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UMALAT LAUDAEV ON THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHECHENS IN "CHECHEN TRIBE"

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Abstract

The problem of the social structure of the Chechens found are reflected in the works and scientific publications of many authors both pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods. All research works that, in one way or another, touch upon the issue of social structure, social relations and everyday life of Chechens can be divided into two groups. The authors, depending on the level of the study of this issue, give a variety of assessments of social and political structure of the Chechens. Caucasian scholars of the 19th century were divided according to the definition of the social system of the Chechens: the first group was those researchers who considered and perceived Chechen society as patriarchal-clan. In this research, the authors focused on the work of the first Chechen ethnographer Umalat Laudaev "The Chechen Tribe", in which he expressed his opinion on the social structure of the Chechens, from the period when the Chechens through trial and errors created their internal order based on adats. U. Laudaev speaks about the difficult search for an optimal social order, when the Chechens created their own aedile, a kind of government body where they elected Kanoi elders who had knowledge and life experience, which gradually grew into the Mehk-Khel-Council of the country. The bodies of trial-hattam and compromise-masatt were created. Then, after the conquest of Chechnya, the Russian government created Mekhkame, but already controlled and managed by the Russian government. Laudaev described the time from the period of antiquity.

Keywords: Laudaev, social structure, Chechens, social relations

1. Introduction

All research works that, in one way or another, touch upon the issue of social structure and social relations of Chechens can be divided into two groups. The authors give a variety of assessments of the social and political structure of the Chechens. Caucasian scholars of the 19th century, in their studies, were divided according to the definition of the social system of the Chechens: the first group was those researchers who considered and perceived Chechen society as patriarchal-clan. This group included Berger (1859), Leontovich (1883), Blaramberg (1992), Debu (1829), Dubrovin (1871) and others. They believed and emphasized in their writings that the Chechens were democratic people and they had no lords and they were all equal. The second group of Caucasian scholars of the pre-Soviet period believed that there was a feudal system in Chechnya. These were such well-known researchers of the history of the North Caucasus as Butkov (1869), Bronevsky (1823) and others. These researchers in their works determined Chechen societies as feudal, in which there was a class of feudal lords ruled by lords and elders. The researchers of the Soviet period can also be divided according to two points of view. The first group of scientists who believed that the Chechens had the dominance of the clan system included Bushuev (1959), Dalgat (1934), who believed that the clan system had disintegrated in Chechnya. The problem of the social structure of the Chechens in the XYIII–XIX centuries was covered by the researchers in the 50-60-ies of the XX century: Kusheva (1963), Gritsenko (1961), Khasbulatov (2001), Saidov (1972), Akhmadov (2002) and others. The researchers Akhmadov (1988), Isaeva (1972), studying the problem of the social structure of the Chechens, also came to the conclusion that feudal relations developed in Chechen society with resettlement to the plain.

2. Problem Statement

The topic of our research is the analysis of the work of the first Chechen ethnographer Laudaev (1872) "The Chechen tribe", written in 1872 and published in Tiflis on the issue of the social structure of the Chechens.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the research is the opinion of the first Chechen ethnographer Umalat Laudaev on the social structure of the Chechens, which he described in his book "The Chechen Tribe".

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our research is to show the social structure of the Chechens based on the book by Umalat Laudaev "The Chechen Tribe".

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis was the principles of objectivity, scientific character and historicism, implying the study of facts and phenomena in all their diversity, in the particular historical conditions of their emergence and development. The authors applied the methods of source analysis.

6. Findings

Many authors, who studied the period of the history of Chechnya indicated in this paper, in one way or another, refer to the book by U. Laudaev "Chechen tribe", in which he touches upon the issues of social structure and social relations throughout history.

Umalat Laudaev, beginning his work with a description of the territory of Chechnya, wrote about the ancient period of history when the people lived in disunited tribes. There was no common ethnic identity and the attempts of good minded people to unite the people under a certain order did not lead to anything. He wrote about the tribal stage of the development of the people, when everyone was worried about the well-being of their noble family and not about people as a whole.

Referring to the historical fate of the Chechens, Laudaev, continuing the description, noted that during this period of the clan system, when the Chechens lived in tribes, or by noble families and challenged superiority over each other, they did not have social stratification, they did not have lords and were all equal, and even if the representatives of neighboring peoples lived among them, they lost all the titles that they had in their people. The Chechens call themselves usdens (ozdi or uzden). The Chechens appreciated courage, bravery in battle and the phrase "He is a good warrior" was the highest praise for a Chechen of that period according to Laudaev.

In conflict situations they, by virtue of their belligerence, resolved their disputes by force of arms. In even more ancient times the eldest in the family could settle all disputes and everyone took into account his decision. However, with the growth of the population, more problems arose among the people than simple fights. This was no longer enough. As a result, from the elders -Kanoi a certain authority Aedile began to form. Kanoi or the members of Aedile decided what punishments followed the crimes and made the guilty ones swear in their execution. Today the Chechens use this word to mean power-edal. Laudaev described the tribal system of the Chechens, a period when there were no special people who forced the Kanoi to carry out their decisions; they often found a compromise – maslagat. The long process of the formation of a unified government for the entire country of Chechens and a unified legal procedure was accompanied by the search for the right path in attempts to preserve equality, which was historically valued and respected by the Chechens. People elected by Kanoi had to be distinguished by high moral qualities, they were entrusted with fate and therefore they had to be impassive and fair. Everyone had to carry out their sentences.

Otherwise, they received such social condemnation that the entire population expelled them from their places of permanent residence, as people who broke the law. The Chechen legal process gradually improved during this period. As Laudaev (1872) explained, if initially they went to the house of judges to deal with cases, now, in the noble family of a fair court decision, a place was determined where the Kanoi conducted inquiries and delivered their verdict. This place where the trial was taking place was called

Khattam-inquiries. The judges asked questions to both sides and made their decision. The parties were obliged to obey the decision of the judges. All this took place until the last return of the Chechens to the plain, and the Khattam tribunal initially operated in the mountains. Laudaev stated that the court Khattam for the residents of the former Argun society was in Maast and Nashakh, for the Ichkerin people the gathering took place on the Khetashon-kort hill of the Tsontaroy village and the plain Chechens gathered in the Khankala gorge and Kachkalyk. Even before Shamil came to Chechnya, these meetings were called Mekhk-Khel.

After the Caucasian War at the Grozny fortress, the Russian authorities formed the Grozny "mehkaeme" according to the type of traditional Chechen court proceedings, where the cases were considered in accordance with Adat and Sharia. Referring again to the history of the Chechens, Laudaev stated that during the time of troubles there were some Chechens who were engaged in unseemly deeds. The period described by Laudaev was apparently a period of resettlement to the plain, which was occupied by the Kabardian, Avar, and Kumyk lords who entered the Russian vassal-allied citizenship. The resettled people were forced to agree to the conditions of those who occupied the lands left by them during the Tatar-Mongol invasion. Although the agreements were of a forced nature, but due to some political calculations, in a later period they invited lords from neighboring peoples to rule in order to establish mutually beneficial, friendly relations with the Russian government, which was established in the region. Umalat Laudaev did not mention the time, but it can be assumed that he was talking about the period when the remnants of the Tatar-Mongolian troops switched to a sedentary lifestyle, lost their belligerence and the Chechens began to return to the plain they were forced to leave. The increased power of Russia and the foundation of Russian fortresses forced the leaders of the Caucasian peoples to seek an alliance with Russia. This alliance in the form of vassal-allied relations was established by the Kabardian, Avar and Kumyk lords. According to Laudaev (1872), when the Chechens returned to the plain they did not have social stratification. Relying on the example of neighboring peoples, in order to establish order and calm, they began to invite Avar (Melardoev), Kumyk and Kabardian lords to various Chechen villages for reign. They were expelled when the Chechens were dissatisfied. They acted as intermediaries between the Chechens and the Russian authorities. The described period was the second half of the 18th century, the period when the increased power of Russian on the banks of the Terek took place, since the Caucasian military line passed along the Terek. The reign of foreign princes ruled out the suppression of the freedom of the Chechens. The tactics were justified; if their interests were infringed the Chechens could return back to the mountains and take revenge on their offenders. The desire of the Chechens to establish calm and order according to Laudaev led them to accept Islam. This religion had a great impact on the social structure of the Chechens. Laudaev (1872) wrote that the Chechens accepted Islam from their Dagestani neighbors. "Mohammedanism was adopted by Chechens from neighboring Dagestan tribes, they followed the Shafi doctrine". With the adoption of Islam, the controversial affairs of the Chechens were resolved according to the Sharia. However, Sharia was very hard to establish among the Chechens. Laudaev wrote that during the examination of a case in terms of Sharia, it happened that if one of the parties was dissatisfied and there was a strong noble family behind it, they protested the court's decision according to Sharia and asked for a punishment according to Adat. This was also considered acceptable.

In order to correct the inconveniences that befell the Sharia, we found it necessary to coordinate it with the Adat, and therefore some cases began to be decided according to the Adat, others – according to the Sharia. This agreement was introduced in other mountain tribes, and therefore it was adopted by the Chechens. At present, the institution of the makhkam (people's court) is conducting more correct legal proceedings than before, and with the vigilant supervision of the Russian bosses, it can satisfy the people's needs. (Laudaev, 1872, p. 24)

In this case, Laudaev spoke about the "Mehkem" already established by the Russian authorities, the court in which cases were examined according to Sharia and according to Adat in some cases. This was an attempt to transform the country's Mehk-Khel Council, which was the legislative and executive body, into a more narrowly assigned judicial institution. Being in the Russian service and the owner of a fairly large piece of land by the time of writing his work, it was not surprising that Laudaev's next statement was that the Chechens enjoyed only freedom at the present time (after joining Russia).

They have been given places to live, scattered small auls and farmsteads are joined together and form regular large auls, already called "shahar" (city), with their bosses and courts. Bazaars are formed in many places, where the Russians and the Chechens beat hands, bargaining with each other and where the Chechens sell their items profitably. (Laudaev, 1872, p. 28)

Laudaev described how the Chechens carried out land surveying in the Chechen tribal society between the noble families. He wrote that everyone gathered and were taken as witnesses in marking the boundaries between the family plots in order to avoid misunderstandings in the future and to resolve the issue peacefully and harmony.

For this, at the end of the border, bulls and rams were slaughtered and meat was cooked in huge cauldrons and witnesses were treated to the approval of the borders. As a sign of this celebration, at the end of the meal, the cauldrons rolled down from the mountains to the other end of the border, thereby declaring their possession of the land and usually a feast was repeated at the other border. (Laudaev, 1872, p. 31)

Laudaev explained by the example of his surname "Chermoev", that when the Chechens returned to the plain in the post-Mongolian period, the land remaining in the mountains left for the use of their brothers who remained in the mountains, but even when they left, this land remained their property and received ber-gift, a kind of veiled tax for the used land. Laudaev wrote the following about his great-grandfather, who received tax from a land plot in the mountains:

Nogai-Mirza, my great-grandfather, moved from Ichkeria to the plane with his property, which consisted of cattle. He stayed in many auls, but nowhere was he satisfied with the quality of the land, which he determined by the following means. He had a bread measure called "girdi" (about 5 garnets). His cows could not anywhere fill in this measure with with one milk yield, as it

happened in Ichkeria. In search of a better land, he went to the Terek, where, to his joy, milk passed over the edges of the girdi. "This is the land that I was looking for" – he said and founded the aul that exists today and bears his name. Our surname received from the remaining plot of land in Ichkeria a ber, or a gift. The Chermoevs showed me the arable lands of our surname as far back as 1860. (Laudaev, 1872, p. 34)

Talking about the return of Chechens to the Chechen plain, the ethnographer stated that the Chechens settled on the plain with farms, fearing the Russians, who ruined and burned farms, took cattle and took people as prisoners.

Despite the fact that, in general, Laudaev's narrative is pro-Russian, nevertheless he noted that the Chechens are so used to resettlement from one place to another that this constituted their national distinctive feature. They moved without any reason and constructed simple, fragile structures. Under Shamil, it happened that some families built their dwellings in 20 different places.

Laudaev (1872) wrote that

The Chechens did not have a serf class; the slaves appeared to them later, and, moreover, on different conditions than those of their neighbors. The slavery of the Chechen slaves was different than that of the neighboring mountain tribes. The lower class of the people was slaves. In other communities of highlanders slaves were presented by a special category of people, however in Chechen tribes the slaves were the younger members of the family. (p. 36)

The difference between the social relations of Chechens and neighboring tribes was noted by Laudaev (1872):

The slave-owners of other tribes settled their slaves with dwellings around them, and the slaves, providing their families, still bore labor duty; among the Chechens, they lived in the houses of their masters and used their food and shoes. Almost always, the owner and the slave worked together. In relation to different persons the slaves were almost equal with the people. Only the word "lai" (slave) distinguished him from other inhabitants, while the usdens of other tribes put them on slaves, tried their best to acquire them and this class was numerous among them. (p. 39).

Even in situation which practically has a clear class polarization among other peoples, the Chechens tried to observe democracy and social equality, despite the emerging economic inequality.

Thus, Umalat Laudaev described the social structure of the Chechens from the period of the tribal system to the period when the Chechen Republic was annexed to Russia until the time in when he lived.

7. Conclusion

The social structure of the Chechens according to Umalat Laudaev had the following features. In an earlier period, the Chechens lived only in favor of their own family name, then, with the increase in the population, the question of the creation of a certain authority-aedile was raised, which included people

who had life experience and knowledge. Gradually, the aedile grew into a more significant legislative and executive body – Mehk-Khel, which, after the conquest of Chechnya by Russia, was transformed into a judicial body of Mehkame. After the annexation of Chechnya in 1859, Chechnya became a part of the Russian Empire and the reforms carried out in the 60s contributed to the entry of Chechnya into civil, administrative and legal field of tsarist Russia.

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