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COLLECTIVE SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF BRITISH ICS OFFICERS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The article is devoted to the collective self-identification of the officers of the Indian Civil Service, using content analysis and a comparative method.

This article aims to reveal the issue of collective self-identification of British ISC officers, their ideology, daily life, and how they saw themselves and others. Under British Rule of India, the role of the connection between the people and the rulers, the symbol of visible power on the ground, was entrusted to the officers of the Indian Civil Service (ICS).

Therefore, the article considers the questions of the features of the British character and their sense of self-identification. Moreover, since the officers underwent a serious selection (age limit (from 20 to 24 years old), passing an open exam, two years of training in Britain), only the best of the best could be accepted into the service, which influenced the sense of collective self-identification of officers, their self-awareness elite among elites and their attitude towards the local population.

Key words: British Empire, district districts, administration, Indian Civil Service officers, self-identification.

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Соғысаралық кезеңдегі Үнді Азаматтық қызметі британдық офицерлерінің ұжымдық өзін-өзі идентификациялауы

Мақала контент-талдау мен салыстырмалы-тарихи әдісті қолдана отырып, колониялық Үнді азаматтық қызметі офицерлерінің ұжымдық өзін-өзі идентификациялауына арналған.

Бұл мақаланың мақсаты – Үнді азаматтық қызметі офицерлерінің (ICS) ұжымдық өзін-өзі идентификациялауы, олардың идеологиясын, күнделікті өмірін және өздерін және басқаларды қалай көретінін қарастыру. Үндістанда британдық билеу кезінде халық пен билеушілер арасын байланыстырушы звено, жергілікті жердегі биліктің символы қызметі Үндістанның азаматтық қызметінің (ICS) офицерлеріне жүктелді. Британдық мінез-құлықтың ерекшеліктері, олардың өзін-өзі идентификациялау сезімдері мәселелері қарастырылады. Офицерлер күрделі іріктеуден (20 жастан 24 жасқа дейін), ашық емтиханнан (Ұлыбританияда екі жыл дайындықтан өту) өткізілді, қызметке тек жақсылардың жақсысы қабылданды, бұл өз кезегінде офицерлердің ұжымдық өзін-өзі идентификациялауына, олардың өзін элита ішіндегі элита ретінде тануына және жергілікті халыққа қатынасына айқын әсер етті.

Түйін сөздер: Британ империясы, дистрикт-округтер, басқару, Үндістанның азаматтық қызметі офицерлері, өзін-өзі идентификациялау.

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Коллективная самоидентификация британских офицеров ИГС в межвоенный период

Статья посвящена коллективной самоидентификации офицеров колониальной Индийской Гражданской Службы с применением контент-анализа и сравнительно-исторического метода.

В данной статье ставится задача раскрыть проблему коллективной самоидентификации британских офицеров ИГС, их мировоззрения, повседневной жизни, того, как они видели себя и других. При британском правлении Индией роль связующего звена между народом и правителями, символа видимой власти на местах была возложена на офицеров Индийской государственной службы (ИГС).

В связи с этим в статье рассматриваются вопросы особенностей характера британцев и их смысл самоидентификации. Более того, поскольку офицеры проходили серьезный отбор (возрастной ценз (от 20 до 24 лет), сдача открытого экзамена, двухлетнее обучение в Британии), то на службу могли быть приняты только лучшие из лучших, что повлияло на смысл коллективной самоидентификации офицеров, их элитарное самосознание среди элит и их отношение к местному населению.

Ключевые слова: Британская империя, дистрикт-округа, управление, офицеры Индийской Гражданской Службы, самоидентификация.

Introduction

Civil Service is an important feature of any system of government – imperial, colonial or democratic. Civil servants were the link between the people and the rulers. Being close to people, they often understood and solved their problems. Civil servants were considered the government itself because they were the visible symbol of the power and represented it locally (Arora, 1996: 11). Under the British Rule of India, this responsibility was in the hands of the Indian Civil Service.

Some scholars writing about the Indian Civil Service note the officers' sense of collective self-identification and their awareness of being an elite among elites. This work aims to study the identity of the ICS officers, their ideology, everyday life, and how they saw themselves and those around them. Consider British imperialism through the eyes of those people who represented British Empire in India.

The training of future colonial administrators began from a young age. From their school days, they absorbed the idea of the greatness of the empire and their role in its ruling. At the end of the 19th century, British education changed, and the idea of raising a Christian gentleman whose duty was to serve the Crown and Britain came to the fore. The Victorian society of that time raised the idea of Christian duty and the ethics of gentlemanly behaviour to a pedestal. As a result, future colonial administrators had an unwavering belief in their moral superiority. Most of the British imperialists came from the upper class of society, whose main occupation was administration. Accustomed to ruling and governing at home, they had a widely used practice in the colonies (Porter, 2005: 39).

The most common positions in the Indian Civil Service were district officer and revenue collector, but service officers were represented in all government areas and along the entire vertical of power. Since the service in the ICS was considered prestigious, they prepared for admission to it from childhood.

To understand what he thought about, what he breathed and how the Indian Civil Service officer

perceived the imperial world and his place in it, one needs to understand what values the officer put at the forefront, what he considered unacceptable for himself and how his worldview reflected in his work. Being a product of the British public schools and then continuing his studies at Oxbridge, the ICS officer absorbed the values and the ethos that ruled British education. They valued such qualities as fair play, incorruptibility, self-sacrifice, and a sense of paternalism, which they acquired in the corridors of those closed public schools from which they were graduates. These qualities, coupled with their morality, formed in their youth, influenced their worldview and how they behaved and felt like imperial administrators (Duffield, 2016: 208).

All these romanticized qualities were not a priori for every ICS officer. However, these principles and qualities were the whales on which their entire worldview rested for many of them. Being people of flesh and blood, they made a considerable number of mistakes in the administration of the empire to understand or vice versa in ignoring the local people and their culture. However, their memoirs and diaries clearly outline that they were far from ideal and made many mistakes.

For many Oxbridge graduates, a career in the ICS was a good prospect, both financially and ambitiously. By the age of 30, some of them could manage a district larger than Ireland.

Materials and methods

The source base of this study is wide and varied. Therefore, when working on the topic, some sources of official and personal origin were used.

There are several categories of official documents on this topic. The most informative is the quarterly reports of the Indian Office List. The annual version of the list contained more detailed information, such as the provision of pensions, official duties, awards, appointments, wages, and vacations, among internal documentation and regulations. In addition, these lists contained the results of the annual ICS recruitment.

The statistics given in these reports are detailed and give an idea of how the British colonial structures functioned in specific periods and allow one to determine the place and importance of the ICS in the composition of the colonial administration of British India and reveal the internal content of the service. Another essential source is *The Combined Civil List for India. List of Civil Services and Higher European Services under the Government of India*. In this collection, one can find information about the hierarchy in the ICS, personnel changes within the service, about the salaries of ICS officers. All this makes it possible to understand how everyday work influenced the self-identification of officers.

Among the sources of personal origin, the most valuable are the diaries, letters, memoirs and autobiographies of the colonial officers of the Indian Civil Service during the period 1918 to 1939. This category contains published and unpublished memoirs and autobiographies. Among the published ones of particular interest are the works of former ICS officers such as Edward Blunt, John Beames, L.S. O'Malley, D. Gordon, Michael O'Dwyer, R.D. Macleod, Philip Mason, and many others. As this article discusses the self-identity of British officers in the Indian Civil Service, these personal origin documents are valuable.

Using the content analysis technique in the study of memoirs allows revealing based on identifying the author of memoirs norms, the evolution of his views on self-identification and collective self-awareness to isolate common characteristics and identify common points. Also, the work used the comparative-historical method. This method helped to reveal some general and unique features in the self-identification of service officers by comparing several memoirs and documents. In addition, the comparative-historical method makes it possible to identify and compare the levels in the development of the object under study, the changes that have occurred, and determine development trends.

Discussion

Speaking about the collective identity of the officers of the Indian Civil Service, it is clear that most of them have a common social background and come from almost the same social class, with rare exceptions. Most of them have many similarities: studying at a public school, then education at Oxford or Cambridge, passing the exam for entry into the service in the ICS, preparing for the service, and finally arriving in India. At home in Britain, their admission to the ICS was regarded as a lucky ticket,

as it provided sufficient financial guarantees in later life. However, working in India was not easy. An enormous responsibility lay on the shoulders of the ICS officers. They had to perform a variety of work, and there was no area of activity in which they would not participate and the work they did not do. Their primary responsibilities were law enforcement and revenue control. However, they also dealt with a massive list of cases, such as health care, judicial duties, land relations, the fight against famine and epidemics, education, financial issues, and the construction of roads and municipal facilities under their supervision. As Sir Edward Blunt wrote, there were practically no duties outside the scope of the ICS, except for the duties of a sailor, soldier, doctor, and priest; and even they sometimes had to be carried out by service officers (Blunt, 1937: 2).

In his lectures on the British Empire, the former ICS officer, Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, discussing its superiority in colonial administration, argues that the root of success lies in the centuries-old training of colonial officials [Lucas, 1915, p. 191]. He cites three points that have become cornerstones in British success: practical experience in training colonial administrators, decent wages, and the British character. Lucas believes that a strong sense of justice and a love of fair play are prominent features of the British character. The love of fair play, according to Lucas, is instilled in public schools in Britain, which provided the majority of graduates who went to serve the Crown in the colonial services (Lucas, 1915: 194).

Since the British Indian Civil Service officers were located in different parts of India, their daily lives and work routines differed depending on their location. What an imprint the work they performed as the face of the Empire left on their lives.

Many of the ICS officers were scientists and researchers who contributed to the study of the history and literature of India and its languages and tried to preserve architectural monuments.

John Beames was one such officer explorer. While serving in the ICS, he compiled and published an excellent three-volume work on the comparative grammar of the Indo-Aryan languages. At the end of his service, Beames left a memoir: "Memoirs of a Bengali Servant". As a person and a colonial officer, Beames's personality was controversial; on the one hand, he was a talented researcher who made a considerable contribution to the study and preservation of the Oriya (Odia) language. On the other hand, Beames was a conservative and biased official, full of confidence in the superiority of the British nation over the Indians. He was one of those

who protested against equal pay among British and Indian officers of the Indian Civil Service. In his memoirs, he clearly stated that British officers had the position of ruling, not ruled (Beames, 1961: 223).

Results

As Sir Walter Lawrence, a former high-ranking ICS officer in the late 19th century, wrote about the mission of the ICS officers: "Their mission was clear: it was to secure the welfare of the millions, to prevent corruption and tyranny, to prevent and to fight famine, plague and pestilence, and to ensure that every Indian should have the free right to enjoy unmolested the rites and the rules of his religion, his caste and his tribe" (Lawrence, 1928: 112-113).

Many officers were aware of their knowledge and capabilities and were not deceived about this, although they still had to deal with issues in which they were incompetent. The young officers of the ICS carried an enormous burden, which affected their self-identification. They perceived and felt significant in India but felt unknown to the empire.

Coming home to Britain on vacation, the ICS officers, in the eyes of society, were sort of prize-winning suitors, for whom many members of society wanted to marry their daughters to secure their future. Nevertheless, there was no understanding of the whole essence of their work and the enormous responsibility that lay on their shoulders, which nurtured in them the feeling that they were underestimated. Almost all ICS officers who left memories felt the same way.

Being a product of the British public schools and then continuing their studies at Oxbridge, the ICS officers absorbed the values and the ethos that ruled British education. As a result, they valued such qualities as fair play, incorruptibility, self-sacrifice and a sense of paternalism, which they acquired in the corridors of those public schools from which they graduated. Together with their morality, these qualities formed in their youth influenced their worldview and how they behaved and felt like imperial administrators (Duffield, 2016: 208).

Main results:

ICS officers considered themselves the pillars on which the British Empire rests (an enormous load of work in all spheres of life, which they had to do).

Officers had a sense of superiority in India and, at the same time, a feeling that their work was underestimated in Britain.

The sense of collective identity only extended to the British officers, an ambivalent perception of the Indian officers of the service.

Officers who entered the service in the 1930s were generally more liberal than officers who began their service before the First World War.

Conclusion

Discussing the collective identity of the officers of the Indian Civil Service, it is clear that most of them had a common social background, which has affected their minds. Enormous responsibilities on the ICS officers' shoulders were law enforcement and revenue control. However, they also dealt with a massive list of cases, such as health care, judicial duties, land relations, the fight against famine and epidemics, education, financial issues, and the construction of roads and municipal facilities took place under their supervision. As Sir Edward Blunt wrote, there were practically no duties outside the scope of the ICS, except for the duties of a sailor, soldier, doctor and priest; and even they sometimes had to be carried out by service officers (Blunt, 1937: 2).

Despite all the privileges and financial stability, life and work in India were not easy. A completely alien debilitating climate, dangers, and diseases could not but leave their mark on the colonial administrators and transform them. These conditions affected their self-perception and collective self-identification. On the one hand, officers felt that they were the face of the empire on the spot; in remote districts, they were the only representatives of power and exercised this power. However, on the other hand, they felt underestimated and overburdened with work. These things left an imprint on their behaviour; some of the officers were snobbish and arrogant, some became a philosopher, and others managed to be epicurean even in their conditions.

Since childhood, the future officers of the colonial services were brought up as gentlemen by blood and manners and valued features of the gentlemanly character; all of this reflected their work in India. Duty and honour were the milestones of their consciousness, and therefore it never occurred to them to resent the conditions of their work. The burden they were carrying did not seem excessive, although they were aware of it. Nevertheless, the gentlemanly behaviour concerned only their equals; they did not consider the Indians equal to themselves; therefore, to them, their behaviour differed. The poor part of the local population, who needed protection and assistance, saw their salvation

in the service officers. Of course, not always and not everywhere.

However, in most cases, the officers did their duty toward those most in need. As for Indians from about the same background as the British officers themselves, everything was much more complicated and depended on the racial prejudices of each officer.

If, for example, Saumarez Smith and officers like him were very liberal and friendly, regardless of race and origin, then there are enough references to intolerant and arrogant officers in the memoirs of other officers.

Most officers know that they have done their duty to the Empire, Britain, India, and civilization with honour and dignity.

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