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**ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN-CAUCASIAN RELATIONS IN XVIII –
XIX CENTURIES**

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Abstract

The article presents analysis of the research of revolutionary-democratic direction representatives of national historiography of the imperial period, devoted to the problem of Russian-Caucasian relations in the XVIII – XIX centuries. The disciplinary matrix of historical science of J. Rusen was used as a tool for historiographic analysis, the typology and conceptualization of pre-revolutionary studies. This theoretical structure makes it possible to formulate criteria in order to distinguish revolutionary-democratic wing of imperial historical thought and to study their conceptual and methodological basis.

The revolutionary-democratic trend in Russian historiography was formed in the middle of the XIX century. There are no special works of the Democrats devoted to the problem of the Russian-Caucasian historical interaction, but individual statements and remarks make it possible to determine their attitude to the policies of Russia in the region during the Caucasian War. The authors, rather toughly estimating national and international policy of the Russian government, express a sharp rejection of any forms of violence against the North Caucasian peoples and describe the actions of the imperial authorities in the region as inhuman and anti-democratic. According to their perception, the military resistance of the highlanders had the form of a national liberation struggle and was considered as an important component of the Russia-wide revolutionary process. The representatives of this area of historical thought carried out the function of propaganda of public struggle with the imperial system of power and created the ideological basis of the revolutionary movement in the country.

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1. Introduction

The formation of the Russian multinational state was a complex and long process. The entry of the North Caucasus into Russia led to sociocultural, political, and economic integration of highland societies within a single state entity. Studying the process of the formation and implementation of the mechanisms of peaceful interaction between different ethnic groups in a single multicultural space makes it possible to determine the degree of consolidation of Russian society and the state.

2. Problem Statement

The attempts to analyze and summarize historiographic sources and facts, conceptual approaches to the study of this issue demonstrate the existence of certain difficulties in the development of unified scientific interpretation of the Russian-Caucasian historical interaction.

During the process of studying this problem, some scientists substantiate the geopolitical aspiration of the Russian empire to conquer the Caucasus, while demonstrating the cruelty of its policies in the region. Other researchers defended a completely different position, according to which the Russian empire in its administrative-territorial structure was the best variant to organize the management of national suburbs, and contributed to the positive impact of Russian culture on the material and spiritual life of North Caucasian ethnic societies. In modern historiography, a whole variety of conflicting interpretations of Russian-Caucasian relations in the 18th – 19th centuries was formed, which requires profound scientific analysis.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the research is presented by the corpus of historiographic facts and sources which reflect the views of representatives of the revolutionary-democratic direction of national historiography on the problem of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus in the XVIII – XIX centuries.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is the comprehensive study, systematization and synthesis of the results of research development in the revolutionary-democratic direction of Russian historiography, devoted to the problem of Russian-Caucasian relations in the XVIII – XIX centuries.

5. Research Methods

The authors of the article used the disciplinary matrix of historical science of J. Rssen as a tool for historiographic analysis. This methodological structure makes it possible to perform simultaneous analysis of the development of historical science, as an academic discipline, and as a sphere of cultural practice of society. The disciplinary matrix of J. Rusen consists of five interdependent factors: interests, conceptual notation, methods, forms of representation, and functions. Each element of the matrix at a certain stage in the development of historical science has its own peculiarities. It allows exploring the peculiarities of the

development of historical science, including the Caucasian studies, taking into account all the objective and subjective factors influencing this process (Zhurtova, Kuzminov, Konovalov, & Muratova, 2017).

6. Findings

The revolutionary-democratic trend in national historiography is formed in the middle of the XIX century. Its few representatives rather toughly estimated the internal policy of the Russian government in general, and in the North Caucasus in particular. There are no special works on the history of the conquest of the Caucasus by Russia among representatives of this trend, but according to individual comments and statements it is possible to determine their attitude to the imperial policy in the region during the Caucasian War.

The genesis of the philosophy of radicalism was determined by its critical spirit, oriented to overcoming the unjust and inhuman feudal-serf and bourgeois relations, the despotism of the state and government. According to the statement of N. Berdyaev “our self-consciousness was a revolt against the reality and imperial Russia” (Berdyaev, 1990). Radicalism was a specific ideological and practical reaction of intelligentsia to the processes of modernization of Russia, the result of the confrontation between bureaucracy and intelligentsia is in the absence of the middle strata of society.

In our opinion the disciplinary matrix of the revolutionary-democratic historical thought of the XIX - early XX centuries possessed the following characteristics:

1. The interests. The peculiarity of the philosophy of the democrats was its distinct social orientation. In their numerous statements, they called for a democratic reorganization of the Russian social and state system through a revolution, which, as expected, would lead to social and political liberation of a person, expand its civil rights and freedoms, and create the conditions for its spiritual development (Saburova, 2006).

2. The concepts. The radical wing of historiography considered the movement of the peoples of the North Caucasus in the context of Russia-wide liberation process. Seeing in the tsarist autocracy the reactionary system and the “gendarme of Europe” who stood in the way of global “liberation of the working masses”, its representatives considered any struggle against it to be “progressive”, “liberating”, and “fair” (Dzimikhov, 2014).

The representatives of the radical trend of pre-revolutionary historiography strongly opposed Russian policy of conquest in the region, the subordination of the autocratic power of other nations, and estimated the actions of the imperial authorities as inhuman and anti-democratic.

3. The methods. In the studies of the revolutionary-democratic direction of pre-revolutionary historiography the positivist attitudes of knowledge of historical phenomena were determined. The authors emphasized the principle of cognition of the world through the senses and mind, giving nature the role of the initial beginning of knowledge. In this case, the Democrats emphasized the activity of human consciousness, the ability to change the environment, relying on the mind.

4. The forms of representation. In terms of content and forms of expression, the radical discourse turns out to be paradoxically close to Christian. In search of high-sounding words, according to G.G. Khazagerov, a radical thought turned to the Church Slavonic source. The works of theorists of the revolutionary movement of historiography pervaded the uncompromising spirit of the Orthodox “standing

for the truth” to fight the government, to assert the ideas of “liberty and rights” (Khazagerov, 2005). The basis of revolutionary thinking is gradually beginning to form the concept of “political enlightenment”, which implies propaganda of revolutionary ideas in society (Khazagerov, 2005).

5. The functions. The revolutionary-democratic direction of pre-revolutionary historical thought was not numerous in its structure, but its activity, political acuteness, influenced the formation of public opinion on the most pressing issues of that time. The researches of representatives of this trend had the function of propaganda of public struggle against the imperial system and its institutions, industrial development and democratization of political life of the country. The democrats have created the ideological basis of the revolutionary movement in the country.

Renowned scientist, philosopher and humanist Y. Zhdanov believed that the Caucasus has played an important role in the development of the Russian revolutionary movement (Zhdanov, 2009). At various times the exiled Decembrists, famous writers and poets, for whom the Caucasus has become a source of inspiration, have spent their time on this territory. According to V.G. Belinsky, the Caucasus has become for the Russians “a cherished country not only of wide, divided will, but also inexhaustible poetry, a country of vigorous life and daring dreams” (Belinsky, 1955). N.P. Ogarev wrote that in the Caucasus, from the first quarter of the nineteenth century “the shelter of Russian free-thinking, where, according to the will of the government, exiles gathered, did not disappear” (Ogarev, 2010).

Philosopher, publicist, active fighter against autocracy A.I. Herzen frankly expressed his hatred for the Emperor Nikolay I “for the arrogance of his despotism”, called the period of his reign a “dark” era, “solemnly” opened by the gallows and “drowned in blood and tears of Poland and the Caucasus” (Herzen, 1958a).

He considered the Caucasian War as “meaningless” (Herzen, 1956), draining the strength of the people and not giving “in return nothing but a multitude of cripples and a few cheap popular paintings representing generals, horses, corpses and smoke” (Herzen, 1958b). A.I. Herzen was convinced that Russian society, “remained indifferent, although there was a minority”, brought up in the spirit of European values, and who “was happy about the failures” of generals in the region (Herzen, 1959). At the same time, the philosopher recognized it unjust to identify the Russian people, supposed by him to be successful in carrying out the revolution, with the Russian government: “for the St. Petersburg scenery,” he said, “there were no people to see or hear, but there was a drum and official talk; bayonets and clerk” (Herzen, 1958b).

Russian thinker and revolutionary M.V. Butashevich - Petrashevsky made attempts to spread revolutionary ideas, including among the Circassians who lived in St. Petersburg. He emphasized that the war between Russia and the Caucasus is extremely unpopular in society and is needed only by the government (Semevsky, 1922).

The position of the revolutionary democrat N.G. Chernyshevsky on the issue of “conquering” the Caucasus is vividly demonstrated in his various statements. In particular, he considered the violence against North Caucasian peoples inhuman, “indignant at foreign domination”, even if such a policy was “useful for Russia’s military might” and its authority in the international stage (Chernyshevsky, 1951). According to the philosopher, any war that aims to conquer other nations is not only “immoral and inhuman, but also unprofitable and harmful for the people”, regardless of its results (Chernyshevsky, 1949).

The representative of the democratic direction of national historical thought, publicist N.A. Dobrolyubov analyzed the peculiarities of imperial policy in the North Caucasus, which caused “the hatred of free highland tribes to Russian reign” (Dobrolyubov, 1962). According to the opinion of the author the protracted nature of the war caused by several reasons: first, the “hatred of foreign domination” was always strong in the North Caucasian peoples; secondly, the Russian “government in the Caucasus was not quite consistent with local needs and relationships ... did not penetrate the spirit of the people” and did not seek to attract the Highlanders to their side, perceiving them as “subjugated long and definitively” (Dobrolyubov, 1962).

As N.A. Dobrolyubov supposed, the main task of the Russian leadership was to arouse among the local peoples “a love for the common good and to demand friendly assistance to the interests of their native country” (Dobrolyubov, 1962).

The ideologist of the rebellious direction in the populism M.A. Bakunin emphasized that for “many decades, the Caucasus served as a military school” for the imperial army (Bakunin, 2014). The thinker condemned the conquering policy of Russia, which was carried out under the slogan of introducing the “civilization of the West to the East” (Bakunin, 2014). A similar explanation of the military actions in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, from his point of view, was unconvincing and was suitable only “for academic or official speeches”, “doctrinal books, brochures and magazines, always filled with sublime nonsense and always saying the opposite of what is being done and what is happening in reality”(Bakunin, 2014).

Revolutionary Democrat K.L. Khetagurov (Khetagurov, 1899) argued that the task of “full introduction of natives of the North Caucasus to the national organism and its culture” cannot be solved by measures practiced by the Russian government that actually lead to “completely opposite results” (Khetagurov, 1899). He saw the main reason for the long “insubordinate conduct” of the Highlanders in their desire “to preserve their spiritual and moral identity, and therefore they met every measure of the Russian government directed against it with great displeasure” (Khetagurov, 1899).

The founder of the USSR V.I. Lenin in his pre-revolutionary studies analyzed national policy of the Russian Empire, which he called the “prison of nations”. From his point of view, the form of government and the state-territorial structure of Russia excluded “freedom and equality of nationalities, also being the main source of barbarism, atrocity and reaction both in Europe and in Asia” (Lenin, 1973). The Caucasus, according to V.I. Lenin was a colony of the Russian Empire, the “economic conquest” of which ended in the post-reform period, “much later than the political one” (Lenin, 2012).

7. Conclusion

The studies of pre-revolutionary authors were the result of creative observations and acquired a scientific and historical character through the use of sources and archive materials. The principle of historicism gradually becomes the philosophical basis of science, which implies an understanding of any social phenomenon in a particular historical context. In the middle of the XIX century due to the professionalization of scientific research, the influence of positivistic theory on the process of studying the past and present of North Caucasian societies is increased.

The main peculiarity of the philosophy of the representatives of the revolutionary-democratic direction was its social orientation and was expressed in calls for the transformation of the Russian social

and state structure through revolutionary changes. From their point of view such transformations should have created a legal basis for social, political and spiritual liberation of a person, and his or her further development. The revolutionary-democratic wing of national historiography considered the resistance of the North Caucasian peoples within the framework of the Russia-wide national liberation movement, its representatives considered the struggle against the imperial administration in the region as “fair and progressive”. In the minds of the democrats, Russian policy in the North Caucasus prevented the “liberation” of Highland societies and their sociocultural development; the actions of the imperial authorities were characterized as anti-democratic. The Democrats called for a “revolutionary struggle” with the imperial power and its institutions speaking sharply against violence against the North Caucasian peoples.

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