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Research paper

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LITTLE-KNOWN PAGES OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF F.I. GOREPEKIN

Abstract. The article provides little-known details from the life of the researcher of writing systems, folklore and ethnography of the Ingush people – Foma Ivanovich Gorepekin. Based on the available sources, documents of archival fonds and materials of the Gorepekin family archive, the author attempts to clarify some gaps in his biography: origin, exact dates of life and death, information about awards and “exposures”, etc. The author has already carried out work on collecting material and publishing articles, as well as a published a facsimile of his works in 2006. However, there have been no other studies of F.I. Gorepekin’s scientific work in Russian historiography, which explains the relevance of our study. The newly discovered facts provide an opportunity to dispel some myths related to his life path and his academic interests. Some of the materials included in this article are first introduced into scientific circulation and shed light on many little-known pages of the researcher’s life. We pay special attention to issues related to his scientific research and negative assessments by academician N.Ya. Marr and his colleagues. During this period, the theory of N. Ya. Marr was strong, and in this context, the work of a little-known Caucasian scholar from Vladikavkaz caused only annoyance and irritation. The works of F.I. Gorepekin were not given due attention by the staff of the Japhetic Institute, to whom they were sent for expert assessment. Analysis of the material allows us to conclude about the reasons for their claims and negative assessment of his works. The introduction of original details about F.I. Gorepekin allows us to see how politics and power could ruin the fates of researchers, regardless of their real contribution to science. The biography of Foma Ivanovich provides a balanced characterization of that period through the fate of one individual.

During the study, the method of biographical research was applied.

Keywords: F.I. Gorepekin; N.Ya. Marr; history; ethnography; archaeology; local history; Caucasus; Ingush; Chechens.

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Исследовательская статья

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МАЛОИЗВЕСТНЫЕ СТРАНИЦЫ ЖИЗНИ Ф.И. ГОРЕПЕКИНА

Аннотация. В статье приводятся малоизвестные детали из жизни исследователя письменности, фольклора и этнографии ингушского и чеченского народа – Фомы Ивановича Горепекина. С опорой на письменные источники, документы архивных фондов и материалы семейного архива Горепекиных мы решили прояснить некоторые детали его биографии: происхождение, точные даты жизни и смерти, сведения о награждениях и «разоблачениях» и т.д. Автором уже была проведена работа по сбору материала и публикации статей, а также подготовлено факсимильное издание его трудов в 2006 г. Однако других исследований, касающихся научной деятельности Ф.И. Горепекина, в отечественной историографии не предпринималось, чем и обусловлена актуальность данной публикации. Вновь открывшиеся факты дают возможность развеять некоторые мифы, связанные с его жизненным путем и научными интересами. Часть материалов, вошедших в эту статью, впервые вводится в научный оборот и проливает свет на малоизвестные страницы жизни исследователя. Особое внимание уделяется вопросам, связанным с его научными изысканиями и негативными оценками академика Н.Я. Марра и его коллег. В указанный период была сильна теория Н.Я. Марра, и на его фоне работы малоизвестного кавказоведа из Владикавказа вызывали только досаду и раздражение. Трудам Ф.И. Горепекина не придавалось должного внимания сотрудниками Яфетического института, которым в качестве экспертов автор пересылал их для оценки. Анализ материалов позволяет сделать вывод о том, чем были обоснованы их претензии и с чем была связана негативная оценка его трудов. Ввод в научный оборот новых данных о Ф.И. Горепекине позволяет увидеть, как политика и власть могли рушить судьбы исследователей, не считаясь с их реальным вкладом в науку. Биография Фомы Ивановича позволяет дать взвешенную характеристику того периода через судьбу ученого.

В работе над статьей использован метод биографического исследования.

Ключевые слова: Ф.И. Горепекин; Н.Я. Марр; история; этнография; краеведение; Кавказ; ингуши; чеченцы.

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F.I. Gorepekin. 1926, Essentuki. Photo by V.M. Chuguevsky

Foma Ivanovich Gorepekin (07.07.1868 — 04.01.1943) is one of the unreservedly forgotten ethnographers. According to his autobiography, written in 1929, he was born in the village of Essentukskaya on July 7, 1874 in the family of the village teacher Gorepekin Ivan Petrovich and the noblewoman Miguzova Natalia Alekseevna.

The Archive of the St. Petersburg branch of the Academy of Sciences stores his biography, from which we learn that in 1891 Foma Ivanovich graduated from the Vladikavkaz 4-grade city Nikolaev School, but since there were no higher education institutions in the Tersk region, in 1893 he entered the Tiflis Teachers' Institute. However, due to lack of funds, he was forced to return home. After the opening of the Vladikavkaz Forestry School in 1894, he was among the first enrolled students and after two and a half years later, when he was already 22 years old, he graduated from it and worked in various positions in forestry [2. p. 126]. Immediately after graduation, he began an active social and academic life.

At the end of the 19th century, the general level of education of the people of multinational Vladikavkaz was very low. The local society suggested to open a Sunday school of literacy which will be available for everyone. The school was opened in 1896, and both adults and children

attended it. Gorepekin became one of the teachers of this school¹. Later he participated in opening of a public library in Vladikavkaz. Gorepekin was also one of the initiators of the creation of the Tersk regional Museum and personally participated in collecting donations for the construction of the museum building. For the next 18 years, he was a full and honorary member of the Terek Statistical Committee, the only institution that conducted research in the region. On behalf of the Regional Statistical Committee, F.I. Gorepekin drew up a plan of Vladikavkaz and a map of the location of mountain mounds and antiquities of the Tersk region. He was a member of the mountain club in Vladikavkaz. The club initiated a creation of the Guide to the mountains of the Tersk region by Gorepekin².

However, the most significant part of his life F. I. Gorepekin devoted to the study of the Ingush and Chechen peoples. Basing on the collected materials, he wrote many works on linguistics, religion, folklore, the general culture of the peoples of the Caucasus, archeology, geography, history (eleven handwritten volumes).

His large contribution to the study of the Ingush people during his lifetime received high recognition among caucasiologists. His works were used by Bashir Kerimovich Dalgat, a researcher of Caucasus, an ethnographer, who made a significant contribution to the study of the Ingush people; his daughter, U. Dalgat, a folklorist, caucasiologist; Zhantieva Dilyara Gireevna, a literary critic, translator, Doctor of Philology; Nikolai Feofanovich Yakovlev, a Soviet linguist-caucasiologist, specialist in theoretical and applied linguistics; Anatoly Nestorovich Genko, a Russian and Soviet linguist, caucasiologist, historian, etc.

Gorepekin also received recognition from the authorities. In August 1918, his manuscripts “were handed over for review and report at the Congress of Deputies from all the North Caucasian Mountain Peoples, to the commissar and chairman of the Terek Republic Y. Pashkovsky and the Commissar of Public Education Yakov Markus. After presenting the submitted materials, the deputies (60 members) awarded Gorepekin F. I. with the honorary title of “Nahaa-sidar”, i.e. “educator of the Ingush people”. After the session, a 13-days unrest broke out in the city, and the manuscripts, after being passed from hands to hands, were found by the author only in 1920 [2, pp. 127–128].

In 1922, for the first alphabet, a school primer and an encyclopedic dictionary (five thousand words), the authorities of the Mountain Republic honored F. I. Gorepekin a prize of 1500 rubles in gold and accepted the primer for publication. With the transition to Romanization, the publication of this primer was postponed.

Unfortunately, during the life of Foma Ivanovich, only a few works were published. The guide “On the mountains of the Tersk region” (1910) is a unique work intended both for tourists interested in the Caucasus region and for researchers. He believed that the tourist routes he worked out would attract the attention of anthropologists and archaeologists, since he provided detailed comments on toponymy, archeology, antiquities of the region; the article “Maga-Yerda” (pagan patron god of the Ingush people) was published in the newspaper “Terskiye Vedomosti” in 1909³. The article discusses in detail the cult of the deity Maga-Yerda and all the rituals associated with it. The celebration, which took place twice a year — during the winter and summer solstices — in the mountainous Ingush village of Salgi, is described in detail. Gorepekin’s article sheds light on the ancient pagan beliefs of

1. PFA RAS. F. 142. Inv. 2. File 27. L. 34.

2. PFA RAS. F. 142. Inv. 2. File 27. L. 36.

3. Gorepekin F. I. “Maga-yerda” (pagan patron god of the Ingush) // Terskiye vedomosti. 1909. № 81, 82, 84, 86.

АЛФАВИТ ОБЩЕГО ИНГУШКО-ЧЕЧЕНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА, на основах древне-
 -мировой письменности с формацией латинского типа и особых
 знаков, свойственных ингушско-чеченскому языку. ГАИМК
 Кабинет Н.Я. МАРРА
 № 1

Аа Аа, ЕЕ Ее, ЭЭ Ээ, Оо Оо, Öö Öö, Уу Уу,
 Üü Üü, Yy Yy, Ii Ii, Jj Jj, Вь Вь, Сс Сс,
 Сс Сс, Dd Dd, Vv Vv, Ff Ff, Гг Гг, Zz Zz, Zz Zz,
 Hh Hh, Kk Kk, Kk Kk, Kk Kk, Kk Kk,
 Лл Лл, Мм Мм, Nn Nn, Pp Pp, Pp Pp,
 Tt Tt, Tt Tt, Xx Xx, Xx Xx, Xx Xx,
 Зз Зз, Zz Zz, Zz Zz, Лл Лл, Ss Ss, Ss Ss,
 Чч Чч, Чч Чч, Rr Rr, Vv Vv, бб

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= 45 знаков. Из них 26 из латинского алфавита, 17 новых, не свойственных латинскому, 2 измененных латинских / а, г /.

Для практического употребления впоследствии можно сократить алфавит на 5 знаков: *h, k, x, v, б* при условии, если сама-собой потеряется разница этих звуков.

Для обозначения наглядного отличия разницы звуков и знаков - приняты особые показатели, соединенные непосредственно с буквой:

ç, ç, h, j, k, p, t, x, ç, k, ç, k, ç, x, ç, ç, ç, ç, v, ö, ü

Примеры письма: *hax, öm, üm, ha, ho, hu, hax-d, çz, çzçmo, peyda, çora, korm, doça, çaxt, çalt, çeta, çharim, çi, çel, çok, ça, ça, çah, ça, miv, miv, çaz, çoha, çaha, ja-ç, ju-ç, jo-ç, je-ç, ji-ç.*

На этом алфавите готовится специальный букварь ингушско-чеченского языка, также словари, записи народных сказаний, грамматика и др. *правила правописания.*

Этнограф Кавказа, исследователь инг.-чеченского народа, Нахаа-си-дар
 3/У-1929г. Владикавказ, /Ф.И. ГОРЕПЕКИН/
 "Дом крестьянина - ингуша". *Ф.И. Горепекин*

the Ingush people, which, after the adoption of Islam, gradually vanished from the life of the society. The material that we have thanks to F. I. Gorepekin tells about the life of the Ingush people in the recent past. The work provides a valuable overview of all the stages of the festival and its significance for the Ingush society of the period under study. In this context, we would like to add that a lot of material on the Ingush language, history and ethnography of the people are well covered in the works of F. I. Gorepekin. His works aroused the well-deserved interest of colleagues and supporters. Some of his manuscripts were kept in the archive of the Regional Mountain Research Institute in Rostov-on-Don, but during the Second World War almost the entire archive, and the materials themselves, were lost [4, p. 131]. However, their existence is evidenced by the materials in the article by D. G. Zhantieva “On the heroic epic of the Highlanders of the North Caucasus” [6, p. 118], written as part of research related to her period of study (1927-1931) at the graduate school of the North Caucasus Mountain Historical and Linguistic Research Institute named after S. M. Kirov. D. G. Zhantieva in her article refers to one of his works – Gorepekin. *Ingush People*. Vol. VI. Book 2. After analyzing the works of F. I. Gorepekin, she considered them a serious scientific source and used them in her research.

Later, the famous caucasiologist N. F. Yakovlev in his publications also actively references the works of F. I. Gorepekin, which is confirmed by the materials stored in the St. Petersburg branch of the Archive of the Academy of Sciences in the N. Ya. Marr Foundation⁴. A caucasiologist and linguist Nikolai Mikhailovich Dryagin in the article “Analysis of several Karachai legends about the struggle of narts with emmech in the light of the Japhetic theory” published in 1930 in the sixth issue of the Japhetic Collection, writes “*The rich materials collected by the modest and tireless local historian F. I. Gorepekin, unfortunately, were not published, and were submitted to the Japhetic Institute in 1925 in the form of a manuscript. The author of this article has the personal permission of the compiler to refer to the materials collected by him*” [5, p. 24].

The archival materials, revealed by us and published in 2006, allow to judge about the value of information preserved thanks to Gorepekin about the language and writing system, about the folklore of the Ingush people and their history. This information is based on the analysis of the works of researchers who studied the Ingush people. From his point of view, the weak and strong sides of the studied aspect are noted, whether it is language, history, ethnography or folklore materials. Collected field material allows to give a balanced assessment of his work. It should also be noted that folklore materials concerning the Nart epic are the most cited to date. We should also mention that first Ingush alphabet was compiled by Gorepekin.

In the early 1930s, Gorepekin faced some difficulties in his life. The researcher was forced to leave Vladikavkaz and move to Essentuki. Marina Evgenievna Burina (Chuguevskaya), the great-granddaughter of Foma Ivanovich, said that from her father’s stories she remembers that Gorepekin began to experience harassment from the authorities, both in academic and private life, as a result of which Foma Ivanovich and his family left Vladikavkaz in a hurry for Essentuki. However, even after returning to his homeland, he continued to hide, fearing for his family, as many of his relatives were considered unreliable, some were shot, some were exiled⁵.

4. PFA RAS. F. 800. Inv. 6. File 574.

5. Shot, dispossessed, exiled. Electronic resource: <http://combcossack.opk.me/viewtopic.php?id=787> (accessed 23.03.2022).

After moving, Foma Ivanovich's life changed. The policy of the new government and changing ideological attitudes greatly influenced not only the health of the scholar, but also his creative potential. He did not produce new works and lived with the family of his youngest daughter Tatiana. It was difficult for a man with such intellectual potential and vital energy to feel unwanted in the society. Despite the fact that he undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the study of the Ingush and Chechen peoples, his works were forgotten. At the end of his life, he sent letters to the Academy of Sciences and the central government bodies of the USSR, hoping that he would be fully supported in the publication of his works. His requests were denied. Gorepkin became blind in the last years of his life and did not even receive a pension. This situation made him depressed since he had worked and supported himself and his family all his life, but at an old age he was left without livelihood. Foma Ivanovich died on January 4, 1943 and was buried in Essentuki.

His life and academic work for various reasons have still not been comprehensively studied. New details of the biography of Foma Ivanovich were revealed in 2020. After reading the article in the "Ethnographic Review", the great-great-granddaughter of Foma Ivanovich, Darina Alexandrovna Burina, contacted the author of the article. This marked a new stage of studying the biography of F. I. Gorepekin. Darina said that her mother, Gorepekin's great-granddaughter, Marina Evgenyevna Burina, lives in St. Petersburg. Her father was the son of Foma Ivanovich's daughter Tatiana. Foma Ivanovich married Polyakova Sofia Grigorievna, a woman from a wealthy noble family. They had seven children, three of whom died in childhood, and four reached adulthood: Valentina, Vladimir, Lydia, Tatiana. Thanks to Tatiana's granddaughter Marina new details from the scholar's life were revealed.

In this article, for the first time we publish his photo and several documents from the Gorepekins' family archive. We have also learned that Foma Ivanovich in his autobiography in 1929 hid information about his exact date of birth (07.07.1868), his origin and education. The available materials of the family archive indicate that F.I. Gorepekin comes from the Cossack class. Foma Ivanovich's grandfather Peter was a military foreman, and his brother Mikhail was the ataman of the village of Essentukskaya, an influential figure [7, p. 625]. He owned a house in the center of the village, which currently houses the administration of the city of Essentuki⁶. Foma Ivanovich's mother and wife belonged to the nobility and were educated women. During the studied period, it was unsafe for him to write about his family's origin, especially since close relatives had already died from political repression. Realizing the extent of the threat to his family, Gorepkin also concealed some facts of his life.

According to his descendants, F. I. Gorepekin studied at the University of Tartu, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences. In 1893-1918 this university was called "Yurievsky", and the education was conducted in Russian [12, p. 858]. Unfortunately, we do not possess documents confirming this information, but the archive materials indicate that after graduating from the Forestry School in Vladikavkaz, he worked in various forest service positions in the Tersk region for the next 23 years, starting as an assistant forester and working his way up to the forest inspector of the Mountain Republic. The archival materials that we have and letters of Gorepkin to the Academy of Sciences confirm that for many years he was a corresponding member of the Tiflis and Yuriev Botanical Gardens. Taking into consideration the remoteness of Vladikavkaz from Tartu, we can assume that if he had not been known in the circles of Tartu botanists, he would not have been offered this position. During that historical period,

6. The administration of the city of Essentuki. Electronic resource: yandex.ru/maps/org/administratsiya_goroda_yessentuki_otdel_priyema_grazhdan/24458989732/?ll=42.858119%2C44.046988&z=15 (accessed 12.03.2022)

there was close interaction between the Tiflis and Yuriev Botanical Gardens. The Caucasian flora was an important part of his research.

The biography of F. I. Gorepekin still has a lot of lacunas, but thanks to copies of documents provided by M.E. Burina, some of the answers have been found. Among the photographs and papers there is a certificate that in 1928 F.I. Gorepekin was a scientific employee of the Society of Local Lore at the Chechen Department of Public Education.



Certificate from the Gorepekins' personal archive

As we know, at that historical stage, the formation and strengthening of Soviet power in the regions was underway. The activity of the North Caucasian regional research institutions for the ethnographic study of the highlanders of the region has intensified [13, p. 12]. There was a lack of qualified scientific personnel in the national regions of the country. In this regard, specialists who had work experience were sent there. One of them was Foma Ivanovich⁷.

Another document dated June 16, 1927 informs that he was invited to work at the North Caucasus Regional Mountain Research Institute in Rostov-on-Don:

"The Board asks you to cooperate in the research of the Institute, the results of which will be published in separate books in the near future. Printed publications of the Institute are paid at the rate of 100 rubles per printed sheet of original works. If you and other

7. PFA. F. 142. Op. 2. D. 27. L. 64.

specified researchers agree with our proposal, the Board asks you and the above-mentioned researchers to complete the questionnaire attached in 2 copies and send it to the Institute.

*With regards, Deputy Director of the Research Institute – V.N. Vershkovsky et al.*⁸

The creation of such an educational institution was dictated by the needs of modern times. After the strengthening of Soviet power, the state faced the necessity of organizing scientific, educational and cultural work. To achieve this, specialists, who were able to solve issues of cultural construction, were involved. There was an urgent need for professionals to train young researchers. To achieve the set goals in the Caucasus, the North Caucasus Regional Mountain Research Institute of Local Lore was established. It received full organizational registration in March-April 1927 and was located in Rostov-on-Don. The Institute was organized to study the natural and economic situation, ethnography, history, language, literature and national cultures of the peoples of the North Caucasus. The training of researchers, the organization of regional studies departments and the solution of a number of other research issues were carried out there⁹. Unfortunately, we possess no information concerning the work of F.I. Gorepekin or cooperation with the Institute, and can only assume that he worked there.

At the same time, we know that already in 1929 he had serious financial and health problems. This forced him to write letters to various institutions of the USSR Academy of Sciences with a request to assign him a pension. Gorepekin sent letters with the same text to several institutions of the country – to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography to Academician E. Karsky (PFA RAS) and the State Academy of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK). The works of F. I. Gorepekin were also known in other academic institutions. Thus, in the published Works of the Institute of Linguistic Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, there is a mention of his works: “Minutes No. 3 of the meeting of the Institute’s Council dated March 21, 1925. N.Ya. Marr handed over F.I. Gorepekin’s manuscript on the North Caucasian and Celtic parallels and on the Ingush language. These works were reviewed by researcher of Ingush people A.N. Genko” [1, p. 125]. Unfortunately, we do not have the text of the review and therefore cannot exactly tell anything about content of this document. At the same time, it seems that A.N. Genko’s extensive knowledge of the Ingush people allowed him to give an objective assessment of the Gorepekin’s works.

Letters addressed to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography were discovered and introduced to public [11], while letters to the GAIMC were unknown. The search of other material with the help of our colleagues is still in progress. For example, the most recent discovery has been made by Olga Vladimirovna Grigorieva, a researcher at the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In the archive collections, she found a list of works and biographical information about the life of F.I. Gorepekin and a letter from the prominent archaeologist, ethnographer and museologist Alexander Alexandrovich Miller concerning the works of F.I. Gorepekin. A.A. Miller was a member of the Archaeological Commission from 1918, and on August 13, 1919 – a member of the RAIMC (GAIMC), where he held various executive positions. He headed a permanent unit of the GAIMK – the North Caucasus Expedition, which dealt with his research work. This expedition became “the leading school of field and cabinet work in the Russian archeology of the 1920s – early 1930s” [9, pp. 8-9]. This was likely the reason why Foma Ivanovich

8. Gorepekins’ Personal Archive

9. The State Archive of the Stavropol Krai. F. P–1260. Inv. 6. File 1. L. 1-30.

decided to write a letter to the GAIMK, believing that its employees were able to give an objective assessment of his work. However, quite the opposite happened. A.A. Miller writes:

“Upon returning the workbook of Tovarisch Gorepekin, I find it preferable for the competent persons to directly familiarize with his manuscript, which in the workbook are named mainly only by titles. I personally will not be able to do it this year, since I have no plans visiting Vladikavkaz this summer.

The general impression that his workbook makes is definitely negative, at least in terms of broad generalizations and scientific hypotheses, not to mention a number of completely absurd statements. However, it is very possible that in terms of the actual material, some manuscripts may be interesting.

Nevertheless, given that Gorepekin has been working in the region for a long time as a researcher and is currently apparently in extreme need, it would be very desirable to request a lifetime pension for this local historian after familiarizing with his manuscripts.

*A. Miller July 10, 1930*¹⁰.

The pension, according to his descendants, was never assigned, and both he and his wife continued to live with their daughter Tatiana.

In his letter in 1929, he wrote: *“I, as the author of the mentioned works, hope that the central government bodies of the USSR will provide full support to the publication of the submitted works, and that there will also be support for the development of interest among researchers of the USSR to continue comprehensive ethnographic and archaeological studies in the Caucasus, as well as that I personally, until the end of my life, with the support of the government, won't starve and will have an opportunity to live and work further for the benefit of science, for the cultural benefit of the Ingush people, i.e. the people to whom my best strength, thoughts, health and joys of life were devoted, and whom, since the announcement of this, I have been putting forward in the eyes of the whole world from insignificance and infamy to the stage of world fame and glory, as a fragment of the common ancestors of the peoples of the white race.”*

*Ethnographer, archaeologist, local historian of the Caucasus,
Researcher of the Ingush-Chechen people,
the Educator of these peoples
'Nahaa sidar' F.I. Gorepekin*¹¹.

The letter was forwarded from the MAE to the Director of the Japhetic Institute, Academician N.Y. Marr, who wrote the following:

“F.I. Gorepekin has not and cannot have anything to do with N.Y. Marr, nor with the Japhetic Institute... That is why, I think, this note was forwarded to the MAE by mistake, and is now being returned.

Director of the Japhetic Institute Academician N.Ya. Marr.” [11, p. 8].

Miller, like Marr, gave a very critical assessment of Gorepekin's works. One of the possible reasons for this may be the fact that at that time Academician Marr had a very strong support from the academic elite of the country. Some of his theories were recognized as state-important and fit into the outline of general policy. I.V. Stalin gave a speech at the XVI Congress of the CPSU (b), which also contained some provisions from the theory of N.Ya. Marr, which played a decisive role in the canonization of his theories. N.Y. Marr's theory

10. AT IIMK RAS, RO. F. 2. Inv. 1. 1930. File 115. L. 52.

11. PFA RAS. F. 142. Inv. 2. File 27. L. 17.

occupied a prominent position in Soviet linguistics, despite the criticism of foreign scholars who considered it untenable. Many Soviet scientists, because of ideological attitudes and fear for their future, had to agree with the existing state of affairs. However, there were also those who did not support the theory. Among them was F.I. Gorepekin. In his letter to the Academy of Sciences in 1929, he criticized the works of N.Y. Marr: “The question of the Japhetids no longer arises since 1918, as well as the need for the theory of Academician Marr when the results of his research in the Caucasus were revealed” [11, p. 18].

Marr definitely could not agree with the arguments of the provincial researcher who criticized him. At that time, Marr was one of the most influential figures in Soviet science, vice-president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, head of two major academic institutions, a member of the VTSIK and the VTSSPS, holder of many other positions [8, p. 498]. We believe that it is the criticism of Marr that later became the cause of persecution and bias in the assessment of Gorepekin’s works. He was unfairly forgotten.

Noteworthy, the prominent Soviet linguist E.D. Polivanov made a critical report on Marr’s theory, after which he was arrested and shot. A similar fate befell other opponents of N.Ya. Marr – G.K. Danilov, V.B. Aptekar, S.N. Bykovsky, etc.¹²

It should be recalled that “marrism” was supported by the government. Stalin himself supported the new doctrine and became one of its patrons. Any negative assessments of the new teaching caused harsh criticism from the academic elite. Obviously, not all of F.I. Gorepekin’s ideas had a solid evidence base – in those times, it was quite common. Marr’s theory itself confirms this. The largest expert in the history of Russian linguistics Vladimir Mikhailovich Alpatov writes: “The ‘new doctrine of language’ was a scientific myth, because it originates from the studies of a particular scholar who began to interpret his individual observations expansively and uncritically; the theory claimed to completely replace the previous paradigm (of the Indo-European linguistics) ...” [3, p. 26].

Theory of N.Ya. Marr does not stand up to constructive criticism, as it is not supported by concrete data. Many linguists believe that N.Ya. Marr’s Japhetic theory and the Japhetic Institute established by him became the reason of hindering the development of Soviet linguistics because they were not backed by specific data. However, N.Ya. Marr was considered a prominent researcher for a long time.

Let us return to Gorepekin. The materials that we have obtained from various sources are not a full-fledged part of his professional biography. The fate of his works, which in 1918 were presented to the deputies of the Congress and which were highly appreciated, is unknown. We can tell about their existence only by the list that we have. From the archival documents identified, we can see the evidence that the Member of the Royal Academy of London, Sir Richmond, who studied the languages of the Aryan root in the Caucasus, was familiar with the works of Gorepekin. He writes: “*His attempts at seeking help from the ruling authorities in the province did were unsuccessful; nevertheless, the author continued to work tirelessly, and his work is truly academic in nature. These circumstances encourage the author to send his works to the Royal Academy of London, rather than publish them in his own country. The author’s works comprise up to 6 thousand pages and will partly require a special Ingush printed font.*”¹³ A search is being conducted in foreign archives, but so far the forwarded materials have not been found.

12. V.M. Alpatov. Marr, marrism, Stalinism. Available at: <http://www.ihst.ru/projects/sohist/papers/alp93sp.htm>

13. PFA RAS. F. 800. Op. 6. D. 154. L. 6-6 vol.

F.I. Gorepekin was a keen researcher and an expert of the life of the peoples of the Caucasus. Undoubtedly, his ideas were not always understood and supported by his contemporaries, but these ideas can be useful and interesting even for modern researchers.

In conclusion, we note that studying and analyzing the life of the scholar, we see how devoted he was to his profession and the region, in which he lived, and the peoples, among whom he spent many years of his academic career. The main part of his works is devoted to the Ingush people, about whom very few works were written at that historical period. Materials about the Ingush people, which Gorepekin introduced into science, still occupy a significant place in Ingush studies.

He conducted his studies in a very difficult historical period, when political repression was fatal for many researchers. Reading the work “Repressed Ethnographers”, it becomes clear how complicated it was to engage in scientific research at that time. Perhaps the works of F.I. Gorepekin would have been more popular if he had been a supporter of academician N.Ya. Marr, who at that time was a recognized scholar, while all those who directly or indirectly criticized his position were ostracized or physically destroyed.

Introduction of new details about the life of F.I. Gorepekin allows us to see how politics and power could ruin the fate of researchers, regardless of their actual contribution to science. The biography of Foma Ivanovich provides a balanced characterization of that period through the fate of the individual.

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