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Исследовательская статья

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ИСТОРИЯ СОЗДАНИЯ ЛЕЗГИНСКОЙ (КАХЕТИНСКОЙ) КОРДОННОЙ ЛИНИИ: ЦЕЛИ И ЗАДАЧИ ФОРТИФИКАЦИЙ В РАЗВИТИИ РЕГИОНА

Аннотация. С начала XIX в. начинается новый этап в военно-политическом освоении Восточного Кавказа и Закавказья. В связи с тем, что в начале века Грузия была присоединена к империи, перед государством встал вопрос защиты новых территорий. При А.П. Ермолове начинается период активной деятельности топографов края, связанный со строительством ряда крепостей, и переход от политики карательных операций к планомерному освоению края, с применением методов гражданской колонизации. С этой целью в 30-х гг. XIX в. началось строительство системы крепостей по рекам Иори и Алазани, вошедшей в историографию как Лезгинская (Кахетинская) кордонная линия, которая была частью Левого фланга Кавказской кордонной линии (после деления Кавказской кордонной линии на фланги в 1834 г.). В статье раскрываются место и роль командного состава Кордонной линии в строительстве, передислокации войск на линии, претворении в жизнь положений кавказской политики в регионе на указанном участке Кордонной линии, раскрывается ее военно-политическое и социально-экономическое значение и история создания кордона на границе с Грузией. На примере Лезгинской (Кахетинской) линии кордона прослеживается трансформация кавказской политики в регионе, изменение вектора ее направленности – от оборонительной (тактика карательных операций) к гражданской колонизации, что впоследствии способствовало сближению с горцами за счет экономических и культурно-бытовых связей. В зависимости от успехов царской армии в горах, менялось количество сооружений на Линии и численность войск, дислоцированных в крепостях и укреплениях. С момента своего возникновения Линия выполняла оборонительные функции, не только для внутренних границ империи, но и служила прикрытием южных рубежей России со стороны Турции и Ирана, что было первостепенной задачей сохранения региона в геополитическом плане.

Ключевые слова: Левый фланг Кавказской кордонной линии; укрепления; посты; Джар; Закаталы; Грузия; Военно-Грузинская дорога; Кордонная линия; геополитика; кавказская политика.

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Research paper

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THE HISTORY OF THE CREATION OF THE LEZGIN (KAKHETI) CORDON LINE: GOALS AND TASKS OF FORTIFICATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

Abstract. The beginning of the 19th century marks a new stage in the military-political development of the Eastern Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Since Georgia was annexed to the empire at that time, the state faced the issue of protecting new territories. A. Ermolov initiated a period of vigorous activity of topographers of the region associated with the construction of a number of fortresses and transfer from the policy of punitive operations to the systematic development of the region using civil colonization. For this purpose, the construction of a system of fortresses along the Iori and Alazani rivers began in the 30s of the 19th century. This system of fortresses entered historiography as the Lezgi (Kakheti) cordon line which was a component of the Left flank of the Caucasian cordon line (after the division of the Caucasian cordon line into flanks in 1834). The Russian government entrusted a number of military-political and economic tasks to the new cordon. In addition, the article examines the place and role of the command staff of the cordon line in the construction, re-deployment of the forces on the line, and the putting into practice provisions of the Caucasian policy in the region. The work reveals the military-political, social-economic importance of the line and the history of the creation of a cordon on the border with Georgia based on the available sources. Overall, the transformation of the Caucasian policy in the region can be seen on the example of the Lezgi (Kakheti) cordon line (the change of policy's vector from defensive (tactics of punitive operations) to the civil colonization of the region that subsequently contributed to the approach with highlanders through economic, cultural and household relations. The number of constructions on the line and the number of forces deployed in fortresses and fortifications were changing depending on the success of the Tsarist Army in the mountains. The line from the moment of its creation and in the subsequent period performed defensive functions not only for the internal borders but also served as a support of the southern borders of Russia from Turkey and Iran. It was the primary task of preserving the region in geopolitical terms.

Keywords: Left flank of the Caucasian cordon line; fortification; post; Djar; Zakatala; Georgia; Georgian Military Highway; cordon line; geopolitics; Caucasian policy.

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The issue of the development of the southern territories and subordinating them to the center was always relevant for Russia throughout different periods of history. The development of the Eastern Caucasus was strategically important and one of the key directions in resolving the Eastern question as an integral part of the Caucasian policy. The designation of the formula of the political vector of the Eastern question was first used by diplomats in 1822 and included a set of disagreements and contentious issues in Russian-Turkish and Russian-Iranian relations. Georgia, a part of Armenia, and Northern Azerbaijan were ceded to Russia as a result of signing of the Adrianople Treaty with Turkey and the Turkmanchay Treaty with Iran. There was an ongoing process of colonization of the North-Eastern Caucasus.

Wishing to designate the territories of the Caucasian peoples as subject to it, Russia began to erect separate cordon lines that covered the most vulnerable and strategically important areas in the 18th century. Separate cordon sections that had been built since the beginning of the 18th century were united into the Caucasian cordon line in 1785. The Caucasian cordon line was divided into the Black Sea cordon line, the Right flank of the line, the Center, the Left flank, and the Vladikavkaz military district by a decree of the Caucasian administration, dated January 20, 1834, as a result of the outbreak of the Caucasian War, for the convenience of management. The Left flank united the Terek line, the Kumyk line, the Sulak cordon, and the Sunzha and Lezgi lines.

Inconsistency resulted in a military-political crisis in the region – territories that expressed obedience during the presence of Russian forces, as soon as the forces left, again became disobedient; this led to numerous human losses and the need to defend the same territory several times. That was a feature of the Caucasian policy since the beginning of the 19th century. The tactics of military development of the region did not bring the desired result. Periodic punitive operations carried out by the Russian administration in the Caucasus did not contribute to the subjugation of the region, but only brought great human losses. This military-political concept was revised and replaced by the systemic development of the region through the construction of cordon sections which shaped the historical and geographical space of the Caucasus and became a platform for communication, integration, and acculturation.

As a result, cordon sections intended for defense and military-political subordination of territories gradually transformed into contact zones. This allows us to explore this topic and the history of the region in accordance with the frontier theory when cordon sections are not administrative-geographical boundaries, their functions are much broader.

Born as a regional theory to consider the relationship between Europeans and the local population of America, the Turner's Thesis has become applicable to the history of many regions. The theory subsequently took form from the military subordination of the region into a policy of civil colonization and incorporation.

Many types of frontier communications such as military frontier, intercultural frontier, and inter-confessional, ethnic, paradigmatic, and mental frontier formed on the Caucasian border. This, in turn, characterizes the uniqueness of the region, where Oriental and Western cultures clashed. Frontier types do not emerge alone, they follow each other and interact in parallel with each other. The historical and geographical characteristics of the frontier are the fundamental concepts of the subsequent economic, political, social, and cultural conditions for the development of the region. The Caucasian border zone has historically been shaped as a military frontier, a zone of distribution of military forces, and a geostrategic base.

The combination of frontier components that emerged in this territory contributed to the change of tactics of military-political development by cultural and civilizational development (a similar type of frontier, confrontation, and promotion of the zone of one's own

influence) through civil colonization. The frontiermen (Cossacks, as pioneers on the frontier) and cultural traders in turn contributed to the active spread of a new culture (material, household) during the colonization of the region.

In the course of studying the subject under consideration, we applied the method of structural-diachronic analysis, which allowed to explore the structurally changing periods in the history of the construction of the fortifications of the Lezgin cordon line and their restructuring. Furthermore, it became possible to carry out a theoretical reconstruction of a strategically important part of the Caucasian cordon line. The principles of objectivity and consistency were used as the main historical principles on which our research is based. This made it possible to explore comprehensively the issue of the history of creation, the main role and functionality of the cordon in the context of the geopolitical implementation of the solution of the key points of the Eastern question.

The Georgian kingdom, according to the Geogrievsky treaty, recognized the vassalage of the Russian Empire, which contributed to the activation of the Caucasian administration in the development and strengthening of the southern borders of the state in 1783. It was supposed to contain two Russian battalions with four guns in Georgia. However, it was impossible for such weak forces to protect the country [1, p. 8].

The decision of undertaking a punitive expedition to the villages of Djar and Belokan against the rebellious mountaineers was carried out on October 14, 1784 in the area of the Muganlu tract. The mountaineers were defeated by the government forces and were forced to flee across the Alazan River. This victory did not bring significant results. The Djar raids on Georgian villages continued since there was no long-term effect from the punitive expeditions of the Russian troops.

The Caucasian administration faced a difficult task to subjugate this territory in the shortest time and bring the population into submission.

Georgia was invaded by Agha Mohammed Khan, who ravaged Tiflis in 1795. The Russian administration immediately reacted to this and sent the tsarist forces to Georgia and Dagestan at the end of 1795 [1, p. 10]. The punitive expeditions undertaken by the military command yielded no significant results. The expeditions allowed to subdue the highlanders for a short period and marked the Russian presence in the region for Persia and Turkey. In subsequent years, the Infantry General V. Zubov was sent against Agha Muhammad Khan for further approval in the region in 1796. I. Lazarev, general-in-chief was sent to Tiflis with the same purpose in 1799.

The question of the devastation of these territories by Turkey and Iran, Djars, and the need to protect them was periodically raised since Russia did not have a constant presence on the Georgian territories and along the border. Major General A. Mende notes that "the Djar-Belokan Lezgins, together with the mountain Lezgins, greatly disturbed us (the empire). They took prisoners from the vicinity of Tiflis itself, and on occasion, could inflict on us a lot of harm before the construction in 1830 of the Lezgin Line with Transcaucasia"[1]. The practice of punitive operations to intimidate the highlanders did not bring the desired results, and Alexander I decided to annex the Kingdom of Georgia to the Russian Empire in 1801. As a consequence, it allowed for the permanent presence of forces on the border territory – as a strategic and geopolitical factor of development, protection, and full incorporation into the Russian state. The process of Georgia's incorporation into the Russian Empire necessitated the creation of the Kakheti (Lezgi) cordon line [2, p. 111]. The transformation

1. Major General Menda's genuine "Note on the Caucasus". Historical review of Russia's actions in the Caucasus from the time of Ivan IV to 1841 [Podlinnaya general-mayora Menda «Zapiska o Kavkaze». Istoricheskiy obzor deystviy Rossii na Kavkaze so vremeni Ivana IVdo 1841 goda]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 102. p. 31.

and expansion of the competencies of the border zone occurred, and subsequently led to the natural historical need for the incorporation of the territory and the development of a new form of frontier relations based on the military-political principles of subjugation and protection of the territory which were typical for all frontier zones, both in Russia and abroad (limes, military border, etc.).

After the signing of the manifesto on the accession of Georgia to Russia, General K. Knorring was assigned as commander-in-chief in Georgia, and M. Kovalensky as the civil ruler; soon, both were recalled due to the turbulent situation in Georgia, and the inability of leadership to cope with the tasks of the center.

The appointment of Prince P. Tsitsianov as commander-in-chief in the Caucasus marked the next milestone in the history of the formation and development of the control system. The Djar and Belokan peoples were conquered "by the power of Russian weapons" by General P. Tsitsianov in 1803[2]. The issue of tactics for protecting the southern territories of the empire still remained open despite numerous successes and acquired territories. The main problem that worried the Russian administration regard to the acquired territories was that the population living in the border areas "provided shelter for open enemies of Russia and rebels, participated with mountain predators in raids on Kakheti, prevented the constant deployment of forces in their possessions and passage through them and oppressing the Georgian Christians enslaved by them in the freedom of faith. They forbade them to build churches and even receive Christian confessors; they never paid a certain tribute and even refused to pay at all"[3].

The situation began to acquire new forms and realities after the capture of Belokan by the tsarist forces. The villagers "quickly moved to Djar, the main and richest of their societies, sent elders from all the people with a petition for clemency and an expression of readiness to submit to the Russian state"[4]. Thus, Prince P. Tsitsianov having subjugated the possessions of Djar, Belokan, Chinih, Tala, Mukhakha, and Dzhanikha[5] accepted an oath of allegiance from their foremen, imposed tribute on them and concluded conditions with them that were supposed to ensure the inviolability of the oath[6]. The relationship was based on military-political subordination for a long period, despite the attempts of the government forces to transform the level of relations with the conquered peoples: military presence on the territory, the construction of fortresses near the conquered lands, and the capture of amanats, which characterized relations as the development of a military frontier.

It must be noted that dependency on the empire was nominal. As a result, hostilities in the area continued. The tactics of punitive operations against rebellious highlanders did not yield the desired outcome, since it had a short-term effect.

The situation in South Dagestan began to worsen in the 30s of the 19th century since the military operations of the Caucasian War were not successful for the Russian army. In addition, the raids of the highlanders on Kakheti and Djar, and the destruction of the Georgian Military Highway, became more frequent.

Georgia was of strategic and economic importance for the empire. At the same time, there was no peace in the annexed territories. As soon as the Russian troops left the territories of the Lezgins, they quickly became disobedient and devastated the subjugated lands. Thus,

2. Proclamation to the Char and Belokan communities from Field Marshal Count Paskevich-Erivansky dated February 25, 1830 [Proklamatsiya Charskomu i Belokanskomu obshchestvam ot general-fel'dmarshala grafa Paskevicha-Erivanskogo ot 25 fevralya 1830 goda]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 92. p. 49.
3. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 42.
4. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 45.
5. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 40.
6. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 42.

the tsarist authorities noted for themselves that the Lezgin mountain communities were quickly recovering from punitive operations. Count I. Paskevich-Erivansky, the commander-in-chief of the civilian unit in Georgia, the Astrakhan province, and the Caucasus region recognized the need not to delay the subjugation of the Djar and Belokan villages[7]. It was decided to start an expedition to Djar in 1830, and "the goal of the expedition was achieved on April 28, 1830"[8].

The Russian command already had experience in the formation of numerous lines of the Caucasian cordon system (the Terskaya, Sulakskaya, and Sunzhenskaya lines were already operating on the Left flank). It was decided to build a number of fortresses and fortifications, which later formed the basis of the Lezgi (Kakheti) cordon line. Djar was the main object around which all the military forces of the region were concentrated by the 1930s. It was possible to conduct an offensive along three roads that led to the Djar – the ford Urdo, Kozlu, and the ford near the village of Muganlo, which was the wider and chosen as the main one. The success of the capture of the Djar was also facilitated because of the natural and climatic conditions (harsh winter) the Lezgins of the villages of Djurmut, Tebelts, Tashaly, Antsug, Kapuchi could not come to the aid of the Djars[9]. Besides, the Belokan, Mukhakhinsky, Djinikh communities "separated from the Djar and Galts" due to discord between the villages of the Djar-Belokan union which could put "up to 10 thousand armed men"[10]. It should be noted that in the case of a military threat to the Lezgin villages, as noted by the headquarters captain V. Mochulsky in his essay "War in the Caucasus and Dagestan. Part I. Politics.", "Lezgins send their wives to neighbors and to distant places to incline them with weeping and shouting to help their community. Women make bread for the fighters and cook food…"[11]. The gorge between Djar and Belokan was chosen as a place for the construction of a Lezgin cordon fortress after this campaign in 1830. As can be seen from the "Information on the construction of fortresses and fortifications in the Caucasus and beyond the Caucasus, existing at present and abolished, and on the works of the Regions of the Transcaucasian Territory with the Russian Empire at different times", the territory near the future Zakatala fortress was occupied in 1830, where a fortress was laid in the same year, and which was completed by Colonel Espejo, a communications engineer[12]. The Russian fortress was founded in Zakatala as the supporting core of the Lezgi cordon line by Count I. Paskevich, the Viceroy of the Caucasus [3, p. 144].

The historical period of the functioning of the Line was associated with the name of Field Marshal Prince I. Paskevich, who proposed the idea of a cordon line and developed a plan for its construction, in accordance with the geographical features of the territory. Paskevich managed to capture Belokan, which seemed impregnable for the tsarist forces until the second quarter of the 19th century, and build seven cordon posts. Twelve posts were built by his order (7 covered the Kakhetian distance and 5 Lezgi). The Lezgi (Kakhetian) line was divided

7. Proclamation … File 92. p. 42.
8. Proclamation … File 92. p. 43.
9. Proclamation … File 92. p. 46.
10. Major General Menda's genuine "Note on the Caucasus". Historical review of Russia's actions in the Caucasus from the time of Ivan IV to 1841 [Podlinnaya general-mayora Menda «Zapiska o Kavkaze». Istoricheskiy obzor deystviy Rossii na Kavkaze so vremeni Ivana IVdo 1841 goda]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 102. p. 46
11. War in the Caucasus and Dagestan. Mochulsky's essay. Part I, political [Voyna na Kavkaze i Dagestane. Sochineniye Mochul'skogo. Chast' I politicheskaya]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 115. p. 36.
12. Information about the construction of fortresses and fortifications in the Caucasus and beyond the Caucasus, now existing and abolished, and about the works at different times of the Regions of the Transcaucasian Territory with the Russian Empire [Svedeniy o postroyenii krepostey i ukrepleniy na Kavkaze i za Kavkazom nyne sushchestvuyushchikh i uprazdnennykh i o proizvedeniyakh v raznoye vremya Oblastey Zakavkazskogo kraya s Rossiyskoy imperiyey]. Scientific Archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 92. p. 411.

into the left and right flanks[13], which united in Lagodekhi. The fortification of Lagodekhi was built under Field Marshal I. Paskevich-Erivansky on the right side of the Kara-Su River in 1830[14]. Amanats were taken from the communities of the territory to maintain order and peace in these lands, and who "will be released to their homes" upon completion of the construction of the fortress between Djar and Belokan[15]. As documents note, the administration of the Line had the right "to take from them (from the unconquered highlanders living near the village of Djar) amanats and issue a pass for free entry into the Russian lands to those who would like to use this advantage for industrial purposes"[16] in order to subordinate all spheres of activity on the cordon to their political interests.

The construction activity that unfolded under Count I. Paskevich Erivansky, spread to all the possessions of the Djar Lezgins, who lived between the Alazan River, the possessions of Elisuy Sultan, and the highest ridge of the Caucasus Mountains. As written in the report of Field Marshal Count Paskevich-Erivansky, the commander-in-chief of a separate Caucasian corps, in the name of the emperor, these were "8200 yards, in which the number of armed men is more than 20 thousand"[17].

In 1830, under Field Marshal I. Paskevich-Erivansky, the Kortuban fortification was built in Kakheti, 4 versts from the post of the same name[18], as well as the fortifications of New Zakatala, Belokan, Lagodekhi[19].

At the same time, fortifications were built at the exit from the mountains, where the loopholes for the attack were located. Posts were located near the villages of "Mukhakh, Dzhary, Katekhi, Belokan, in the tracts of Lagodekhi, Karatuban, Bezhanyany, near the villages of Kvareli, Shildy, Napareul, Pshavel, and Matany" [4]. The work on the construction of the Lezginskaya line was carried out since 1822, in addition to the fortification of Bezhanyany, which was built during the Georgian rebellion in 1812, and resumed in 1822[20]. There were also built fortifications of Matlis Mtsemeli and Kvarel[21].

For convenient administration, the Line was divided into three distances: Bezhanyanskaya, Belokanskaya, and Zakatalskaya. Distances in turn were equipped with guns and regimental teams for the defense and protection of the Line. After the establishment of the Line and the severe punishment of the Dzhary by force of arms, "it brought peace not only to this province, but also to Kakheti and Tiflis", as the decrees of the tsarist government say[22].

The Line had undergone a number of significant changes caused by military operations and the strategic plans of the Russian administration by the 40s of the 19th century. The Line with new fortifications and changes in the combat composition had the following form:

13. Left wing of the Caucasian cordon line (Terek region). Caspian region (Dagestan region) and Lezgin cordon line. Collection of documents [Levoye krylo Kavkazskoy kordonnoy Linii (Terskaya oblast'). Prikaspiyskiy kray (Dagestanskaya oblast') i Lezginskaya kordonnaya Liniya. Sbornik dokumentov B.v.d.]. From the rare book fund of the DFRC RAS. p. 339.
14. Information about the fortresses and fortifications in the Caucasus and beyond the Caucasus, now existing and abolished, and about the work at different times of the Regions of the Transcaucasian Territory in the Russian Empire [Svedeniya krepostey i ukrepleniy na Kavkaze i za Kavkazom nyne sushchestvuyushchikh i uprazdnennykh i o proizvedenii v raznoye vremya Oblastey Zakavkazskogo kraya v Rossiyskoy imperii]. Scientific Archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 97. p. 411.
15. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 48.
16. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 48.
17. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 40.
18. Information about the construction of fortresses ... F. 1. Inv. 1. File 92. p. 411.
19. Major General Menda's genuine "Note on the Caucasus". Historical review of Russia's actions in the Caucasus from the time of Ivan IV to 1841 [Podlinnaya general-mayora Menda «Zapiska o Kavkaze». Istoricheskiy obzor deystviy Rossii na Kavkaze so vremeni Ivana IVdo 1841 goda]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 102. p. 31.
20. Information about the construction of fortresses ... p. 411.
21. Major General Menda's genuine "Note on the Caucasus". Historical review of Russia's actions in the Caucasus from the time of Ivan IV to 1841 [Podlinnaya general-mayora Menda «Zapiska o Kavkaze». Istoricheskiy obzor deystviy Rossii na Kavkaze so vremeni Ivana IVdo 1841 goda]. Scientific archive of the IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 102. p. 26.
22. Information about the fortresses and fortifications ... File 97. p. 481.

a) “The Bezhan distance: the posts of Bezhanyan, Kvarel, Shild, Napareuli, Pshaveli, Matan, Sabu (newly erected), and four notifications (new) in the tract of Kontsio, Koshtskaro, Tsikh-is-Jvari, and Goris-Tsviri. Each post was guarded by 40 foot and 7 mounted policemen from Telavi and Signakh regions; in Bezhanyany, Kvareli, and Sabui. Additionally, there was an infantry company with a cannon; b) the Belokan distance; posts: Lagodekhi, Karatuban, Koroglychay, and Atakharab. A strong fortification was erected in Belokany, and the Karatuban post was brought into a good defensive condition. The distance was guarded by an infantry company, the 1st Georgian foot regiment and the 60th regiment of Signakh militiamen, with 7 guns (4 in Belokany, 2 in Lagodekhi, and 1 in Karatubani); c) Zakatala distance; posts: Mukhakh, Yar (Zakatala), Katekh and notification – in the Kolisa-Ulan-Takhta tract, near the Sapunchi-chai river, at the tip of the Abirganukh-burun spur, on Mount Karaul-tapa, in the gorges of Kafizdar and Zagatala and in the tract of Tsoor- Katsy. The distance was guarded by the Georgian line battalions No. 12 and 13, an artillery garrison, and 20 Cossacks, who were stationed in the Novaya Zakatala fortress (near the village of Dzhary). The posts were guarded by 1 1/2 hundreds of militiamen of the Dzhary-Belokan district, and one company was sent from the Zakatala garrison to Belokan” [4]. From the passage above, describing the disposition of forces on the Line, we can conclude that its organization was complex, with the involvement of a large number of military police and Cossacks, which was necessary since it was the key to the Caucasian fortification line and the base of the military frontier in the Caucasus. The authorities actively used the practice of forming police units from the local population because there was no recruitment system in the Caucasus, which is also a characteristic feature of the military border. The principle of voluntariness lay at the heart of the system of formation of detachments. The government ordered “to make up the zemstvo army from Lezgins and Ingeli (Ingiloys), mixing them among themselves without any preference” after the Russian troops captured Djar and Belokan[23].

Furthermore, the Line was divided into sections, as its length was too long, which was inconvenient for defense. The Lezgi (Kakheti) line did not fulfill the tasks assigned to it because militarily it needed additional weapons and military personnel (the problem of most of the cordon section lines at that time).

Lieutenant General N. Volkonsky described the cordon sections of the Caucasian line erected in the fortification area as follows: “They could not be called guard posts literally judging by their structure and armament. They were nothing more than a cover for teams put forward with two purposes: to mark the outskirts or limit of the territory we occupied and for a possible threat to the population in the case of any private predatory or general political movement on their part” [5, p. 102]. It was necessary to increase the command staff of the troops at the posts, as well as to improve and increase the material and technical base of the cordons in order to resolve the issue of the defensive capability of the fortifications.

Another important fact that should be noted is that natural and geographical conditions played an important role in the functioning of the line. The landscape, namely a large number of gorges, had a negative impact on the functioning of the Lezgi (Kakheti) line fortifications, namely on the protective function of the designated territories, in particular the Georgian Military Highway. Thus, this section remained as a military frontier for a long time without the possibility of transformation to a new level of border relations.

The administration of the Line was aware of the need to transfer some of the fortifications and build new ones after reconnaissance activities under the leadership of Major General L. Sevarsemidze. The Caucasian administration petitioned the leadership for the need for

23. Proclamation ... File 92. p. 53.

radical reforms on the cordon. As a result of reconnaissance, it was decided to build a fortification on a hill near Mount Akvan in order to exercise control over neighboring gorges and protect Kakheti.

As a result of the reconstruction of the Line, many fortifications were abolished and new ones emerged because of the strategic need. The Line was still presented as a division into three distances: "1) Bezhanyanskaya covered the fortification of Natlis-Mtsemeli and the posts of Bakhimtel, Evstafiev, Artan, Small Eilakh, Schild and Bezhanyan. The Telavi and Signakh districts were freed from the order of 420 city posts and abolished posts by the prince at Bezhanyana tract, Apena, at Kvareli, Sabui, Natsareul, Ibuzha, Konzio, Kushtskaro, Tsikhis-Jvari, and pickets at Shakryan, Yenisely, Gremy, Nakalakevi, Ampaty, Chekany and at Dalochabi tract; 2) Belokanskaya consisted of Belokan fortification and the posts of Khochaldag, Lagodekhi, Koroglychay, and Karatuban; 3) Zakatala (from posts near Lake Akimal-Naur, in the Tsabluan Gorge, descending from Mezeldeger Mountain and to Sary-Dag). The entire line was guarded by 5 companies of infantry, 4 1/2 hundreds of the 1st Georgian Foot Regiment, and 4 1/2 hundreds of militia. The 1st distance was subordinate to the commander of the Georgian linear No. 14th battalion, the 2nd to the commander of the 1st Georgian foot regiment, and the 3rd to the Djar chief bailiff" [4].

As we believe, the main purpose of creating a large number of fortifications was to increase the defense capability and prevent ties between non-civil, belligerent mountaineers, as well as to defend the territory of Georgia.

Besides, the Line became much better equipped militarily because of the reconstruction in the 30s. As a result, the detachments of the recalcitrant highlanders of Dagestan had to send more forces to destroy it. Thus, the situation in the foothill areas became more peaceful.

The Line continued to be built up during 40-50s, and the existing fortifications were improved, either in terms of weapons or in terms of expanding the fortifications and increasing their amount. The Zakatala fortress and the Belokan fortification can be noted as the largest and most strategically important structures of that period. The Lezgi (Kakheti) line was divided into two sections and had the following form in 1846: "1) the right flank contained the posts of the Sheki district and the Belokan district with such fortifications as Nukhi city, the Kakh village, New Zakatala and Belokan settlement fortresses (from the Georgian Lagodek to the Nukhi city); 2) the left flank skirted the posts of the Kvareli section and following fortifications – Lagodekhi, Karatuban, Bezhanyan, Kvareli, Natlis-Mtsemeli, and Kodori fortification since 1847. The control of the right flank was entrusted to the head of the Belokansky district, and the left – to the commander of the Georgian linear number 16th battalion located in the Kvareli fortification" [6].

However, the Line did not fully fulfill the main functions assigned to it during the construction despite the extensive system of fortifications. During this period, the problem was not the poor staffing of military personnel and a weak material and technical base, but the fact that conducting maneuvers in this area was impractical in relation to the geographical location. This confirms the description of the geographical position of the Line given by Lieutenant-General N. Volkonsky: "The grandiose ridge stretched without significant bends for 160 miles from Barbalo Mountain to Gudur-Dag Mountain dividing the unruly communities from the Tiflis province. The slope in front of us and 15 to 20 versts deep was desolate and completely covered with dense forest; the monotony of a treeless and elongated almost straight line of the ridge was broken only a few meters by very rounded protruding peaks. The lower part of the slope was everywhere marked with a clear line; it was the outskirts of a wooded plain, which had a slight depression, and therefore was swampy almost everywhere. A strip of dry and fertile land with a width of 1.5 to 5 versts stretched along the outskirts" [6].

The administration faced the issue of restructuring the main structures of the Line, as well as changing the tactical approach to the issue of warfare.

The work on the reorganization of the Line began with the rise to power of Prince M. Vorontsov. He realized that the Line had not only strategic but also geopolitical significance. As a result, road construction began. The road could establish a connection with the rest of the region, and the mobility of troops in both directions would contribute to the complete subordination of this territory. Thus, a military-Akhtyn road was built from the city of Nukhi along the Shin gorge to the fortification of Akhta. At the same time, the construction of the road from Kakheti to Kodor Mountain was in process. The old posts and fortifications, which were in a dilapidated state, were demolished, some were built according to a new plan, and those that had lost their strategic importance were moved to more convenient places. It should be emphasized that a number of decisions were made in order to increase the defense capacity of the Line: "to put up a tower between Zakatala and Belokan, ... to resettle a village near Bezhenyan, in which the Capuchins settled, ... to cut down clearings in several places ... to establish a guard post between the fortress of Zakatala and Muganinskaya crossing"[24].

M. Vorontsov's plan suggested to move the Lezgin line higher to the mountains for better control of the peoples living there. The implementation of this plan began with the construction of the Kodor fortification. A number of towers and fortresses were built "at the foot of the main Caucasian ridge, partly on the top of the mountains, in the space from Mskhalt Mountain and Ugeltekhili to Sairmo Mountain and the Stora River" [7]. Peace on the Line was maintained by military-political methods and the capture of amanats, as in the 30s. The unruly peoples, over time, were forced to submit in the face of the constant presence of the Russian army. Thus, the temporary commander of the troops on the Lezgin cordon Line "Lieutenant-General Prince Andronikov, on February 12, 1858 reported... that the inhabitants of the Khushet society expressed their obedience to the government"[25], which secured the eastern regions of Tushetia. A number of mountain societies, which had previously expressed disobedience, desired to develop and live under the rule of the Russian Empire in the 50-60s of the 19th century. It is clear from the report of July 31, 1859 of Prince Shalikov, head of the detachment of the right flank of the Lezgin Line, Colonel and Melikov, the commander of the troops of the Lezgin Line, Major General and Cavalier that the highlanders of the regions subject to them gravitated towards Russia, that "even remote societies, such as the Keyserukh and Antsukh, sent deputies with an expression of humility and with full readiness to surrender Irib"[26]. The military frontier gradually entered the phase of the peak of development, which had a logical possibility of transformation in the socio-economic direction at that period.

Such transformations contributed to the increase in the defense capability of this section, the establishment, and the improvement of the quality of economic contacts with Georgia.

During the historical functioning of the Lezgin (Kakheti) Line, it served as a defensive line, both internal – "had a brought great peace to Kakheti and Kartli [7, p. 481,] protecting Georgian territories from the raids of the highlanders, – and external – marked geopolitical interests of Russia in the region". The line was abolished by order No. 208 (May 20, 1860) of Prince A. Baryatinsky, Field Marshal of the Caucasian Army, which stated that "the transformation of the Djar-Belokan district into Zakatala, its administration, and dependence are

24. Journal of military operations of the Chechen detachment on January 7-15, 1852 [Zhurnal voyennykh deystviy Chechenskogo otryada 7-15 yanvarya 1852 goda]. Central State Archive of the Republic of Dagestan. F. 133. Inv. 4. File 13. p. 5.

25. Left wing of the Caucasian cordon line ... . p. 147-148.

26. Left wing of the Caucasian cordon line ... p. 460.

explained in a special regulation on the administration of the Zakatala region, the Tionet and Nukhinsky districts are withdrawn from the military department and go directly to the conduct of the governors, the first to Tiflis, and the last one to Baku" [6, p. 702]. The Lezgin (Kakheti) line played a strategic and defensive role with a subsequent transformation into an economic one, promoting free trade with Georgia along the Georgian Military Highway, not only for Russia, but also for the local peoples until the end of hostilities in the Caucasus. It should be emphasized that, despite the constant work to improve the material and technical base of the Line and attempts to transfer it, it was constantly in a state of transformation and improvement, as this was required by the natural and geographical conditions of the region and the strategic tactics of warfare. The Lezgin (Kakheti) Line became the objective completion of the system of cordon fortifications in the Eastern Caucasus.

This section of the cordon of the Left flank of the Caucasian line played one of the key roles in the geopolitical assertion of the Russian Empire in the Eastern Caucasus and Transcaucasia. The studied part of the frontier zone of the Caucasian region, in the course of the historical process, which arose as a military, external frontier, was transformed and began its formation as an internal one, concentrating various elements of economic, cultural, and ethnic integration. The value of the cordon as a junction road was great both in terms of defense and in the development of trade and economic ties in the region that formed the basis for communication and incorporation of the highlanders into the Russian state, although initially the construction was planned as a border from outlanders.

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