В 1907 г. после достигнутых договоренностей между Россией и Великобританией по Тибету продолжались переговоры по Персии и по Афганистану. Англия хотела добиться от России признания Афганистана британской сферой влияния.

Требования Англии вызвали серьезное противодействие в правящих кругах России. В результате 14 (27) апреля 1907 года было созвано особое совещание, посвященное заключению соглашения с Англией. Главным был вопрос о Тибете. Извольскому с трудом удалось убедить членов совещания формально признать Афганистан вне сферы русского влияния.

На совещании было принято решение оставить Афганистан вне сферы влияния России. Ряд английских предложений, направленных против русской торговли в Афганистане был отвергнут. В ходе переговоров по англо-русским соглашениям, каждая сторона твердо отстаивала свои интересы, не желая предоставить другой больше, чем та имела.

Стимулом к скорейшему заключению соглашения стало известие о революции в Персии. Английское правительство вынуждено было отказаться от своих требований, касающихся признания Россией особых интересов Англии в Персидском заливе и приняло предложение русской дипломатии. В конвенцию по Афганистану было включено обязательство Англии не присоединять и не занимать какой-либо части афганской территории, не вмешиваться во внутренние дела Афганистана. Кроме того, Англия обязалась не принимать там мер, угрожающих России и не поощрять к таким мерам Афганские власти. Соглашения между Россией и Англией по делам Персии, Афганистана и Тибета были подписаны 18 (31) августа 1907 г.

В 1912 г. Британия решила выдвинуть ряд предложений по изменению договора. У России также имелись свои предложения по расширению своего присутствия в Северном Афганистане и требования установления контроля над ирригационными сооружениями, запрещение деятельности английских монополий. Дискуссии об изменении договора 1907 г. прекратились только с началом Первой мировой войны.

Конфликты между Россией и Великобританией в Центральной Азии продолжались. Как Россия, так и Англия продолжали расширять свое влияние на новые территории и государственные образования в этих районах.

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Circassian Movement in Turkey in 1908–1924: Socio-Cultural and Political Organizations (an Outline)

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Аннотация

В статье прослеживается в общих чертах эволюция черкесского движения в Османской империи и ранней кемалистской Турции в первой четверти XX в. Основное

внимание уделено деятельности северокавказских диаспорных организаций. Предпринята попытка выявить связь их программных установок и целей с внутривосточной ситуацией в стране и международной военно-политической конъюнктурой. Сделан вывод о том, что, несмотря на ограниченность достигнутых в этот период черкесскими активистами результатов, указанные объединения смогли способствовать определенной этнонациональной консолидации северокавказцев в Турции.

Ключевые слова: Османская империя, кемалистская Турция, северокавказская диаспора, черкесы, этнонациональное движение, общественные объединения

Abstract

The article outlines the evolution of the Circassian movement in the Ottoman Empire and early Kemalist Turkey in the first quarter of the 20th century. The main attention is paid to the activities of the North Caucasian diasporic organizations. An attempt is made to reveal the connection of their program setups and goals with the internal political situation in the country and the international military-political conjuncture. It is concluded that, despite the limited results achieved during this period by Circassian activists, these associations could contribute to a certain ethno-national consolidation of North Caucasians in Turkey.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Kemalist Turkey, North Caucasian diaspora, Circassians, ethno-national movement, public associations

Studying the history and current situation of foreign diasporas of the North Caucasian peoples is a rather urgent task not only due to the significant public interest in this problem, but also in view of the ongoing gradual transformation of the North Caucasian communities and their institutions abroad into a noticeable element of the socio-political and cultural landscape of both their adopted countries and the historical homeland. Obviously, an important place in these processes belongs to the several million-strong Circassian diaspora residing in Turkey.

It should be noted, however, that while many aspects of the settlement of North Caucasian immigrants in the Ottoman Middle East in the 19th century are to a certain extent reflected in the works of Turkish, Western and Russian researchers, the issue of the genesis and evolution of Circassian ethnic nationalism in late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey so far remains largely outside the focus of scholarly attention.

In order to fill, at least partially, the above-mentioned gap, this article aims to trace – albeit in somewhat concise and outlined way – the principal phases of the organized Circassian movement in Turkey during the first quarter of the 20th century, or more precisely in the period of 1908–1924, and assess in preliminary terms the significance of this phenomenon in the the history of North Caucasian diaspora.

Circassian ethno-national movement first came to the foreground in the Ottoman Empire immediately after the Constitutional (Young Turk) Revolution of 1908. Over the next decade and a half it manifested itself mainly in the activities of a number of socio-cultural and political associations and societies. This activity was the result of the efforts of a relatively limited, but fairly cohesive and organized circle of the diasporic civil and military intelligentsia that emerged in the country following the massive North Caucasian immigrations of the second half of the 19th century. The worldview of this group was characterized by a combination of two basic vectors of identity: the national-state Ottoman and the ethnic Circassian. Over the next decade and a half, this activity went through several clearly distinguishable stages, whose temporal boundaries, specific content and level of productivity were determined to a decisive extent by the peculiarities of the legal regime and the socio-political situation in the country. At the same time, most of the organizations created during this period by Circassian intellectuals, bureaucrats and military men, demonstrated –

despite the difference of their purposes and interest areas – a rather high degree of personnel and ideological continuity.

The Circassian Society of Unity and Mutual Assistance (CSUMA), which arose soon after the 1908 revolution, sought to implement a strategy aimed at a sufficiently thorough reform of the traditional economic, social and cultural structure of the Ottoman Circassians in order to increase their adaptation potential both to the conditions of the diaspora living and to the realities of the capitalist era, the ultimate goal being the ensuring of their ethnic survival and transformation into a “modern civilized nation”, one of the elements of the Ottoman community of peoples [2, p. 10–14; 5, p. 28–29].

In 1908–1912, in the context of the “cultural pluralism” stipulated by the official doctrine of Ottomanism, the CSUMA took measures aimed at creating conditions for the development of “national” culture and education in the country, namely, developing alphabets for North Caucasian languages, opening Circassian schools, publishing textbooks and periodicals, promoting caucasological knowledge, establishing contacts with the intelligentsia of the North Caucasus, etc. [5, p. 33–34; 9, p. 80–81] Steps have also been taken to overcome the remnants of patriarchal-feudal relations among Circassians, such as the domestic and especially harem slavery and the slave trade [1, p. 85–86; 4, p. 57–58]. In order to modernize the economic life of the Circassian population, the CSUMA sought to introduce into its milieu the mercantilistic values, while simultaneously encouraging intra-ethnic cooperation [2, p. 15–23].

The refusal of the Young Turks from the doctrine of Ottomanism and the strengthening of Turkist accents in the public life of the country in 1912–1914 forced the CSUMA to reduce its activities, while many of its leaders joined the ranks of political opposition to the regime [7, I, p. 294, 458–463, 564–565, 626].

Yet, after the start of World War I some of the CSUMA activists got enthusiastically involved in the political-propagandistic and partly military support of the expansionist Caucasian strategy of the Young Turks, hoping to achieve in this way the ideal of the “free and united Caucasus”. The non-public closed structures formed during the war – such as the Committee for the Independence of the Caucasus, the Society of Unity of the Caucasus (1915), the Committee of North Caucasian Political Emigrés in Turkey (1916) and the Political Society of the North Caucasus (1918) – tried to lobby domestically and abroad for the projects aimed at creation of a confederative Caucasian state under the protectorate of the Porte and her allies; in 1917–1918 they contributed willingly to the military-political support provided by Istanbul to the self-proclaimed North Caucasian (Mountaineers) Republic [3, p. 594–610]. Although the Circassian politicians associated with these organizations acted in accordance with their own understanding of the national interests of the Caucasian peoples and their diasporas, this activity was clearly controlled by the authorities and as a rule poorly correlated with the socio-political realities of the North Caucasus [3, p. 619–620].

As the military collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of the Young Turk regime in late 1918 brought about the relative (albeit short-lived) liberalization of the political situation in British-occupied Istanbul, the Circassian elite attempted to resume cultural-educational and social activities oriented towards wide sections of the diaspora. The Benevolent Society of the North Caucasus and the Circassian Women’s Mutual Aid Society that emerged at this stage, as well as the revived CSUMA, followed mainly the pre-war ethno-reformist tradition [5, p. 36–37; 6, p. 21–24].

However, under the conditions of foreign occupation of a significant part of the country and the aggravation of the intra-Turkish civil conflict, the Circassian movement was undergoing a rapid process of fragmentation and partial politicization. A number of members of the mentioned organizations, as well as the Caucasus Elevation Society established in 1920, gave priority to continuing efforts to ensure the independence of the historic homeland, trying, for the most part unsuccessfully, to reanimate the interest of Turkish political circles in this issue [2, p. 32–35; 8, p. 129–131]. On the other hand, the reaction of a part of the

provincial Circassian population and elites to chauvinistic, Turkist tendencies in domestic policy was reflected in the creation in 1921 in Izmir of the Society of Ensuring the Rights of Near Eastern Circassians, which proclaimed as its goal the establishment in Northwest Anatolia of an autonomous administrative entity of the North Caucasian diaspora under the auspices of the Entente [7, II, p. 587–590].

In 1923–1924 the Ankara Kemalist government put an end in the most arbitrary fashion to the organized Circassian movement that originated in the beginning of the century, banning all the existing associations of North Caucasians, and subsequently harshly suppressed any attempts of ethnic minority activity in Turkish Republic until the 1950s [6, p. 25–26].

On the whole, it can be stated that the ethno-reformist program put forward in 1908 by the patriotically-minded Circassian intelligentsia had in practice a rather limited effect due to a variety of objective factors (including extremely dispersed mode of settlement of Circassians across the country, deficiency of links between the enlightened Istanbul-based diasporic elite and the bulk of its fellow countrymen in the provinces, impossibility to conduct any special ethnically targeted policies through official institutions, instability of the internal and external political situations, etc.) and obviously could not neutralize the impact on the North Caucasians of the contradictory and painful processes of socio-economic and political transformation of the general-Turkish scale. Nevertheless, despite the unfavorable historical background, the Circassian associations of the first quarter of the 20th century undoubtedly contributed to a certain consolidation and strengthening of the ethno-national identity of their compatriots and the formation of ideological, social and organizational traditions of North Caucasian diasporic activism in Turkey, even if these gains did not have quick effects.

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