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ETHNOCULTURAL PROCESSES IN THE CHECHEN SOCIETY
IN 20TH –21ST CENTURIES

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Abstract

Ethnocultural processes taking place in the Chechen Republic in the last thirty years are analyzed in the paper. The main catalyst for ethnocultural transformations in Chechen society was the events of the military-political crisis of the 1990s of the 20th century. destruction of the cultural space took place during the Dudayev regime establishment, which resulted in the degradation of the cultural and educational environment. During the conflict military phase, the leading republican cultural institutions were completely destroyed. The peculiarity of the situation in Chechnya lies in the total destruction of cultural heritage. Everything that connected people with the past, which testified to its historical path, perished here. The cultural revival of the Chechen Republic people is the most significant task, since it dictates the need to solve other basic issues as well. Everyone knows that there is no civilization without culture, the existence purpose of any ethnic group is lost, moral and cultural decay occurs. Particular attention is paid to the traditional culture revival of the Chechen people; its integration into the international and all-Russian cultural space. Today the republic is going through one of the most severe periods of its history. It is required to restore people's faith in such humanistic values as social justice, respect for human dignity, kindness, mercy, decency, to regain seriously deformed ethical norms and principles.

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1. Introduction

The coming year 2022 is dedicated to the cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia – Decree of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin. The relevance of studying the dynamics of cultural processes in modern Russia is determined by the observed increase in the dialogue and mutual influence of ethno-national cultures. The state policy of the Chechen Republic in the framework of culture is carried out in the field of museum and library business, folk art crafts, all types and genres of art, cinematography, amateur art, identification, study, protection, restoration, and use of historical and cultural monuments, aesthetic education and art education. Positive changes have taken place in recent years in culture: the construction of new cultural facilities; restoration of historical and cultural monuments; resumption of activities of museum institutions, professional theaters, choreographic and musical groups, rural houses of culture, libraries and schools of supplementary education.

Museum and library funds are systematically replenished; the repertoire of theaters is being expanded. The framework of cultural cooperation with other regions of the Russian Federation has developed, friendly contacts have been established with creative teams from countries near and far abroad. Creating favorable conditions contributes to the development of cultural activities of citizens and new types of creativity, revival, development, and use of the national cultural and historical heritage.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of the paper is formulated as a contradiction between the need for adequate scientific knowledge of contemporary culture of Russia, which is in dynamic development, and the lack of comprehension of this state by modern historians and culturologists. Theoretical and methodological foundations for analyzing the dynamics of cultural processes in the Chechen Republic involve identification of trends in cultural dynamics in the context of Russia's socio-economic reform; determination of the main vectors of cultural transformations at the present stage.

3. Research Questions

- i. The object of the study is ethno-cultural processes in modern Chechnya.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of cultural processes in the Chechen Republic, identification of factors that contribute to the transformation of traditional culture.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research is the method of theoretical analysis, which determines the traditional culture place of the Chechen people in modern society. The application of the content analysis method made it possible to reveal the content side of texts published in various editions.

The comparative historical method and the principle of historicism are applied in the paper. Particular attention is paid to the problem-chronological, retrospective, historical-comparative, historical-typological approach, which allowed the author to explore the issue.

6. Findings

Modern culture is going through a state defined by the vast majority of researchers as a "crisis", which indicates strenuous attempts to comprehend the sociocultural process in post-Soviet Russia. On the one hand, culture is influenced by emerging socio-political and socio-economic mechanisms. On the other hand, culture has a noticeable influence on them, acting as a kind of catalyst for the social process. Regarding the degree of problem development, it can be argued that there is no holistic historical concept of the culture dynamics of the Russian Federation, despite the apparent abundance of literature devoted to the analysis of contemporary culture. Modern researchers of culture are attracted by the problems of morphogenesis, the transformation of culture, that is, cultural dynamics and, in particular, the moments of the most intense dynamism – the transitional states of culture. Transitional epochs in the history of national culture are studied by Ahiezer (1997), Kondakov (1998), Zlobin (1980).

The state of culture is deeply analyzed in the works of foreign authors – Baudrillard (1988), Kozlovski (1997), Kristeva (1969), Ortega-i-Gasset (1989).

The monograph by Tishkov (2003) *Society in Armed Conflict (Ethnography of the Chechen War)* should be mentioned among major studies on Chechen society at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries.

Several collections of articles published at various times contain a collective analysis of the ethnocultural processes that have taken place in Chechen society in recent years (Furman, 1999; *Culture of Chechnya*, 2002).

The USSR collapse caused much more serious socio-economic, political and ethnocultural consequences in the Chechen Republic than in other subjects of the Russian Federation, which ultimately (combined with the mistakes made by the federal center) led to a protracted military conflict, as well as a noticeable degradation of state and public institutions of Chechnya. A self-destructive process based on the denial of the past and the absolutization of the ethnic, was launched during the years of perestroika in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. The cultural space destruction took place during the period of the Dudayev regime establishment, which resulted in the degradation of the cultural and educational environment. The idea of self-determination of the Chechen nation arose under the conditions of Gorbachev's perestroika, when peripheral ethno-nationalism interrupted the democratization process with its power carried out by the reformist elite of the Communist Party and the radical democratic opposition. The challenge from the elite of the titular nationalities was so unexpected and strong that the center, with its controversial and indecisive policy, could not find an effective and acceptable answer for the republics. Ethnic nationalism demonstrated great mobilizing power, and the idea of creating the state for each nation was defined as natural, desirable, and truly democratic (Tishkov, 2003).

The neglect of work has become the most dangerous in its consequences in the new pseudo-culture generated by the Chechen revolution. An easy, criminal way of making money very quickly enriched thousands of people without a family or occupation, creating a "new elite" from yesterday's outcasts. They became the basis of the new regime. Unrighteous wealth (acquired without much effort and fell into

the hands of people, most people are unable to use them for the benefit of themselves and society) gave rise to evil, destroyed the foundations of the traditional life and culture of the Chechen people.

The leading republican cultural institutions were completely destroyed during the conflict military phase: the United Museum, the National Library, the buildings of the Republican Children's Library, the Vainakh State Dance Ensemble, the State Philharmonic, and the Chechen State Drama Theater named after Nuradilov, Russian Drama Theater named after Lermontov, the Republican Puppet Theater, and etc. Many buildings of historical and cultural value were destroyed; monuments and memorable places associated with the names of Tolstoy, Polezhaev, Lermontov, A.P. Chekhov. The Argun State Historical-Architectural and Natural Museum-Reserve, which includes more than 60 architectural complexes, about 150 above-ground crypts, 20 places of worship, 22 natural monuments (lakes, waterfalls, meadows, valuable forest lands), and 13 monuments of stone architecture, have significantly suffered (Elbuzdukaeva, 2012).

Irreparable damage was inflicted on the archives of the Chechen Republic during the war of 1994-1996. Ninety per cent of the unique documents reflecting the political, economic, cultural life of the Chechens, starting from the 18th century, were destroyed. Valuable pre-revolutionary papers, information about the history of Grozny, villages, districts, and personal archives of prominent people burned down. The small property that the war spared was plundered and damaged. Creative teams broke up; many cultural figures left the republic.

The Yandarbiev-Udugov propaganda, which staked on the national exclusivity of the Chechens, ethnic hatred, base instincts, caused terrible damage to culture. Nevertheless, Chechnya did not leave the information and educational space of Russia. Newspapers came from Moscow, television programs were received, humanitarian contacts were maintained, contacts were maintained between scientists and cultural figures (Tishkov, 2003). Due to poverty, the population's access to culture was limited mainly by television.

An essential part of the population of the post-war republic was not satisfied with the social comfort state and the security level, there were a lot of people who wanted to go abroad for permanent residence. The Chechen intelligentsia realized that the preservation and improvement of the Chechen people was possible only through their return to the Russian legal field. In August 2000, the Ministry of Culture of the Chechen Republic was recreated, and together with the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation determined the priority measures for the restoration of cultural objects. Thirteen regional, city and republican newspapers were registered on January 1, 2001 in the Chechen Republic, television and radio worked. Since 2000, the process of the library network revival in the republic began. The library fund was replenished with 73 thousand copies of books; 219 clubs, 258 libraries, 31 children's music schools resumed their work in the republic. Generally, by 2001, 560 institutions and organizations revived their work with a total number of employees of 2845 people (Tishkov, 2003). The State Archival Service of the republic was created by the Decree of the Head of the Administration of the Chechen Republic Kadyrov dated September 9, 2000. The State Archival Service of the Chechen Republic was transformed into the Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic with a staff of 45 people by the Decree of the Head of the Administration of the Chechen Republic dated January 27, 2001. The restoration of the Archive Fund took place on the initiative of the Archive Department under the President

of the Chechen Republic by direct conclusion of agreements with the archive departments of Dagestan, Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Rostov Region, Stavropol Territory, and etc. The restoration of the archive fund made it possible to expand the reference and information work of the archive; it was very substantial for people who had lost all documents during the hostilities.

It was required to recreate the structure of concert organizations, to begin accelerated training of professional musicians, singers, dancers, and artists of other genres in order to make up for the losses and move on. In the 2002/03 academic year, talented students of music and art schools gained scholarships from the Ministry of Culture of Russia “Young Talents.”

In 2003, young artists from Chechnya took part in the New Names of Russia project in Moscow. The exhibition “Drawings of Chechen Children” was held at the State Tretyakov Gallery as part of the project “Return the museum to Grozny.” An exhibition of 101 paintings by 33 artists from Chechnya was held in the exhibition hall of the Russian Academy of Arts under the personal patronage of the Academy President Zurab Tsereteli, with the subsequent publication of a catalog of exhibited works (State Tretyakov Gallery, 2003).

An exhibition of Chechen and Ingush artists dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Union of Artists of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was held within the framework of the city government program “Tolerance” in St. Petersburg on November 26, 2009. The staff of the culture sphere worked optimally, despite the scarcity of funding and low wages fee. It was required to recreate the structure of concert organizations, to begin accelerated training of professional musicians, singers, dancers, and artists of other genres in order to make up for the losses and move on. The revival of the ensemble “Vainakh” became a great event in the cultural life of the republic. The artists restored the concert program in a short time, and in March 2002 they participated in the 5th Festival of Masters of Arts of the North Caucasus in Moscow. The culmination of the ensemble revival was participation in the prestigious international festival of folklore in France, where it was highly appreciated and was invited to the upcoming art festivals. The republic leadership provided the ensemble team with all required support.

In April 2005, a delegation headed by Executive Secretary of the Russian Commission for UNESCO G.E. Ordzhonikidze visited Grozny (Astalov & Hamurzaev, 2014). The issues related to the restoration of the material and technical infrastructure of museums, education and advanced training of museum staff, were discussed at meetings with museum workers, university teachers, and students.

In 2010, the Memorial Complex of Glory named after A.-Kh. Kadyrov and the State Gallery named after A.-Kh. Kadyrov were solemnly opened in Grozny. The construction of a new museum complex of the National Museum under the Federal target program, which combined various architectural styles, including stylized medieval battle towers, became an essential event in the cultural life of the republic.

The museum network of the Chechen Republic includes six state museums with six branches and one municipal museum. The museum fund of the National Museum of the Chechen Republic currently consists of 38417 items. For instance, before the events of the 90s of the 20th century, about 230 thousand items were in the funds of the Chechen State United Museum. The library network of the republic consists of 279 libraries with a book fund of 2,139,023 copies. In comparison, before the outbreak of hostilities, there were 423 libraries in the CHIASSR with a book fund of 10.5 million copies, namely,

10 times more. Moreover, 80 % of the book fund is outdated and subject to write-off (Ministry of Culture of the Chechen Republic, 2021). It is indispensable to increase funding and update the electronic catalog of library collections to better ensure the Chechen Republic population access to it.

New productions appear in the repertoire of theaters in the Chechen Republic; cultural cooperation with the regions of the Russian Federation is expanding, creative contacts are being established with theaters from the countries of near and far abroad.

Recently, sixty cultural facilities have been built and restored in the republic; ten monuments of history and culture have been restored. In the period from 2008 to 2016, thirty-five houses of culture, seven rural libraries, six schools of supplementary education, the building of the Chechen Drama Theater named after Kh. Nuradilov, and the National Museum of the Chechen Republic with two branches have been reconstructed and put into exploitation.

The activities of cultural institutions of the Chechen Republic contribute to its socio-economic development. The state program "Development of culture and tourism in the Chechen Republic" for 2015-2020 is of great significance for cultural progress. The program provides for measures to preserve and evolve the cultural heritage of the Chechen Republic by increasing the library fund, attendance of museums, theaters, implementing exhibition projects, holding regional, all-Russian and international festivals, conferences, and round tables.

The Mahmud Esambaev International Dance Festival has been held in Grozny since 2009; The "Orpheus" International Music Competition in memory of People's Artist of the USSR Muslim Magomayev started in 2018; The All-Russian Theater Festival "Federation" has been held since 2019. The activities of cultural and art institutions are based on republican laws: "On librarianship in the Chechen Republic" (President of the Chechen Republic, 2009), "On the museum fund of the Chechen Republic and museums in the Chechen Republic" (President of the Chechen Republic, 2007), "On Social Guarantees for Workers Employed in the Sphere of Culture" (President of the Chechen Republic, 2012), "On Cultural Heritage Objects (Historical and Cultural Monuments) in the Chechen Republic" (President of the Chechen Republic, 2017).

A number of problems take place in the sphere of culture of the Chechen Republic, connected, primarily, with the replenishment and acquisition of the museum, archival and library funds; organization of traveling and exchange exhibitions.

The shortage of qualified specialists is observed in the sphere of culture of the republic. The given problem is solved by purposeful professional training and advanced training of employees of cultural institutions.

A serious task is to preserve the intangible cultural heritage. The Ministry of Culture of the Chechen Republic in 2016 began to create an electronic Catalog of objects of intangible cultural heritage of the Chechen Republic, including 75 objects.

The development of a cultural and tourism cluster will stimulate economic growth; contribute to the creation of new work places and attraction of investment to the republic. A significant advantage of the tourism industry is the excellent geographical and climatic conditions, the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Chechen Republic peoples. The amount of funding required for the implementation of the

State Program for 2014–2020 amounted to 9,535,221.1 thousand rubles (Government of the Chechen Republic, 2015).

Grants from the Head of the Chechen Republic are provided annually in the amount of 500,000 rubles to support projects in the field of culture and art. Employees of culture and art are awarded with the Prize named after the first President of the Chechen Republic Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov in the amount of 1,000,000 rubles for high achievements. The Ministry of Culture of the Chechen Republic assists in the cultural development of the peoples living in the republic. Tatar, Cossack, Nogai national cultural centers operate in the Shelkovsky region; Avar – in Sharoisk, Kumyk – in Gudermes, and Russian – in Grozny.

7. Conclusion

As a result of the USSR collapse, Chechen society, which retained many features of a pre-industrial, agrarian type of society, was plunged into a deep political crisis that affected literally all aspects of life and at the same time sharply accelerated the process of erosion of traditional spiritual culture. Starting from the 90s of the last century and up to the present, the search for an optimal model of state structure that would take into consideration the interests of the Chechen society and contribute to the preservation of its traditional culture has been one of the main imperatives in socio-political processes. Currently, it is impossible to imagine a society without contemporary musical, song and choreographic culture. Having ensured the right to cultural identity, the leadership of the Chechen Republic determines the vector of cultural growth, while preserving the historical heritage.

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