

# All-Estate Military Draft and the Caucasus in the Russian Government Policy

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A universal conscription system was introduced in Russia in 1874. For thirteen years special rules regulating enrollment of Caucasian peoples had been discussed by the government. With regard to this issue, eight special committees, commissions and sub-commissions were formed in St Petersburg and Tiflis; a number of meetings were held; and numerous notes and projects were written. The article analyzes the process of discussion of this complex and understudied topic in the government circles and Caucasian administration in addition to numerous projects and proposals related to these rules. It is notable that encouraging the highlanders of Caucasia to serve in the Russian army, St Petersburg tried to achieve several goals: firstly, to use their experience as excellent soldiers in the service in Caucasia; secondly, to ease the burden of military service in the inner provinces of Russia, and, finally, to quickly incorporate the peoples of Caucasia into the Russian Empire. As it was crucial to preserve the fragile stability in the region, the government approached the problem of conscription in Caucasia with great caution, considering the factor of ethnic, religious, and socio-cultural diversity of the region; the unstable situation there; the proximity of hostile Turkey; and the population's fear of recruitment. The abovementioned discussions resulted in the special rules approved by Alexander III in 1886. Thus, the peoples of Transcaucasia, and "the alien population of the Terek and Kuban regions" were required to serve. The Muslim population of Caucasia was exempt from service which was replaced by a special tax.

*Keywords:* military draft, the Caucasus, charter, recruits, conscription area, family lists, armed force, benefits, military tax.

## Всесловная воинская повинность и Кавказ в правительственной политике России

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В 1874 г. в России была введена всесловная воинская повинность. В течение 13 лет в различных правительственных кабинетах обсуждался вопрос об особых правилах для жителей Кавказа, на основе которых они могли быть привлечены к исполнению

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воинской повинности. За этот период в Петербурге и Тифлисе было образовано не менее восьми специальных комитетов, комиссий и подкомиссий, проведено несколько совещаний по этому вопросу, написаны сотни страниц различных записок и проектов. В статье анализируются этапы обсуждения этого сложного и малоизученного вопроса в правительственных кругах и Кавказской администрации, а также проекты и предложения, которые были представлены в ходе многолетнего обсуждения этих правил. Отмечается, что, привлекая горцев Кавказского края к службе в русской армии, Петербург стремился достичь несколько целей: использовать их опыт отличных воинов для службы на Кавказе в привычных для них условиях; облегчить тяготы воинской повинности для населения внутренних губерний империи и, наконец, как можно быстрее инкорпорировать народы Кавказа в Российскую империю. Поскольку было важно сохранить хрупкую стабильность в крае, к решению задачи распространения воинской повинности на Кавказский край верховная власть подошла максимально осторожно. При этом принимали во внимание сразу несколько факторов: этническое, религиозное и социокультурное разнообразие региона, нестабильную обстановку в совсем недавно замиренном крае, близость враждебной Турции, а также страх населения перед рекрутчиной. Итогом многолетних дискуссий стали особые правила, утвержденные царем 28 мая 1886 г. Согласно им, народы Закавказья, «а также инородческое население Терской и Кубанской областей» стали привлекаться к отбыванию воинской повинности. При этом мусульманское население Кавказа освобождалось от поставки новобранцев в войска, для них служба в армии заменялась особым налогом.

*Ключевые слова:* воинская повинность, Кавказ, устав, новобранцы, призывной участок, посемейные списки, дружина, льготы, воинский налог.

The introduction of the universal conscription in Caucasia is one of the most complicated aspects of the military reform of 1874, which demands an intensive study of numerous documents of various government agencies from a researcher. However, the discourse on this subject has not yet taken shape. During the Soviet period there were no special publications on this topic. Some scholars in their works focused on the voluntary service of Caucasian peoples in the Russian Army and their participation in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878, provided a general outline of the introduction of universal conscription in Caucasia<sup>1</sup>. Other research works, including such a profound treatise as “Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza (konets XVIII v. — 1917)” (the History of the Peoples of Northern Caucasia (late XVIII c. — 1917)) mentioned the reform of 1874 only briefly. It should be noted that noteworthy that the problem lies in the absence of special studies dedicated to the draft of Caucasian males, in other words, conscription, which from 1874 on became universal in Russia.

At the same time, there is a body of research works providing insight into the military service of the representatives of Caucasian peoples in different military corps of the Russian Empire in the XIX — early XX century.

The situation began to change at the turn of the century when alongside with the studies outlining the military topic in the Caucasus and featuring various aspects of the formation of voluntary national corps in the Russian army, irregular and militia forces, and the service of the representatives of Caucasian peoples and certain clans<sup>2</sup> in them,

<sup>1</sup> *Megrelidze Sh. V. Zakavkazie v Russko-Turetskoi voine 1877–1878.* Tbilisi, 1972. P.107–110, 123–124; *Sanakoev M. P. Iz istorii boevogo sodruzhestva russkogo i osetinskogo narodov (XVIII — early XX centuries).* Tskhinvali, 1987. P.141–142.

<sup>2</sup> For example: *Prokudin K. A. Gorskije narody Severnogo Kavkaza na gosudarstvennoi sluzhbe v Rossiiskoi imperii (XIX century): diss. ... kand. ist. nauk.* Rostov-on-Don, 2013. P.275; *Bratsun E. V. Gortsy*

especially during the last Russo-Turkish war, the articles dwelling on the introduction of conscription in Caucasia appeared.

V. V. Lapin, a well-known expert in military history and the Caucasian war, was the first to address this issue in his review article, having summarized the problems faced by the authorities in the Caucasus region. Of these, the most significant one was determined by a “general anti-imperial trend” demonstrated by the region, by Caucasians’ negative attitudes towards the draft, which they considered to be something “much more frightening” than other taxes and obligations, and by the fact that the “reasons which induced Caucasian people to fly to arms (self-defense, revenge for a kinsman, the improvement of social status, the seizure of booty, the role of a friend or a liegeman, the sacred war with the infidels) didn’t accord with the principles which formed the basis of the regular army”<sup>3</sup>. M. S. Arsanukaeva in her works covers the state-legal aspects of North Caucasian mountain peoples’ eligibility for enlistment, especially in the Kuban and Terskaia provinces. She also places high emphasis on the military tax and the fee, paid by Caucasian Muslims to avoid “actual” military service<sup>4</sup>.

To sum up, the introduction of conscription in Caucasia still remains a largely unexplored topic, as is the history of the universal conscription in the Russian Empire in general. Various aspects of its regional and national peculiarities, including Caucasia, require an in-depth study, careful reading of numerous reports and suggestions (“concerns” in the official jargon of the XIX century) and discussions on these issues at different levels of the imperial hierarchy of power. This is especially important as some works contain inaccuracies and mistakes. For example, it is claimed that according to the Manifesto of January 1, 1874, “the military service regulations applied to all the peoples of Caucasia without exception”<sup>5</sup>. In actual fact, under the Ukase to the Ruling (Supreme) Senate of January 1, 1874, the new Charter of military service did not apply to some areas and “population groups”, including Transcaucasia and the “alien population of Northern Caucasia”<sup>6</sup>. Another study argues that “in 1882, carrying out the order of Emperor Alexander III about an urgent need to subject the local population of Caucasia to proper military service,” Adjutant General prince A. I. Dondukov-Korsakov, the Caucasian military district commander, set up regional and provincial commissions to deal with this matter<sup>7</sup>. In reality, such commissions came into service only in 1883.

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Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza na voinskoj sluzhbe Rossii (late XVIII — XIX centuries): diss. ... kand. ist. nauk. Krasnodar, 2014. P. 26; *Egorova V. P.* Uchastie dagestanskikh polkov vo vnesnepoliticheskikh aktsiakh Rossii v Srednei Azii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka (po materialam E. I. Kozubskogo) // *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza na gosudarstvennoj sluzhbe Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost.* Makhachkala, 2018. P. 106–113.

<sup>3</sup> *Lapin V. V.* Vvedenie vsesoslovnoi voinskoj povinnosti na Kavkaze (konets XIX — nachalo XX vv.) // *Vlast’, obshchestvo i reformy v Rossii: istoriia, istochniki, istoriografii.* St Petersburg, 2007. P. 505.

<sup>4</sup> *Arsanukaeva M. S.*: 1) Proekty vvedeniia voinskoj povinnosti na Severnom Kavkaze (70–80-e gg. XIX veka) // *Aktualnye problemy rossiiskogo prava.* 2009. No. 2. P. 91–98; 2) *Otbyvanie voinskoj povinnosti gortsami Severnogo Kavkaza (vtoraia polovina XIX — nachalo XX vv.)* // *Pravo i gosudarstvo: teoriia i praktika.* 2015. No. 12 (132). P. 16–19.

<sup>5</sup> *Alieva S. I., Asker A.* Voinskoe delo i musulmanskie narody Severnogo Kavkaza // *Sovremennaia nauchnaia mysl’.* 2013. No. 3. P. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Ustav o voinskoj povinnosti 1874 goda. S izmeneniami, dopolneniami, raz’iasneniami i nastaveniami k nemu po 1-e ianvaria 1879 goda.* Moscow, 1879. P. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Arsanukaeva M. S.* Proekty vvedeniia voinskoj povinnosti na Severnom Kavkaze (70–80-e gg. XIX veka). P. 93.

The prospected draft of the population of Northern Caucasia and Transcaucasia into the Russian army had been under the consideration of Petersburg authorities since the period of the “taming” of Northern Caucasia and the wars with Turkey and Persia. The government used the resources of local population both to achieve “military ends” and to “ensure internal security”<sup>8</sup>. V. V. Lapin points out that “of all types of cooperation between the local population and the tsarist authorities the most widespread was the formation of national irregular military units in accordance with the terms of the treaties, which granted Russian citizenship to princes and free communities”<sup>9</sup>. During the wars with Persia and Turkey emergency voluntary corps, composed of the citizens of Transcaucasia (Georgian and Armenian squads), provided great assistance to the Russian Army. Moreover, the squads of Ossetins, Azerbaijanis, Kabardinians, Chechens, Ingushs, and all the peoples of Dagestan were also part of these auxiliary troops. In official documents such troops, made up of indigenous people, were referred to as militia. At the height of the Crimean War the overall strength of the Caucasian militia amounted to 30 000 people<sup>10</sup>.

As the peoples of Caucasia proved themselves to be excellent soldiers, the authorities spared no efforts to engage them in the military service. Thus, on April 5, 1864, Alexander II approved a Statute of the Caucasian committee “on the rights of the indigenous people of Caucasia who have voluntarily joined the regular army”. It was emphasized that the above-mentioned rules were introduced “only for a trial and applied to those indigenous people who” might have wished to serve the Empire outside the Caucasus region<sup>11</sup>.

On November 4, 1870, it was followed by the imperial command of Alexander II “on the extension of conscription to all estates in the state”<sup>12</sup>. From that moment on, the plans of the authorities to introduce a universal conscription in Russia were made public. In October 1871, governor-general of Caucasia and commander-in-chief of the Caucasian Army Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich summoned senior army leaders of the region to Tiflis to discuss this issue and suggested that all of them had to submit in writing the ideas raised at the meeting<sup>13</sup>.

In early January 1872, commander of the Terskaia province Adjutant General M. T. Loris-Melikov submitted such a report to the grand duke having expressed his concerns in it and pointing out that the introduction of conscription in the “Caucasian region among indigenous tribes would be... a measure hardly advisable and for the time being perhaps not even safe”. According to him, the first thing to be done was to decide whether to pursue the reform straight away or to pave the way for it, “subtly” accustoming the “population to the new idea of the army service”. M. T. Loris-Melikov’s arguments stemmed from the cer-

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<sup>8</sup> O poriadke primeneiia pravil ustava o voinskoj povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaziia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA). F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Lapin V. V. *Armiiia Rossii v Kavkazskoi voine XVIII–XIX vekov*. St Petersburg, 2008. P. 337.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* P. 341.

<sup>11</sup> Vysochaishe utverzhdennoe Polozhenie o pravakh Kavkazskikh tuzemtsev, postupaiushchikh po dobrovolnomu zhelaniiu na sluzhbu v reguliarnye voiska. Polozhenie Kavkazskogo Komiteta, Vysochaishe utverzhdennoe 5 apreliia 1864 goda, ob’iavlennoe Senatu Voennym Ministrom // Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii (PSZ). Coll. 2. Vol. 39. Sect. 1. 1864. No. 40743. St Petersburg, 1867. P. 306–307.

<sup>12</sup> Ob uchrezhdenii pri Voennom Ministerstve Komissii dlia razrabotki i sostavleniia Polozhenii o lichnoi voennoi povinnosti v Imperii i Tsarstve Polskom i o zapasnykh, mestnykh i rezervnykh voiskakh i Gosudarstvennom opolchenii // PSZ. Coll. 2. Vol. 45. Sect. 2. 1870. No. 48871. St Petersburg, 1874. P. 420.

<sup>13</sup> Chernovik dokladnoi zapiski Loris-Melikova namestniku na Kavkaze po voprosu primeneiia k naseleniiu Kavkazskogo namestnichestva poveleniia ot 4/XI-1870 goda “O rasprostraneniі priamogo uchastiia v voennoi povinnosti na vse sosloviia gosudarstva” // RGIA. F. 866. Op. 1. D. 56. L. 1.

tainty that the government would have to deal with masses of “unruly and still uncivilized people”<sup>14</sup>, who, besides, were afraid of recruitment and hated it. He claimed that it was the hatred of the locals towards the draft that triggered the successful propagation of Muridism in Northern Caucasia. Despite the intertribal and religious animosity, the attempt of forcible recruitment could have resulted in the highlanders’ joining forces against imperial authorities, in defense of the “privilege they particularly valued” promised by various senior officials. The implications of such a “universal movement” of Caucasian peoples against recruitment were difficult to foresee. Although M. T. Loris-Melikov was sure that Russia would never lose any of its acquisitions in Caucasia, “obtained at the cost of many sacrifices made in the course of 70 years”, he deeply feared the external implications of the resistance of mountain peoples, “substantial difficulties”, as he called them which “could have been exploited by unfriendly European powers”. Thus, the author of the paper believed that the success of the reform largely depended on the peaceful atmosphere for a few years (“at least five years”), both inside and outside the region, as in the case of a war most of the Caucasian army, which was unable to guarantee safety in the area, would have to be transferred to the borders of the Empire.

As for the intended results of the reforms, a “drastic and ill-timed measure”, M. T. Loris-Melikov was openly skeptical about it and believed that “the game was not worth the candle”, as the preliminary estimates of the Ministry of War indicated that Christian and Muslim populations of Caucasia taken together could not amount to more than 4000 recruits. He had no doubts that Caucasian recruits, scattered over different army units, unaccustomed to the new climate and unusual way of life and, what is more, consumed with hatred towards the service in the regular military forces, “in moral terms... would make up the most unreliable segment of the army” and, in addition, increased the number of fugitives<sup>15</sup>.

M. T. Loris-Melikov, who did not question the obligation of the population of Caucasia to protect the state “against the enemies and perform military service in times of peace”, came up with his own solution to this problem making reference to the already existing units — the Dagestanskii and Kutaiskii (Dagestan and Kutaisi) irregular cavalry regiments and the Georgian infantry squad. In a nut shell, M. T. Loris-Melikov’s suggestions came down to the following: to form Caucasian irregular cavalry and infantry units taking into consideration the “nature and propensities” of the population; to teach them the art of war in the same manner as in Cossack units uttering all the drill commands in the Russian language; to recruit “both native and Russian officers”; to maintain the same order of promoting to military ranks and awarding pensions and decorations as in other military units<sup>16</sup>.

The commander of the Terskaia province calculated that after 15 years of the operation of the new Charter there would be 20 000 Caucasians serving in the army and about 40 000 transferred to the reserve. He adhered to the opinion that in times of peace, native army forces were to be used for protecting “message deliveries, guard maintenance, escorting of mail and transport when necessary, guard maintenance in prisons, and, finally, transfer of prisoners”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. L. 2–4 ob.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. L. 3–7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. L. 7 ob. — 9 ob.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. L. 11.

The paper of Loris-Melikov provided the basis for the report by governor-general of Caucasia Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich to the minister of war. The governor-general suggested putting off the introduction of conscription until lasting peace and stability were established in the region and recommended starting a gradual military training of the citizens of Caucasia to prepare them for the service in the regular army. One of the advocates of such a cautious incremental approach to this task was popular publicist R. A. Fadeev<sup>18</sup>.

Historical literature holds an opinion that minister of war D. A. Miliutin “was a staunch supporter of the standardization of the service rules for all the imperial subjects since he considered the army to be a means of education and russification of the population”<sup>19</sup>. Meanwhile, this position needs clarification. As an officer who had fought in Caucasia for more than 10 years D. A. Miliutin was well aware of the customs of highlanders and allowed for the possibility of their service in special local army units, in accordance with their “natural tendencies”<sup>20</sup>. In the course of time his view on this issue underwent certain changes. This can be confirmed by an entry in his diary. In May 1883, D. A. Miliutin, who had already retired, had a rendezvous with Emperor Alexander III. During their twenty-minute conversation they touched upon the “sensitive issue of the implementation of the Statute of conscription with regard to the local population”. The former minister of war wrote in his diary that he “had drawn the attention of His Majesty to the risks of excessively harsh manner [measures] of handling this issue in favor of gradual approach”<sup>21</sup>.

On January 1, a new Charter of military service was approved. As it has already been mentioned, the Charter did not apply — temporarily or permanently — to the peoples of Northern Caucasia and Transcaucasia, central Asia, and the north of Siberia due to their small numbers. From that moment on, the authorities engaged in the practical task of the compilation of the Statute of the subjection of Caucasian local population to universal conscription. To achieve this, it was necessary to consider the following basic factors: Caucasia was the home to two million males, of these — 800 000 were of Georgian and Armenian origin, practiced Christianity, and for more than 50 years had had strong connections with Russia not through “the force of arms, but through voluntary submission”. The authorities believed it was possible to recruit around 600 000 Caucasian Muslims, albeit belonging to Sunni and Shia denominations and “separated by irreconcilable sectarian strife”, on the same terms as the Muslims of the Crimea, Volga region, and Ural, who had already joined the Russian army. Finally, half a million of Muslim highlanders were of “great value for the army due to their militant disposition, recent experience of warfare, and aggressiveness”, but at the same time — the least reliable “politically”, “having a low level of civic consciousness and culture”<sup>22</sup>.

The first move was made in September 1874, when the authorities of Caucasia presented their “preliminary considerations”. Colonel of the General Staff Kraevich collected relevant information and prepared a report, which by the order of Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich was referred to minister of war Miliutin and “the governors of different areas of the region”. The representatives of local administration did not agree on this issue. With

<sup>18</sup> *Lapin V. V. Vvedenie vsesoslovnoi voinskoj povinnosti na Kavkaze (konets XIX — nachalo XX vv.)*. P. 506.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* P. 504.

<sup>20</sup> *Megrelidze Sh. V. Zakavkaz'e v Russko-Turetskoj voine 1877–1878*. P. 108.

<sup>21</sup> *Miliutin D. A. Dnevnik. 1882–1890*. Moscow, 2010. P. 84.

<sup>22</sup> *O privlechenii k voinskoj povinnosti naseleniia Kavkazskogo kraia // RGIA. F. 573. Op. 6. D. 7277. L. 3–3 ob.*

regard to conscription some of them suggested acting decisively, “adopting effective measures”. Others, on the opposite, taking into account negative attitudes of mountain-dwellers towards regular military service, called for caution and advocated “considerable deviation” from the Charter<sup>23</sup>. In order to discuss the arising differences and develop a general view on the situation Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich summoned all the representatives of the Caucasian administration and a member of the Council of State, Adjutant General Prince G. D. Orbeliani. The outcome of the discussion was passed on to minister of war D. A. Miliutin, who in turn submitted his “ideas” to the emperor.

On September 3, 1875, the emperor granted his approval, having supported the champions of moderate and gradual approach, and pointed out that the implementation of the “universal conscription” had to be harmonized with the specificities and diverse interests of each people of Caucasia and their attitudes to military service in order “to avoid, if possible, any upheaval and disturbance of peace in the region”. The draft of local population into military service had to be carried out within the “native military units formed on permanent or temporary basis”. These special rules were of “provisional nature”, meant to allow for a gradual transition to the general rules of military service established in the empire. Finally, for reasons of economy, the emperor emphasized that the implementation of the Charter in Caucasia was expected “not to entail” any further expenses<sup>24</sup>.

To develop a detailed reform project in accordance with the imperial orders Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich summoned to the city of Tiflis a special committee composed of representatives of local administration and senior officers in the autumn of 1876. The decision was made to announce publicly the main principles of conscription in Caucasia to reassure the native population and to stop the spread of various “false rumors and groundless fears”<sup>25</sup>. However, the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 forced them to suspend the work on the project. During the war numerous militia (irregular) cavalry and infantry units were formed from Caucasian residents on a voluntary basis. Recruitment to irregular cavalry regiments, divisions, and infantry squads in general were regarded sympathetically. Thus, Dagestan, where it was planned to form only one regiment, happened to provide enough volunteers to fill three regiments. A large number of people also volunteered for the army in Georgia and Terskaia province<sup>26</sup>. In total, during the war 251 cavalry and infantry hundreds (military units) were formed from the natives of Caucasia, all together more than 39 000 people<sup>27</sup>. All in all, according to the estimations of Soviet and pre-Revolutionary scholars, who used to study this issue, around 42 000 citizens of Caucasia and Transcaucasia participated in the war of 1877–1878 years<sup>28</sup>.

A lot of sources focus on the fighting merits of Caucasian soldiers, their service to the Tsar and fatherland<sup>29</sup>. However, in the spring of 1877 a revolt broke out in Dagestan and

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<sup>23</sup> O poriadke primeneniia pravil ustava o voinskoi povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaz'ia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // RGIA. F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 66.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. L. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. L. 66 ob.

<sup>26</sup> *Megrelidze Sh. V. Zakavkaz'e v Russko-Turetskoi voine 1877–1878.* P. 112.

<sup>27</sup> O poriadke primeneniia pravil ustava o voinskoi povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaz'ia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // RGIA. F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 65 ob.

<sup>28</sup> *Akiev Kh. A. Narody Severnogo Kavkaza v russko-turetskoi voine 1877–1878.* Magas, 2009. P. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid; *Sanakoev M. P. Iz istorii boevogo sodruzhestva russkogo i osetinskogo narodov (XVIII — early XX); Idrisov M. M., Magomeddadaev A. M. Dagestantsy na sluzhbe Rossii v Russko-turetskoi voine 1877–1878 // Narody Severnogo Kavkaza na gosudarstvennoi sluzhbe Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost. Makhachkala, 2018. P. 114–120.*

Chechnia. It was so powerful that some Russian garrisons in Dagestan were besieged. By the autumn of 1877 the forces who had come to their rescue scattered the rebels over the villages and defeated them in quick succession<sup>30</sup>.

The mutiny of the mountain peoples forced the authorities of St Petersburg to adjust their policies on the issue. On the conclusion of hostilities Governor-General Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich acknowledged that it would be more important first to “draft a new plan of the organization of the native forces” and only after its approval — to establish commissions in the districts and provinces of Caucasia to develop regulations on conscription, “in accordance with the specific features of each of the native tribes”<sup>31</sup>.

In early 1879, Major-General M. Ia. Shalikov asked local authorities whether it was reasonable to recruit “Russian or other non-native” people to the regular forces of Transcaucasia on the same basis and under the same rules as had been set for the indigenous population of the region. This also applied to the service in militia forces. Having obtained the data he needed, Shalikov wrote a note with detailed information on the number and composition of the native troops, “the order of staffing and the related costs”<sup>32</sup>. In the January of 1889, Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich submitted a special report to the minister of war based on the above-mentioned figures. According to it, it was proposed to form 11 infantry squads and 12 cavalry hundreds from the citizens of Transcaucasia and the highlanders of Northern Caucasia, totaling 6060 people. In times of peace, these forces were expected to serve “as cadres to furnish cavalry and infantry militia regiments in wartime”. These were to be reinforced by “hunters” (volunteers), aged 17–30 years, as well as by recruits drafted by lot to the active service for the term of two years. Other draftees were to be summoned annually for month-long military training organized by the above-mentioned units. Taking into account local conditions, the “multi-tribal” and “diverse” composition of the population of Caucasia, the grand prince suggested “considerable deviations from the general rules of the Charter”, granting additional concessions and deferments due to financial situation, education, and occupation. Alongside with other measures, it was proposed to offer local communities the freedom of choice with regard to “who would serve and who would go into reserves”; and to let the draftees draw lots not in the administrative centres but “in their own communities”<sup>33</sup>.

The suggestions of the governor-general of Caucasia were also considered at the Main Department of the Cossack troops and approved with minor revisions. On May 31, 1880, the emperor approved the “ideas” of the Caucasian authorities, taking into account the opinion and comments of the minister of war. In particular, D. A. Miliutin objected to the fact that the Statute of conscription in the region would be approved by the governor-general of Caucasia, as it ran contrary to the “common spirit” of legislation and the order of consideration and adoptions of additions to the Charter of 1874. In early 1881, Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich with the purpose of the “comprehensive development of the project” ordered to establish a special committee, composed of nine different senior officials of the region and chaired by his assistant Adjutant General Prince L. I. Melikov,

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<sup>30</sup> Tkachenko D. S., Kolosovskaia T. A. *Voенно-politicheskaia istoriia Severnogo Kavkaza XVI–XIX: fakty, sobytia, liudi*. Stavropol, 2009. P. 266–267.

<sup>31</sup> О порiadке primeneniia pravil ustava o voinskoi povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaziia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // RGIA. F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 1 ob.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. L. 67.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. L. 1 ob. — 2.



in Tiflis. At the first meeting of the committee a three-member sub-commission was established. Later in the same year it conducted several sessions. The second meeting of the committee took place on January 29, 1882. By that time the posts of the governor-general of Caucasia and the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian army had been abolished. Instead of these two, new posts were introduced on November 22, 1881: those of the head of the civil administration of Caucasia and of the commander of the Caucasian military district. On January 1, 1882, by the imperial order Adjutant General Prince Aleksandr Mikhailovich Dondukov-Korsakov was appointed to both posts. Within 5 days after his appointment, the Ministry of war sought his assessment of this matter “as of a person with experience and a Caucasian veteran”<sup>34</sup>, accentuating a “pressing need for drafting the local population to a proper military service”<sup>35</sup>.

After six months on August 14, 1882, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov submitted a special note to the minister of war, in which he had given a detailed account of his view on the matter, which differed markedly from the plan presented by Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich. Thus, instead of regular infantry squads and cavalry hundreds the new governor of the Caucasian region suggested the formation of native squads and cavalry regiments “as parts of *plastun* (patrol and intelligence) battalions and cavalry regiments of the Terskaia Cossack army”. These units were expected to join “cavalry and infantry divisions located in Caucasia, the Caucasian rifle brigade, and the Terskaia and Kuban Cossack brigades”. Anticipating that the service rules for Christians and Muslims would differ, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov believed that it would be “utterly uncomfortable” for them to serve in one military unit and came up with the idea of forming separate units for the representatives of these religions in Caucasia. Moreover, he recommended creating a special cavalry regiment composed of the non-native population of the region (mostly of Russian sect members and German colonists) which could serve as reserve forces for the guard cordon at the border with Persia in Lenkoranskii district. The term of active service in regular militia units for those recruited by lot had to be extended to three years. According to Dondukov-Korsakov, that was the minimum period sufficient for the militiamen to receive necessary military training and learn the Russian language. A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov suggested establishing local commissions aimed at developing the reform. In order to “reassure the native population and to avoid the spread of various false rumors and groundless fears” governors and heads of provinces were recommended to announce to rules of the military service to the population<sup>36</sup>.

Once again extensive correspondence was started between the regional administration and St Petersburg. In March 1883, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov received a “humble” report of the General Staff “About the application of the rules of the Charter of military service to the population of the Caucasian and Transcaucasian regions”. The document included the suggestions of A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, and the opinion of the General Staff. The military department emphasized the significance of universal conscription as a “binding element” of the “political unity of the State”. According to the General Staff, the release (in the text “exemption”) of some

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<sup>34</sup> *Volkonskii N. A.* Biografiia general-adiutanta, generala ot kavalerii, kniazia Aleksandra Mikhailovicha Dondukova-Korsakova. Tiflis, 1883. P. 1.

<sup>35</sup> О порiadке primeneniia pravil ustava o voinskoj povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaziia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // RGIA. F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 67 ob.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. L. 2–2 ob.

“segment of the population” from this “universal sacred duty” would legitimize separatism, grant preferential treatment to the native population, and “jeopardize the amalgamation of different nationalities into one”. Realizing that “such exemption” from conscription would inevitably result in the “increasing pressure on the rest of the population of Russia”, the military department feared reasonable “complaints” from the residents of central provinces of the Empire.

In addition to the intended enhancement of the army by fresh “excellent forces”, their military enrolment had “important political implications”. Recruiting a “considerable number of mountain-dwellers” into the army, the authorities planned to clear them out of the most unstable areas of the region, thus, securing peace and tranquility in Northern Caucasia. Moreover, such a measure was likely to give an opportunity to reduce the number of regular troops accommodated there by using the spare military units “against the external enemy”.

The General Staff expected all this to “help strengthen the imperial power and law and order in Northern Caucasia” as well as to “merge Caucasia with the rest of the country and bring the aliens of Caucasia to the level of the indigenous Russian population”. The establishment of a “separate native army” and allowing preferential treatment to the highlanders with regard to the military service, by contrast, could have adverse effect: “to intensify the isolation of this remote area” from the rest of Russia. Thus, being politically motivated, the General Staff made a conclusion: the closer the rules of conscription in Caucasia would be to those applied all over Russia, “the sooner Caucasia would become a Russian territory not only by name”. It was expected that the transition to common “rules and provisions” of the military service would be gradual, and the adherence to special rules — temporary<sup>37</sup>.

For example, the military department found it appropriate not to form new units composed of native citizens, but to enroll them “in the existing regular troops on general grounds”. Although the department agreed with the arguments of Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich and A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, it believed such a step to be untimely due to the “cultural background” of Caucasian tribes, “different language, religion, food, clothes, and a very low level of civic development” and also expressed concerns about a prospective “undisguised resistance” of highlanders, particularly, the Muslims. For the same reasons (difference with the “Russian population in customs, language, food, and clothes”), the General Staff suggested the draft of Transcaucasian Christians (the Georgians, the Imeritins, the Mingrelians, the Ghurians, and the Armenians) into special military units. Their allocation to ordinary regular troops was considered also “inappropriate” because they were supposed to serve for three years, while most of their counterparts “of the lowest ranks born in the inland areas of Russia” had to slog for five years. Such a situation would definitely breach a principle of justice pertaining to equal terms of service for all the people in the empire.

At the same time, the General Staff placed high emphasis “on the imperative need” that the special units where Caucasians had to serve “at the beginning” had nothing to do with the “native army” and “remained *Russian regular* units”, as many others.

However, in contrast to the Caucasian authorities, the officials of St Petersburg believed that it was impossible to form such units simply by merging “native units into bri-

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<sup>37</sup> О порядке применения правил устава о воинской повинности к населению Закавказья и к инородцам Северного Кавказа // РГИА. Ф. 1292. Оп. 4. Д. 191. Л. 4 об.

gades, divisions, and corps together with the Russian forces and under one commander". Russian non-commissioned officers, lance corporals, and representatives of lower ranks were expected to serve in the special units together with Caucasians. Thus, "*the Russian cadre*" could become a kind of an "interlink" between the natives and the army, an "intermediary" for them with regard to "all the aspects of military training and the Russian language". In such units the ratio between Russian and Caucasian soldiers depended on the civic consciousness of the latter and the "level of their loyalty and allegiance to the government"<sup>38</sup>.

Apart from this, the General Staff considered it fair to extend "similar privileges and concessions" to the "non-native population" as well. As the document states, "otherwise, if on the same territories some people were allowed to enjoy privileges and some — were not, such an order would be abnormal"<sup>39</sup>.

Eventually, on the basis of all the above-mentioned "considerations" the General Staff presented its opinion consisting of 18 paragraphs. Caucasian population was intended to be recruited from 1884 with all the exemptions, deferments and privileges with the exception of the residents of Karskaia and Batumskaia provinces, the Black Sea district and Sukhumi district, who "had not yet recovered from the bitter consequences of the Turkish war". They had been exempted from the military service until January 1, 1887. It was agreed not to recruit "until further notice" the citizens of the region beyond the Caspian Sea "who had recently been incorporated into Russia". In order to draw up the provisions on the "privileges and exemptions from the common rules of the Charter" of 1874 the administrative centers of the Caucasian region had to establish the commissions "as soon as possible" including in them, if necessary, some local residents. As it has already been mentioned, Caucasian recruits were assigned to serve for three years. This point did not require any amendments to the Charter as it had already been provided for the right of the military department to "transfer to reserve the representatives of the lower ranks" before the termination date of service set earlier (article 21)<sup>40</sup>. One more concession to the citizens of Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasia was the decision to halve the annual number of draftees. Finally, the General Staff proposed to assign Caucasian draftees to the troops of the Caucasian military region so that they could serve close to home "enlisting them, if possible, into the units located in the same provinces and areas where they came from"<sup>41</sup>.

Emperor Alexander III approved of the suggestions of the General Staff as temporary, transitional solutions and entrusted the commanders of the troops of the Caucasian military region with the task of drafting the rules on the extension of the universal conscription law to the population of Caucasia by December 1, 1883<sup>42</sup>. In this regard, the authorities of Caucasia ordered to issue a special announcement which had to be translated into the languages of the native tribes, to be printed and made public. Special commissions, chaired by the governors of provinces and heads of territories were established to discuss all the relevant issues: in Tiflis (for Tiflis and Kutaisi provinces, Sukhumi region

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. L. 5 ob. — 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. L. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ustav o voinskoi povinnosti Vysochaishe utverzhdenyi 1 ianvaria 1874 // Reformy Aleksandra II. Moscow, 1998. P. 340.

<sup>41</sup> O poriadke primeneniia pravil ustava o voinskoi povinnosti k naseleniiu Zakavkaziia i k inorodtsam Severnogo Kavkaza // RGIA. F. 1292. Op. 4. D. 191. L. 9–9 ob.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. L. 1.

and Zakatalskii region), Elizavetpol (for Elizavetpol and Baku provinces), Erivani, Temir-Khan-Shure, Vladikavkaz, and Stavropol<sup>43</sup>. The commissions were obliged to inform the General Staff about their work every month.

In April 1883, head of the administration of Caucasia Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov set up a special commission “for preliminary consultations” chaired by the head of the central administration Lieutenant-General D. S. Staroselskii. The Commission (among whose members were Lieutenant-General V. N. Trotskii, the head of the Transcaucasian military region, his assistant Major-General M. M. Tomilov, senior officials and governors of Caucasia) conducted four meetings and the conclusions drawn by it formed the framework for further discussion which took place on April 28 at the Committee led by Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov himself. The highest echelon of the military, all the governors and senior officials of the region took part in it — all together 16 people. A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov “gave them all a chance to speak out”. The records of the discussion were handed over to local commissions for further consideration. Contrary to the previous instructions, the members of the Committee, as the members of the consultative Commissions before them, did not dare inform the population about the conscription. This step was considered untimely due to the concerns about the “hyper-emotional” “native population” of Caucasia, which allegedly could easily fall prey to “malicious” provocateurs “who could spread rumors, stir up discontent and fear, thus giving rise to “undesirable, disastrous consequences”<sup>44</sup>.

In the early May of 1883, Commander-in-chief of Caucasia Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov in his “special secret letters” attracted the attention of governors and heads of the territories of the region, who supervised the commissions, to the political aspect of the issue. The prince appealed to their prudence and asked them not to conduct a population census of any kind in order to estimate the number of draftees, to “store in the utmost secrecy” a copy of the report of the General Staff and to inform him candidly and “as often as possible” about the local population’s response (“especially about the reaction of Muslims”) to the forthcoming conscription during the commissions. Wishing to have precise and detailed information about the “attitudes of the people”, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov provided instructions to his subordinates: “Both in style and presentation your reports should look like private letters, but strictly confidential and addressed to me, marked: “to be delivered in person”<sup>45</sup>.

All the proposals sent to the central Committee by local commissions were put together into one “collection of documents”. In order to study it and prepare the draft version of the law on conscription in Caucasia Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov established a sub-commission on the basis of the Central Committee headed by commander of the native troops of the Caucasian military region Major-General V. V. Gurchin the first.

The next stage of the development and preparation of the law were two special meetings in Tiflis on September 28 and 30, 1883. At the end of the same year, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov set up a special central committee “aimed at the thorough review of the work of local commissions”. He presided over all the meetings, among whose participants were the administrative elites of Caucasia and the military district, namely: assistant of

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<sup>43</sup> О порядке применения правил устава о воинской повинности к населению Закавказья и к инородцам Северного Кавказа // РГИА. Ф. 1292. Оп. 4. Д. 191. Л. 68.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Л. 68 об.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Л. 68 об. — 69.

the Head of the civil administration in Caucasia Adjutant-General S. A. Sheremet'ev, commander of the Caucasian military district headquarters Lieutenant-General V. N. Trotskii, various officials, governors of provinces and cities, corps commanders, division commanders, brigade commanders as well as several honorary mountain dwellers of the Terskaia province — all together 28 people. In October 1883, Major-General Nikolai Ivanovich Petrov, a recently appointed governor of Astrakhan and a *nakaznoi* (appointed by the authorities) ataman of the Astrakhan Cossack army, was seconded to the central Committee by the Ministry of War. In the military circles he had a reputation of an experienced professional, a connoisseur of the Charter of 1874, as well as of all the amendments and supplements to it, a person who was directly involved in the extension of the conscription to the alien population of different territories of Russia<sup>46</sup>.

On November 18, 1883, the invited “officers, mountain dwellers renowned for their service in the Russian Army and commitment to the government, namely: Major-General Kaisum Anzorov (a Kabardinian), Aru Chermoev (a Chechen) and Prince Gamzaev (a Kumyk)”, spoke at the meeting in Tiflis. M. S. Arsanukaeva in her article, drawing on the documents from the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, gave a detailed account of their view on the application of the Charter of military service to the Muslim population of Terskaia province. They generally agreed on the following: mountain dwellers “except in a few cases” were not ready to perform military service in accordance with the prospective Statute since after the Caucasian war “within just twenty years or so they have had to undergo unprecedented reforms which usually need centuries of preparation”. “Give us some time, — claimed General Anzorov, — for our people to get used to all this, to get settled, and after that they will be able to accept calmly all the newly introduced obligations and even the most hateful one, the conscription. The general pointed out that at the time the mountain peoples “could not put up with the idea of the compulsory rather than voluntary conscription”, with the idea of a service, “modeled on a regular troops pattern <...> on a par with other subjects of the empire”. There was also a warning that highlanders “concerned about their identity” might choose to relocate to Turkey.

Generals Anzorov and Chermoev and Major Gamzaev believed that in order to introduce the conscription successfully in Terskaia province it was necessary to let all those who wished it (“the restless ones”) move to Turkey and to extend the conscription to other mountain peoples without “any temporary exemptions from the Charter”<sup>47</sup>.

The generals touched upon a very sensitive issue for both the mountain dwellers and the central authority — the problem of hijra — the relocation of some peoples of Northern Caucasia outside the country, above all, to Turkey. The topic of hijra has been the focus of many studies of the researchers of Caucasus<sup>48</sup>. This problem was first faced by the Russian authorities after the conquest of the North Caucasus in the 1850s–1860s. “The reasons for this exodus of the mountain dwellers to Turkey were numerous and intricately intertwined; these included some external and internal political interests of the Russian

<sup>46</sup> По отношению военного министра о порядке применения правил устава о воинской повинности к населению Закавказия и к инородцам Северного Кавказа // РГИА. Ф. 1292. Оп. 4. Д. 190. Л. 1 об. — 2 об.

<sup>47</sup> Arsanukaeva M. S. Proekty vvedeniia voinskoj povinnosti na Severnom Kavkaze (70–80-e gg. XIX veka). P. 94–95.

<sup>48</sup> For example: Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaia borba narodov Severnogo Kavkaza i problemy mukhadzhirstva. Materialy Vsesoiuznoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii, 24–26 October, 1990. Načhik, 1994; Ibragimova Z. Kh. Emigratsiia chechentsev v Turtsiiu (60–70 gg. XIX v.). Moscow, 2000.

government, the specific features of the development of mountain dwellers' communities, religious discontent etc." The authorities were eager to "dispose" of the unruly persons and repopulate the vacated lands with the Cossacks and Russian settlers. The Turkish authorities, in turn, actively campaigned for the relocation among the highlanders of Caucasia: spreading leaflets, calling for "Muslim brotherhood", promising various benefits and privileges, and threatening the remaining people with serfdom, forced Christianization, and recruitment<sup>49</sup>.

The relocation of highlanders to Turkey ended in real tragedy. Thus, "only in the Kuban region by 1876 only 90 thousand mountain dwellers had remained out of a million"<sup>50</sup>. Many emigrants died en route of hunger, cold, and diseases. However, when they reached Turkey, a "country of their coreligionists", they suffered enhanced hardships through social and national oppression. Some of them "went broke, sold themselves and their families into slavery, or were forced to join the army (although the Turkish government had promised a 20-year exemption from service)"<sup>51</sup>. Eventually, emigrants-highlanders in large numbers applied to the Russian authorities for the permission to return to their homeland, but their requests were turned down. Despite the bans, they sought all possible illegal ways to cross the Turkish border.

It does not seem possible to estimate the number of these migrants. According to official statistics within the period from 1858 to 1865, 492 000 194 people moved to Turkey. However, experts believe these figures to have been much higher as many mountain dwellers left the country without the knowledge and approval of the authorities<sup>52</sup>. In total 1 800 000 people are thought to have left Caucasia. The prevailing view in western historiography is that the number of Caucasian migrants in the process of hijra in this period exceeded one million<sup>53</sup>. It is even more difficult to count the number of mountain dwellers who returned from Turkey. It is commonly believed that by the mid-1870 almost a half of those who had previously moved there came back home<sup>54</sup>.

The final meeting of the Committee, which took place on November 21, 1883, focused on the issue of hijra. The authorities of Caucasia had second thoughts about the advisability of the introduction of conscription for "belligerent tribes of Northern Caucasia and Dagestan" and the benefits of a well-trained military force "amidst quite violent and overzealous population". It was already clear that one of the negative impacts of this step would be the determination of highlanders to move to Turkey. In this regard, the issues which were within the competence of the tsarist authorities were brought up at the meeting, for example: whether it was advisable to give the permission to all who wished to emigrate or to introduce some limitation, for example, to issue passports and exit permits only to "the most unruly and unreliable segment of population". There was also one more option — a ban on "any emigration". Another set of issues addressed the measures

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<sup>49</sup> Tkachenko D. S., Kolosovskaia T. A. Voенно-politicheskaia istoriia Severnogo Kavkaza XVI–XIX vv. P. 251–253.

<sup>50</sup> Kумыков Т. Kh. Mukhadzhirstvo v istorii gorskikh narodov Severnogo Kavkaza // Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaia borba narodov Severnogo Kavkaza i problemy mukhadzhirstva. Nalchik, 1994. P. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Tkachenko D. S., Kolosovskaia T. A. Voенно-politicheskaia istoriia Severnogo Kavkaza XVI–XIX vv. P. 258.

<sup>52</sup> Chekmenev S. A. Iz istorii pereseleniia gortsev v Turtsiiu // Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaia bor'ba narodov Severnogo Kavkaza i problemy mukhadzhirstva. Nalchik, 1994. P. 184–185.

<sup>53</sup> Ibragimova Z. Kh. Mir chechentsev. XIX v. Moscow, 2007. P. 450.

<sup>54</sup> Ibragimova Z. Kh. Emigratsiia chechentsev v Turtsiiu (60–70 gg. XIX v.). P. 60.

needed to avert the projected “more or less serious disturbances in the region” (the number of troops and their deployment) and also the actions in the case of a rebellion. Finally, the members of the committee came up with a question “whether it would be better to extend the conscription to Caucasia but to put on hold its implementation in Northern Caucasia and Dagestan”. It was also proposed to consider all pros and cons, “comparing the expenses” on the possibly untimely demands of the government, on the one hand, and “those moral and political implications” which could entail the government decision to give up the measures which had already been announced “although frowned upon by the population”, on the other<sup>55</sup>.

Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov sent his report with the final proposals about the organization of military service in Caucasia to the minister of war. Apart from the report, he prepared a “humble” note on this issue, which was discussed at the meetings of the Cabinet of ministers on January 24 and 32 and February 7, 1884. During the last meeting, the political aspect of this burning issue again came to the fore. A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov suggested taking advantage of the desire of the most overzealous segment of Muslims to move to Turkey, thus getting rid of the most “violent and harmful element”. He also proposed setting a six-month time limit during which all those “who wanted to leave the country could declare their intention to do so” provided their “lands would be subject to forfeiture by the state, and emigrants would be banned from returning to Russia forever”. In the case of disturbances, the rebels would be disarmed and the riots “vigorously suppressed”. The prince also emphasized that “any delay in this matter, let alone” failing to introduce conscription in Caucasia, would be “taken a sign of weakness on the part of the government”<sup>56</sup>.

The arguments presented by A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, and the data he provided gave rise to the concerns of the members of the Cabinet of ministers about the risks of destabilization in the region in the case of simultaneous subjection to draft of all the population of Caucasia. Thus, Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, a former governor-general of Caucasia, expressed doubts whether the implementation of this plan was possible, without “disturbances over the entire region” although he quite approved of the ideas of removing the unruliest maintain-dwellers of the North Caucasia out of the country and “claiming their rich and fertile lands for the Cossacks, who needed them” and other Russian settlers. The arguments of the grand prince were based on his extensive experience of residence in Caucasia. Twice (in Kuban province and Chechnia) he was a “witness to great sorrows” for both the emigrants “and the entire country” caused by such movements. According to him, it was difficult to “control” “masses of people who were so ignorant and infatuated with fantasies”. “Once started, the relocation spreads to entire villages and even districts; it is happening without any preliminary plan and is accompanied by a random sell-out of all the property for next to nothing”, — argued the grand prince. Consequently, the chaotic emigration of highlanders became a source of great worry for both the Russian and the Turkish government. Many fugitives failed to settle in the new place and had to return to Caucasia “in the most pathetic state”. The Turkish authorities housed other refugees along the border with Russia as could be seen from the experience of the previous war. This contributed to the formation of a “rather dangerous” and hostile to Russia avant-garde of the Turkish army”. Mikhail Aleksandrovich believed that it was only the diplomatic way

<sup>55</sup> О порядке применеии правил устava о воинской повинности... L. 69 об.

<sup>56</sup> По отнoшениу военного министра о порядке применеии правил устava... L. 16 об. — 17.

(through negotiations with Porta) that could solve the problem of hijra. Other members of the Committee supported this point of view<sup>57</sup>.

Finally, the suggestions of A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov and the report of the General Staff were submitted to the State Council on May 25, 1884. In the course of the discussion on the draft the members of the Council came to a conclusion that concerns about “public protests” on the part of Muslim population in the mountains were not “over-stated”. Senators and senior officials from different agencies agreed with the view of the Caucasian authorities that only after the departure of “the unruliest contingent” from Caucasia, it would be possible to start the process of the enlisting the North Caucasian and Dagestani Muslims to the military service. Nevertheless, “even in this case” the authorities of Caucasia could not guarantee a “peaceful outcome”. One of the documents of the State Council, addressed to the minister of war, stated: “Caucasia seems to be at peace now, but local Muslims still sympathize with their co-religionists in the East”. And a “spark from Turkey or Persia” will be enough to “start a fire of fanaticism”<sup>58</sup>.

After a lengthy discussion the Highest Approved Regulation of the State Council was issued on May 28, 1886. According to it, “all the population of Caucasia (both native and non-native) as well as the alien population of the Terskaia and Kuban provinces” was to be subject to draft. At the same time, Muslim population temporary was exempted from the recruitment of draftees into the army “until further notice”<sup>59</sup>. At the suggestion of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov it was agreed to introduce a special tax as a substitute for the army service of the Muslims of Caucasia. It was expected to cover the costs of the formation of new military units, thus cutting down on the additional expenses of the state.

The date of the first draft in Transcaucasia was set for October — December 1887, but in Batumskaia, Artvinskaia, Sukhumskaia (with the exception of its Okumskaia part), and Kutaiskaia provinces as well as in Karskii region and Chernomorskii district the draft was postponed until 1889. In the Caucasian region, the annual draft was usually held from October 15 up to December 31, however, some deviations from the rules occurred at times. People, engaged in active service as well as their “families and households”, were exempted from all personal monetary taxes (state, zemskii (territorial) or community). This privilege did not extend to those who joined the army as “volunteers”.

The “alien” residents of the Caucasian region were entitled to some extra first-degree privileges on the grounds of their family situation: for a son-in-law, “the only breadwinner in his disabled father-in-law’s or widowed mother-in-law’s household” if they lived together or for “single family men”<sup>60</sup>. It should be noted that Caucasian draftees could

<sup>57</sup> Po otnosheniiu voennogo ministra o poriadke primeneniia pravil ustava... L. 18–21.

<sup>58</sup> Po otnosheniiu Voennogo Ministra o poriadke privlecheniia k voinskoj povinnosti: a) netuzemnogo naseleniia Zakavkasiia i Severnogo Kavkaza i b) kalmykov i drugikh kachuiushchikh inorodtsev Astrakhanskoi i Stavropolskoi gubernii // RGIA. F. 381. Op. 23. D. 15112. L. 4 ob. — 5.

<sup>59</sup> O privlechenii k otbyvaniu voinskoj povinnosti naseleniia Zakavkaziia i inorodtsev Terskoi i Kubanskoi oblastei // PSZ. Coll. 3. Vol. VI. 1886. No. 3741. St Petersburg, 1888. P. 239.

<sup>60</sup> The Charter of 1874 introduced three degrees of privileges for the draftees according to their family situation. The only “breadwinners” in a family — sons, brothers or grandsons were entitled to the first-degree privilege. Such young people could be recruited only in exceptional cases and only by the decision of the State council, approved by the emperor. “The aliens” of the Caucasian region were entitled to some additional first-degree privileges, depending on their family situation: for sons- in-law, the only breadwinners capable of working in their disabled father-in-law’s or widowed mother-in law’s households” in case they lived together and for the “single family men”, which meant married men, the only breadwinners for their wives and young children. (Author’s note).



apply for the family situation privilege even after the drawing of lots. In such a case they were transferred to the reserve. The changes also affected the rules of granting draft deferments. In particular, the rule which provided deferments of military service to the people whose “families run trade, manufacturing or industrial companies” did not apply to the Caucasian region. However, a one-year deferment could be granted to pastoralists with herds of cattle or small livestock and only in the places where cattle-breeding “was the main industry”. Caucasian students and students of other nationalities accepted to educational institutions before the promulgation of the law were allowed to complete the course without any age restrictions.

Some changes were related to drawing up recruitment list based on birth certificates, family lists, and personal applications. The governor of the Caucasian region supervised the sequence and order of the drawing of lots. One condition remained permanent: recruits from the ‘native population’ were deployed to “special troops” located in Caucasia. As planned, the term of service in such troops was 3 years and 12 years in the reserve. The special troops accepted Christian and Muslim “volunteers” of the age from 21 to 30 years. Their number in every military unit was severely restricted and was not to exceed the standards set by the minister of war<sup>61</sup>.

Consequently, the special rules on conscription for the people of Caucasia fully complied with one of the main principles of the imperial national policy pointed out by B. N. Mironov in his fundamental work — the introduction of “some advantages in legal status in favor of non-Russians in comparison with Russians”. One must agree with his statement that “concerns about separatism forced the central government to continue this situation, which did not correspond to the truly colonial nature of the state”<sup>62</sup>.

The promulgation of the law took place only in the late August of 1886. Eventually, it took thirteen years (not counting the Russo-Turkish war) to develop the principles of the military reform of 1874 for the Caucasian region. According to the documents, within this period all together 8 committees, commissions and sub-commissions, and three meetings were established with the aim of discussing this very important and urgent issue.

The promulgation of the law on May 28, 1886 did not put an end to the process of the introduction of the universal conscription in Caucasia. Moreover, throughout a year the minister of war and the minister of state property exchanged letters with A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov discussing the issue of the recruitment of Ossetins, Ingilos, Kurds, and Yasidis as well as Kalmyks and other alien nomads of the Astrakhanskaia and Stavropol'skaia provinces.

For example, it was suggested that Ossetins would pay a monetary tax instead of military service but in the course of the conversation it turned out that many Christian Ossetins had preserved “some Mohammedan beliefs and customs” and, what is more, some families professed both Christianity and Islam. In such circumstances, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov in order to “ensure justice for all the Ossetins in this matter” encouraged them to fulfill their military obligations by actual service in the armed forces, especially considering the fact that the Ossetins themselves petitioned him claiming to recognize

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<sup>61</sup> О привлеchenii k obyvaniu voinskoi povinnosti naseleniia Zakavkaziia i inorodtsev Terskoi i Kubanskoi oblastei. P. 239–242.

<sup>62</sup> *Mironov B. N. Sotsialnaia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (XVIII — nachalo XIX v.). Genezis lichnosti, demokraticheskoi sem'i, grazhdanskogo obshchestva i pravovogo gosudarstva: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. St Petersburg. P. 31, 34.*

their right to serve in the army<sup>63</sup>. The head of the administration likewise did not distinguish between the Ingilos of Zakatalskii district — some of them had converted to Islam but the majority remained Christians. According to Dondukov-Korsakov, their enrolment in the actual military service in the armed forces could have a negative effect on the activities of the spiritual mission aimed at the propagation of the Orthodox faith among them<sup>64</sup>.

Eventually, on July 28, 1887, an imperial decree addressed to the Senate was issued. It granted all the Ossetins, both Muslims and Christians, the right to serve in the regiments of the Terskaia Cossack army under the same conditions as the native population of the Transcaucasian region. Russians and other non-native people of Transcaucasia received the same privileges as the native population and had to serve in the regiments of the Caucasian military district. The peoples of the Stavropolskaia province (Trukhmens, Nogais, Kara-nogais, Kalmyks, and others) as well as Ingilos, practicing both religions, Kurds, and Yazidis had to pay the tax for the Muslim population imposed by the law of 1886<sup>65</sup>.

A special fee or tax collected from Muslims to increase the government revenue amounted to 542 940 rubles. This money was legally distributed over all the provinces and districts of the region. Skipping the details of the complicated tax calculation (M. S. Arsanukaeva<sup>66</sup> gives an account of this in her article), I will refer to the “Humble report on the administration of the Caucasian region” written 20 years later by governor of Caucasia Adjutant-General I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, in which he in simple terms explained what exactly the tax was supposed to cover: “It was assessed at the ratio of two recruits per a thousand of people with the average length of service having been three years. Supposedly, their average productivity was 60 rubles a year each, 120 rubles — for two. In three years of service, the annual productivity of these two draftees amounted to 360 rubles. Taking into account these calculations, the total amount of tax for each province and district was set, depending on the number of Muslims living there. The taxation of individual peasants was set in proportion to the household tax, paid for the common needs of the region. As for privileged classes, the tax was levied in accordance with their real estate value and income from trade”<sup>67</sup>.

Therefore, in terms of taxpaying the “alien” population fell into two categories: the first one consisted of taxpaying country folks and the second one — of other taxpayers. The military tax appears to have put additional pressure on the local population. Thus, in the spring of 1895 four residents of the village of Toifugi of the Areshskii district in Elizavetpolskaia province applied to the minister of internal affairs with a petition featuring the unbearable burden of the tax and claiming that “from the day the tax had been imposed in the region, none of the noblemen of their district was able to pay “the requested amount of money”, including the applicants themselves. They had to pay annually 33 rubles for each family and the shortfall, accrued over the years, was so high that “the local police,

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<sup>63</sup> O poriadke primeniia pravil ustava o voinskoj povinnosti... L. 70–70 ob.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> O privilechenii k lichnomu otpravleniiu voinskoj povinnosti na l'gotnykh osnovaniiakh osetin musulmanskogo veroispovedaniia i netuzemnogo naseleniia Zakavkazskogo kraia i ob otbyvanii voinskoj povinnosti, posredstvom denezhnogo oblozheniia, inorodtsami Stavropolskoj gubernii i zhiteliami nekotorykh mest Zakavkazskogo kraia // PSZ. Coll. 3. Vol. VII. 1887. No. 4660. St Petersburg, 1889. P. 387.

<sup>66</sup> Arsanukaeva M. S. Otbyvanie voinskoj povinnosti gortsami Severnogo Kavkaza (vtoraia polovina XIX — nachalo XX vv.). P. 18.

<sup>67</sup> Vorontsov-Dashkov H. I. Vsepoddanneishaia zapiska po upravleniiu Kavkazskim kraem general-ad'utanta grafa Vorontsova-Dashkova. St Petersburg, 1907. P. 100.

despite all the efforts, failed to recover it". The applicants expressed concern that "in the near future" all their movable and immovable property would be distrained and put for sale which would inevitably result in bankruptcy. Facing "such a critical and desperate situation" they plucked up the courage and addressed the minister since their repeated complaints to the local authorities fell on deaf ears. The citizens of the Toifuga village humbly asked to withdraw the shortfall and to distribute the above-mentioned tax "in accordance with their wealth and potential"<sup>68</sup>. Apparently, such requests to the authorities were not uncommon as the governor promised to deal with the issue of fair taxation of the Muslims of Elizavetpolskaia province "in due time", "in the course of a new calculation of the military tax"<sup>69</sup>.

Preparations for the enforcement of the universal conscription in Caucasia started with making family lists which had to contain accurate information about population figures and to provide an overview of "the paying capacity of the families subject to household taxes"<sup>70</sup>. The fears of St Petersburg and Caucasian authorities came true: the compilation of family lists gave rise to unrest among the Muslims of the region. The most serious revolt against conscription took place in the Terskaia province, where several Chechen villages sabotaged the demand of the authorities stubbornly evading the census<sup>71</sup>. Only the citizens of Dagestan, Tiflisskaia, Bakinskaia, and partly Erivanskaia provinces took the reform calmly. One of the main reasons for public discontent and unrest among the Muslims was the fact that the law on the compilation of family lists (February 24, 1886) had been issued 6 months before its promulgation on May 28, 1886. The people of Caucasia became aware of their exemption from the actual military service in the armed forces and its substitution by the monetary tax only in late August of 1886.

The first draft in Transcaucasia took place in November 1887. An official document states that with few exceptions it was held "in a calm atmosphere without any breach of peace"<sup>72</sup>. According to the statistics, the recruitment plan for in Transcaucasia was implemented: all together 2397 "native citizens" (planned 2400) and 169 "non-native citizens" (planned 172) were recruited; i. e., the shortage constituted only 6 people. As for the class affiliation, most of the recruits were peasants, with petty bourgeois ranking second (700 men). There were also representatives of the nobility (72), merchants (33), and even 2 officials<sup>73</sup>. 621 men did not show up at the recruiting centre, of these 592 were native citizens and 29 — non-native. According to a special report, the fact that "many persons of military age were away on trade-related or some other business" could have accounted for the "relatively high figures" of non-appearance at the time of draft<sup>74</sup>.

Thus, addressing the issue of the conscription of the indigenous peoples of Caucasia, the central government pursued several objectives at a time: to incorporate the peoples of the recently tamed Caucasia into the Russian Empire; to engage local mountain dwellers, excellent soldiers, in the military service in Caucasia in the natural and climatic condi-

<sup>68</sup> О порядке применеия правил устава о воинской повинности... L. 181.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. L. 184 ob.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. L. 71–72.

<sup>71</sup> Zapiski neustanovlennykh lits o sformirovanii voennykh družhin iz mestnogo naseleniia na Kavkaze i o khode vvedeniia vseobshchei voynskoi povinnosti na Kavkaze // RGIA. F.932. Op. 1. D.456. L. 19 ob.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. L. 21.

<sup>73</sup> Statistika Rossiiskoi imperii. X. Sbornik svedenii po Rossii, 1890. St Petersburg, 1890. P. 293.

<sup>74</sup> Zapiski neustanovlennykh lits... P. 22 ob. — 23.

tions they were accustomed to. Finally, the extension of the conscription to the population of Caucasia was expected to ease the burden of this conscription on the population of European provinces of the empire. At the same time the government had to consider political, economic, religious and ethnic factors, which had intertwined in this sensitive region of the Russian Empire. This multifactorality resulted in the cautious approach, years of discussion of this issue at all levels of the imperial power. Eventually, eager to maintain a balance between the imperial interests (preserving the fragile peace and order in Caucasia) and commitment to the basic principle of the reform of 1874 — the equality of everyone before the law, Petersburg granted advantages to the peoples of Caucasia in the form of additional privileges and a monetary tax. That was seen as a keystone to the political stability of the Russian Empire.

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