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SOCIOCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF GROZNY IN THE LATE
19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

The paper examines the factors contributing to the socio-cultural development of Grozny in the late 19th and early 20th century. The city always attracts the attention of researchers. The Groznaya fortress, having become a city, took over all the functions of a city, becoming the center of progress – breakthrough ideas, innovations, and culture. The city, being a complex organism, played a special role in the material and spiritual culture of society, an artificial habitat was created here, which portrayed a slice of the era. The urban space of Grozny was distinguished by its polyethnicity, polyconfessionalism, active interaction and interrelation of various cultural traditions. Capitalist development and urbanization have entailed the modernization of social and cultural environment. Along with its administrative status, a demographic indicator was no less important, denoting the concept of “city”, its development and place in the social structure of society. Grozny was also the center of innovative culture. In the light of modernization to occur in the socio-economic life of Grozny in the late 19th – early 20th century, the urban infrastructure was getting more complex. This time created a fairly large variety of public buildings, reflecting new forms of financial, economic and cultural life, needs for vehicles and information systems. In Grozny, a station, banks, stock exchanges, hotels, schools, theaters were being built, changing the look of the city center. There were educational institutions here with a cultural and information system to be established, which facilitated the integration of cultural processes.

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Keywords: Architectural look, urban space, cultural institutions, industrial center, capitalist development, oil boom



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1. Introduction

A cultural space of the city of Grozny is determined by the social and cultural environment, since it characterizes the fullness and diversity of its spiritual and intellectual life, functioning of culture in society, objective and subjective possibilities of its existence in various social strata. Ultimately, the state and development of the social and cultural environment reflects the degree of social functionality of culture and is an indispensable condition for social and cultural progress. The development of society depends on the rate of urbanization, therefore, historical science turns to the history of cities and the history of everyday life of townspeople. The most important and remarkable moments of the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the city of Grozny are associated with the activities of national and local institutions.

2. Problem Statement

Socio-cultural urban environment of Grozny, being a relevant and topical issue for its time, has not lost its significance even now. Grozny in the late 19th – early 20th century played an important role in the cultural and integration processes, the social and cultural life of the region. Its state at the end of present and the beginning of new century stemmed from previous development and largely determined the cultural potential of society. However, the city was also the center of an innovative culture. There were educational institutions, institutes and organizations related to its creative component, a cultural and information system was being established, thereby contributing to the integration of cultural processes.

3. Research Questions

The object of research is the socio-cultural environment of Grozny in the late 19th – early 20th century, social and cultural processes and phenomena that took place during this period.

4. Purpose of the Study

The paper aims to analyze the character and progress of social and cultural processes that took place in Grozny at the turn of the 19th and 20th century.

5. Research Methods

To address the problems, various techniques and methods were used, both general scientific (analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction) and specific historical research methods (comparative historical and historical reconstruction, problem-chronological, synchronous, retrospective). Taken together, the above methods complemented each other and contributed to the comprehensive coverage of the research object. The principle of historicism was called upon to analyze the establishment of the sociocultural environment of Grozny at the turn of the 19th and 20th century as a process with a certain direction and history of development. A comparative-historical method helped to disclose the regional

features of the socio-cultural process in the light of socio-economic and internal political situation in the country.

6. Findings

In the late 19th century, Chechnya entered a period of rapid capitalist growth. The history of North Caucasian cities at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, much less the city of Grozny, is understudied. Most of pre-revolutionary and Soviet studies partially explored the issues of the urban environment, showing socio-economic, political and legal topics. This inertia prevented the development of new methodological approaches and directions that were rapidly developing in Europe and the United States. In the 1960s and 1970s, foreign historians exploited an interdisciplinary approach to address the city in the intellectual context of the “new urban history”. Studies in this area sought to investigate their subject through the intersection of a number of social sciences: demography, sociology, economic and historical geography, ethnosociology, and others. One of the first publications concerned with theoretical issues of urban history was the collection of papers “The Historian and the City” published in the USA, most of whose authors contemplated the city in its social environment as a function of a larger social system it constituted (Handlin & Burchard, 1963). The narrative of the city as a meeting point for different cultures in the past, present and future was evidenced in the 1980s in the theory of “sedimentary society” by Rieber (1982).

The oil boom sparked the city’s rapid growth. The population increased mainly due to Russian settlers. If in 1870 4,000 people lived in Grozny, then by 1 (January 13) 1893 there were 13,588 inhabitants, of which Christians made up 11 691, Jews – 984, Muslims – 913. In 1893–1901, a number of Chechens in Grozny was affected by the law “On prohibiting the highlanders who were not in government service or who were retired (not in officer ranks) to live in the city” (Golovlev, 2000).

In 1897 the population of the city amounted to 15,600; in 1900 – 18,875 people; in 1904 – 23,012 people (workers – 10,000); by 1907 the population of Grozny reached 25.3 thousand people (575 of them were Persians), at the beginning of 1912 – 29,000 people, in 1913 – 30,400 people (workers – 20,000). For 25 years, since 1862, the population of Grozny grew 6 times, while the population of Vladikavkaz only doubled (Daaev & Elbuzdukaeva, 2018).

With the construction of the railway, oil gained access to a wide market, and Grozny became one of the centers of the oil industry in Russia. Russian and foreign entrepreneurs rushed to the region. The industrial enterprises of the city grew. Traditional Caucasian dwellings and Cossack mud huts were replaced with brick houses with tiled roofs, although, there was no sewage system and water supply in the city. Nor were there any pavements – in rainy weather, horses and carts just got stuck in the mud on the streets. A characteristic feature of most of the streets was total greenlessness – on a hot summer day there was nowhere to hide from scorching rays of the sun. The slightest wind raised clouds of dust (Weisman, 1956). In a large industrial city there was no theater, no pavements, no tram, no street lighting. “Upon closer inspection of this city, almost devoid of usual urban improvements”, wrote the Terek Vedomosti, “it is not difficult to notice its extremely miserable economic well-being: everywhere, material poverty and, moreover, mental poverty were coming thick and fast in the most unprotected way. The city does not

have not only pavements, but even crossings across the street, making people literally get stuck in the mud during a spring thaw” (Vakhabov, 1896, p. 12).

It is not until 1913 that the city had the first street lamp, and the length of the water supply network before the revolution reached only 78 km (Chechen-Ingush ASSR for 40 years, 1960).

In the fall of 1911, they began to strengthen the banks and build the first stone embankments on both sides of the river from Dvoryanskaya to Grapho-Evdokimovskaya Street.

A two-storey building that housed the France Hotel was built in 1902. It was the most comfortable hotel in the city, and in those days all honored and eminent guests willingly stayed there. It became especially popular as soon as the railway was all over put in commission and the oil boom began in Grozny, followed by a real pilgrimage of famous and well-known writers, scientists, artists, actors, athletes flooding to the city. Dashing cabbies met them at the station and offered to take them at rapid-fire pace to the France Hotel. Yevgeny Vakhtangov, a renowned theater director, stayed at the France Hotel. During the days of their tour in Grozny, it was at this hotel that Vera Kholodnaya, Vladimir Maksimov and many other famous silent film actors stayed.

Just behind the France Hotel, there was a small but architecturally interesting L-shaped house. It was built as early as in 1892 with the express purpose of housing the first postal and telegraph office opened in Grozny. The opening ceremony took place in March 1892. One could find the way to the courtyard from Ermolovskaya Street. Inside the block, fenced off by the post office and its stables, there was a cobblestone parking lot for the mail and passenger coaches that arrived and left the city every day. A national savings bank began to operate at the post and telegraph office for the first time in Grozny (Kusaev, 2012).

One of the first brick buildings in Grozny was a two-storey Grand Hotel on Dundukovskaya Street. The hotel had a beautiful look and was protected as a monument of history and architecture until the middle of the 20th century. After the Great Patriotic War, during the reconstruction of the city, the hotel was demolished and in its place there was a building of the Council of Ministers of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which was destroyed during the military events in 1995. A three-story building, the so-called Abubakar’s house, was the tallest in Grozny in the early 20th century. In those days it was proudly called a “skyscraper”. This corner house, with towers crowned with spires at the corners of the roof, was built in 1912 by the Mirzoev brothers. When it was completed, Grozny newspapers reported this fact under catchy headlines: “Another skyscraper!” This was the first three-story building in Grozny. On the ground floor there was the largest grocery in the city, on the first – the city council and government with all its services, the second floor served as a hotel.

In 1904, the population of the city was 24 thousand people. The oil workers lived in the farms and villages of the now Staropromyslovsky district. There were 630 schoolchildren in the district. There was nowhere to teach them – the city was far away, there was no accessible transport. A one-class school was opened in the fields, but only 60 children could study in it. The classrooms were so cramped that pupils to come to the blackboard had to make their way under the benches. In the collection of orders for the Caucasian Military District for 1904, it is written: “147 learners were enrolled: 46 – in the preparatory class, 46 – in the first grade, 32 – in the second, and 24 – in the third.” At first (until September 1912),

classes were held on the adapted premises of a three-story house owned by the merchant Matsiev on 2nd Baryatinskaya Street.

In 1904 in Grozny Sheikh Deni Arsanov opened one of the first private schools in Chechnya at his own expense in his mansion on 1st Kurinskaya Street (P. Lumumba St. – now Deni Arsanov St.). Children from neighboring regions came to the school where they studied the Koran, Arabic, Russian and Tatar letters. For several tens of thousands of residents in Grozny, there were only six primary and two secondary schools, one real school and one library that in 1914 contained less than 7 thousand books collected mainly through personal donations (Kaloiev, 1960).

In 1910, the first stone was laid for a non-classical secondary school in Grozny. It was designed by the architect P.P. Schmidt. On September 1, 1912, the school opened its doors to learners and classes began.

In the Grozny non-classical school, a Chechen preparatory class was opened. In the 1915–1916 academic year, it was attended by 562 learners, of which only 15 were Chechens. The school educated people who later became widely known political, military and statesmen, writers and scientists. Children of recent settlers could enter the tradesman's school and got a labour profession. The school provided workshops for teaching crafts like locksmith's, metal turner's and blacksmith's. Education was paid – ten rubles a year. Most of the students, having mastered the basics of their major, dropped out of school and went to work. The first lower primary school was built in the fields at the expense of the city.

A necessity to establish girls' schools became an important socio-cultural phenomenon in the life of society at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Unlike central Russia where girls' schools began to open as early as the 70–80s of the 19th century, it is not until early 20th century that specialized educational institutions for women appeared in the Caucasus. In 1904, a girls' school appeared in Grozny on Dundukovskaya Street (Revolution Avenue, now M. Esambayev Avenue). The first Chechen writer Maryam Isaeva, the first Chechen scholar and philologist Maryam Chentieva and the first Chechen journalist Maryam Sarakaeva were graduated from this school.

In 1908, the first illusion cinema Aquarium was opened in Grozny, which was built at the expense of the merchant Shabason. In 1910–1911, on Shosseynaya Street, a two-story Ars Cinema was being constructed under the project of the local architect A.V. Stanovich. The cinema was intended for a privileged segment of the city's population. On the ground floor there was a cloak room with nests for galoshes, a foyer with carpets on the floor, upholstered furniture, palm trees, a mechanical piano and a crush bar. On the first floor there was a large auditorium. The Ars Cinema was demolished in the forties of the last century during the construction of the Kavkaz Hotel. Another large Gigant Cinema was built just after. The films were silent, and a piece of paper describing the plot of a film was attached to the ticket (Kazakov, 1989). The musical culture of the Chechens also developed. The first Chechen composer was Abdul-Muslim Magomedovich Magomayev, a native of Starye Atagi, grandfather of the famous Soviet singer Muslim Magomayev. A certain contribution to cultural growth of the Chechen people was made by Chechen officers and their families, who normally were people educated in a European way. Those were the families of Major General A. Chermoev, Major General K. Kurumov, Colonels Elmurzaev, Sarakaev, Muradov, officers Akhtakhanovs, Kuzhuevs and others. All of them, including representatives of the titled nobility – descendants of the Turlovs, Taymazovs, Alkhazovs and others –

were involved in attracting highlanders into the Russian-European civilization. In 1914, there were six educational institutions in Grozny (non-classical school, girl's high school, tradesman's school, highland school, girl's four-year school). The positions of the Russian language and secular school became noticeable in Chechnya at the beginning of the 20th century, when Russian schools began to gain more and more popularity among Chechens. The Chechens saw the best way, being a secular education, to improve their economic situation. Literate people could apply for a job in government agencies and thereby become free from duties. The growing strata of prosperous peasants found it advantageous to know the Russian language and literacy, since it was profitable to sell the products of their labor in the markets of Grozny, in the neighboring Cossack villages and, especially outside Chechnya. A minimum education, Russian language proficiency was badly needed by the poorest strata of the population who used to leave for seasonal work (Daaev & Elbuzdukaeva, 2018).

Speaking about the socio-cultural development of the city of Grozny, one cannot fail to mention the cathedral architecture of the city. Despite the provincial nature of Grozny, temples, magnificent in architectural and artistic design, were built there in 1861–1900. In 1908, Mullah Ali Huseynov built a mosque through donations from the faithful. The major shrine of the Muslims of Grozny was located immediately after the Romanovsky Bridge (Leninsky since 1920) on the right bank of the Sunzha, in the bend of which there was a synagogue as well. And not far from the mosque, the mullah built his own private dwelling.

On the right bank of the Sunzha, (in the area of Moskovskaya and Proletarskaya Streets), there was a settlement of Mountain Jews who moved to the Caucasus, apparently from Dagestan. By 1866, there were 453 Jewish men and 475 Jewish women. A little later, in 1875, the first prayer house of Jews was established. In the 2nd half of the 19th century, there were 2 synagogues in Grozny (Ashkenazi, built in 1863 and in 1865 for Mountain Jews). Mountain Jews lived in a special area – Slobodka, were engaged in arable farming, gardening, cattle breeding, and crafts. In the second half of the 1920s, there was a club for Mountain Jews in the building that used to be a synagogue. A Catholic parish was built in Grozny after the end of the Caucasian War. A significant number of German colonists settled in the Grozny district. They bought or received land from the Russian government that was interested in settling the Caucasus with a loyal population. In September 1862, a church was designed under the project received from Tiflis and cost 4,500 rubles. It was consecrated as the Church of the Heart of Jesus on November 22, 1864. The temples of Grozny are witnesses of many historical events that took place in Grozny, thus having become an integral part of its look. A remarkable fact is that all the temples in the city were built along the Sunzha River. The distances between the temples were small. During the day, the adhan was heard from the minaret, bells were ringing from the Intercession Cathedral. Even though we will never restore the destroyed mosques, churches, synagogues, we must remember both the bright and tragic chapters of their history.

7. Conclusion

The turn of the 19th and 20th century in the history of Grozny ushered a rise in culture, in which all-Russian cultural processes were reflected. The centers of the city's cultural life were educational institutions, libraries, theaters, cultural and educational societies and art associations. The development of

culture determined a turning point in public consciousness. The inhabitants of Grozny were united by the status of townspeople, the general processes of adaptation to the urbanized economy and culture. Varying in numbers, social and ethnic composition, the first townspeople were for the most part carriers of the peasant mentality. At the end of the 19th century, Grozny became a city attractive for scientists, industrialists, people of art, etc. and the largest oil producer.

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