STALIN AGAINST ENGELS – FOR THE HISTORIOGRAFYH OF THE GREEK PROJECT

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Abstract. The article reviews the ideological background, due to which the study of the Russian-Austrian model of European Redistribution in the 60-90-ies of the XVIII century, in particular the Greek Project, was effected by a certain limits of the Soviet period. The Greek Project contained all signs of imperial policy and is recognized as the main concept of Russia's foreign policy. The issues of the foreign policy of the Russian Empire became particularly relevant in 30-ies of XX century, when Engels's work "The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism" had to be published in magazine “Bolshevik” at the request of the Bolshevik Adoretsky on the twentieth anniversary of the World War I. However, Stalin had a rather negative reaction to it. Engels's article, revealing Russia's aggressive imperialist intentions, was a pretty good weapon for the world leading countries against Soviet ideology taking into account the complicated foreign policy existing before the Second World War. Stalin's letter - in an open appeal to the Politburo - clearly expressed the criticism towards Engels, the classic of Marxism, and the inexpediency of publishing his work. It was also observed that Soviet ideologues should not allow capitalist ideologues to criticize Russia's foreign policy, whether this criticism referred to Tsarist or Soviet period. Accordingly, the entire Russian foreign policy was revised in accordance with the desired tsarist ideological model. This criticism of Stalin was a signal to Soviet scientists, to refer the problems of Russian foreign policy with a particular consideration, where one of the main topics was the Greek Project. As studies of the Soviet period have shown, Soviet historiography has tried to find a desirable explanation for the Greek Project. Consequently, results of any study of Russia's foreign policy were predetermined and entitled the scientists to make predetermined conclusions as well. Such approach to the issue excluded the possibility of an objective study of the topic from the very beginning. The referred Stalinist methodological principle has not been overcome by current Georgian historiography. It is confirmed by the fact of ignoring the Greek Project and its effect in terms of defining foreign policy.

Introduction
I found myself in an unusual reality while studying the Greek Project, the Russian-Austrian plan for the redistribution of Europe in the 60-90-ies of the XVIII century. This topic was either completely ignored by Georgian historians, or was considered only fragmentary, in a rather modest manner, or was considered as a frivolous issue.

However, the Greek Project is a plan for the redistribution of Europe, envisaging the neutralization of the Ottoman Empire by the Russian and Austrian Empires. All three countries directly involved in this project had close relations with Georgia and the Caucasus [2; 74; 41; 82; 46].
Consequently, the question arose, how Georgia and the Caucasus could not be affected by the European redistribution project, in which Russia is a direct participant and potential conqueror of Georgia and the Caucasus and declares it publicly. The second participant, the Austrian Empire, has been Georgia's only strategic ally since the Middle Ages, and the third country, the Ottoman Empire (to be neutralized by the current project) owns western Georgia, half of the country, in accordance with the Peace of Amasya.

The second unusual topic refers to the interrelation between the Seven Years' War and Georgia. The Seven Years' War has defined the world historical process since the 60-ies of XVIII century. However, neither monographic research has been conducted nor an article written in Georgian historiography regarding the interrelation between the Seven Years' War and Georgia. Moreover, even a single hint to the referred problem has not been made either.

This meant that Georgian historiography reviewed the political processes of Georgia in the second half of the XVIII century within the context of regional problems, the traditional triangle: Russia-Iran-the Ottoman Empire and completely ignored the world-historical process.

We have studied the Greek Project and political events in the history of Georgia within the frameworks of the Seven Years' War. Outcomes of the study have been published...

**Novelty of the Study**

"The Greek Project" has not been studied in Georgian Soviet and post-Soviet Historiography. Consequently, there was no need to review the Greek Project within the ideological directives and attitudes of Stalin.

The Russian scientist Petrov and the German researcher Hasch refer to the controversy between Stalin and Engels in a historiographical review of the Greek Project. They show Stalin's directives were reflected on Soviet historiography during the study of the Greek Project.

These directives remain relevant even today in terms of history of Georgia. Current article is the first attempt to overcome the Russian Imperial methodology while studying Georgian history of the second half of the XVIII century.

**Task of the Study**

The task of this article is to show, on the one hand, the methodological gap associated with the studies of Georgian historiography devoted to the foreign policy of Georgia in the second half of the XVIII century, and on the other hand, to present a way to correct the referred gap.

Russian historiography of the post-Soviet period was able to overcome Stalinist ideological pressure. Several interesting studies, indicating the imperial paradigms of the Greek Project were published [9, p. 328-342; 15; 14, p 42-46; 32, p25-29; 26, p. 668-672]. Nothing has been done in Georgian historiography of the post-Soviet era. Accordingly, the study of the political processes of the second half of the XVIII century in Georgia has been conducted without taking into account the world-historical process, which excludes the possibility of obtaining objective results from the very beginning.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the current article is to show that reviewing Greek Project is one of the main methodologies in the light of the world-historical process. As the study of other issues takes into account the trends of the world-historical process, we must use the same method to study the political processes of the second half of the XVIII century in Georgia, including the Greek Project. Another methodological approach to
the research process excludes obtaining objective results from the very beginning.

**Research methods**

We rely on the methodological principles of objectivity, historicism, determinism, alternativeness, reconstruction, developed in the theoretical studies by the following scientists: Charles-Victor Langlois, Charles Seignobos [39]; Robin George Collingwood [11]; Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch [8]; Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield [40]; Abrams Lynn [1]; Brundage Anthony [7]; Gregory Ian, Ell Paul [20]; Hughes-Warrington; Iggers George, Wang Qiang Edward [24]; Akira Iriye [25]; Koselleck Reinhart [30; 31]; Lukacs John [38]; Munro Doug, Reid John [52]; Quigley Carroll [81]; Raaflaub Kurt [83].

**Sources**

In this study, we use primary sources: Work of Engels "Foreign policy of Russian tsarism" [16], open appeal of Stalin to the members of Political bureau "About Engels' article "Foreign policy of Russian tsarism" [87].

**Research Results**

A letter of Stalin about the article of Engels “On the Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism” was published in May, 1941 in the magazine “Bolshevik”, the main body of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. There was nothing unusual, little time was left until June 22, 1941. Hence, the ideology acquired greater importance. In this regard, Soviet political ideologies use the classics of Marxism, including Engels. However, it was strange that the referred letter did not support Stalin's ideological position, but it was the subject of criticism.

It is noteworthy that this letter of Stalin was written in 1934. He hesitated for seven years whether to publish it or not, whether to show his ideological disagreement with Engels. Secondly, it is also important that "Stalin" has been published quite rarely since the late 1930s [84, p. 44]. The fact that he decided not only to appear before the public, but also to criticize Engels before the war, indicates the importance of this step for Soviet ideology.

All this has a rather interesting pre-history. At the 20th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, the Bolshevik Adoratsky decided to publish a full version of Engels' letter. For the Soviet ideology, which had grand conquering plans before (soon the Soviet Union conquers Western Ukraine, the Baltic States, starts a war with Finland), it was actually self-illustration. The situation was further complicated by the fact that it was not a thought of an ordinary person but a classic of Marxism.

On July 19, 1934 Stalin sent a letter to the proletarian newspaper Bolshevik about Engels’ article "Russian Tsarist Foreign Policy", addressed to members of the Politburo and not intended for publication. This meant that the conclusions given in this letter, despite its informal nature, were to become the main message for science as well.

In fact, it was an official message to scientists how to evaluate the aggressive policy of Tsarist Russia.

Categorical rejection of this aggressive policy was the ideological framework posing limits to any Soviet scientist. In addition, all researches dedicated to Russian foreign policy should be subjected to the latter, including the conclusions obtained from the study of the Greek Project. Therefore, the Greek project was not chosen as the subject of a monographic study, only a few historians decided to publish an article about it, presumably also for ideological reasons.

The year 1934 is quite a characteristic stage for Soviet ideology - the occupation of western Ukraine and the Baltics, as well as an attempt to occupy Finland is being
prepared. Such a policy of conquest, opposed by the whole world of that period, was further intensified by the classics of Marxism.

Talks about the Russian aggression and its embellished ideological veil, given in Engels’ work means that the soviet ideology is actually in a deadlock. This is why Stalin considers it necessary to transfer his remarks and directives to the editors of the magazine “Bolshevik” as an ordinary reader that equals to censorship. The letter was not published by Stalin. It was only a working option for the editors and scientists of the magazine, who were in charge of determining the ideological direction. Actually, the referred directive of Stalin served as a taboo to the circulation and publication of the thought of the classics of Marxism.

It is rather interesting that the letter written by Stalin in 1934, was published at his initiative later, in September 1941 – during the most difficult period for the Soviet Union [3; 10].

The reason of Stalin's negative attitude to Engels is rather interesting. It is also noteworthy that he has a constant negative attitude towards Engels, as indicated by the Russian researcher Romanovsky based on archival materials [84, p.44]. However, Stalin tried not to show the controversy to the public and to keep his views and attitudes at the backstage.

Interest in Engels' article was extremely increased due to existing situation. Engels took off the mask of the Russian Empire that played the role of a liberator and supporter of Christians. He directly pointed out that it was a tactic used by Imperial Court of St. Petersburg to gain influence on the world. Engels writes in regard of it:

"The "humane" policy of the king, who, under the pretext of liberating Greek Christians from Muslim oppression, sought to take the place of Muslims himself, did not achieve the desired success. For, as the Russian ambassador in London, Prince Lieven (dispatch of October 18 (30), 1825), wrote, "the whole of Europe looks with horror at this Russian colossus, whose gigantic forces are waiting only for a signal to move against it. It is therefore in its interest to support the Turkish power, this natural enemy of our empire" [16, p.34].

The Russian Empire is a kind of Jesuit order for Engels that hires foreigners to fulfill its own will. It is also emphasized that the Empress Catherine II, the founder of this movement, was a foreigner. Engels writes in regard of it:

"foreign policy is certainly an area in which tsarism is strong, very strong. Russian diplomacy forms a kind of modern Jesuit order, powerful enough to overcome, if necessary, even the tsar's whims and corruption in its own environment, in order to spread it more widely around. Initially, this order was recruited mainly from foreigners: Corsicans, such as Pozzo di Borgo, Germans like Nesselrode, Ostsee Germans like Lieven; a foreigner was also its founder, Catherine II" [16, p.14].

Engels clearly explains the specific advantages of the Imperial Court of St. Petersburg over the Ottoman Empire. This is the mask of liberator for the conquered Christian peoples in the Ottoman Empire. It was a guaranteed (undefeated) game for St. Petersburg, thanks to which it can obtain advantage over the Ottomans through calling for the disobedience of Christian countries and their rebellion. That was a precondition for the irreversible process of weakening the Ottoman Empire. Engels writes in regard of it:

"In the south - the Turks and their tributaries, the Crimean Tatars, who were only fragments of former greatness; the offensive power of the Turks was broken 100 years ago, while their defensive strength, still considerable, also decreased; the best indicator of this growing weakness was the unrest that began among the Christians
they conquered: Slavs, Romanians and Greeks, who made up the majority of the population of the Balkan Peninsula. These Christians, almost exclusively of the Greek Orthodox faith, were thus co-religionists of the Russians, and among them the Slavs - Serbs and Bulgarians - besides their fellow tribesmen. Therefore, as soon as Russia announced its vocation to defend the oppressed Orthodox Church and the enslaved Slavs, the ground for conquest - under the guise of liberation - was already prepared here. Similarly, to the south of the Caucasian ridge under Turkish rule were small Christian states and Armenians professing Christianity, in relation to which tsarism could proclaim itself a "liberator". [16, p.17]

The work of the classic of Marxism focuses on Constantinople, considered by Engels as not only a Russian city but the third capital of the Russian Empire as well. He shows general mood existing throughout the Russian Empire indicating that the conquest of Constantinople was the main foreign policy goal of the Imperial Court of St. Petersburg. Engels also explains the advantages Russia would have gained as a result of the conquest of Constantinople. He writes:

"In addition, here, in the south, the greedy conqueror was seduced by such military booty, which was not equal in Europe: the ancient capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the metropolis of the entire Orthodox world, the city, whose Russian name Constantinople-Constantinople alone serves as an expression of domination over the East and the authority that its ruler is endowed with in the eyes of Eastern Christians."

"Tsargrad as the third Russian capital, along with Moscow and St. Petersburg, would mean, however, not only spiritual domination over the Eastern Christian world, it would also be a decisive stage towards the establishment of domination over Europe. This would mean undivided domination over the Black Sea, Asia Minor, the Balkan Peninsula."

"This would mean that the Black Sea, at the first request of the Tsar, could be closed to all commercial and military fleets, except the Russian, that this sea turns into a Russian military harbor and a place of maneuvers exclusively for the Russian fleet, which at any moment could make sorties from this reliable reserve position through the fortified Bosphorus and again take refuge in this harbor. Then Russia would only have to establish the same domination, direct or indirect, over the Sund and both Belts, and it would be impregnable also from the sea" [16, p.18].

Engels clearly points to the advantageous political situation that was most favorable for Russian conquests after the Seven Years' War, particularly in 1762. The classic of Marxism does not consider it to be accidental as this is the date of the enthronement of Catherine II. According to Engels, this is a start of a qualitatively different period of the aggressive policy of the Russian Empire. This is confirmed by the agreement concluded with Prussia in 1764, which was actually a precondition for the annexation of Poland. Engels writes:

"The international situation has never been more favorable for the conquest plans of tsarism than in 1762, when the great harlot Catherine II came to the throne after the murder of her husband" [16, p.23].

"England broke the power of the French at sea, in America, in India, and then abandoned to the mercy of fate its continental ally, the Prussian king Frederick II. This latter was in 1762 on the verge of death, when Peter III, who had entered the Russian throne, stopped the war against Prussia; Frederick, abandoned by his last and only ally, England, who had a long quarrel with Austria and France, exhausted by the seven-year struggle for existence, had no choice but to rush to the feet of the queen who had just ascended to the throne. This provided him not only with powerful
patronage, but also gave hope for the accession of that piece of Poland that separated East Prussia from the main part of his monarchy and the conquest of which now became the main goal of his life. On March 31 (April 11), 1764, Catherine and Frederick concluded the Treaty of St. Petersburg, according to the secret article of which both sides undertook to protect the current Polish constitution by force of arms, the best means of destroying Poland, from any attempts at reform. This was a foregone conclusion for the future partition of Poland. A piece of Poland was the bone that the Queen threw to Prussia to make her sit quietly for a century on the Russian chain."

"I will not go into the details of the first partition of Poland. But characteristically, it was carried out - against the will of the old-fashioned Maria Theresa - mainly by the three main pillars. [16, p.23]

"European "enlightenment": Catherine, Frederick and Joseph. The last two, proud of the enlightened state wisdom with which they trampled as a prejudice the traditional norms of international law, were at the same time stupid enough not to notice that by their participation in the plunder of Poland they gave themselves headlong into the power of Russian tsarism" [16, P.23].

"Hardly anyone could do Catherine a greater service than these enlightened august neighbors. "Enlightenment" was the same motto of tsarism in Europe in the eighteenth century as the "liberation of nations" in the nineteenth century. Any seizure of territory, any violence, any oppression tsarism carried out only under the pretext of enlightenment, liberalism, liberation of peoples. And childishly naive Western European liberals, up to Gladstone, believed this, just as no less naive conservatives also unshakably believe in empty phrases about the protection of legitimism, about maintaining order, religion. European balance, about the sanctity of treaties - phrases that official Russia simultaneously repeats. Russian diplomacy cleverly managed to flatter the two great bourgeois parties of Europe. She, and only her, is allowed to be at the same time legitimist and revolutionary, conservative and liberal, orthodox and enlightened. Hence the contempt with which such a Russian diplomat looks at the "educated" West" [16, p. 24].

"Turkey was not forgotten. Russia's wars against the Turks always occur at times when peace reigns on Russia's western border and Europe is more or less occupied elsewhere. Catherine fought two such wars. The first led to the conquests on the Sea of Azov and the proclamation of the independence of the Crimea, turned four years later into a Russian province. As a result, the second border of Russia moved from the Bug up to the Dniester. During these wars, Russian agents incited the Greeks to revolt against the Turks. Of course, the rebels were eventually abandoned by the Russian government to their fate" [16, p.25].

It is a rather characteristic detail that Engels considers Russia's desire for Constantinople to be the second out of three main preconditions of the Second World War. Classic of Marxism writes:

"The present situation of Europe is determined by three facts: 1) the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany; 2) the aspiration of tsarist Russia to Constantinople; 3) the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which is flaring up in all countries, is becoming hotter, as exemplated by the rise of the socialist movement observed everywhere."

"The first two facts determine the modern division of Europe into two large military camps. German annexation turned France into an ally of Russia against Germany, the tsarist threat to Constantinople turns Austria and even Italy into allies of Germany. Both camps are preparing for a decisive struggle, for a war that the world
has never seen, for a war in which ten to fifteen million armed fighters will confront each other. Only two circumstances prevented the fact that this terrible war has not yet broken out: first, the unprecedented rapid development of military equipment, in which every invented sample of weapons is surpassed by new inventions before it can be introduced in at least one army, and, secondly, the absolute impossibility of calculating the chances, complete uncertainty, who will eventually emerge victorious from this gigantic struggle” [16, p.48].

What was so unacceptable for Stalin in the work of classicism of Marxism? Engels wrote about tsarist Russia, whose policy was also unacceptable to the founders and ideologists of the new state.

Actually, everything was unacceptable, since the critical attitude of Marx, Engels and Lenin towards tsarist Russia was evaluated quite differently by Stalin.

It is also noteworthy that Engels' work was written in 1890, so the events and moods of that period are fully reflected there. It also consists critical attitude towards tsarist Russia.

The direction of Stalin's foreign policy scrupulously repeats the aggressive forms of tsarist policy, he perceives criticism of tsarism as criticism of his own policy. This is clearly observed in Stalin's letter, where he critically assesses Engels' position.

Stalin writes:

"Describing and disclosing the aggressive policy of Russian tsarism, Engels does not explain it as the "necessity" of Russian military-feudal trading elite to obtain access to the sea... by expanding foreign trade and occupying strategic points, but by indicating the fact that the Russian foreign policy was headed by foreign adventurers - supposedly an omnipotent and talented gang, which was lucky for some reason, managed to overcome all obstacles, deceived all European rulers and achieved that Russia eventually became a strong state in a military point of view" [87, p.3].

"The policy of conquest with its abominations and filth was not the monopoly of the Russian monarchs. Everyone knows that the policy of conquest more or less was also characteristic of kings and diplomats of all European countries" [87, p.3].

After giving rather few and more sophistic arguments, Stalin summarizes what he has to say and presents three reasons why Engels' position should not be shared.

Stalin writes:

"a) Russia's strive towards Constantinople within the context of World War II has been overestimated. It is true that Engels considered the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine by Germany as the first factor of war, but then he gives up this point and emphasizes the aggressive aspirations of Russian tsarism. He claims that "whole threat to the world, the war will disappear when events in Russia develop in such a way, that the Russian people will be able to put an end to the traditional policy of conquest" [87, p.5].

"b) The role of the bourgeois revolution in Russia is overestimated ... Engels argues that the fall of Russian tsarism is the only way to prevent a world war. This is a clear exaggeration" [87, p. 5].

"c) The role of the tsarist government as "the last support of a total European reaction" is overestimated. Undoubtedly, the tsarist power in Russia was a bulwark of European (as well as Asian) reaction. However, the statement that it should be the final support of the reaction can be doubtful" [87, p.5].

This letter of Stalin is an unambiguous message not only to politicians, but also to scientists, especially historians. According to this letter it is obvious that:

1. Criticizing Russia's foreign policy is inadmissible.
2. Russia's foreign policy should not be reviewed within the context of
aggression.

3. Russia's aspiration to Constantinople should not be assessed as a desire to conquer a foreign country, but as a desire to expand the trade market.

4. Tsarist Russia should not be separated from Soviet-era Russia (as Lenin believed). Accordingly, criticism towards Tsarist Russia should be perceived as a criticism of common Russian policy.

5. A certain order is clearly evident - the need for a defensive approach to Tsarist Russian imperial policy.

The message of Stalin's foreign policy concept was directly related to the study of the Greek Project, since it was the main conceptual line underlying Russia's foreign policy from the 60-ies of the XVIII century including the First World War.

The plan for the redistribution of Europe - the topic for the existence of the Greek Project, its content and main postulates served as a subject of ideological controversy in Soviet historiography directed against the foreign one. Thus, the paucity of research devoted to this topic in Soviet historiography from the very beginning excluded the possibility of an objective approach to the problem.

The historiography of the XIX century and later period clearly indicated the aggressive and expansive nature of the Russian Empire, which was clearly observed in the Greek Project. According to which Russia, together with Austria, was the initiator to restore the Byzantine Empire headed by the Romanov dynasty. It was also supposed to create a buffer state the Kingdom of Dacia, which would include Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia.

The revived Byzantine Empire, as well as the Kingdom of Dacia, were considered by the Imperial Court of Russia as puppet states subordinated to the interests of St. Petersburg.

Soviet historiography was placed in a rather difficult position by Marx and Engels, the founders of Marxist ideology, who took a rather unambiguous position in assessing the foreign policy of Tsarist Russia. Accordingly, their position was also evident - the "Greek Project" really existed.

Karl Marx states in a publication in the New York Times that Catherine II persuaded Austria and called on France to take part in the partition of Turkey and the foundation of the Greek Empire in Constantinople under the leadership of her grandson. It is also indicated, without any ambiguity that Catherine's grandson was brought up appropriately for this purpose and that a suitable name (Konstantin) was chosen for him [53].

Friedrich Engels, the second founder of Marxism, is not less categorical in terms of the Greek Project. In his work, "The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism", he suggests that the transformation of Tsargrad as the third Russian capital, along with Moscow and St. Petersburg, was a decisive stage to establish the Russian hegemony in Europe. The conquest of Constantinople was the main goal of Russia's foreign policy during the reign of Catherine II [16, p.18].

Position of Marx and Engels put Soviet historiography in a rather difficult situation, which had a fierce ideological struggle with foreign historiography. Bourgeois historiography pointed to the expansion of the foreign policy of Tsarist Russia and considered the expansive policy of the Soviet Union to be the successor of Tsarist Russia's foreign policy.

Moreover, during the ideological war, the historiographers of bourgeois countries had a big trump card - they opposed the Soviet historiography with the position of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. A good example of this is the American researcher David Griffiths, who is the author of a special letter dedicated to the Greek
David Griffiths pointed to the most difficult dilemma of Soviet historiography - he had to either unconditionally accept the formulation of Marx and Engels, who unequivocally gave the bourgeois historiography Carte blanche, or separate himself from the classics, whose thoughts were used as basis of historiography (and other filed as well) of the Soviet Union.

American scientist David Mark Griffiths writes: "Soviet historians had to choose between Marxist internationalism and Russian Soviet nationalism. The method of solving this issue proposed by Soviet historiography is important for determining the priority of the entire Soviet scientific community and at least for Soviet historical science" [21, p.77].

Within this option, most Soviet scientists took the side of Russian-Soviet nationalism. The position of Marx and Engels was properly respected in textbooks. However, the specialized scientific literature contained the position totally denying the existence of Russia’s aggressive plans.

Russian scientist Mikhail Belov [9, p. 328-331], as well as the German scientist Hasch refer to the dilemma of Soviet historiography and involvement of Stalin in the referred process [22, p. 169-188]

The position of Stalin actually determined the official framework, the conjuncture that Soviet scientists had to take into account while making conclusions.

The most fundamental research on this subject belongs to Olga Markova, limited to a couple of articles in Soviet times. According to Markova, the Greek Project was a maneuver of Russian diplomacy aiming to conquer the Crimean peninsula in 1783 and for this reason trying to divert the attention of European states to another issue. Markova unequivocally states that the Greek Project as a real project did not exist in Russia's foreign policy of the 80-ies of XVIII century [48, p.78].

It is noteworthy that Markova sees the reasons for the absence of the Greek Project in the Russian social reality, in particular, he believes that during the period of Catherine there was no middle class in Russia, who might be interested in the aggressive policy of the country [49, p.47-49].

Augusta Stanislavskaya [88, p. 57], [13, p. 39-40] and Yuri Klokmann [27, p. 146-152] agree that there was a "Greek Project", although it was a slight deviation from the usual Russian foreign policy and was not reflected in external strategic plans of Russia.

The referred position was shared in the essays of the History of the Soviet Union [17, p. 366-367] and Soviet History textbooks [23, p.532].

Fadeev has a completely different point of view on this topic and believes that the "Greek Project" had a kind of chimerical character and was unrealizable. As Catherine had neither financial nor human resources, for such a grand plan. Therefore, the existence of this project could not be real and did not exist in fact [19, p. 48-57].

Although Soviet historians, referring the aforementioned topic, manage to offer their views to society in a slightly different version, they are like-minded and unanimous that the "Greek Project" has never been the cornerstone of Russia's foreign policy. This topic was not proportionally covered by Western states and bourgeois historiography in order to convince the public of the threat of Russian aggression [19, p. 52-53; 47; 48, p 53; 50, p.242; 94, p.242; 86, p. 212].

Based on this reality, Soviet ideology establishes the scheme to be used by the Soviet Historians as a guideline. It is clear from Stalin's remarks that talking about
the Russian Empire as a conqueror belongs to the prohibited topic. Therefore, science must return to the ideological pattern used by Tsarist Russia to justify its conquest policy that was clearly incriminated by Engels.

It was a postulate predetermined by science. Naturally, this factor did not exclude various interpretations. On the contrary, such interpretations were desirable in order to make scientific research more convincing. However, with one necessary provision - all reasoning, all interpretations had to end with a specific conclusion, ruling out the aggressive and effusive policy of Russia.

The mentioned censorship directly affected the Greek Project. Consequently, many researchers chose not to say anything at all about this redistribution. However, when it comes to the study of a specific issue, such as relations between Russia and Austria, it is evident that being in a position of an ostrich would not be favorable. Accordingly, the agenda was to develop a position that would normally be the starting point for discussing these topics. This is how Markova's theory developed, that was actually shared by the Soviet historiography of the later period with various interpretations.

An interesting conclusion is made by the Russian scientist Mikhail Belov, who directly writes that a hidden trend persists in post-Soviet historiography, which reviews rather distant, early and imperial plans from an autocratic position [9, p.322]. A collection published during the Soviet "Perestroika", was full of very important and significant ideological implications dedicated to source study and methodological problems of Russian foreign policy. Editor of the referred collection was Narochnitsky [77].

It is noteworthy that Narochnitsky is not accidentally the editor of a collection saturated with ideological messages. He is the scientist who studied Stalin's epochal letter thoroughly and devoted a special study to him [75].

The "Greek Project" was not mentioned in the collection of 1986 by chance. It is noteworthy that Markova’s letter, written 30 years before, became relevant for Soviet ideologists in the 80-ies [48] and was included as the first article in the collection. The hidden forms of the new imperial ideological postulates become even more remarkable and noteworthy because the last article of the collection is "The Testament of Peter the Great" [12].

Post-Soviet Russian historiography expresses particular interest towards the Greek Project. A lot of research works have been published due to the versatility of the issue. The Greek Project is reviewed within the context of the anti-Osmotic campaign, Greek themes, the ancient world, imperial ideology and other issues.

Interesting studies have been presented by scientists: Zorin [96], Lupanova [43; 44], Vinogradov [95], Stegni [89], Devterov [15], Khavanova [32], Dostyan [14], Eliseeva [18], Zelenina [97], Blagodatski [6], Arsh [4], Ivanov [26], Khru [28], Kondakov [29], Priymak [78], Parastatov [79], Kuznetsov [33], Kryuchkov [34; 35], Paleologue [80], Kobishanov [36], Litvin [42], Alekseev [5], Kashtanova [37], Magomedova [55], Ovchinnikov [76], Razgonova [85], Stetsenko [90], Shlyapnikova [91], Musaeva, Halimbekova [54].

Quite an interesting scientific argument exists proving that the Greek Project is the main ideological postulate of the Russian Empire, which has been relevant for the Imperial Court of St. Petersburg since its foundation (60-ies of the XVIII century) for a century and a half - including the First World War.

As for Georgian historiography, only a few Georgian scientists recognized the Greek Project during the Soviet period, although none of them studied this subject
and were satisfied with the conclusions recognized by Soviet historiography.

Iase Tsintsadze is the only Georgian scientist of the Soviet period who paid attention to the Greek Project in his research [92]. However, the Georgian scientist follows the Soviet ideological limits and links the Greek Project only to the conquest of the Crimea. It is also noteworthy that the well-known researcher Valerian Matcharadze does not consider the Greek Project seriously [45, p253-255].

Almost nothing has changed in 30-year post-Soviet Georgian historiography. We can definitely conclude there is a complete vacuum in terms of the research conducted regarding the Greek Project. Only a few small-format review articles have been published [51; 93]. The Seven Years' War and the trends of the world historical process developed during this period are also completely ignored in regard to Georgia and the Caucasus. However, it is impossible to properly assess the Georgian history of the second half of the XVIII century without the consideration of the referred topics.

Our scientific activity aims to solve the existing problem. Over the past year, the outcomes of our research have been published in scientific publications of different cities of the world. In particular: in Paris [71]; Oxford [66], Cambridge [70], Melbourne [73], Moscow [69], Tokyo [72], Rome [65], Vienna [64], Warsaw [57; 58], Boston [56], San Francisco [60], Sheffield [59], Las Palmas [63], Tbilisi [61], Telavi [62; 67] Kutaisi [68].

Current article is an attempt to analyze the methodological gap existing in Georgian historiography in terms of studying Georgia's foreign policy of the second half of the XVIII century, as well as to present a way for eliminating the referred gap.

**Conclusion**

The conceptual messages of Stalin’s foreign policy research actually determined the tendencies of Georgian historiography for studying the second half of the XVIII century of Georgian history. A number of patterns, meticulously followed by the Georgian Historical School for decades, have been observed.

1. It was announced that after the fall of Constantinople the Caucasus is the subject of interest only to regional countries: Russia, Iran and the Ottomans.
2. The traditional interest of European countries in Georgia and the Caucasus has been unequivocally ignored.
3. An unwritten law is formulated - Georgia is a part of the regional policy and is separated from the world historical processes. Therefore, it is not related to the world historical process.
4. The discussion of the Georgian history within the context of the world-historical process was not considered relevant. Hence, scientists dealing with the history of Georgia were not interested in topics not related to Georgia directly.

Although there has always been a great interest towards the Georgian history of the second half of the XVIII century, this period was not studied in the light of the world-historical process due to above mentioned circumstances. This gives explanation to the fact that Georgian historiography ignores the Seven Years' War. Thus, clearly indicating that modern Georgian historiography should be freed from Stalin’s directives, still existing subconsciously in the minds of contemporary scientists.

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