

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION IN DAGESTAN AT THE
BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY**

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Abstract

The paper deals with the political and socio-economic situation of Dagestan at the beginning of the 19th century. The level of socio-economic development of Dagestan is analyzed from the established feudal relations in Primorsky Dagestan and early feudal relations, complicated by patriarchal-communal remnants in mountainous regions. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Northern Dagestan, there was a large state of Shamkhalate of Tarki with the most developed feudal relations. At the same time, seven domains functioned as independent there: Buynak, Enderi, Aksai, Kostek, Karabudakhkent, and Kazanishchi. There were ten feudal domains in Southern Dagestan: the Derbent, Kura, Kurakh, and Kakin Khanates, the Rutul Federation, the Tabasaran Principality, the Tabasaran qadi's domain, the Sultanate of Elislu, the Sultanate of Utamysh, and the Karakaitag Utsmiate. Also in the Mountainous Dagestan were the khanates of Avar, Mekhtulinsky, Gazikumukh, Siukh, and Gotsatl. The mountainous region was also important. Sixty-eight so-called "free societies" were located there. Most of them functioned as unions of rural communities. They consisted of forty-one Avar, nine Dargin, eleven Lezgin, three Tabasaran, two Agul, and two Rutul. At the beginning of the 19th century, rural gatherings still played a specific role in public life in the Dagestan villages, but the leading role here also belonged to feudal representatives. The Muslim clergy had a significant influence on the socio-political life in Dagestan. Dagestan was the spiritual center of the Muslims of the North Caucasus. Here were the most famous religious centers and schools in the region.

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1. Introduction

The socio-political situation of Dagestan at the beginning of the 19th century is a complex, historically lengthy, and multifaceted process. The level of socio-economic development in the regions of Dagestan was different. In Primorsky Dagestan, there were developed feudal relations, while in the mountainous regions remnants of patriarchal-communal relations were preserved.

Sixty-eight “free societies” were located in the mountainous regions. Most of them were formed from unions of rural communities. They played an important role in the social life of Dagestan.

2. Problem Statement

The study of the socio-economic and political situation of the Dagestan society at the beginning of the 19th century, the analysis of domestic political events in the region during this period, allow us to answer questions that have not yet been sufficiently studied in a similar logical connection in Soviet and Russian Caucasian studies. The answers to these questions are not only scientific but practical, and applied. The relevance of studying the problem of the socio-political situation in Dagestan at the beginning of the 19th century is beyond doubt, especially in the light of the current state of Russian-North Caucasian relations.

3. Research Questions

The study of the socio-economic and political development of Dagestan at the beginning of the 19th century, as well as the history of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus, has its historiography. Particular attention was paid to the study of the socio-political situation in the early 19th century. Russian authors who wrote about the Caucasus, including participants in the Caucasian War, tried to understand the socio-economic and political situation in Dagestan at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, publications began to appear in Russia, the authors of which objectively assessed the level of socio-political development of Dagestan at the beginning of the 19th century (Gadzhiev, 1965; Gapurov et al., 2008; Magomedov, 1957).

Research and archival documents provide possibilities to objectively and comprehensively analyze the process of the formation of feudal relations in Dagestan and the socio-political and economic development of Dagestan society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The paper aims to show the socio-political situation in Dagestan, to consider the social differentiation of various feudal domains, “free societies” and the complex social hierarchy among the peoples of Dagestan in the early 19th century, along with the formation of their relationship with Russia. The analysis of the role of the Muslim clergy in these processes is also important.

5. Research Methods

The general scientific (analysis and synthesis) and special methods (problem-chronological, historical-genetic, historical-typological, method of frontal examination of archival funds) are used. The problem-chronological method allowed us to study the development of feudal relations in Dagestan. We also considered the historical-typological for classifying all feudal states and their social differentiation, the motives for concluding agreements and alliances between large feudal khanates, independent estates, and “free societies”, i.e., unions of rural communities.

6. Findings

Dagestan also called the “Land of Mountains”, lies between the Main Caucasian Range in the southwest, the Andean Range in the northwest, and the Caspian Sea in the east. Geographically, Dagestan is divided into three parts: Nagorny, Primorsky, and the Samur and Kyurinsky-Tabasaran valleys (Kovalevsky, 1914).

By the beginning of the 19th century, Dagestan presented a mixed picture. The total population is approximately five hundred thousand people (Milyutin, 1848). It was divided into many nationalities speaking different languages, the largest of which were Avars, Dargins, Lezgins, Kumyks, Laks, and Tabasarans. The level of socio-economic development of Dagestan was also different: from developed feudal relations in Primorsky Dagestan and early feudal relations in mountainous regions.

Politically, by the beginning of the 19th century, Dagestan was characterized by extreme feudal fragmentation. There were, according to some sources, twenty-four semi-independent feudal states and more than sixty unions of rural communities, known as “free societies” (Milyutin, 1850; Magomedov, 1957), according to others, twelve feudal domains, and many “free societies” (Nakhshunov, 1956). “In general, the whole of Dagestan was divided into seventy-five or more parts, and each of them was an independent domain, where “independent” feudal princelings sat” (Magomedov, 1991). The most developed part in the socio-economic terms was South Dagestan, where the main feudal domains were located.

Some authors of the 19th century believed that a form of monarchical government existed in several Dagestan states. S.M. Bronevsky included the Shamkhalate of Tarki, the Karakaitag Utsmiate, the Tabasaran Principality, and Gazikumukh Khanate as such (Bronevsky, 1823). I. F. Blaramberg (1992) added to them the Avar Khanate and the Sultanate of Elisu. Blaramberg also believed that the population of the Caucasus (he included, in particular, Kabarda and the feudal domains of Dagestan) is divided into three estates: sovereign princes, nobles, clergy, and two classes – peasants and slaves. S.M. Bronevsky attributed the Tarki shamkhal, the Kazykumukh and Avar khans, the Karakaytag utsmi, and the Tabasaran qadi to the sovereign princes (Bronevsky, 1823). The nobility, according to Blaramberg (1992), is petty vassals of princes: beys or bais – rich landowners, murzas, uzdens, etc. Approximately the same picture of social differentiation among the Kumyks was also described by P.I. Kovalevsky (1914).

Modern historians pointed to the existence of a complex social hierarchy among the peoples of Dagestan at the time under consideration (Gadzhiev, 1965; Magomedov, 1968; Ramazanov & Shikhsaidov, 1964).

By the beginning of the 19th century, Dagestan society was divided into two main classes: the feudal lords and the peasantry. At the top were sovereign princes or feudal dynasties, which bore various titles. Such titles included the Karakaytag utsmi, the Avar nutsal, the Tarki shamkhal, the Tabasaran masum and qadi, the Kazikumukh khan, Elisu sultan, Kumyk, namely Endirey, Aksai, and Kostekov princes. The second place in the social hierarchy of Dagestan society was occupied by beys, most of whom were relatives of sovereign princes. The bey estate was also divided into two categories: Khalis-beys and chanka-beys. The first category included the descendants of sovereign families born from an equal marriage. They were considered pureblood beys and enjoyed broad rights (possession, inheritance of property). (Chanka-beys had more limited rights. The position of the chanka-beys in society depended on the status that their fathers and brothers, full-fledged beys, passed on to them. The beys were considered vassals of the Dagestan rulers, such as shamkhals, utsmi, etc., and according to custom had to obey them. The beys were hereditary landowners, who possessed almost unlimited power in their possessions. They “managed rayats and chagars, led them to war, judged and punished according to adat, and sometimes according to their conviction” and “imposed fines on the guilty in their favor, they could even subject them to death”. Primary uzdens or sala-uzdens and the Muslim clergy adjoined the ruling elite of the Dagestan society. Among the Kumyks, according to F. I. Leontovich, “primary uzdens constitute the second class after the princes” (Leontovich, 1883).

Dagestan was the spiritual center of the Muslims of the North Caucasus. Here were the most authoritative and well-known clergy in the region. It had a significant impact on public life. As S.M. Bronevsky pointed out, the clergy in Dagestan “had decent power and respect” (Bronevsky, 1823).

The Dagestan clergy also had considerable economic power: Income from zakat, donations to the mosque, the maintenance of theological schools, that is, the so-called madrasa. As a result, “the Muslim clergy in Dagestan constituted a special privileged caste” (Magomedov, 1957). According to the data from the middle of the 19th century, 8600 people were belonging to the clergy in Dagestan (Daniyalov, 1959).

The dependent, exploited part of the Dagestan population consisted of several groups: uzdens, rayats, chagars, and terekemeys. Dagestan uzdenstvo (like mountain uzdenstvo) was not socially unified. The primary uzdens belonged to the class of feudal lords. The bulk of the uzdens living in feudal states was legally free and performed various feudal duties.

In the mountainous regions of Dagestan, in the unions of rural communities, by the beginning of the 19th century, there was still a layer of free uzdens who had their land and ran an independent economy (Magomedov, 1968).

Rayats and chagars were categories of serfs. They were deprived of the right to transfer from one feudal lord to another. However, the feudal lord could not sell the rayat or drive him out of the village. Part of the chagars (the so-called secondary chagars) was deprived of even this meager right and in their position differed little from slaves. The Terekemeys were a small ethnic group of Azerbaijanis who lived in the Kaitag Utsmiate and on the Kumyk Plain. They had the same rights as serfs. The term “Terekeme” eventually turns from ethnic to social. It began to designate a certain category of the dependent peasantry (Gadzhieva, 1990).

The most disenfranchised part of the dependent population of Dagestan were slaves. Mostly, prisoners captured during raids on neighboring regions of Transcaucasia or in neighboring Dagestan domains during internecine clashes became slaves. In addition, runaway rayats, chagars, debtors, and blood enemies were turned into slaves as well. Deprived of personal and property rights, slaves were used as servants and in fieldwork. The number of slaves in Dagestan was relatively small, about 4811 people in the middle of the 19th century. Therefore, they could not play any significant role in the economic life of the Dagestanis.

Dagestan by the beginning of the 19th century remained extremely fragmented politically. The Dagestan feudal lords tried to regulate their relations by concluding various agreements with each other, with the help of which they resolved border and territorial issues, the conditions for using pastures, the procedure and time for transhumance. To develop a certain common line in foreign policy, alliances were concluded (Magomedov, 1957). The internecine clash was a constant phenomenon in the political life of Dagestan. Often, a sharp struggle took place within the families of the Dagestan feudal lords. Bronevsky (1823) wrote about this: “Rivalry, malice, hatred, which were allowed between consanguineous feudal lords in such a way that a brother fought against a brother, and a son rebelled against a father, were a common thing” (p. 22).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Northern Dagestan, there was a large state of Shamkhalate of Tarki with the most developed feudal relations. At the same time, seven domains functioned as independent there: Buynak, Enderi, Aksai, Kostek, Karabudakhkent, and Kazanishchi. There were ten feudal domains in Southern Dagestan: the Derbent, Kura, Kurakh, and Kakin Khanates, the Rutul Federation, the Tabasaran Principality, the Tabasaran qadi’s domain, the Sultanate of Elislu, the Sultanate of Utamysh, and the Karakaitag Utsmiate. Also in the Mountainous Dagestan were the khanates of Avar, Mekhtulinsky, Gazikumukh, Siukh, and Gotsatl.

The mountainous region was also important. Sixty-eight so-called free societies were located there. Most of them functioned as unions of rural communities. They consisted of forty-one Avar, nine Dargin, eleven Lezgin, three Tabasaran, two Agul, and two Rutul (Fadeev, 1961).

The population in the largest Dagestan feudal states at the time under review was as follows: 12 thousand households in the Kumyk principalities of Aksai, Enderi, and Kostek, 12 thousand households in the Shamkhalate of Tarki, 12 thousand households in the Karakaitag Utsmiate, 10 thousand households in the Tabasaran Principality, 20 thousand households in the Avar Khanate, and 35 thousand households in the Akush and Dzhengutay lands (Bronevsky, 1823). These statistics by S.M. Bronevsky do not coincide with the data on the population of these territories, collected by Major A.G. Serebrov in 1796. According to his calculations, the possessions of the Avar Khan amounted to 30 thousand households, the Tabasaran maysum’s and qadi’s domain were 17 thousand households.

Archival documents and notes of authors of the 19th century testify that by the beginning of the 19th century the Dagestan feudal lords enjoyed unlimited rights in their domains. Zubov (1835) wrote: “the Tarki shamkhal governs all his possessions as an unlimited sovereign... the rule of the Karakaitag utsmi also has an autocratic character (p. 52).

Dagestan rulers did not have a standing army. For protection from an external enemy and for internecine clashes, however, a significant number of soldiers gathered, since conscription existed in the

Dagestan domains: each household had to give one person. The highest military power over the nökers and the people's militia during campaigns and wars belonged to the feudal lord.

7. Conclusion

This paper has clearly shown that by the beginning of the 19th century, feudal relations were most developed in the Kumyk principalities located in Primorsky Dagestan. Among them, the Shamkhalate of Tarki was the largest and most influential. The authority of the shamkhal was recognized not only by other rulers of the Dagestan domains but by the rest of the peoples of the North Caucasus. Shamkhal's military ally was the Akushinsky Union of Free Societies.

Among the South Dagestan feudal estates, the Karakaitag Utsmiate was singled out. It was divided into two parts: Lower and Upper Kaitag. In socio-economic terms, these two parts of the Utsmiate were developed differently.

The Kazikumukh, Avar and Mekhtulin khanates were the largest in the Middle and Central Dagestan. The Avar Khanate influenced the unions of the rural communities of the Avars surrounding it.

The picture of the socio-political structure of Dagestan shows rather the inconsistency than the controversy of the statement found in some modern authors. They believe that “by the beginning of the Caucasian War, most of the mountain tribes were at the stage of decomposition of the tribalism and the active formation of military democracy, with greater or lesser elements of feudalization” (Lapin, 2008, p. 37). Such a characteristic, in our opinion, cannot be applied to the level of socio-economic development of any people of the North Caucasus by the beginning of the 19th century.

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