

THE PROBLEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE BORDERLANDS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AT THE TURN OF THE 19-20TH CENTURIES IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORICAL AND LEGAL DISCIPLINES

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Abstract

The article analyzes the approaches to the consideration of the imperial policy of Russia at the turn of the 19-20th centuries in the teaching of historical and legal disciplines in Russian universities. The authors state the discrepancy between the results of modern research on the Russian empire and the idea of the Russian empire as an ethnically homogeneous state that remains in the practice of teaching. Adjusting such an outdated view requires greater attention to the issues of heterogeneity of the Russian empire, its place among other empires at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the nature and typology of the Russian imperial borderlands and their relationship with the imperial center. Using the example of the Volga-Ural region, the authors consider the processes that took place at that imperial borderland of Russia at the turn of the 19-20th centuries, and its place in imperial politics. The Volga-Ural is characterized as the first imperial borderland of the Russian Empire, where a model of Russian imperial politics was formed. The central place in Russian imperial politics was played by the Christianization of the local population, which could be either violent or voluntary. The results of the imperial confessional policy were contradictory. The success of Christianization led to the beginning of the 20th century to the formation in the region of new identities among residents, who perceived themselves as Orthodox, but distinguished themselves from the ethnically Russian population. On the other hand, the opposition to Christianization by local Muslims contributed to the identity of the Volga-Ural Tatars, which was based on adherence to Islam. The article offers a number of specific recommendations for updating the teaching of historical and legal disciplines by introducing into their content issues of imperial control at the borderlands of Russia at the turn of the 19-20th centuries.

Keywords: Borderlands of the Russian Empire, teaching of historical and legal disciplines.

1. INTRODUCTION

The period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century entered world history as the 'Age of the Empire'. That is how 'The Age of Empire' named its work on the history of Europe in 1875-1914, the eminent British historian E. Hobsbaum. Russian historians who studied the same period in the Soviet era are very familiar with the famous Leninist work 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism'. During the 20th century the connotations of the concepts "empire" and "imperialism" have changed dramatically. Served as the pride of the "white man" at the beginning of the century, empire and imperialism in the process of decolonization became a complex of Western intellectual. The collapse of the Soviet Union, perceived in the West as the collapse of the "last empire," revived scientific discussions about the essence of empire and imperial control, and also included for the first time the Russian historical experience of the turn of the 19-20th centuries in comparative studies of empires. Empires and imperialism continue to be discussed, but the material accumulated in historiography can already and should be used in the practice of teaching.

In our opinion, the historical experience of empires is in demand when preparing students studying in the areas of “Law” and “State and Municipal Administration”. The curriculum of these areas necessarily includes such historical and legal disciplines as “History of the Russian state and law”, “History of public administration”. Within these disciplines such issues should be considered as the essence of the concept of “empire”, the administration of the borderlands of the Russian Empire, the methods of imperial control. Today, when the world and Russia are in a “post-imperial state” and the outlines of future empires emerge, the analysis of these issues using the example of historical experience at the turn of the 19-20th centuries seems to us very relevant.

The aim of this article is to analyze 19-20th centuries and to offer recommendations on the introduction of imperial theme in the practice of teaching historical and legal disciplines.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The system problem solved in the study requires the use of special historical and concrete problem methods. The principle of consistency involves considering the object of research as a system of interaction between the creation of scientific ideas and determining the place of these ideas to society. The historical-systemic approach allows us to consider the range of institutional approaches to the issue of heterogeneity of the Russian empire, its place among other empires at the turn of the 19-20th centuries. The use of a formal legal method seems to be justified for determining the content of key concepts of a topic, embedding them in a system for explaining new terms on imperial topics, and establishing relationships with modern administration practices. The study of the formation of the imperial idea, its interpretations predetermined the use of the historical-genetic method to establish cause-effect relationships.

The use of comparative historical and comparative legal methods in revealing the status of the Russian imperial borderlands allows us to show various forms of relations with the imperial center, to reveal the characteristic problems. The study of the process from a single (by the example of the Volga-Ural region within the Russian Empire) allows you to go to the special (characteristics of regional characteristics), and then, to the general - typology of administration of Russian borderlands. This approach requires the use of a retrospective method that allows you to apply modern theoretical and methodological approaches.

3. DISCUSSIONS

3.1. The Essence of the Concept of “Empire” and the Place of the Russian Empire among Other Empires

The concept of “empire” is used in relation to a very wide range of states and political entities of different historical eras. In Russian historiography (and especially in Russian academic literature) the point of view is generally accepted, according to which the history of the Russian Empire begins at the beginning of the 18th century in connection with the victory of Peter I in the Great Northern War. This approach forms a simplified view of the empire as a monarchical form of government, derived from the new title of the Russian monarch, adopted in 1721. In our opinion, we should move away from such a formalized view of the empire, since it does not include the main characteristic of the imperial state - its cultural heterogeneity. Modern empire experts, such as M. Doyle and A. Motyl, understand the empire primarily as a set of relationships between the center and the periphery, between which there are cultural differences. In this understanding, Russia became an empire at least as early as the middle of the 16th century with the conquest of the Kazan and Astrakhan khanates, when for the first time vast territories with non-Russian and non-Christian populations were included in the possessions of the Muscovite rulers. At the same time, the question of the time of completion of the history of the Russian imperial state remains debatable, although there is reason to consider the disintegration of the Soviet state as evidence of Russia's transition to a “post-imperial” state.

Ignoring the essence of the concept of “empire” and the factor of cultural differentiation between the imperial center and the imperial periphery forms in students an idea of the Russian empire as an exclusively Russian state and turns other ethnic and religious groups in the best case in the marginal participants of the historical process. Unfortunately, such an incorrect idea is based on a long historiographic tradition of neglecting the history of non-Russian groups. In foreign Russian studies this area has long been on the sidelines of research interests. Foreign researchers had a very vague idea of ethnic minorities. As M. David-Fox notes, they were recalled, as a rule, in the context of the history of Russian conquests as an illustration of Russian imperial and colonial ambitions (David-Fox, 2000). Only the release in 1992 of A. Kappeler's study “The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History” turned the tide, giving rise to an explosive growth in research into the history of ethnic and religious groups outside Russia. The situation in the Soviet historiography was different - works on the history of the Soviet republics were published and reprinted here. They were built according to a single scheme, since their authors were primarily interested in the question of the

“progressive significance” of the interaction of a people with the Russians, the positive experience of its presence in the Russian Empire. However, the results of these works had almost no place in the great Soviet historical narrative dedicated to the history of the Russian Empire. As a result of the “imperial turn” that occurred in historiography at the turn of the 20-21th centuries, a large array of imperial studies has developed. But even today, educational literature suffers from “russocentrism”, the history of the Russian empire appears in it as the history of the state of the Russian people with situational “interspersions” of representatives of other groups.

There is another aspect of this issue - the place of the Russian Empire among other empires at the turn of the 19-20th centuries. It seems meaningless to us that the Russian empire is attributed to the category of “European” or “Asian” empires, however, a comparative analysis of the structure and practices of the Russian empire and its modern empires (Britain, Austro-Hungary or Qing) would make it possible to more clearly define the peculiarities of Russia among other political entities of the “Age of Empires”. The need for such a comparative analysis is determined by the stability in Russian historiography of the idea of the “uniqueness” of the Russian empire, dating back to the times of discussions of Westernizers and Slavophiles.

3.2. The problem of the Borderlands of the Russian Empire

The recognition of the cultural differentiation between the center and the periphery as an essential feature of the imperial state highlights another acute problem of the modern practice of teaching the history of the Russian empire - its rigid focus on the imperial center. At the same time, the history of the imperial state is not at all one, but a multitude of stories written from different “angles” of the empire - Warsaw, Kazan, Kiev, Tiflis, etc. Considering the experience of the imperial periphery in presenting the history of the Russian empire will make this story more complex, multidimensional, and replace the monologue of the imperial center with dialogue and confrontation between various positions and interests, the echoes of which are heard today.

Such a reorientation of imperial history raises the question of what constituted the imperial periphery in Russia at the turn of the 19-20th centuries. Selecting this periphery on the material of the Russian Empire is not easy. In contrast to the “maritime” Western European empires of the period in Russia, the territorially extended empire, it is very problematic to apply the concepts of “metropole” and “colony”. The lack of clear geographical and legal boundaries between the metropole and the colonies is a strong argument against opponents of the analysis of Russian historical experience using the concept of the colonial empire. Even in Anglo-American historiography with its tradition of research on the history of “Russian colonialism” there is no clear list of Russian “colonies” and the criteria for their selection. Territories in Central Asia, acquired by Russia in the second half of the 19th century, and local Russian protectorates are closer to the British and French colonies.

The term *okraina* (borderland), which is very vague in its content, is widely used to refer to the imperial periphery as applied to Russia. However, it is possible to single out two essential characteristics of the borderlands of the Russian Empire - this is, firstly, their location outside the territory of the formation of the Russian ethnos, and, secondly, the process of their accession to the Russian state falls on the 16-19th centuries. Note that a large part of the territory of the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19-20th centuries falls under such broad criteria (Volga-Ural region, Siberia, Finland, Poland, the Baltic states, Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Transcaucasia, Central Asia). The increased attention of modern Russian and foreign historians to the study of the borderlands of the Russian empire allows us to draw a conclusion about the design of an independent research direction - the history of the borderlands. As an illustration of the fruitfulness and prospects of this trend, it should be noted a series of works "The Borderlands of the Russian Empire", published in 2006-2007. It includes research on the history of the Western borderlands, Siberia, the North Caucasus and Central Asia.

Of course, the imperial borderlands of Russia were very different from each other in the historical experience of relations with the Russian state and cultural characteristics. At one pole of the Russian imperial periphery is the Volga-Ural region, the de facto first Russian borderland, formed in 1552 with the capture of Kazan by the troops of Ivan the Terrible. By the turn of the 19-20th centuries that region was already very deeply integrated into Russia, having passed through the centuries-old and generally successful imperial incorporation process. While closely approaching in many ways to the imperial center, the Volga-Ural region still retained its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character. At the other extreme were Finland and Poland, which became part of the Russian Empire only at the beginning of the 19th century as a result of major European military conflicts. The relationship between these western borderlands and the imperial center is very reminiscent of the Western European model, the imperial experience of Austria-Hungary. These border territories had a special political and legal status, their own privileges and, at the same time, at the turn of the

19-20th centuries they subjected to attempts of hard Russification. There was also a third pole - Central Asia. As shown by Schimmelpennink van der Oye, it was the "Russian Orient", which the Russian imperial elite at the turn of the 19-20th centuries mastered with military, scientific and artistic means, realized its "civilizing mission" (Schimmelpennink van der Oye, 2010).

3.3. Imperial Administration Practices: Volga-Ural Region

Consideration of the Russian Empire from the angle of its cultural heterogeneity leads to the conclusion about the diversity of its imperial administration practices. Like any other empire at the turn of the 19-20th centuries, the Russian Empire was a complex and complexly controlled structure. To show the various levels and practices of the Russian imperial administration is one of the important tasks facing the historical and legal disciplines, which, however, are often neglected. As an example, take the case of the Volga-Ural region. As already noted, this region to the beginning of the 20th century was already very deeply integrated into the space of the empire. The process of its incorporation into the Russian state began in the middle of the 16th century with the conquest of the Kazan Khanate and dragged on until the end of the 18th century. The western part of this region (the right bank of the Volga) became part of Russia relatively quickly and peacefully. To the east of the Volga, bloody dramas unfolded - the capture of Kazan by the troops of Ivan the Terrible in 1552 and the Cheremis Wars of the second half of the 16th century. At the end of the 16th century Russian state affirmed its authority in the Middle Volga region with the help of the voivodship administration system. But the territories south of Kazan in the 17th century were still very poorly mastered by the emerging imperial state. Fortification lines (*zasechnaya cherta*) crossed the steppes of the Middle Volga and defended the possessions of the Muscovite tsar from the raids of nomadic peoples. Ural in the 18th century, in fact, was still the Russian frontier, where the officials and soldiers of the empire, the Orthodox Church, the Cossacks, the merchants, the colonist peasants, the Bashkirs and other local peoples were in complex interaction. The Pugachev rebellion highlighted this transitional state of the Volga-Ural region, its suppression clearly marked the end of the incorporation of the region into the empire. By the end of the 19th century administratively, the Volga-Ural region was part of nine provinces. The Ufa province, the youngest among them, was established in 1865. By this time, the external borders of the Russian Empire were hundreds of kilometers away from the Volga-Ural region. The peculiarity of the region remained its intermediate position between the imperial center and the new imperial periphery. It is no coincidence that the modern American researcher R. Geraci designated the status of this region in the 19th century as the Russian "Window on the East" (Geraci, 2001).

By the end of the 19th century, the main concern of the imperial authorities in this region was too strong positions of animism and Islam among the local population. As M. Khodarkovsky has shown, the Christianization of the new subjects of the Russian monarch was viewed as a sure and tested means of imperial control and was an essential component of the Russian imperial policy (Khodarkovsky, 1996). In the 16-18th centuries the Volga-Ural region experienced several waves of Christianization, which, however, did not lead to deep rooting of Orthodoxy among the population. In the second half of the 19th century the rigid methods of spreading Christianity of earlier centuries were replaced by "the system of I.N. Ilminsky", who used native languages to preach orthodoxy. The change of approach gave its results - most of the Mari, Chuvash, Udmurt population and even a part of the Muslim Tatars adopted Christianity. However, the Ilminsky method - the creation of languages for the local peoples based on Cyrillic and the translation of Christian literature into them - raised doubts in the imperial ranks. These fears were substantiated, at the beginning of the 20th century local peoples who have undergone Christian enlightenment have their first glimpses of national self-consciousness.

The history of the Volga-Ural region is an excellent illustration of the Russian imperial policy towards Muslims and the change of its paradigms. Since Catherine II, the region has been viewed (and continues to be considered) as the center of Russian Islam. At the end of the 19th century, when the Christianization of the Volga-Ural Muslims suffered a final collapse, the imperial government was confronted with the Jadid movement (movement for the renewal of education among Muslims), headed by I. Gasprinsky, and aimed at consolidating Russian Muslims and their transformation into an Islamic nation. At the beginning of the 20th century political Turkism was a challenge to the Russian Empire. The struggle of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism, imaginary threats to the existence of the empire, became an important direction of Russian imperial policy, which manifested itself in the Volga-Ural region.

3.4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the rapid development of imperial studies in Russia and abroad, their results are practically not reflected in the modern practice of teaching the history of public administration, the history of the Russian state and law, and other historical and legal disciplines. Questions about the imperial nature of Russian statehood, the essence of the imperial state, and the peculiarities of the Russian empire among other

empires continue to be ignored. Minimal attention is paid to the history of the borderlands of the Russian Empire, the peculiarities of the management of the borderlands. This approach leads to the formation of a distorted view of the Russian empire as a unified state, which contradicts the very essence of the empire - a complex, heterogeneous state, representing a mosaic of territories, ethnic and religious groups, diasporas, ways of life, etc. In our opinion, one of the options for teaching the history of the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19-20th centuries there can be a history of interaction between the imperial center and the borderlands of the empire. In this case, the emphasis will be shifted to the processes that took place on the periphery of the empire and largely formed the latter. Such processes, which are often still underestimated, include the formation and evolution of the administrative apparatus of the borderlands, the Christianization of the borderlands and the policy towards non-Christian groups, Russian colonization, the participation of ethnic and religious diasporas in imperial control. The inclusion of these processes in the practice of teaching will contribute to the formation of a more multi-dimensional understanding of the Russian empire on the eve of its collapse.

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