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Pavel Ivanovich Melnikov as Writer and Ethnologist

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Abstract

This article is devoted to one of the aspects of intellectual heritage of P. Melnikov. Pavel Ivanovich Melnikov (1819-1883) was an ethnographer-fiction writer who based the descriptions on big actual and documentary material, giving it art and literary interpretation. His main ethnographic work is the "Mordva sketches" published in 1867 in the Russian Bulletin magazine, but not finished. The analysis of his publications shows that actually the ethnography of mordva had no self-sufficing value for P. I. Melnikov. Melnikov shared the idea of Slavic cultural and historical type, general for Slavophiles-pochvenniks, which during historical development assimilate Finno-Ugric tribes. The article is based on application of a comparative method, and comparison to N. Danilevsky's treatise "Russia and Europe" allowed to draw a conclusion that Melnikov and Danilevsky's approach concerning situation "of foreigners" in the Russian Empire coincided in a position concerning paganism. Traditional beliefs of the people of the Volga region were considered by them as reflection and memory of ancient Slavic paganism. The historical past of Slavs and finno-ugrs was considered by Melnikov-Pechersky as the general, and modern condition of traditional family institutes and pagan religious representations seemed to them the direct evidence of old Slavic common life. From the point of view of modern historical science Melnikov-Pechersky came to a right conclusion about the early beginning of a Salvic incorporation of the Finno-Ugric population of the Volga region. Their descriptions of life and religion of mordva keep value of the important primary source. This question occupied Danilevsky in the last turn. This study can be of interest to ethnographers and researchers of the Russian social thought of the 19th century.

Keywords: Ethnography, Cultural-historical types, Philosophy of history, Finno-Ugric tribes, Slavic tribes, Russian Empire, P.I. Melnikov-Pechersky, N.Y. Danilevsky.

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Introduction

Pavel Ivanovich Melnikov (Andrey Pechersky, 1819-1883) - is most known as the fiction writer whose main place in compositions was taken by a problem of Raskol (Sokolova, 1981). Nevertheless, in a round of the researches devoted to him, the considerable place is taken by his creativity as ethnographer not only Old Believers - as special ethnocultural group of the Russian people, but also indigenous people of the Volga region (Mikhailova & Korshunova, 2005) - first of all, mordva. The humanitarian component of his creativity, beyond all doubt, was imparted during training at the Kazan University. Melnikov's views of "foreigners" substantially go back to the humanitarian circle of KA of university in which both the classical oriental studies, and numerous representatives of the people of the East of Russia (Faizrahmanova & Kovrikova, 2017; Dmitriev, 2012) were always presented.

Methodological framework

Pavel Melnikov in the ethnographic sketches, and in the works of art, obviously showed a keen interest to traditions and various forms of spiritual life, a difference and plurality of cultures of the Volga region and Russia in general. If to speak about views of Split, a number of authors (M. M. Dunayev, V. V. Bochenkov) quite reasonably claim that judgment of the truth of life - specifically, church, - through denial of "anti-church", that is sectarians and conservatives was characteristic of P. Melnikov (Dmitriev, 2012).

Sources of similar views can quite be treated through a prism of the treatise of N. Y. Danilevsky "Russia and Europe" (Russia and Europe: look at the cultural and political relations of the Slavic world to the Romano-German world, 1869). It is known that in the treatise 4 main categories of cultural life or activity are marked out, namely:

1. Religious - "a concept of the person about the destinies as moral indivisible in the attitude towards the general destinies of mankind and the Universe, that is ... national outlook ... as the strong belief making a live basis of all moral activity of the person".
2. Cultural, understood as the relation of the person to the outside world in all variety (including esthetic).
3. Political, "comprehensive the relations of people among themselves as members of one national whole and the relations of this whole as units of the highest order to other people".
4. Socioeconomic (Niezen, 2010).

If to use N. Y. Danilevsky's typology, then in the analyzed P. I. Melnikov's works the statement is conducted, first of all, at the two first levels, partly concerning also the third. If to continue a statement of views of Danilevsky, it is possible to find the known parallels with Melnikov-Pechersky's works.

According to N. Danilevsky, the religion made the most essential, dominating maintenance of ancient Russian life; the prevailing interest of simple Russian people consisted in it. Orthodoxy assigned to Russia a role of the god-chosen people, - the third after Israel and Byzantium. As national character of Slavs is characterized as "alien to violence", it, on one hand, corresponds to a Christian ideal, on the other leads to chronic diseases - split and sects which diagnose as the persistent guarding which is not allowing changes even in external ceremonialism; and ability to religious philosophically thinking (Niezen, 2010). Parallels of judgment of Melnikov of importance of studying "foreign" (inorodets, national minority in tsarist Russia) paganisms as memory of ancient Slavic paganism with which they are uniform not only in the typological relation are obvious. Speaking about the political party of life, N. Y. Danilevsky formulated the concept of expansion of the Russian state in a classical look. Here an essential role is played by a concept of "ethnographic life", excellently the acquaintance and P. I. Melnikova. By analogy to views of

religion, Millers noted at mordva the fortress of the family patriarchal system providing as durability of conjugal ties and "mnogotyagolnost" (many impost) testifying for it to the ideal parties of family way.

Actually, the matter occupied Danilevsky in the last turn, but was very brightly shown in Melnikov-Pechersky's creativity. A. V. Karpov claimed even that P. I. Melnikov brought an essential contribution to development of the concept of assimilation by Slavs of the Finno-Ugric population of Eastern Europe, and long before "full-scale and originally scientific archaeological, anthropological, and in the latest time and the genetic researches which confirmed its justice" (Karpov, 2016). Unlike the same Gobino or F. von Ratzel's western theories, the "ethnographic element" described by P. I. Melnikov though is doomed to russification, but as it stands is a part multipurpose and the polysynthetic "Russian world" that, apparently, was also a consequence of his communication with V. I. Vladimir Ivanovich Dal (Etkind, 2013).

Results

Pavel Ivanovich Melnikov came from not well-born Nizhny Novgorod noble family, his father was the chief of horse gendarme team. At 15-year age it arrived on verbal faculty of the Kazan University, having ended it in 18 years with a rank of the candidate of university. Because of the certain incident (which is avariciously covered in sources), in 1838 Pavel Ivanovich was directed by the teacher of the Shadrinsk district school, but out of charity left in the Perm gymnasium. In 1839 it is transferred to the Nizhny Novgorod gymnasium, its first literary attempts - in a genre of traveling notes belonged by this time. In 1845-1850 he was in addition an editor of an informal part of "The Nizhny Novgorod provincial news" (The Nizhny Novgorod Government News), and often the main author of the whole issues of the newspaper. Since 1846 P. I. Melnikov is a governor of affairs of the Nizhny Novgorod provincial statistical committee, on this post it made the detailed description of the province. Since 1847 - the official by special instructions of the governor. The most part of these instructions was connected with eradication of Kerzhensky monasteries and reduction of dissenters (old believers) to a coreligionism (Yedinovertsy) for what P. I. Melnikov was awarded the order St. Annas the 3rd degree (1849). Since 1849 - the secretary of the Nizhny Novgorod temporary commission for analysis of ancient acts, published 143 ancient documents which remained in Voznesensky the Pechersky monastery. Long-term acquaintance of P. I. Melnikov to V. I. Dahl which was thought up to it by a literary pseudonym (Andrey Pechersky) also is connected with it. Since 1850 - the official of special orders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, because of the conflict with the Nizhny Novgorod governor M. A. Urusov, spent two years in Arzamas, researching religion and life of mordva. In 1852 it is appointed the chief of a statistical expedition for determination of number of Old Believers. Since 1856 it was transferred to St. Petersburg, mainly being engaged in the review of dogmatics of raskolnichy sects. Since 1858 there is more and more time and attention gave to literary creativity. In 1864 it is made in the valid councilors of state, the gentleman of an award St. Annas the 2nd degree. In 1866 it is transferred to Moscow (without salary), existing only due to literary work, and its publications included not only stories, but also historical sketches. In 1867 published in "The Russian bulletin" (Russky Vestnik) "Mordva sketches" ("Essays of Mordovians"). In 1869 was given the last big assignment - on investigation of railway routes in Vyatka, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm, Kazan and Ufa provinces. Another travel gave material for a dilogy "In the woods" (In the Forests, 1871-1874) and "On the mountains" (On the Hills, 1875-1881) in which life and customs of the Nizhny Novgorod Old Believers merchants is in details described. In the novel "In the Woods", in particular, the legend on an underwater hails Kitez is stated "utopian" (The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitez). In 1874 the high literary status of Melnikov-Pechersky when the 35 anniversary of its literary activity was solemnly celebrated was formally confirmed. In 1878 it is awarded awards St. Annas 1st degree. In resignation P. I. Melnikov was since 1881. The last years of the writer were saddened by a serious illness - paralysis and loss of memory (Kudrina & Selezneva, 2013).

Despite the philological education got by it, P. I. Melnikov left in Kazan for preparation for a professorial rank chose as a thesis "History of the Suzdal and Vladimir grand duchy" (including and Nizhny Novgorod) (Kudrina & Selezneva, 2013). In this regard he had to go in profoundly for history and to attend the corresponding classes, and also to hand over term papers, first of which it was devoted to great resettlement of the people (Kudrina & Selezneva, 2013). Exactly here its interest in "foreign tribes" which only went deep into time of office traveling across the territory from the Urals and Vyatka to Moscow roots. It is characteristic that the literary debut of P. I. Melnikov took place in a genre of traveling sketches, it were left in 1839, "Road notes on a way from the Tambov province to Siberia" (From Tambov Governorate to Siberia: The Traveller's Notes). In this composition several pages are given also to mordva. It is characteristic that already the general sounded for the Russian ethnography of the 19th century motives of assimilation here: "... Mordva kind people ... tolerant mix up with Russians from whom the Mordvin can only be distinguished on a dress and on a reprimand". However the following time ethnographic researches in the environment of mordva are mentioned in P. Melnikov's correspondence in 1852, in connection with a statistical expedition. Before appointment in team on identification of number of conservatives, he planned to go in organized by the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) and the Ministry internal put a research trip for studying of the Mordovian population of the Nizhny Novgorod, Tambov, Penza, Simbirsk, Kazan and Saratov provinces (Kudrina & Selezneva, 2013).

Researches of the Mordovian ethnography did not take the essential place in interests and P. Melnikov's priorities for the rest of life connected with the Nizhny Novgorod Volga region (Karpov, 2016). Moreover, the specialized expedition of RGO to places of compact accommodation of mordva was organized only in 1877, its head - V. N. Maynov - for the first time conducted both complex ethnographic and anthropological researches. It is natural that P. I. Melnikov had no contacts and in the environment of the academic finno-ugric studies; apparently, he did not know also local languages (Karpov, 2016).

As usual in the literary environment of the 19th century, P. I. Melnikov presented "Mordva sketches" for public in the Russian Bulletin magazine which was defined by own edition as "literary and political". In other words, the author was addressed to wide educated audience at once, without becoming isolated in the highly specialized edition which in Russia of that time there were units. "Sketches" were published consistently during 1867 in three issues of "The Russian bulletin", but the publication was not finished. Appeared in the last release (Volume 71, the issue 10) that "to be continued", but it so never also was (Karpov, 2016).

Discussion

Still contemporaries often characterized P. I. Melnikov-Pechersky as "ethnographer-fiction writer". In this regard paramount is a consideration of a question of applicability to his ethnographic compositions of definition "scientific". So, in M. V. Shaldenkova's review independence of a position of P. Melnikov among the authors writing about mordva as he denied the things which are unanimously stated by others is emphasized but also reported the facts which did not have analogs (Shaldenkova, 2013). This phenomenon has especially literary character, showing specifics of humanitarian processes of the first half of the 19th century when the Russian writers addressed "internal" non-European forms of culture that gradually resulted in understanding of plurality and an originality of forms of life including spiritual. At the same time P. I. Melnikov from him can be defined by "Mordva sketches" as "the founder of folklore and ethnographic studying of the Mordovian people, at the same time put tradition of consideration of the corresponding material in the context of the Russian-Mordovian contacts and cultural interrelations" (Karpov, 2016). Literary critics concentrated on its novelistic heritage, and historians treat the materials collected by it in a historical context.

Identification of common features in culture of Russians and mordva was one of the major tendencies in "Mordva sketches". Actually, the published text of "Sketches" comes to the end with the following maxim: "In general the ancient Mordovian belief had, apparently, strong likeness with pagan belief of the Russian Slavs if was not same. At Russians, nine hundred years which adopted Christianity it was absolutely forgotten, but its remains remained in different ceremonies from which many difficult or at all cannot be explained. Mordva is baptized not so long ago, and still remembers ancient belief. On the religious practices which remained at mordva and according to legends about their religion it is possible to explain many Russian customs and ceremonies". It quite keeps within the general method of ethnography of the 19th century - descriptive. In this regard there is an important question of reliability of the data provided by Melnikov-Pechersky as his descriptions circles of Old Believers as it was obvious at his life, extremely unilaterally and are tendentious. Nevertheless, many modern writers consider descriptions of the Mordovian religion nearly the ultimate truth. The characteristic example of similar approach is presented in R. A. Saberov's article (Saberov, 2015).

Conclusion

P. I. Melnikov built "Mordva sketches" as the literary work having conceptual character. The major keynote on which the structure of the text - the proof of russification of the people and its rapprochement with Russians and adoption of orthodox belief is founded. Actually, "Sketches" are entered by the characteristic period: "From all people of the so-called chudsky or Finnish tribe living in Russia any so did not become Russified now as mordva ... Mordva already absolutely almost forgot the language and only in some few villages of the woman keep still the remains of the Mordovian dress, but also that meets less frequently every year. The numerous Mordovian tribe of Erzyans also half became Russified". Many researchers paid attention to this passage, but it must be kept in mind that P. I. Melnikov honestly explained that it belongs, first of all, to Teryukhan living in the Nizhny Novgorod province. Really, the Teryukhen first of all lost own traditions (Karpov, 2016).

And in "Road notes", and in "Mordva sketches" P. I. Melnikov could not pass by division of the Mordovian people into two subethnoses - Moksha (Mokshas) and Erzyans (Erzya) which he called "tribes". It must be kept in mind, however, that author's feature is concentration on "study of local lore" (local history in modern terminology), that is only those features of those tribes which are connected with the past of Nizhny Novgorod were considered. The question of Christianization of mordva fully in "Sketches" is not resolved.

Recommendations

The material of the article is interesting to specialists who are engaged in Russian and Eurasian studies, history of the East and the foreign policy of the Russian Empire, historiography and history of Oriental.

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