

CAUCASOLOGY© **Nikolai S. Avdulov**

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[Н.С. Авдулов Наука о Кавказе]

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The subject of our discussion is of particular complexity, polysemy and multicolor. The Caucasus: its past and present, its culture, economy, way of life, traditions, customs, relations between peoples are unique in their wealth, unique in their diversity. The Caucasus has been and still remains for science a sphere of constant searches and discoveries of universal value, a sphere of interaction of various political interests, economic structures, spiritual values, religions, lifestyles and human behavior. To penetrate into their essence, to know their interweaving, to enlighten them with the light of truth, and thereby contribute to both improving the life of the peoples of the Caucasus and enriching world culture and world civilization. In our opinion, this is the main vocation of the science of the Caucasus.

I believe that during our discussion we will clarify our ideas about the main goals, objectives and functions of Caucasian studies. It seems that we are united in the fact that science, by its nature, is a constructive human activity, that its results, as a rule, benefit people, help to overcome delusions, prejudices, ignorance and everything that prevents the peoples of the Caucasus from living in joy, peace and harmony, working with dignity. In order to strengthen the potential of science and expand its influence on solving urgent problems, it is important to constantly comprehend its condition, identify problems and ways to solve them, determine the guidelines and prospects for its development.

1. On the state of science about the Caucasus. The state of scientific research on the problems of the Caucasus can be judged by a number of important indicators. First of all, it should be recognized that, despite the unfavorable socio-economic and political conditions of recent times, the science of the Caucasus has not disappeared, has not ceased to exist. Thanks to selfless devotion of the Caucasian scholars themselves, serious scientific works have been prepared and published in all branches of knowledge. In the bibliographic reference prepared by our institute and the Don Public Library, more than 450 works are indicated. The following works should be highlighted:

1. Gadagatl A.M. Pamyat natsii. Genezis eposa «Narty» [Ist. filol. issled.] Maykop, [The memory of the nation. The genesis of the epic "Nart" [Historical philological research.] 1997. 399 p.

2. Yazyki mira: Kavkazskiy yazyki. Otv. red. M.Ye. Alekseyev. [Languages of the world: Caucasian languages. Ans. ed. M.E. Alekseev. Moscow.] M., 1999. 473 p.

3. Problemy pravovogo i politicheskogo regulirovaniya kazach'yego dvizheniya (istoriya i sovremennost'). In-t istorii kazachestva. Pod red. V.A Khizhnyakova, Ye.I. Dulimova. Rostov n/D [Problems of legal and political regulation of the Cossack movement (history and modernity). Institute of History of the Cossacks. Ed. V.A. Khizhnyakova, E.I. Dulimova. Rost-on-Don], 1998.

4. Narody Rossii: problemy departatsii i reabilitatsii. Pod red. Bugay N.F. i dr., [The peoples of Russia: problems of the department and rehabilitation. Ed. Bugay N.F. et al.]. Maykop. 1997. 197 p.

5. Magomedov Sh.B. Problemy nats.-gos. ustroystva Respubliki Dagestan: istoriya i sovremennost. M., [Problems of the national state structure of the Republic of Dagestan: history and modernity. Moscow.] 1998. 104 p.

The main achievement of Caucasian studies can be considered that the science of the Caucasus continues to work, produce knowledge, expanding and deepening our ideas about the richness and originality of history, culture, achievements, problems and difficulties of the peoples living in our region, and thereby increase the contribution to the national science.

Nowadays, Caucasian studies is an extensive network of scientific institutions, including universities, academic research institutes, departments, research centers, in which a large group of professional scientists work. Currently, there are 1,195 research institutions in the North Caucasus, including 47 higher education institutions. The total number of scientists in the region is 37,328, including 1,172 doctors of sciences and 14,694 candidates of science.

More than 100 members of industry academies of the Russian Federation work in scientific institutions of the North Caucasus, including 10 members of the Russian Academy of Sciences. About 400 Caucasian scholars, including 148 doctors and 218 candidates of sciences, were included in the "Contemporary Caucasian Studies" reference book.

A network of scientific institutions has developed, the staff of which is fruitfully exploring Caucasian problems. These are, first of all, the scientific centers of the Republic of Dagestan, the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, the institutes of history and culture of the peoples of Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygea. Nearly all universities have created and are launching research work at the Department of the History of the Peoples of the North Caucasus, regional studies, most of which are focused on studying the problems of the Caucasus. At the initiative of the Higher School of Science and Technology, the Scientific Research Institute of the Caucasus was created, with the help of which it was possible in five years to prepare two issues of the Modern Caucasus Studies handbook, a bibliographic handbook, and prepare the first volume of the eight-volume Encyclopedia of Cultures of the Peoples of the North Caucasus.

A particularly important role in these years in the development of Caucasian studies is played by the department of the North Caucasus in the structure of the Institute of Ethnology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which is headed by Academician V.A. Tishkov. In a series published by the institute, out of 127 issues, 25 (i.e., every fifth) are devoted to the problems of the North Caucasus.

In recent years, as a rejoicing phenomenon, specialized scientific journals have appeared that are entirely oriented to the Caucasian problems. So, with personal participation and constant help and support from Yu.A. Zhdanov published the journals "Nauchnaya mysl Kavkaza" [Scientific Thought of the Caucasus], "Izvestiya vuzov Severnogo Kavkaza" [Proceedings of the universities of the North Caucasus]. Among these publications can be called "Yuridicheskiy vestnik" [Legal Bulletin], published by the Rostov Law

Institute of South-Russian Institute of Management of Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (SRIM RANEPА).

The problems of the Caucasus in recent years have been actively discussed and are being discussed at international, Russian, interregional and regional forums, conferences, symposia, and seminars. At these meetings, as a rule, a fruitful exchange of views takes place, business contacts are established. Based on their results, collections of speeches, messages, accepted recommendations are published.

In recent years, dozens of doctoral and hundreds of candidate dissertations on the problems of the Caucasus have been prepared and defended, scientific schools headed by well-known scientists have developed, and the number of graduate students doing research on the Caucasian topic has grown.

All this suggests that the science of the Caucasus has not collapsed, lives and develops, overcomes incredible difficulties and experiences the brunt of the current situation in the country as a whole and in the region in particular.

2. Problems of modern Caucasian studies. In modern conditions, Caucasian studies, like all other branches of knowledge, meet many difficulties and problems in their development. And above all, methodological problems.

The turbulent processes of sovereignty and mutual alienation of peoples from each other against the backdrop of a catastrophic rupture of economic and cultural ties violated the continuity in the study of the North Caucasus. The terms describing phenomena are outdated. The old way of thinking has disappeared.

On the one hand, ideological control and closed topics have been replaced by methodological pluralism, freedom of research methods, and openness to scientific research of any problems and topics. On the other hand, together with the ideological press, the existing rather high requirements to the professional level of scientific research, their scientific validity and integrity, source culture, the responsibility of the humanitarian intelligentsia to society, the peoples of Russia for "how our word will be answered" were thrown away.

Over the years, the source and historiographic information field of the Caucasus has expanded both qualitatively and quantitatively. Confidence (and far from always justified) has shaken in the achievements of Russian Caucasian studies of recent decades. At the same time, there is clearly not enough critical perception of the works of foreign scholars who came to us (which, of course, is positive), but who were prepared mainly also during the Cold War, ideologized, fulfilling a social order (albeit different) no less than Soviet science. An objective historiographic understanding of the development of Caucasian studies, especially in the twentieth century, is one of the urgent tasks of modern science.

In the context of the global problem "West – Russia – East", there is a search for a methodology adequate to the study of the North Caucasus. The dogmatic, formational approach, which reigns supreme in our science, is being overcome, but the desire to rely on one of the most important features of scientific research of the Soviet era i.e. systematicity remains. The most interesting in relation to the North Caucasus is an attempt to apply various models of civilizational, geopolitical approach, to carry out their synthesis. However, these are still the first staged steps. R.G. Abdulatipov and others uphold the idea of the existence of a unified Caucasian civilization, "the integrity and cultural-historical proximity of Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Abkhazians, Ossetians and Ingush." Other researchers suggest the Caucasus as a contact zone of several civilizations. A.A. Anikeev develops the idea of the existence of a North Caucasian civilization, V.V. Chernous speaks about the Caucasian mountain civilization, A. Kh. Bizhev, A. Bakiev talk about the Adyghe civilization. I would especially like to note the attention to these problems of the scientists of Stavropol, who held a series of conferences on their development. These searches res-

onate with the work on understanding the geopolitics of the Caucasus, changes in its geopolitical role at various stages of history: V.N. Smirnov, V.N. Ryabtsev, V.V. Chernous (Rostov-on-Don), V.V. Degoev (Vladikavkaz), A.Ya. Akhmadov, Sh.A. Gapurov (Grozny), N.A. Sotavov (Makhachkala), A.N. Marenkulov (Nalchik) and others. This problem is being updated in connection with recent events in the Balkans and the North Caucasus. Last year, the North Caucasian Scientific Center of Higher Education held scientific readings on the problems of geopolitics of the Caucasus. They have caused considerable interest, we plan to expand them, make them annual. Various theoretical and methodological approaches, a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the monistic and pluralistic approaches to the problems of the North Caucasus, the possibilities and limits of their use open, as we see it, new interesting prospects for Caucasian studies, and allow us to move away from excessive politicization on strictly scientific lines.

The revival of national cultures, the growth of national self-awareness draw attention to the problems of ethnogenesis of modern peoples. Unfortunately, many ethnogenetic reconstructions, widely circulated by popular science publications, rely on a simplified understanding of the historical process, controversial research methods, including parascientific, frank manipulation of material culture and linguistics. As a result, ethnogenetic reconstructions of this type are, as a rule, extremely ideologized, embellish the historical role of their peoples; inspire a sense of national exceptionalism and superiority. Exaggerating the homogeneity, "purity of blood" of their peoples, the authors of such constructions insist on the straightforward kinship of almost all the peoples of the North Caucasus with the Sumerians, Egyptians, Chinese, British and other owners of the largest civilizations. These ethnogenetic myths serve to justify mutual territorial claims and underlie the cultural legitimization of interethnic claims and conflicts. A clear position on these issues of the leading association of our archaeologists "Krupnovsky Readings", (Chairman of the Permanent Coordinating Council I.M. Chechenov), Dagestan historians: R.M. Magomedova, M.R. Hasanova, O.M. Davudov and others inspire hope that the situation can be reversed and that these issues remain within the framework of a scientific approach.

We have to find suitable concepts, as well as all sorts of parameters that allow us to identify, systematize, and interpret many new phenomena and facts. Nevertheless, that is not all. It is important to interpret the past impartially, to return everything that was excluded from the nation by Soviet historiography. Only in this way can we avoid the emergence of new myths. The historian is an archaeologist of the current sociocultural situation. At the same time, he/she is called upon to overcome any political and ideological influences from the outside. It is in this that we see our duty in the development of a normal civil society.

In this regard, thoughts and facts were quite instructive for us at the meeting of historians of Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Moldova and Russia in September 1998 in Moscow. In particular, the writer Chingiz Huseynov expressed the following maxim: "Alas, today much in history can be presented as true, but not true. I came across this when I, as a writer and as a professor at Moscow State University, was invited to give a talk on Nagorno-Karabakh at a US university. The discussion was attended by representatives of Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey. I adhered to the Russian point of view on events (although, as a writer, I am Russian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian), I tried to identify every truth and then formulate the truth. What was the reaction?"

Everyone literally attacked me: the Azerbaijanis called me, the Azerbaijani, almost a traitor; the Armenians accused of the pro-Azerbaijani point of view, the Turks of the pro-Armenian one. We must not forget that those who write national history hold in their hands a canister of gasoline. One must be extremely careful and self-critical.

At this meeting, such a fact was cited. In 1996 in Saratov, "Chronology of the history of the Ingush people" was published, which contains more than 360 dates, at least 100 of

which record acts of violence, oppression, abuse, humiliation, eviction, expulsion, etc. Distracting from the problem of reliability, legitimacy and objectively chronological constructions, it is necessary to note their potential educational aspect. Textbooks written in conflict zones not only form the victim's complex, but also are able to provoke an increase in retaliatory aggression and shift perceptions of humanism and human values. The fastening factor in this process is often the cult figures of the past.

The traditional problem of Caucasian studies is Russian-Caucasian relations. However, if in the 60-80s the main emphasis was placed on the positive traditions of these relations, the progressive consequences of the accession of the North Caucasus to Russia, and the tragic pages of these relations, their contradictions were hushed up or referred to as a tongue twister, now the situation has changed. The main emphasis is on the military confrontation with Russia, the tragedy of Muhajirism, the terror of the civil war, the repressions of the period of industrialization and collectivization, the deportations of the peoples of 1943-1944. There is no doubt that the study of these problems is necessary; it is our duty to the memory of the victims of these events. Nevertheless, it is impossible to reduce only to them the whole palette of Russian-Caucasian relations in the 19th-20th centuries, to demonize them from both Russophobic and Caucasian-phobic traditions. This is no better than embellishment events in previous decades. Emphasis on "painful" subjects (instead of a comprehensive study of problems), as V. Kh. Akayev rightly noted in one of his works, leads to the fact that "Russian national-patriotic thought proceeds from the recognition of the great civilizational mission of the Russian autocracy in the Caucasus, while local historical thought, based on national patriotism, indicates a colonial and destructive essence. As a result, the works of some Rostov and Kuban authors, on the one hand, and Chechen, some Dagestan, Adyghe, and other authors, on the other hand, sustained in different paradigms, practically exclude dialogue with each other, which is also expressed in non-participation of one or another parties at local science conferences. It is necessary to restore the dialogue, carefully look at each other's position, listen to the opponent's argumentation, accept the possibility of different approaches to the complex and controversial historical process, and refuse to ascribe evil motives to each other. Otherwise, our works will generate Russophobia and Caucasian phobia. Let us remember that Russia is our common Motherland, the common fate of our peoples for several centuries." In this regard, I would like to note the role of humanitarian institutes of the Dagestan Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which do a lot to ensure that acute problems (the Caucasian War, for example) are considered in monographs, collections of articles, scientific conferences objectively, balanced, and academically. This, first of all, refers to the works of our old friends: G.G. Gamzatova, R.M. Magomedova, A.I. Osmanova, V.G. Gadzhiev, M.R. Hasanova, A.R. Shikhsaidova, G.C. Gadzhiev and many other scientists from all republics and territories of the North Caucasus.

An increase in the religious factor in ethnic self-awareness actualizes the study of religion, their interaction in the North Caucasus, especially the role of Islam. If in the past, excluding the work of A.V. Avkentntva, A.D. Yandarova, A.R. Shikhsaidov and some others, popular atheistic brochures prevailed, now interesting monographs and articles by M.Yu. Abdullaev have appeared (along with new works by mentioned previously authors), V.Kh. Akayev (city of Grozny), I.P. Dobaev (Rostov-on-Don) and others.

An autonomous part of this problem is the study of a vivid phenomenon of Russian history i.e. the Cossacks. Unfortunately, this is not without politicization. Along with the fundamental works of A.I. Kozlova, A.V. Venkova, V.N. Koroleva, N.A. Mininkova (Rostov-on-Don), S.A. Kozlov (St. Petersburg), Kuban and Stavropol authors there is a stream of pseudoscientific literature, mythologizing the origin of the Cossacks, its social institutions and role in history. These constructions, in turn, provide the basis for various political forc-

es to manipulate the Cossacks in their own interests and thereby actually block the process of a real revival of the Cossacks.

They reflect the stages of the spread of Islam in the North Caucasus, its interaction with local pagan beliefs, Christianity, and consider modern complex religious processes. The role of Christianity in the North Caucasus is not so intensively studied. One can note the famous monograph of Metropolitan Gideon and the work of the Rostov historian Rimsky.

A relatively new, or rather earlier forgotten direction is the study of the state and law of the peoples of the North Caucasus. In the works of H.M. Dumanova, V.Kh. Kazharova (Nalchik), I.L. Babich, V.O. Bobrovnikova (Moscow) anthropology (ethnology) of law was revived. Works on the history of the state and law of Ossetia (V.I. Morgiev), Dagestan (collective of authors), Kabardino-Balkaria, North Caucasus (N.F. Bugay, D. Mekulov) and others were prepared. D.Yu. Shapsugov, the director of the SRIM RANEPА, constantly initiates and supports the development of these problems, through the appropriate regional research program, training of scientific personnel and the journal "North Caucasus Legal Vestnik".

Significant successes achieved by SRIM RANEPА scientists (V.G. Ignatov, A.V. Ponedelkov, L.A. Khoperskaya, A.M. Starostin and others) in the development of problems of the formation of federal relations, new statehood and civil service in the North Caucasus.

Abruptly ethnopolitical direction was born. The problems of ethnopolitical research are extensive: the establishment of ethnic and political institutions and processes in the republics, conflict studies, migration and demographic processes, civilizational and cultural interaction in the North Caucasus, the situation of diasporas, etc. Specialists always meet with great interest works of L.A. Khopersky, G.S. Denisova (Rostov-on-Don), N.F. Bugaya, V.A. Korenyako (Moscow), V.A. Avksentieva, A.Yu. Korkmazova (Stavropol), R.A. Hanahu (Maykop), V.D. Dzidzoeva, A.B. Dzadzieva (Vladikavkaz) and others. At the same time, the ethnopolitology of the Caucasus became a fashion. Many specialists (and non-specialists) from other areas of knowledge quickly turned into ethnopolitologists and ethnosociologists. Without proper training, not possessing modern research methods, having traveled to the Caucasus for a short time (and sometimes not having visited), they endlessly comment on the development of events in the region, draw superficial, straightforward conclusions, offer simplified solutions to complex problems without feeling and not taking into account Caucasian traditions, mentality. Therefore, the abundance of such ethnopolitical works turns them into one of the conflictogenic factors.

The issue of the effectiveness of scientific Caucasian studies, their influence on people's mindsets, and the improvement of the situation was and remains important. For each of us, it is important how society evaluates the results of our efforts and what needs to be done to ensure that society correctly understands and perceives the results of scientific research. It should be recognized that, as a rule, the expectations of society exceed what science really provides, and society evaluates the effectiveness of scientific research mainly from the standpoint of utility. We have to realize that in our time new tendencies have appeared; new relations between scientists and society. Previously, science answered the question: how can one or another problem be solved. Today, when thanks to the successes of science, humankind has learned to solve many problems, and the number of tasks that cannot be solved on the basis of existing knowledge and experience is decreasing, society would like science to foresee the problems that will arise in the near future and find ways to solve them.. Now, very often, turning to scientists, they say: "Prove that we should do this and that and explain how we should do this?"

The paradigm of motivation in science has changed: science not only meets the demand formed in society, but also anticipates and predicts the areas of knowledge demand. Life challenges the scientific community. In order to survive, you need to nurture in your environment people with extensive interdisciplinary knowledge, who own modern technology and know the latest achievements of science. It is necessary to create a system for early detection of emerging demand in society for new knowledge.

If in the future, the priorities of science will be determined by the need of society, then the whole system of financing and management of science will undergo significant changes.

We are used to the fact that the priorities of science are determined either by officials or by scientists themselves, and we are convinced that these are the most correct ways. A number of countries have already abandoned such a simple approach and attract the public to analyze what society will need in 10-30 years. Based on their assessments, science priorities are formed.

The main global trend is that society is increasingly involved in the decision-making process on the amount of expenditures on science and its priorities. As a result, the state increasingly transfers the right to make decisions from rigid management and financing structures such as ministries to more flexible ones, based on collective opinion and expertise, funds, and councils.

We all have to be more selective and demanding to the quality of scientific research, to Phd and master's theses. Nowadays, we see a reassuring phenomenon i.e. an immeasurably increased desire to obtain academic degrees and titles. According to the chairman of the Higher Attestation Commission academician G.A. Mesyats, "the impression is that all of Russia rushed into science and produces candidate and doctoral degrees at extreme speed. There are three thousand scientific councils in Russia. They must be reduced by at least half."

Today in Russia, there are 120 registered public academies, and in each of them, there are "academicians" and "corresponding members". As the scientific observer, V. Gubarev wrote in the newspaper Tribuna: "Moreover, the titles can simply be bought by making an appropriate sponsorship contribution. What to do with it? Moreover, do we have to do something with it? In America, there are a lot of different academies and scientific communities where various problems are discussed: from mysticism to household problems. In our country, the concepts of "academy" and "academician" always carried a special meaning, and this is exactly what those who, not having the opportunity to be elected to the RAS, are trying to create something alternative.

"Last year, 800 works on the economy passed through the Higher Attestation Commission," says Academician G.A. Month. "The worse situation is in economics, the more dissertations we have?"

The severity of one's scientific activity should not be confused with the disregard of science and scientists, which we sometimes observe in the media. Conditions for scientific work are not the most favorable. It is no accident that in recent years, 600 thousand scientists - about half of all scientists in the country - have left science in other areas of activity.

Today, as before, there is an underestimation of the role of science in a number of subjects of the region. At the same time, there is the inability and unwillingness of scientists to adapt to modern conditions.

3. Prospects for the development of Caucasian studies. The economic and socio-political situation of the region, as well as the state of our science, obliges us to determine the ways and means of further development of research on the problems of the North Caucasus and increase their effectiveness. First of all, we should consider strengthening our ties, business partnerships and cooperation. Given the complexity, we are obliged to

find opportunities for meetings, scientific exchanges, and the implementation of large-scale basic research with joint efforts. At the first stage, we suggest thinking about resuming the preparation and publication of 3-4 volumes of the History of the Peoples of the North Caucasus, including in the preparation of the next volumes of the Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the North Caucasus. We believe that it would be possible to begin to develop a geopolitical model of the North Caucasus, to more actively engage in the creation of the scientific foundations for the implementation of national policies in the North Caucasus, as well as the scientific support for the implementation of the federal target program for the economic and socio-political development of the region. Joint studies should also be subjected to comprehensive study of such problems as the interaction of cultures of the peoples of the Caucasus, the revival of the Cossacks. To study these and other problems, special teams could be created, including scientists from the whole region, Moscow and other scientific centers of the country. Joint work on the implementation of these projects will bring us closer, strengthen us, and help us more successfully solve methodological and organizational-financial issues. We all need to take care of creating a base of scientific research, of developing methodological problems of Caucasian studies, of strengthening the connection of scientific research with practice, with the activities of government bodies and public organizations, of training qualified personnel, of creating material and technical conditions for the development of science about the Caucasus, and expanding relations with collectives from foreign countries, with the media.

In order to coordinate and support scientific research, it is proposed to create a Council based on the North Caucasus Association and the Higher School of Science and Technology.

In a short report, it is impossible to touch upon all the scientific problems developed by the Caucasian experts in our region. A quick review of some of them indicates that Caucasian studies have considerable potential, but are scattered across individual research centers, apartments and need to intensify mutual contacts and exchange information. This is served by a real congress, as well as a prepared handbook of Caucasian experts, work on the Encyclopedia of the Cultures of the Peoples of the North Caucasus, other collective works, and we will probably still hear ideas about developing new ones.

Caucasian scholars are the intellectual elite of the North Caucasus, which can and must actively influence the development of interethnic relations in the region, their harmonization, restoration and expansion of the economy, education and culture. Caucasian scholars, not politicians, should determine the vectors of development of self-consciousness of our peoples, their ethnic and all-Russian identity.

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