

## GODERDZI VACHRIDZE

### A PLAN OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF WESTERN GEORGIA INTO A RUSSIAN PROVINCE

In the first part of the 19th century Georgia lost the state independence and became a part of the Russian Empire. In the 1860s, when Tsarizm conquered the Caucasus and began to assimilate its economics \_ in the Empire's tricentennial history, a new modernizing periods took place. Russification of "outskirt provinces" gained full currency. In such circumstances, in 1864, the plan of the transformation of western Georgia into a Russian province had been worked out in the army's headquarters, in which the main signs of Russification were reflected. According to the plan, it had to be realized with the formation of the Russian settlements along the east coast of the Black sea, with the achievement of material and moral advantages of the Russian people and with the development of the Russian navigation and ship-building. In this project, Russian port city's formation had to play a great role.

The main idea of the plan was to transform Western Georgia into a Russian province. According to the authors, it was important to settle the Russians here and to russificate indigeneous as well as to assimilate its economics by developing interior navigation on the east coast of the Black sea in which the river Rioni would be joined.

As the Russians projected, the process of russification would be accelerated by the construction of Poti, establishment of the navigation on the river Rioni, and broadening the interior navigation along the east coast of the Black Sea.

However, this plan was not realized. The energetic resistance on the part of the Georgian people prevented the project from its realization. Led by N. Nikoladze, the Georgian port was constructed, and, as for Western Georgia, it remained the most georgian region forever.