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The Aristocratic Groups of Dagestan in Relations with the Russian Empire and the Imamate in the first half of the XIX century

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Abstract

The article refers to the problem of the ruling aristocratic groups in Dagestan in the first half of the XIX century. The attention is paid to the issues related to the relations of representatives of the mountain nobility with the Russian military administration and with the structures of Muslim statehood (Imamate) in the specified period. The opus presents the results of an analysis of military-political events during which the region became part of the Russian Empire. Particular (Special) attention is paid to the issue of the struggle for power and the subsequent change of traditional power groups in Dagestan. It is concluded that this process took place not only under the pressure of Russian military officials who doubted the loyalty of the mountain aristocracy, but also due to the fact that only a few of the representatives of nobility were able to integrate into the new system of power relations within the framework of the Imamate. The question also arises of the degree of influence of individual owners and their relatives on the genesis of the Imamate and its further functioning, including the extent to which their actions contributed to the spread of the ideas of muridism in Dagestan and Chechnya. The novelty of the study is seen in an attempt to present these events using the terminological apparatus adequate to describe the Islamic society. The work is relevance due to the acute controversy taking place in the scientific community on the role of individual historical figures in these events and ambiguous interpretations of their heritage. All this is analyzed on the basis of a system-historical approach, using the achievements of social science and attracting a wide range of material, including unpublished archival sources.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Caucasus, Dagestan, Imamate, aristocracy, the ruling groups, highlanders.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the XIX century the Russian Empire continued to build up its presence and dominance in the Northeast Caucasus. This process took place against the backdrop of confrontation with Qajar Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The glorious victory of Russian arms was crowned by the Gulistan Peace Treaty, signed in October 1813. The Shah renounced his claims to Dagestan and accepted its annexation to Russia.

During this period, pressure grew on indigenous aristocratic groups from the unions of rural communities in Dagestan. The level of public solidarity (what Ibn Khaldun called *asabiyya*) in the free communities of highlanders began to surpass the cohesion among the quasi-feudal lords. The accessibility of firearms for the highlanders-community members eliminated the power monopoly of the Dagestani rulers. At the same time, the demographic growth of the highlander population was facilitated by the introduction from the Transcaucasus to Interior or Nagorny (upland/mountain) Dagestan at the end of the XVIII century high-yielding agricultural crops (rice and corn) (Khapizov, 2013: 63).

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We must turn to the calculations given by A.P. Tormasov for 1811, S.M. Bronevsky at the beginning of the 1820s and A.V. Komarov in the mid-1860s to estimate the approximate size and age and gender composition of the population of Dagestan at the beginning of the XIX century

According to Tormasov, in average, there were 6 people per family household in Dagestan, and this indicator applies to both the plain and mountainous areas of the region. However, about a number of districts, such as Avar Khanate and Shamkhalate of Tarki, as well as Kayak and Tabasaran Tormasov directly wrote that «their possessions ... are not numbered» and only «should roughly assume» how many people actually lived there (Tormasov, 1958: 237-238). Bronevsky's information is less precise, but he dispenses with assumptions and provides complete information only on the number of households and families, which complicates the calculation of the population (Bronevsky, 1823: 58-59). Finally, according to Komarov's data in the mid-1860s on average, there were more than 4.58 people per household in Dagestan (Komarov, 1869: 123).

It should be mentioned that the calculations above are largely evaluative, and also take into consideration the dynamics of hostilities in the Caucasus. Thus, it makes sense to say that in the first quarter of the XIX century with the traditional birth rate and before the start of large-scale hostilities («The Caucasian War»), every fourth inhabitant of Dagestan belonged to the category of youth.

Based on this, as a hypothesis, let us turn to the empirical model of J. Goldstone (Goldstone, 1991: 2-3). According to his calculations (the case of the Peasant War in Germany and the French Revolution), if the share of youth in the social structure exceeds 25 %, then this becomes not sufficient, but a necessary condition for social cataclysm. This kind of commotion was the process of changing the ruling groups in the Dagestani society, which coincided with the integration of the region into the Russian Empire. This led to changes that were revolutionary. However, as A. Toynbee noted, «any revolution is a search for a new elite». The former aristocratic rulers were losing power, but they still continued to play a significant role in events.

Based on a wide range of sources, we will try to analyze the role of the Dagestani aristocracy as a relatively closed ruling group in terms of class in the confrontation between the Russian Empire and the Imamate. We will also try to identify the reasons for the systemic crisis of this social group, which demonstrated itself in their «izmelchanie» (degradation) and the subsequent elimination of possessions by the tsarist power. To understand the motives of the behavior of this or that aristocrat in the course of military and political events, we will provide information about his origin and the degree of kinship with other representatives of the Dagestan nobility.

2. Materials and methods

A common feature of the most studies on the Caucasus is the transfer to the Caucasian society the concepts that are alien to its nature, taken from the European experience of comprehending the socio-historical process. This, in our opinion, prevents the allocation of systemic qualities and system-forming elements inherent only to it (Caucasian society). In many respects, modern authors have not gone beyond the class approach and continue to follow in the mainstream of the traditional Marxist «five-member» system. Alternatively, we will proceed from the fact that Sunni Islam, which underwent qualitative changes under the influence of the Naqshbandiyya tariqat (Sufi order), becomes an essential characteristic of the social life of the highlanders of Dagestan during this period. The new stage of the Islamization of the region also transformed the system of power relations, which turned out to be even more densely incorporated into Islam according to the principle of Euler's circles. It was these parameters that gave the Caucasian society a new trajectory of historical movement towards the end of the 1820s. However, the inability to fit this trajectory into the logic of the evolution of the Russian system, which was much stronger, more complex and larger, caused the duration and painfulness of Dagestan's entry into Russia. Since the research is of a historical and sociological nature, we used the achievements of such representatives of social science as B. Moore, Jr., G. Standing and the above-mentioned J. Goldstone.

As sources, we used unpublished archival documents extracted from the funds of the Central State Historical Archives of Georgia (CSHAG) and the Russian State Historical Archives (RSHA). Important information is contained in a report written in 1843 by the captain of the General Staff A.K. Vranken. The document is an example of the tactical vision of the military planning authorities of the Russian Empire of the operational situation during the Caucasian War.

3. Discussion

In Russian historiography, attention to the quasi-feudal groups of Dagestan is observed, as a rule, in the context of research on regional history. The Dagestan nobility fell into the optics of researchers studying the history of individual state formations in the region. Soviet historical science reduced the strategy of autocracy in the Caucasus to the search for support in the face of the «reactionary feudal elements» of the mountain society, which, in turn, used the Russian bayonet to strengthen control and exploitation of ordinary bridles, appropriating an already small «surplus» product (Magomedov, 1957; Khashaev, 1961). A contribution to the study of this problem was also made in the post-Soviet period. New sources were introduced into scientific circulation and a significant number of works were published on the problem of the ruling aristocratic circles. The works of T.M. Aitberov, Sh.M. Khapizov, B.G. Aliev, in which the social nature of the khan's families of Dagestan is analyzed in detail, including their relationships, family ties, as well as

their role in the military-political events associated with the entry of the region into the Russian Empire are of interest for our article (Aitberov, 1990; Aitberov, 2017; Khapizov, 2013; Aliev, 2006). The outstanding ethnographer Yu.Yu. Karpov made a great contribution to the understanding of the specifics of social relations of the mountaineers of the Caucasus, including the potestary problem (Karpov, 2016).

Within the framework of foreign studies, it is worth noting the works of individual English-speaking authors about the integration of the Caucasus into the Empire, which touches the problem of the indigenous elites of the region (Khodarkovsky, 2008). At the same time, we tried to take into account the works that allow us to understand the specifics of social changes in Dagestan, as well as to determine the place of these changes in a number of similar processes associated with the reaction to the «civilizing» actions of European powers taking place in other regions of the Muslim world (Kisriev, 2006; Keddie, 1994).

Thus, we have not identified any separate studies on this historical plot, which, despite its seeming narrowness, is in many ways an issue of the decisive importance for the history of Dagestan's entry into Russia.

4. Results

By the beginning of the XIX century, there were about two dozen estates in Dagestan, located in the plains and foothills. Most of the rulers of Northern and Nagorny Dagestan were representatives of the Shamkhal clan and its lateral branches. Shamkhal's residence was located in Tarki. At the same time, the ownership of Mekhtuly was virtually independent of him, as well as biliks in Buinak, Karabudakhkent, Kazanishchi and beyond the river Sulak (Endirey, Aksay and Kostek Principalities). The power of the Shamkhal was limited by other members of the clan and was not hereditary until the arrival in the region of the Russian Empire (Magomedov, 1957: 189). At the beginning of the XIX century the Nutsal of Avaria, whose possession was located in the interfluvium of the Avar and Andiy koisu, and the residence in Khunzakh, was the Paraul bek Sultan-Akhmed from the clan of khans of Mehtuly, married to Pakhu-bike, the daughter of the late Avar Nutsal Uma-khan the Great. The relatives of Sultan-Akhmed were the rulers of Mekhtuly and Dzhengutay and also descended from the Shamkhal root (Mekhtulinskiy, 1869: 3). In central Dagestan since the XVII century power belonged to the khans of Gazikumukh, who were the younger branch of the Shamkhal clan. In 1812, from the lands on the Kyura plane, Agul, Koshan, Kurakh and Richin rural communities that were previously part of the Gazikumukh Khanate, the Russian military administration separated the Kyura Khanate. Aslan Khan (with the rank of colonel in the Russian army) was appointed its ruler. In alliance with the Russians, he confronted his uncle, the strong-willed and enterprising Surkhay-khan, the ruler of Gazikumukh, who was an implacable enemy of Russia (A.K., 1869: 19-20).

Analyzing the possessions of Southern Dagestan, we will dwell our attention in more detail on the Ilisu Sultanate, whose rulers have replaced the rulers of Tsakhur. The sultans were elected at gatherings from the representatives of the dynasty, and the election was a kind of compromise with the Tsakhur communities (jamaats). Until 1830, Ahmad-Khan was the sultan. After the death of Ahmad-Khan and his eldest son Musa, another son, Daniyal-bek, became sultan, whose maternal grandfather was Surkhay-khan Gazikumukh. (Linevich, 1873: 37).

It should be noted that the development of structures of the feudal type had a characteristics different from the European «standard», and, therefore, it is incorrect to call this system feudal. A low degree of social stratification was an essential characteristic of the historically established social relations in Dagestan. One of the manifestations of the peculiarity of potestary relations was the absence of entitlement, mentioned above. «The temporary dominion of the khans was based only on their personal power or on moral influence», – noted D.A. Milyutin (Milyutin, 1850: 13). Moreover, it was precisely the «moral influence» strengthened by the construction of a genealogy to glorious ancestors that allowed the rulers to claim power not only on the plain, but also (albeit nominally) in the mountainous regions. Those it can be argued that the power of local rulers was patrimonial. The symptomatic characteristic given by General R.F. Rosen to the system of power in Avaria: «... the government of Avaria is public, while the khan, as if out of mercy and according to customs, is given a small share of his crops and herds for feeding» (Rosen, 1958: 291). The source of power, in contrast to Western Europe, in Dagestan was the highlander community (jamaat), whose decisions were made at gatherings similar to those of the ancient ecclesia. In large settlements, such as Khunzakh, the community acted not as a vassal of the ruler, but as his partner. It was the jamaat that endowed Nutsal with the right to collect taxes from subordinate villages (Aitberov, 1990: 9-17). In turn, even before the coming Russia to Dagestan, there was a kind of infiltration of the aristocracy into the top of the rural communities, which was facilitated by the tradition of the Avar Nutsals (*bal*) (Aitberov, Khapizov, 2017: 25). The descendants and relatives of the Nutsals moved to remote villages as hereditary «commandants» and also became hereditary rural foremen. The mountainous areas were controlled by the unions of rural communities, which were highlander polities, which were virtually not subject to the plane rulers. The khans were unable to subdue the mountain jamaats by force. However, the tradition described above contributed to the inclusion of rural communities in the orbit of influence of the Dagestani rulers within the framework of union relations.

However, a serious external influence from the Russian Empire led to changes in the existing system of social relations. To gain a foothold in the integrated territories, Russia tried to find the support among the rulers of Dagestan. If they entered the Russian service, they received patronage in return for civil strife and

the threat of a Persian invasion. In these conditions, the aristocrats sought to expand their influence on rural communities, which had previously successfully repulsed them. So the already mentioned Aslan-khan for almost 20 years contested in his favor the arable land in the Quba province (CSHAG coll. 2. aids. 1. fol. 774. L. 2–55), and Danial-bek had land claims to the inhabitants of the Jar (CSHAG coll. 2. aids. 1. fol. 10322). But at the same time, in the 1810s some of the rulers of Dagestan tried to defend the independence of external relations, which they were deprived when they received Russian titles. Many of them have developed stable ties with both Turkish and Persian border officials, and they have benefited from such a «multi-vector» policy. An example of such a ruler was Surkhay-khan. The aristocracy of Dagestan found itself socially squeezed by the Russian Empire on the one hand, which meant the prospect of being included in the Russian noble corporation (which was partially hindered by the Muslim religion), on the other hand, it was pressured by the expanded unions of rural communities, armed and ready to defend freedom.

The Russian command did not intend to endure such a khan's freedom for a long time. In 1816 A.P. Ermolov was appointed commander of the Separate Georgian Corps (renamed the Separate Caucasian Corps in 1820) and continued the course of P.D. Tsitsianov based on forceful methods. This led to the fact that in the summer of 1818 an uprising of part of the Dagestan rulers broke out against the Russian administration. The so-called «khan movement» was headed by Sultan-Ahmed-khan of Avar, his brother Hasan, Khan of Mekhtuly and Surkhay, Khan of Gazikumukh. The Khans called for a ghazavat to gather the highlander masses around them (Narodno-osvoboditel'naya, 2005: 19). However, after a series of defeats from the Russian troops during 1819, the khan's coalition collapsed, and the most militant of the leaders – Surkhay-khan - escaped to Persia. From that moment on, a clear course of the Russian administration was traced to reshape the political map of the region to suit its needs.

In January 1820 Aslan, Khan of Kyura was appointed the Khan of Gazikumukh, as a reward for helping the Russian troops (CSHAG coll. 2. aids. 1. fol. 1009. p. 1). He persistently and consistently strove to expand his possessions, using the reputation of a loyal ruler for Russia. At the same time, the cruelty of the khan was widely known, which he easily got away with. A contemporary of events A. Omarov mentioned a case in the Lak aul, where the khan and his nukers «dragged the women, took the chickens from the highlanders and reveled» (Omar-ogly, 1868: 30–31). Aslan-khan's commitment to Russia was largely formal and pragmatic. «His constant policy was to make himself necessary for the Russian government, but not to allow us to strengthen in Dagestan», – wrote about him Captain A.K. Vranken (RSHA coll.1268. aids 1. fol. 545. p. 19). At the same time, the Russian troops by the very fact of potential interference served as support for such rulers. From them, the Russians received help in the form of fodder, provisions and the participation of militia units in actions against the non-peaceful highlanders.

Another rebellious leader, Hasan, Khan of Mehtuly, was replaced by the loyal Ahmad-khan, who faithfully served the tsar for more than 20 years, «understood the Dagestanis well, was strict with them to the point of cruelty and generous to the point of wastefulness». After his death in 1843, without a firm ruling hand, the Mekhtulins began not to regularly expose the militia, to deserted from its ranks, and in July of the same year, a battalion of the Apsheron regiment was sent to punish the inhabitants of the village of Kaka-Shura, which was part of the Mehtuly Khanate, who raised revolt against the captain Ali-Sultan, the owner of them (RSHA coll.1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 28).

Tarki shamkhals Mekhti and his sons Suleiman and Abu Muslim were the most consistent supporters of Russia. At the same time, the «weak character and mind», as well as the lack of «love and respect» of their subjects made them an unnecessary link in the management chain. A contemporary noted that the Kumyks «are more willing to have direct relations with the Russians than with their ruler, who often withholds part of the money that comes from the treasury for carts, food delivery, etc.» (RSHA coll.1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 28–29). Thus, the weak rulers did not meet the requirements of the Russian command and did not properly control their subjects. The era of truly strong rulers who could unite Dagestani uzdens (free community members) around themselves ended in the XVIII century. Charismatic figures like Uma-khan or Surkhay-khan were gone to the past. And by the end of the 1820s the sermons of Magomed Yaragsky and the spread of the Naqshbandiyya tariqat in Dagestan drew a line under the bygone era.

So, in the 1820s a movement for the introduction of Sharia law in Dagestan and Chechnya was unfolding. This movement aimed at eliminating the khan's power, which controlled by the Russians. The confrontation with Russia and the khans bore the character of a gazavat. The former ruling groups were losing their necessity and legitimacy in the mind of the highlanders. Earlier, the leaders of the «khan's movement» in 1818–1819. have already tried to play the Islamic card, calling for gazavat. However, such appeals from the lips of the rulers were not able to win over to their side the large unions of rural communities. The Dagestani rulers were in a state of «cold war» with them. And in turn, rural communities, fighting the khans, sought to expand their territory and solve the problem of land-hunger. This is reflected in Dagestan folklore («The Legend of the Brave Khochbar»). This confrontation continued and even intensified with the spread of the Naqshbandiyya tariqat. In the arabographic Dagestan literature, we find the fixation of a sharply negative attitude towards the native aristocracy from the part of the murids. The main accusations boiled down to the facts that the khans are henchmen of the «infidels» (Russians), adhere to adats and do not correspond to the moral canons of Islam, are slaves to their vices (al-Karakhi, 1941: 33–34; Genichutlinsky, 1992: 58–59).

The central event in changing power relations in Dagestan was the ruination of the Nutsal ruling house. The second imam Gamzat-bek, the son of Aliskander-bek (an associate of Uma-khan the Great), was brought up in the Nutsal house. However, in August 1834 he occupied Khunzakh with an army. At the same time, the murids dealt with the female ruler Pakhu-bike (the widow of one of the leaders of the «khan's movement» in 1818-1819, Nutsal Sultan-Ahmed-khan, who died in 1826) and her elder sons Abu-Sultan and Uma-khan. The youngest son Bulach was previously taken by Imam Gamzat-bek as an amanat during negotiations and taken to the village Gotsatl. The massacre in Khunzakh, initialized by the murids, led to the fact that the people of Avaria were divided into supporters of the Nutsal government and supporters of the imam. Most of the first party (primarily the residents of Khunzakh) supported the candidacy of Bulach-khan. Perhaps for this reason, in 1843, Shamil razed Khunzakh to the ground, as punishment for its inhabitants for refusing to support the murids. However, there was also another contender for the Nutsal – the young Fet-Ali-bek, the grandson of Nutsal Gebek. The imam managed to usurp the Nutsal power. Gamzat-bek was a native of the nobility and, perhaps, therefore, sought to seize power in Khunzakh, using Sharia as a pretext for realizing his ambitions. Adherence to Sharia and ghazavat became instruments for achieving this power. But on September 19, 1834, he was killed in the mosque of Khunzakh by Usman and Hadji Murad. They were the foster brothers of the children of Pakhu-bike. The murids were put to flight and left Khunzakh, but Bulach-khan died tragically, never returning to Khunzakh from Gotsatl. As a result, the actual control of Avaria was in the hands of Aslan-khan, who had long been striving towards this goal (his mother was the sister of Uma-khan the Great). Previously, he supported the candidacy of Bulach-khan. Aslan reasonably believed that the Russian administration would approve him in the rank of atalyk at the minor Nutsal. However, his power was relatively short-lived: Aslan-khan died in 1836, being the ruler of significant territories of Dagestan. Sic transit Gloria mundi. Further struggle within the mountain aristocracy will unfold for the possession of Kumukh as the old residence of the shamkhals.

After the death of Aslan-khan, the Kyura and Gazikumukh possessions passed to his sons Nurtsal-khan and Magomed-Mirza-khan, who died in turn, and in 1839 the administration of the Kyura khanate was entrusted to Garun-bek. He was one of the 12 sons of Tagir-bek, Aslan-khan's brother. Aslan Khan's widow Ummu Kulsum-bike became the ruler of Gazikumukh. Among her assistants was Mahmud-bek (Garun-bek's brother), who was reputed to be a fool and a drunkard (RSHA coll.1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 20). Another contender for the khanate was Abd-ar-Rahman-khan, the son of Umar-bek (brother of Aslan-khan and Tagir-bek). As the captain of the Russian army, Abd-ar-Rahman has established himself as well-meaning and loyal to the Russian government. However, he was not distinguished by courage and «did not know how to acquire either people's love or even respect» (RSHA coll. 1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 20-21).

Certain aristocrats also became murids of the Naqshbandiyya tariqat and advocated gazavat. Another son of Tagir-bek, Hadji-Yakhya, tried to introduce Sharia law in Dagestan, thereby opposing himself to most of his relatives. His brother Mahmud-bek and father Tagir-bek persuaded Hadji -Yahya not to oppose Russia and vouched for him before the Russian command. However, Hadji-Yakhya could not keep his promise and went over to Shamil's camp. His connections with the brothers Mahmud-bek and Garun-bek allowed the murids to enter Kumukh without a fight, where Shamil installed Haji-Yakhya naib (A.K., 1869: 38). The surrender of the fortifications with the Russian garrison and ammunition to Shamil in 1842 was a real disaster for the Russians. After the expulsion of the murids by the troops of M.Z. Argutinsky-Dolgorukov Garun-bek was arrested and taken to Tiflis, where over time he managed to whitewash himself (A.K., 1869: 39). The ruler of the Kyura Khanate was appointed his brother – lieutenant Yusuf-bek, who was the sworn enemy of their cousin Abd-ar-Rahman, who was appointed the ruler of Gazikumukh. Family ties played an important role in this appointment. This happened with the filing of the female ruler Ummu Kulsum-bike, whose sister, Rukiyat-bike, was the mother of Abd-ar-Rahman.

Another contender for power in Gazikumukh was the Ilisu sultan Daniyal-bek. For a long time he was assessed by the Russian command as a person «very valuable» in the indirect management of the region. Given his «far-sighted mind, strong will and insatiable ambition», the Russian administration was confident in his predictability (RSHA coll.1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 15). He tried to spread his influence in Dagestan not only with the help of the Russians, but also using dynastic connections. So, he became related with Aslan-khan, and later married the daughter of the deceased Akhmad-khan Mehtuly. Daniyal-bek was an insidious politician, an example of which is his skillful play on the contradictions of the Magomed, the Qadi of Akusha and Aslan, the Qadi of Tsudakhar (RSHA coll. 1268. aids1. fol. 545. p. 15). In 1842, General E.A. Golovin petitioned for the granting of Daniyal-bek by Gazikumukh possession with complete freedom of internal police orders, trial and punishment, excluding serious criminal offenses subject to military court (Linevich, 1873: 41). However, with the head of the Jar-Belokan district, Major General G.E. Schwartz, to whom he had to report directly, Daniyal-bek could not agree (Linevich, 1873: 42). He promised to gather militia detachments to assist the spring-summer expedition of the Russian troops in 1844. In exchange for this, he bargained for the privileges indicated above, with the preservation of him in the hereditary administration the Ilisu Sultanate. However, with the appointment of Abd-ar-Rahman-khan as an assistant to the female ruler Ummu Kulsum-bike, the sultan's claims to get possession of Gazikumukh were rejected. Not having received what he wanted from the Russian command, in June 1844 he went over to the side of Shamil and

became a *mudir*. Later, he will give his daughter Karimat in marriage to the eldest son of Shamil Gazi-Magomed, thereby continuing to build a power base, relying on a kindred environment.

Representatives of the Dagestan aristocracy who went over to Shamil's side (Hadji-Yakhya, Daniyal-bek, etc.) sought to realize their claims to possessions ruled by their ancestors. Less noble, but ambitious aristocrats close to the Nutsal family (Gamzat-bek, Hadji-Murat) also tried to take power into their own hands. Not having received what was expected from the Russians, they began to realize themselves within the framework of the Imamate, but even there their power was limited to the corporation of Ulama (Islamic theologians), and the *naibs* were destined to be in the shadow of the imam. Their death as an estate was inevitable.

5. Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that it is inappropriate to reduce the events of the Caucasian War to a dichotomous confrontation between Russia and the highlanders. Considering the processes of social transformation in the Caucasus, we can observe a complex picture of the struggle for domination within the Dagestani society, which was burdened by the Russian expansion. So, Imam Shamil in 1836 wrote to the commander of the Russian troops in Dagestan, General F.K. Klucky-von-Klugenau: «... I ask one thing: do not prevent us from fighting among ourselves. The bravest will remain the victor, the unbridled will humble themselves, power and order will prevail, and then, by God's help, there will be general peace» (Drozdov, 1899: 280).

That part of the aristocracy (Shamkhals of Tarki, Abd ar-Rahman-khan, etc.), which was not noticed in treason to the king and connivance on the *murids*, did not enjoy authority among the subjects. On the territory formally controlled by the Russians, unrest of the highlanders often arose, who were more impressed by the militant *murids*.

Another part of the rulers entered the service of Russia, but they were unreliable and, at an opportunity, tried to benefit from aiding the *murids* and from helping the Russians. Thus, Garun-bek, Mahmud-bek, Daniyal-bek, Qadis of Akusha and Tsudakhar were noticed in betrayal. At the same time, the soft attitude towards them on the part of the ranks of the empire is surprising. When they repent and promised not to repeat their «mistakes», they were forgiven and often even promoted. There were, of course, tragic subjects (the fate of Hadji-Murat), but the scenario described above was more typical. This can be explained both by the shortage of Russian administrative personnel in the region, and by the imperial tradition of consolidating their power in the newly annexed regions, relying on the ruling elites. It should be borne in mind that this process stretched out in time and therefore, the steps of the Russian command were overly cautious, and sometimes did not differ in the sequence of decisions.

Finally, a number of representatives of the privileged groups of Dagestani society took an active part in the *gazavat* against the Russian Empire. The integration of Dagestan into the empire led to a breakdown of the established social (including potestary) relations in Caucasian society. The former ruling groups, on the one hand, were losing their authority in the eyes of the highlanders, and on the other, they were gradually eliminated by the Russian administration. The latter took place by accepting mountain rulers into the Russian service and paying pensions to members of their families, viz. turning them into salaried officials (from the elite to the salariate, in terms of the British sociologist G. Standing). Caucasian aristocrats who passed to Shamil were included in the administrative structures of the Imamate. Former khans and chunks held positions of *naibs* and *mudirs*. As a rule, their appointment to certain regions was determined by Shamil's aspirations to pacify the territories that became part of the Imamate and could be successfully controlled by the *murids* while leaving their usual power in the person of people close to the ruling clan (Hadji-Murat in Avaria, Hadji-Yakhya in Gazikumukh). At the same time, the noble origin of the khans did not particularly affect the level of the office to which they were appointed by the imam, and their authority among the subjects of the Imamate. Ulama, who, as a rule, came from the environment of free rural community members, enjoyed significantly great influence in the Imamate.

And the Russian Empire failed to find the key to attracting the old ruling groups to its side, successful cases did not constitute the majority. The reasons for this should be seen in the fact that the rhetoric of Islamic preaching was more understandable and effective for mobilizing the highlanders. Orthodox Russia was more difficult to perceive for the Muslims of Dagestan. Even the last descendants of the rulers of Gazikumukh and Avaria, on whose territory Shamil could not gain a foothold for a long time, Jafar and Fet-Ali, respectively, eventually became supporters of the *gazavat* and died during the events of 1877, which became the tragic epilogue of the confrontation of 1820s – 1850s in Dagestan. After the military conquest, administrative transformations were carried out, as a result of which the former possessions were included in the Dagestan region, formed in 1860. In the 1860s the last rulers, despite their loyalty to the empire, would renounce their ownership rights, and the patrimonies themselves would be abolished (the Khanate of Kyura in 1864, the Khanate of Mehtuly and Shamkhalate of Tarki in 1867). The Russian government itself was unable to painlessly include the highlanders in the Russian statehood for a number of reasons. An alternative to joining the European Christian empire for the Caucasus was the Islamic path and the construction of a Muslim statehood. Calls for equality and asceticism of the Naqshbandiyya tariqat were adopted by a number of representatives of the aristocratic class, who played a noticeable and at times even decisive role in the

Sharia movement in the North-Eastern Caucasus. At one time, the American sociologist B. Moore, Jr. noted that «the wellsprings of human freedom lie not only where Marx saw them, in the aspirations of classes about to take power, but perhaps even more in the dying wail of a class over whom the wave of progress is about to roll» (Moore, 1966: 505). Of course, it is necessary to clarify that the concept of linear progress is not inherent in Islam – this is the prerogative of Christian Europe. However, this biting remark quite accurately characterizes what happened to the aristocracy of Dagestan in the XIX century (her death in historical terms), and what will happen to her, according to the logic of development, in the XX century (physical death). The owners have ceased to correspond to the circumstances and challenges of the new era that has come. Those who made a choice not in favor of Russia had to perish. As the Romans said, «Vae victis». Those who chose the service of the empire extended their lives in the physical, but not in the social sense, and, becoming servants of the tsar, they lost hereditary rights in the territories that became the administrative units of Russia.

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