

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****BAY-BULAT TAIMIEV AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IN  
CHECHNYA IN 1800–1825**

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***Abstract***

The study considers the issues of Russian-Chechen relations in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which the military-political leader of Chechnya Bay-Bulat Taimiev played a prominent role. It is noted that until the beginning of the Caucasus War, since the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century these relations developed mainly in a peaceful way. Russian-Chechen relations were the result of mutual attraction and mutual interest. Chechnya was interested in trade and economic relations and wanted to establish a military-political alliance with Russia. As a result of this mutual interest between Russia and the Chechen people, its foundations are being laid, strategic goals are being set, and optimal forms and methods of Russian-Chechen relations are being sought. The paper shows the development of the military-political leader of Chechnya Bay-Bulat Taimiev, considers his diplomatic activities, as well as the huge contribution to the development of Russian-Chechen relations in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this context, the study traces the process of establishing and developing relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus region. It is shown that even during the initial period of the People's Liberation Struggle of the North Caucasus Highlanders in Chechnya there was a strong "party of peace", which tried peacefully, by compromise, to solve the problem of establishing the Russian power in Chechnya.

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**Keywords:** Chechen, Bay-Bulat Taimiev, mutual interest, cross-cultural relations.



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## **1. Introduction**

The formation and development of Russian-Chechen relations is a complex, historically long and multidimensional process. It began in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and evolved from good-neighborly relations and a military-political union to state unity. On the eve and in the first years of the Caucasus War, both the Russian and Chechen sides sought politically, through negotiations, to solve emerging problems and disagreements. Bay-Bulat Taimiev – a military-political leader of Chechnya of the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – played a key role in this process.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Since the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, acting mainly by political and diplomatic methods, Russia has been able to make significant progress in strengthening its influence in the North Caucasus. Bay-Bulat Taimiev played an important role in this matter.

The study of Russian-Chechen relations in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of domestic political events in the region during this period make it possible to answer questions that have not yet been sufficiently studied in such a logical connective in Soviet and Russian Caucasus studies. The answers to these questions are not only scientific, but practical and applied. The relevance of the study of the historical role of Bay-Bulat Taimiev in strengthening the Russian-Chechen mutual relations is beyond any doubt, especially in the light of the modern state of Russian-North Caucasus relations.

## **3. Research Questions**

The problem of studying the history of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus in the 16<sup>th</sup> – first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the question of the historical role of the politician Bay-Bulat Taimiev has an extensive historiography. Serious attention was paid to the study of the formation of the Russian-North Caucasus military-political union in the 16<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many Russian authors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wrote about the Caucasus, including the participants of the Caucasus War who tried to objectively understand the events that took place in the Caucasus in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries there were many publications in Russia, the authors of which objectively and impartially assessed the Caucasus War, as well as forms and methods of joining the North Caucasus to Russia (Kolosov, 1982).

The set of studies and identified archival documents provides an opportunity for objective and comprehensive analysis of the formation of Russian-North Caucasus socio-political, cultural and military unity, makes it possible to reveal the deep socio-political reasons of the people's liberation movement of the highlanders, to consider the issues of the historical role of Bay-Bulat Taimiev in strengthening the Russian-North Caucasus unity.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the paper is to show the formation of the military-political leader of Chechnya Bay-Bulat Taimiev, to consider his diplomatic activities, as well as to study his huge contribution to the development of Russian-Chechen relations in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this context, it seems

necessary to trace the process of establishing and developing relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus region.

## 5. Research Methods

The work used general scientific (analysis and synthesis) and special methods (chronological, historical-genetic, historical-typological, method of frontal study of archival funds). The chronological method allowed studying the formation of Russian-North Caucasus relations in the historical perspective, historical-genetic provided an opportunity to establish causal ties throughout the development of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus, the historical-typological method allowed classifying the motives of regular periodic political, economic and cultural ties and the conclusion of agreements and alliances.

## 6. Findings

The name of Bay-Bulat Taimiev in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resounded through the Caucasus. This name was also widely known in Russia. Needless to say that only such qualities as bravery and courage (so typical for Bay-Bulat Taimiev) could bring such fame. There have always been many brave and courageous people in the Caucasus, but most of them have run into history as unknown or little-known. Apart from the courage that struck the entire Caucasus, Bay-Bulat had such qualities as an acute mind, the ability to understand the tricks of politics and international relations in the Caucasus. In fact, Bay-Bulat possessed another rare gift for the highlander of the time – he was a born diplomat.

In historical literature, the image of Bay-Bulat has been developing, first of all, as a warrior, the leader of the liberation movement in Chechnya in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, very little is written about Taimiev's diplomatic activities, about his huge contribution to the development of Russian-Chechen relations in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the 1820s of this century.

In the political arena of Chechnya Bay-Bulat Taimiev appears in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite his youth, he quickly became a widely recognized military-political leader. His name first appears in Russian documents in 1806 and has already been regularly mentioned since 1808. From the early 1820s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until his death in 1831, the name Bay-Bulat was mentioned in most reports by Russian military commanders about Chechnya.

Bay-Bulat has been a supporter of alliance with Russia since the beginning of his military-political career. He understood that in an environment of intense struggle for the Caucasus between Russia, Turkey and Iran, Chechnya would not be able to maintain its independence. He saw the future of Chechnya as part of Russia. But he wanted Russia, by establishing its power over the Chechen people, to do so in accordance with their traditions and customs, and to govern them with the help of the Chechen people. Bay-Bulat sought this by all means – peaceful, diplomatic, and only if they failed to achieve the goal – then military. Along the way he had both allies and opponents among Russian military commanders and administrations. There were victories and defeats. Until his death Bay-Bulat Taimiev did not get out of this way.

In early June 1806, I.V. Gudovich was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus. Alexander I asked him before leaving St. Petersburg to present his ideas on new aspects in the Caucasus policy of Russia, as set out in the *Destiny* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dubrovin, 1875).

On June 12, Gudovich presented his plan of action in the Caucasus to the tsar. The new mayor correctly understood what he wanted in St. Petersburg – the preservation of existing Russian positions in the region and the minimum offensive activity. In his report to the tsar I.V. Gudovich paid most attention and place to the Chechens. He proposed three aspects which, in his opinion, should have led to the reassurance and restraint of the Chechen people: 1) to relocate as many Chechen people as possible to the right bank of the Terek, but with the condition that they themselves guard the nearby cordon line from attacks by the highlanders. Gudovich understood that on the plain, especially near the Caucasus line, it would be much easier to control the Chechen people and bring them gradually into complete subjugation; 2) to sell salt to the Chechen at a reasonable cost, to allow them to trade duty-free within the Russian limits; 3) allow the Chechen people grazing their cattle in winter “on empty steppes of the left bank of the Terek”. Undoubtedly, these proposals met the urgent needs of the Chechen population and, if implemented, could lead to further Russian-Chechen rapprochement, strengthening of political, trade and economic ties.

At the end of July 1806 I.V. Gudovich arrived to the North Caucasus and began to carefully understand the state of Russian-Chechen relations. He convened a congress of petty officers of 104 Chechen villages, i.e. most settlements in Chechnya. The Chechen representatives told Gudovich that the discontent in Chechnya and Chechen attacks on the Caucasus Line were caused by the oppression of residents by local Russian superiors. Gudovich promised to settle all the complaints of the Chechen people and demanded that they stop the raids on the Caucasus Line. In response to peace and tranquility on the cordon line, he promised to sell salt to the Chechen people at a very low price, to allow them grazing their cattle in winter on the lowlands of the left bank of the Terek, to improve the amanats’ position, to stop harassment of the Chechen people by the Russian authorities and, above all, to equalize them with Russian subjects (Berge, 1904; Dubrovin, 1888).

In Chechnya at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was no single center of government of the country, the power of petty officers in their villages and societies was largely nominal, based more on their personal authority and traditions; they had no real leverage. Knowing the military-political situation in the region many of the Chechen petty officers and owners would like to live in peace with Russia.

On September 20, 1806, I.V. Gudovich addressed the Chechen people with a semi-categorical *Announcement*: ... “I found, he announces, that some frivolous persons from the Chechen people do not stop raids in a theft manner and continue robbery and capture ..., but before I turned to a fair measure of severity, I found it necessary to invite honorary petty officers of your society and namely Kusa Al-Temir, Masaray, Idut, with whom through personal conversations I declare the danger to the entire Chechen society: ... If you stop your raids, leave predations and be calm, you will find your happiness and well-being ....”. In the *Announcement*, Gudovich reiterates his promises to the Chechen people made at the congress, persistently calls on them to relocate to the right bank of the Terek and announces that from now on the amanats will be perceived “not as a pledge of loyalty”, but as “the only means of nationality”.

On the contrary, in 1806 Chechen petty officers tried in every way to improve relations with the royal authorities, to prevent Russian troops from going to Chechnya. This is also evidenced by their negotiations with I.V. Gudovich in the summer of the same year and their subsequent actions.

The villages of Big and Small Chechnya negotiated with the Russian authorities on normalization of relations through the mediation of Andreevsky uzden Haji-Kandurov. Besides, Chechen petty officers also conducted the same negotiations, among them there were Bay-Bulat Taimiev (it was from 1806 that

he began to play an increasing role in the political arena of Chechnya), Chulik Khandyrgei, Princes Turlovs and Taimazovs (CAC, 1868) Similar negotiations with the Russian side through the mediation of Georgian princes were conducted at this time by Ingush and Karabulak (CAC, 1870; Kolosov, 1982).

The year 1807 in Russian-Chechen relations is also important because it was the beginning of Russian administrative power in Chechnya established in the form of police departments. The officers were appointed in agreement with Chechen societies.

However, in 1813, the police administration in Chechnya was abolished and the power in the region was transferred to military commanders. This immediately caused resentment in Chechnya, as the military tried to solve all issues by order and in categorical manner.

The situation was exacerbated by the appointment of General A.P. Ermolov as the Caucasus viceroy in 1816. On the way to Tiflis A.P. Ermolov stopped in the fortress of Vladikavkaz, and there, upon his initiative, called the meeting with Bay-Bulat Taimiev. Ermolov announced that he intends to appoint him “the chief of Chechnya”. But the General did not give any power to Bay-Bulat, despite claims of the latter one.

A.P. Ermolov as soon as possible (within 2–3 years) decided to forcibly establish a firm Russian power in the North Caucasus. He began the execution of his plan to conquer the North Caucasus with the construction of the fortress Grozny in Chechnya. The repressive policy of Ermolov caused the revolts of the highlanders in Chechnya, Dagestan and Kabarda in 1818. Thus began the historic Caucasus War (1818–1864), the people’s liberation struggle of the Chechen was led by Bay-Bulat Taimiev.

Since 1818, there have been occasional military clashes between the Russian army and Chechen rebels in Chechnya. Until 1822, the liberation movement in Chechnya was not massive.

In the autumn of 1822, part of the local population, brought to despair by punitive measures of the royal authorities, was ready to seek compromise with them and to conquer with certain concessions on their part. On October 5, 1822, Grekov reported to the Chief of Staff of the Caucasus Corps that the majority of the Kachkalykovs “absolutely want subjugation to us and obedience”, and “there are a few that do not want to conquer”. The Grekov’s report of October 13 to Ermolov clearly shows that in the autumn of 1822 the Chechen villages faced an acute struggle between supporters of reconciliation with Russia and their opponents (“military party”).

Thus, the representatives of the Russian administration in the Caucasus responded with new punitive actions to the attempts of Bay-Bulat Taimiev and the Chechen people to solve the problem of accession to Russia through negotiations. This news caused misunderstanding and shadow of indignation even in the official Petersburg. Ermolov had to justify himself by presenting the Russian-Chechen talks as his own attempts to conquer the Chechen people by political, peaceful means. He fully blamed the Chechen people for the breakdown of negotiations, thus proving loyalty to the power tactics chosen by them.

## **7. Conclusion**

From 1818 to 1820 the Russian authorities conquered Chechnya, brought it into obedience, and since 1821 have consolidated this victory. In both cases the methods were the same: the destruction of villages and their inhabitants, the expulsion of Chechen people from the lowland areas to the mountains (Ermolov’s predecessors as the viceroy of the Caucasus – Gudovich, Tormasov, Rtischev, on the

contrary, sought to evict mountain Chechen people to the plain), the deprivation of their means of subsistence. Neither Dagestan nor Kabarda suffered such huge material and human losses during that period from the actions of Russian troops and authorities as Chechnya. No other people of the North Caucasus were hit by the Russian government at that time by such repressions as the Chechen people.

Therefore, it is in Chechnya that a huge amount of combustible material has accumulated. The first explosion of general indignation took place in 1822. This opposition aimed at “protecting land and independence against the royal administration and colonial orders” was of a “liberation character” (Narochnitskiy, 1988). However, the uprising was poorly organized, and by the end of the year the Russian troops managed to suppress it. The uprising was suppressed with exceptional cruelty. At the same time, the authorities were not going to continue to abandon the repressive course towards the Chechen population. Narochnitskiy (1988) noted that in 1817–1825 “in the Caucasus tsarism applied methods of colonial policy of feudal states. These measures were violent to the mountain peasantry ...” (p. 463).

At the same time, during the initial period of the Caucasus War, not all Chechen residents were ready to participate in the armed struggle with Russia. Mindful of previous years of Russian-Chechen relations, when many emerging differences and problems were resolved peacefully, through negotiation, the Chechens hoped that it would be possible to negotiate with Russia. However, this did not happen. A.P. Ermolov was against any political, peaceful means of solving the problem of establishing firm Russian power in the region. He preferred to speak to the highlanders of the North Caucasus the language of strength and repression, convinced of the universality of these methods. That is what ignited the flames of the Caucasus War.

On the long and multifaceted path of accession of the peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia there was also political and economic rapprochement, establishment and development of cultural ties, extension of Russian administrative power in a given territory, faults and mistakes on both sides, which often led to armed clashes.

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