

History

The “Nobility” and “Commoners” in Ubykh Society: The Reasons behind the Social Conflict

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(Presented by Academy Members Guram Lortkipanidze and Liana Melikishvili)

ABSTRACT. This article examines, based on documentary and other materials, the reasons behind the social conflict between the nobility and commoners in Ubykh society in the first half of the 19th century. The authors look into the system of governance in Ubykh highland society and address its demographic and religious aspects. The authors discuss the numerous attempts by the Russian administration to enter into trade (social-economic), as well as military-political, relations with the mountaineers. The article also outlines the foreign policy of the Russian Empire in the first half of the 19th century. Ubykh highland society was not homogeneous, for which reason the rift within it has its distinctive characteristics. Thus, for instance, there existed a rift between noble (princely) kins and commoners. This rift flared into a civil war (circa 1785), during which the nobility lost their power over commoners. Fifty years later, during the making of the Russian military presence in the region, the highland nobility would not forget their defeat – the factor which determined the nobility’s course for rapprochement with the Russians. Apart from that, there was much diversity about highland society on account of the area’s geography. Thus, if in littoral mountaineer communities the population was mainly engaged in trade, horticulture, and animal husbandry, mountainous communities were known for their penchant for robbery. One of the reasons behind the destructive conduct of the mountainous tribes was their being protected by the area’s very nature, which was facilitated by the area’s numerous gorges and heavy-going terrain. Of major importance is the discovered link between the 1785 Ubykh civil war and the commencement of the process of Islamization of the region. It was after the defeat of the nobility in the civil war that a new system of religious rules was instituted in highland society, which allowed them to profess Islam. In the end, the authors come to the conclusion that the social crisis in Ubykh society was a crucial factor that led the mountaineers to the muhajirism tragedy. Other reasons the authors cite include the fact that the mountaineers, who were poorly versed in politics, became a tool in the hands of Great Britain, Turkey, Poland, and other countries in their contention against the Russian Empire. For that reason, the antagonism between the warring sides was in large part fueled from the outside. Overall, the leading European powers of the time were keen to thwart Russia’s influence – not only in the Caucasus but also Turkestan, and later on – in the early 20th century – in Korea and China. ©2014 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Keywords: *Ubykhs; nobility; commoners; civil war; Christianity; Islam*

Interaction between the “bottoms” and the “tops” is central to any nation’s development history. Internal conflicts have torn society apart, causing revolutions and destroying empires. The development of social conflicts has affected the conduct of historical figures in history and the formation of positive and negative principles in socio-cultural space. In this regard, the study of these interactions in any ethnos, especially one subjected to assimilation, is of utter significance. The article’s main topic is the issue of the interrelationship between the Ubykh nobility and Ubykhs’ relatively free community. The reasons behind the tragedy associated with the muhajirism of the Ubykh people in the late 1850s-early 1860s remain a topic of intense debate to this day. Our objective is to investigate the root causes of the social conflict which resulted in a crisis in Ubykh society.

Materials and methods. This article employs archive documents from regional and local archives, sources of personal origins (reminiscences and diary notes) from travelers, intelligence officers, and envoys. The article’s methodological basis is grounded in the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systemicity. In addition to this, to achieve the aims of our study, we have employed the methods of study, analysis, comparison, and generalization of scientific literature.

Results

Russia’s external policy in the 19th century. The external policy of the Russian Empire during the age of humanism was not distinguished by excessive aggressiveness. With variable success, Russia continued to wage the alternate Russo-Turkish wars, and during one of those (1828-1829) it managed to annex under the Andrianopol Peace Treaty a part of the Black Sea coast from the mouth of the River Kuban to the town of Poti. This territory was inhabited by a considerable number of tribal formations, namely: Natukhais, Shapsugs, Ubykhs, Dzhigets, etc. On the eve of the 1917 February Revolution, the Russian Empire numbered 209 ethnoses. Note that there were

no activities carried out on artificial reduction of the national presence of peoples in the Russian Empire. Why then did the Ubykhs not become the 210th national group within the Russian Empire? To answer this question, we need to look into one of the crucial issues – the interrelationship between the Ubykh “bottoms” and “tops” in the first half of the 19th century.

The system of governance. One of the most credible first-hand accounts of the life of mountaineers in the vicinity of the River Socha (an Ubykh aul (village)) was left by Staff-Captain Baron F.F. Tornau, a Russian intelligence officer who had lived among the mountaineers for several years: “The people have little obedience to princes and nobles, whom some welfare and personal courage empower to respect their compatriots, without providing them with any power at that” [1: L8]. Thereby, F.F. Tornau points out that in the first half of the 19th century Ubykh society reached the period of dissolution of tribal relations with pronounced elements of decentralization. At that time, the prince was a nominal figure of no great authority.

Baron Tornau adds: “In the council, when a prince is known for his courage, when he can captivate with that and coordinate his intentions with the wishes of people, then you can expect some obedience, temporary at that. Their changeable character and levity cause these people to constantly divide, meaning one-off gains” [1: L9,13].

This observation by the baron clearly points to certain elements of social tensions. Firstly, the existence of two bodies of government (the council and the prince) indicates the division of authority; secondly, there is the observed distinctive trait of Ubykh society – “live for today”. Princes, surely, desired greater permanence – merely because they just wanted to be able to preserve their property.

Demography. Elements of decentralization were clearly traceable in Ubykh’s poly-national primary settlement – Sochipsy (“Sochi”– “place”, “psy” – “river”). This settlement, according to materials pro-

vided by F.F. Tornau, was inhabited by up to 450 families of Abazins and Ubykhs plus a number of Turkish residents. Note that the Turks living in that settlement had it as one of their primary areas of residence, and it is from there that they engaged in trade with mountaineers from other tribes [1: L8,9,13]. Vibrant trade in the region and constant interaction with other tribes amid a boost in centralization could have side effects – for instance, they could be an issue with other freedom-loving tribal formations. As for the size of the Ubykh community, which consisted of noble (princely) kins and commoner kins, based on estimates provided by travelers and explorers, there were between 5-6 thousand (F.F. Tornau) and up to 50 thousand (V.V. Voroshilov) people [2].

Religion. Old Testament Christianity, which emerged here in the 3rd-4th centuries AD, existed with virtually no changes until the 19th century [3]. Its active phase, which involved the building of new Orthodox temples, continued until the 15th-16th centuries. This is due to the fact that in 1453 the Turks captured the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople [4, V.4:783], and in 1461 they subdued the capital of another Christian empire – Trapezunt (the Trapezunt Empire) [4, V.18: 546]. Having found themselves at the maritime boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, the mountaineers of the Black Sea region, just like other ethnoses of the Caucasus, continued to preserve Christian traditions, which had become for them the legacy of their ancestors. Especially zealous as the keepers of Christianity were the princely and noble kins of the mountaineers of the Black Sea region.

During the 1780s, there broke out a civil war between the nobility and commoners in the territory of the mountaineers of the Black Sea region. The nobility lost the war and had to give up their power over commoners, but the period's main novelty was the introduction of a **new uniform system of religious rules**. The new system of religious rules replaced the practicing of Christian rites [5: 191,192] with spreading the teachings of four religious books: the Bible,

the Psalms of David, the books of Evangelists, and the Quran [5: 192]. In other words, an important and prolonged outcome of the civil war was the commencement of the process of Islamizing the region, which, in turn, crowned the emergence of a religious schism.

Despite Turkey's attempts to Islamize the region in the late 18th century, by the 1830s the Moslem religion had a declarative character and was yet to settle roots in the region. The process of preserving the purity of faith had its own distinctive peculiarities. Thus, for instance, places of trading interactions with foreigners were characterized by a major religious symbiosis, where the dialog between the Moslem civilization and Christianity was in part intertwined with paganism. Thus, religion could not become with Ubykhs a cementing principle for centralizing society. Due to this, there was no clear-cut administration within spiritual and, consequently, lay authority.

Of interest is the phenomenon of the Ubykh's religiousness, which was so typical of feudal societies in the late medieval period. Thus, for instance, the village of Sochipsy, which Turks lived in and often visited, was known for the zealous practicing of the Moslem religion, while other auls and villages did not exhibit such conduct [1: L13].

Language. The Ubykhs did not have an official language. Thus, for instance, there were three languages spoken in the village of Sochipsy: Circassian, Abazin, and Ubykh [1: L13,14]. There is no doubt that Turkic (Turkish) was spoken there as well.

Geography. Of major significance to the analysis of the state of Ubykh society is the geographical factor. In terms of their social-economic activity, the littoral tribes of Ubykhs differed from mountain tribes significantly. Thus, for instance, the littoral Ubykhs were mainly engaged in gardening, animal husbandry, and trade, while the mountain Ubykhs were no strangers to armed robbery. The latter was due to the protection that the mountain Ubykhs derived from nature, namely the availability of hard-to-reach spots, gorges, and mountain trails. In such places, the moun-

tain Ubykhs could with less force contain the attacks of an opponent that surpassed them in numbers. All this, on the whole, fostered impunity in the mountain tribes. Prior to the advent of the Russian administration into the region, the mountain tribes engaged in armed robbery on close (the littoral area) and remote avenues of approach (e.g., in Kabarda).

With the advent of the Russian administration, the mountain Ubykhs began to counter the Russians. Acting from behind ambushes and making sudden incursions upon Russian garrisons, the mountain Ubykhs had little to risk, since in case of success they would just retreat into the mountains with the loot. At the same time, the counter-measures taken by the Russian military administration could affect only the littoral tribes. As a result, the littoral Ubykhs often ended up as hostages to mountain brigand teams. It should be noted that this state of affairs oftentimes triggered tough counter-measures in respect of the mountain tribes on the part of the littoral ones. Thus, for instance, when in December, 1853 naib Magomet Amin arrived in the vicinity of Fort Golovinsky (the littoral area) with a large detachment of mountain Ubykhs on purpose to unite Shapsug warriors under his aegis, he failed to come to an agreement with them. This resulted in a major battle, during which the artillery of the Russian Golovinsky fort backed the Shapsugs with gunfire [1: L13,14]. The reason behind this conduct was the fatigue of the Black Sea mountaineers from war, which was the case with the Black Sea Ubykhs as well.

During the first half of the 19th century, Ubykh society was experiencing a powerful process of dissolution of tribal relations. The impact of the Ottoman Empire, which spread upon the tribes of this area of the Black Sea region, was virtually limited to just trading relations (export – arms, import – slaves). In such conditions, the Ubykhs needed centuries to achieve harmonious development, to be able to at least reach the early industrial level in the setting of preservation of their original culture. However, history failed to grant them such time.

As we have already noted, in 1829 the territory, which also included the aul of Sochipsy, was ceded to the Russian Empire under the Andrianopol Peace Treaty. And starting in 1837 they began to build the Russian Black Sea coastline fortifications [6: L.7,8]. In these conditions, the search for future paths of development was willy or nilly conducted by tribal princes, who wielded virtually no real power. Throughout the area, at the instigation of anti-Russian envoys of Turkey, Great Britain, and other states, the militant tribes were countering Russian expedition units. However, the Russians, who were better equipped technically, managed to gain a foothold in the Black Sea region, which left the princess facing a dilemma – how to manage their relations with the Russians next.

Ubykh prince Aoubla-Akhmet had been inclined towards close ties with Russia back before the erection of the Black Sea coastline fortifications. Thus, for instance, Baron Tornau had this to say describing the Ubykh prince in his notes: “Prince Ali Akhmet Oblagu, whose descent is traced to the tribe of Adyge. Sasha (the village of Sochipsy – *the author*) obeys him, although not in all cases; his influence has waned since the time the natives, for reasons unknown, began to suspect him of close ties with the Russians. Yet, having said that, of all the princes and masters from the River Shakhe to the River Bzyba (Gagry) he is the most powerful and enjoys good welfare” [6: L.10].

In April, 1838, Russian landing troops were landed at the mouth of the River Socha and Fort Alexandria was set up in the place of the village of Sochipsy. The Ubykh’s first reaction was their active armed counteraction. However, after the escalation of hostilities in 1839-1840, which failed to have the Russian outpost removed, the Ubykhs agreed to a dialog with the Russian administration. In particular, there started to develop barter trade. Taking advantage of the calming down of his people, on May 12, 1841 Ubykh prince Aoubla-Akhmet was the first to swear an oath of loyalty to Emperor Nicholas I for himself and the no-

bility and commoners under his authority. Furthermore, the prince pledged to give away his son and two sons of the noblest of his noblemen as hostage [6: L.13].

It should be noted that on the day of swearing an oath of loyalty, the Russian administration of Fort Navaginsky (in 1830 Fort Alexandria was renamed Navaginsky) made Aoubla-Akhmet a substantial monetary gift – 200 silver rubles. Nor were overlooked for attention his noblemen (Urusbiy and Khatazukh, who received 30 silver rubles each) [7: L3].

What is more, around that time there occurred an unprecedented event in the life of the Ubykh people. Ubykh prince Aoubla-Akhmet was recommended for the rank of captain with an annual salary of 300 silver rubles. He would go on to receive that rank soon after [8: 505]. The Ubykh nobility received the rank of Russian army lieutenants. Thus, the Russian administration sought to see the Ubykhs not just as venal allies but a military-national support. No other country of the world treated the Ubykhs the way the Russian Empire did. Leaping ahead, we should note that Prince Aoubla-Akhmet remained loyal to his stance of nurturing close ties with Russia through to muhajirism – the mountaineers' mass exodus to Turkey in 1864. You can imagine the extent of the Ubykh prince's despair and resentment with all that was going on at the time, namely the conduct of his own people. The conduct which 23 years later would lead to expulsion to a foreign land.

Let us, however, go back to the events of 1841. In mid-May, Prince Aoubla-Akhmet and nobleman Zurab Khamysh were captured by the "commoners" – people for whom the nobility swore an oath of loyalty [9: L8]. In exchange for personal liberty, the nobility would have to recant the oath sworn to the Russian Emperor [10]. Unwilling to put up with such a turn of events, the Russian administration had to take relevant measures. After some pressure on the part of Russian troops and the troops of Dzhigets which had joined them, on June 4 all Ubykh princes and noblemen in the neighborhood decided to sub-

mit to the Russians. Aoubla-Akhmet confirmed his oath as well.

The Russian administration's external pressure on the mountaineers seemed to approach its logical conclusion, since the swearing of a general oath of loyalty by mountain princes was slated for September, 1841. However, at the end of July the mountaineers incited by the anti-Russian envoys of Poland, Turkey, and Great Britain engaged in active military action. On July 29, there commenced the artillery bombardment of Fort Navaginsky [11: L18].

In October, 1841, Russian troops headed by Major-General Anrem undertook the first illustrative raid along the coast from the Sacred Spirit fortress (now Adler) to the Navaginsky fortification. M.F. Fedorov, a participant in those events, noted in his memoirs "March Notes Made in the Caucasus from 1835 to 1842" that the Russian detachment numbered 8 thousand soldiers and was even armed with artillery, but the mountaineers put up fierce resistance against them. Over the period the raid lasted, from October 8 through October 10, the detachment ended up with casualties of nearly 700 dead, wounded, and sick (37 company officers and 634 soldiers of a lower rank), i.e. almost 10%. To back its infantry, the Russian side had made an active use of the firepower of the Russian fleet, which operated in the littoral zone [11: L21]. General Anrem reported on the raid's outcome to Commander of the Independent Caucasian Corps Lieutenant-General Golovin: "I have the honor to report to you that yesterday the detachment under my command arrived in the Navaginsky fortification. This crossing lasted for three days which were marked with numerous feats; the Ubykhs were all there and under the leadership of Khadzhi Berzek fought desperately for each inch... Our losses were substantial, but the enemy lost even more men. Yesterday after a desperate attack on our right cover, Khadzhi Berzek left the scene saying, "Let now whoever wants to fight do so, but I'm going home" [12: 213]. According to the same source, the mountaineers lost 1.7 thousand men during the three days of battle [8: 513].

The Russian troops produced an impression upon the mountaineers, and in early 1842, an oath of loyalty to the Russian czar was sworn by Ubykh princes residing in the Subashi gorge: Sheylekh-uko-Amshchuk Berzek, Khapesh-uko-Elbuz Berzek, Sheylekh-uko-Edik Berzek, and Sheouey-uko-Matu Berzek. On March 26, 1842, all of them received the rank of Russian army lieutenants [8: 520].

Despite an improvement in relations between the Russian administration and the mountaineers, the latter continued to bother the Russian military outposts. Gunfire would normally come from mountain youth aged up to 20 years. That was done deliberately – to demonstrate one’s fearlessness in front of one’s fellow tribesmen. It should be noted that the main thing a young Ubykh warrior probably cared about was an all-out demonstration of one’s fearlessness in front of one’s fellow tribesmen and, above all, tribeswomen. Hence displays of temerity, engaging in horse-stealing and trivial thievery. There is an illustrative case which occurred at Fort Navaginsky. On June 16, 1846, an Ubykh, who was returning from the barter trade market, wounded a private with a pistol shot and fled the scene. He was followed by a number of other mountaineers from the trade square. However, a buck shot from a nearby gun killed a mountaineer and wounded two [13: L17]. A month later, on July 21, there was an attack on the security team guarding strip grazing cattle, with a private getting wounded during a short gun battle. On July 24, an Ubykh named Khussein Kaspolet rounded up a detachment of 150 mountaineers and attacked a team of 180 soldiers headed by a company officer and armed with two licornes, which was engaged in mowing grass. As a result of an instant reaction on the part of the military outpost, the mountaineers came under rifle and cannon fire and had to retreat hastily, having lost one man dead and four wounded [7: L47]. It goes without saying, such escapades would do little to improve Russo-Ubykh relations.

Peaceful Ubykhs loyal to the Russian czar actively aided the Russians in the struggle against con-

spirators and belligerent mountaineers. Among them was Captain Prince Aoubla-Akhmet, who came to realize that envoys from Turkey, Great Britain, and other countries desired not peace but war for the mountaineers. Information supplied by the so-called peaceful mountaineers was sometimes of great importance to the Russian administration. Thus, for instance, in late January, 1846, Captain Aoubla-Akhmet reported that in the vicinity of Fort Navaginsky in the aul of Dzhembulat Berzek there was a gathering of numerous mountaineers who were plotting to invade Abkhazia and besiege the Sacred Spirit fortification and Pitsunda on the way [7: L47].

In the late 1840s-early 1850s, the social contradictions between the Ubykh nobility and “bottoms” became more exacerbated. The Ubykhs suspected virtually all of their nobles of close ties with the Russian administration, the only sticking point here being the fact that the nobility were receiving financial assets from the Russians but the rest of the people were not. Note that the nobility were seeking ways to get along with Russia, and one was found. In 1848, a delegation of mountaineers approached the Russian administration with a request to have serfdom like in the Russian Empire instituted in their tribal communities. However, the winds of the final period of the reign of Nicholas I demonstrably indicated that serfdom was going to be abolished soon in Russia, and the Russian administration refused the request. We can assume that it was not only this factor that influenced the Russian administration’s response but that this kind of innovation could cause serious unrest within the mountain community. According to one of the authors of “A Military Collection”, there is no doubt that the muhajirism tragedy would have never happened if there had been a favorable development of events and a boost in centralization within Ubykh society [14]. The events which were taking place indicated that the Ubykh nobility were trying to copy the development of the evolutionary process in order to be able to catch up with the modern period of civilization, which they were so hopelessly lagging

behind.

In late 1853, the Ubykhs turned against their nobility once again by supporting Imam Shamil's naib Magomet Amin in the cause of creating a united mountaineer army. The mountain tribes of Ubykhs which were partially backed by the Ubykhs of the Black Sea region, resolved to fight on the side of Magomet Amin. As a result, there was an increase in gunfire aimed at Fort Navaginsky. Thus, on December 31, 1853 during a wood-chopping outing, as a result of gunfire, the mountaineers wounded 3 soldiers, and on January 9, 1854 4 soldiers were wounded [7: L3]. In February, the teams went out for wood 5 times and each time they were subjected to gunfire, 4 soldiers dead and 8 wounded as a result [9: L8].

The reason behind the sharp activation of Ubykhs was news that Turkey severed its diplomatic relations with Russia and was preparing for war. The mountaineers took it as a signal for an all-out uprising.

At around the same time, Fort Navaginsky was secretly visited by a delegation of the most distinguished and noble Ubykhs, which offered its services on informing about what was going on [9: L11]. This once again demonstrated social contradictions within Ubykh society between unruly youth with no reverence for anybody and the nobility trying to look into the future.

Besides, at the dawn of the 1850s the mountain nobility began to realize that Turkey was not interested in mountain tribes getting stronger; it only had a trading interest in Ubykhs, which had lasted for several previous centuries. Turkey needed the Ubykhs and their land to be a buffer zone between Turkey and the Russian Empire. Over that period of time, the Turkish leadership had done virtually nothing to improve the locals' welfare. The only favor Turkey could do the Ubykhs was to supply Ubykh girls to Turkish harems. In return, Turkey supplied the Ubykhs with powder and lead, whereby it just fueled the inter-tribal feud among mountaineers. No serious production operation had been put together

within the zone of tribal formations. The High Porte was indifferent about the national interests of Ubykhs, Natukhais, Dzhigets, Shapsugs, and others, which led to these ethnic groups getting assimilated by the Turks in the territory of the Ottoman Empire after muhajirism.

Right at the very end of the Caucasian War, with just days left before its closure and the defeat of the mountaineers looking obvious, there occurred quite a demonstrative event. A poorly guarded Russian march baggage train, which was moving along a road in the vicinity of Krasnaya Polyana, was ambushed by men from the Aeegba tribe. The mountaineers killed off the Russian soldiers and captured their possessions. Upon receiving the news of the tragic fate of their baggage train, the Russian command sent two groups of troops over to the Aeegba village. The mountaineers, however, refused to fight and surrendered at once. Furthermore, the mountaineers asked the Russians not to resettle them to Turkey and let them stay in their homeland. The request was, of course, turned down [15].

The "live for today" mindset was manifested here in all its diversity. The mountaineers were unable to refuse themselves the pleasure of sacking a weak baggage train. It was this event that drained the last drop of patience with the Russian administration. Ubykh and other brigand units, which lived for today and did not recognize the authority of either their princes or elders, intrinsically facilitated the sad outcome – resettlement out of their native lands.

Conclusion. The schism within Ubykh society, as a consequence of the social conflict, became the defining reason behind the tragedy of muhajirism. Among other reasons, we can note that the mountaineers, who were not sophisticated in politics, became a means of struggle against Russia for Great Britain, Turkey, Poland, and other countries. In this regard, the antagonism between the opposing sides was in part fueled from the outside. On the whole, the leading European powers were interested in competing against Russia, which pursued its geopolitical

objectives not only in the Caucasus but Turkestan and later on – in the early 20th century – in Korea and China.

Acknowledgements. The article has been prepared

as part of a fundamental subject of the research-scientific work “The Caucasus in the Dialog of Civilizations: Mechanisms for Global Changes (the Experience of the 18th-19th Centuries)”, Sochi, 2014.

ისტორია

უბიხეთის საზოგადოების დიდგვაროვნები და უბრალო ხალხი: სოციალური კონფლიქტის მიზეზები

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§ ფუნდამენტური და გამოყენებითი კვლევის საერთაშორისო ცენტრი, სოჭი, რუსეთი

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრების ვ. ლორთქიფანიძის და ლ. მელიქიშვილის მიერ)

სტატიამი დოკუმენტური და სხვა სახის მასალების საფუძველზე გაანალიზებულია 19-ე საუკუნის უბიხეთის საზოგადოების დიდგვაროვნებსა და უბრალო ხალხს შორის არსებული სოციალური კონფლიქტის მიზეზები, აღწერილია უბიხეთის მაღალმთიანი რაიონის მმართველობის სისტემა, მისი დემოგრაფია და რელიგიური ასპექტები. ავტორები აღნიშნავენ, რომ რუსეთი მრავალჯერ ცდილობდა მთიელებთან საუკურო (სოციო-ეკონომიკური) და სამხედრო-პოლიტიკური ურთიერთობის დამყარებას. სტატიამი განხილულია აგრეთვე რუსეთის იმპერიის საგარეო პოლიტიკა 19-ე საუკუნის პირველ ნახევარში. უბიხეთის მაღალმთიანი საზოგადოება არაერთგვაროვანი იყო, რის გამოც იქ შიდა განხეთქილებას განსაკუთრებული ხასიათი ჰქონდა. მაგალითად, განხეთქილება იყო დიდგვაროვან მოდგმასა და უბრალო ხალხს შორის. ეს განხეთქილება სამოქალაქო ომში გადაიზარდა (დაახლოებით 1785წ.), რომლის დროსაც დიდგვაროვნებმა უბრალო ხალხზე ბატონობის ძალაუფლება დაკარგეს. ეს მარცხი უბიხეთის დიდგვაროვნებს ორმოცდაათი წლის შემდეგაც კარგად ახსოვდათ. სწორედ ამან განაპირობა, რომ რეგიონში რუსეთის ჯარის ჩაყენებისას ისინი რუსებთან დაახლოების კურსს დაადგინენ. გეოგრაფიული ადგილ-მდებარეობის გამო მთიელთა საზოგადოება დიდი ნაირფეროვნებით ხასიათდებოდა. მაგალითად, მთის განაპირა მოსახლეობა ძირითადად ვაჭრობით, მებაღეობითა და მეცხოველეობით იყო დაკავებული, მთაში კი ყაჩაღობით იყვნენ განთქმული. მთიელი ტომების ასეთ დესტრუქციულ საქციელს თვითონ ბუნება განაპირობებდა, რადგან იმ ადგილებში უამრავი ხეობა და ძნელად მისადგომი ადგილი იყო, რაც ხელს უწყობდა და იფარავდა მათ. მნიშვნელოვანი კავშირია აღმოჩენილი უბიხეთის 1785 წლის სამოქალაქო ომსა და ამ რეგიონის ისლამიზაციის პროცესს შორის. სწორედ დიდგვაროვანთა სამოქალაქო ომში დამარცხების შემდეგ იყო, რომ მთიელთა საზოგადოებაში რელიგიური წესების ახალი სისტემა შემოიღეს, რომელიც ისლამის აღმსარებლობის ნებას იძლეოდა. ბოლოს, ავტორები იმ დასკვნამდე მიდიან, რომ უბიხური საზოგადოების სოციალური კრიზისი გადამწყვეტი ფაქტორი

იყო, რამაც მთიელები მუჰაჯირიზმის ტრაგედიამდე მიიყვანა. ამასთან ერთად, ერთ-ერთი მიზეზი, რაზედაც ავტორები მიუთითებენ, იყო ის ფაქტი, რომ პოლიტიკურად გამოუცდელი მთიელები დიდი ბრიტანეთის, თურქეთის, პოლონეთის და სხვა ქვეყნების ხელში რუსეთის იმპერიის წინააღმდეგ მიმართულ იარაღად იქცნენ. ამის გამო, დაპირისპირებულ მხარეთა შორის ანტაგონიზმი დიდწილად გარედან იყო გაღვივებული. მოკლედ, ევროპის იმდროინდელი წამყვანი სახელმწიფოები არამართო კავკასიაში ცდილობდნენ რუსეთის წინააღმდეგ მოქმედებას არამედ თურქესტანშიც, ხოლო მე-20 საუკუნის დასაწყისში, კორეასა და ჩინეთშიც.

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Received September, 2014