

# Adaptation of Vainakhs and Well-Being of the Asian Region of Russia

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**Abstract** — The article determines the role of political aspects of the Russian social space, which influences the life of Ingush and Chechens living in the Asian part of the country. Attention is focused on the religious factor as an important part of the life of the Vainakhs in Siberia and the Far East for 150 years. The paper analyses ways of socialization of Vainakh in the ethnoconfessional community. In the presented study, we seek to answer the question of what is the role of the religious factor in the formation and functioning of the Ummah in the territory of the host Asian part of Russia. As a result, we have traced and shown the ways of socialization of the Vainakhs in the historical perspective and at the present stage. The high value of the religious factor is clearly shown; the sources of removal of interethnic tension are revealed; highly effective preventive measures against the national-religious conflicts are defined. All of the above aspects are extremely important for modern Russian society as they have a direct and very high impact on the economic and social well-being of not only the Asian region of Russia, but also the whole country.

**Keywords** — *Ingush, Chechens, Siberia, Far East, Vainakhs*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The appearance of Ingush and Chechens in Siberia and the Far East is not only due to the events in the North Caucasus. It also reflects the whole range of issues of their integration (or disintegration) in connection with the Islamic factor, which is currently problematic.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Vainakhs differed in the degree of involvement in the socio-economic and cultural life of the macroregion. In the Tyumen region alone their number increased from 6 448 – in 1989 to 13 014 – in 2002. They began to occupy different stages of the social hierarchy starting from warriors and ending with elites of public recognition (imams and heads of companies). For example, the deposit in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra was named after geologist Z.Zh. Durdiev [1].

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Since we are talking about the life and activities of the Muslim community in the country, where Orthodoxy is the dominant religion, we should note that it is the construction of ethnic and religious identity and the successful adaptation of community members that underlies the socio-economic well-being of the macro region.

In the presented study, we seek to answer the question of what religious factor forms and allows functioning of the Ummah in the Asian part of Russia.

The issues of formation of ethnic identity and ethnic conflicts have been widely discussed in the works of Russian researchers in the last decade; a number of innovative approaches have been developed [2]. The relevance of this issue is supported by the historical events of the last three decades (the collapse of the USSR, the interaction of the CIS countries). In the new historical conditions, small Nations forced to reorganize themselves and develop rules of internal interaction [3; 4].

## IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study focusing on the religious factor analyzes the ways of Vainakh's socialization or dissocialization in variegated ethnic and religious environment of the megaregion. To achieve this goal, we have set the following tasks: 1. to trace the change in the number of Vainakhs; 2. to identify areas and forms of consolidation; 3. to determine the place of religion in the life of the Ummah; 4. to trace the role of the Vainakhs in the creation of socio-economic well-being of the macroregion.

## V. RESEARCH METHODS

The following methods are used to solve the tasks: participant observation, factor analysis of statistical data, expert interviews, document analysis.

The chosen set of methods allows grasping the process of national identity formation, and taking into account the religious factor. At the same time, it reduces the risk of data

validity loss, because of a combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies [5].

## VI. RESULTS

In Siberia, the first Vainakhs appeared as prisoners served sentences for criminal and political crimes. It happened after joining the territories of their residence to the Russian Empire. So, in "Notes from the Dead house" F. M. Dostoevsky noticed that in 1850-1854 in Omsk prison he was with Tatars, two Lezgins, the Chechen and three "Dagestan Tatars"[6].

In 1884, G. N. Potanin met in Irkutsk exiled I. Mihailova and asked him the names of stars, constellations, and other celestial bodies, adopted by the Vainakh. Another vivid example of Vainakh's resettlement is "The case of the eviction to Eastern Siberia of the Ingush Nazran detachment Zelimkhan", which took place in 1910 and told about the participants of anti-government protests expelled from the Caucasus.

The other part of Vainakhs chose the way of military service and faithfully served the interests of Russia Empire.

The most famous Ingush among them were those distinguished in the Russian-Japanese war. The first of them was E.A. Nalgiev, the army commander stationed in Eastern Siberia and in the Far East. The second was lieutenant general T.N. Umarov; he got a promotion and became a major general subsequently. He graduated from Vladikavkaz Military School in 1883 and then from Stavropol Cossack cadet school in 1886. He began his service as ordinary. During the Russian-Japanese war in the Far East, he commanded regiments from the regular Russian military in the period 1908 to 1910, with the rank of Colonel. Then he took command of the Cossack units. In a rank - the commander of crews of the Kuban Cossack division. In the period from 1915 to 1918. For service he was awarded the Order of St. Anne with swords and ribbon, in 1904, then in 1905 was awarded the Order of St. Anne of the third degree with swords and also was awarded the Order of St. Stanislav of the third degree with swords and a ribbon. Further, in 1906 he got the Order of St. Stanislav of the Second Degree with swords, and the Order of St. Anne of the second degree with swords, next, the Order of St. Vladimir of all degrees. And finally, he was awarded the St. George's weapon in 1916.

Another Chechen is general E.J.S.-G. Aliev. Since 16.05.1906, G. was in command of the fifth East Siberian rifle division, and 14.08.1908 G. – the 2nd Siberian corps. He awarded the title of general of artillery (1914). In May 1917, he left Petrograd and came back to Chechnya. He offered the services of a military expert to the Government of the Caucasus highlanders but was rejected. Later in November 1918, after the beginning of Citizen War, he was placed at the disposal of the commander-in-Chief of the Volunteer Army. After the occupation of Chechnya by white guard troops in March 1919 at the Congress of the Supreme ruler of Chechnya was elected to the commander-in-chief. After the withdrawal of parts of Dobrarmia from the Terek region, he was arrested by the Bolsheviks, imprisoned and shot under the sentence of revolutionary tribunal.

Finally, after him the street in the lower village of Berezovka (his native village) was named. That Resolution was made by the city Council of the city of Verkhneudinsk on September 10, in 1911 [7].

Indigenous people, with rare exceptions, did not distinguish them from other natives of the Caucasus, sometimes called together with other mountaineers "Circassians" or "Tatars". They were not singled out as a separate group among Muslims due to the fact that their number at that time on the territory of the Russian Empire was very small.

According to the materials of the one-day census of the population of Verkhneudinsk, which was held in Ulan-Ude on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October in 1907, it's materials showed that of the 343 313 Muslims Tatars were 91.2 per cent, and the rest was shared between the Bashkirs, Circassians, Turks, Chechens [8]. In the same period, the first Muslim associations in the Asian part of Russia appeared.

During the First World War, the Vainakhs served in the reserve regiments of the Russian army, the wounded remained in the country, formed settlements, and were assembled. As a sign of gratitude for the contribution to the suppression of L.G. Kornilov's rebellion, the Provisional government allowed the all-Russian Muslim military Council to create Muslim military formations [9]. In addition, under the chair of ensign, Eser (later Deputy of the Siberian regional Duma) Yu.I. Saiev, the First Siberian Muslim military Congress held. In December 1917, a Muslim company formed in Tomsk with the participation of Saiev. According to contemporaries, the soldiers "were soldered strong discipline and were definitely against the Bolsheviks."

Later, Saiev wrote that the convening of the Congress and the formation of national regiments caused by the need to organize resistance to the penetration of Bolshevism into the Muslim masses [10]. Islam in those conditions turned out to be a political and ethno-confessional factor of consolidation.

Then the Vainakhs joined the events of the Civil war and divided into political camps. Caucasians as a separate compound were in the composition of the troop's ataman G. M. Semenov, then trapped interned in China. Moreover, on the contrary, Ingush Sandro Malsagov was a member of the first revolutionary Committee of Chukotka.

In the course of the dispossession of kulaks (wealthy farmers employing wage labor, the rural bourgeoisie, the speculators) some of the Vainakhs were in Northern Asia. Like many Soviet citizens, they in the 1930s and 1940s were repressed, and as deportees in 1944 was in the "Dalstroj" also known as Far North Construction Trust, was an organization set up in 1931 by the Soviet Union in order to manage road construction and the mining of gold in the Magadan-Chukotka region of the Russian Far East, now known as Kolyma. Initially it was established as *State Trust for Road and Industrial Construction in the Upper Kolyma Area*. After the 1952 reorganization it was known as *Main Directorate of Camps and Construction of the Far North* [11]. They were under strict control. In addition, in Kuzbass camp No. 525, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the Chechens were prisoners of war, had previously

served in the Wehrmacht<sup>1</sup>, The Kuznetsk Basin (often abbreviated as Kuzbass or Kuzbas) in southwestern Siberia, Russia, is one of the largest coal mining areas in Russia, covering an area of around 10,000 square miles (26,000 km<sup>2</sup>). It lies in the Kuznetsk Depression between Tomsk and Novokuznetsk in the basin of the Tom River. On the south, it borders the Abakan Range; on the west - Salair Ridge, and Kuznetsky Alatau - on the east.

It turned out that the deportees Muslims' rituals were extremely different from those that adhere to their local co-religionists. There were domestic conflicts but with the "ethno-confessional substrate". The situation was complicated when the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on November 26 in 1948 was determined by the decree that "punished" ethnic groups deprived of the opportunity to return home, strengthening the feeling of resentment, forming protest behavior and aggressive rejection of power. For the remaining Muslims in Russia, religion has become a powerful means of protecting ethnic and cultural identity, but for political reasons, many of the "new" Siberians did not find spiritual support among local co-religionists. Due to the forced mixing of the indigenous population, which often had a higher level of religiosity and among the newly arrived Muslims, in some cases, the appearance of the parishes has significantly changed. The newly arrived Muslims brought with them not only religious traditions and rites that had already become traditional for this part of Russia. They brought home their new political, ethnic, religious rites and connections, not just family relics and manuscripts. The former population of the Chechen Republic, Dagestan and Ingushetia showed the least integration into the all-Russian culture. At the same time the former population of the Chechen Republic, Dagestan and Ingushetia showed the least integration into the all-Russian culture. As a result, the number of Muslim Diaspora decreased. Despite such a "diversity" in order to consolidate, experiencing problems in the maintenance of mosques, the performance of rituals, the carriers of different madhhabs and ethnic groups, especially in small towns, not to mention towns and villages, forced actively communicate with each other.

For example, some forms of self-help and social distribution played an important social insurance role. One of the most unusual circumstance is the collection of «zakat». Zakat is a form of alms giving treated in Islam as a religious obligation or tax, which, by Quranic ranking, is next after prayer (*salat*) in importance.

As one of the Five Pillars of Islam, zakat is a religious obligation for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth<sup>[7]</sup>. It is a mandatory charitable contribution, often considered to be a tax<sup>[8][9]</sup>. The payment and disputes on zakat have played a major role in the history of Islam, notably during the Ridda wars.

Zakat is based on income and the value of entire one's possessions. It is customarily 2.5% (or 1/40) of a Muslim's total savings and wealth above a minimum amount known as *nisab*, but Islamic scholars differ on how much *nisab* is and other aspects of zakat. According to Islamic doctrine, the

collected amount should be paid to the poor, the needy, Zakat collectors, those sympathetic to Islam, to free from slavery, for debt relief, in the cause of Allah and to benefit the stranded traveller.

Later in the Asian part of Russia began to emerge purely religious associations of Muslims of different nationalities. But zakat was practiced among not all Siberian Muslims. On the first of January in 1953, 152 Ingush and 75 Chechens registered among special settlers in the Irkutsk region; 51 and 14 in the Kemerovo region (respectively); 19 and 3 in the Krasnoyarsk region. In other regions of Russia, the number is also uneven. In the context of compact residence (in the Khabarovsk territory consisted of 82 Chechens, and the Amur region 19 Ingush) in the special settlements it is possible to speak about some ways of ethno consolidating, in the Altai region for 27 the Ingush and the Chechens, obviously, had problems even with the implementation of the vital rites («janaza»). Janaza means funerals in Islam or to follow fairly specific rites, though they are subject to regional interpretation and variation in custom. In all cases, however, sharia (Islamic religious law) calls for burial of the body as soon as possible, preceded by a simple ritual involving bathing and shrouding the body<sup>[1]</sup>, followed by salah (prayer). Burial is usually within 24 hours of death to protect the living from any sanitary issues, except in the case of a person killed in battle or when foul play is suspected. In those cases it is important to determine the cause of death before burial. Cremation of the body is strictly forbidden in Islam.

After the restoration of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1957, many Vainakhs went home. Other Muslims settled throughout Siberia and the Far East of Russia. And later, in another capacity, they continued to actively participate in the socio-economic development of the Asian mega-region of the country since the 1960s. It was a voluntary (including seasonal) migration to Siberia and the Far East. Their number has increased more significantly since the 1970s, including in connection with the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline and the development of natural resources. The Baikal-Amur Mainline is a 1,520 mm (4 ft 11 <sup>27</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in) broad gauge railway line in Russia. Traversing Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East, the 4,324 km (2,687 mi) long BAM runs about 610 to 770 km (380 to 480 miles) north of and parallel to the Trans-Siberian railway.

The BAM was built as a strategic alternative route to the Trans-Siberian Railway, especially along the vulnerable sections close to the border with China. The BAM's costs were estimated at \$14 billion, and it was built with special, durable tracks since much of it was built over permafrost. Also, migration was connected with the need for the development and development of virgin lands. Tselina or Virgin lands (Russian: цели́на, lit. 'whole lands'; Ukrainian: ціліна́, romanized: tsilina) is an umbrella term for underdeveloped, scarcely populated, high-fertility lands often covered with the chernozemsoil. The lands were mostly located in the steppes of the Volga region, Northern

<sup>1</sup> Information center of the main Department of the Kemerovo region. F. I. Op. 1. D. 5. L. 45-57 (all vol.).

Kazakhstan and Southern Siberia. The term became widely used in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the Soviet Union during the Virgin Lands Campaign «Osvoyeniye tseliny» (lit. 'reclamation of tselina') is a state development and resettlement campaign to turn the lands into a major agriculture producing region. In the case of assimilation mixed families were often created, in which a compromise of traditions worked out [12].

At the same time, the settlement was uneven: according to 1989, 667 Chechens lived in the Altai territory, in 2010 – 532 (with a slight predominance of villagers), and in the industrialized Kuzbass in the same period – 1,123 Chechens. Vainakhs often were the initiators of communities. Therefore, in 1993 in the capital of Primorye from the building belonging to leaders of the Vainakh community, the prayer house on Shchepetkov Street was equipped. Since 1994, Jumu'ah (also known as Friday Prayer or Congregational Prayer, is a prayer that Muslims hold every Friday just after noon instead of the Zuhr prayer. Muslims ordinarily pray five times each day according to the sun's sky path regardless of time zones held weekly at this address), and iftars (also known in English as fatoon - the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. They break their fast at the time of the call to prayer for the prey. This is their second meal of the day; the daily fast during Ramadan begins immediately after the pre-dawn meal of Suhur and continues during the daylight hours, ending with sunset with the evening meal of iftar) organized periodically in the month of Ramadan. There was "Organization of Islamic Cooperation", which became, successively, the basis for Maritime regional Muslim religious organization called «Islam» and Kazahskogo administration of Muslims of Primorsky Krai. Subsequent years are characterized by an increase in the number of the Ummah (Muslim religious community) due to the entry into it of believers and immams (priests) of different ethnicity [13].

Not all of the Vainakhs (especially the middle generation) are active practicing Muslims, while the all-believing Sunnis are Shafi'is. If we take into account that among the modern Siberian and Far Eastern Ummah, about 80 % are adherents of hanafism; this sometimes creates problems.

Since in some parts of Russia the total number of Muslims is very small, all of them are forced to unite to create religious communities. It is characteristic that when creating a Muslim community on Sakhalin in 2015, the founders of the same name Islamist ethnic group living on the island included Tatars, Bashkirs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirghiz, Chechens, Ingush and Dagestanis.

We note that part of the Caucasian Muslims themselves sought isolation from their co-religionists, creating groups and parishes from the Ingush, as happened in Susuman (Magadan region) and Zeya (Amur region); or Chechens – in Surgut, abandoned the Mullah-Tatar, saying that they do not understand the Arabic language in his mouth [14]. In the mosque of Golyshmanovo village of Tyumen region, in addition to local Muslims, Ingush held "Gurba" – mass worship and sacrifice [15]. As a rule, Chechens and Ingush actively interact with other ethnic groups professing Islam, often occupying the posts of imams of mosques or community chairs in the regions of the

Asian part of Russia, for example, in Tyumen, Yakutsk, Stary Urengoy, Vladivostok, Kiselevsk and many others. Immigrants from the regions of the North Caucasus significantly replenished the communities of Siberia and the Far East at the turn of the century. Then the society disintegrated as a result of military actions, which had the character of a civil war, and cultural values were devalued as a result of the archaization of society and the introduction of extremely radical religious and political concepts. Some of these ideas they tried to transfer to the space of the Asian part of Russia, affecting young people. Therefore, Said Buryatsky (biological parents – Russian and Buryat) introduced into the consciousness of the youth that there is only one way to paradise – through Jihad, a war with the kafirs. His Salafi video sermons from Ichkeria disintegrated the youth. However, on the other side of the "barricade" there was a Chechen-Siberian, who defended the constitutional system during the fighting in the North Caucasus is the Hero of Russia R. Butsaev. In 2010, 2 994 10 502 Ingush and Chechens lived in the Tyumen region, including the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous district – Yugra and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous district, 3 105 and 4 712 - in the Siberian Federal district (respectively), 2 349 1 and 349 - in the Far Eastern Federal district [16].

Many national-cultural organizations are often built as ethnically homogeneous, but sometimes joint (communal), depending on the number and relationships of leaders. Some Vainakh, for example, M.H. Belkharoev (the head of the Muslim community in rainbow), R.S. Kartoev (head of the Muslim organization of Primorsky Krai) and M.B. Sagov (mufti of Yakutia) are the leaders of major religious organizations. As a rule, leaders do not approve of the division of the Ummah by ethnic origin.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The peculiarities of Islam among the Vainakhs were, by the ratio of the basic principles, characterized by ethnic terms in the orientation to the teip structures, and in the confessional – the traditions of the Shafi'i madhhab, but with considerable influence of Sufi elements, for example, with Zikr. This distinguishes them from the traditions of confession, common among Siberian and Kazan Tatars, Bashkirs and Kazakhs, which make up the main flock of mosques. In some areas, the mosque began to function as a building block of the ethnic community, where they can freely speak their native language, support the origin.

For one hundred and fifty years, Vainakhs have become an integral part of Siberian society. Even because of the diversity of traditions of the place of exodus, they seek to unite communities, helping to build ethnic and religious consolidation.

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