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**ANNEXATION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS
TO RUSSIA**

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Abstract

The article studies the issue of annexation of the peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia. Four stages of formation of the Russian-North Caucasian socio-political, cultural and military unity were identified. The most important debatable issues of this process were analyzed. The chronology of annexation was reconstructed. Russian-Highland relations, the Russian-Highland Union in the 16th – 18th centuries were results of mutual interests. Due to its geopolitical and strategic interests, Russia was interested in asserting its influence in the North Caucasus. The XVI-the middle of the XIX centuries were the period of hard relations between Russia and the mountain peoples. In addition to military operations, defensive-offensive alliances, there were trade, political-diplomatic, and cultural relations. The peoples of the North Caucasus were interested in economic, military and political relations with Russia. Foundations of these relations were constructed and strategic goals were developed. Optimal forms and methods for annexing the North Caucasus were identified. Annexation of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia was a complex, multi-stage and time-consuming historical process.

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Keywords: Russia, the North Caucasus, annexation, stages, mutual interest of the parties.



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1. Introduction

Russian historical science finds it difficult to find a more relevant than the history of Russian-North Caucasian relations. Thorough and impartial research on the history of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus of the 16th - first half of the 19th centuries provides answers to many questions about the emergence and development of the political crisis in the North Caucasus region at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. This crisis had a negative impact on the development of the North Caucasus and Russia, on their relations with Europe and America.

In the Caucasian studies, one of the most controversial issues has been the issue of annexation of the peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia.

2. Problem Statement

Since the middle of the XVI century, Russia has managed to achieve significant success in strengthening its influence in the North Caucasus.

The study of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus in the 16th - first half of the 19th centuries, political events in the region allow us to answer the questions that have not been sufficiently studied in Soviet and Russian Caucasus studies. The answers to these questions are of theoretical and practical importance. They are connected with current events in the North Caucasus. The experience of Russian-North Caucasian relations may be useful for developing the current policy in this region.

3. Research Questions

The issues of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus and annexation methods used during the Caucasian War of 1818-1864 have an extensive historiography. Attention was paid to the military-political alliance in the 16th - first half of the 18th centuries (Gritsenko, 1975; Akhmadov, 1988; Magomadova, 2012). Many Russian authors of the 19th century who wrote about the Caucasus were not infected with Caucasophobia unlike their current compatriots and tried to understand the events that took place in the Caucasus in the 18th-19th centuries (Belokurov, 1888; Butkov, 1869).

At the turn of XX-XXI centuries, the authors impartially assessed the Caucasian War, annexation forms and methods (Novoseltsev, 1989; Gapurov, 2004; Degoev, 1999; Panesh, 2009).

The issue of the Russian-North Caucasian unity is understudied. The studies and archival documents provide an opportunity for an objective and comprehensive analysis of Russian-North Caucasian socio-political, cultural and military relations, revealing deep socio-political causes of the annexation.

4. Purpose of the Study

The annexation of the North Caucasus to Russia was a long and complex historical process, a result of mutual interests of Russian and mountain peoples. At the same time, Russia used various political, economic and military methods.

The purpose of the article is to study the development of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus region and annexation of the North Caucasus as a result of the Caucasian War of 1818-1864.

5. Research Methods

General scientific (analysis and synthesis) and special (problem-chronological, historical-genetic, historical-typological, frontal examination of archive collections) methods were used. The problem-chronological method made it possible to study the formation of Russian-North Caucasian relations in a historical perspective; the historical-genetic method made it possible to establish causal relationships in the development of relations between Russia and the peoples of the North Caucasus; the historical-typological method allowed us to classify motives of regular periodic political, economic and cultural relations. The frontal survey of archival funds made it possible to create an empirical base of research by summarizing and systematizing the documents.

6. Findings

Some authors link the annexation to a specific date: 1781 – for the Chechen (V.B. Vinogradov's concept of “Chechen volunteer membership in Russia”), 1770 – for the Ingush, 1557 – for the Kabardian, etc. Other authors have counter-arguments: what is “annexation”? The act of acceptance under the patronage of Russia? Then the Chechen may argue that they became part of Russia in 1588. After all, in that year, the first Chechen embassy visited Moscow, and the Russian tsar signed a certificate accepting the Chechen under the auspices of Russia. In Kabarda, until the second half of the 18th century, there was no Russian administration; Russian-Kabardian relations were reduced to irregular political, economic and cultural relations. The same can be said about Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan.

England, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Afro-Asian countries established their power immediately after the seizure of a particular territory. They imposed their taxes and duties and established the colonial order. The North Caucasian territories were not “ordinary” colonies. They were not colonies of Russia at all.

Russian-Highland relations, the Russian-Highland Union in the 16th – 18th centuries were a result of mutual mutual interests. Russia aiming to become a great power interested in asserting its influence in the North Caucasus. Struggling with Turkey and Iran for the region, Russia needed an alliance with the highlanders. The mountaineers were also interested in economic relations with Russia and needed its help to repel attacks of the Crimean Tatars, the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Mountain embassies regularly visited Moscow and Russian administrative centers in the North Caucasus. Official Russian representatives were frequent guests of mountain peoples. Various agreements on protection of the mountain peoples were concluded.

The history of relations between the Afro-Asian peoples and Western European was different. The Eastern peoples sought to isolate themselves from the European world.

There is no consensus about the stages of the Russian-Mountain relations until the twentieth century. The Russian policy involve four stages:

1) the second half of the sixteenth century - the end of the seventeenth century: constructing the foundations of the policy, outlining strategic goals, searching for optimal forms and methods for establishing the Russian influence in the region, forms of relations with local peoples;

2) the 18th century: Russia is dominant in the struggle with Turkey and Iran for the North Caucasus; a gradual transition from “caress” to military pressure in relations with the North Caucasian peoples;

3) the first quarter of the 19th century: the Russian government began to establish its real supremacy in the North Caucasus using extremely harsh, military-force methods which caused the Caucasian war of the 1820–1850s;

4) the end of the 1820s – 1864: the Russian-Caucasian war which ended with the final annexation of the North Caucasus to Russia (Gapurov, 2004).

Since XVI century to the middle of the nineteenth century, there were hard relations between Russia and the mountain peoples.

In addition to wars, predatory raids, defensive-offensive alliances and counter-unions, there were political, diplomatic, cultural relations, dynastic marriages, personal friendship and sympathy between the rulers. ... The border between the Russian state and local early political entities was mobile. It was a line of armed contacts (even during the Caucasian War) and a contact-civilization zone, where intensive economic, political, personal (kunic) relations developed. The process of mutual understanding and mutual influence of peoples weakened enmity and distrust ... (Degeev, 1999, p. 52)

The agreements on loyalty and patronage which stipulated the rights and obligations of the parties became milestones in developing political relations between Russia and mountain owners (or communities). The first act was signed by Kabardian feudal lords. In 1558, under a Turkish threat to Kabarda, they entered into the agreement with Moscow which became “a model for subsequent treaties concluded by Moscow and North Caucasian feudal lords” (Akhmadov, 1988, p. 41). For protection and defense, the Kabardian were obliged to put troops against the enemies of Russia. In case of violation of the obligations, punishment was imposed. The Russian-Kakhetian agreement signed in 1589 stated: “If a prince or murza Shevkalov or Cherkesov, or some other people, will be disobedient to the will of the tsar, prince Alexander (the Kakhetian tsar) and his successors have to combine their troops with the troops of Astrakhan and Terek voevods in order to tame troublemakers” (Belokurov, 1888, p. 88). In 1588, the Vainakh embassy headed by Batay visited Moscow and asked Moscow tsar for protection. The petition was granted. The Chechen territory became protected by Moscow (Isaeva, 1981). At the end of the sixteenth century, under the auspices of Russia, the southern territory of Chechnya and Daryal and Larsov kabak of Ingushetia were under the authority of Russia (Isaeva, 1981). In the middle of the eighteenth century, by the decision of the College of Foreign Affairs, permanent tsar salaries were paid to 50 Chechen Uzdens and four princes: Roslanbek Aydemirov, Alisultan and Alibek Kazbulatov, Turlov (RGVIA).

The year of annexation of the North Caucasus is of political nature. Some authors try to “wake up” the history of relations of their peoples with Russia, deepen into the history. In 2011, the Ingush Republic celebrated the 240th anniversary of its annexation to Russia. The colorful book “Russia-Ingushetia: 240

years together” was published. The chapter (“They took out citizenship not under coercion. On the process of annexation of Ingushetia to Russia”) was written by Professor Dakhkilgov (2010). The basis was allegiance to Russia owed by the Ingush foremen on 4–6 March 1770. However, the Ingush scientists believe that this event was only the formal end of the historical process that began at the end of the sixteenth century. According to Dakhkilgov (2010), in 1587, the okotsk ruler Shikh-Murza sent a petition to the Russian Tsar, Fyodor Ivanovich, with an application for his admission to the Russian citizenship. Dakhkilgov (2010) concludes: “Following the scientists of some other nations, we could recognize 1587 as the year of unity of our ancestors with Russia” (p. 8). However, in 1587, no embassies and petitions were sent to Moscow. That petition was sent to Moscow in 1588. The response letter of Tsar Fedor Ivanovich was sent in 1589. The Okina are the Chechen. According to Gritsenko (1975), the name “Okina” is derived from the name of a Chechen village in the Oku-Yurt plain founded in the 16th century by the people of the Chechen teip. Magomadova (2012) writes: “The Terek Okina were representatives of the first migration wave of the Chechens within the boundaries of Terek” (p. 149).

Oku-Yurt and nearby villages of the Akkinian Chechen were merged into the feudal possession of Akka Murza of Ushurma. Volkova (1974) believed that it was located on the Argun River, “not far from the exit of the river to the plain” (p. 29). According to Akhmadov (1983), the lands of okocki murz stretched from Aukh in the east to the west along the Kachalykov ridge. Professional ethnographers and the majority of residents of the North Caucasus know that the Akkin are Chechens, most of whom (about 150 thousand people) live in Dagestan. And the Akkin have never identified themselves with the Ingush. Until the eighteenth century, the Chechen (Nokhchi), Akin, Ingush (Galgai) were a single ethnic group – the Nakh, Vainakhs. The Ingush separated from the Vainakh-Chechens in the 18th century. The name “Ingush” appeared only in the eighteenth century. That is why, the 1588 embassy of Chechen residents to Moscow cannot be the beginning of Russian-Ingush relations. In “Russia-Ingushetia ...”, there is a map of the Russian Empire in 1725-1801 compiled by Dakhkilgov (2010). All the regions of the Caucasus (Dagestan, Ossetia, Kabarda, Ingushetia, Georgia, etc.) were marked. However, there is no Chechnya (Dakhkilgov, 2010). The author wanted to say that there was no region named “Chechnya” in the North Caucasus. However, all maps and historical and ethnographic works of the eighteenth - early nineteenth centuries mention the territory of residence of the Chechen while the Ingush territory is mentioned irregularly.

The Russian-Ingush Agreement of 1770 is the first bilateral official document which reflects the beginning of annexation of Ingushetia to Russia. In the Russian-Ingush relations, nothing has changed. In Ingushetia, there were no official Russian representatives, Russian administrative bodies. Moreover, the Ingush continued to oppress Kabardian and Kumyk feudal lords who demanded tribute. The Ingush did not receive any real help and protection from the Russian authorities. Moreover, the tsarist government ordered General Medem “not to reject the Ingush from the Kabardian because the Ingush admitted that they were tributaries” (Butkov, 1869, p 44). For the Russian authorities, good relations with the Kabardian princes were more important than protection of the Ingush against neighboring feudal lords. In 1806, the Kabardian prince Butok Dzhambulatov had 6 amanats from the most noble Ingush families. Kabardian princes attacked the Ingush if they refused to pay tribute. During one of these attacks, the Kabardian killed over 100 Ingush and stole their livestock (RGVIA). Construction of the fortress of Vladikavkaz generated serious discontent of the Ingush (Butkov, 1869).

Unlike the Ingush authors, we believe that the Russian-Ingush agreement of 1770 was only the beginning of the process of real annexation of Ingushetia to Russia. This process ended in 1810, when a new agreement was signed. In the same year, the Russian fortress in Nazran was built. The example of Ingushetia shows that annexation is a long process.

The only case when the date does not generate disputes is annexation of North Ossetia to Russia.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, agreements on the entry into Russia were signed by a number of Adyghe, Dagestan and Chechen rulers. In the 17th century, embassy exchanges were regular. At the same time, Russian-North Caucasian agreements were often formal. According to Novoseltsev (1989), every mountain ruler was interested in maintaining his power, part of which he was ready to yield to the Russian monarch. The mountain rulers did not want to lose their independence, while the tsarist government wanted to establish absolute power (Novoseltsev, 1989). Almost all the mountain rulers considered their relations with Russia as allied. Relations between Russia and the mountaineers were understood as a political union directed against common enemies rather than of turning the mountaineers into subjects of Russia. "The appeal of the Circassian to the Russian tsar did not mean their immediate entry into Russia." The recognition of Russia's suzerainty was not perceived as transformation into the loyal subjects of the Russian tsar and termination of their state identity. Originally it was a military-political alliance between Kabarda and Russia directed against common external enemies. Kabarda remained independent. The Russian administration did not destroy the specifics of economic and social life of Kabarda. Political goals were more important than forced assimilation. The same is true for other peoples of the North Caucasus. Struggling with Turkey, Iran and the Crimea, Russia needed military assistance or even neutrality of the North Caucasian lords. Until the last third of the 18th century, it sought to adhere to cautious policies in the region. At the same time, the Caucasian administration and the mountain lords interpreted citizenship agreements in a different way which caused conflicts (Sotavov, 1991). Some mountain lords violated their obligations. Under the influence of various factors, they changed their foreign policies. Prince Khadzhimukov wrote about the relationship between the Adyghe rulers and Russia:

When the force of arms forced some tribes to take the oath of citizenship, they consider it as a temporary truce. The whole epoch of the Caucasian War abounds in extremely original facts: some prince swore allegiance, stopped raids, even protected Russian borders, but later, they began to struggle again the Russians. (Panesh, 2009, p. 245)

In the second half of the XVI – XVII centuries, the most successful and dominant methods were peaceful, political and economic ones. Military methods were used at the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the reign of General A.P. Ermolov who caused the Great Caucasian War of the 1820-1850s (Gapurov, 2004).

When Western European countries created the colonial system, most of the territories of Asia and Africa were captured by the metropolises using military methods. The North Caucasus was annexed to Russia using a wide range of methods. In the XVI – XVIII centuries, Russia used peaceful, political and economic methods. Military force was used only in individual cases. At the same time, the flat part of the territory of the North Caucasus belonged to Russia. The Caucasian war was a response to the colonial order

within the internal borders of Russia. It is not correct to say that the North Caucasus was annexed to Russia using military methods.

The closest relations were between Russia and the Circassians. They did not have a pronounced pro-Russian orientation or a desire for an alliance with Russia. The Zakuban Circassians who lived on the Black Sea coast had long-standing trade, economic and political relations with Turkey and did not need such relations with Russia. Moreover, until 1829, Zakubanye was officially considered the Turkish sphere of influence. Since the end of the eighteenth century, there were constant mutual raids of the Circassians and Kuban Cossacks which caused conflicts. Under the Adrianople Peace Treaty, Turkey recognized Zakubanye "in the eternal possession of the Russian Empire." Petersburg took "special measures" to subdue the Highlanders, among whom it was recognized that it was necessary to "settle the lands of the Highlanders with Cossacks" (Denisova & Khlynina, 2009). At the turn of the 1820-1830s, Muridism was rapidly spreading in Dagestan; the mass liberation movement of the Highlanders headed by Imam Ghazi-Mohammed began. In these conditions, the Russian authorities created a new center of armed resistance to the highlanders: it was clear that attempts to evict the Circassians and settle their lands by Russian settlers and Cossacks would cause opposition. However, the desire to occupy the Black Sea coast and oust the Circassians was stronger than any other considerations.

The Western Circassians responded to this policy with armed resistance which lasted until 1864. Throughout the entire period of hostilities, there was always a group of princes who supported the Russian government. But the opposition prevailed. The Russian authorities aimed at ousting the Circassians from their lands and deporting to Turkey. According to Panesh (2009), "the conquest of Circassia is being completed with the expulsion of the majority of the Adrift Circassians to Turkey. The massive forced eviction of the Circassians into the Ottoman Empire became their national tragedy, genocide" (p. 245).

In the historical memory of the Circassians, the names of A.P. Ermolov, G.Kh. Zass, A.A. Velyaminov, N.I. Evdokimov have negative connotations. The activities of these generals are depicted in the national epos created during the Caucasian War and dramatic events of deportation to Turkey. There are 23 versions of the song about the inhabitants of Laba.

The complex vicissitudes of the history of the Circassians indicate the destructive force, impact of the Caucasian war on the life support system of the ethnic group. It took a lot of time and effort to normalize their lives and adapt to new historical conditions.

After the end of the Caucasian War, the North-Western Caucasus became one of the agricultural outskirts and a point of international trade of Russia. The inclusion of the Circassians into the administrative-political system of the Russian Empire was accompanied by the rupture of a single ethnocultural space, destruction of institutions of the political and social infrastructure. At the same time, economic and cultural relations with the Cossacks and Russian peasant migrants were developed. Despite the bitter sediment of the past war, domestic, linguistic, confessional and other differences, peaceful business relations are improving (Panesh, 2009). The land of the Western Circassians was annexed to Russia using military methods (Denisova & Khlynina, 2009).

7. Conclusion

There is no single criterion to identify the period of annexation of one or another people of the North Caucasus to Russia. The basis for annexation of Kabarda, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Ossetia to Russia was the date when the first agreement on the Russian patronage was signed. Although over the years, Russia has not taken any measures to establish its power in this territory. Moreover, similar documents were concluded between the mountaineers and Russia (in 1770 and 1810 – with Ingushetia, in 1588, 1781, 1807 – with Chechnya, etc.) It is more correct and fruitful to recognize another principle in the study of annexation of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus to Russia: it was a complex, multi-stage and time-consuming historical process. The first agreement on the Russian patronage was the first step to the annexation of this people to Russia. The annexation of Kabarda to Russia began in 1557 and ended at the beginning of the 1920s; the annexation of Chechnya began in 1588 and ended in 1859; the annexation of Dagestan began at the end of the XVI century and ended in 1813; the annexation of Adygea began in 1829 and ended in 1864; the annexation of Ingushetia began in 1770 and ended at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Political and economic rapprochement, development of cultural ties, spread of Russian administrative power, shortcomings and mistakes, armed conflicts accompanied annexation processes. However, the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus became part of the Russian state.

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