

Social Revolution in Circassia: The Interdependence of Religion and the World- System

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between religion, geography, and social changes that took place in Circassia in the middle of the 17th century. The paper uses a philosophical approach to analyze the articulation of the economic, political, and ideological elements that connected the case of Circassia to the world-system theory. The Circassian social formation was a hybrid of the communal and tributary stages of human history. The social revolution in Circassia appears to be the result of class conflict, in the Marxist definition. The Circassians economy and political system was a product of the diffusion in the Silk Road system that affected their relationship with Europe, the Middle East, Anatolia, and Russia. These forces created the framework in which the Circassians were subjected to, and became the victims of, historical oppression. Likewise, this measure of oppression only successively deepened as the transition of the world system from the Tributary stage, starting 1492, to advanced industrial capitalism, i.e., 1850, asserted dominance over the framework of oppression. In proportion, the conditions of revolution ripen.

Key words: *Circassians, Caucasus, Marxism, World-system, Social structure*

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Çerkesya'da Sosyal Devrim: Dinin ve Dünya Sisteminin Birbirine Bağımlılığı

Özet

Bu makale, 17. yüzyılın ortalarında Çerkesya'da meydana gelen din, coğrafya ve sosyal değişimler arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Makale, Çerkesya örneğini dünya sistemi teorisine bağlayan ekonomik, politik ve ideolojik unsurların eklemlenmesini analiz etmek için felsefi bir yaklaşım kullanmaktadır. Çerkes sosyal yapısı, insanlık tarihinin toplumsal ve bağımlı aşamalarının bir melezidir.

Çerkesya'daki toplumsal devrim, Marksist tanımdaki sınıf çatışmasının bir sonucu gibi görünmektedir. Çerkes ekonomisi ve politik sistemi, İpek Yolu sistemindeki Avrupa, Orta Doğu, Anadolu ve Rusya ile ilişkilerini etkileyen yayılmanın bir ürünüdür. Bu güçler, Çerkeslerin maruz kaldıkları ve mağdur oldukları tarihsel baskıya çerçeve oluşturdu. Aynı şekilde, bu baskı ölçütü, 1492'den başlayarak, gelişmiş bir endüstriyel kapitalizme, örneğin, 1850'ye, 1850'den itibaren, Birleşik Devletler'in Bağımlılık aşamasından geçiş sürecine, örneğin, 1850'nin, baskı çerçevesi üzerinde baskın olduğunu öne sürerek, art arda derinleşti. Orantılı olarak, devrim koşulları olgunlaştı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerkesler, Kafkasya, marksizm, dünya sistemi, sosyal yapı

Introduction

Karl Marx wrote both approvingly and with concern for the Circassian's resistance against the Russian expansion, respectively. His consciousness of this social struggle, though, like our's to our current struggles, was *limited* to the specificity of both the material and social conditions organizing the spatiotemporal nature of his life's situation; which for him was London, the core of the then global superpower, in the mid 19th century. Therefore, much like other writers of the subject of Circassia, such as Longworth,¹ Bell² and Urquhart (King 238-255), his content of

¹ Longworth, John A., *A Year among the Circassians*, 2 vols. (London, 1840)

² Bell, James Stanislaus, *Journal of a Residence in Circassia, during the years 1837, 1838, and 1839*, 2 vols. (London, 1840)

understanding was based by the aggregated material made by others, his subjectivity, the ideologies at play in the world-system, and the intersection of the internal (metropole-colonial) factors with those of the world systems'. The last two, for e.g., is found in the *Great Game*.

While all the production of knowledge must start from the product of an intellectual's analysis of one's object, and while the accumulation of these products allows for a more total articulation, there are clearly defects existing in the material. What I mean by defects in relation to literary material of Circassia associated with the Tsar or Soviet spatio-temporalities is the lack of self-criticism of their own societies. While being truly unique, Circassia's story is a symbol of what will happen to marginal societies enveloped by an hostile world system if humans do not act internationally in class solidarity, aspects of these defects have permeated into contemporary understandings of Circassia. While I recognize that without these works I could not write *this*, as they are elements of the larger historical development of the historiographies of Circassia, this needs to be overcome. Some expressions of these inherited limitations are realizable in the charges of homology of Circassia's development to that of feudal Europe, in the notions that the Circassian movement in the first half of the 19th century was for a Nation-state, and the general lack of interconnection between religion, the Circassian structure and international forces in contemporary products. Others are seen in the labeling of this structure as acephalous (Althusser 53).³ On this, I think scholars' assertions of Circassia's social structure as

³ "Marx conceived the *structure* of every society as constituted by 'levels' or 'instances' articulated by a specific determination: the *infrastructure*, or economic base (the 'unity' of the productive forces and the relations of production) and the *superstructure*, which itself contains two 'levels' or 'instances': the politico-legal (law and the State) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political, etc.)" The structure, in itself, therefore mediates its two essential concepts to raise to dominance a particular element, determined by the dominant of the two concepts (tributary or capital), to reconstitute and animate the unity of the social formation.

acephalous⁴ is based two reasons. One the one hand, on their realization of a differentiation of coming to be in the historical forms of the stages of development between the social formations of Europe and Circassia. Two, based on the first, the incongruence between the terms for articulating the historical development of the European reality as against that of Circassia's own, and hence the forms of historical individuality between them *appear* incommensurable.

Even if the transition from European feudalism to capitalist was the result of absolute monarchies losing control over the new relations of production they stimulated to dislocate the aristocracy, and were motivated by centralizing power for itself and to wage ever more complex wars, this does not make necessary this same *form of transition* for Circassia. It is clear the transitory process was underway in Circassia in the late 1700s, but as the international pressure bore down, in proportion to the social reforms, it increased in rate. To start the next stage of historical analysis, research, and recognition of Circassia, we must break out of "the tradition of all the dead generations [which] weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* 15). The only way to do so is by revolutionizing our consciousness of it. On that end, I submit Circassia was not in the feudal or slave stage of history; rather they were in the *tributary stage*.

To argue this, I propose that Circassia's development is but an element of the larger story of the Mediterranean and then world system (Amin).⁵ Through this lens, I seek in this paper to prove the

⁴ As the lack of a central political authority, political dominance, and therefore is "headless."

⁵ In the words of Samir Amin, "we can date the birth of this mediterranean system from the conquests of Alexander the Great and conceptualize a single long historical period from this date to the Renaissance, encompassing at first the 'Ancient Orient', then the Mediterranean as whole and its Arab-Islamic and European extensions." It is "a single cultural area whose unity is manifested in a common" ideological content (whether it be Hellenistic, Eastern or Western

historical development of Circassia is inextricably bound to the Mediterranean *religions*. That, therefore, the religions from the dominant societies of the Mediterranean often managed to convert the Circassian elite to it, subjecting to them their suzerain, and that the Circassian structure was subject, within itself and from its suzerain, to the dominance of a political-ideological instance. An example, among the many that will be covered, is the Ottomans who *helped* to propagate Islam throughout and before the Circassian war. The effect of these successive phases, as I shall argue, was that the once means of reproducing the legitimacy for the political dominance of Princes became, in the end, the ideological means of their power's dislocation by and for the conscious Circassians. Thus, the movement, made so famous in the popular consciousness of the time, was not one of national independence but class struggle for the independence of one class from another acted with Islam and through councils. Also, it was a movement between two tributary systems, the Ottomans and Persians, then Russians, which is still class conflict, just within a certain class.

In order to argue this thesis, the geography of Circassia, an exposition of the Mediterranean system, an analysis of the development of religion in Circassia in relation to the development of the local, regional and international social forces that converged to affect its social structure, will all be given in that order. Lastly, an effort to prove that the 18th century social movement here was not for the formation of a *Nation*, but *class conflict*, will conclude this work.

1. Geographical Importance

Circassia, as it sits on the coast of the Black sea and extending inland up to just shy of the Georgian Military Highway, or Terek river, is one of the links mediating access between the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, therefore was at the crossroads of pre-1492 (old world) history. The Caucasus even functioned as an

Christianity, or Islamic) that serves to reproduce the conditions of the terms of political dominance.

alternative route for the Silk Road when its standard route from China to Europe, through Central Asia to Persia then Syria, became engulfed in war. Furthermore, one of the few passes from the Eurasian steppes, just north of the North Caucasus mountains, to Western Asia is located southeast from modern-day Sochi. Not just does Circassia serve as a natural geopolitical point of contention for the civilizations south, i.e., those south of the lesser Caucasus mountains, and those north of the Caucasus, it also became a node of diffusion and trade. This diffusion is summarized and embodied in their syncretic religious-character, which possesses a heterogeneous catalog of artefacts that served the once dominant religions existing throughout the life of the Mediterranean system. For tributary and capitalist formations in the north though, due to the Northern European plain, the acquisition of the Caucasus became a categorical imperative to plug a literal hole in their armor. One of the strong points of that armor was Kabarda, located on the west bank of the Terek river. This location made it, which cannot be overstated, an object of all military commanders consciousness. Therefore Russia, out of the Mediterranean system and the Middle East, appeared as ideologically alien to themselves as Circassians from start to finish. And, therefore, Kabarda became one of the first staging grounds for invasion.

While Circassia functioned as a node of diffusion, forming a notion on this premise regarding the relative conducive quality their geography had to this reality would be an illusion. Circassia was not like most centers of trade in the world. In the sense that, as according to Henze's document, *The North Caucasus Barrier Circassian Resistance to Russia*, "Geographically this region was extremely fragmented, consisting of a succession of lush valleys formed by short, non-navigable rivers leading back into the high mountains with steep sections of coast and [had] only poor natural harbours in between. Rainfall was high, so forests grew luxuriantly. When cleared for agriculture and grazing, these valleys were a dependable source of food and could support a comparatively large population" (Henze 4).

In the duration of the Mediterranean system, the western region was the periphery to its core in eastern region (western Asia), where in both it was constituted by tributary societies within a tributary system subsuming them together. In this context, one dominated the others through centralizing the surplus for it—e.g. the Ottomans with their vassals. Conversely from 300 BC to the Renaissance, while the western region was the periphery, 1492 signified a gradual transition to western dominance over the east. Why Mediterranean if Circassia is in the Black Sea, one might ask? Part of this question is resolved through Genoa's colonization, various Italian city-states engagement in commerce with Circassians, and the Golden Fleece.

According to Amin, "the normal method of centralization of this tributary surplus was political centralization, operating to the advantage of imperial capitals. Of course this centralization remained weak, as did the authority of the centres concerned" (Amin 22). Even after the Mediterranean system became subordinate to the developing European Atlantic system (colonization), the nature of the Turks relation to Circassia remained as described above by Amin. With that stated, before and after the inversion of the pole of power to the west, Circassia became subject to competing great powers, namely between the Turks, Persians and Russians. Although after the inversion crystallized, Russia quickly became the most serious contender. Here, the historical conditions of Circassians, such as their language whose origination is Turkic or economic dependency on trade, meant that even though many sided with the Ottomans during the period of conflict, many also did not. What this shows is that with the dissolution of the Mediterranean tributary system came the chance for the powers all around them to subject them to integration into their tributary systems. Russia proved to do just that, after prying the Circassians out of the Ottomans sphere.

2. Religion and Ethics in Circassia before Islam

Religion throughout Circassia's history is an essential and complex social unit of analysis, within which the content embodies particular elements of Greco-Roman and Abrahamic

religions that served the political dominance of a class(es) over the material base to structure the whole into unity, to give all a similar identity. But, as explained in Henze's quote about Circassia's geographical fragmentation, because the material foundation of those beings of common identity was subject to spatial heterogeneity meant the process of differentiation suffused the totality into a family of principalities and tribes. In this section, there are two things to note. One, while Islam was adopted by the Princes first and then the people, it remained limited by both of their syncretic religious-characters, and only became predominant after its conditions developed—hence *complexity*. Two, the syncretic character for the non princely classes was predominated by, i.e., until their conversion and revolution, “an animistic-pagan religion” (Ilgener 36), a form of polytheism in the early periods. This distinction is important because “whereas polytheism offers a wide range of religious expression for a society's members and can defuse conflicts over religious issues, monotheism is typically plagued by clashes over the correct interpretation of the one true faith” (Egger 251). Thus, the transition of the people from clashes or differences amongst themselves to transcending this for themselves against Princes in the revolution of the 1600s will be the focus here.

To explain how religion is bound to Circassia, and to explain the romantic characterization of Circassians as Hellenistic, e.g. as by the Brits aforementioned, we must start from the realm of the primeval. The ancient relationship between the Greco-Roman societies and the Caucasus produced not just an interrelated history, network of trade, and a reliance on the Caucasus as a forward line of defense for the polities succeeding Rome. It also ingrained certain common units of consciousness between them. Such as that both originated from a points of homology in the Greco-Roman age of the early phases of the Tributary epoch. That is, each came out of the stage of “primitive communism” and became (excluding most of Europe), in its earliest, Greek colonies and, at its highest developed expression, a part of the tributary system of the Roman empire. However, Greeks, to their Macedonian successor states, Rome and Byzantium, all, in their

own particular ways, made the peoples of, not the British Isles or Russia, but Circassia a periphery to them, constituting a part of the Mediterranean system. Recognition of this distinction is important when reading historical works discussing the relationship of foreign nations or powers to Circassia during the Russian invasions of the 1800s. As in that context, when historical and present elite's invoke these concepts to their people, to revive and glorify this common history, not just do they make the actors and activities of the past embody and mask the character of the their struggle. For they also avail bourgeois society by ascribing to their gods and heroes from the past of world history adoration and legitimation of their own society's historical basis, and abstract from their societies and the Caucasus the historical development of its socio-cultural elements hitherto. Through that abstraction came the definition of the frame of the Europeans struggle for Circassia. This abstraction became manifested in the form of statements by certain adventurous British officials, who, operating unofficially, romantically referenced the Ancient Greek civilizations, specifically those of city-states, to Circassia by treating as analogous. This is a problem because between the spatio-temporality of both referenced, the world-system was and is certainly not practically analogous. Nonetheless, the Greco-Roman religions came to the British Isles and Circassia.

The elements of Christianity transmitted from Byzantine interaction with Circassia not just remained subordinate to the local traditions, but supplemented them. This became part of the reason for the heterogeneous catalog of religious artefacts. We see this in Byzantine-Circassian relations as "ties were also maintained through Christianized Georgia,... [but] Christianity never became more than a veneer over traditional beliefs and customs. If a national church ever formed among the Circassians, it was never strong and disappeared in medieval times. No separate priestly class developed to maintain literacy and preserve written records; the Circassian language remained unwritten and unstandardized" (Henze 5). Furthermore, it was stated in the same document, that "a Circassian Muslim dignitary explained to the Englishman James Bell in 1837 that... Four books

were recognised by Circassians as important for their system of religion and morality: the Bible (by which he seems to have meant the Pentateuch), the Psalms of David, the four Gospels, and the Quran” (Henze 5). Here we find a member of the elite objectifying to us the ethical basis of their dominance. The document also conveys the effect of Christianity on the people, where “ceremonies honoring Tshible (the thunder-god) and Merem (the Virgin Mary) were important annual events and included feasting, prayers and dancing in which both sexes participated together” (Henze 5). Even after the fall of the Byzantines and the rise of the Ottomans, Genoa maintained economic ties and colonies through the construction of fortifications that would become of use and pain later in Circassia.

To clarify the linguistic reality, as the quote above could leave the impression of ambiguity, Circassians did have a mutually intelligible family of dialects, and the name under which they recognized this family, and therefore themselves and country, was *Adyghe*. As was alluded to prior, while Islamic terminology became universalized in diplomacy, their vocabulary became infused, through all the historical social situations of development of Circassia based on their internal and external relationships with neighboring societies, with many Turkic loanwords. What the form of their vocabulary’s content shows to us is the particular social relations they were homologous and interacted with were of the Turkic family of languages and people. Although without a mode of transcribing their being in this period, they developed their modes of oratory, transcending those of the social formations near them. What the use-value of the possession of this refined mode of oration for public situations, specifically councils, was that it allowed oneself to, especially if of a non-aristocratic class, overcome the universal right to ignore for subjects of the council (Manning 21). The oratorical quality that must be attained for a person to become a political agent, is that one’s speech to the council had to embody the interests, desires, and needs of the people tied to that council; to make these struggles their own, in such a way as to use one’s silver-tongue to become a recognized representative by other council members,

and to prove to these subalterns⁶ that one's subjectivity enabled them from having to disrupt their own isolated modes of life. Although this will be explored more fully later, it is important to note that "leaders gained as much renown for their speechmaking ability as for their skill in battle" (Henze 7).

The two dominant modes of consciousness that united the Circassians socially from the start, alongside *Adyghe*, and to a lesser extent in the second revolution in the 19th century, was an "ancient animistic-pagan religion, and the code of conduct, adige khabze, which also has regulated mundane life. This unwritten traditional conduct regulated military affairs, communal courts, crime and punishment, blood-feuds, the interaction between social classes, marriage, sexuality, and gender-relations" (Richmond 18). Therefore, adyghe khabze itself formed the theoretical, or more properly ideological basis for the content of the practice of Adat (customary law). Its principles of observance "are the memory of ancestors, consciousness of Circassia as the home of those ancestors, and tolerance of other ways of life and religious beliefs" (Richmond 18). This could be argued to be a product of their geographical isolation and their ability to overcome many of its normal effects, such as linguistic or social contradictions, through their standardization and production of socio-cultural artefacts. For the reason that by their use of these they placed the particular modes of life of Circassians into unity through the general mode of life of Circassia that is naturally composed of these, as they are correspondent to the nature of the means of reproducing of this social formation. As explained, as will be further expounded, this *social production* rests on the production of artefacts, whether they be the religious texts as mentioned or sustenance to support the warbands of princes.

An elucidation of the relationship of this practice to class will be addressed later, but one thing to note is the dominance of the concept and function of the oath itself. The oath was a form of ideological contract existing between the caste, and later class, stratum of Circassia, in the sense that with its affirmation by the

⁶ The meaning I impose to the term *subaltern* here is they who are politically and aristocratically alienated.

people, the people were bound to certain obligations (exogamy) while gaining some rights (such as the right to speak in councils) that presupposed and mediated the structure of social relations.⁷ Both of these ideological modes (religious theory and practice) served the practical segmentary species-character of Circassia, while endowing Circassians with a common catalog of cultural artefacts and activities, to beget a general social element that unified the numerous principalities in their consciousness. This substance of the Circassians became the germ cell that would be developed by them in response to internal (class struggle) and external (Ottomans and Russian competition) factors in play within their realm, to both correspond to the terms of Islam and become a means of revolution.

3. The articulation of the Mediterranean system into the Tributary World-system and the latter's specificity as against that of the capitalist world-system

As I mentioned the dominant tributary formations throughout the majority of the existence of the Mediterranean System were situated in the east, and in turn all either greatly valued or depended on the function of, as with the Macedonian empire and its various successor-states or Byzantines, and or were based in, such as with the Rashiduns, the Middle East as it operated as "an obligatory intermediary for almost all transcontinental trade in pre-modern epochs" (Amin 53). Accordingly, in Samir's "concept of the ancient world system for the periods covering the eighteenth centuries between the establishment of the Hellenistic system in the middle east (300 bc), the establishment of the Han state in China (200 bc), the Kushana and Maurya states in Central Asia and India (200 BC), and the European renaissance, that is, from 300 BC to 1500 AD" (Amin 31), all of these societies and regional systems mentioned were cores in this once world system,

⁷ Note the nature of the rights corresponded to the stage of development that the oath achieved, that is to say before the anti-aristocratic revolution the oath may have just been an implicit social consensus.

excluding the rest of Eurasia which were peripheries—e.g. Europe until the sixteenth century, or Africa.

Before continuing the analysis of the ancient world system, in its character and diachrony in terms of its effectivity relative to Circassia, the distinction of Central vs peripheral should be articulated so as to make this objective. With that said, Amin determined “the former as characterized by a surplus centralisation at the relatively high state level, with its redistribution placed under its control; while in peripheral formations, the embryonic character of the state (and even its virtual non-existence) leads to a complete disintegration of surplus distribution monopolised by local feudal systems.” Nonetheless, while this “core periphery polarisation [in its application to the modern capitalist age] is neither synonymous with the metropolis-colony contrast, nor particular to the stage designated as imperialism by Lenin (defined by the establishment of monopolies at the core)” (Amin 71), this relationship “is an economic domination relationship in which the centres override the peripheries (and this is associated with economic dominance)” (Amin 31), and consequently is qualitatively different from its application for the ancient/tributary world system. Therefore the reader should know that the form this relationship takes in the capitalist epoch does not have the same structure and function as does the form which it assumes in the tributary system and epoch. This is because the latter is based on the dominance of the political-ideological instance and has its world system composed of competitive societies in autonomous regional systems, composed themselves of constituent societies, which interlock into a world-system through exchange between them as organized in each particular regional systems and mediated by the centre and dominant society of the Middle East. The regional systems are qualified and organized on the basis of the existence of three factors in operation between the societies subject to our cognition: “the density of economic exchanges and transfers of surplus distributed through this channel; the degree of centralisation of political power; and the relative diversity/specificity and hence autonomy of the ideological

systems” (Amin 27). As will be shown throughout all sections succeeding this one, Circassia veritable qualifies as a periphery throughout the life of the mediterranean system and, in its delimitation to the history covered in this paper, remained subject, in varying degrees, to the dominant Islamic tributary societies.

In regards to the dominance of the political-ideological instance characterizing tributary societies, “the tributary structures are either central or peripheral depending on the degree of the completion of the power centralisation process and its expression through a state religion. In the central formations, the latter takes the form of a state religion or a religious-orientated state philosophy with a universal vocation which breaks with the specific local religions of the former periods which I called ‘communal formations’” (Amin 31).

4. Transitory stage: From no Islam to the Exposure of it to the Relations of Production

Islam was first presented to the Circassian aristocracy as attractive, after the Mongol invasion, with their successor of the Qipchaq Khanate (Golden Horde), when Berke (1257-1267) converted to Islam. This fact can be over-extrapolated quickly, for no formal force or campaign of proselytization was actuated, instead for the Circassians their religious emulsion remained. This experience though, was in contrast to the Central and Eastern parts of the Caucasus, where “caravans that plied the long-established routes between Syria and the lower Volga provided a means for Muslim merchants, scholars, and craftsmen, as well as wandering preachers, to make their presence felt in the realm” (Egger 286). Irrespectively to the religion of the Khan, Qipchaq elite were interested and active in trade, despite their preference to remain nomadic while the bulk of their subjects reside in towns, villages, or even if they were demographically fragmented like Circassia, because they found this “would augment the revenues derived from taxes on [these] peasants and townsmen” (Egger 286). In this trade, the Ayyubids and then Mamluks sought out and established commercial relations with the Qipchaq to

acquire slaves in exchange for their own commodities, produced from proto-capitalist industries based in the Mamluk domain. The purpose of this particular trade for the political state was essential to reproduce the conditions of its political-economic mode of production, i.e., through impressing these slaves into positions of the lowest to the highest levels in the economy, bureaucracy, and military, and to even choose among them one to become the eventual successor to the Sultan himself.

At the same time succession predominately took place by force, as “the perquisites and luxuries of power roded the martial instincts and skills of the most successful Mamluks within a generation or two, leaving the way open to a new crop of lean and hungry slave-soldiers, fresh from the hinterlands of Circassia and their Egyptian training camps, to seize power from their soft, indolent masters. The New Mamluk sultan would then purge the top rank of the old sultan’s troops, the so-called ‘Royal Mamluks,’ and replace them with his own followers, and the cycle began anew” (Bernstein 122-123). In the wake of this cluster of events, the outcome was nothing but a new form of the same old now overthrown or dislocated: the Mamluks, arising from the Ayyubids, still needed slaves; as the venetian’s rival, that is, the Genoese with the resurrected Byzantine Empire replaced the former’s combo by itself with the Latin Empire to transit slaves from the Caucasus to Egypt.

Therefore, markets, a cell of (proto-)capitalist development, were in operation with forms of commercial exchanges with, on the one hand, commodities from the proto-capitalist enterprises in the Mamluk realm and, on the other, slaves from the Caucasus. Through treaties with Venice and Genoa, this commercial relationship was sustained and mediated. Likewise, through all this the *conditions* of Islam and pro-capitalist elements began to spread to Circassia, where elites quickly started to assert their lineage to both the Mamluk sultans and Chinggis Khan, as a means for them to interpellate their legitimacy and illusory superiority into and over their people.

There are two factors to bear in mind from this section which haunt the story till the end. One, the elements that are to be

reproduced by the life-activity of the Circassian princes, henceforth, is their alienation from their subjects, like the Qipchaq, but in a non-nomadic fashion, and the positive sentiment towards whomever the other actor of trade is with whichever prince controls that trade. Two, when a region's export-trade is dependant on the alienation of the life of it's people in themselves and from themselves for a master abroad in exchange for whatever form of value, and even if these stolen lives become the next sultan or pashas, it alienates the substance of its *being*, and makes the realization of its species-life, its life-activity, based on the denial to it's species-beings of the being of their will, of human freedom. If the means of producing the society is the society's means of alienating it's people, so to will it alienate itself once the interests of the dominant relations of production become threatened or attacked in their own domain.

5. Development of the Material Conditions of an Islamic Transition

The first Khan to convert, and who became a direct agent of Islams development here, is Khan Uzbek, who both assumed power and Islam in 1313, while declaring it the state religion. In response the Cherkees Princes, who hail from Kabarda, among others, converted and entered the court of Uzbek, giving impetus to the areas associated with the princes to proselytize. The best expression of the degree of religious observation from this development, is symbolized in the name and historical being of Khan Hajji Cherkes, who ascended to power in 1367 (Zhemukhov 8). What his name means in of itself for history, is that his adherence to the Islamic pillar of Hajj was a source of legitimacy. Furthermore, this implies that the Cherkess princes adopted Islam and accompanied the khans on their pilgrimage to Mecca, making the hajj with them. Archeological evidence also indicates, from the uncovered artifact of the grand mosque in the Piatigorsk region, that in the 14th century "there were Cherkess clergymen who performed the five daily prayers and observed the other pillars of Islam" (Zhemukhov 9).

During the period, though, after Uzbek and his son Berdi-beg died, signifying the extinction of Batu's lineage (the founder), a power vacuum and civil war formed in 1359. Russia stopped paying tribute, but when Toqtamish of the White Horde, a faction in the civil war, seized New Saray in 1377, he quickly restored the horde's dominance over Russia by 1383. After Toqtamish overcame his internal rivals, he took his confidence and projected it violently at his external rival, Timur—who was attempting to restore the Mongol Empire. After Toqtamish launched raids, Timur responded by meeting and defeating him, but "Toqtamish foolishly challenged Timur again in Azerbaijan" (Egger 308). At that battle, while Toqtamish escaped with his life, his reputation was drowned in the blood of his people and destroyed by Timur's razing of the horde's *commercial infrastructure* and cities. Timur would again in 1401 come to the Caucasus, after neutralizing the Mamlukian threat, but had to divert his force to confront the defiant Bayezit, the Ottomans.

The effect of this loss not just symbolized the start of the process of Qipchaq disintegration, it also "diverted permanently [long-distance trade] northward into Russia and southward into Iran... the merchant and artisanal classes were shattered, with catastrophic results for cultural life and technology" (Egger 383), in the sense that with the dissolution of the horde came, with it, the dissolution of the mode of producing, at least, firearms, while its adoption in the Europe increased.⁸ Although the same could be said generally of the commercial infrastructure in this brief moment, it comes back later as the Ottomans need for slaves increases as with the Circassians need for guns. Therefore the implication from this, which haunts the story of Circassia henceforth, is the Circassians dependence on foreign produced, and consequently, foreign bourgeois and their dictated prices for firearms. Naturally, by this reality, the loss of the Horde became the gain, by the force of circumstances outside its direct action, for Russia's political economic conditions. Further, this point in

⁸ The loss of the Merchant and Artisanal classes was really the loss of the relations of production and the productive forces, the two elements of the mode of production, for firearms, and likely much more.

Circassia's history, with the Mamluks loss and the Qipchaq's disintegration both respectively to the Mongols, and then the Ottomans' rise, likewise, signifies a new phase in the diachrony of Circassia's end.

With the dissolution of the Qipchaq horde came, consequently, the Russian advance towards the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, and the entrenchment of dynastic ties with the Crimean Khanate, Nogai Horde, and Ottoman Empire, who would, after failing to invade, become the Circassian's protective, but self-serving guardian. There are exceptions of course though. For instance, in the wake of that geopolitical alteration, the Kabardians and Besleney principalities, of which the latter of whom resided in Piatigorsk region and had contacted the Russians in 1552, conceived Russia, in the *immediacy* of their situation, as a potential ally (Henze 8). Both of these principalities, likewise, in 1556 aided the Russians in their defence against the Crimeans, who were induced to retaliate to the Russian annexation of the Volga valley by Suleiman (military encyclopedia pp. 492). The highest developed expression of their adherence to Islam, but also consciousness of the *impending* threat, in this period is "in 1561, [when] contemporaries noted that the Kabard princess Guashanei Temriukovna professed Islam before her marriage, but when she married the Moscow prince Ivan IV she was baptized and took the Christian name Mariia" (Zhemukhov 9). If it is normal to expect duchies of the Holy roman empire to be seeking out an alliance when they try to establish dynastic ties with France, to protect themselves from them or others like them, then the same is also true for Kabardia and Russia. Regardless of these exceptions though, they had to adapt to the environment of political fragmentation. Generally, to establish diplomatic relations and to engage in political correspondence, Islamic terms defined the structure of their content of expression towards their neighbors.

An economic result of this dissolution is realized in the role of the Crimean khanate, a successor state to the horde (both), who became an "autonomous vassal"⁹ of the Ottomans. Here, Crimea,

⁹ "The Ottoman sultan gained the right [after 1470s] to confirm the choice of the crimean khan and to use Crimean troops in his military

with its established maritime trading routes and ports, in its strategic location, quickly replaced the horde as the slavers, by deriving their surplus through raiding once Qipchaq cities to expropriate people for the purpose of their sale at Ottoman slave markets. What this caused, the pillaging, was the depopulation of the areas between the Black sea societies and the core of Russia, leaving it without a formal society. In this, Cossacks, which comprised a motley of slavnic peasants and Tatars, both *together*, found their means of life through interaction with the natural world and by raiding the worlds all around them. This changed, however, once a Turko-Crimean (Tatar) army looted and set ablaze Moscow, excluding the Kremlin, in 1570. The fire forced onto their physiological basis, with their military's inability to defend anything but the Kremlin, terrorized the Kremlin into allying and coming to terms with another threatening group, the Cossacks, against the Tatars (Egger 385-386).

This alliance of Russians and Cossacks coincided with the latter's reorientation to "a systematic policy of raiding Tatar communities and intercepting Tatar raiding parties on their return from the north" (Egger 386). The importance of this sequence of events for Circassia maybe explained with the fact that "the lingua franca of the entire Caucasus was Turkish, then termed *Tatar*. It was widely understood among Circassians on the coast because of regular trade with Turkey and contacts with Ottoman administrators" (Henze 7). Dare I say the war between the two tributary systems of the Russians and Ottomans already started but that the role of Circassia in it began here? This is also why the Cossacks first, before the real Russians, established themselves "on steppes north of the Kuban river in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and advanced up the Terek valley." Hence, once the "Cossacks... struck up alliances with these [local] leaders and married and intermingled with both Circassians and Nogay Tatars" (Henze 7). And even if they acculturated, they brought the people, who were bound to these aristocrats, closer to Russia. Lastly, in this paragraph, it is essential to bare in mind two things.

campaigns, and the Crimeans enjoyed the protection and commercial advantages of the powerful Ottoman Empire". (385)

One, the Circassian Princes and people, clearly, supported differing sides, usually either the Russian sphere or Ottoman sphere, for interests that alienated the social-beings of Circassia. Two, that the acquisition of the Terek valley was to split the North Caucasus, through a network of fortifications, in two for Russia's favor.

In this section, nor at the start or end, did the aristocracy fully, if you will really, adopt Islam, but it clearly started the process or even became the predominant element of their syncretism. The same, conversely, cannot be stated or argued for the masses themselves.

6. Russo-Ottoman War and the expressions of intra-class conflict

In this next section we see not just the rise of great power conflict between Russia and the Ottomans, but the antagonization of the conditions of existence for the Circassian social formation generally. Further, we see the princes concerned only with fighting another for their own gain. For the Circassians, this period demonstrated to them the contradictions in their social structure, for the holes and defects of it could no longer hide themselves in the face of the war between the Ottomans and Russia, and then Persia.

When in 1569 the Ottomans, with their various clients, launched an all out invasion to annex the Caucasus and fight Russia, not just did the wife of Ivan the Terrible¹⁰ die without producing an heir, but her father's fortunes, in the following year, also flipped on its head once the *Crimeans* and Nogai formed a coalition to, which they did, defeat him. In 1615, we find objective proof of the princes subjection to the opposing spheres of influence in their choice of sides in the battle of "Kul'kuzhin (K"ul"k"uzhyn, Qwlhqwzhin)", where "Kazi Psheanpshokov was killed... fighting against the forces of the Kabard prince Sholokh Tapsarukov, who led the forces of murzas of the Great Nogai Horde into Kabarda" (Zhemukhov 9). Here the head of the slain

¹⁰ The Invasion and marriage are mentioned on pp. 7

was cut off and used as Nogai's means of suing for peace, which they found in getting Psheanpshokov's daughter to marry a murza. With that said, once Kazi was succeeded by Prince Aleguko Shoguenkov, his nephew, not only did he join in an alliance with the Nogai, those who cut off his father's head, they also defeated and ousted the forces of Karashai Sholokhov (the first Sholokhov's son) and their people at and from the Lower Julat fortress. In place of both the princes and people came the Nogai to replaced them. Here, "a later Nogai khan, Zhanibek, turned the pagan and Christian buildings of Lower Julat into mosques and minarets. By the seventeenth century the greater part of Kabarda had already been converted to Islam" (Zhemukhov 9-10).

Quickly, it's important to note in this section that this offensive in 1569, which was not successful, occurred within a year of Moscow's burning, and that Moscow was equally as quick in responding with Cossacks and erecting fortifications. Also it should be glaring obvious that what drives the princes is not their piety, sense of duty for their people or chivalry, etc., for in the last instance all that drives them is the tribute to increase their political power; to, again, increase their wealth for even more power and so on. Thus, the last situation in this section, between the princes, was nothing more than an expression of conflict within the dominant class itself. Here we see the first example of the extent to which princes would go to realize power. It will not be the last.

7. Forty-three years of war: Transition to Revolution and its effect on the Structure

In the late parts of the 16th and early parts of the 17th centuries, the Ottomans and Safavid Persians where contesting the Caucasus, again. The stage of war took up an immense mass of space on earth, and span of time—around 1603 to 1638—, as each Tributary system controlled large swaths of land. For the Ottomans, Circassia "represented the northeastern most extension of imperial holdings extending from Hungary across the Black Sea steppes to the Kuban and beyond, where the Ottomans were heirs of Turkic peoples extending back to the Cumans and

the Khazars. [Although], Persian holdings in the Caucasus had even more ancient beginnings in ties to Georgians and Armenians that had their roots in pre-Roman times. The Persian-dominated Caucasian territories formed the north-west flank of an empire which extended deep into Central Asia” (Henze 3). The outcome of these wars was concluded in the Treaty of Zuhab¹¹, 1639, which although is commonly cited for purposes of Turkish and Persian history, nonetheless, had profound effects for Circassia, which is not commonly explained—if at all. A forewarning is needed though, as what is about to be said is something theoretical; i.e., I, myself, could not recognize a material basis for my assertions outside of those I have synthesized in my argument. Nonetheless, there are three proofs for this treaty’s importance from contemporary times:

One, even though the treaty, famously, constituted the de facto borders of modern day Turkey and Iran, giving to the former the western Caucasus and Mesopotamia, while to the latter the eastern Caucasus; it also “subordinated the opposing religious doctrines of Sunni Islam and Safavid Shi’ism to the principle of territorial integrity, comparable to the European Peace of Westphalia of 1648” (Jordet 287). The Ottomans and or Cirmeans could now condition it to Islam without fear, they, the latter, owned them now. *Secondly*, according to Hansen, in his work *The Circassian Revival: A Quest for Recognition*, “the Muslim religion was introduced by the Crimean Tatars during the *seventeenth* and *eighteenth* centuries and was consolidated during the many years of war with Russia” (Hansen 104). *Thirdly*, it would not be until 1703, when some Crimean Khans “placed a mullah in each aul [Kabadian village] to teach the people Islam” (Zhemukhov 10), that the people of Circassia would begin the process of integrating Islam into their syncretism and, from there, make it predominant.

On top of those three proofs is a fourth one from James Stanislaus Bell’s *Journal of a residence in Circassia, during the years 1837, 1838, and 1839*, where he expounds the importance of that treaty, albeit indirectly: “... about ***two centuries*** ago there

¹¹ The first war went from 1578-1590; the second from 1603-1618; third from 1623-1639.

was a fierce struggle between the free men and the nobles of Circassia, and that the power of the latter, who were then much more numerous, and each sept of whom had a sept of thfokotls subject to it, was then first effectually broken. Mohammedism farther reduced it. Its renovation, and the reduction of all below to a servile equality, have been distinctly promised to individuals of that class by the Russians, in the event of their success. But although the liberty now enjoyed appears thus to have been wrenched from the hands of the nobles, there remains enough of respect and precedence allowed to those of that class to evince the forbearance and good-feeling of the rest ; and the expression in common use among them for anything done genteelly is “vorkhi khabse,” (a la noble) (Bell 219). With these four points, and the rise of the underclasses, it is now prudent to articulate the structure of the tributary social formation of Circassia before the condensation of the class contradiction and after its rupture.

With that said though, what Bell points out, namely that “each sept of whom had a sept of thfokotls (freemen) subject to it [i.e., a prince]” (Bell 219) implies, for one, the reality of the caste structure and, two, that the oath mediating the social relations, ideological and political, in the form associated with the socialized councils, was an unreality before the revolution. This is confirmed in Bell’s journal, after he cognized about the social structure of Circassia before the realization of the “national” oath in the mid 19th century, as well: “The nobles did not lead these organizations, but rather nobles and commoners had *parallel societies*, often with a vague “alliance” between them” (Manning 15). Here we find that commoners are not subjected to the will of the princes, on the contrary, there is an article of faith that mediates both the class contradiction in civil society and in the councils. In councils it functions as an ideology to suffuse peasants into externalizing from themselves their social right and power of participation and determination, respectively, into an oratorical representative recognized by them as the determiner of the political instance that they are then to realize.

This point in the historical development of Circassia might signify in itself the growing division between the democratic and

feudal tributary societies, the coastal and inland principalities. That is to say that while “traditional princes remained strongest among the tribes of Kabarda,... they had lost much of their authority — if indeed they ever had it — in the mountain and coastal tribes” (Henze 6). It seems safe to determine that the oath started, or manifested a higher stage of development in its practical form, for those on coast after the conclusion of this stir of *class conflict*. By higher development, etc., I mean that, from all history mentioned hitherto, the material conditions of the existence for a qualitative transformation of the function of the oath, thus its social appearance in existence, matured in the womb of old society itself (Marx, Marx on the History of his Opinions 3-6), and that the activity of revolution was merely “its *actual act* of genesis (the birth act of its empirical existence)” (Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 84).

8. Structure and Implications from Revolution

The fullest exposition of the caste structure that will be active until 1794, is as stated: “The first caste was the hereditary caste of “princes” (as well as an even more elevated caste of khans), spelt variously pshi, pshee, or pshe. The second was the non-hereditary caste of noble retainers dependent on the pshi, the vork. Together these were referred to by the Turkish appellation ouzden (lord), or bey. Alongside these was an independent caste of yeomanry comprising the bulk of the population, called in Turkish tokav/tocav, or in Circassian thfokotl. Lastly, there was the class of slaves or serfs attached to the princes, pshitl or pshilt (the term appears to mean “prince’s man”)” (Manning 13). This system, arguably, without the caste character, was maintained until at least the national oath in the early 1840s.

In this system, princes lorded over the vork, whom were commoners armed with means of war owned by their employer, for the sake of, after manipulating blood feuds with other principalities, pillaging for half the year to acquire weapons, horses and slaves. With these, not just did they realize a surplus, they found a means of exchange to start exporting these slaves and horses to, namely, the Ottomans for manufactured goods,

weapons, and prestige objects to reproduce the conditions of the relations of production. These vital two processes for the Ottomans and princes were realized by Turkic merchants established on the coast of the black sea who mediated this relationship. Therefore, for princes to reproduce the conditions of their existence requires that they produce, through their grunts, the destruction of the conditions of existence of peasants not subject to them or principality. In order for feuding princes to reconcile their antagonisms, as such, first necessitated that it intensified, in that "Circassian tribes raided each other and took prisoners and hostages and then met in councils on neutral ground to regulate relations between tribes and clans, [to] debate political issues" (Henze 7). After this revolution, the princes maintained their monopoly on trade, truly on society, by their employment of work to allow themselves to alienate the freeman from the real content of their society's life, i.e., only until the violence forces either their loss or a meeting in council. But in this period, when the councils met to handle the aristocratic problem, they, therefore, only restored relations between the conflicting princes; status quo ante bellum. For what other possible end is there if this is how they realize a surplus, and if their surplus is their means of reproducing their power?

To explain this, suppose prince A raids a district outside of his principality associated with prince B's district, the result is the formation of a council. In this situation, the political representatives from both sides met to not end the conditions of existence for this rapacious reality, rather, the elite meet to just enable the aggressing prince to realize a surplus and to allow the "victimized" prince to appear like he is acquiring *material* compensation, all the while his means of life is no different from his aggressors. The object of the council's production is the negation of the situational expression of harm from the class contradiction, without negating that essential contradiction, but preserving and enriching it. Hence the princes maintained their position as a class over civil society by their ownership and direction of small armies that became their means of political dominance in the last instance. In all, "this complex and

diversified cycle of exchanges combining agricultural production, commerce and pillage has exercised considerable influence on the Circassian vendetta, provoking distortions, ‘anomalies,’ ... distortions accentuated by the very nature of political and juridical power, left to the discretion of the aristocracy” (Manning 603). In that quote their political dominance in the last instance is summarized.

Before jumping back into the historical development up to the manifestation of the revolution in 1794, a brief analysis of the slave trade for the sake of highlighting its essentiality for the relationship between the Ottomans and Circassians is in order. While princes engaged in the slave trade to profit, their sold slaves were instrumental in reconstituting the harem slaves needed, under the terms of the Ottoman political state, to reproduce heirs for the Empire. As to the relationship of exchange, “this trade was particularly valuable to both sides, since Circassia was the last major source of harem slaves for the Ottoman Empire, and harem slaves were structurally central to its elite politics.” Even though the amount of sold African slaves outnumbered that of Circassian slaves per annum by anywhere from 1:13, Circassians were deemed much more valuable: the “slave trade [of Circassia] was worth almost as much as the African trade, at £70,000 – 140,000 and £160,000 – 200,000 annually, respectively” (Manning 602). The effect of the potential wealth from trade just waiting to be tapped on by the princes, the dominant class, henceforth dominants their movement until the conclusion of their historical end in Circassia. With this trade came, on the one hand, the “transition to “market-based” feuding amongst coastal Circassian princes (and, on the other, the presence of proto-capitalist elements once more in Circassian history. The best way for the Russians to dislocate the conditions of existence for the mode of life of princes is to construct a complex network of forts to, on the one hand, divide the social groupings from being able to combine forces for a counter-hegemonic bloc and, on the other, to transition the monopoly on military force from princes and to the Russian army.

Could some of the aristocratic rivalries, or even the princes allowance of other princes to die by Russian steel, be attributed to the competition for the recognition of the right to pillage certain *populous* areas for the sake of their own gain in the slave trade?

On the other side of the economic reality of Circassian society were the peasants, the dominant group in terms of population size. Generally, and in the words of Marx, “they live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production *isolates* them from one another instead of bring them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased by [Circassia’s] bad means of communication and by the poverty [socio-economic] of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, admits no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships” outside of those in the tribal system to be discussed. As was the case for the French peasants, the Circassian peasants “cannot represent themselves, they must be represented” (Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* 123-124).

Generally speaking, each principality was constituted by a varied number, depending on its size, of districts, which were themselves constituted by a certain number of village communes, of course each with a varied number of small holding peasant residences. Depending on the principality in question, such as Kabadia or the Shapsug, either princely relations united the districts through themselves into the principality – Kabadia¹²– or the oath imbibed all villagers minds into ideological correspondence for their hailing of the councils, mediated by four dominant social classes, as the source of the political unity of the districts as one principality–Shapsug.

Each principality had its own “tribe(s)”, recognized and articulated in their identities (Kabadia or Shapsug). Bell defined the tribes as “extraterritorial kinship organizations that stood in opposition to the local territorial geographical groupings... [village

¹² One prince per district is the standard (more common in land than on the coast).

and district] that were the corporate groups in which Circassians engaged in warfare and in council". Furthermore, he stated that in these, which "were not "feudal" [in origin, but were, one might almost say], "civil," ... they organized all castes, not just the nobles" (Manning 606). On that note, whether or not the existence of this element or mode of organization was articulated within the structure of the Circassian social formation before the revolution of 1796 needs to be determined, as that was when the caste system ended in west Circassia. What the existence of this element or mode within the structure of Circassia would mean both before and after the revolution of 1796, as against if a bourgeois form or, namely, civil society existed instead, is that the notion of the development of a national revolution henceforth would be an illusion. Before explaining their function, these tribes obliged all, by force of the oath, to practice exogamy (no intermarriages in one's own family). Here we find a convention enshrining a certain degree of socialization of the process of human reproduction.

To summarize the secondary aspect of the notion of tribes, tribes were to be the mode of adjudication for feuds between themselves, between both the tribes of differing principalities and those within a principality. In an Adjudicative situation making the cost of rectification and punishments for the violator's crime against the violated become, both, the burden of the former's whole tribe. The primary aspect of this conceptual notion of tribes is the endowment, on the one hand, of a sense of community, in that "every man feels that for the payment or exaction of fines the resources of the society are his own, and in proportion to these is he respected by his neighbours," and, on the other, that by this tribally internal but *communal mode of distribution*, "a man has a claim upon it for anything he may stand in need of" (Manning 607), such as a wife or food. As was mentioned before, princes did not lead these societies, for they had their own; therefore, principalities who had this were constituted by *parallel societies*, with the princely society dominate over and against the people's society.

But to be clear the mode of mediation between these two parallel societies only arose, that is, in my knowledge, when a principality was stimulated by an external prince's mode of producing his means of reproducing his power through pillaging and enslaving the subjects of a district in it, in the form of situational councils; or from the tribal conflicts as just mentioned. Thus this mediation of two societies organized around whichever social unit constitutive of a principality connected them together with the other side, identical to it only in inverted factors, necessary for this mode to become actualized. Thus each emergence of the situational political state not just served the prince's surplus accumulation, thus their reproduction of the conditions for this and their power, or the function of tribal mediation. It also was a means of inter-subjective development for the non-aristocratic social groups alienated from each other due to their mode of production and life, and or that were not together organized in either the same village commune, district, tribe, or principality.

In either case of social organization, the princes or council-districts could socialize their activity with any number of the others or could be autonomous from them, but councils, as mentioned, only existed as the need arose for their function, unlike, sadly, the princes.¹³ However, the consciousness of the Circassians, those that gave to the Brits their knowledge in their books upon which this section is partially based, did not conceive of this heteronomy shown above. This fact was transmitted by Bell, for those Circassians that told him, that, it was, "in fact, the monarch¹⁴—the only one—whose sway (morally and metaphorically speaking) had been submitted to, from time immemorial, in every part of the Caucasus. His seal it is that

¹³ This jab at the aristocracy also rings truth once one considers the Circassian world before council-based social formations emerged in itself. Thus before that point the spirit of Circassia, in itself, had no idea of an element of it without a prince; hence, the councils signifies, i.e., to the spirit of Circassia, in all of it's aware constituents, the objective unnecessary of the aristocracy.

¹⁴ Monarch, here, means Oath.

confers validity on every compact, social or political. He is the mighty arbiter in all differences—the sole lawgiver, whose authority enforced what his sanction has confirmed. All, of whatever sex or condition, are his vassals” (Manning 614). From this quote what is clear is, one, that Bell is transmitting to us an effective expression of the product of the individual’s interpellation to the dominant ideology that, two, serves to reify into them the notion that unifying the structure requires the political dominance of the council, a mode of their self-alienation. Furthermore, as was conveyed earlier, Bell stated that about 200 years *before* 1840 the then power-basis of the princes was sundered, and even if the oath was undeveloped before in comparison to its being after, princes were still differentiated over the people while the people’s relationship to the society was subject to the determination by now not the princes, or even the oath itself, but, rather, the political agents (representatives and princes) whom together form(s) the body of the council. Before illustrating the political structure of relations, it is important to note that, despite my negative arguments, this development of the political state is surely positive, and a veritable stage in political socialization for Circassians.

Even though all members were recognized with the right to speak in councils, “in practice [it was] limited to authoritative speakers, elders over forty years (tamatas), religious authorities (effendis) and nobility (pshis)... [i.e.] those persons who embodied what Habermas calls... “representative publicness” were those best able to “virtually represent” the social totality” (Manning 610). This limitation was allowed by means of the universal right to ignore. Therefore if a person talks, or filibusters, and if the audience dislikes them or finds their perspective poor, the council dissolves to only reform for the members’ sake of listening to a new person’s orations which they merit.

Now I shall operationalize the social structure and, while doing so, articulate the dominance and subordance endowed into the relationship of the elements of this situational political state. Before doing so it is important to note the relationship between Islamic law (Sharia), which came in the late 18th century, and

adat, which is that “Islamic law tended to be observed only when it did not come into direct conflict with adat” (Henze 6). By doing so the notion of acephalous should be negated.

The people, who resided in the areas that produced the substance of the council’s discussion, accorded recognition for certain political elite as their tacit, informal representatives in the councils on the basis of their degree, on one hand, of *persuasion* in their articulation of the interests and needs of the people, showing to them their transcended state of knowledge, and, on the other, their *authority* emanating from their position in society. Both of these essential factors are themselves a product of these elite’s social situations of development, which is predominant for the elders whose status in the council is largely founded upon their social knowledge from their old age, and position assigned to them in the structure of the relations in the social formation. Further, because of the very nature of that structure’s reality, it allows the princes, irrespectively, to become privy to democracy. A genius could enter into the activity of democracy, i.e., only after one adopts the struggles and interests of the civil society and makes them one’s own, to express it totally in itself and for itself, to convey one’s identity as that of their own, does one become a general representative and a Charismatic authority. Therefore, from the formation of the consensus of the totalized determination in theory, integrating all agreed elements of the discussion, by these elite, and by its transmission from them to the mounted messenger to relay it to the people, tasking all with the realization of this, did not negate the personal autonomy of the people in their practical implementation of it. It alienated them from the process of formulating the determination. Their personal autonomy in the Circassian social structure was negated by either their age, sex (females excluded), knowledge of oratory and their oratorations of knowledge to those in councils, and, most importantly, *class*.

9. The Change of Kabarda’s Status in the World-System

In the start of the 18th century, Russia annexed the port of Azov as its prize for fighting with all of the central and eastern

European powers against the Ottomans. The Russians have a staging area now to launch invasions. What made the Russians desire to expand and, seemingly, to colonize the Caucasus now and not in the previous century, one might ask. After Russia, namely, Peter the Great, realized that itself was backwards in all spheres of society, which threatened the Tsars survival as such, a period of synthesizing the elements of Tsarist Russia with those of the west the elite considered essential to overcoming their defects occurred. As this unfolded, colonies were qualified “as one of the ways to increase Russia’s political, economic and symbolic power simultaneously. As the idea of developing inferior or uncivilized peoples became a source of imperial legitimization, Russia’s attitude towards adjacent non-Russian populations underwent a profound change” (Kreiten 215). So the process of political centralization, spawning its proto-capitalist elements to dislocate the outmoded feudal structure, into absolutism for the Tsar begins. An expression of this imperialistic desire emerging as early as the 16th century is found in Russia’s inaction in the face of the Crimean (still an Turkish vassal) invasion of Kabardia, their supposed ally.

The first regional clash of the titans of Russian and the Ottomans occurring in this century spanned from 1736-1739. At the war’s conclusion, “Kabardia... had its territory named in the treaty as a neutral buffer state” (<https://medium.com>). Further, this very same “treaty also stipulated that both the Turkish and Russian sides had the right to take Kabardian hostages and granted them the right to use force to punish the Kabardian people if they had any cause for complaint to do so”. The outcome that Kabardia expected from them joining with Russia to fight the Turkish coalition “had been on the understanding that they would be guaranteed recognition as a state” (medium). The very reality of the front stage, i.e., the new *state*, of Kabardia, and Kabardia’s backstage of having its life-source expropriated for trying to resist expropriation, means, even if mendaciously, Russia allegorically realized their desire. It appears the Ottomans found a breeding ground for the purpose of reconstituting their decrepit state apparatus.

The treaty was nothing more than a formal prolonged truce that would see conflict break out again in the late 1760s. In the interim though, Russia, as theorized earlier, expanded its complex network of fortifying the alienation of social groupings of Circassians. In that, “these fortifications cut across traditional trade and migration routes essential to the Kabardian peoples survival. They at first petitioned St. Petersburg against these actions, but when what was a tightening siege continued the Kabardians were forced to respond” (<https://medium.com>) for the field they derive their life from has been abnegated. If this situation just described was an expression of “the basic Russian approach to develop alliance relationships with as many of the Kabardian aristocracy as possible, gain their acquiescence in a permanent Russian presence in the region, and construct chains of fortified settlements” (Henze 8) then it would appear Russia seduced the Kabardian elite into a willful activity of killing their *mutual* subordinates.

War, again, would break out in “1768-74 to block Russian access to the Caucasus, but tsarist forces made further advances” (Henze 8). In the treaty of Kuchuk Kaynardji, the Ottomans surrendered claims of sovereignty on Crimea and the Caucasus, while Russia accorded, momentarily, recognition of independence to them both. In 1783, both Georgia fell under vassalship to Russia and the latter annexed Crimea, thereby instigating their exodus to Circassia. With the assimilation of the Crimeans came the consolidation of Islam.

10. Conclusion

While I stopped at the consolidation of Islam, it should be clear that it became the ideological means with which the Circassians would foster a sense of commonality, through using the notions of equality in the Koran, to instigate the revolution of 1796. If Circassian scholars seek to overcome the limitations of historical narratives created and or promoted by, and even if they are made into nationalistic dogmas of, certain governments or Nation-states, then the only way is break out of it by using the world system. As transnational corporations have shown to political

states and their constituents by their liberation from them, our intellectual liberation from the framework of nation-states is the first step to overcoming them.

For instance, Russia cannot assert that the very short “union of Kabarda and Russia” was voluntary if we connect the movement of the world throughout history into its actions. By doing so we would render concrete their assertions of voluntary unions by pointing to, not just how these statements objectify the totality of historical Kabardians and thus destroys any notion of democracy, or human subjectivity that we have come to cherish in the contemporary world, but also how this is essentially identical to America claiming it has good relations with Native Americans because of Thanksgiving. In both dissimulations, of the voluntary union and thanksgiving, of the feeble and dominated republics bearing the names of the lost tribes or the reservations (concentration camps) of those, we see nothing more than a means to pretend to the citizen of the nation, who knows *nothing really* about this history besides it is, that this nation is an allegorical moral thing. When we treat the Ottoman empire, Russia, the United States of America, Syria, Iran, and China as if they are a *singular* person, and not the sublation of *millions* who have the right to be considered, who have the categorical imperative of *being* and affecting the world around us, when we treat the actions of *their governments* as representative of the *all* their people, we already lose the ability to overcome it. Class conflict is necessary in all historical analyses to preclude this. For the reason if the majority of humans are subjugated and unconscious, as is the case now in at least the U.S.A., then only a few agents of history subsist; but if we prove to the people of the world the power of conscious, solidaristic, internationally orientated human action through these historical analysis founded on philosophy, such as *this*, the spirit of human liberation can be forged. Only through uniting the histories of the world, by transforming there outcomes into *political issues* of all subjugate people’s concerns, by acting in solidarity with all other people’s of genocide and stating this to be a universal wrong, by losing the narrowness of our struggles, can the Circassians become truly

recognized. Lastly, only by recognizing that their story, nay all of our stories, is the result of class conflict and this motion of the world, which if we do not fight will repeat itself in a new form, can we begin the process of rebuilding those societies which Imperialism destroyed and can the Circassians start the process of universal, practical recognition.

As it appears the Circassians actuation of revolutions through Islam, councils, and their force of arms, was caused more so by the increasing intensity of war and foreign interference, they could not “criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weakness and paltrinesses of their first attempts... until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: Hic Rhodus, hic salta!”. Rather their course was imposed on them, their unrealized criticism exists as our suffering of having to comprehend genocide, but take this paper as the first attempt to steer us all on the course that will allow us to force the possibility of turning back to become veritably impossible (Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* 19). We must produce the means and organize a social situation to make the humans dance for themselves once more.

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