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AGRARIAN ISSUE IN PROGRAMS OF MUSLIM POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF VOLGA-URAL REGION

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Abstract

The article considers views of representatives of the Muslim movement of the two most important regions of the Russian Empire with the dominant share of the Muslim population. The considered period of 1905-1917 is a period of activation of all forms of social movement in the Russian Empire. Having been unable to speak about their political and economic ethno-confessional interests for centuries, Russian Muslims began to formalize their political program. Among other pressing issues, the Muslim all-Russian party "Ittifaq al-muslimin" declared the solution of the agrarian problem in its program. In the program, its decision was based on liberal-bourgeois principles. The Volga-Ural and Caucasian regions differed historically and geographically. Colonization of these regions by Russian immigrants took place in different historical periods and had a fundamentally different character. The level of development of feudalism at the time of entry of these territories into the Russian state was different. These differences led to a different understanding of ways of solving the agricultural issue. But still, it should be noted that one of the main uniting principles was the requirement to revise the Russian colonization policy and stop the practice of eviction of the Muslim population. Political preferences of the authors of the project also influenced the definition of forms and methods of solving the agrarian problem in the Muslim movement. We recognized that the majority of the leaders of the Muslim movement consistently defended the liberal-bourgeois and national-confessional principles, which is reflected in their projects when addressing the agricultural issue.

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Keywords: The agrarian question, the Muslim movement, the Volga-Urals region, the Caucasus, the State Duma, Ittifaq al-muslimin.



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1. Introduction

The agrarian question was key in the programs of social movements in Russia at the beginning of the last century. Along with the question of power it was the main content of the program provisions of all political parties in Russia. Political parties founded by national and confessional movements were no exception. One of the leading forces in this direction in the early twentieth century was the party "Ittifik al-muslimin", which expressed the interests of all Muslims of the Russian Empire. It was headed by the most educated and well-known members of the social movement of Muslims from the regions of the state with Muslim population.

The growth of the population of the Russian Empire during the XIX - beginning of XX centuries led to the reduction of the average peasant holding to 8 acres per man that was not enough to conduct extensive agriculture. In addition, the distribution of land was uneven, when the privileged classes (especially the nobles and Cossacks) had land plots that were much larger than the peasant's in size, including quality, access to forest, water and meadows.

In connection with the expansion of the state, the Russian peasantry was able to settle the land that became part of the Russian state as a result of the inclusion of the territories of the once independent Muslim countries. In these territories the systematic policy on redistribution of the earth in interests of the Russian population began to be carried out. Some groups of the Muslim population (Kazakhs, Bashkirs) in the late XIX - early XX centuries also lost their land in favor of the privileged classes of the Russian Empire. In the conditions of revolutionary changes, such situation could not but cause a public reaction. In this regard, in the activities of the leaders of the Muslim movement in Russia, the agricultural issue and ways to solve it occupied a significant place.

2. Problem Statement

The Muslim political movement in Russia in the early XX century became the subject of active study in the 1920s - early 1930s, when it was considered as anti-soviet (Arsharuni & Gabidullin, 1931). At the same time, certain information about the struggle of Muslims for their rights to land was given.

The next stage of the detailed analysis is connected with 1990-2000s. Usmanova (2005) in the works devoted to the Muslim fraction of the State Duma of the Russian Empire sanitized various aspects of its activity, including the agrarian question. Iskhakov (2003, 2007) analyzed the activity of Russian Muslims during the revolutions of 1905-1907 and 1917-1918.

The most important source of the public movement of Russian Muslims remain verbatim records of the meetings of the State Duma (1907). Among the Muslim press bodies, the greatest attention was paid to the political movement of Russian Muslims by the newspaper "Vakyt", published in the Tatar language in Orenburg in 1906-1918.

In the 2000s and 2010s, collections of documents on the history of the social movement and the creation of national autonomies of Russian Muslims began to be published. 4 volumes were published in Bashkortostan, analyzing the creation of the Bashkir Republic and the solution of the land issue in it in 1917-1925. In Tatarstan, a three-volume book dedicated to the Tatar political movement in 1917-1920 was published in 2017.

3. Research Questions

The research work was aimed at solving three interrelated tasks. First, one must give the definition of goals and methods of promoting the interests of Muslim peoples by their elected representatives in the socio-political institutions of the Russian Empire during the revolutions of the early twentieth century. Second, it is necessary to identify the historical factors that influenced the formation of agricultural programs of Muslims of Russia in the period under review. The third task is to analyze the projects of solving the agrarian problem put forward by the leaders of Russian Muslims of the Volga-Ural and Caucasus regions.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the work is to identify similarities and differences in the programs of various Muslim political movements in Russia during the revolutions of 1905-1907 and 1917.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the article is a systematic approach combined with the principle of historicism. The general scientific system approach involves the use of socio-historical, general scientific and interdisciplinary methods: problem-chronological, comparative-historical, retrospective, etc. for transfer and analysis of the historical material. The principle of historicism involves the consideration of the draft decision of the agrarian question in Muslim regions of the Volga-Ural and Caucasus of the Russian Empire, taking into account the specific historical conditions.

The study of the practical activities of the leaders of the Muslim movement – deputies of the State Duma, aimed at solving the agricultural issue in the interests of the designated ethnic and religious group, was carried out based on the principle of actualization and on the essential and substantive analysis of the forms and methods of political participation of Muslims in the socio-political processes in the early twentieth century.

A systematic approach to the problem and systematic analysis of the material made it possible to identify different views, to highlight the views of the representatives of the Muslims of the Volga-Ural and Caucasus region for the solution of the agrarian question. Methods of system-structural and problem-historical study were used to obtain information from memoirs, Assembly materials and other published sources.

6. Findings

In the I and II State Duma of the Russian Empire, Muslims from all regions of the Russian Empire were represented. They were united mainly in the Muslim faction. In the II State Duma 6 deputies took part in “Musulman hezmet taifese” (“Muslim labour group”), adherents of Russian social revolutionaries. The final formation of the party "Ittifak al-muslimin" and the election program of Muslim liberals took place at the II all-Russian Muslim Congress in January 1906 in St. Petersburg. The congress considered the program of "Ittifaq". In timeline the land question was also in the program of the cadets differing by the fact that the

land funds have to be transferred under the control of regional authorities, and resettlement (colonization) have to be stopped. The program of "Ittifaq" recognized the private ownership of land.

In particular, paragraph 58 proclaimed that "it is necessary to give the necessary share of tsar's family, palace, state land, as well as the necessary amount of private land, by paying the owners a fair (non-market) price at the expense of the state to all people who cultivate land and are engaged in the cultivation of cattle. However, private property donated to or illegally acquired by superiors and officials is to be returned without compensation."

Paragraph 59 of the same program specified that "the division of the land of each gubernia (province) between needy permanent residents of this province is accepted as a basis of providing peasants with land. Local governments comprehensively promote settling peasants along borders of the province and solution of the land questions. Resettlement is finally cancelled, the confiscated lands have to be returned to the owners."

Extraterritorial autonomy was seen as religious autonomy, modelled on the Ottoman millet system. Muslims received the right to create a religious center, elect the clergy, create Muslim parishes (mahallas). Maktabs, madrasahs, mosques, places of worship, charities and waqfs, including plots of land passed through their hands (Topchibashev, 1906).

The most well-known discussions on the land issue were in I and II State Duma. In the first Duma, Shah-Aydar Syrtlanov, Murza (Muslim noble) from the Ufa gubernia, the member of the Central Committee of the "Ittifaq" party, demanded the return of confiscated Bashkir lands on June 2, 1906 (State Duma, 1907).

Interests of Muslims of the Terek region in the State Duma were represented by the Chechen, Tashtemir Eldarkhanov. He adhered to a more radical point of view in the agricultural issue and signed the "project of 33", that is, the party of Trudoviks, which held the views of social revolutionaries.

According to the draft, "(1) the land Law can only be issued by a Duma, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret ballot in freedom of election and after discussion of land reform on the ground under the same conditions." In the section "Basics of the law of the land" it was stated, "§1. Any private ownership of land within the Russian State is now completely destroyed. §2. All the land, its subsoil and water are declared the common property of the entire population of the Russian State" (State Duma, 1907, p. 34).

The reasons for such tough position are most clearly revealed in the most famous speech of T. Eldarkhanov, devoted to the agrarian question, already in the II State Duma. On May 3, 1907, he pointed out that the entire Terek region is divided into two parts: planes and mountains. In the planar part Chechens and Ingush experience the acute need for the land where a person has from 6 to 8 acres of land. But in the mountains they hardly possessed 1 acre of land.

According to Eldarkhanov the solution of the agrarian question is directly linked to political freedoms and freedom of local self-government. "As for the conditions of land use, we will have to defend the principle of community property. I conclude by pointing out that the cause of agrarian reform must be transferred to the field and placed in the hands of the local land committees. But in order for the latter to play their due role and resolve the agrarian question in the spirit of the principles to be established by the State Duma, it is necessary that this reform should be realized by local self-government legalizing fundamental freedoms (as cited in State Duma, 1907).

At the session of the II State Duma on May 16, 1907, a member of the Muslim faction, Kazakh, a descendant of the Genghis Khan, Bakhytzhan Karatayev, said, "let the State Duma remember that the Kirghiz-kaysaks (i.e. – Kazakhs) ... always sympathize with all the opposition factions that want to forcibly alienate private land to satisfy the peasant land hunger. But one must keep in mind that currently the Kyrgyz are being evicted not from land, but from houses in order to make room for the peasants in order to save these landlords" (State Duma, 1907, p. 24). On March 22, 1907, Kazakh deputies of the II State Duma opposed what they called the plundering of their lands. Representatives of the Kazakhs and Bashkirs were dissatisfied with the situation when their lands were declared state property and gradually were passed to Orthodox landowners.

At the meeting of the III State Duma on October 17, 1908, the Deputy from Transcaucasia, Azerbaijani Khalil Khas-Mammadov, on behalf of the Muslim faction, opposed the Decree of November 9, 1906, destroying the peasant communities (obschinas). According to the Decree "On the addition of certain provisions of the current law relating to peasant land ownership and land use", "Every householder who owns allotment land by community law may at any time require the strengthening of the ownership of the part of the land due to him" (SOBR, 1909). The faction's statement stated that the community in many localities remained viable and was "a more appropriate form of land use" (State Duma, 1907). In the future, representatives of the Muslim faction have repeatedly opposed the resettlement policy.

In 1917, the following positions of Russian Muslims on the agrarian question were formed. The Kazan Muslim Committee retained the program of the Ittifak party on confiscation of tsar family, palace, state (cabinet) lands while maintaining private ownership of the land and upon termination of resettlement in the Kazakh steppes and Turkestan (Khabutdinov, 2017). A similar point was contained in the program of the Turkic party of Federalists "Musavat" (Iskhakov, 2003).

At the first all-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow in May 1917, a resolution was adopted on the agrarian question, according to which all lands "should be inherited without redemption with the complete abolition of all private ownership of land with the cessation of all purchases and sales.

Everyone has the right to use land without hiring ... The disposal of land should belong to labor communities".

However, at the II all-Russian Muslim Congress in Kazan in July 1917, there was a return to the program of the Kazan Muslim Committee, which caused a protest of the socialists. In the agrarian question, the wording concerning the alienation of private lands for a fee was adopted. If the newspaper of Ufa province, Tatar social revolutionaries "Irek", called the resolutions of the I Congress "the great decisions of the great Assembly". In the article "Why we broke up" they directly pointed to the revision by the II Congress of the resolutions concerning the I Congress on women's rights and land issues.

A number of peoples raised the issue of land distribution only on a national basis. This was the decision of the Bashkir regional Congress in December 1917, according to which all the lands "are the property of the entire Bashkir people" and are transferred for distribution to the "Main Bashkir land Committee".

7. Conclusion

Thus, we see that the Muslim leaders of Volga-Ural and Caucasus regions, during the Russian revolutionary events, put forward projects to resolve the agricultural issue, guided primarily by their ethnic and territorial interests. Also, the political preferences of the leaders of the Muslim movement influenced the projects of solving the agrarian question in the interests of various groups of Muslims.

In this regard, in the projects of the deputies of the Muslim faction of the State Duma of the Russian Empire of the First and Second convocations, we see the priority of regional and ethnic aspects rather than general Muslim ones. For Volga-Ural and Caucasus regions, historically and geographically, there were serious differences in the agricultural issue. They are reflected in the formulation of this problem in the draft deputies representing these regions.

The difference in views on the solution of the agrarian question was expressed in rather generalized formulations of the points of the program of the all-Russian Muslim party "Ittifaq" devoted to the solution of the agrarian question. The political program of the Russian liberal party constitutionalists-democrats (cadets) to have had great impact on these provisions and the whole program of "Ittifaq". Muslim social revolutionaries in 1905-1907 and in 1917 were greatly influenced by the Russian social revolutionaries.

Despite the fact that the Muslim leaders of the early twentieth century offered several options for solving the agrarian question, based on the territorial-ethnic and national principles, they were not destined to be implemented in practice. Since the Soviet government, which eventually established itself in the space of the Russian Empire, had its own ideas about national and land issues. In the "Decree on peace" in November, 1917, the agrarian programme of Russian social revolutionaries was adopted.

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