's imperial policies in the Caucasus in the late 18th-first half of the 19th centuries are poorly studied.

We know much less about the German colonies in the Caucasus than about the other regions of mass German colonization (the Volga area, South Ukraine, the Urals, Volhynia, Siberia, Central Asia, and Altai); students of the history of German colonization in the Russian Empire have pointed to this gap more than once. Its geographic location made the Caucasus a bridge between Europe and Asia and between the North and the South and, as such, a center of the great powers' political intrigues. From ancient times on, the region was and remains objectively involved in military-political expansion. Its territory was crisscrossed by trade routes (the most important of them being the Silk Road) via which the products of India, China, and other Asian countries reached Europe. This means that domination over the Caucasus meant control of the main transportation, trade, and economic routes.

Colonization policy and the geopolitical struggle of the Russia for the Caucasus

In the 17th century, the Russian rulers were driven beyond the limits of their state by an urgent need to colonize the vast areas to the east of the main territory joined to Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Until the mid-18th century, however, these efforts brought no results: serfdom kept peasants tied to their landlords, who were reluctant to move to the

new unfamiliar and insecure border areas. Meanwhile, economic development of the newly acquired expanse along the Volga called for capitalist relations between the landlord and those who tilled his land. Meanwhile, all regions of the vast country were to be consolidated around its European part—a task of geopolitical importance: having entrenched itself in the Volga area, Russia could increase its pressure on the Caucasus. In the early 18th century, Peter the Great nurtured the plan of ousting the Porte from the Black Sea coastal areas to gain access to the Black Sea and consolidate Russia's position in the Caucasus. During his lifetime, Russian troops moved into the Caspian littoral; after the emperor's death in 1725, successive palace coups distracted the Russian rulers from pursuing an active Caucasian policy, although they never let the region out of their sight. They merely bided their time to reapply pressure in a more favorable domestic and foreign political context in order to realize their cherished dreams. By the first third of the 18th century, Russia had entrenched itself in the Caucasian piedmont; in the 1730s, Empress Anna Ioanovna (1730-1740) allowed South Caucasian migrants (Armenians, Georgians, and practically everyone wishing to move in) to settle in the area; the newcomers were promised financial aid and free grain. Until the mid-18th century, however, everything was in vain: the subjects of the empire could not move into the vast piedmont steppes. Serfs remained tied to their landlords, while the Cossacks, well-known for their violent and rough tempers, could hardly serve as an attractive model for economic activity. The few Georgian and Armenian migrants could do nothing much to develop the barren lands. The Russian government had no choice but to invite foreigners to the still undeveloped lands in the Caucasian piedmont and along the Volga. By the mid-18th century, the Germans had become the most mobile nation: they migrated to European neighbors and other continents. However, in Russia, the memory of the atrocities of Biron, the German favorite of Anna Ioanovna, and his compatriots made the Germans unwelcome, even though ElizavetaPetrovna, who replaced Anna Ioanovna on the Russian throne, toyed with the idea of massive foreign colonization of the still vacant lands. She believed that the subjugated Slavic Balkan peoples with similar languages and similar mentalities should be preferred to other people. On 24 December, 1751, she signed a decree which offered

Russian citizenship to those Serbs who would move to Russia[1]. The far from rational colonization policy essentially failed; foreign colonists were few and far between: 75% of them were Moldovans, followed by Serbs (12%), who had been expected to comprise the bulk of the migrants. Other colonists comprised a total of 13%: 6% of them being Macedonians, 4% Hungarians, 2% Bulgarians, and 1% Germans[2].

It was under Catherine the Great (1762-1796) that foreign, including German, colonization began in earnest. The Empress, well aware of the economic and geopolitical value of the empire's recent acquisitions, paid particular attention to their economic and demographic development: "We need more people. Fill the vast wasteland with the hustle and bustle of people if you can."[3] On 4 December, 1762, as the Seven Years' War was drawing to a close, the Empress issued a Manifesto on Permission for Foreigners, Except for Jews, to Move to and Settle in Russia and for Russian People who Escaped Abroad to Freely Return to their Fatherland."[4] It was nothing more than a succinct declaration that failed to lure potential migrants. It was followed by another document based on what the Russian diplomats stationed in Europe thought about the matter and information supplied by all sorts of recruiting agents. The Manifesto of 22 July, 1763 On Permission for All Foreigners who Come to Russia to Settle in the Gubernias of Their Choice and on Their Rights[5] offered a solid legal foundation for foreign colonization in the Russian Empire. The appendix enumerated "the vacant lands suitable for settlement," which offered the Crimea and the recently acquired southern gubernias along with the Lower Volga, the Urals, and Siberia for settlement.[6] Both manifestos attracted a huge number of colonists. In 1763-1767, Russia received and settled about 32 thousand foreigners, mainly in the Volga area, a sure sign of skillful state policy and the efficiency of the Chancellery for Assisting Foreigners. On the whole, the colonization policy bore fruit even if it had nothing in common with the empire's real needs and real potential. Indeed, in 10 years

[1]See: ∗ *PolnoesobraniezakonovRossiyskoyimperii* (Laws of the Russian Empire), First edition (further PSZ-1), Vol. 12, No. 10049, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 552-558.
[2]See: PSZ-1, Vol. 16, No. 12099, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 750-752.
[3] *Ibid*., No. 11720, p. 45.
[4] *Ibid*., No. 11880, pp. 126-127.
[5]*Ibid*., pp. 313-318.
[6]*Ibid*., pp. 315-316.

(between 1756 and 1766) only about 15% of the 200 thousand German émigrés went to Russia; the rest, very much as before, preferred America[7].

By the late 18th century, the Russian Empire had gained a lot of strength; foreign policy came to the fore under Empress Catherine the Great, who was well aware that Russia needed access to the Black Sea. To entrench itself in the Northern Black Sea area Russia had to overpower the Sublime Porte and the Crimean Khanate, its principal ally in the region. Between 1768 and 1791, Turkey was defeated in two Russo-Turkish wars; this triggered enormous geopolitical shifts in the Northern Black Sea littoral and the Caucasus when Russia moved into the vast territory between the Bug and the Dnieper, as well as into the Crimea and the Kuban area. In 1774, Russia added North Ossetia to its domains; in 1781, Digoriya; and in the 1790s, Balkaria. Under the Georgievsk Treaty of 1783, Georgia adopted Russian protectorate, which sealed the future of the Southern Caucasus. Russia's interests in the new domains were not limited to strategy; their economic value was no less important. The St. Petersburg Academy was asked to start scientific research of the Caucasus. Studies began in the latter half of the 18th century; from 1770 to 1808 prominent scholars of German origin—Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin, Johan Anton Güldenstädt, Julius Heinrich Klaproth, and others—individually or as members of expeditions collected economic and geographical information about the Caucasus.[8] The results were summarized and became part, directly or indirectly, of the Russian colonization policy in the Caucasus. Catherine the Great understood that the newly conquered lands should be populated with people loyal to the Russian Empire. Under the pressure of European policy, the Russians had to move fast in the Northern Caucasus: in the late 18th century, Britain and France became actively involved in the geopolitical Caucasian games. Fully aware that they had come too late, the Brits and the French still wanted a toehold in the Caucasus. They argued that the Russian Empire had captured only the North Caucasian valleys, while the Ottoman Empire, reluctant to accept the loss of the territories between the mouth of the Danube and the Kuban River, was waiting for an opportune moment. In

[7]See: *Vsemirnaiaistoria*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1958, p. 414.

[8]See E.-M. Auch, "Nemetskiekolonisty v Zakavkazie," in *Rossiyskienemtsyna Donu*, Kavkazei Volge. Materialy rossiysko-germanskoy nauchnoy konferentsii sentyabria 1994 g., Moscow, 1995, pp. 103-109.

the mid-1770s, the Germans began moving to the south; in July 1785, Catherine the Great issued a new manifesto that filled in the gaps of the 1763 Manifesto[9]. The Germans first moved into the Northern Caucasus where ten fortresses (which together formed the Azov-Mozdok Line) protected the newly acquired lands. Colonization proceeded at a slow pace: serfdom created a shortage of free people, which meant that a problem of state importance remained unresolved. In an effort to speed up economic development of the new territories, the government allowed the German settlers in the Volga area to move to the Caucasian Line. Entrusted with the task of drafting a plan to move the German colonists from the Volga to the Caucasus, Prosecutor General of the Russian Empire Prince Vyazemskyproduced a report "On Resettling Colonists of the Meadow Side of the Volga to the Line Built between Mozdok and the Azov Sea," which the Empress endorsed by a decree of 27 October, 1778[10]. Progress was slow. By 1789, only 347 colonists had arrived from Saratov to take up residence on the Volga in the area of StaryeMazhary, and even they, just two years later, finding this area to be "inconveniently situated,"[11] scattered across the towns and cities of the Caucasian Gubernia. Owing to the absence of volunteers prepared to move to the Northern Caucasus, the government, determined to colonize this geopolitically important region, had no choice but to resort to compulsion. A decree of 1 July, 1794 instructed the local power bodies to collect signatures from the foreign colonists to find out who wanted to remain in the Saratov Gubernia and who was prepared to move to the Caucasus. The document warned that after specifying their preferred place of residence the colonists should not "move from their permanent residences to other places or gubernias without written permission."[12] The decree did nothing to keep the foreign colonists in the Northern Caucasus. No matter how hard Pavel I tried to attract colonists, in the 1790s the trickle remained meager. Those who came were sent to Novorossia: in 1782, there were 0.2 thousand Germans there; by the late

[9]See: PSZ-1, Vol. 22, No. 16223, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 426-427.
[10]See: PSZ-1, Vol. 20, No. 14814, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 757-759.
[11] PSZ-1, Vol. 23, No. 17230, St. Petersburg, 1830, p. 537.
[12] *Ibidem*.

18th century, there were 5.5 thousands of them.[13] Late in the 18th century, the czarist government issued several documents designed to encourage foreign colonization of the Northern Caucasus which, however, were less effective than expected: until the early 19th century, there were no German colonies in the Caucasian Gubernia.

The geopolitical attempts of the Great Britain in the Caucasus and European Christian missionaries

German colonization of the Caucasus coincided with the second stage of massive migration of foreigners to the Russian Empire which began under Alexander I (1801-1825). The Karras colony was the first foreign colony which appeared in the Northern Caucasus. In the summer of 1801, Scottish Presbyterian missionaries Henry Brunton and Alexander Paterson asked the Russian authorities for permission to settle in the Northern Caucasus in the fortress of Konstantinogorskaia. In 1802, they founded a colony which they called Karras. Later, common settlers from Scotland[14] and German ecclesiastical reformers from the Saratov Gubernia[15] joined them. The Scottish missionaries were attracted not only by the possibility of spreading Christianity among the mountain dwellers; they hoped to set up an outpost to promote Great Britain's trade and political interests. The Russian royal court, however, did not regard the Scots as British spies. It was expected that they would help to popularize Christianity among the local Muslims, Buddhists, pagans, and Judaists, which explains the energetic measures taken by St. Petersburg to meet the Scots' requests. The Russian Minister of Internal Affairs promptly delivered his report to Alexander I, which was endorsed on 25 November, 1802.[16]Some people, however, had their doubts: General Tsitsianov thought that the missionaries were British agents determined to persuade the mountain peoples to start trading with Britain. He was convinced that the

[13]See: V.M. Kabuzan, "Nemetskoenaselenie v Rossii v XVIII-nachale XX veka," *Voprosyistorii*, No. 12, 1989, p. 23.

[14]See: Akty, sobrannyeKavkazskoyarkheograficheskoykomissiey(further AKAK), ArkhivglavnogoupravleniyanamestnikaKavazskogo, Published under the editorship of d.S.S. A.D. Berzhe, Vol. VII, Section XV, Kavkazskayaoblast,No. 898, Tiflis, 1878, p. 910.

[15]See: AKAK, Vol. 7, Tiflis, 1878, pp. 930-931.

[16]See: AKAK, Vol. 2, Tiflis, 1868, p. 926.

missionaries were extending material support to the locals "to gain their confidence and are very lavish with their money to this end." The missionaries defied their own financial problems to buy better relations with the mountain peoples. Henry Brunton earned respect by his perfect knowledge of Arabic. The Gospels in the Tatar language were published in the colony's print shop.[17] General Tsitsianov explained: "They (the missionaries.—Ed.) have no other aim but to win the trust of the mountain peoples with the help of Arabic and to channel their trade across the Black Sea where the Brits feel free to navigate."[18] The general was right, at least partially: the Scottish missionaries took commands from the Edinburgh directors, received money from them, and had to obey their instructions. They tried to increase British influence in the Northern Caucasus by preaching Protestantism among the local mountain dwellers. British diplomats closely followed the ups and downs of the relations between the czarist authorities and the local Caucasian peoples. Early in the 19th century, British diplomats even crossed the Caucasus under the guise of travelers or on their way home from missions abroad; they kept their eyes open and gathered information as well as they could. For example, in 1814, William Gore-Ouseley, a British envoy to Persia, asked for permission to cross, together with his retinue, the Caucasus on the way to St. Petersburg and further on to Britain. Once in the Caucasus, he spent some time in Karras with the Scottish missionaries. According to Russian historian S. Chekmenev, "the British diplomat was lured into this far from easy, long, and inconvenient journey not by its romantic attractions. He set out on the journey with a secret assignment from his government."[19] This may at least be partially true. The Scottish missionaries were not alone; in 1821, Christian missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, Evangelical priests August Dietrich and Felician von Zaremba, applied to the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs with a "request to permit them to found colonies of pious German families beyond the Caucasus between the Black and Caspian seas and to start an academy and print shop there for the purpose of spreading the word of God in that region among the pagans

[17] See: I. Apukhtin, KoloniaKarras, eeproshloeinastoiashchee, Pyatigorsk, 1903, p. 3.
[18] AKAK, Vol. 2, p. 927.
[19] S.A. Chekmenev, "InostrannyeposeleniyanaStavropole v kontse XVIII i v pervoypolovine XIX v.," in MaterialypoizucheniiuStavropolskogokraia, Issue 12-13, Stavropol, 1971, p. 246.

and Mohammedans and to enjoy the same rights as the colony of the Scottish missionaries of the Caucasian Gubernia in Karras."[20] The Basel Missionary Society entrusted its missionaries with the task of spreading Christianity in the Caucasus in full accordance of the rules formulated by the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association of Great Britain. The Russian Empire, in turn, wanted the Basel missionaries to settle between the Black and the Caspian Sea "to start an academy and printing shop there for the purpose of spreading the word of God in that region among the pagans and Mohammedans." It should be said that the Basel missionaries had perfect command of Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, and Persian, which helped them in their evangelical effort among the local peoples. Operating in the Derbent-Irevan-Karabakh triangle, they gradually widened the geography of their mission: in 1829 some of them went as far as Baghdad to study Arabic and preach Christianity. General Ermolov, entrusted with military and civilian power in the Caucasus, looked askance at what the Protestant missionaries were doing in his territory. An ardent supporter of missionary activities of the Greco-Russian faith,[21] he wrote to Prince Golitsyn in 1822: "I deported Scottish missionary Blair who lived among the Ingush and behaved suspiciously." The Russian general disapproved of the Edinburgh Missionary Society and pointed out in the same letter: "When educating young men they teach them the language of their fatherland and do not try hard enough to make them good Russian subjects… I have to admit that unwilling to acquire new preachers from among these charges I prevent the Karras colonists from taking new charges."[22] In January 1827, in response to one of the many inquiries from the capital about the causes of the colony's disintegration, General Ermolov was extremely outspoken: "I do not regard the missionaries' departure a great loss for the Caucasus because they demonstrated no success either in preaching Christianity or in economic activities."[23] He went on to clarify his point: "It is unacceptable, especially politically, to allow foreign missionaries to educate the local peoples."[24]Under the Law of 22 May, 1828, the Lutheran Church acquired

[20] AKAK, Vol. 6, Part I, Tiflis, 1874, p. 468.
[21] See: AKAK, Vol. 7, Tiflis, 1878, p. 932
[22] AKAK, Vol. 6, Part II, Tiflis, 1875, p. 507.
[23] AKAK, Vol. 7, p. 932.
[24] *Ibidem*.

an official status equal to that of the Russian Orthodox Church largely thanks to Frederica Louise Charlotte Wilhemina, daughter of the King of Prussia Frederick William III and wife of Russian Emperor Nicholas I. The same law ruled that all Protestant religious organizations should merge with the Lutheran Church; it was a blow to the reform movement, which deprived the continued functioning of the Scottish Christian Mission in Karras of any meaning. The Edinburgh Missionary Society, which had poured a lot of money into the Karras colony, refused to accept the loss of the reform mission's outpost; it asked for a permission to transfer its lands to the Basel Missionary Society. The persistent requests of the missionaries and numerous petitions which arrived in St. Petersburg from Edinburgh were crowned with success. In 1828, the Emperor allowed the Basel missionaries to settle in the area of the Caucasian Mineral Waters if the Karras colonists agreed[25]. In1828, the missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Society joined their Scottish colleagues. Late in the 1820s, disappointed with the results of their mission, the Scots started moving away from the Northern Caucasus; there were several other reasons of their pull-out. First, according to historical sources, early in the 1830s, there were nine families of baptized mountain dwellers in the Karras colony and six baptized men from Kabarda, with English and German surnames, such as Walter, Buchanan, Abercromby, Davidson, etc., married to German women[26]. The locals not merely remained indifferent to Christianity, they took up arms to rebuff foreign Christian expansion; the Muslims—Nogays and Kabardins—were the most vehement opponents[27]. By the 1830s, it became clear that the missionary activities of the Scots from Edinburgh had failed. Some of them, including Alexander Paterson, refused to obey the orders from the Edinburgh headquarters and served Russia. His services were lavishly rewarded with the inheritance of 1,000 desyatins of land in Karras. Edinburgh, which had been supervising the Karras missionaries for about 30 years, was furious. It should be said that the Russian officials were just as displeased with the Basel missionaries. On 10 January, 1835 Baron Rosen

[25]See: *Ibid*., pp. 931-932, 940-941.

[26]See: E. Weindenbaum, "K istorii Shotlandskoy kolonii okolo Piatigorska," Izvestia Kavkazskogo otdela Imperskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva (IKOIRGO), Vol. VII, No. 1, 1881, pp. 170-174.

[27]See: AKAK, Vol. 5, Tiflis, 1873, p. 909.

reported: "I think that the Basel missionaries are even more harmful than the Scots: they do not set up colonies, they do not convert the Mohammedans and pagans (what they planned to do and for which they asked permission); instead they act on the sly among the Armenians, distribute their translations among them, and lure them to their schools. During the thirteen years they have been in the Caucasus, they have not only failed to set up colonies, they have not converted a single pagan or Mohammedan to Christianity[28]." In 1835, the Cabinet of Ministers of Russia banned the missionary activities of foreign religious societies; they could be involved only in agriculture, industry, and handicrafts[29].According to T. Plakhotnyuk, the Russian government banned the missionary activities of the Scots suspected of spying in favor of Great Britain; the author proceeds from the suspicions of Prince Tsitsianov[30]. It seems that the ban was caused by much weightier arguments. What the foreign Christian missions were doing in the Caucasus did not tally with Russia's Christianization policy there and failed to bring the desired results. This convinced the imperial powers that since the Edinburgh and Basel missionaries proved to be unable to spread Christianity in the newly captured lands their continued presence in the Caucasus was useless; it was decided to set up a society for promoting Orthodox Christianity[31].

Conclusion

In the late 18th century and first half of the 19th century, Russia's settlement policy in the Caucasus served an important geopolitical aim: to tie the Caucasus to Russia in order to make it an inalienable part of the Russian Empire. Britain and France deemed it necessary to join the geopolitical struggle in the Caucasus in the late 18th century. With no colonies in the Caucasus and no common borders, these powers had to rely on their relations with Russia, which had already achieved domination. Britain was especially concerned about the state of affairs: London was convinced that "savage" and "despotic" Russia should drop its claims to the region. What caused this negative yet completely justified response of

[28]AKAK, Vol. 8, Tiflis, 1881, p. 320.
[29]See: *Ibid.,* p. 321.
[30]See: E. Weindenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
[31]See: AKAK, Vol. 8, pp. 256, 320.

the Brits to Russia's Caucasian conquests? Britain, France, and other states were concerned about Russia's acquisitions because this tipped the balance of power. After coming to the Caucasus, Russia could have spread its control to Western Asia and Iran. London was convinced that Russia's claims to the Caucasus were unjustified because "barbarian Russia could not civilize the Caucasian peoples and plant liberal-democratic values among them. 'The burden of the white man' in the Caucasus was Britain's duty."[32] Both Britain and Russia relied on the Edinburgh and Basel missionaries. We can say that Britain failed to achieve its geopolitical aims in the Caucasus by means of the European Christian missionaries. The Russian government, likewise, failed to acquire firm support in the Caucasus; it went on with its military political expansion and demonstrated much more cruelty when confronted by the armed riots of the mountain peoples. Britain was waiting for the opportunity to change the geopolitical situation in the Caucasus in its favor and never abandoned the idea of revenge until the Crimean War.

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