

## RUSSIAN AGRARIAN COLONIAL POLICY IN BATUMI REGION IN THE 80S OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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**Abstract.** *After the war between Russia and Turkey in 1877-1878 years, Adjara came within the boundaries of Russian Empire. The new government for the purpose of establishing the Russification regime in a short period of time begin carrying out of different types of reforms. One of the important from these reforms was the carrying out of agrarian policy and homestead reforms in this region by king tsarizm. Russian agrarian formation significantly differed from the land possasing rule established in Ottoman Empire.*

*It's obvious, that the agrarian relationships in Batumi oblast was distinguished from Russian one. Social-economic mastering as international as internal state was carried out quite in difficult/contradictory situation.*

*The state ownership on homesteads was really approved, which existed in nominal form in the Ottomans domination. The homesteads of local AGHA masters and land-owners decreased due to the division of ancestral or selling of the land-plots, the nature of land-plot registering and tax system were significantly changed. In the form of traders-entrepreneurs and Tsarizm officials a new land-plot owners group- agricultural Bourgeoisie was created. The processes were of evolution character.*

**Keywords:** *Russia, Turkey, Tsarizm, Batumi, Dondukov-Korsakov, Constantinopol, colonial.*

**Introduction.** In the mentioned period the state treasury, prince summons/office and nobility maintained the monopolize possession on the land plot. The significant part of the homestead appeared under the possession of Bourgeoisie. Even in Georgia in 1864-1871 years, after the peasant reform, the more than 30 % of land plot overall area remained in the possession of nobility. At the beginning of the century, more than 77 % of land plot under private ownership belonged to the nobility [1].

Despite of this, Russian government, out of the colonial interests, began carrying out of serious changes in the nature and forms of land-plot possession and land using issues. Here the national land-owner nobility AGHA-BEGS masters did not support tsarizm because, the tsarizm did not deemed them as the social basis of them.

The government of Russia disregarded the actual state of private ownership onto the homesteads (land plots) of Batumi oblast population. For the purpose of disregarding the actual state of local population's land plot possession or use, Russian government applied to the Ottoman agricultural legislation too.

Tsarizm deemed such method of approach profitable for reaching its goal. According to the thought of the government, the ottoman agrarian legislation would be the legal basis for legalizing the Russian treasury property onto the homesteads (land-plots), for transferring the local population without distinction, in the rank of peasant. By realizing of this intention, the state treasury income would increase and would settle the colonists here, by which, would create the loyal social foothold. The government also showed some caution, since the defiling of interests and rights onto the land-plots of the local population was connected to the mass public demonstrations. Immediately after annexation of Batumi district, the representatives of high ranks, declared the population officially that, land-plot possession and land-plot using, taxes and tax-obligations would remain as in old time as it existed in Ottoman predominance. Before clearing out the forms of the land plot possession, only selling and purchasing would be banned [2].

In March of 1879 year, viceroy of Caucasus, created the special commission for clearing out the homestead issues in Batumi oblast. By the special instruction from the government, the commission should study the all the form of land possession or using, also the legal and actual state existing to gather the document of land-plot possession and primarily to identify the free treasury land-plots [3].

The commission gathered the documents of land-possession and using, studied the actual state existing at the place though faced to the great opposition. Many of the land-possession documents were deemed doubtful, since they were issued in August of 1878 year, when the Ottomans were leaving Batumi. The company assured that, by the documents gathered, it would not be possible to clear out the homestead issues.

The commission of homestead did not bring the desired result for Russian government. The commission activity terminated in December of 1880 year. In 1883 year, a new homestead commission was created which was headed by Batumi oblast Governor.

By the order of Caucasus chief Dondukov-Korsakov, in August of 1888 year, well-known Georgian historian D. Bakradze to Constantinople. His task was to reveal the new homestead documents in archive of Ottoman. Though, because of different objective reasons, he could not bring any important documents from the archives of Istanbul [4].

Working of commission even for this time also finished result less. Despite of this, government of Russia out of fiscal-colonic interests, declared the land plots of Batumi and Karsi oblast as the treasury property and the population- as the peasants of the state. Ottoman agrarian legislation was used as the formal basis for this act.

For the purpose of accelerating of colonic mastering of Adjara, transferring of land plots under the control of central government of empire, was more profitable. Due to this was created the code of 1888 year, by which the land plots of Karsi, Batumi and Artvin were under control of state property ministry and councilor. In 1893 year was issued a new order of the government, according to which, all kind of land-plots of Karsi, Batumi and Artvin districts in relation to which the population did not have the documentations, transferred to the property of land action and state land property ministries. By the mentioned normative act, all kind of land plots of Batumi and Artvin districts become the property of state treasury in the form of land-action and state property ministry.

In 1895-1896 years, Land plots of Karsi, Batumi and Artvin districts were described, created the acts and were transferred to Erevan and Kutaisi province division of state property ministry [5].

Transferring of Batumi and Karsi districts' land plot from local administrative division to the land plot-action and state property ministry created the additional difficulties. Transferring of Batumi and Karsi districts' land plots to the land plot-action and state property ministry was not the legal solution of the issue. This knew the government of Russia and began elaboration of homestead legislation.

The land plots deemed to be the property of the state, only the small area were left under property of the local population. According to the possibilities, the habitants of the village would be given the nearby free land plots and forests in common use. The population were taxed for land-plot possession-using to the benefit of the state. The new habitants were given the acquired land-plots in use for descendants by the permission issued by the appropriate bodies. Purchasing of homesteads with ownership or acquiring, selling of them also, trading by the wood from the village land plots, forests were strictly forbidden [6].

This project of law also applied to the land plots of religious institutions. Christian churches and monasteries had those land plots which they already had during the ottoman rule, though they could not sell them. In case of cancellation of churches and monasteries, the homesteads were transferred to the treasury office. The land plots of Muslim religious institutes should have been acquired by the state in the villages, and in the cities – the city boards. After acquiring, their management would be arranged according to the Transcaucasia Muslim institutions [7].

In 1892 year, the commission of Transcaucasia 5 province state peasant homestead reform preparation was created in Tbilisi, which was headed by I. Medvedev. The commission was given the mentioned draft law for discussion. After study the issues, I. Medvedev created the long letter concerning Transcaucasia 5 state peasant homestead land arrangement. He excluded solving of issue in other way [8].

In October of 1894 year, on the basis of I. Medvedev's long letter, the special meeting was held in Petersburg, in which participated the representatives of state property, internal affairs, military, justice ministries and Caucasus chief governor. The meeting showed the obvious different approach to the issue. The representatives of Caucasus chief governor and ministries strictly refused the ownership title of the local population to the homesteads.

The representatives of justice and military ministries had the different position to the issue. The first ones protected the interests of the colonists and acquiring of homesteads by the new habitants according to the limitation age possession law deemed to be the lawful. The military ministry vice versa, out of the actual state, justified the right of aborigine population concerning selling of homestead on the basis of limitation age possession law [9].

The meeting could not elaborate the specific recommendations. In 1898 year, the chief governor of Caucasus, Golitsin, for the purpose of reprocessing, required the mentioned draft of law again. On first May of 1900 year, the Emperor Nikoloz the first approved the draft of law concerning arranging of land-plots of Transcaucasia 5 province state peasant, but that law did not apply to the homestead issue of Karsi, Batumi and Artvin districts [10].

At the imperial court of Petersburg, in the high instance of the government they once again assured that, including the land plot of these areas to the state treasury was not easy. On 24 may of 1901 year, the chief governor of Caucasus wrote to the military ministry concerning this that: " I do my best to solve this issue as soon as possible, an appropriate measurement are being carried out in

this way, since, unfortunately, there is not enough material to clear out this very important and too difficult issue, even if it relates to the main part of economic life of the local population, special caution is required while solving it. Therefore, creation of a new draft of law concerning arranging of Karsi, Batumi and Artvin districts' homestead is not possible in short period of time. Despite of this that, I take all the measure to speed up this process [11].

Both the local authority and the imperial court knew the attitude of the population. The population of Batumi and Karsi district would not consent such decision of homestead issue. In the letter sent to the Caucasus king viceroy the military governor of Batumi district noted that the actual state of homestead was not envisaged in the draft law. The draft law protected the new habitants and required approval of land plot under their possession in their ownership [12].

The supreme government in Petersburg was informed concerning the point of view of the gubernator of Batumi district, though studying of documentation took long time. Below is shown the land-plots of Batumi district population according to regions and sections.

The land lease got essential meaning for the landless and landowner peasants. As long-term as short-term land-leasing was used in the region. The tenants were state treasury, messrs, Mosques, prince office and village bourgeoisie- the new habitants. There were two forms of leasing as natural as monetary in Batumi. Choosing of form was depended on the tenant. The state treasury and the capitalists issued the land-plots for monetary leasing and the Messrs and landowners issued the land plot basically for natural income. For example the Khimshiashvilebi received the pastures leasing fee in the form of livestock products. The quantity of the land plot leasing was depended on the land-plot usefulness and the land owners issued the land-plots for half, third and fourth partial leasing fee [13]. Furthermore, the half partial form was mostly spread. In 1899 year, this form was used in tobacco making [14]. As, Georgians peasants-local and Lazians came from Turkey as well non-Georgians, Armenians and other received the leased land plots in partial use [15].

The exact accounting of Batumi district Muhajirs' homesteads is related to the difficulties. This was explained by that the migration had continuous character. Despite of this, existing incomplete materials on land-plot quantities of Muhajirs, create some understanding. According to accounting held in 1897 year, the land-owners in Batumi counted 984 people of both sex, which amounted 1.1 % of the population [16].

According to the same accounting, their number in Artaani and Oltisi oblasts- Karsi oblast amounted 277 people, which amounted 0,3 % of the population [17].<sup>17</sup> If assume that the family consisted of 5 persons, than about 200 family were in Batumi oblast and about 50 in Artaani and Oltisi oblast.

So, in the nature and the forms of land-plots possession in Batumi oblast the significant changes took place.

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