

## Contentious aspects of the term "Caucasian war" in the works of the North Caucasian historians

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted the most debating point of the domestic Caucasiology, which was and still is the problem of "Caucasian War" in the XIX century. Today this topic arouses the biggest scientific and public interest in the Russian historical science. An extended, multifaceted view of historians about the complex process of entering the mountain peoples into the Russian Empire was also reflected in the rethinking of the term "Caucasian war." Following a brief historic consideration of the term's origin, the author analyzes various theories and views of the North Caucasus authors, focuses on the fact, and focuses on the fact that in the past of our national and spiritual history we should find the answers to the burning questions of life, which now are the real topic of the day.

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### Introduction

Perhaps, the political history of the Caucasus is the most difficult and the most problematic integral part of the Russian Empire. From the standpoint of Factography this history is considered as a well-studied, but that fact didn't prevent it to become the subject of the most acute scientific discussions [1], ideological battles, nationalist and chauvinist speculations, and clumsy mythmaking nowadays. Among the most debatable questions of the domestic Caucasiology was and still is the problem of "Caucasian War" in the XIX century, which is one of the topics, which arouses the biggest scientific and public interest in the Russian historical science. In our time it's accepted to speak about the new Caucasian war, which is a continuation of the Great Caucasian War of the XIX century. However, you should understand and comprehend its historical context to make comparisons and to note the similarities with the present day [2]. An extended, multifaceted view of historians on the complex process of entering of the mountain peoples into our country was also reflected in the rethinking of the term "Caucasian War" [3].

In the XXI century the traces of the rigid mutual antagonism and the survivability of ethnocentric myths in the national education programs that develop a sense of patriotism in the younger citizens, create the feeling of a serious threat to the process of European integration in the historians and teachers [4].

### History of the term "Caucasian War" formation

The prerevolutionary historical school has made a quite coherent concept of the event. In the XIX century R.A Fadeev, a military historian and

publicist, participant of military action in the Caucasus, introduced the term "Caucasian war" as a scientific term [5], took the beginning of war to 1801, to the time when joining Georgia joined Russia. Later this title came into use. Over time the term appears in the works of representatives of the nobility historiography, such as V.A. Potto [6], N.F. Dubrovin [7]. The Soviet historiography is characterized by having a plurality of estimates, sometimes opposite to each other [8].

Caucasian War represents an extremely complicated, multifaceted and contradictory phenomenon. As early as 2006 at one of seminars in the Caucasiology School of prof. V.B. Vinogradov, the fundamental thought of the term "Caucasus War" was formulated and the positions of individual authors were discussed. Today the state of the so-called Caucasian-national and liberal pro-Western direction in the modern science, "determining the Russian policy in the region as an exceptionally invasive-colonial, bloody-enslave and the like, forms a kind of dead end", said the Historian D.I. Oleynik [9]. In the works of the researcher T.N. Khlynin an overview of the domestic historians' views is given in the mainstream of awareness of "contact zones and the dialogue of cultures", "moving boundaries" in the regions, which were not at once included "completely and finally into the jurisdiction of the Russian government" [10].

In the work of the Rostov historian A.V. Scherbyna the signs of Caucasian frontier, i.e. the Russian borderlands, "where the different logic of relations between the imperial authority and the local community acted, rather than on what was then the border of our state" are submitted using and abstracting the English-language publications, issued

in Europe and America. Their overall finding is "... in the studies of Western researchers the North-Caucasian frontier acts not only as a moving boundary, but above all, as a complicated way of military, economic and cultural cooperation between Russia and the indigenous peoples ..." [11].

Giving coverage to the essence of international events relating to the Caucasus, its history and the "Eastern Question" from their positions the majority of foreign researchers, such as Spenser Ed [12], Lyall R. [13], Mackie J.M. [14], Lross A. (ed.) [15], Johnson J. [16], didn't see or didn't want to see the growth of the Russian orientation among the North Caucasian peoples. They are trying to prove that the Russian Empire initially pursued the aggressive plans in relation to the North Caucasus.

In the UK, the classical works on the Caucasian War are the work of J. Budleigh [17]. Among the individual works it is possible to distinguish the works of D. Freshfield [18] and M. Florinsky [19].

You cannot lose sight of the fact that the one-dimensional fair Caucasian war has become a symbol of separatism ideologists throughout the North Caucasus. And that, in its turn, didn't add the objectivity in covering the causes, nature and essence of the Caucasian War [20], and actually deep essence of the process of centuries-old Russian-Caucasian relations, and government integration [21]. Why was carried out the movement, Who was right and who was guilty, Whether was won the victory? And till today there is no direct and accurate answer to these questions.

### **The theoretical understanding and the Necessity to change the term "Caucasus War"**

The professor V.B. Vinogradov believes that the theoretical understanding and the vital application of acquisition and construction models of the southern Russian state seems quite useful [22]. Hence, in his opinion, the necessity to abandon the conditional and washed out semantic content of "Caucasus War" follows [23]. The term is used in historical science in different ways. The supporters of the professor V.B. Vinogradov agree that the unity of views on this issue will not be achieved, so you should at least try to recognize an effective conditionality of this term.

During the Soviet period the term "Caucasian war" got seemingly a more definite content - they began to call this way the fight of people in the region against the "tsarist policy of conquest." Despite the evolution of the Soviet historical science views on the nature of the North Caucasus-Russian relations, one thing remained

almost unchanged – the recognition of "colonial policy of conquest" of czarism and the "fair liberation" nature of the Highlanders resistance.

The professor Yu.Yu. Klychnikov underlines that the term "Caucasian war" at present remains the generally accepted historical term, which has, like many others, a considerable degree of conditionality. The attempt to deviate from the above terminological conventionality has been undertaken during the formation of a new look at the problem of history of the Russian-North-Caucasian relations, by V.B. Vinogradov and Professor S.L. Dudarev, who noted the essence of the historical phenomenon "Caucasian War" as "the actual uptake of the "patronized territories and their population, armed assertion on them of the tsarist military administration and the imperial orders, which resulted in the activation of internal social and political processes in the medium of highlanders' societies ... and the deployment of .. long, gradually increasing, complicated on the composition of participants and aims liberation and anti-feudal struggle of highlanders ..." [24]. The stated point of view on the content of a historical phenomenon "Caucasus War" characterizes its complicated and complex structure. In this regard, it should be emphasized that this phenomenon is, definitely, includes a number of historical events and processes, which have a single vector and the general historical result – the North Caucasian peoples were merged in the Russian Empire. In the opinion of Yu.Yu. Klychnikov, the military component of the highlanders' integration into Russia is not the main, consequently this term both doesn't reveal the essence of a historical phenomenon, which it means, and more than that, it "compromises" the very idea about the complexity and ambiguity of the joining process of the North Caucasus peoples in the Russian State [25].

The professor N.N. Velikaya repeatedly noted in her publications that for a number of researchers the term "Caucasian war" means the continuation of confrontation that for a number of researchers the term "Caucasian war" means the continuation of confrontation that is transferred to the ideological sphere and kindles the anti-Russian sentiment [26].

The reason for that, probably, is only one: "in the Caucasus the history is always more than just a story", - said the political analyst A. Epifantsev. For Caucasian peoples the events of the past were the means to justify their requirements of today and the ethnoses consolidation tool. As you know the cooperation on the basis of a wonderful or, conversely, tragic past is an excellent and, perhaps, the easiest and fastest way to not only unite but also

to create peoples. The perfect proof of it is the history of Caucasian War and the coming of Russia in the Caucasus [27]. There is, if not many, but definitely, a considerable number of interpretations of the events of that time. And if one of them considers an event in a positive manner, then the other calls it as a terrible tragedy and a never seen before genocide. At that, quite often our contemporaries relate to the events of those days much more implacable and tragically than people who lived at those time. At first, the awareness of that surprises and misleads you a lot, but gradually after you get into the topic, you understand that the point here is not the history but the present time [28].

The concept, which a number of Dagestan historians adhere, is tested in all textbooks on the History of Dagestan. More often they use the term "national liberation struggle" of Highlanders of the North Caucasus. In recent years the term got a second life and is widely used. Thus, it indicates that the movement of the Highlanders did not go against Russia and the Russian people, but against the methods by means of which czarism was trying to gain a foothold here.

In our opinion the finding of Dagestan scientific, Professor V. Gadzhiev that the term "Caucasian war" is not the evaluative term, but just only a geographical area definition, deserves the attention.

### **Place of the Highlanders' raiding system in the "concept of the Caucasian War"**

A new impulse to the scientific analysis in the Dagestan studies of the longest war in the history of Russia and the Caucasian nations in its time was the article written by the Professor M.M. Bliev published in 1983 the academic journal of CAS Institute of History [29]. The author of the article covered the essence of Caucasian from the War "new positions" c The author of the article from the "new positions" covered the essence of the Caucasian War, reducing it to a desire of Russia to curb the "raids of wild highlanders", who were at the level of tribal system, or more precisely, at the stage of military democracy. The mountain people of the Caucasus, according to the article, could not exist otherwise, and namely a war and spoil could only feed them. It should be noted that that article provoked a quite mixed assessment of the North Caucasian historians.

"The concept of "raiding system" is not a discovery of M.M. Bliev" – the researcher M.A. Ammaev notes [30]. It "justified" the colonial conquests of czarism previously as well. The new, in our opinion, was the author's opinion that without raids the economy of the mountain part of North Caucasus, which was the main base of resistance to

colonization, could not feed the population. Hence the logical conclusion: highlanders could not live without raids. And Russia had no choice but to conquer them with the cruel methods... ". But arising from this concept question remained the most paradoxical logically and which M.A. Ammaev asks: how and at what expense did live and fight the North Caucasus people in full blockade for more than fifty years? Are a few breakthroughs to the plain provided them with all the necessary for decades? As for the localization of the Caucasian War mainly with the mountain Dagestan and Chechnya, besides many other explanations, there was the most elementary explanation: here, in the mountains and forests, where there is little scope for using artillery and the mass regular army, you could organize the effective resistance by small forces [31].

From the expressed theory of the North Ossetian scientist M. Bliev follows also his position on the terminology that is associated with the fact that the term "Caucasian war" does not reflect the historical reality at all. It seems to combine, but although simplify, the multifaceted facts and processes. There is the transitional economy, braided with the formation of feudal belongings and the statehood establishment, and the formation of a new ideology that serves the above processes, and bringing into contact the interests of Russia and highlanders of the great Caucasus, as well the foreign policy interests of the United Kingdom, Turkey, Persia here. And all this always passes through the violence and military actions rather than through the democracy and demonstrations.

Understanding the complexity of defining the term, today some of the authors offer to introduce the term "Caucasian wars in the XVIII - XIX centuries." But then, in our opinion, this term will include: the suppression by czarism a number of anti-feudal movements of the Caucasian nations, the Russian military intervention in the feudal strives in the Caucasus, wars of Russia with Iran and Turkey, who laid claim to the Caucasus, and, finally, the Caucasian War itself in 1817 - 1864 years – "a colonial war" of czarism against the highlanders of the North Caucasus, completed the final merger of the region in Russia.

A part of Dagestanian scientists, represented by Prof. Kh.Kh. Ramazanov, believe that more than anything the term "Caucasian war" is comparable to the term: "national liberation movement." Views were expressed that this event can be designated as the "Revolution for the free societies of the North-East Caucasus and for so-called "democratic" tribes of the Northwest Caucasus"; there was even a proposal to call these events as "the Caucasian Reformation." [32]

The researcher at the Caucasus Research Center at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations V. Mukhanov notes that another exclusively ideological term was introduced into use - "Russian-Caucasian War" (for example, we can find it on the website NGO Caucasian Forum). "This term is used by the political forces who are trying to whet even more the restless situation in the region. As it was noted by V. Muhanov, some myth-makers write that in the XIX century there was only war and blood between Russia and the Caucasus, ignoring the fact that precisely in this period the cities arose, which are now the capitals and administrative centers, roads were built, the cultural centers and hospitals were opened [33]. And the fact that there was a mutual influence of Russia and the Caucasus is forgotten, the proof of which is the theme of Caucasus in the works of Russian writers and artists [34]. In our opinion it's unacceptable, when a positive factor of the relationship between Russia and the Caucasus is ignored or reduced to nothing by individual authors.

The Dagestanian researcher M.A. Ammaev notes that "the Caucasian War" will be the subject of heated discussions and scientific debates for a long time, although its overall concept was developed to justify the legitimacy of colonial conquest of the North Caucasus in order to curb the raids of "wild" highlanders in the works of prerevolutionary domestic historians and documents of the Czarist Russia Government, as well in the works of such Western European authors as Charles King [35], Freshfields D [36], Groves F.S. [37], Mummery A.F. [38], Googh G. P. [39], Bourn Kenneth [40], Baddeley J.F. [41].

### **Treatments of the term of "Caucasian War" in the light of contemporary research**

It should be noted that the last decades of the XX and early the XXI century have become the most productive in the sense of deep, serious research of the Caucasian War, including in the international and regional scientific conferences, doctoral and master's theses on historical and historical and legal aspects of the war and the Imamate of Shamil, issue of monographic research works, encyclopedias, numerous scientific publications in the form of articles, theses of reports and materials in the Internet.

At the International level, a serious incentive to attract the attention to studying the above problem both in Russia and abroad have served the International Congress "Shamil" with the participation of scientists from the U.S., the USSR, England, France, Turkey, Israel and other countries held in March 1991 at Oxford College Of St. Anthony under the London University, the 3rd

session of the International Roundtable "For the reconstruction of Chechnya, the Caucasus peace and democracy in Russia" (Warsaw, December 11-13th, 1996), solemn meetings, international scientific conferences and events in Moscow, Makhachkala, and other cities of Russia and the CIS in connection with the 200th anniversary of Imam Shamil (1997). All this says that the subject of the Caucasian War of the XIX century from the restricted and unsolicited became "harmless" and even popular for research.

The danger lies in another - in an effort to use it in the political life today, in stirring up the national enmity and hatred and in the promotion of methods and experiences of the Caucasian War, in search of parallels between the events of today and two hundred years old. The denial of a sense of proportion, taste, professional liability, appearance on the muddy wave in mass media, on the Internet and the use in the ideological confrontation of numerous publications pseudoscientific of nationalist and chauvinistic feeling - that is, in our opinion, one of the biggest dangers of a tendentious unilateral return to the historical past.

Most American and European studies is still persistently and consistently emphasizes the aggressive, conquest, brutal nature of Russian policy in the Caucasus and the resolute, uncompromising, "national liberation" in its nature response of the Caucasian nations. This highly confrontational model of relations, with varying degrees of scientific or pseudo-scientific grace, is being touted as a systemic, historical and enduring phenomenon.

In the Internet the negative feedback on the work of School for Caucasus Studies named after V.B. Vinogradov are frequent, and even attacks happen, because it allegedly represents the "openly provocative direction", a subjective opinion of Islam Baudinov called "Sahib Klychnikov ..." has appeared on the pages of the electronic journal "Amateur" where he denotes the accents in the works of School for Caucasus Studies named after V.B. Vinogradov, caused the most powerful disagreement in his view: "highland nations are not the subject of the historical process, and its object, "elements" in the process of "integrating role of the Russian government and civilization and cultural component"; all the facts of the repressive policy of the Russian authorities concerning the "non-peaceful societies" almost don't beyond the scope of fragmentary monitored events"; there was no any Caucasian War, nor the national liberation movement with enormous victims, and there was a fair struggle of the integrating "center" against the "raiding expansion" of the highlanders from Dagestan, Chechnya and Circassia to bringing them to the imperial order; there was no "Circassians' genocide" as well and so on." Such



authors consider that event sidedly [42]. We will leave the subjective and one-sided views on the conscience of their authors.

### Findings

However, there are some promising directions of studying the problem of the Caucasian War, which lack of one-sided view on this issue. A number of researchers, following the concept of "Russian" developed by it, considers the given phenomenon as a very complex, multifaceted and contradictory process, where the military actions is just one of its sides, combined with the trade and the voluntary migration of highlanders under the patronage of Russia [43]. "Some of them, for example, V. Skiba [44] and A.A. Tsybulnikova [45] even consider it necessary to abandon the use of this term due to the fact that it, in their opinion, destroys the unity prevailing between the Caucasian nations and Russia, while not having a clear theoretical definition and justification. Although, the alternative options were not proposed" - pointed the researcher A. Savelev [46].

In our opinion, the hypothesis proposed by the Professor YU.YU. Klychnikova is not indisputable, where he suggests identifying a word "war" with the definition of "modernization process." We believe that the main means to achieving the aims of war is an organized armed struggle as the main and decisive means, as well the economic, diplomatic, ideological, informational and other means of struggle. In this sense, the war is an organized armed violence, the aim of which is to achieve the political objectives. And it's hard and not equal to call this event instead of "national liberation movement of highlanders" or "Caucasian war" as the process ("course", "motion", "promotion"), even the future developed.

The proposed today at many online forums option of replacing the term "Caucasian war" to "Russian-Caucasian" war is not very successful. "Russian-" reflects the belonging to the nation. "Caucasian" - reflects the geography. If we use the term "Russian-Caucasian" war, it means that "the Russians fought against the Caucasian ridge". Of course, it's unacceptable.

The term Caucasian "KRISIS" is much closer, assuming the "decision, decisive outcome, designating, most of all, turning point, severe transition state" arose in the Russian - North Caucasian relations. But this word is also not entirely successful. It requires some explanation. The term shall have the forceful emphasis; otherwise, this term will not be able to replace the term "Caucasian War" well-established for many Caucasiologists.

In our opinion, with a large conventionality those events can be called as "Collision of civilizations fronts", cultural and civilizational barriers. Or "Caucasus reprisal of the XIX centuries" (i.e. a reprisal – is an armed conflict with a small state).

In our view, the opinion of Prof. N.N. Velykaya is very significant, who notes the following: "we consider it expedient and timely to write works not only on the history of wars and collisions, and on the ethnic and cultural history of nations of the region" [25]. Today, according to the figurative expression of V.V. Degoev, both, the Russians and Caucasians, need to understand that the North Caucasus is our common concern and common fate, and all that is created here will belong to us and our descendants. [46]

The contemporaries, who think about issues of polarity of the Caucasiologists' opinions, should know that the tradition of cohabitation and the experience of mutual communication sometimes were born and matured in the violent collisions of various group, estates, class and other interests. The Caucasian problematics will continue to be felt in one way or another, but most likely with the growing power. Unfortunately, it's easier to sow the seeds of enmity than to work for peace and harmony [47].

Namely in the past of our national and spiritual history we should find the answers to the burning questions of life, which now are the real topic of the day. After all without all that it is impossible to imagine the full history of the centuries of social and economic, political and cultural "cohabitation", cooperation and Commonwealth of Nations.

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