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ARRANGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF TEREK REGION AT THE BEGINNING OF 20TH CENTURY

Fatima Vahaevna Dimaiva (a)*, Seda Shakhitovna Zhemchuraeva (a, c), Khozh Akhmetovich Khizriev (a), Magomed-Amy Huseynovich Shamsuev (b, d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Kh. I. Ibragimov Complex Research Institute, RAS, 364051, 21a, Staropromyslovskoe highway, Grozny, Russia
dimaeva@bk.ru,

(b) Academy of Sciences of Chechen Republic, 13, Esambaev Av., 364024, Grozny, Russia academy_chr@mail.ru,

(c) Grozny State Oil Technical University named after Academician M.D. Millionshchikov, 100, Kh.A. Isaev Av.,
364051, Grozny, Russia, umoggni@yandex.ru,

(d) Chechen State Pedagogical University, 33, Kievskaya Street, Grozny, Russia, chechspi@mail.ru

Abstract

The system of reorganization of administrative and territorial arrangement as well as government system of the North Caucasus, in particular, the Terek Region, was distorted, which forced the population of the Region – the highlanders – to oppose the policies pursued by the throne. It most severely concerned the land issue, which was very topical in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It should be clarified that the reorganization carried out by the throne was one of the Western “modernization” models, the purpose of which was to destroy the traditional system of highlanders. This fact can be found in archival documents that recorded the actions and activities of the reformers who wrote the following: “... with this system we could no longer fear stirring up a murmur in the population to prematurely destroy the government system developed throughout the history”. This is an excerpt from the report of the governor of the Caucasus, Grand Duke M.N. Romanov (1863–1879). The throne did not recognize the rights of the Chechens, arguing that the Chechens historically did not have any farming skills, and they did not have rights and supporting documents to own the land and rejected the transactions of ordinary mountain law. As a result, by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the state was the main owner of the Chechen territories in the Terek Region. The second large landowner after the state was the Terek Cossacks of the North Caucasus.

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1. Introduction

Russian, and later the Russian state, had no clear plans for the territories and peoples of the Caucasus. An interest in information from travelers about the passage of the Great Silk Road through these lands, and the presence of large reserves of natural resources and numerous ethnic tribes in these territories evoked interest and attracted the idea of joining the competition for world trade routes. The goal was to remove, as far as possible, the partners of competitors from both Western and Eastern countries. The Russian state uses the methods, forms and methods of colonization of Arab and African praetorium by Western countries in the system of arrangement and government of the North Caucasus. Obviously, the program developers were managers from representatives of foreigners of the Westerners. Military leadership, which is involved in the development of the eastern territories, introduces the elements from the system of governing the eastern territories into the management practice. So, for example, the system of “military and people management” that was introduced in the North Caucasus was borrowed from the war with Azerbaijan.

The basis “On the government of mountain peoples not included in the civilian administration”, where a new branch was directly subordinate to the Main Headquarters of the Caucasian Army according to the Decree of Alexander II of May 29, 1862 (Alexander II, 1862), the main core of the system was “military public administration”, which resulted in violations of human rights, and most importantly, in the alienation of land allotments, which were the main means of survival of the ethnic peoples of the North Caucasus.

Modern Chechen historians Akhmadov and Khasmagomedov (2005) in one of his works writes the following: ... The land tightness experienced by the mountain peoples of the Terek Region, primarily Chechens and Ingush, led to constant social and interethnic tension. ... The Russian administration had effective options, i.e. either to increase the area of land allotments of the Chechen villages, returning to them the land that had been seized earlier in favor of the state treasury, Cossacks and officers, or to create conditions for the migration of ruining Chechen peasants to Grozny and other cities ... it would be necessary to do both, however, the rigid framework of state policy in relation to the “natives” did not allow us to undertake anything significant to make their life easier. The actions of the throne were aimed primarily at securing the privileges of the Terek Cossack army and further development of Russian colonization (Akhmadov & Khasmagomedov, 2005).

In the post-reform period, starting 1862, more progressive and acceptable forms of reorganization were introduced. The image, status and mission of the Region were fundamentally changing. There where fortresses were previously laid, urban centers emerge. Such cities as Grozny, Vladikavkaz, Mozdok, Nalchik, Kizlyar, etc were established.

The oil fields of Chechnya, known since ancient times, have become extremely attractive for investing private capital. Dozens of companies rushed to Grozny to invest in the technical equipment of the fields. Grozny also attracted rural population of Chechnya. The Chechen peasants who came to the city ... did not have any special knowledge in the field of industry. ... However, over time, the Chechens acquired knowledge and skills, i.e. turners, locksmiths, signalmen, etc. However, the influx of Chechens into the industry of Grozny was constrained by administrative and governmental barriers ...

Starting 1896, large quantities of oil from Grozny were brought to the industrial centers of Russia. Foreign capital was involved into the exploitation of Grozny oil fields, primarily English and German. Foreign businessmen were actively buying existing Russian companies. The largest owner of the oil fields was the Terek Cossack army. They ... made their living exclusively on the lease of the occupied Chechen lands. The Terek regional administration strongly supported the feudal privileges of the Terek Cossack army in relation to the leasing of oil lands and made efforts to deprive the Chechen villages that owned oil fields.

In the economy of Chechnya a commercial farming had appeared, bourgeoisie and working class had emerged, goods/money relations had become dominant. The industrial development of Chechen oil and railway were of great importance for the development of the Region. “The highlanders had a great potential for growing into modern capitalist production” if it weren’t for “the colonial policy of tsar Russia aimed at robbing the lands of Chechnya and limiting the rights and freedoms of the Chechens”, which significantly slowed down the processes of development (Akhmadov & Khasmagomedov, 2005).

2. Problem Statement

How the reorganization in the tsar government system was reflected in the society of the North Caucasus? In the search for the truth, the author of the study relies and associates it with revealing the attitude of large masses of people to the content and direction of reforms.

3. Research Questions

The subject under study is the transformation and population of the North Caucasus – the Terek Region under the conditions of constantly ongoing new processes of reorganization by the tsar government during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify positive outcome of reorganizations and their consequences in a strategic perspective from the point of view of expediency.

5. Research Methods

The purpose of the study is to identify positive outcome of reorganizations and their consequences in a strategic perspective from the point of view of expediency.

6. Findings

On January 9 (22), 1905, at the beginning of the 20th century Russia faced with political demonstrations and strikes. For the North Caucasus, this period was marked not only by the revolutionary events of 1905–1907, but also by a kind of *déjà vu*, i.e. a return to the past. “By the highest decree of the Governing Senate on February 26, 1905, the Caucasian vicegerency was restored and it existed until

1917” (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire, 1830). The Count Vorontsov–Dashkov was appointed governor in the Caucasus.

The history of the development of events in the North Caucasus is closely connected with the history of the development of the Russian government in this Region, and it shows that the more reorganizations took place, the tougher and more irreconcilable was the local government. The process of reorganization of this system can be studied in stages, starting, for example, with Catherine II and her Decree of May 5, 1785, when she established the institution of vicegerency in the Caucasus. The first territories in which vicegerency was introduced were the Caucasus and Astrakhan regions, where it existed until December 31, 1796.

The draft document of a new institution of vicegerency appeared in 1816. The vicegerency as a system of government had its powers and units. Firstly, the Governor General was equated with the Ministry; he had “an important right to directly report to Imperial Majesty”. Secondly, the Governor General did not report to the government and did not report to it. The local administration was completely dependent on the Governor General. Its functions included the notification of the recommendations of the Governor-General to the ministers“ to maintain order and unity”.

According to the Decree of April 8, 1829, any minister of the Russian government ‘made administrative orders to subordinate institutions through the Governor-General’. All questions related to the “improvement, official interest and general policy of the region entrusted to him” demanded his final decisions, assumption and encouragement. In addition, those persons who enjoyed the personal trust of the emperor himself were appointed governor general. Count M.S. Vorontsov was one of them, the Novorossiysk and Bessarabian areas were subordinate to him according to the Decree of Nicholas I of November 17, 1844.

The administrative personnel was from time to time modified and improved.

In 1846, the Council of the Governor and the Chancellery became part of new administrative staff. The administrative staff consisted of officials and governors represented by the emperor. Their functions included supervision of the entire apparatus and the court. In addition to this, the gendarme districts and the lines of communication were also the prerogative of the governor.

The chief department consisted of five ministry departments. The State Property Expedition had the rights of a ministerial department. The structure of the Viceroy’s Main Directorate consisted of the General Affairs Department, which was in charge of officials, post offices, construction, medical and educational affairs; departments – judicial, financial, state property and control.

During the period of hostilities in the North Caucasus, in one of the tsar’s reports, Count Vorontsov wrote the following: “Any change ... and any innovation that changes centuries-old customs is extremely difficult to conduct everywhere, and especially in this Region, and therefore, in such cases it is necessary to act with great care. Violent measures not only do not bring good; they can have very bad consequences”.

Another reorganization took place in 1856 and a new governor was appointed. It was Count Baryatinsky, who introduced very strict rules regarding military component of the region management. Innovations and imperial representations allowed Count Baryatinsky to receive supreme supervision over existing local laws. At his disposal and submission came the whole Caucasus, all movable and

immovable, all territories and employees (Dimaeva, 2019). He became the main one in the distribution of loans. He was assigned the highest supervision of the Muslim clergy, and spiritual supervision. The policies and efforts of Count Baryatinsky resulted in expulsions. That's how the devastation of the Caucasus was created.

In 1883, a new reorganization was carried out. The Caucasian vicegerency was abolished and its functions were transferred to the new head of administration, who was called the chief civilian in the Caucasus.

However, the rapidly changing political situation in Russia, and then in the North Caucasus, required a change regarding the way the administration of the Region was operating. Therefore, in February 1905, the vicegerency was returned with the appointment of Count M.S. Vorontsov–Dashkov (1905–1915) in the rank of governor with broad military and civil powers (Dimaeva, 2019). The liberal conservative, Count Vorontsov, being aware of the highlanders' issue, i.e. the land issue, publicly spoke out about the need for judicial reform; however, the main emphasis he made on the development of a land system and demarcation of land, which was required by the mountain intelligentsia and members of the public. The goals of the governor and representatives were very similar, i.e. everyone wanted to defuse tense situation, and everyone wanted to get what they wanted regarding their issue. Transferring the functions of resolving public issues to rural communities, Vorontsov tried to delay time and hoped for the situation to become stable.

In line with this (1905–1906), the Terek Cossack army held several meetings with the representatives of the mountain peoples on the issues that arose. They were organized in the village of Chervlennaya (Chervlen meetings). The reason for the meetings was a telegram addressed to the Caucasian governor with a warning about the impending large-scale bashing of the Chechens. The situation in Chechen society was explosive and emotional; however, it divided the biggest part of the population into several groups that were looking for but could not find a way out of the crisis impasse with minimal concessions to the Russian authorities. However, during one of the meetings, there was a turning point in the position of the Chechen social elite, which expressed readiness to cooperate with authorities and the Cossacks in order to avert the impending tragedy for the entire Chechen people. The Cossacks demanded to dissolve the mountain police and replace it with guards from the Cossack detachment. The Chechen representatives agreed with this requirement and the decision was made to create mixed mountain Cossack courts to identify those responsible for the riots and robberies.

1906 is notable for the fact that elections were held in the 1st State Duma. For the first time in the Terek Region, the highlanders and the Cossacks participated in the legislative elections; however, they voted separately. The interests of the highlanders were represented by one candidate for deputy, i.e. the Chechen enlightener and public figure Tashtemir Eldarkhanov (Dimaeva, 2019). Two candidates were nominated from the Cossacks of the region with a minority of Cossacks.

The State Duma had become a public venue for political debates. T. Eldarkhanov criticized the laws and the attitude of authorities regarding local population in the Terek Region (Dimaeva, 2019). As a result, the Duma was dissolved on May 9, 1906. After that, the events were developing under the influence of force. Russian authorities decided to show who the boss in the house was as they anticipated further development of the situation.

At the end of 1906, the government introduced armed units with artillery in the Vedeno District, the authority of the local administration was restored in the villages. The villages were subjected to artillery shelling, where the population showed disobedience to the authorities. People were either arrested (more than 100 people) or detained. Most of them were convicted and exiled.

The authorities involved military force and introduced repressive measures, i.e. the process of disarming the Chechen villages and mass searches took place, patrol Cossacks checked the riders on the roads and took melee weapons, and exorbitant fines were imposed for refusing to surrender their weapons.

The events of 1905-1907 in Russia and the mood of the Russian revolutionaries had nothing to do with the events in Chechnya. The discontent of the mountain peasants was rare phenomenon and was not connected with the revolutionary actions that took place in cities and in the oil fields. The unrest in the villages was of different nature and it related to the land issue. In fact, most of Chechen society was not ready for revolutionary actions, but the problems created by the Russian authorities needed to be resolved, which both the peasants and the Chechen intelligentsia upheld. As the way to resolve the problem was not found, the Chechen protest took the form of an individual struggle of single elements – *abreks*, and resulted in “spiritual opposition of the most prominent sheikhs”.

Despite everything and regardless of political and other vital processes, it was the capitalization, which modified the surrounding reality. It covered all fields of human life; for Chechens and for Chechnya that was agriculture. The form of production relations was not new to those social formations. Therefore, it was quickly introduced into large farms; the Chechens who possessed very little land also used it. For seasonal work, the largest number of workers were hired by Cossacks as they had a lot of land plots. The *stanitsa* Cossacks leased excess land to those Chechens who did not have much land in use. The lease of land was common practice in some villages, as it was an additional income. Land has become a sought-after commodity the price for which had been increasing from year to year.

Even in the times of crisis, the leadership of the Terek Region pursued a policy of encouraging the resettlement of foreigners to strengthen Russian power in the region. In the early 20th century, this process began to decline due to exorbitant rents and rising land prices. However, the leadership of the Terek Region managed to find options and means for foreigners. Treasury lands were handed over to them, or they bought land at private treasury from private Chechen owners. The emergence of new immigrants evoked conflicts with the local population in view of the tightness of low land. However, there were cases when foreigners were not willing to go to the Terek Region.

The disturbed centuries-old living space of the population of the Terek Region affected the conditions of the social system with the predominance of peasants. Many broken peasants, having no land and no opportunity to be engaged in agriculture, were forced to leave villages and move to the cities or engage themselves into seasonal work. However, Seasonal work was not seen as a long-term objective, and moving to the city as well as moving around in general was prohibited by law. Besides, the Chechen peasants who did not know the Russian language could not compete with the Russian migrants who were looking for work.

7. Conclusion

The government system created by the throne was purely paramilitary, which generated many problems in the government system with the mountain peoples and did not contribute to establishing relations with the ethnic peoples of the North Caucasus resulting in their extermination. Constant expulsion of the population, “cleaning” of the land to create new Cossack settlements, accompanied by deliberate lies, caused only local distrust and fierce anger.

Military event participant P. Gavrilov pointed out the following in his note: Accidents of war constantly changed the situation of the population and often resulted in the movement of auls from one place to another, but in new places they were also temporarily allocated almost always without indicating the boundaries of land ownership. ... This order of things could not but have a detrimental effect on the welfare of the mountain population ... every year people became more and more incredulous regarding their strength, which resulted in such a life style that they could abandon one area and move to another one without any material loss.

Dozens of years passed, the position of the highlanders did not change for the better, which facilitated in development of war inclined type of thinking towards us. Any housework was almost impossible for the highlander, and therefore, they were forced to find means of livelihood in military production”. This is where the “evilness” came from (Khmara, 1995).

The idea of the “savagery” and “cruelty” of the highlanders has long spread in Russia. As one of the Russian contemporary researcher of the war in the Caucasus said, “Looking at the highlanders through the slot of a gun sight, you will not see anything else. ... And this gave rise to the problems in the relation of peoples for centuries, creating an endless process of subjugation” (Khmara, 1995, p. 163).

In one of his works, a great specialist in Caucasus A.P. Berger writes the following: The Caucasus, more than any other mountainous country, has always been known to foreigners for the diversity of its tribes and languages. Greek and Roman geographers totaled 300 dialects only between mountaineers who came for trade relations in Dioscurias, where there was a storage place for various products for sale to the wild peoples of the Caucasus (*). The same thing gave the Arabs an opportunity to call the Caucasus the “Mountain of Languages” (Berger, 1859). Berger refers to the work of the French geographer Vivien de Saint-Martin (Saint-Martin, 1847). Antiquity does not always mean savagery; the mature minds of the tsar Academy of Sciences deliberately ranked the peoples of the Caucasus as wild and gave rise to a system and policy of genocide. All peoples came out of wild infancy and the researcher’s task is not to belittle or exaggerate the dignity of the object that has become the subject of his study, especially when it comes to the people. The Arab geographer of the 10th century, Ibn-Haukal, for example, described the Caucasus with the following words: This ridge is huge; they say that there are three hundred and sixty languages; I used to deny this fact until I saw many cities myself, and each city had its own language (Kondratov, 1974). The opus indicated by Berger was a label that had long been attached to the peoples of the Caucasus. However, where is civilized Greece and Rome now and where is Strabo, Vivien de Saint-Martin (1847) and Berger (1859)? Everything has sunk into oblivion. The story of a woman is very unpredictable, and sometimes even insidious.

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