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**CHECHEN EVENTS OF XX-XXI CENTURIES IN DESCRIPTION  
OF CHECHEN AUTHORS**

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***Abstract***

The article is devoted to description of events occurred in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the Chechen Republic by analyzing Russian-language texts of Chechen authors. The focus on the situation called “the restoration of constitutional order” is of great importance for understanding Caucasian wars of recent decades and for preventing similar tragedies in the future. The research also emphasizes the difference between the information that the Russian authors write about the Chechen events and the way Chechen writers perceive this incident.

If the Russian military could not explain the reasons for their presence on the territory of Chechnya, only texts of the Chechen battle writers reflected the feeling of representatives of the opposite side. It is also interesting to learn about relationships between fighters, which during the Great Patriotic War, were called “front-line brotherhood” relations in Russian military and in Chechen detachments. A conflict between the author of the text who fought and the reader who did not fight is typical for Russian battle prose of the last decades. The presence or absence of such mutual rejection of an author and a reader have also become an object of study. The infinity of war for minds of its participants, penetration of horrors of battles into peaceful life are emphasized. Nevertheless, many differences exist in the attitude to clashes between Chechens and Russians in the territory of the Caucasian republic, being the object of the study.

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## **1. Introduction**

It is quite natural that not only Russian authors, but also the representatives of national Chechen Russian-language literature, write about the Chechen tragedy of the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century. Their view of the situation with “the restoration of constitutional order” in Chechnya, as it was called in press, is different from that stated in Russian prose, and these discrepancies require careful consideration. The Chechen literature about the war is not represented by many texts, but it is impossible not to take them into account in a conversation on understanding of the Chechen events.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Modern Russian battle prose in general is devoted to the events in Chechnya, which were officially called “the restoration of constitutional order” and “counter-terrorist operation”, but in fact the opposition of representatives of the army and residents of the Chechen Republic turned into an ethnic armed clash, and interpretations of Chechen conflicts are reflected in fiction.

In connection with the exceptional importance of the ethnic component in battle prose about the Chechen events, it is necessary to analyze not only the view of the Russian writers on the conflict, but also the understanding of the tragedy from the other side, the Chechen one. This is the main task of the authors of the article.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the article is the fiction texts of Chechen Russian-speaking writers about the military conflict in the territory of the Chechen Republic at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries.

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

The scientific novelty of the article is directly related to the object of the research: modern Russian battle prose about the Chechen events of the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries and its understanding. The relevance of the issues of ethnic confrontation is increasing every day due to political events in the world, which are reflected in art. The purpose of the study the attempt to clarify some features of the designated problem, since everything that is connected with the national manifestations of people, especially armed, should be discussed with special correctness. The special importance is the attempt to clarify and correct the overall picture of the Caucasian wars of recent decades, taking into account the view of these events on the part of representatives of Chechen literature.

## **5. Research Methods**

The research methodology is based on general scientific (generalization, abstraction) and experimental methods (observation, comparison, induction). Studying the features of depicting Chechen events in modern battle literature may present the basis for the development of the constructive approach to the formulation of lessons that can be learned from the tragic events that occurred in the Caucasus at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

## 6. Findings

Despite numerous linguistic inaccuracies, stylistic and speech errors, Aslan Shataev's utopia "Meteorite" can hardly leave anyone indifferent among modern inhabitants of the planet who are tired of wars, aggression, fear and nightmare associated with the use of weapons. The Chechen author asks very simple, almost childish questions: "Why do we fight all the time? Wouldn't it be better to lay down arms?"

The plot of the utopian story "Meteorite" is an almost detective fiction story about a meteorite fell on the territory of Argun during the years when constitutional order was restoring in Chechnya. As the Meteorite cools, bacteria that feed on explosives started to activate. Within a few hours, the bacteria disabled all the weapons on the planet. The humanity was forced to respond. Without any doubt, it is indicative that the story was created by a Chechen author who has experienced the horrors of war.

The author hopes that during the forced stand-down people will not create new types of weapons, which will not include explosives, but people will start changing the world in the direction of mutual understanding.

The tale written by Musa Akhmadov, "The Wild Pear by the Light River" cannot be called a battle one. The author's focus is not on military actions, but on the friendship of three Chechen children, who are being tested by the war too. But a number of details reflected by the author are certainly worth mentioning.

The war brought to Chechnya the destruction of many foundations. Akhmadov writes that during and after the war "the evil that fell upon the people, like a mountain avalanche, blurred the lines of mutual respect and nobility, which seemed so far indestructible" (Akhmadov, 2008).

A very important observation is the fact that inside the Chechen ethnos there is a condemnation of the leaders who unleashed this war: both Russians and Chechens who could "bring up blindly devoted warriors who were ready to execute any order without discussing" (Aristov, 2013; Akhmadov, 2008). The behavior of many Chechens in the war was perceived as heroism, because pride and honor were the basis of this behavior (Akhmadov, 2008).

The Russian warriors, according to the modern battle works of Chechen authors, were stunned by the severity of the Highlanders, their sophisticated and diverse ways of bullying the prisoners and intimidating those who had not yet been captured. But the Chechens thought about the Russians and said almost the same thing: "They capture prisoners, they are very cruel: they set the dogs on prisoners, beat people with electricity, hang them by one arm, hold them in zindans, beat them ... it's better to die than to endure these tortures" (Akhmadov, 2008; Shataev, 2008; Rousseau, 1979).

The main character of the tale, Dovt, came up with a very noble way of participating in the fate of his homeland. He went to the place where the "sweep" was going, gave several lines to divert attention and took the soldiers as far as possible, and then hid for several days in a place prepared in advance. The legends about Dovt were composed; they called him the Lone Wolf.

The most significant text of the Chechen author about the war was the story of German Sadulayev called "One swallow does not make spring yet". It is distinguished by the depth and penetration of such a level that it is very difficult to find in prose about Chechen events.

The main feature of the text is its epic direction of episodes and the author's tendency to journalism in other passages of the tale. The epic is manifested in the author's attempts to fit his life and the lives of contemporaries into the centuries-old history of his ethnos, in the chain of existences transmitted from

ancestors to descendants, from previous generations to future. Hence the perception of G. Sadulayev's lyrical hero mother as a motherland and a motherland as a mother, the absence of lines and barriers separating these two concepts. The author feels guilty for not being around when his land was destroyed, when his mother was killed, what was the same thing for him (Ibragimov, 2005; Sadulayev, 2005b).

Periodically translating the narrative into prehistoric times (G. Sadulayev's space-time is infinitely becoming a thing of the past and is not completely limited by spatial boundaries), the author reproduces epochs when the ancestors of Russians and Chechens were brothers and together protected the Great Steppe, "ones from the north, others from the south" (Sadulayev, 2005b; Rousseau, 1979).

"Sadulaev's texts are characterized by a mythological cyclical nature of time, binary semantic oppositions of summer and winter. The time cycle is broken by war. The space is divided trichonically vertically: the sky, the earth, the underworld. The sky is an ambivalent symbol associated with the male element. The earth (homeland) embodies the feminine principle of a mother. The underground level is populated with chthonic inhabitants - monster tanks that wake up during the war. The space horizontally dual and is organized as a semantic opposition with (sacral) and alien (profane)" (Aristov, 2013).

A striking feature of G. Sadulayev, in addition to the epic, is the ability to combine in one sentence very romantic, symbolical images with purely routine, reduced realist-type details: "When the scarlet sun cow goes to the endless blue pasture of the sky to chew white bushes of clouds slowly, to give fresh milk to the rain of the green calf fields, the housewives, rattling enameled buckets, go into the sheds for the morning milking" (Sadulayev, 2005b).

If we approach to the question of what Russia has done with Chechnya from a scientific point of view, then, according to the theory of Lev Gumilyov, with which G. Sadulayev is in solidarity in the text of the tale, the Chechens have entered the "passionate overheating" stage by the efforts of Russian politicians (Sadulayev, 2005b). In the worst case, it ends with the extinction of the nation, but in the best case, overheating contributes to the activation of ethnic features: "The Russians are our last hope. They will not let us to remain women. They will force us to be Chechens and men, because every Chechen is a fighter, every Chechen is an enemy" (Sadulayev, 2005b).

The text of G. Sadulayev is also an essay on the Chechen war, the Chechen mentality and the prospects for Russian-Chechen relations. The plot is connected by the style rather than text. And, of course, the leitmotif of swallows, made in the title. Swallows present the main cross-cutting symbol of the tale. The image of this bird is very significant and many-sided. In one of the episodes, the swallows are described with the help of battle terminology: "summer comes tomorrow, maybe the swallows are the avant-garde or reconnaissance squadron, they arrive first and tell the summer with Morse code, whistles and chirping: everything is well, you may come. And summer comes "Summer takes our villages, but this is the army of liberation, and the land meets summer with fruits and bright flowers in green meadows" (Sadulayev, 2005b). Here swallows are a symbol of summer, the sun, the awakening of nature. But these birds carry a semantic, or rather, even symbolic loads. Swallows serve as a counterweight to the war as part of nature, suffering from clashes not only less, but more than the people who started the bloodshed. Unable to withstand the pain, the swallows flew back to the place where the summer passes winter, "because in our country there is no love left, only death" (Sadulayev, 2005b; Rousseau, 1979). Another unexpected role of

the swallow in the tale is the possible personification of man in the chain of terrestrial incarnations (Sadulayev, 2005b; Shklar, 1984).

In all the battle texts about the Chechen events, regardless of whether they were written by Russian or Chechen authors, they curse Moscow and Moscow officials. “Fat and happy” (Sadulayev, 2005b) Moscow caused hatred. And not only the representatives of the highest echelons of the authorities acted so annoyingly at the participants of the war, but also those so-called “ordinary citizens” of the country who did not express their protest: “Why didn’t we take to the streets when this madness began, when this madness continued when this madness was repeated? When peaceful villages were bombed and shelled, thousands were killed by people, citizens of our country, ours, when loads of 200, coffins with Russian guys, yes, Russians, senselessly killed in senseless war, were going in endless tears. Yes, we tears of thousands of tortured children and mothers, sad and unfortunate?” (Sadulayev, 2005b; Scarry, 1985).

There are few details of the military reality in the tale. And they are woven not so much into plot nodes and intersections, but into the stylistic realities of the text, for example: “Here, even positions in law enforcement agencies are given for life. For the remaining two weeks of your life” (Sadulayev, 2005b); “They just shoot at the mountains. As if the mountains are at war with them ... And then there will be a real victory. When the mountains die, when they become equal to the ground, and this proud ridge will no longer be, “pride” and “mountains” have one root, there will be no pride of the mountains, there will be humility of the plains, or, rather, there will be emptiness of the steppes” (Sadulayev, 2005b).

In writer's military observations there is a philological component: “When Russians die, this is called “loss”, or they say “died”. When Chechens die, they call it “destroyed”, because the Chechens are enemies. I am also a Chechen, which means an enemy. And when I die, they will call it “destroyed”” (Sadulayev, 2005b).

The reasons for the war in Chechnya are huge. But only G. Sadulayev finds among them purely philological ones: “Grozny, Grozny. Think before giving names to your children, cities or even dogs. After giving a name - you determine their destiny, so it turns out” (Sadulayev, 2005a).

The mentioned features of military reality may not be as terrible as they are described in other texts about Chechen horror, but the fact that they are “inscribed” in style, in language, and not left at the level of the plot, speaks of the incredibly deep penetration of war in human biography and in the history of people.

The war in the texts about the Chechen battles is interpreted in different ways: as the manifestation of political ambitions, as criminal actions of the state level, as the opposition of Islam and Christianity, as a way to earn huge money. G. Sadulayev thinks about the war in a completely different dimension, rather mystical than realistic: “The sky fell upon us. In Russia, the sky is empty, distant, it doesn’t matter what people do. The sky over Chechnya is denser than steel, it is close; it is scratched by the tops of mountains. And it fell on us because we broke the law” (Sadulayev, 2005b).

The Apocrypha is the life story of saints; therefore the name of another tale by G. Sadulayev, The Apocrypha of the Chechen War, is already a challenge. And if you understand that classmates, relatives, neighbors, acquaintances of the author, a Chechen and a patriot act as saints, the genre definition given to them in the text becomes impudent. It is the act of the writer and a man.

The writer explains that he creates texts not for the living, but for the dead people. A.Prokhanov called his “Chechen” works as gravestones, temples at military cemeteries, G. Sadulayev says that his

“Apocrypha ...” are memorials. This is a book of the dead, written by a living person, who was left by the Almighty in this world precisely in order to create this book, to fulfill its duty.

The text of G. Sadulayev “Shali raid” in form is a confession to the doctor. Perhaps, it is a confession to a psychotherapist. The main recognition of the lyrical hero is that he was a connection man of the militants not from religious or patriotic fanaticism, not from romantic heroism, but simply because it was necessary to survive, otherwise it was impossible to survive at that moment. Sometimes the appeal to a doctor is replaced by the appeal to a mister officer, and the confession turns into a kind of confession during interrogation. And right away, the accuracy of the narration becomes doubtful, the reader can no longer consider the text documentary, and even to distinguish dreams from reality becomes it is problematic. G. Sadulayev writes the experienced events into the invented one, or vice versa.

The argument against weapons is also the teaching of Kunta-Khadzhi Kishiyev, a famous Chechen preacher, who comes from a poor family. He said that a person who took a weapon in his hands is already a sinner, since he does not believe in the mercy of God and does not trust himself in His hands (Sadulayev, 2010). G. Sadulayev calls such a program true nationalism, because the people, according to the teachings of Kunt, could not even be sacrificed to the idea of the victory of Islam in the whole world. But for their physical and cultural preservation, every member of the nation had to fight to the end.

The justice of the war, the writer proposes to measure in one single way: whether mothers bless their sons to war. But not a single mother: neither Russian nor Chechen - did not bless her children for the Chechen slaughter, because modern wars are “a crime against humanity, it is a mistake, it is a sin” (Sadulayev, 2010). War no longer solves any problems, but “we are like cannibals, who, being overwhelmed with the most delicious food, still cannot abandon the vile habit of eating human flesh” (Sadulayev, 2010).

Horror pages of the story are devoted to the fate of a psychiatric clinic in Shali. Of course, no one took care of the evacuation of the sick and helpless people; they died from fear, hunger, thirst, inability to adapt to life without doctors and nurses: “And I saw a sin for which we were punished by defeat and death. Not the death of hundreds and thousands federals that came to our land in arms.” (Sadulayev, 2010). It is impossible not to recall, in connection with this particular scene, how the mad people who fled from the hospitals in Moscow gripped by fire of 1812 were described in the novel War and Peace are described written by Leo Tolstoy.

“The madness of the main hero and minor characters endows them with prophetic abilities, brings them to the cultural archetype of the holy fool. The holy fool is eschatological in nature, which reinforces the eschatological motifs in the description of Shali. The madness of the hero correlates with the specific perception of eternity. Temporary registers always switch in the texts: real events and facts of war coexist with ancient myths.” (Aristov, 2013).

Despite the fact that the Chechen war is constantly compared with the Great Patriotic War, the writer categorically refuses to equate the experience of veterans of the battles of 1941-1945 to those who fought in Chechnya because the bloody battles of the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in the Caucasus did not have real (Sadulayev, 2010).

G. Sadulayev suggests that the Chechen war had a serious ideological significance for Russia, because it gave the country (once again) the myth: “And again, these soldiers on the subway, injured for

the Russian land. They sing songs. And heroic deeds in the name of and for, on movies and just on the bench in the yard. And romantic men, decorated with suffering and scars in the soul, which gives them the right to drink vodka without a break or commit crimes, or write books, for example.” (Sadulayev, 2005b). The writer speaks tough: “By killing tens of thousands of people of different nations in Chechnya, the rise of Russian national identity is paid, it is real, albeit, artificial to some extent, noticeably inspired. Without it Russia would not have survived. Let's face it and call things by their proper names” (Sadulayev, 2010).

The Chechen writer is a supporter of the mystical interpretation of history. He is convinced that any significant event, for example, war, first becomes necessary for the universe due to some reasons, and then it happens on the Earth (Sadulayev, 2010). The case puts a certain person in a certain place, and the story can “spin” around him. At the same time, the status of a person and even his personal qualities may not have values (Sadulayev, 2010).

Arguing about the role of an individual in history, G. Sadulayev comes to the conclusion that he stopped the war, stopped the people, because he wanted peace, wanted to live and work without fear that a rocket would fly from the sky or a mine would break underfoot (Sadulayev, 2010).

## 7. Conclusion

The conclusions reached by the authors of the study during the work are as follows:

1. Almost all the texts of the modern Chechen Russian-language battle prose are anti-war in nature aimed at preventing a relapse of what has already happened at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
2. Within the Chechen ethnos, there is a condemnation of the leaders who have unleashed the war, both Russian and Chechen.
3. The Chechen battle prose authors include the lives of their contemporaries in the centuries-old history of their ethnic group.
4. The war is interpreted in Chechen prose in different ways: as the manifestation of political ambitions, as criminal actions of the state level, as the opposition to religions and ethnic groups, as a mystical phenomenon.

The results of the research can be used in works on the reflection of modern Caucasian wars in art. It may be important for scientific and journalistic analysis in the study of one of the last civil wars, which was the result of ill-considered national and religious leadership policies of Russia. Negative experience, well-considered and transformed, is the basis for the elimination of conflicts, a reason for the authorities and media representatives to reflect on the consequences of their actions and decisions, and in the case of Chechnya it is also an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the history of terrorism in Russia and in the world.

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