

**ISCKMC 2022****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****SOCIOCULTURAL INSTITUTIONS OF CHECHNYA IN THE 40–  
60S OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

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**Abstract**

The paper analyzes socio-cultural institutions functioning on the territory of the Grozny region (the former Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) of the USSR in the 40s – early 60s of the 20th century. The need for such an analysis is explained by the current socio-political situation caused by the deportation of a number of Soviet peoples during the Great Patriotic War. The traditional culture and socio-cultural institutions of the mountain peoples were replaced by new Soviet realities. The paper reveals the main features of the functioning of socio-cultural institutions in Chechnya. The spheres of their influence on the inhabitants of the region were determined. The study used documents and materials covering the history of the issue. The materials of the periodical press – the newspaper Groznensky Rabochiy were of particular interest. After analyzing the chronological and systematic principle, the author came to the conclusion that socio-cultural institutions were able to unite people who had suffered historical trauma and contributed to the way out of severe socio-political crises. If the traditional culture of the Chechens and Ingush helped to survive in exile, then upon returning to their homeland, it was necessary to be included in the modernization processes. Young people aspired to get an education and a good profession. Soviet socio-cultural institutions provided people with the necessary conditions and skills and contributed to the development of creative and other abilities.

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## **1. Introduction**

The reinterpretation of the old value systems and mastering new ones is an urgent need for a person and society. The formation of attitudes towards traditions helps in the transmission of cultural experience. The acceptance of the basic foundations of traditional culture helps people to perceive innovations in the future and include them in their cultural system.

A sociocultural institution is a mechanism that allows an individual and society to perceive cultural processes. In any society, social institutions are stable forms of the organization of the joint activities of people that ensure the satisfaction of the needs of society, social groups and individuals. It is customary to single out four groups of social institutions: political, economic, cultural and stratigraphy and kinship. It is socio-cultural institutions that have a great influence on society. These include schools, higher education, libraries, museums, theaters, religion, science and archives.

In difficult historical periods, during the years of wars and hardships, traditional socio-cultural institutions help peoples to consolidate and survive. In peacetime, during periods of active economic and social development, modernization of society, there is a need to familiarize individuals with a new cultural experience.

## **2. Problem Statement**

As a result of the mass resettlement of Chechens and Ingush in the Grozny region (the former Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic), a demographic problem arose. The region was of strategic importance. Personnel were needed at oil producing, processing enterprises and agriculture, and workers and specialists from all over the USSR were sent there. People brought their culture, customs, songs and dances to the Chechen land.

The Soviet state offered a list of cultural institutions familiar to most: schools, universities, libraries, theaters and cinemas, clubs. These forms worked successfully in the new territory. After the return of the Chechens and Ingush to their homeland, the solution of basic economic, housing and social issues, the Soviet socio-cultural institutions became the opportunity that gave yesterday's exiles to join an active social, educational and creative life. The main objective of the study was to examine the functioning of socio-cultural institutions in Chechnya both during the period of deportation of the indigenous population and in the first years after their return.

## **3. Research Questions**

A significant number of works by Soviet, Russian and foreign authors are devoted to the study of sociocultural institutions of the Soviet period. The research took place in the context of several areas: culture, history, politics, ethnography, philosophy. These articles and monographs are devoted to the issues of Caucasian tradition and culture, the development of socio-cultural institutions, as well as the coexistence, clashes and interaction of national and Russian (Soviet) cultures. The specificity of the historical past, due to deportation, has led to the fact that scientists closely connect the problems of politics, economics, nation – organization and cultural development in the Caucasus.

A chapter in the book of the Swedish researcher Cornell (2001) is devoted to the history and political processes in Chechnya.

A number of works by leading experts are devoted to the issues of interaction between Russian and national cultures (Akaev, 2015; Gapurov et al., 2016). The problems of intercultural and interethnic interaction are reflected in the studies of Akkueva (2019). The features of the national traditional culture of the Chechens are covered in the articles by Khasbulatova (2018) and Isakieva et al. (2019).

In the list of monographs on the culture of Chechnya and Ingushetia, it is necessary to note the work of Elbuzdukaeva "Culture of Chechnya: the 20th century" (2012). She also has an interesting article on the history of the Chechen theater (Elbuzdukaeva, 2021). A curious documentary publication by Muzakaev (2012) "Chechen culture – from tradition to modernity". The events held in the field of culture in Chechnya in the 40s – 50s are covered in the publication of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology named after Miklukho-Maclay "Culture of Chechnya; history and modern problems" (ChR Folk, 2006).

The employees of the SSC RAS have repeatedly turned to the history of the North Caucasus. The monographs reflect the problems of historiography, nation-organization and culture of the region (Krinko & Khlynina, 2009), (Khlynina & Krinko, 2014). The works of Semenova (2007; 2009) are devoted to the specifics of civilizational and modernization processes in the Caucasus.

Currently, the study of the culture of the peoples of the South of Russia, including the Chechens and Ingush, continues in the laboratory of history and ethnography of the SSC RAS as a part of the implementation of the scientific basic theme "Political and socio-cultural processes in the South of Russia in the context of modernization (the 18th–21st centuries)." The analysis of sociocultural institutions of Chechnya in 40–60 years previously was not performed.

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

This paper analyzes the activities of socio-cultural institutions operating in Chechnya in the 1940s–1960s. The purpose is to show their role, significance for the inhabitants of Chechnya, as well as the importance in the course of the resolution of the socio-political crisis that has developed in this territory and has become a consequence of the political decision of the USSR leadership to deport peoples.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The study was based on documents used for the first time and related to cultural organization in Chechen-Ingushetia, and materials from the periodical press – the newspaper Groznensky Rabochiy, published in Chechnya from March 1917 to 1991. The filings of the 50s–60s became an interesting source for the analysis of the socio-cultural institutions of Chechnya. The newspaper in Russian was published regularly, daily, excluding holidays and weekends.

The author used general scientific methods of logical analysis, source analysis of documents and a comparative historical method, which allowed analyzing a large amount of information, isolating the features of the functioning of socio-cultural institutions in Chechnya and determining the possibilities for the influence of these institutions on the process of including Chechens and Ingush coming from

deportation into the modernization processes in the republic. It is necessary to note that this analysis was carried out on a chronological and systematic basis.

## 6. Findings

The Great Patriotic War, which began in June 1941, adversely affected the work of the socio-cultural institutions of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The reductions in budget funding temporarily interrupted the work of the youth theater, the puppet theater, the music school, the museum of fine arts and the museum of geology at Grozny Oil Institute (Cultural organization).

The shortage of teaching staff caused by military mobilization could not make up for Grozny Pedagogical Institute, since, in view of the organizational difficulties of wartime, only 142 students graduated in 1941–1943 (Cultural Construction).

By early 1943 the situation was improving. Most of the libraries, 12 houses of culture and the museum of local lore are starting to work in the republic. Russian Drama Theater named after Lermontov returned from evacuation. Young specialists from the evacuees were recruited to work in the theater (Cultural Organization). With the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush in 1944, the need for national personnel in the arts, culture and education disappeared. Their training was interrupted for 13 years. The absence of specialists was made up for by the arrival of settlers (Osmaev, 2018). As a result of the analysis of documents and materials of the periodical press about those operating in the territory of Chechnya in the second half of the 40s–50s sociocultural institutions, the author got the following idea.

In the Grozny region (Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was abolished in 1944) there were schools, vocational schools, technical schools, and various educational courses. There were libraries, including mobile ones. There were actively functioning Houses of Culture at large enterprises and in some places on collective farms. In Grozny, the Drama Theater named after Lermontov had the most diverse repertoire. There were also cinemas with regular screenings. Some large houses of culture also work as cinemas, for example Cultural Centre named after Lenin. Oil and pedagogical institutes continued to produce specialists. In 1958, about 10,500 students were studying in the universities and technical schools of the republic. The movement of amateur performances, folk theaters and communities had a huge popularity. In 1956, at a review of amateur art in Grozny, the work of 53 groups from clubs, houses and palaces of culture, red corners, enterprises, institutions and educational institutions with a total number of participants of over two thousand people (2,000) was presented. 24 choirs, 185 soloists, 16 dance groups took part in the regional amateur art review (Alyshev & Samoilov, 1956). Such information might make a very favorable impression. Indeed, after the Second World War, many cities and villages in the USSR were literally destroyed. The country was hard to recover. However, a careful study of the materials made another, sad impression:

- there were no Chechen and Ingush journalists among the authors of the newspaper;
- there were no Chechen surnames in the notes and articles (neither among the employees of enterprises, nor collective farmers, nor students, nor among the participants in amateur art activities);

- there were no photographs of Chechens and Ingush, there were also no images of citizens in national costumes on the pages of newspapers, there were no national or simply Caucasian numbers in the list of amateur art reports;
- not a single name was noted in the notes on successful sports achievements, which were reported a lot and regularly (chess, athletics, football);
- not a single Chechen or Ingush awarded with an award or diploma was mentioned;

It was difficult to realize that peoples who had lived on their own land for centuries were expelled. The terrible injustice carried out with the Chechen and Ingush peoples was reflected in the pages of newspapers.

At the same time, it can be argued that it was the above-mentioned socio-cultural institutions that became the basis for the revival of those returning in the late 50s – early 60s to the homeland of the Chechens and Ingush in the restored Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Of course, people were severely injured. However, they were helped to survive this tragedy in exile by traditional culture, their own socio-cultural institutions: family, clan, language, songs and legends, memory of their ancestors, national codes of honor. These institutions became the backbone that made it possible not only to survive the exile and deportation, but also, returning to their homeland after 13 years, to start a new life.

It is known that many Chechens and Ingush, when returning to their homeland, could not move into their houses, which either collapsed, or other citizens with their families lived in their houses. There were financial problems, problems with work, etc. This caused anger, pain, and undermined faith in justice.

The future of a people is its youth. Returning to their native lands, young people seemed to fall into another world. Having experienced hunger, the death of loved ones and lack of rights, it was necessary to live on, move forward, catch up, study and work.

From the materials of periodicals of the late 50s – early 60s we can learn the following:

- the Drama Theater named after Lermontov continued to work actively. Along with the Russian drama theater, the Chechen-Ingush theater began to work, with a constant, albeit small, repertoire;
- the national ensemble "Vainakh" gave concerts;
- a large number of Soviet and foreign films were shown.

Gradually, Chechen and Ingush surnames appeared in the newspapers. In printed materials, the speech turnover “the representatives of the indigenous nationality” appeared. Tracing the materials of newspapers, we got an idea that a variety of training courses were in the republic:

- sewing courses
- accordion courses for the village (for indigenous people)
- corn courses
- textile painting courses (Privalov, 1959).

A symphonic music club began its work in Grozny.

There was an active school reform and school construction. More and more young people were being educated. There were 14 technical schools and vocational schools in the republic. However, higher

education for representatives of the indigenous nationality in the 50s remained inaccessible due to the poor preparation of schoolchildren. In the 60s and then young people began to actively study at universities, including according to republican quotas.

The articles about the Chechen-Ingush literature of Vinogradov appeared, as well as poems and prose by Chechen and Ingush authors, for example, Bazorkina. The work of libraries was covered, but from a slightly different angle – how to attract Caucasian women to the number of readers? The answer was to arrange readings at the courses of cutting and sewing.

There were essays about countrymen who served in the ranks of the Soviet army. Separately, it was emphasized that they were proud of their homeland (native regiment, submarine, etc.). It was possible to single out materials about the heroes of the Great Patriotic War – Chechens and Ingush. Previously, before returning from deportation, such articles were not published.

Boys and girls – Chechens and Ingush – became participants in sports competitions. Grozny hosts many all-Union and regional championships in gymnastics, athletics, boxing, football, volleyball, chess.

The articles covering amateur art shows mentioned the names of Chechen and Ingush participants. These were not only workers in industry and agriculture, but also students, teachers and employees.

One more characteristic feature of the newspapers of this period was the appearance of photographs and notes about the leaders of production, livestock breeders, workers, teachers and librarians of Caucasian nationalities. During the 1959 population census, they wrote about Chechen and Ingush families with many children.

Based on the materials, there was an algorithm for conveying to readers the information about the fate of these people. As a rule, the pain of a decade and a half of deportation fit into one phrase:

- "she began her career in Pavlodar" (a city in the north-east of Kazakhstan);
- "he returned from Kazakhstan";
- "he organized drilling operations in Siberia".

The newspapers wrote about the dangers of religion, rituals, fasting, polygamy. However, these were just a few notes. There was no criticism of the national Chechen culture, history, art in the materials of the periodical press.

## **7. Conclusion**

As a result of the study, it is obvious that the end of the 50s and the beginning of the 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not an easy time for the inclusion of Chechens and Ingush in the legal and cultural space of the Soviet state as full-fledged citizens. In this regard, the following conclusions can be drawn. Traditional culture helped people survive in critical situations, sometimes outside the homeland. The language, songs, fairy tales, historical memory and other forms of non-material culture were preserved. The Soviet state, through socio-cultural institutions, included people of different nationalities in a single cultural and educational space, provided opportunities for educational and creative development.

People returning to Chechnya from deportation had to solve many problems. The bitter taste of resentment, losses, years of missed opportunities did not prevent a significant part of the citizens not only from returning to creative peaceful labor, but also from joining the cultural, scientific and social life of the republic. The desire to be needed and useful to their families led young people not only to production, but

also to schools, technical schools and institutes. The state, which had committed injustice, tried to resolve the problems by building new schools and libraries, clubs and cinemas. Moreover, it is necessary to note that the people who came to Chechnya (Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Avars, Laks and representatives of other nationalities) worked hard and honestly on this land, studied, created families and received housing. Moving to a new place during the period of socialist organization and post-war reconstruction was perceived in a large country as something natural and dynamic. However, even these people began to understand that the state had let them down by moving them into other people's houses.

In conclusion, it is necessary to mention that a common socio-cultural space, the values and ideals of society were able to solve the most complex problems, unite people, and contribute to the way out of the most difficult socio-political crises (such as deportation, for example).

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