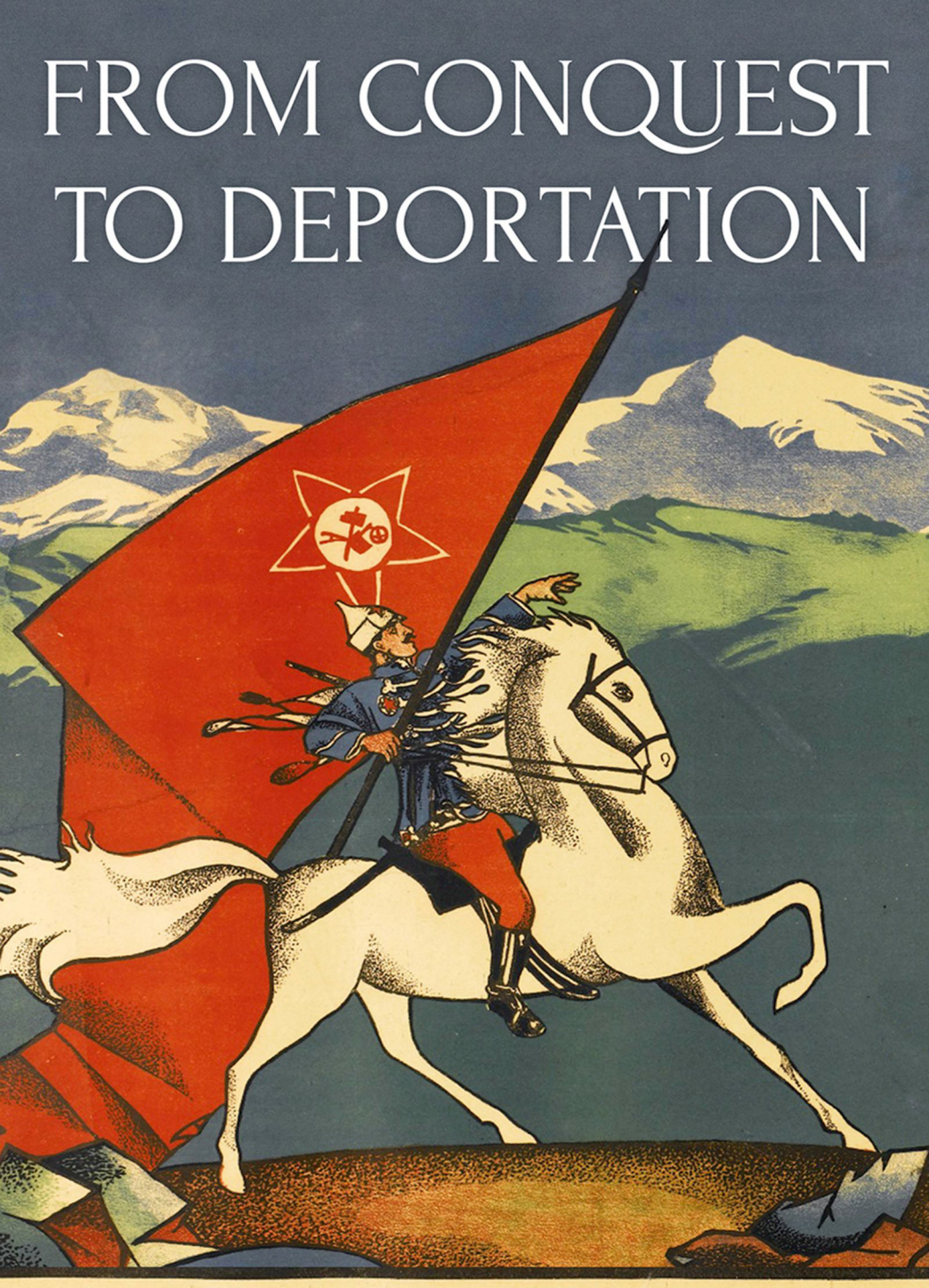
FROM CONQUEST TO DEPORTATION



THE NORTH CAUCASUS UNDER RUSSIAN RULE

JERONIM PEROVIĆ

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GLOSSARY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

abrek	Probably derived from the Pahlavi (Iranian) word *aparak*, 'robber, 'vagabond'; a frequently used term in the Caucasus to denote an outlaw exile; the word may also refer to a bandit or a renegade hero.
adat	Arabic: *ʿādāt*, 'customs'; Customary law.
AO	Autonomous region (*avtonomnaia oblast'*). A relatively small, ethnically defined administrative–territorial unit of the Soviet Union, often part of larger republics (SSR), and created to grant a degree of autonomy to some ethnic minority groups.
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Avtonomnaia Sovetskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika). Ethnically defined administrative–territorial unit of the Soviet Union, with reduced legal status compared with a full SSR. Created to grant a degree of autonomy to some major ethnic minority groups.
ataman	Cossack leader.
aul	A mountain village in the Caucasus.
AUP ChR	Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic (Arkhivnoe upravlenie Pravitel'stva Chechenskoi Respubliki).
bedniak	Plural *bedniaki*, from the Russian *bednyi*, 'poor'; a poor peasant, owning some land but usually not

	enough to support a family. In the Bolshevik terminology, the *bedniak* ranks in the lowest category of the three-level tier of 'poor' (*bedniaki*), 'middle' (*seredniaki*) and 'rich' peasants (*zazhitochnyi* and *kulaky*).
Bezbozhnik	'Godless'; the title of a journal edited by the organ of the central council of the League of the Militant Godless (Soiuz voinstviuiushchikh bezbozhnikov), which was issued during the early Soviet period (1920s up to the early 1940s).
CC	Central Committee (Tsentral'nyi komitet). Central ruling body ('executive') of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
Cheka	Chrezvychainaia komissiia; 'Chk'. Political police created by the Bolsheviks in December 1917; Cheka is the abbreviation of 'All-Russian Emergency Commission for Combating Counterrevolution, Speculation and Sabotage' (Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissiia po bor'be s konterrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem; 'VChK'). In February 1922, the Cheka was formally dissolved and reconstituted under the name GPU.
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza).
desiatin	Russian measure of land, 2.7 acres or 1.1 hectares.
dhikr	Arabic: *ḏikr,* also *zikr*, literally 'remembrance'; the term used to denote a form of prayer in Islam, in which short phrases are repeatedly recited within the mind or aloud. In the North Caucasus, this form of prayer is usually accompanied by loud singing, clapping and dancing, widespread among the followers of the Qādiriyya in Chechnia.
dobrovol'stvo	Voluntary service; an alternative to regular military service during the Second World War.
Duma	Council; name of the parliament of the Russian Empire established under Tsar Nicholas II in 1906. Name of the parliament of the Russian Federation since 1993.

FSB	Federal Security Service (Federal'naia sluzhba bezopasnosti). The principal security agency of the Russian Federation.
GARF	State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii).
gazavat	Transliterated from Russian spelling; an Arabic term referring to *ġazw* (or *ġazwah*) meaning battle, a military expedition or raid. The English term 'razzia' derives from *ġazw*. In the context of the Caucasian wars, the term is usually equated with jihad ('holy war').
gortsy	Singular *gorets*, 'mountaineer', 'highlander'; a term used from the early nineteenth century to collectively designate the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus.
Gosplan	State Planning Committee (Gosudarstvennyi planovyi komitet). Established in 1921, the agency was primarily responsible for central economic planning in the Soviet Union.
GPU	State Political Directorate (Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie). The secret police, successor organisation to the Cheka.
grazhdanstvennost'	From *grazhdanstvo*, 'citizenship', and *grazhdanin*, 'citizen'; in the Russian imperial context of the nineteenth century, the term refers to the spirit of duty and allegiance towards the imperial state and its laws.
Hajj	Arabic: *Ḥağğ*; the pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam.
HPSSS	Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System.
imam	Muslim political and religious leader; in the North Caucasus historical context, it also refers to the spiritual and political head of a theocratic state (imamate).
inogorodnye	Literally 'outlanders'. In the North Caucasus, a denomination for all non-autochthonous inhabitants or those who moved to the region from outside (mostly Russians and other Slavs).

inorodtsy	Singular *inorodets*, 'alien'. *Inorodets* was a legal term referring in the mid-nineteenth century to all non-Russians, non-Orthodox and non-Slavs of the Russian Empire. It initially included also the 'mountaineers' (*gortsy*) of the North Caucasus. The *inorodtsy* were not subject to the same legal provisions as the other inhabitants of the Russian Empire.
ispolkom	Executive committee (*ispolnitel'nyi komitet*). An elected Soviet government organ.
jihad	Arabic: *jihād*, literally 'striving'. In the context of the conflicts in the North Caucasus of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries usually referred to as 'holy war', i.e. the warfare of Muslims against infidels.
Kavburo	Caucasian Bureau (Kavbiuro). The Kavburo was created in April 1920 and had its seat in Rostov-on-Don. The Kavburo was the plenipotentiary representative of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CC RCP (b)), and was responsible for building up party cells and state institutions in the region. The bureau was dissolved in February 1922.
KKOV	Committees for Farmers' Social Mutual Assistance (Komitet krest'ianskoi obshchestvennoi vzaimopomoshchi).
kolkhoz	Plural *kolkhozy*; contraction of 'collective farm' (*kollektivnoe khoziaistvo*). The *kolkhozy* were cooperative agricultural enterprises operated on state-owned land by peasants from a number of households belonging to the collective and being paid as salaried employees on the basis of quality and quantity of labour contributed.
korenizatsiia	Literally 'taking root', from Russian *koren'*, 'root'. The term is sometimes translated as 'indigenisation' or 'nativisation', referring to the early Soviet policy of promoting members of the non-Russian 'titular nations' into the upper ranks of administration or

	other positions of power in their ethnically defined administrative–territorial units.
KPSS	*See* CPSU.
krai	Large administrative–territorial units, usually border regions, or large, territorially defined military and/or political structures.
kraikom	*Krai komitet*; committee of the Communist Party at the *krai* level.
kulak	Literally 'fist'. The term has existed in Russia since the nineteenth century and refers to relatively wealthy peasants. The Bolsheviks used the term to denote all those who hired labour, denouncing them as 'capitalist' peasants and 'exploiters' of poorer peasants. The term was eventually applied to any peasant opposing collectivisation.
madrassa	Arabic: *madrasa*, literally 'place of study'; a higher institute of Islamic scholarship.
medzhlis	Arabic: *mağlis*, 'place of gathering'; in a political context, the term refers to a council or a large meeting.
mufti	Arabic: *muftī*; Muslim legal scholar, qualified to give authoritative legal opinions (known as *fatāwā*, singular *fatwā*).
mukhadzhirstvo	From the Arabic *muhāğir*, meaning 'refugee' or 'émigré'. The term refers to the mass emigration of North Caucasians, namely the Cherkessians, to the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Caucasian wars in the mid-1860s.
mullah	Honorary title for a person with a religious education.
murid	Arabic: *murīd*, literally 'committed one'. In Sufism, the term refers to an adept of a *tariqa*, an Islamic (Sufi) brotherhood.
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del).
naib	Arabic: *nā'ib*, 'deputy', 'delegate'. Arabic title in use since the Middle Ages. In the context of the Caucasus wars of the nineteenth century, *naib*

	refers to people who were appointed by Imam Shamil as governors of a certain district (*naibstvo*).
namestnichestvo	Institution of viceroyalty governed by the *namestnik*. In the Caucasus, the *namestnichestvo* existed from 1845 to 1881 and 1905 to 1916.
namestnik	The vice-regent (governor) appointed by the tsar.
Naqshbandiyya	Major Sufi order of the Sunni branch of Islam, widespread in Chechnia since the eighteenth century.
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennykh del).
obkom	Regional committee (*oblastnyi komitet*); executive body of the Communist Party at the regional (*oblast'*) level.
oblast'	Plural *oblasti*, 'region'. Administrative–territorial unit, already used in tsarist times; after the abolishment of the tsarist system of governorates, the *oblast'* was the most common administrative–territorial unit in the Soviet Union. The *okrug* and later the *raion* were subunits of the *oblasti*.
OGPU	Joint State Political Directorate (Ob''edinënnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie); the state's secret police, successor to the GPU in 1923.
okrug	Plural *okruga*, 'district'. Low-level territorial–administrative unit subordinated to the republics, *oblasti* and *kraia*. Almost all *okruga* were replaced by *raiony* in the early 1930s. An *okrug* may also refer to a larger unit, e.g. the North Caucasus Military District (*okrug*).
OPKB	Special Party of Caucasian Brothers (Osobaia partiia kavkazskikh brat'ev).
Orgburo	Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Founded in 1919, it existed in

	parallel with the Politburo and had similar functions. The institution was dissolved in 1952.
Politburo	Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Founded in October 1917, it was to become the de facto most important decision-making body during Soviet times.
PP	Plenipotentary representative (*polnomochnyi predstavitel'*, *polpred*). In our context, this refers to the PP of the secret police (OGPU) in the Caucasus.
pristav	Headman of a *pristavstvo*, an institution existing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in non-Russian, Muslim-populated areas of the Russian imperial borderland.
pud	Old Russian measurement unit; 1 *pud* = 16.38 kilogrammes.
qadi	Arabic: *qāḍī*, 'judge who applies sharia law'. A Muslim judge authorised to speak on legal matters and qualified to issue a judgement according to the sharia.
Qādiriyya	One of the oldest Islamic-mystic Sufi-brotherhoods. Large following in Chechnia since the mid-nineteenth century.
raion	Plural *raiony*; from French *rayon*, 'district'. Administrative–territorial unit (district); a low-level territorial and administrative subdivision for rural and municipal administration. During the 1920s, *raiony* replaced the *uezdy* and *volosti* (existing from Tsarist times), from the early 1930s the *okruga*.
RCP (b)	Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Rossiiskaia kommunisticheskaia partiia (bol'shevikov)). Name of the Russian Communist Party until 1925.
revkom	Revolutionary committee (*revoliutsionyi komitet*); non-elected governments created by the Bolsheviks during the civil war period,

	meant for a temporary duration until replaced by elected soviets.
RGAKFD	Russian State Archive of Film- and Photo-Documents (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov).
RGANI	Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii).
RGASPI	Russian Archive of Social and Political History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii).
RKP (b)	*See* RCP (b).
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika).
sejm	Parliament.
seredniak	Plural *seredniaki*, from *srednii*, 'middle'. Middle peasant; in the Bolshevik classification of the peasantry, the *seredniak* constituted the average wealthy peasant, who before collectivisation constituted the peasant mass.
sharia	Arabic: *sharīʿah*. Islamic law; series of religious principles that are part of the Islamic tradition.
sheikh	Arabic title of honour for revered men, both non-religious (chief of a clan or village elder) and religious leaders. In Sufism, it refers to a religious authority, i.e. the leader of a Sufi order.
SKVO	North Caucasus Military District (Severo-Kavkazskii voennyi okrug).
South Eastern Bureau	Iugovostochnyi biuro; Iugovostbiuro. Plenipotentiary representation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the North Caucasus. This institution, seated in Rostov-on-Don, was separated from the Kavburo in March 1921 and existed until May 1924. After this, the North Caucasus *krai* Committee of the Communist Party (Severo-

	Kavkazskii kraevoi komitet VKP (b)) took over its functions.
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic (Sovetskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika).
SSSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik); Soviet Union, created in December 1922.
stanitsa	Plural *stanitsy*. Fortified Cossack settlement.
svodka	Plural *svodki*. Report, digest.
tariqa	Arabic: *ṭarīqa*, 'path'. Sufi (mystic) spiritual affiliation with a brotherhood led by a *murshid*. A follower of a *tariqa* is called a *murid*.
teip	Extended family (clan) in Chechen and Ingush societies.
TOZ	Associations for Cooperative Cultivation of the Land (Tovarishchestvo po sovmestnoi obrabotke zemli).
TsA FSB	Central Archive of the Federal Security Services of the Russian Federation (Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Federal'noi sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii).
TsK	*See* CC.
tukhum	Political unit of a *teip*.
tuzemtsy	Singular *tuzemets*, 'native'. In the North Caucasus, the term denotes the non-Russian, non-Cossack indigenous local population.
USSR	*See* SSSR.
VChK	*See* Cheka.
VKP (b)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Vsesoiuznaia kommunisticheskaia partiia (bol'shevikov)). Name of the Communist Party since 1925.
VTsIK	All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet). Nominally the highest legislative, administrative and revising body of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) from 1917 to 1937.

waqf	Arabic: *waqf*, 'endowment'. An endowment (usually a property in the form of land, buildings or other assets) made by a Muslim under Islamic law, to be held in trust and used for a charitable or religious purpose.
zakat	Arabic: *zakāt*, 'purity'. Alms tax; an obligatory payment by a Muslim for a charitable and religious purpose. The *zakat* is one of the principal obligations of Islam.
zikr	*See dhikr*.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND DATING

A particularly problematic area is the correct and consistent spelling in a region that has been under the influence of various cultures and literary languages, including Russian, Iranian, Turkic, Armenian, Georgian and Arabic. Since I work mostly with Russian-language sources, I generally use Russian transliteration throughout the book. I transliterate non-Russian terms and names as they appear in the Russian sources. I write Khadzhi (not *Ḥāǧǧī*) or *mukhadzhir* (not *muhāǧir*). But I am not always consistent when, for example, referring to the Sufi orders of the Qādiriyya (not Kadiriia) and Naqshbandiyya (not Nakshbandiia).

When transliterating from Russian into English, I follow the Library of Congress system, including diacritics and some of the special characters. This excludes words that have become established in the English language. I write Bolsheviks (not *bol'sheviki*), soviet (not *sovet*), Moscow (not *Mosvka*). In general, I prefer the transliterated spelling of words. I write Groznyi (not Grozny), Beriia (not Beria) or Chechnia (not Chechnya). In some cases, however, I have decided to apply the more commonly known versions. For example, I have opted for Ingushetia (not Ingushetiia) and Ossetia (not Osetiia). Russian transliterated terms (unless they refer to established terms, and excluding personal names, names of organisations, geographic locations or toponyms) are in italics. I generally follow the Library of Congress system of transliteration in the geographical maps as well, but leave out diacritics and other special characters.

Dates are given in their chronological order. Events taking place before 1 February 1918 are provided in the Julian calendar (thirteen days behind the calendar generally used in the Western world); developments after this date are given in the Gregorian calendar.

FOREWORD

The North Caucasus is one of the world's most turbulent and least understood regions. Nowhere did Russia's imperial advance meet with fiercer resistance than in the mountainous parts of this predominantly Muslim-populated borderland. In 1859, Imam Shamil, who had led the struggle against the Russian army in Chechnia and Dagestan for some twenty-five years, surrendered after decades of bloody warfare. Five years later, Russia defeated the Muslim tribes in the western part of the region, subsequently driving hundreds of thousands into Ottoman exile. After the end of military conquest, the North Caucasus saw repeated armed rebellions against tsarist rule, and it also presented one of the most difficult to control areas for the Bolsheviks in the early Soviet period. During the Second World War, amid accusations of collaboration with Nazi Germany, several North Caucasian peoples, including the entire Chechen and Ingush populations, were declared enemies of the people and forcibly deported to Central Asia. Only after Stalin's death were these exiled nations allowed to return home. After a short period of tranquillity and economic recovery in late Soviet times, the North Caucasus again experienced extreme violence in the course of the two Chechen wars of secession in the 1990s and 2000s, with the whole region eventually being transformed into a zone of frequent armed conflict and a hotbed for militant Islamic extremists.

This book is about a region at the fringes of empire, which neither tsarist Russia, nor the Soviet Union, nor in fact the Russian Federation, ever really managed to control. It analyses the state's various strategies to establish its rule over populations that were highly resilient to change imposed from outside, and which frequently resorted to arms in order to resist interference with their

religious practices and beliefs, traditional customs and ways of life. This book goes beyond existing Western scholarship, which typically portrays developments in the North Caucasus in the context of an epic struggle between an expanding Russian power and the resistance of an oppressed people. In contrast, I argue for an approach that seeks to understand the trajectories in the framework of the specific North Caucasian cultural setting. Like other peoples in the Soviet Union, the mountaineer societies of the North Caucasus suffered from state repression and frequent cruelty at the hands of the security forces. Nevertheless, the creation of ethnically defined territories and the introduction of new institutions—public schools, Communist Party organisations and Soviet state structures—combined with industrialisation and urbanisation, offered new social prospects and career opportunities. The questions that need to be addressed are thus not only why people took up arms against certain measures introduced by the state, most notably the disastrous attempt at collectivisation and dekulakisation in 1929/30, but also the ways in which people perceived the new opportunities and sought to take advantage of them. Rather than viewing the history of the North Caucasus only as a matter of subjugation or resistance to Russian imperial and later Bolshevik rule, what needs to be examined is the changing nature of state–society arrangements, the degree of stability these arrangements produced and the question of why arrangements at times broke down and conflict erupted.

In order to arrive at a new understanding of developments in the North Caucasus during the period of Russian rule, this analysis includes not only the perspective of state representatives at local, regional and central levels but also the views of people living through this period as direct participants and observers of events. Through the story of Musa Kundukhov, a Muslim Ossetian general in the Russian Imperial Army, the famous Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev, the memoirs of party functionary and later dissident Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, or the unpublished diaries of Chechen resistance fighter Khasan Israilov, we can get a better notion of how members of the indigenous society viewed Russian rule and what motivated their reactions to state policies, and thus come to a general understanding of how Russian rule affected the identities and loyalties of North Caucasian society over time and space.

While this book covers the whole of the North Caucasus, its focus is mainly on the eastern part of the region, and mostly on Chechnia, which constituted, from the state's perspective, the most troublesome spot. Although

this book offers a longitudinal view of North Caucasian history from the times of war and conquest in the nineteenth century up to recent developments, the emphasis is on the early twentieth century, from the late tsarist period through the period of revolutions and civil war up to the deportations of 1943/4. It was during the establishment of Bolshevik rule in the 1920s and 1930s that these societies came into contact with a modernising state that sought not only submission and loyalty but unconditional support and active participation in the new socialist project—demands that many of these peoples, in Moscow's judgement, failed to live up to. In this respect, the Stalinist deportations constituted radical measures of a totalitarian state that was ultimately unsuccessful in enforcing its claim to power and authority over this difficult to govern part of the Soviet Union.

Unlike most of the extant scholarship, the account presented in this book relies on a wide range of unpublished archival material (namely from the Russian state and party archives located in Moscow), Russian-language document collections, memoirs, as well as new research in multiple languages. Most importantly, it connects the larger history with the stories of the peoples themselves, tracing developments through the accounts of state officials, religious leaders and resistance fighters. Only if macro-history is combined with concrete life stories and detailed accounts of key events can history be interpreted without the prejudice and ideology that has characterised the work of authors in both the West and Russia.

* * *

This study is a revised and updated version of my German-language book *Der Nordkaukasus unter russischer Herrschaft: Eine Vielvölkerregion zwischen Widerstand und Anpassung* (The North Caucasus under Russian Rule: A Multi-National Region between Resistance and Adaption, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2015). Two chapters of this book draw on previously published English-language articles. Chapter 6 on Ali Mitaev is based on 'Uneasy Alliances: Bolshevik Co-Optation Policy and the Case of Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2014), pp. 729–65. Chapter 8 on collectivisation is an extended version of 'Highland Rebels: The North Caucasus during the Stalinist Collectivisation Campaign', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2016), pp. 234–60.

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Zurich, November 2017

INTRODUCTION

RUSSIA AND THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS

On 23 February 1944, Stalin received a telegram from the North Caucasus. The sender of the confidential message was Lavrentii Beriia, chairman of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD*). In his message, Beriia states that 'at daybreak today the operation for the resettlement of the Chechens and Ingush' had begun and that 'everything is proceeding normally'.[1] Behind these words lay the unfolding of one of the greatest human tragedies on Soviet territory at the end of the Second World War. Between the autumn of 1943 and the spring of 1944, the Soviet regime, on Stalin's orders, loaded more than 600,000 people from the North Caucasus into railway wagons and deported them to faraway Central Asia. Along with Chechens and the related Ingush, the members of two smaller North Caucasian ethnicities, the Balkar and Karachai peoples, were also forced out of their

* The NKVD (Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennykh del) was established as a ministry of the USSR in 1934. The secret police, formerly a separate directorate, was incorporated into the NKVD. While the NKVD functioned as an independent power apparatus that was formally subordinate to the Council of People's Commissars (Sovet narodnykh kommissarov; SNK), nominally the highest executive organ of the USSR, it was in fact Stalin's most important instrument of power, which he frequently used to achieve his goals independently of existing party or state institutions. The denomination 'NKVD' was in use until 1946, when the ministry was again reorganised and renamed as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del; MVD).

mountain valleys and deported. Their republics were dissolved. Tens of thousands died on the journey and in the first few years of their exile.[2]

Beriia and his henchmen had already decided on the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush when the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), in its decree of 7 March 1944, cited the following reasons for the dissolution of the Chechen–Ingush autonomous republic and the resettlement operation: many Chechens and Ingush had committed treason against their homeland by 'deserting to the Fascist occupiers' following Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union; they had been placed by the Germans behind the front line of the Red Army as 'spies and scouts'; and they had formed 'armed gangs for fighting against Soviet power at the behest of the Germans'. In addition, it was claimed that many Chechens and Ingush had joined 'armed uprisings against Soviet power', and instead of practising an 'honourable activity', many had been engaged in 'bandit attacks' on the *kolkhozy*, the collective farms, in neighbouring areas and in the killing and robbing of Soviet citizens.[3]

The forced displacement of entire populations was not a policy invented by Stalin. The tsars had repeatedly resorted to resettlement and deportation as a way of stabilising non-Russian-populated border regions. Following Russia's victory over the Cherkess in 1864, for example, almost the entire indigenous Cherkess (Adyghe) population south of the Kuban, around half a million individuals, emigrated to the Ottoman Empire. Tens of thousands died on the voyage across the Black Sea and in the first few months of their Ottoman exile. However, in terms of their extent and systematic implementation, the crimes committed by the Soviet regime under Stalin's rule were unparalleled in Russian history. During the deportations of 1943/4, Beriia even gave the order to remove soldiers and officers belonging to the condemned North Caucasian ethnicities from the ranks of the Red Army; they were arrested and packed off to Central Asia. The Soviet Union then resolved to dissolve and rename the home republics of these peoples, transferred parts of their territory to their neighbours and ordered the destruction of everything that even remotely recalled the existence of what were now declared to be 'enemy nations'. Their memory was to be obliterated forever.

Even though Stalin's deportations had a genocidal character in terms of the large number of casualties, they did not constitute an attempt at systematic annihilation. Stalin and his entourage saw the resettlement of peoples as a means to create order in what they perceived as one of the most difficult to control areas in the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership made use of the

special situation created by the war to remove entire populations that had previously been found to be problematic and whose loyalty was frequently put to the test due to a long history of uprisings. With the deportation of the Chechens in particular, as numerically the largest non-Russian ethnicity in the North Caucasus region at that time (around 400,000 people in all), the Stalinist leadership was eliminating the same element of the population that the tsarist administration had already found to be especially unruly and suspect. To some extent, the deportations under Stalin can be seen as an expression of the fact that the top Soviet leadership saw their Sovietisation project in the Muslim-populated parts of the North Caucasus, at least when it came to the Chechens and some of the other North Caucasian peoples, as a failure.

This book deals with the reasons for that 'failure'. It explores the nature of the state's rule over the North Caucasus and its peoples, from the time of Russia's military conquest in the nineteenth century to Stalin's deportations during the Second World War. This book analyses the diverse tensions and repeated conflicts accompanying the difficult incorporation of the non-Russian populations into the tsarist and Soviet imperial states. It reconstructs a past that, despite a spate of publications, generated in particular by a growing interest in the background to the two Russo-Chechen wars in the 1990s and 2000s, has yet to be systematically analysed.

Identifying problem areas in the historiography on the North Caucasus

So far, the historiography on the North Caucasus has tended to focus mainly on military and political events, particularly on the armed resistance of the predominantly Muslim peoples to Russia's military conquest of and rule over the region. Few attempts have been made to look into the specific forms of resistance, as well as modes of adaption, to the state's policies, or the exact motivations of the individual protagonists involved. The many and varied societal changes that took place under Russian and later Bolshevik rule have yet to attract close scrutiny by historians. The essential nature of the tsarist imperial and Soviet systems as they took shape on the southern borders of the multi-ethnic empire has to date remained largely unexplored.

Particularly widespread in the Western literature is a tendency to read history backwards. In the light of such climactic events as the deportations during the Second World War or Russia's two wars against the Chechens fighting for independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it is

tempting to read the entire history of the region purely as a long succession of violent events, and to treat every conflict episode as the prelude to ensuing tragedies. Western historical writings, which in many cases have uncritically espoused the specific national perspectives of members of the North Caucasian diaspora,[4] are dominated by a narrative of a centuries-old anti-colonial freedom struggle that traces the underlying causes of violent events, both now and in the past, back to the 'permanent warfare' of the freedom-loving North Caucasian peoples against a Russian-dominated oppressor state.[5]

The post-Soviet Russian-language literature has developed in multiple directions, but generally a shift of emphasis can be observed from the period of the democratic changeover at the beginning of the 1990s, characterised by a settlement of accounts with the Communist system and its protagonists, towards a more conservative stance that invokes patriotic sentiments and mourns Russia's glorious imperial past. This has been reflected in views taken on the issues of deportation and the treatment of the suppressed populations. After a liberal phase of historical writing at the beginning of the 1990s, which mercilessly condemned the crimes of Stalin, the historiographical approach since the end of the 1990s, and particularly since the start of Russia's second military invasion of Chechnia in 1999, has been to see the peoples affected as partly to blame for their own fate.[6] Citing the problem of 'banditry' in the poorly accessible areas in the North Caucasus, continuing into the Soviet era, and instances of collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Second World War, some authors in Russia have even expressed open endorsement of Stalin's decision to deport the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples. This view, which has been widely propagated, particularly in popular non-fiction works, is not shared by most Russian historians, but it seems to attract a fairly large degree of public consent in today's Russia.[7]

In contrast to Soviet propaganda, which treated difficult historical topics such as the deportation as largely taboo, focusing instead on the 'friendship among peoples' under socialism (an attitude that has again come to dominate the official view of history in Russia since the 'pacification' of Chechnia during Vladimir Putin's second term as Russian president[8]), some of the contemporary post-Soviet literature has also presented historical trends in the light of a conflict that has been going on for centuries.[9] In contrast to their Western colleagues and to nationalistic-oriented Chechen historians, historians in present-day Russia tend to see particular events such as the deportation or the Russian–Chechen wars of the 1990s and 2000s less as the consequence of state policies of suppression than as the result of a failed

modernisation attempt. Accordingly, they argue, while belonging to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union led to changes within traditional North Caucasian societies, these were too limited in extent to overcome their longstanding customs and institutions, thus preventing successful integration into the larger Soviet political and sociocultural space.[10] For some historians, the Soviet Union even appears as a benefactor, notwithstanding its errors. For example, Vladimir Degoev, a well-known historian of the Caucasus, writes that, in the final analysis, the seventy years within the Soviet 'mega-system' led to positive changes, and that the situation at the beginning of the 1990s would probably have been even worse, if Soviet modernity had had less time to exert its influence on these peoples.[11]

A different line is taken by those historians from the conservative school of Russian historiography who see the social bonds based on clan structures, the Islamic religion and various archaic institutions, such as the blood-feud, as creating a 'civilisational' dichotomy that was virtually impossible to overcome. According to this conception, the long and protracted nature of the 'Great Caucasus War' of the nineteenth century was not due to Russia pursuing the wrong military strategies but to the fact that ultimately the Russian generals were having to contend with peoples whose 'national psychology' was completely at odds with 'Russianness' and European culture.[12] In taking this stance, these authors are following the perspectives that also informed Russian historiography and literary Romanticism during the time of war and conquest in the nineteenth century. According to this conception, conflict remained inevitable until such time as the 'backward' inhabitants of the North Caucasus could be made aware of the superiority of Russian culture and inoculated with *grazhdanstvennost'*, the spirit of responsibility and duty towards the imperial Russian state and its laws.[13]

All of these attempts to explain and understand the situation open up important perspectives. However, they can also create an unduly narrow view by excessively reducing the complexity of historical trends and developments. The problem of the 'colonial' approach begins with the use of the term itself. The attribute 'colonial' is a semantic vessel that can be filled with virtually any kind of content. In very general terms, the notion describes an unequal relationship between the 'state' and the 'people', characterised by the state forcing concepts of societal order and ways of life on society.[14] This approach falls short insofar as it describes the historical itinerary solely as a struggle between two forces. On the one hand, this view ignores the fact that the state is not to be seen solely as an entity distinct from society, acting in opposition

to the people; it may also be interconnected with society in many different ways. Admittedly, through the security services or tax authorities, often staffed with outsiders, the state's dealings with the local inhabitants resembled very much those of the actions of a foreign colonial power. But the state was also manifested by local officials who were paid by it, represented it and performed its functions. To properly understand the characteristics of the state's rule, it is therefore necessary to see the non-Russian indigenous peoples and their representatives not just as objects of a state policy of suppression but also as independent actors who through their behaviour influenced and shaped the course of events.[15]

Nor did the state and the possibilities it offered always generate a negative reaction. In certain situations, it could be seen as a welcome ally. The establishment of a new system of governance brought about opportunities that could signify negative discrimination for some elements of the population but for others could provide avenues for social advancement. It is true that representatives of the Russian Empire saw the peoples of the North Caucasus largely as 'aliens' (*inorodtsy*) and tended to discriminate against them. But for the members of these ethnicities who demonstrated a willingness to adapt, Russian rule generally provided real opportunities to better themselves, particularly in the armed forces. As well as investigating the dichotomy between 'state' and 'people' and the resulting tensions, historical analysis also has to explain why there were no major conflicts in specific historical phases, why it was possible to arrive at state–society arrangements that proved surprisingly stable over longer periods of time, and why such arrangements could break down and lead to conflict. In fact, though scholars generally tend to dwell on mass resistance to empires, it was, for much of global history, 'the degree of mass acquiescence in empire' that is actually more striking and that is in need of explanation.[16]

A second aspect ignored by the 'colonial' approach to history writing is that, in some cases, conflicts also originated from within the society itself. Violence is not always an expression of dissatisfaction with central state policy—it could also be based on intra-societal factors and originate from the specific traditions and customs of the peoples of the North Caucasus. For example, the existing research has largely ignored the fact that social conflict arising from inter-clan feuds, from disputes over land and assets, and sometimes simply from youthful high spirits among young males—who aspired to use gang raids as a way to demonstrate masculine ideals such as courage, honour or stamina in combat—was a characteristic of Caucasian

societies. Such conflicts escalated to major dimensions and developed their own momentum only when they came up against the higher interests of the state. It was quite possible for the original objectives of armed resistance to change in the course of a dispute or for the conflict to be re-interpreted as a 'struggle against state oppression' by those looking back on past events.

Contrary to the widely held view, the mountainous terrain of the North Caucasus was not, as such, the factor determining the resistance. The mountains did, however, provide an ideal retreat location, boosting the prospects of successful resistance even against an attacker with superior military technology. Traditions and longstanding mores were more stubbornly maintained in the *auls* (villages) located in the remote mountain valleys of the North Caucasus than on the plain, which was an area transited by a wide range of peoples and ideas. As well as providing important identity references, the social cohesion of the mountain communities, based on strong clan structures, also operated as a network affording the individual protection against interventions by the state. At the same time, these structures could be activated for the organisation of armed resistance whenever this appeared necessary on the basis of external threats. There were even repeated instances of solidarity among communities across ethnic boundaries, as when men from different villages in the North Caucasus heeded the call for a 'holy war' against the 'infidel' and endeavoured to coordinate their uprising against the Russian occupiers under collective leadership.

Rather than proceeding from the assumption of a protracted anti-colonial freedom struggle, it is thus more fruitful to enquire into the motivations of the protagonists themselves. How did the North Caucasians who stood against the troops of the tsars during the Caucasus wars in the nineteenth century differ from those who rose up in arms during the times of Russian imperial and Soviet rule? How can historians explain the fact that many North Caucasians sympathised with the Bolsheviks during the era of revolutions and civil war, whereas others fought on the side of the anti-Bolshevik forces of the Whites, and others again fought only for themselves? Why was it that, during the Second World War, thousands responded to the state's mobilisation campaign to enlist in the army and fight against Nazi Germany, but others did everything possible to evade military service, and a minority even joined the armed anti-Soviet resistance?

No less problematic than the colonial perspective is the 'modernisation' approach, which seeks to recognise societal change as progress in the form of a linear development, seeing the indicators of this process in primarily

quantitative terms, in the rising numbers of schools and pupils attending them, industrial workers, people with literacy skills or party members. This conception of modernity is espoused, for example, in contemporary Soviet reports, whose authors try to see such indicators as tangible proof of the 'successes' of the socialist transformation project. This type of approach fails to take account of the fact that under the influence of political and societal changes, people may have moved in parallel worlds and may have been able to adopt different identities, a phenomenon that becomes significant for the Stalinist period, and is particularly evident from the analysis of autobiographical accounts.[17] Many of the Chechen fighters engaged in armed resistance against the Soviet regime during the Second World War, for example, were Soviet-educated men, and in some cases had held high positions in the state and party apparatus in their home districts. Thus, rather than looking at the extent of 'modernisation', it is more important to consider the ways in which people and individuals were able to make use of the opportunities afforded by the innovations of Soviet modernity for their own benefit, and to analyse the varied forms of societal reactions and adaptions to the new realities and conditions imposed by the state's rule.

An equally thorny problem is the 'civilisational' perspective in its assumption of an Islam-defined North Caucasus that is fundamentally different from Slavic Orthodox Russia. In the long course of its gradual expansion, the Russian Empire encountered a wide range of peoples with many different traditions and religions. Yet to the upper strata of the imperial society, the world of the non-Russian, non-Orthodox peoples on the southern borders of the empire or in far-off Siberia often seemed no more alien than that of the Russian Orthodox peasants in the central part of Russia. The Russian Empire was an extremely diverse amalgam of peoples and cultures and was characterised by an equally heterogeneous administration structure that constantly incorporated members of all sorts of ethnic groups and religions. Provided that the individual peoples in question displayed loyalty and fulfilled the obligations placed on them by the state, it was assumed that differing ways of life, societal and legal structures, religious views and traditions did not represent insuperable problems until such time as they were perceived as such.[18]

Therefore, to speak of a Slavic Orthodox versus Islam dichotomy in the case of the North Caucasus is problematic in that this region never belonged to a single cultural sphere and was never dominated by a single religion. Before the penetration of Sunni Islam, which had gained a footing in Dagestan in the

seventh century but spread only slowly and gradually to other parts of the region, Christianity had been much stronger enrooted than would be suggested by the subsequent dominance of Islam. In the case of Ossetia, on the arrival of the Russians in the mid-eighteenth century a large proportion of the peasants were Christians, at a time when the aristocratic elite were already largely Muslims.[19] It is also important to note that even before its military conquest by Russia in the 1850s and 1860s, the North Caucasus never represented solely an impenetrable 'barrier' between Russia and the North Caucasian peoples, since the Caucasus had always remained a frontier area, in which the different populations not only fought but also engaged in many forms of interaction, mixing and trading with each other. From the sixteenth century, alongside the autochthonous non-Russian peoples, Cossack communities had formed along the banks of the Terek and Don Rivers. These people, despite their different religious faith (most were Orthodox Christians, although there were also Muslim Cossacks), displayed far more similarities with the North Caucasian peoples than with, say, the peasants of Central Russia in terms of their mores, economy, societal structure and even their external appearance (clothing, traditional dress and weapons).[20]

The close links between religious classification and perception were clearly illustrated in the attitude adopted by the Russian conquerors, who generally applied the label of 'heathen' to the Ingush,[21] a people ethnically and linguistically related to Chechens, despite the Christian-animist based faith that had remained dominant among them up until their definitive conversion to Islam in the 1830s.[22] The Russians were ambivalent in their opinion of the Chechens, most of whom had largely been Islamised by the sixteenth century.[23] Even though the reputation of being fanatical Muslims clung persistently to the Chechens, beginning with their first major uprising against the Russians under Sheikh Mansur (Ushurma) in the late eighteenth century, there was at the same time a widespread perception among the Russian conquerors that they were only superficially Islamised.

With regard to the Chechens in particular, the negative images of the 'fanatic', 'robber', 'mountain savage' or 'Asiatic' proved very stubborn. These images, which had emerged during the wars of the nineteenth century and were associated with a fascination with the 'other', as disseminated above all in Russian Romantic literature,[24] combined with arrogance and deprecation, continued to define Russian attitudes towards the North Caucasian peoples even after military conquest. Similarly, representatives of the Soviet regime ultimately saw themselves as bearers of a higher culture and were driven by a

modernisation mission.[25] The often extremely brutal manner in which members of the Russian-dominated Soviet security services conducted the struggle against North Caucasian 'bandits' until well into the 1940s highlighted the perception that ultimately the peoples of the North Caucasus could only be tamed by brute force. To be sure, images were not always negative. In the early phase of the Soviet period, the figure of the 'freedom-loving mountain dweller' trying to liberate himself from the tsarist 'yoke' became an emblem of the new era—so much so that the legendary Imam Shamil (1797–1871), who had led the armed resistance of the Chechens and Dagestanis against the Russian Imperial Army until his surrender in 1859, rose to cult status in the early Soviet era. Rather than focusing on 'civilisational otherness' as such, the historian needs to consider how that otherness was understood at different times, how it translated into specific actions and how it affected state–society arrangements.

The establishment of Russian rule

This book discusses the many and varied problems that accompanied the establishment of Russian rule in the conquered territories of the North Caucasus in different phases of history. The main focus is on three sets of questions: First, which were the basic visions of governance that informed the central state's policy vis-à-vis the North Caucasus and its peoples, and what strategies did the state choose to assert its control over society? Second, how did the non-Russian societies of the North Caucasus—and individual members of the population—perceive the state's intentions and strategies of rule, and how did they respond to state policy? And third, how did society adapt to the realities imposed by Russian rule, and what new identities and loyalties emerged as a consequence of state–society interactions?

In general, the tsarist state pursued a minimalistic state-building project, putting stability ahead of modernisation and the active transformation of society. The tsar's administrators ruthlessly suppressed any form of disobedience, but Russian imperial rule over the region and its peoples was not only based on suppression and force. Instead, Russia also applied integrative strategies such as the co-opting of societal and spiritual elites or setting up state schools in order to secure the population's allegiance to the cause of the state. Tolerance towards Islam and traditional mores alternated with the prohibition of particular religious practices and the persecution of societal authority figures such as the highly respected Sufi sheikhs.

Admittedly, in the North Caucasus as elsewhere, under the state's *mission civilisatrice* in the nineteenth century, Russia formulated policies focused on the comprehensive incorporation of indigenous peoples in the political, social and economic space of the empire, with a view to subsequent amalgamation with the Russian people. In practice, however, the tsarist administrators were no more successful with the mainly Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus than with the populations of the steppes of Central Asia or the shamanic population groups of Siberia. The situation was thus dominated by a fairly light-handed form of administration, allowing populations to retain their inner freedoms in exchange for loyalty and the maintenance of peace and order. The empire did not, however, undertake any major efforts to integrate these peoples into its multinational state or to allocate resources for such central areas as education, the economy or infrastructure. While a small minority would achieve social advancement under Russian imperial rule, the overwhelming majority of the population, that is to say, the inhabitants of the rural and remote mountain areas, gained little or no benefit. Thus, while the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus, often generally referred to as *gortsy* or 'mountaineers' (even though most of them took up residence on the plains following the wars of conquest), were no longer formally classified as *inorodtsy* (singular *inorodets*, literally 'of different descent/nation', frequently translated as 'allogenes' or 'aliens') from the early nineteenth century, they often continued to be treated as such in political practice.[26]

The central state's suspicion of the non-Russian peoples of this region was partly attributable to their location in a frontier area that had historically been within the catchment area of a number of major powers that were hostile to Russia: Persia and the Ottoman Empire, and subsequently Great Britain and Germany, had asserted claims to power in the Caucasus at various historical stages, and had also actively tried to recruit the indigenous peoples in support of their political ambitions. An expression of the deep-seated mistrust with which imperial Russia regarded the peoples of this region can be seen in the fact that by the time of the outbreak of the First World War, members of the different North Caucasian ethnic groups were not allowed to serve as regular soldiers in the army. It was this minimalist state-building project, fed by an at times racist-tinged sense of superiority, that, albeit with some exceptions, dominated the entire tsarist epoch and accordingly led to marginalisation and segregation rather than the integration of the various non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus into imperial Russia.

The Bolsheviks thought, and acted, along different and far more radical lines: after seizing power in October 1917, they formulated the ambition of freeing these peoples from the 'yoke' of tsarism. Under the leadership of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin (real name Ul'ianov, 1870–1924), the new Soviet state viewed the advancement and modernisation of the non-Russian peoples as one of its key objectives. The Bolsheviks granted the larger non-Russian ethnicities their own autonomous administrative territories, within which they had the status of 'titular nations'. This was intended as a means for their progress in cultural terms and to enable them to advance to leadership positions in the bureaucratic apparatus and the party organisation within their territories. It was also in the Soviet era that broad strata of the non-Russian population first gained access to a secular school education. Attempts were also made at this time to increase the involvement of North Caucasians in urban-based industries, as most of the people were living almost exclusively in rural areas, where they practised agriculture and (in the mountains) raised livestock.

This should not, however, obscure the fact that the Bolsheviks' project of governing the North Caucasus was informed by maximalist objectives. In contrast to the Russian Empire, which was ultimately satisfied if the peoples in question did not actively challenge the state's claim to authority and rule, the Bolsheviks defined as their ultimate objective the complete transformation of society. For them, loyalty meant not just tacit acquiescence but active and unconditional participation in their 'great socialist transformation' project. Modernity was not merely desirable—it was seen as an integral component of a social utopian vision, one that would ultimately culminate in a classless, Communist society. In the view of the Bolsheviks, however, the comprehensive socioeconomic transformation needed for the successful implementation of this project could only be achieved if the state dictated not only the destination but also the path to be followed to get there. To ensure the achievement of its utopian goals, the state would also have to subjugate backward-looking elements, freeing them from their traditional social ties and values, in order to secure their full participation in the socialist transformation project. 'State-building' now also described a comprehensive incursion into the social space, into the private sphere of the individual.[27] The ultimate goal of socialist transformation aimed at nothing less than the creation of a new 'Soviet man'.[28]

Consequently, the Bolsheviks undertook far more consistent efforts than the tsarist administrators had ever done: through direct interventions in economic, social, and political and administrative structures, they sought to

open up communication channels within society as a whole and thereby create the required conditions for successfully asserting their concepts of power and order and accordingly bringing about changes in people's existing loyalties and identities. While coercion was repeatedly used in this context, this was never the sole means of the state's strategies for asserting its rule over society. By the mid-1920s, the Bolsheviks had succeeded in eliminating any serious political opposition, but they were still too weak to implement the kind of radical transformation that they would try to pursue, albeit with limited success, in later years, namely during their efforts at total collectivisation starting in the late 1920s.

Over the whole of the early Soviet period, the state remained merely one reference point for societal integration among others, which in the North Caucasus included the Sufi brotherhoods and their respective followings, family networks and clans, and the village communities with their councils of elders. The state competed with these and tried to eradicate them, but in practice it was in many ways interlinked with them and was forced to adapt to the social realities on the ground. With a view to stabilising its still precarious position at the beginning of the 1920s, the Bolshevik leadership even permitted, for the time being, the existence of sharia law courts and local legal traditions. As had been applied in tsarist times, the Bolsheviks in the early 1920s often resorted to the technique of co-opting social elites, when Muslim clerics were allowed to stand for elections in local soviets and in exceptional cases even to hold positions in regional executive bodies.

If the Soviet state was never able to fully implement its totalitarian claim to govern, and ultimately had to make compromises, this was also due to the fact that it was not enough merely to have the means for the subjugation of an opponent by force; a further critical consideration was the extent to which the authority of the state and the ideas it propagated were recognised and internalised by society and individuals. Power is always partly relational and arises according to the interpretations assigned to it in the communicative social process.[29] In this case, communication between representatives of the central state and society was impeded not only by an inadequate knowledge of Russian on the part of the non-Russian population but also by a fundamental misunderstanding of the objectives and intentions of the Bolshevik's project of governance and its ideas of modernisation. On the one hand, the strictly hierarchical nature of the state administration and party centralism was contrary to the village community-based organisational structure of the North Caucasian peoples, many of whom (such as the

Chechens, the Ingush and the Dagestani mountain communities) had never known any aristocracy or had any feudal relations in their history. And in many cases, even the idea of subjugation to an external state organisation was an essentially alien concept. Declarations of subjugation, made repeatedly as the Russians advanced into their territory, were seen by these peoples at best as temporary alliances that they could revoke as and when necessary.

Similarly, the North Caucasians initially interpreted the concept of autonomy granted to them by the Bolsheviks after the end of the Russian Civil War as a relationship of equals with Russia. They clung to the illusion that the Bolsheviks would in fact preserve their inner freedoms and that they would even be given the right to dissolve the alliance if they wished to do so. The realisation that the Bolsheviks had a different understanding of autonomy became evident when, from the mid-1920s, the Soviet security forces set about systematically disarming the population in large-scale military actions (up until this time, virtually the entire male population of the North Caucasus carried arms) and arresting and murdering leading societal figures, including important clerical leaders.

The policy of *korenizatsiia* (literally 'taking root', from Russian *koren* = root), as the Bolsheviks called the process of promoting non-Russian minorities and their cultures and languages, was also revealed as an ambivalent project, since for the Bolsheviks, this policy of creating a national consciousness was not an end in itself but a means towards achieving its socialist transformation project. The 'nations' forged from the various peoples, as bearers of new socialist ideas, would ultimately amalgamate into one people once Communism had been realised.[30] The nationalities policy of the Bolsheviks was therefore also part of a mobilisation project that required the participation of all. Those who remained outside the Soviet Union's mobilisation society, or were seen to be outside its ranks because they rejected the new norms and values or did not actively participate in it, were accordingly regarded as 'class enemies', 'wreckers' or 'spies'.[31] Essentially, anyone at all could be assigned to one or other of the enemy classes, such as the category of the clergy or prosperous peasant farmers, the 'kulaks'. But under this system, even entire peoples could become 'enemies', as proven by the repeated resettlements and deportations in the North Caucasus, affecting not only non-Russian peoples but also the Cossacks, for example.

From the central state's perspective, the clearest indication that certain elements of the North Caucasian societies were unable or unwilling to meet the mobilisation challenge was the fact that their response to the most

ambitious state modernisation project in rural areas, the collectivisation and dekulakisation campaigns of 1929/30, was one of massive armed resistance, which even forced the Soviet leaders to interrupt this project for a time. Other mobilisation campaigns, such as school education or the integration of the North Caucasus into the emerging regional industries (namely the oil industry around Groznyi), lagged far behind the progress achieved in Russian-inhabited areas. The most drastic example of this process, however, was during the Second World War, which vividly highlighted the ambivalent nature of the state's larger efforts at transforming society, particularly with regard to the Chechens. The Soviet leadership's decision to deport the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples was not made because of any serious threat to Soviet power from rebel groups operating in the mountain areas. By the time of the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943, if not earlier, Nazi Germany had ceased to be a major threat for the Caucasus, and without massive military assistance to the rebels, their struggle against the Soviet regime would in any event have been futile. The deeper reasons for the deportation are instead to be seen in the fact that from the late 1930s, at a time when an increasingly tense international situation required the total mobilisation of society and unconditional support, many people had been unable or unwilling to heed this call. The recruitment campaign for the Red Army among the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus for the first time in the years before the Second World War—prior to this, as in tsarist times, they had been exempted from general conscription—was discontinued by the Soviet leadership shortly after the actual outbreak of war with Nazi Germany because of massive problems with the conscription process.

What to the outside observer may appear as failed modernisation meant to the societies and individuals in question a wave of constant new demands and requirements to which they had to adapt. The transformation measures initiated by the state may not have resulted in the kinds of societal changes the Bolshevik leadership had wished for, but they brought about significant incursions in the ways of life of the individual peoples. Often, the end result of transformation was various forms of fusion between old and new: the efforts to achieve total collectivisation of agriculture with the abolition of privately operated farms and private ownership, following some interruptions in the process, finally resulted in formal standardisation in this sector of the economy. However, within the collective farms themselves, longstanding traditions lived on, often clothed in new institutional forms, for example with the farming and distribution of land being controlled by the same individuals

who had previously made these decisions in the context of village communities. While the establishment of Soviet schools enabled the state to reach out to an increasing number of children, the fact of tuition being conducted in the local language also led to a heightened awareness of the content of their own national culture. The displacement of religion from the public space and the closing of Islamic schools lent momentum to the secularisation process, but at the same time, customs and traditions continued to be followed within the family circle and were often tacitly accepted by local state representatives.

Finally, via its *korenizatsiia* policy, which remained a central element of Soviet nationalities policy throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the state did indeed create a local cadre that increasingly consisted of non-Russians. Yet even *korenizatsiia* did not always yield the results the Bolsheviks had been hoping for. While the Soviet project for the building of nations through the creation of written languages, the advancement of non-Russians, and the establishment of ethnically defined administrative areas led to some displacement of traditional social bonds and loyalties, the 'nation' increasingly also functioned as an entity with its own social mobilisation potential, boosting ethnic national awareness but also fomenting conflict with neighbouring nationalities over borders and resources. Also, while the nationalities policy did raise the national awareness of the various peoples, this did not always go hand in hand with a strengthening of pro-Soviet attitudes. This was displayed all too clearly in the events following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, with the formation of anti-Soviet resistance movements in the North Caucasus mountains and widespread refusal to serve in the Red Army. Whereas earlier resistance to state mobilisation campaigns had often been associated with religious slogans, national and secular demands took centre stage during the resistance movement of the early 1940s.

Objectives and methods of this study

The history of the North Caucasus—and particularly Chechnia—contains a plentiful selection of bloody episodes that would readily allow this history to be portrayed as a sequence of conquests, suppression and uprisings against a Russian-dominated state. An examination of causes cannot, however, proceed from assumptions without first examining the specific historical circumstances and hence the objectives and motivations of the peoples involved at the time. The interpretation of the past always remains closely

entwined with the present, since the analysis cannot escape subjective interpretation on the part of the observer, who knows the end of the story. The historian can, however, strive to approach the subject by revealing the motives and interests of the protagonists of the relevant historical period, drawing on source materials from the time and examining the realities as they emerge from first-hand documents.

This book does not aspire to trace the history of distinct North Caucasian peoples in detail.[32] It instead seeks to address some concrete aspects of that history by examining the forms of resistance, the difficulties in adapting to the realities created after Russian conquest, and the societal changes that can be observed in the non-Russian-populated North Caucasus following its forcible incorporation into the Russian Empire. After a review of the key developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the initial discussion of the (little-researched) situation in the late tsarist period, from the second half of the nineteenth century up the outbreak of the revolutions of 1917, forms a crucial phase in the story as the time when Russia, for the first time, engaged closely with the subjugated peoples of the North Caucasus and the tsar's administrators took up the task of incorporating the Chechens and other peoples into a single imperial administrative structure. Most of the book is then devoted to developments after the revolutions of 1917 up to the watershed event of the deportations in 1943/4.

Hence the start of the period covered in this book has deliberately been set before the supposedly crucial event of the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in October 1917, since only in this way is it possible to trace the discontinuities, and some parallels, between the tsarist and Soviet periods. A longitudinal perspective is also valuable for the consideration of how the responses of individual peoples and communities to state policies changed over time and what kinds of new identities and loyalties formed as the result of interactions between state policies and societal responses to them. This is important, since through the analyses of these interactions, the prevailing identities and loyalties may be discerned, which allows conclusions to be drawn as to the stability of state–society arrangements in various phases of the story.

Central importance is given to the detailed reconstruction of specific events and processes, in particular the time of the revolutions of 1917 and the ensuing civil war, the phase of the total collectivisation and rebellions in 1929/30, and the time immediately before and during the Second World War in order to counter some half-truths and myths that continue to bedevil historical accounts to this day. Along with the discussion of key historical

events, this book also seeks to approach the history of the North Caucasus by tracing some specific individual biographies. Life stories provide the clearest illustration that the grounds prompting a person to act in a certain way were always complex and dependent on specific circumstances in an individual's life. Supplementing a discussion of general historical trajectories with biographical perspectives is the only way to escape the mono-dimensional, mono-chromatic perspectives that have dominated historiography on the North Caucasus to date.[33] Another reason for the importance of discussions of life stories is that this is the only means available for tracing the precise interactions between state and societal actors and, hence, determining the nature of local power relations. The character of the tsarist and Soviet state-building projects can only be understood by combining the analysis of 'high' politics with the 'thick description' of local circumstances.[34]

The book primarily focuses on the history of the eastern parts of the North Caucasus inhabited by the Chechens. The Chechen communities form the largest non-Russian Muslim population group in the North Caucasus, and their territory is among the parts of the North Caucasus from which unrest and uprisings have frequently originated over the entire period under consideration. On the basis of an examination of Chechnia, this book also seeks to formulate comparisons with the situation in other non-Russian-populated areas in the North Caucasus and the Islamic-populated periphery in general to understand the specificities of the Chechen case and the characteristics held in common with developments in other parts of the Caucasus and Russia.

There is a relatively solid body of source material available for studying the situation of the North Caucasus in the tsarist period. Edited source publications and substantial research contributions on the North Caucasus appeared as early as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[35] The reconstruction of individual life stories is more difficult, however. There are few if any written accounts by Chechens for the late tsarist era, for example. Insights into life at the time can, however, be gained from accounts by members of other North Caucasian peoples. A good example is the memoirs of Musa Alkhazovich Kundukhov (1818/20–1889), a general in the Imperial Army, himself of Ossetian origin. Kundukhov took part in the Russian wars against the peoples of the North Caucasus as a member of the Muslim upper social stratum, and in 1865, after the end of the military conquest, organised the resettlement of thousands of Chechens and members of other North Caucasian ethnicities to lands of the Ottoman Empire.[36]

Following the partial opening of the Russian archives in the 1990s, the situation of the North Caucasus and its peoples can now be analysed for the first time on the basis of source documents that were previously classified. The author of this work has drawn mainly on unpublished documents viewed in two archives: the State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii; GARF)[37] and the Russian Archive of Social and Political History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii; RGASPI). This book also contains selected documents from other archival holdings, including the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii; RGANI).[38] For the period of the Second World War in particular, the analysis also includes documents from the German military archive (Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militärarchiv; BArch Abt. MA) in Freiburg im Breisgau. The author also draws on documents from the Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic (Arkhivnoe upravlenie Pravitelstva Chechenskoi Respubliki), the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, as well as the Memorial Society Archive in Moscow (Arkhiv Mezhdunarodnogo obshchestva 'Memorial'). Most of the published photographs are from the Russian State Archive of Film- and Photo-Documents (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov; RGAKFD). Other valuable resources include the comprehensive source editions published on Soviet nationalities policy in the early Soviet period and on Chechnia.[39] With regard to the repeated uprisings during the Soviet era, I have also consulted compilations of documents recording the perspective of the Soviet secret police and state security agencies that were active in the North Caucasus.[40]

For the Soviet phase of the story, this book is therefore based on primary documents written by representatives of the state in various sectors and on all levels, from the Politburo of the Communist Party in Moscow to the soviets and party committees in individual regions, districts and cities. These documents, while clearly not always providing a consistent picture of the events and developments covered, do include detailed analyses that allow for the reconstruction of individual life stories. This is the case, for example, with Sheikh Ali Mitaev (ca. 1891–1925), one of the most influential personalities in Chechnia in the early 1920s. After being under close surveillance by the secret police from the beginning of Soviet rule in Chechnia, more particularly after his appointment in 1923 to the 'revolutionary committee' (*revkom*) of Chechnia, he was arrested in 1924 and murdered in 1925.[41]

Valuable insights into people's lives at the time are also provided by the memoirs of the well-known Chechen historian Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov (1908/10–1997), a Chechen Communist who held various posts in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR before he was arrested in 1937 and who escaped to Germany in 1942 after being released from prison. In his memoirs, which are only available in Russian, Avtorkhanov paints a far more detailed and nuanced picture of the situation, particularly in the early 1920s, than he does in his better-known publications in English.[42] The rare written accounts offering the perspective of a Chechen resistance fighter include, for the Soviet era, the diaries of Khasan Israilov (also known as Terloev, 1907–44), one of the key Chechen leaders of an anti-Soviet movement, who operated during the Second World War against Soviet armed forces.[43] Individual perspectives are complemented by various other memoirs, and the compilation of interviews by the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (HPSSS), which contains several hundred interviews with Soviet refugees, including from the North Caucasus, who emigrated to the West during or after the Second World War and were interviewed at the beginning of the 1950s.[44]

1

CONQUEST AND RESISTANCE

Russia's conquest of the Caucasus took place over an extended period of time and in stages. Already in the mid-sixteenth century, Tsar Ivan IV ('the Terrible') established diplomatic relations with the peoples north of the Caucasian massif, had the first fortresses built, and settled Cossacks in the region. However, Russia's presence in the Caucasus remained relatively weak compared with that of its great rivals, the Ottoman Empire in the south-west and Persia in the south-east. This remained true even when Tsar Peter I ('the Great') advanced southwards in the first quarter of the eighteenth century and made his first military conquests beyond the Caucasus mountains. Yet the Russian forces were unable to hold on to the territories they had seized, which included Baku and Derbent, and withdrew. In Kabarda, too, Russia's influence remained limited.

Developments beginning in the mid-eighteenth century led to a lasting geopolitical watershed when the Russian Empire, under Catherine II ('the Great'), engaged in a series of protracted campaigns to gradually push the Ottomans and Persians out of the entire Caucasian region. After achieving successes against the Ottomans and suppressing several revolts of North Caucasian peoples, by the first quarter of the nineteenth century the tsar's empire had extended its influence over an area that reached from the Kuban River in the west to the Terek in the east. The only areas in the larger Caucasus that remained outside of Russia's sphere of influence were those of the Adyghe tribes settling south of the Kuban (generally referred to as

'Cherkessians' or 'Circassians') and the—geographically unconnected—Chechen communities living in the east of the Caucasus as well as the Dagestani peoples. The mountainous areas of the North Caucasus and the peoples who lived there were now hemmed in by the Russian presence both in the north and in the south.

During their campaign of conquest beginning in the early nineteenth century, the Russian troops encountered unexpected resistance in the north-eastern part of the Caucasus. Building on the achievements of two predecessors from Avar communities, Gazi Muhammad and Hamza Bek, it was Imam Shamil, another ethnic Avar, who for the first time managed to unify Chechen and Dagestani communities as part of a Muslim state entity ('imamate').[1] This was remarkable because these communities were not only unfamiliar with centralist forms of government but also because Shamil introduced the legal system of sharia (Arabic: *sharīʿah*, 'religious law'), which in many ways contradicted the local legal traditions collectively known as *adat* (Arabic: *ʿādāt*, 'customs'). Only in 1859, after a quarter-century of nearly uninterrupted warfare, did Shamil surrender to Russian troops at the Dagestani town of Gunib. The areas settled by the Cherkess were not conquered until 1864.

The Caucasus wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not only mark a fundamental turning point in the histories of the indigenous peoples; they have also long occupied such an important place in the commemorative culture of the North Caucasians that they must inevitably be included in any discussion of the topic. For Russia, too, the conquest of the Caucasus—or the 'Great Caucasus War', as it is often referred to in Russian historiography—was one of the most important chapters of its imperial expansion. Though the history of the Russian conquest continues to be studied to this day, historiographic perspectives have repeatedly changed over time in line with the societal context and the intellectual and political tendencies of the age. While Russian imperial historiography in the nineteenth century leaned towards the glorification of war and an emphasis on the superiority of Russian civilisation,[2] early Soviet historiography interpreted developments through new ideological coordinates: now, it was no longer the 'pacification' of these 'wild mountain peoples' by imperial Russia, but their 'heroic resistance' to 'imperialism' and the 'tsarist yoke' that was glorified. After the deportations of several North Caucasian peoples in 1943/4, Soviet historians made an about-face: while the Chechens and Ingush vanished completely as objects of historiographic enquiry, Shamil's movement was now pictured as anti-

democratic and reactionary. It was not until after Stalin's death and the subsequent de-Stalinisation campaign in 1956 that the first careful attempts were made to rehabilitate Shamil and his resistance and to ensure that the peoples of the North Caucasus were awarded their proper place in Soviet history.[3]

Despite divergent ideological starting points, Russian imperial and Soviet historiography had at least one thing in common: both were operating in the service of the state and used history to communicate a viewpoint that largely served state interests and subscribed to prevalent views and values. The same might be said, however, for some of the accounts published in the West. The North Caucasus had been popularised early through the writings of European travelling scholars who had ventured to explore this largely unknown region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4]

Nevertheless, it was not until the Russian wars of conquest and the resistance led by Shamil in the nineteenth century[5] that the North Caucasus entered the broader European consciousness, not least through translations of Russian Romantic authors such as Lermontov, Pushkin, and later also Tolstoi, who gave literary form to Russia's long war against the peoples north of the Caucasus.[6] The first major work of historiography on the Caucasus wars was penned in 1908 by John Frederick Baddeley, and it was in no way inferior to the monumental historical accounts composed by Russian imperial authors of the nineteenth century.[7] If the interest of Western historians in the North Caucasus began to flag after the 1917 October Revolution, it experienced a revival through the study of 'Soviet Islam' and its historical roots beginning in the 1960s.[8] Generally speaking, Western researchers, too, have long focused on the military and political aspects of the conquest and, in doing so, have tacitly sided with the subjugated non-Russian peoples to the extent that they interpreted all developments in the region as reactions to Russia's policy of military expansion. Only after the dissolution of the USSR and the opening of the Soviet archives did a new generation of historians arise—both in Russia and in the West—who also began to take into account the spiritual, religious and social backgrounds of the North Caucasians' resistance.[9]

This chapter aims to provide a schematic overview of the main historical tendencies and controversies in the literature on the Caucasus wars. In this context, it will in particular attempt to trace the changes and characteristics that can be observed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in terms of both the external features of Russia's advance and the forms of resistance against it. How did the situation in the North Caucasus manifest itself during

the various historical epochs? Which features were distinctive of Russian policy, and how did individual peoples react to them? How important were religion and societal structure for the resistance, and which societal changes could be observed in the context of Russia's conquest and the state-building efforts under Imam Shamil?

Russia and the North Caucasus in the eighteenth century

In retrospect, Russia's imperial advance to the Caucasus appears to have followed a well-conceived strategy that, while it may have had a variety of motivations during the individual epochs, was nevertheless directed consistently towards the goal of expansion and subjugation of the various peoples.[10] However, what appears to have been the 'grand strategy of the Russian Empire' was not necessarily seen as such by contemporaries.[11] Until late in the eighteenth century, the extension of Russia's sphere of influence was primarily the result of a local dynamic arising not so much from grand strategic visions in St Petersburg, but from the personal ambitions of certain Russian generals and the concrete opportunities on the ground. Indeed, in St Petersburg, opinions diverged as to the economic and geostrategic usefulness of expansion southwards.

The controversy surrounding this expansion is especially evident in the case of Russian–Georgian relations. Georgia, whose 'golden age' as a powerful medieval kingdom had become a remote memory by the eighteenth century, was now divided into various rival royalties and dynasties. As such, it was subject not only to threats from the Ottomans and Persians but also to the risks of constant raids by Dagestani 'mountaineers', specifically the Lezgin people. At the request by Georgian King Irakli II, Russia placed his kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, situated in the eastern part of present-day Georgia, under its protection in the 1783 Treaty of Georgievsk and stationed troops in Tbilisi (Tiflis).* However, soon thereafter, St Petersburg decided to withdraw its forces. Accordingly, Persian troops were able to pillage the city unhindered in 1795. Only afterwards did Moscow decide to maintain a permanent troop presence in the South Caucasus in order to uphold its geopolitical influence. However, in violation of the treaty, Russia permanently annexed the kingdom

* In Russian sources published before 1936, Tbilisi is generally referred to under the foreign name Tiflis. Here and throughout this book, I will refer to Tbilisi.

in 1801 by deposing the Georgian king, abolishing the monarchy and transferring the administration of Georgia to a Russian general.[12]

Developments in the North Caucasus followed a similar path. After Russian victories, the Ottomans were forced to cede important bases on the Black Sea under the terms of the Peace Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774). The Crimean Khanate was declared to be independent, but was later annexed by Russia. While the text of the treaty remained vague when it came to the exact borders of Russia in the North Caucasus and the role of Russia in Georgia and Kabarda, the following years witnessed an incremental expansion of Russian influence both to the north and the south of the Caucasus massif. There is no doubt that the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca marked an important turning point in Russia's strategy in the Caucasus. It should not, however, be regarded as the starting point of the further expansion of the tsar's empire in the North Caucasus. Contrary to a view that has gained broad acceptance in the literature, there were serious doubts in political circles in St Petersburg whether a further Russian expansion after the victory over the Ottomans was actually in the empire's best interests.[13] It was only in 1777 that Catherine II agreed to the plan of fortifying the so-called Caucasus Military Line, a belt of Russian forts and fortified Cossack settlements stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and to push this line further southwards.[14] Russia's decision to adopt a more offensive stance was determined not only by the victory over the Ottomans but also by the fact that, much like in the case of Georgia, Russia was aware of the pro-Russian sympathies of certain North Caucasian peoples, in particular the princes of Kabarda, and courted them accordingly. For some of these local potentates, Russia appeared as a viable ally that was capable of providing effective protection from other external powers and strengthening their own position vis-à-vis other local powerbrokers.[15]

While the tsar's military commanders did not hesitate to employ brute force in achieving their expansionist goals, they also tried to forge ties with the individual peoples through deft diplomatic manoeuvring. In this respect, the case of Dagestan was a particular success for Russia: many documents survive from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in which Dagestani khans and village provosts solemnly place themselves under Russian protection.[16] We also have various such statements of obeisance from Ingush and Chechen communities for this same period. For example, the German Baltic naturalist and explorer Johann Anton Güldenstädt (1745–81), who travelled and studied southern Russia and the Caucasus at the request of Catherine II, remarks in his notes on the Ingush that a

Russian officer had accepted their 'oath of allegiance' in 1770. Although the Ingush were a free people and elected their own elders and judges, they had so far remained 'under the protection of the Kabardian and Alkhaian princes', Güldenstädt noted. '[T]hrough the agency of the commander of Kizliar, Colonel Nemptsch [Nempch], however, they exchanged these puny patrons for Russia's protection. It is estimated that they can raise 5000 mounted fighting men.'[17] With reference to the Ingush, in addition to the 1770 dating, the historical sources also refer to the year 1810, when they again swore fealty to Russia and 'voluntarily' and 'solemnly' entered into alliance with the Russian Empire.[18] It was a similar situation in the areas settled by Chechens. They, too, were fending off foreign power claims—from Kabardian and Kumyk princes as well as from Dagestani khanates. Thus, documents from that era refer to oaths of fealty given by Chechen communities in the year 1781 and again in 1807.[19]

In accepting such pledges of submission, and through its coalitions with local princes, notables and clan chiefs, Russia fell back on traditions that had proven successful since Ivan IV. In the Caucasus, since the days of Catherine II if not before, Russia supplemented this policy by involving cooperative local leaders in the national system of rank and hierarchy. In Georgia, Armenia and to some extent also in Kabarda, Russia sought to integrate parts of the aristocratic elite directly into the imperial system, but in other instances, St Petersburg left local power structures largely untouched and tried to project its power by way of local potentates. This latter form of alliance-building was typical of the forms of Russian governance that emerged in the Muslim-dominated areas of the North Caucasus from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards.[20]

Within this feudal relationship, the bestowing of service rank involved more than simple honorifics. The local rulers in question were given a specific salary, and diplomas issued by the tsar's imperial administration confirmed their power and credentials. Russia supported such local potentates not only politically but also with military backing if needed, which allowed them to establish order within their bailiwick and crack down on anti-Russian tendencies. In return, the vassals stated their loyalty towards Russia, supplied hostages and might permit Russian troops to be stationed on their territory. For instance, in a communiqué of 1819, Russian General Aleksei Petrovich Ermolov (1777–1861), supreme commander of the Russian forces in the Caucasus from 1816 to 1827, ordered the ruler of the Dagestani town of Akusha not to interfere with established forms of administration and

traditional customs, and to ensure that his territory did not become a 'haven for adversaries and enemies of Russia'.[21]

While the tsar's imperial administration always viewed such a coalition as establishing the perpetual submission and incorporation of a certain people into the Russian Empire, the new alliance partners did not always interpret it the same way. From the perspective of the various peoples in question, alliances were often only binding for as long as they served their own interests. In no circumstance did the peoples regard this as prejudicial to their ancestral liberties.[22] These varying perceptions led to conflicts when Russia made up its mind to treat its own understanding as the only valid one. Any resistance was interpreted as a transgression and a form of 'uprising' (*vosstanie*) against Russia, framing the subsequent military suppression of such rebellions as a legitimate action. Several large-scale rebellions against Russian rule coincided directly with Russia's pivot towards a more aggressive policy of expansion in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Subsequently, the Russian side would treat pledges of submission as cause for dealing harshly with those who resisted Russian demands or disagreed with Russia's interpretation of the relationship between overlord and vassal.[23]

Due to such differences of opinion in the interpretation of vassalage, certain Kabardian princes took up arms in a major revolt against Russia in 1779.[24] This uprising, the fact of which was deliberately suppressed by Soviet historiography—most likely because it contradicted the state's official propaganda of 'friendship among peoples'—was significant because it offered the first indication of the future trajectory of Russian policy in the North Caucasus.[25] Although the leaders of Kabarda had sworn fealty to Russia in the spring of 1777 and had given high-ranking dignitaries as hostages, in accordance with diplomatic practice at the time, a disagreement broke out only months later, leading to the aforementioned revolt. The Kabardians disagreed with the Russian interpretation of the Peace Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, according to which unification made them subjects of Russia. Rather, they insisted, Russia had undertaken to protect them from external enemies without service in return. As far as the Kabardians were concerned, they had been, 'since the time of Tsar Ivan Vasil'evich [i.e. Ivan IV]', allies or guests (*kunaky*) of Russia, but not subjects of the empire, as Petr Grigorevich Butkov (1775–1857) had already noted in his three-volume history of the Caucasus, published in 1869.[26]

The Russian rulers had the rebellion quashed violently; subsequently, Russia weakened the Kabardian nobility further by declaring itself the

protector of the rural population and of the tributary peoples living within the jurisdiction of the principality of Kabarda. Communities thus liberated from Kabardian rule now sought direct contact with Russia to secure their privileges. The Ossetians, who had placed themselves under Russia's protection in 1774, received the right to settle in the plain.[27] Occasionally, members of certain ethnic groups also declared their willingness to convert to Christianity in order to enjoy the protection afforded by Russia. For instance, in 1787, Karachaian and Balkar communities approached Russia asking for conversion in order to gain 'protection from the Kabardians'.[28] Conversely, Russia's policy of religious proselytisation was quite limited in the second half of the eighteenth century. Christianity was to be strengthened where it was already prevalent, as was the case among the Ossetians. But efforts at spreading Christianity among the Muslims of the Caucasus through the Orthodox Church were generally a low priority in Russian policy. St Petersburg permitted missionary campaigns where they seemed helpful in the context of certain political and denominational constellations, and if they did not disrupt the stabilisation of rule within the empire's dominion.[29]

Chechen idiosyncrasies

In the long history of Russia's encroachment, the Chechens had also repeatedly decided in favour of alliances and oaths of allegiance to Russia. As part of the propaganda on the 'friendship among peoples', late Soviet scholarship in particular began to celebrate these acts of allegiances as constituting the amalgamation of these peoples with Russia and to refer to the dates in question—and the year 1781 in particular—as official unification dates.[30] However, this perspective fails to recognise that, for the Chechens, like other peoples, the concept of 'submission' (*poddanstvo*) had fundamentally different connotations than for the Russians. From the perspective of the 'subjugated' (*poddanye*), such agreements never constituted more than temporary alliances as expressions of short-term policies, offering protection from third parties through association with a strong external partner.

This can be seen simply from the fact that expressions of allegiance appear to have occurred relatively frequently. For instance, Güldenstädt notes that the Chechens did not hesitate, during their raids against Cossack settlements, to take on Russian troops, though these were often superior in numbers; the Chechens would 'aggrieve and assail them; however, if their assaults go awry even once, they scatter, abandoning their villages altogether, swear the most

solemn oaths of subservience, and send their dignitaries as hostages to Kizliar. However, at the first opportunity, these faithless wretches go back to their treacherous ways.'[31]

This assessment applied not just to the Chechens but also to other North Caucasian peoples. In 1804, even the Ossetians—generally regarded as especially loyal—rebelled against what they viewed as unfair compulsory labour and levies imposed by the Russian *pristav* (headman).[32] Not even the renewed subjugation of the Ingush in 1810 could prevent the outbreak of repeated unrest in Ingushetia during the course of the nineteenth century. However, especially in the specific case of the Ingush, it is important to note that, and unlike the Chechens, they were generally viewed by representatives of the Russian Empire as peaceful and not overtly anti-Russian, at least after the 1810 treaty. This positive image would somewhat suffer after the Ingush converted to Islam in the 1830s, but still little would change over the following decades when it came to the basically favourable view of this people. Thus, the Russian rulers tended not to assess the repeated Ingush raids and revolts of the nineteenth century as evidence of 'religious fanaticism', as they often did in the case of the Chechens, but to accept them as part of the way of life in the Caucasus. The Russian conquerors viewed the refusal of the Ingush to join Shamil's imamate as a vindication of their beliefs regarding this ethnic group.[33] It is unclear whether this did indeed reflect a pro-Russian stance on the part of the Ingush, or whether it may be better understood as a result of their rejection of political Islam as propagated by Shamil in his theocratic state. While they were not part of Shamil's state, the Ingush did not permit themselves to be co-opted by the Russians to take an active part in the struggle against Shamil either.[34]

In the case of the Chechens, another important characteristic to bear in mind when considering such gestures of submission was that under the anarchic conditions of a clan-based society, these were never seen as agreements extending to the entire population. In contrast to later Soviet historiography, and even to certain contemporary Russian historical narratives, which often fail to mention this critical aspect when referencing the 1781 agreement, Butkov had already noted that the Chechens in the settlement of Atagi stubbornly refused to swear the oath of fealty of 1781. The inhabitants of Atagi supplied no hostages to the Russians and stated they would not tolerate any foreign rulers on their territory.[35] The same attitude was noted in 1807, when the Chechens gathered for a major assembly with representatives of 104 settlements to submit to Russia once more: no representatives of the mountain areas were in attendance.[36]

It was in this context over the following years that Count Pavel Sergeevich Potemkin (1743–96), whom Catherine II had appointed supreme commander of the Russian forces in the Caucasus, ordered military expeditions against those communities that had refused to ally themselves with Russia or had broken their 'oath of allegiance'. In doing so, however, Potemkin laid the ground for later unrest that would spread from Chechnia to large parts of the North Caucasus. The most important leader of the resistance was the legendary Sheikh Mansur, whose struggle is generally regarded in the literature as one of the first 'wars of liberation' under the banner of jihad (Arabic: *jihād*, literally 'striving', also often referred to as *gazavat* in the North Caucasus context[37]). Russia's war against Mansur, who joined up with Ottoman forces against the Russian Empire in the final phase of his revolt, not only created a negative perception of Chechens but would also help to entrench the notion that Islam was a threat that might allow Chechnia and other North Caucasian peoples (the Ingush did not participate in Mansur's war) to link up with external forces against Russia.[38] It is generally accepted among historians that Mansur's rebellion ended in the year 1791, when the sheikh was captured at the fortress of Anapa.[39]

Butkov's remarks regarding the conquest of the Chechens encapsulate a trait of Chechen societies at the time, which were not represented by any kind of superordinate political authority. Even today, there is ultimately no final consensus over the precise structure of Chechen society and the functions of the individual units of societal organisation. This applies in particular to the Chechen clans or the *teip* and the political associations, the *tukhum*. On the one hand, the problem with describing the societal structure is that already in their earliest descriptions from the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian ethnologists tended to overemphasise the significance of the clans, even though contemporary sources have very little to say about them.[40] Notions of Chechen societal structures and the importance of the *teip* are strongly influenced by the work produced in the late Soviet period, especially by that of Chechen writer Magomet Amaevich Mamakaev (1910–73).[41] However, Mamakaev's model of family relations, which is based on a strictly hierarchical structure, must be treated with caution. More recent research shows that this model, describing a linear social development from the nuclear family via the extended clans to the *teip* and *tukhum*, does not correspond to the realities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[42]

A *teip* constituted a community whose members claimed a common ancestor, making them nominal blood relations. In actual fact, however, often

no real consanguinity existed, simply because there were many outsiders among the clan members who hailed from another *teip* or from non-Chechen communities. The most important aspect of a *teip* was ancestor worship. All those who claimed the same common (mythical) ancestor and subscribed to a (fictitious) genealogy were considered members of a *teip*. The cult of the ancestors, which was underpinned by religious ceremonies, was the basis of all clan members' shared identity. At least in the mountains, this extended to *teip* mosques, *teip* saints, and sacred places such as a *teip* mountain or a cemetery that bore the name of the clan. While the members of each *teip* seem originally to have all lived in the same region, the encroachment of Russia led to increased migration from the mountains to the plains, and thus to a fragmentation of the territorial unity of the *teip*. The *auls* of the plains were therefore often populated with members of different *teips*, each of whom occupied their own quarter. Cohesion among the *teip* members who were sometimes dispersed across the lowlands was maintained by way of the shared ancestral *teip* lands in the mountains. In terms of societal organisation, there was an obligation of mutual assistance within the *teip*. Thus, members would flee from the plains to their relatives in the highlands in case of danger. While there was no obligation for mutual military assistance in case of external threats, such resistance could be organised by clan members in the mountains. Theft within a *teip* was proscribed, but raids on other *teips* were a way of gaining honour. Also, marriage within a *teip* was considered the preferred option.[43] There were considerable differences between the roughly 135 *teips* that existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[44] While the greater *teips* boasted several thousand members, the smaller ones only had a few hundred. It was a matter of rivalry among the *teips* who had the oldest and thus the most honourable ancestors. A *teip* might boost its standing by acquiring as much land in the plains as possible to add to the ancestral lands in the mountains.[45]

The widespread belief that the *tukhum* was some kind of defensive alliance among various *teips*, as Mamakaev claims, is in all likelihood wrong. This would not have been possible for the simple reason that the clan members settled in territorially dispersed areas. Rather, the *tukhum* constituted a self-contained political unit of a *teip* in their respective areas of settlement, which in the mountains might encompass several *auls*, but which in a larger *aul* with several *tukhums* only covered a part of the village. Politically, the *tukhum* served the purpose of electing an elder who would manage matters of concern to this institution, both internally and externally. In the mountains, where the

clans lived in homogenous territories, it probably often consisted of a council of elders recruited from all of a village's clan members. The confusion surrounding the term *tukhum* in the literature can be traced all the way back to early sources that did not distinguish between the terms *teip* and *tukhum* and would occasionally confuse them.[46]

The elders played the main role in the political life of the Chechens and other North Caucasians. They were individuals with great authority, usually well advanced in years, but often also with reputations as scholars. It was their job to coordinate societal and economic life in their quarter or village in accordance with *adat*. The precepts of this customary law—often only handed down through oral tradition—governed the life of each individual as well as the day-to-day existence of the clan down to the last detail. Not much changed in this respect after the conversion to Islam, where the law of sharia constituted a similar body of norms claiming universal validity. Since many principles of sharia were incompatible with the precepts of *adat*, tensions would arise in the mid-nineteenth century when Imam Shamil was trying to absorb the Chechens into his sharia-based state.[47]

Each elder was the sole arbiter of the law in his own *tukhum*, while in the *aul*, the council of judges consisted of an assembly of all elders. However, neither the elder nor the council of elders had the power to enforce rulings. Rather, the elders sought to mediate between the conflict parties, despite having no executive authority of their own. In order to ensure that judgements still had the greatest possible degree of authority, hearings were often held at sacred places or near the mosque, if one was available. The most important role of the elders at assemblies was to coordinate between various unifications of Chechen political–territorial factions. And since we usually see reference to councils of elders when the sources refer to the conclusion of treaties with Russia, it is reasonable to assume that the elders also represented the interests of their communities vis-à-vis third parties.[48]

Within the village, however, the most important body was the village assembly, in which every male participated. This assembly decided all important matters, and every male resident had the right to call an assembly and state their opinion, although the elders and other respected personages, including the *qadis* (Arabic: *qāḍī*, 'judge who applies sharia law') and mullahs (honorific title for a Sufi master, often also used as a general term for a religious leader, Muslim legal scholar or simply Islamic teacher[49]) enjoyed a privileged status as speakers. The village assembly was especially involved in deliberating and handing down decisions on important matters such as

agriculture or distribution of land, or when general questions of policymaking were involved. If one part of the village disagreed with a given decision, the village might split into two camps, or one group of residents might leave altogether.[50]

In the literature, the Chechen, Ingush and Dagestani mountain communities are generally labelled 'stateless' societies as they lacked an overarching political authority. However, they did occasionally join up into larger-scale amalgamations. Russia's military advances from the late eighteenth century onwards brought significant changes in this respect, and Russian victories over the Kabardians and Kumyks relieved the lowland Chechens of the tributary yoke they had imposed. The villages were now independent and free to unite politically as they saw fit. As Russia increased its pressure on the Chechen lowlands towards the end of the eighteenth century, villages would sometimes join up into loosely organised political–territorial associations named for rivers or other geographic features in the region (e.g. the 'Martankhoi' on the River Martan, or the 'Gikhoi' on the River Gekhi). The same development was seen in the mountains as well. Since the clans here settled in more close-knit patterns than those in the lowlands, the political amalgamations here were accordingly more homogenous. The 'Nokhchmakhoi' from the part of Chechnia called 'Ichkeriia' constituted the largest union (this was the part of the mountain region from which most of the lowland Chechens, who called themselves 'Nokhchi', had originated).[51]

Ethnically mixed border regions produced particularly distinct regional identities that remain defining factors to this day. For instance, Chechens settling in the territory of what is today northern Dagestan developed a distinct identity of their own due to their proximity to the Kumyk people of the steppe.[52] Quite a few of these Chechens, known as 'Akkintsy' or 'Aukhovtsy', traced their origins to the Kumyks.[53] The mountain communities of Dagestan were organised much like the Chechen *teip* and *tukhum* as a kind of primordial democracy made up of loosely associated federations.[54] Among the Ingush, too, whose societal structure was very similar to that of the Chechens despite certain differences, a drive towards unification in the form of political–territorial units (tribes) could be observed after Russia's incursion into their settlement areas.[55]

Nevertheless, the political character of these peoples remained highly decentralised, as the contemporary Russian conquerors soon discovered. This was reflected first of all in the fact that there was initially no overarching term

for the Chechens and Ingush. It was probably not until the Persian campaign of Tsar Peter I in the 1720s that the ethnonym 'Chechens' (*chechentsy*) began to enter general use as the collective term for the people whom the tsar's soldiers had encountered during their southwards march near the *aul* of 'Chechen' (sometimes also spelled 'Chachen'), which no longer exists today. It was also during this time that the name 'Ingush' (plural *ingushi*) must have entered the Russian language, having been derived by the Russians from the name of the Ingush settlement of 'Ongusht' (or 'Angusht').[56]

It seems that, for a long time, the Chechens themselves did not appreciate this name, judging by the comments of Russian military officers. For instance, we read in the notes of Russian General Milentii Iakovlevich Ol'shevskii (1816–95), who was posted to the Caucasus in 1840 and would remain stationed in the region for a quarter-century, that 'the inhabitants [of Chechnia] do not call themselves Chechens and are almost ashamed of that name'. He writes that they instead referred to themselves as the 'People of God' and as the 'Nokhche', referencing the mythical ancestor of the Chechens. Or they might name themselves after one of his twelve sons who had founded the individual Chechen communities. However, according to Ol'shevskii, it was the young in particular who not only rejected the term 'Chechens' but also spurned the moniker 'Nokhche'. Rather, they preferred to name themselves after the communities or *auls* from which they hailed.[57]

According to Russian ethnographer V.P. Pozhidaev, who travelled the Caucasus in the 1920s, the name 'Chechens' remained unpopular until well into the Soviet era. Pozhidaev, too, mentions that the members of this people often referred to themselves as 'Nokhchii', which would translate to 'people', 'but they preferred even more to name themselves after the designations of the *auls* and communities from whence they came'.[58] The term 'Vainakhi' (or 'Veinakhi', literally 'our people'), on the other hand, which is generally used today as a collective name for the ethnically and linguistically closely related Chechens and Ingush, entered into use only as a result of Soviet-promoted state-building processes in the 1920s and 1930s.[59] It was always clear to contemporary observers, however, that the various Chechen communities constituted a 'distinct people', as Ol'shevskii also emphasises. As 'evidence', he cites the language of the Chechens, which he says differs 'markedly from the languages of the other residents of the Caucasus'.[60]

Life and death on the 'Line'

Initially, the expansion of Russia's influence in the Caucasus did not constitute a redrawing of a fixed external border between Russia and the non-Russian indigenous population of the North Caucasus. Russia did keep pushing the Caucasus Military Line further south as part of its expansion policy by constructing new fortresses and settling Cossack communities in reorganised fortified settlements, the so-called *stanitsy* (singular *stanitsa*), in the border marches. However, even until the beginning of Russia's massive campaign of conquest in the nineteenth century, this line was not so much a barrier or bulwark, as most of the works on the Caucasus war would suggest. Rather, the term was used to describe a frontier that was marked by minor conflicts as well as manifold forms of exchange and trade among the peoples settling on both sides.[61]

Encounters between the indigenous non-Russian residents of the Caucasus and the mainly ethnic Slavic Cossacks were especially intense. The latter had been advancing from the north since the middle of the sixteenth century towards the river plains of the Sunzha and the Terek, where they encountered the Chechens, who migrated from the mountains to the plains at around the same time. Major Cossack communities settled in the North Caucasus, including in the Kuban region. Since the Cossacks were largely the descendants of people who had fled to the periphery of the empire in order to elude the authority of the Russian rulers, many of them had an ambiguous relationship with the imperial state. By the time the Terek Cossack community was formally accepted into Russian service in 1721, they had already lived in the Caucasus region for 200 years as independent settlers, sometimes also as bandits and highwaymen. Ultimately, they were just another entity in the ethnic mix of the North Caucasus—and as a group, they were not very different from the other peoples of the region in terms of their way of life, communal organisation or external appearance. The close proximity of different groups was also reflected in the fact that many people spoke two or three other languages in addition to their own. The influence of the indigenous non-Russian population on the Cossacks and other Slavic settlers seems to have been disproportionately higher than the reciprocal impact of the latter. The Cossacks not only dressed in the garb of the North Caucasian peoples but they also ate Caucasian dishes and danced to the same music as the Caucasians. Often, Cossack youths refrained from speaking Russian among themselves altogether.[62] While the Cossacks did view themselves as

representatives of the tsar, that did not mean that they were prepared to give up their traditions and political liberties.[63]

In the eyes of outsiders, the Caucasus constituted an ethnic mosaic of often perplexing diversity. But that was not how the locals perceived the situation. It was precisely the close proximity of the various ethnic groups that reinforced a sense of their own identity. But transitions were fluid, and ethnicity—which outsiders mostly assessed based on language—was just one of many criteria for defining membership in a social group, and often not even the most important. Identity was further asserted based on important factors such as shared ancestry and local communal life, but ultimately, and crucially, also on religious affiliation. However, religion did not necessarily constitute a barrier either, as illustrated by the case of Semen Semenovich Atarshchikov (1807–45), a simple Cossack officer from the *stanitsa* of Naur, who spoke not only Russian and Arabic but also Chechen (his father being a native Chechen) and Kumyk (since his mother was a Nogai by birth).[64]

As an expert on the cultures and languages of the North Caucasian peoples, Atarshchikov was all but predestined for military service in the region. Accordingly, his career progressed quickly from the early 1830s onwards, when he began working as a translator in St Petersburg and joined the Circassian Guard. After being promoted and decorated, he was ordered to return to the Caucasus, where he was finally appointed as overseer of the Karachaians in the north-western part of the region in 1836. He won the respect and the confidence of the Russian military leadership, which sent him repeatedly on special missions to the mountain regions. In all these missions, Atarshchikov conducted himself with distinction. However, in 1841, there was a sudden rupture when he deserted and fled to the Adyghe for reasons unknown. Four months later, though, he decided to return to Russia and to seek clemency. Tsar Nicholas I did grant this request, but at the same time, he ordered that Atarshchikov be posted to Finland, which was most likely an expression of distrust towards this Cossack officer. This suspicion appears to have been well founded, since shortly before his transfer, Atarshchikov decided once more to flee for the hills; he converted to Islam, married the daughter of a local nobleman and subsequently took up an active career as a raider along the frontline. In 1845, Atarshchikov was shot and severely injured by his colleague, Cossack Fedor Fenev. Fenev had joined Atarshchikov and taken refuge in the mountains with him, but then decided to switch sides and to betray Atarshchikov. By the time the Cossack

forces arrived to arrest Atarshchikov, he had already succumbed to his gunshot injuries.

Indeed, it was not unusual during the Caucasus wars of the nineteenth century for Russian or Cossack soldiers to desert from the army, seek refuge among the respective communities and even convert to Islam. In fact, this occurred far more often than Russian imperial officers cared to admit. But the opposite case was frequently seen as well. Thus, among the Cossacks one might also find members of North Caucasian ethnicities who were fleeing blood-feuds or who, after being taken prisoner, had married into the Cossack community.[65]

Economically, too, there had always been a lively exchange. Trade between the various peoples of the North Caucasus and the Cossacks, in which Russian soldiers were often also involved, took place in the forts, in Cossack settlements and at certain trading posts along the Caucasus Military Line; sometimes it was also handled via third parties, such as Armenian merchants. Especially at the trading posts along the Line, but also in individual Cossack *stanitsy* and Russian forts, the exchange was so intense that the Chechens and Ingush would sometimes settle directly adjacent to such locations or in the vicinity.[66] The North Caucasian peoples traded in cattle, grain, timber, arms, furs, garments, leather goods and other craft goods for salt, fish, caviar, cotton, iron and manufactured goods. Another important aspect of local commerce was the trade in hostages. One quirk of this trade was that the Cossacks carried weapons purchased from the North Caucasian peoples, who were experts in making sabres (singular *shashka*), daggers (singular *kinzhal'*) and muskets. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, when the confrontation with Imam Shamil reached its peak, Russian attempts to regulate or curtail this trade as part of their military campaigns were only partially successful.[67]

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that this long history of contact gave rise to harmonious relations or mutual appreciation. The reality of everyday life on the Line was quite grim. It is true that the Cossacks also campaigned against the Chechens, and that Russian troops often burned down entire villages in their military operations against the non-Russian peoples. However, especially among the North Caucasians peoples, raiding—together with cattle herding and farming—essentially constituted a sort of 'side line job', which 'many of them make into their main endeavour', as Güldenstädt had already remarked in his description of the Chechens. According to the German Baltic explorer, these raids constituted 'minor out-and-out wars', in which the Chechens 'plunder, pillage, and burn'. 'To this end',

he continues, 'they are all armed and on a full-blown military footing, with equipment similar to that of the Cossacks.' On their raids, he explains,

> they haul people off into bondage, drive away their cattle, ambush individual detachments and drive away the Cossacks' horses. They butcher anybody that resists them and burn the *stanitsy* whenever possible. Thus, in 1774, they attacked and looted the *stanitsa* of Naur and drove away more than one thousand horses belonging to a Cossack regiment.[68]

The 'minor out-and-out wars' referenced here describe the form of warfare that was prevalent at the time, with the main aim of taking goods from adversaries and to weaken them through deprivation of resources.[69] Logistically, such common raids were organised by the village or the clan, with young men participating. Such military associations, which were frequently encountered among the Chechens, the Dagestani mountain communities and other peoples of the North Caucasus, and which young unmarried men would join from age fourteen upwards, were important societal institutions. The youths would spend the winter and early spring living communally in specially fortified houses, where they would practise martial arts. In the warmer months, they would go raiding. However, more important than the loot was that each individual should prove his mettle in combat, and thus conduct himself in accordance with the masculine warrior ethos of the Caucasus.[70] While the women were responsible for tilling the field, tradition required that the men take responsibility for animal husbandry, the honour and safety of the family in blood-feuds, and warfare (although, in the plains, males increasingly worked in the fields and women were relegated to managing the household).[71] These associations of young males not only formed the basis of raiding parties; they also constituted networks that could be activated for armed resistance in case of external threats.[72] However, at no point were such raids carried out as campaigns of territorial conquest, which would have made little sense given that these peoples lacked a modern concept of statehood.[73]

It was only the massive interference of the Russian Empire in local and regional affairs from the first quarter of the nineteenth century onwards that skewed the fragile balance that had emerged over the centuries between the peoples settling along the Caucasus Military Line. Although the non-Russians living in the North Caucasus did experience far-reaching societal and political changes, these were initially caused not so much by Russia's wars of conquest, but by Imam Shamil's efforts—indirectly fostered by the external threat—at building a state based on sharia law.

The 'Great Caucasus War' and Shamil's imamate

Well into the first decade of the nineteenth century, Russia appears to have seen no need to subdue the Chechens south of the Terek and other peoples living mainly in the mountain areas of the North Caucasus. The main goal was to secure the southern borders and trade routes along the shore of the Caspian Sea from Astrakhan via Derbent to Baku and Astrabad. In the north, Russia was initially content to keep the North Caucasian peoples in check through fortresses along the Caucasus Military Line as well as individual military expeditions. By the end of the eighteenth century, Russia had succeeded in rolling back Ottoman influence in the southern parts of the Caucasus. In a series of gruelling wars between 1804 and 1813, the Russian Empire managed to displace Persia from the region as well (the Treaty of Gulistan was signed in 1813). Only now did Russia return its attention to the North Caucasus.

The conquest of these territories was prompted, first and foremost, not by an immediate military threat to Russia from the peoples living there, but by the political aim of expanding Russia's rule to the entire Caucasus and eliminating any 'blank spots' that remained outside of Russian control. The huge military, financial and human resources that Russia would invest over several decades in its campaigns against the Chechens and Dagestanis in particular were entirely disproportional to the military–strategic importance of subjugating these peoples. The wars dragged on for nearly half a century; at the apex of the fighting, the conflict devoured about one-sixth of the total imperial budget; and it caused tens of thousands of deaths. According to a study published in 1901 on the losses of the Russian Imperial Army during Russia's wars against the North Caucasian mountain peoples from 1801 to 1864 (the losses of irregular troops and militias are not included), some 804 officers and 24,142 soldiers had been killed, and some 3,154 officers and 62,168 soldiers wounded. More than 6,000 members of the Imperial Army were taken prisoner.[74] Given these numbers, even contemporary Russian observers repeatedly criticised Russia's military's actions and questioned the purpose of this war.[75] However, once it had begun, the war developed a dynamic of its own, and the question of its inherent purpose was subordinated to the unconditional pursuit of military victory. This is what Adolf Petrovich Berzhe (1828–86), renowned scholar of the Caucasus, meant when he wrote in 1882 that the Caucasus wars had not erupted 'due to any political assignments or diplomatic considerations', but were the 'natural outcome of the expansion of the Russian state'. Not only was this the reason why the war

had dragged on for so long, but 'a majority sees no goals and no purpose [in this war]', with Berzhe lamenting the 'futile destruction of state resources for the purpose of useless bloodshed'.[76]

The military expeditions under General Potemkin and the insurgency under Sheikh Mansur at the end of the eighteenth century may already be regarded as major conflicts between Russia and the Chechen communities in their own right; however, when we compare this period with the subsequent conflict of the nineteenth century, it seems inappropriate to refer to an actual Russian–Chechen 'war' at this time. Contemporary observers shared this opinion; for instance, General Ol'shevskii writes in his memoirs: 'Until 1806, at least as far as I am aware, based on the written record, any encounters and confrontations with Chechens were limited to us repelling them from our own borders, and the [Chechens] were only pursued to the Sunzha.'[77] Although this is not in accordance with the historical facts—operations against the settlement of Atagi, located south of the River Sunzha had already been authorised by Potemkin—it is significant that the severe escalation of the conflict was clearly associated with the later command of General Ermolov. It was with his appointment in 1816 that 'Chechnia stop[ped] being terra incognito [*sic*]', Ol'shevskii notes.[78]

Russia's expansionist policy under General Ermolov was not so much the execution of a strategy prepared in St Petersburg, but a result of the general's own ambitious plans. His vision included notions of conquering Persia and opening a land passage to India. It is difficult to tell whether the tsar sent Ermolov to the Caucasus because of his unconventional nature, or in spite of it. At any rate, Ermolov was convinced that his decisions, which he made largely independently, were in Russia's interest and thus also in accordance with the tsar's intentions.[79]

Ermolov's momentous decision in 1817 to push the Caucasus Military Line from the Terek to the Sunzha and to build new forts, including Groznaia (literally, 'the Fearsome', which would become Groznyi), Vnezapnaia ('the Unexpected') and Burnaia ('the Tempestuous'), marked the beginning of a massive escalation. At the same time, the general secured the link between the North and South Caucasus via the so-called Georgian Military Road, which ran from Mozdok to Tbilisi. As always, these measures were accompanied by forced resettlements of the population. For instance, Ermolov had several Kabardian communities displaced from their areas of settlement along the Georgian Military Road in favour of Orthodox Christian Ossetians, who were seen as more loyal. He had the forts along the Caucasus Military Line

reinforced with Cossack units.[80] While Russia did not hesitate to use force, economic incentives also played a role. For instance, the Ingush were granted estates and forestry rights in the Terek plain as early as 1810, in return for their services in securing one section of the Military Road.[81]

Because Ermolov, like other Russian generals before him, had comparatively few regular troops at his disposal in the North Caucasus, large-scale campaigns and permanent postings of major units were not feasible. Therefore, he chose an especially ruthless tactic, burning down entire villages, destroying harvests and driving away cattle in numerous operations that he referred to as 'punitive expeditions'. Ermolov himself is reported to have stated the purpose of these measures as follows:

> I want the terror inspired by my name to defend our borders more effectively than a belt of fortresses, and my word shall be unto the natives a law even more inexorable than death itself. In the eyes of the Asians, laxity is merely a sign of weakness, and it is because of my own philanthropic nature that I am mercilessly strict. A [single] punitive operation preserves the lives of hundreds of Russian soldiers and thousands of Muslims from treason.[82]

The advancement of the Military Line from the Terek to the Sunzha River was primarily directed at the Chechens, whom Ermolov in 1818 described in a report to Tsar Alexander I as 'the strongest and most dangerous people' (*Chechentsy—sil'neishchii narod' i opasneishchii*).[83] However, his measures stirred up unrest in the entire eastern part of the North Caucasus, including the mountain areas that had hitherto remained largely untouched by Russian influence as well as the khanates of Dagestan that Russia had already subjugated some time earlier. Russia's encroachment not only displaced the locals from their native areas of settlement; the advance of the Caucasus Military Line also gave Russia control over the vitally important trade and commerce routes between the mountains and the lowlands. By blocking these routes, the Russian Empire could cut off the highland clans from their sources of grain and winter grazing lands in the plains at any time. This threat was perceived as so existential that it even facilitated an alliance against Russia between the usually estranged Dagestani khanates, which now took up arms together against the empire. It was through a combination of brute force and diplomatic finesse that Russia reasserted control over Dagestan in the 1820s, before unilaterally deposing the rebel khans. However, in the Avar Khanate, this approach set off a process of disintegration that would work to Russia's detriment later on: the weakening of the khanate deprived the Russian Empire

of important allies in its campaigns against the peoples of the North Caucasus. In the years to come, they would look to a new leadership of imams, who were also originally from Avaria.[84]

General Ermolov now had a much tougher time of it in Chechnia, which was especially hard hit by his scorched-earth tactics. He failed to achieve his intended effect of getting the Chechens to submit. Rather, Chechen raids on Cossack villages increased in frequency, and the guerrilla warfare against the Russian army intensified. The decentralised structure of Chechen society made it difficult for the Russians to subjugate the people militarily. The tsarist empire was simply not able to fight new unrest everywhere simultaneously, especially since Russia's military forces were also engaged in new wars with the Persian and the Ottoman empires in the late 1820s on its southern Caucasian flank. At the same time, Chechen particularism also exposed the weaknesses of an uncoordinated resistance. In the long run, the traditional form of resistance based on bands of young men and ad-hoc alliances between various groups and clans, determined though their struggle might be, could not withstand an opponent with superior military capabilities.

In view of the Russian peril, these hard-beset peoples had a stark choice between complete military surrender to Russia or continuing the struggle as part of a military alliance. The rudiments of such an alliance first came together in the mid-1820s under the leadership of Chechen elder Bei-Bulat Taimiev (1779–1831), who managed to win over large parts of the Chechen people for the fight against tsarist Russia. His appeal was supported by the authority of the senior clergy and of the elders, who were bound to him by oaths. Following the example of Mansur, he managed to raise a regular army by requiring that each farmstead supply one fighter. Bei-Bulat did indeed succeed in creating the foundations of a state entity that he himself would have ruled as prince. Furthermore, he did achieve great military successes initially. Nevertheless, the relentless military pressure from Russia, but even more the disputes among the Chechens themselves—in particular, the defection of some of the spiritual elites who felt they had been slighted—weakened Bei-Bulat's position considerably, and finally led to the failure of his war efforts.[85]

During this time, under Ermolov's supreme command, Russia conducted its war against the Chechens with such brutality that even Tsar Alexander I himself, in a letter dated 29 September 1825, admonished him to restrain himself.[86] While Russia managed to secure a temporary 'pacification' of the Chechens with this ruthless approach, it also created discontent and thus

sowed the seeds for a resurgence of Chechen resistance against the foreign power at the next opportunity. Such a chance presented itself quite soon when the first imam from Dagestan, Gazi Muhammad, appeared. He was an ethnic Avar cleric from the mountain village of Gimry and appears to have had not only great personal charisma but also the ability to forge a military alliance from large parts of the population settling in the eastern parts of the North Caucasus. This alliance proved sufficiently stable to survive beyond Muhammad's death and was continued under a new imam. This was also possible because the imams succeeded in introducing sharia law as a bracket that imparted a shared bond to an alliance of otherwise diverse peoples with varying legal traditions.

Efforts to replace customary law with Islamic law had already been made; especially in the eastern part of the North Caucasus, these efforts were supported by Muslim scholars from Dagestan, while in the western part of the North Caucasus, the influence of the Ottoman Empire was stronger. Most of the Chechens had only converted to Islam in the course of the sixteenth and seventeen centuries, and some Adyghe peoples in the north-western part of the Caucasus converted even later; the Karachaians did not become Muslims until the eighteenth century, and the Ingush only converted to Islam in the first third of the nineteenth century. In Dagestan, however, Islam had already gained a foothold in the seventh century following the conquest of Derbent by the Arabs. Subsequently, Derbent became the centre of an Islamic scholarly tradition whose impact would reach far into the hinterland.[87]

Wars against 'infidels' under the banner of jihad had been conducted earlier. However, it was the massive external threat that really galvanised efforts to enforce sharia and to unify the various resistance movements in the late 1820s. Significantly, the campaign of jihad began in 1830 not with an assault on Russian troops but with an attack against opponents of the armed struggle in various locations in Dagestan, the purpose of which was the systematic implementation of sharia. At the same time, Gazi Muhammad established links with the leaders of the Chechen resistance. Russian officials representing the colonial power initially had only a vague notion of these internal developments, which would soon give rise to a full-blown popular movement.[88]

Islam was not the main driver of the struggle against the Russians. Rather, in the form of sharia, it gave the resistance movement an organisational structure that facilitated a relatively stable regional alliance.[89] In this context, historians have noted the importance of Sufi orders or brotherhoods, the

so-called *tariqa* (Arabic: *ṭarīqa*, 'path'). Historians believe they played a major role in the jihad against Russia. In particular, the mystical Muslim brotherhood of the Naqshbandiyya,[90] which was the order most prevalent at that time in the eastern part of the North Caucasus and had a far-flung network of spiritual leaders and their adherents, is alleged to have been largely responsible for the organisation and the success of the resistance movement.[91]

Scholars of the Caucasus largely agree that the Naqshbandiyya was an important societal factor and a spiritual movement that attracted many people. While the Naqshbandiyya also aimed for strict enforcement of sharia law, the brotherhood seems never really to have played the crucial role in the struggle against the Russian conquerors that was attributed to it by representatives of the tsarist regime and later historians.[92] Clemens Sidorko, a German historian of the Caucasus, proves convincingly that just as the jihad movement of Gazi Muhammad entered its first stage, considerable differences arose between the various Naqshbandiyya sheikhs regarding the religious struggle against Russia.[93] German scholar of Islam Michael Kemper notes that there is no evidence generated by the jihad movement about itself to suggest that the teachings of the Naqshbandiyya was drawn upon to provide legitimacy for the fight against Russia. Existing Sufi networks were not used, and the Naqshbandiyya sheikhs who enjoyed a certain reputation at the time did not take on official functions in the imamate of Imam Shamil, as Kemper points out.[94] Shamil did integrate Sufi rituals into his exercise of power, and the Naqshbandi *tariqa* had a firm place in the imamate as well as many adherents, though most of them are likely to have been sympathisers rather than permanent members.[95] But the Sufi order was not the driving force behind the resistance. According to Sidorko, the question of whether individual fighters or leaders were ultimately members of the brotherhood or not made 'no difference whatsoever, neither for the war nor within the state'.[96]

The confusion over the Naqshbandiyya, which can already be found in the Russian-language literature of the late nineteenth century and which continues to this day, may also be due to the fact that the Russian conquerors generally referred to their adversaries as *murids* (Arabic: *murīd*, literally 'committed one', which in Sufism refers to an adept of a *tariqa*), although this label did not apply to many of the combatants from the Sufi perspective. The movement, which is labelled *muridism* in early Russian descriptions, was often viewed by the Russians as the work of obscure secret societies organised clandestinely by Sufi sheikhs in order to stir up popular anger against Russia.[97]

But first and foremost, the common state based on sharia made it possible to mobilise and discipline the various communities and ethnic groups for jihad against a numerically and technically superior enemy. The groundwork for the creation of the imamate had already been laid by Gazi Muhammad, and these efforts were continued after his death in battle in 1832 by Hamza Bek, though the latter was killed only two years later by an assassin. But the real institutionalisation of the struggle in the framework of a unified state entity did not occur until Imam Shamil took over the leadership of the resistance in 1834, which he retained until his surrender in 1859. Shamil's rule is particularly notable as he was the first leader in the recent history in this part of the North Caucasus region to succeed in building a centralised state entity, although this was in contravention of the traditional societal structures and customs observed among the Chechens and the Dagestani village communities, which had previously formed the backbone of the anti-Russian resistance movement.[98]

The society of Chechnia, with its basic *teip* structures, and the village communities of Dagestan were largely organised in a decentralised fashion; they were also generally homogenous in terms of social stratification. Unlike in neighbouring Kabarda, for example, where the societal order within the principality was based on the serfs' dependency on the ruling nobility, no such feudal relationships existed among the Chechen communities or in the Dagestani mountain villages. The only people who were excluded from political life and from voting in the assembly were the women, who were otherwise in a similar position legally and socially as men under the rules of *adat*, and the serfs (slaves). However, again unlike in Kabarda, there seem to have been very few of the latter.[99]

In the scholarly literature, it is often claimed with respect to the later state-building processes of the Soviet era that the structure of Chechen society was one reason why they had failed to adapt to a state polity organised along modern principles. But the imamate of Shamil largely disproves that view. One important factor for the success of the North Caucasus resistance movement in the nineteenth century was the fact that the majority of the Chechen *teips* were successfully integrated into Imam Shamil's centralist state, despite the far-reaching outcomes for traditional societal structure and the Chechen way of life based on *adat*.

The introduction to the new order was not always a smooth affair. The executive reorganisation mainly affected the overarching administrative structures, military and financial matters, jurisprudence, and domestic and

foreign policy; at the local level, the reforms were less acutely felt. The most important local institutions, such as village assemblies and councils of elders, were not abolished. However, in effect, these bodies had to submit to the instructions of the *naib* (Arabic: *nā'ib*, 'deputy', 'delegate'), a functionary appointed by Shamil to rule over a certain administrative district. Thus, for instance, either the imam himself or his *naib* would determine how many fighting men a village had to supply. Social and private life in the village, arrangements for the annual agricultural cycle and relations between individual communities remained largely determined by customary law even under the imamate. Nevertheless, with the introduction of sharia, the elders were not only forced to cede their judicial role to the *qadi* or mufti (Arabic: *muftī*, 'Muslim legal scholar'); the imamate also took over fiscal sovereignty. In repeated conflicts and local revolts over jurisdictional matters, *naibs* were driven away or even murdered, and the locals declared they would not accept the rule of sharia. Imam Shamil had all such rebellions put down with an iron fist.[100]

Although Shamil's imamate introduced comprehensive structural changes by enforcing sharia, recent research indicates that these had little tangible effects on the ethnic consciousness of the individual peoples. There was certainly closer contact between different linguistic groups, notably the Chechens and members of various Dagestani ethnic groups (and the Avars in particular). Because of their deep-rooted scholarly tradition, and probably also because of their closeness to Shamil, the Dagestanis often occupied leadership positions in Chechen settlement areas as well, and held sway over the Chechens in the judiciary system. After the collapse of the imamate in 1859, the Chechens also evicted numerous ethnic Dagestani leaders and officials from their communities. However, even in Dagestani communities, expulsions of refugees and of officials from their own ethnic group were observed. These developments were thus not necessarily directed against a specific ethnic group, but probably against representatives of the imamate.[101] It is also worth noting that there was a sharp increase in blood-feuds after the dissolution of the imamate. Many of these killings targeted former dignitaries and *naibs* of Shamil, whose past deeds, such as the death penalties they had imposed, were now avenged by their victims' families.[102]

Russia's victory and historiographical controversies

Shamil's defeat and the rapid downfall of the imamate came as a surprise to the Russians. From a purely military perspective, even after losing large swathes of

Chechnia, the imam still had sufficient forces at his disposal to resist the conquerors. Why did Shamil's state collapse in 1859? Certainly, one factor was Russia's advance, which tied down more and more Chechen military forces while reducing their natural areas of refuge through systematic deforestation. On the other hand, the population was utterly exhausted, physically and mentally, from decades of nearly permanent warfare. This war, it should be noted, was accompanied in the 1850s by famines due to crop failures, overpopulation caused by the arrival of refugees, and an economic blockade imposed by Russia.[103] But in addition to all these factors, Russia's policy towards the peoples of the North Caucasus also played a not insignificant role.

Russia's conquest of the North Caucasus is not very different from the war campaigns that other European colonial powers had waged, although what sets Russia's case apart from other empires is that its conquests were motivated not so much by desire for economic gain, but by strategic and military considerations.[104] This does not mean, however, that Russia relied exclusively on military force. Already from the early 1850s onwards, the tsar's local representatives increasingly employed not just military pressure but also incentives for switching over to Russia's protective embrace. In 1852, the Russian high command suggested that an administration be installed for the occupied parts of the Chechen plain. As part of this effort, Russia began to build up a system that was able to vie for popular support with Shamil's state. In emulation of the administrative districts that Shamil had created, the Russian administration decided not only to retain the previous administrative structure but also to preserve the title of *naib*. The *naibs* supervised the elders in the villages, who were nominated by the head of the administration for Chechnia and approved by Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich Bariatinskii (1815–79), who at the time was the commander of the Left Flank of the Caucasus Military Line. Though the administrative head himself was not a Chechen, at least the first *naibs* whom Bariatinskii appointed were all ethnic Chechens who had previously assisted the Russian imperial forces in various capacities and were now installed as administrators in their home territories.[105] Bariatinskii sought to recruit members from the indigenous population by holding out the prospect of leadership positions in the administration as well as financial and material incentives. All locals who were employed by Bariatinskii's bureaucracy received their pay from the imperial treasury.[106] The Russian conquerors demonstrably, and seemingly successfully, disbursed relatively sizeable sums of cash to recruit certain groups among the North

Caucasus indigenous population for the war against Shamil or to bribe officials of the imamate. This aspect of Russia's history of imperial conquest has yet to receive the historiographical attention that it deserves.[107]

Under Bariatinskii's rule, a real political about-face was achieved with regard to Islam and the treatment afforded to the Muslim clerics, who were now also appointed to leadership positions within the new state structures, together with other social elites. The idea was to lure away the stratum of society that Shamil had so far managed to bind to himself due to the isolation imposed by Russia. When Bariatinskii ordered the drafting of these basic rules for the Chechen administration, he made certain that not only *naibs* and elders but also *qadis* and mullahs were involved in the task. The involvement of members of the spiritual elites signalled more than a rapprochement with Islam and the clergy; in a more general sense, it also indicated a shift towards sharia law, which provided the legal foundation for the new regulations. Moreover, Russia sought to win over the locals by taking a more tolerant stance towards their long-established customs and traditions. For instance, a later codicil to the guidelines for the Chechen administration even permitted the practice of vendetta killings (which Russia had so far strictly banned) if committed in retaliation against the perpetrators themselves, but not their further (male) relations.[108]

It would be wrong, however, in the final conclusion to attribute the defeat of the Chechens and Dagestanis to a failure of Shamil's '*murid* project', as suggested by Vladimir Degoev. Degoev claims that the socio-cultural and ideological appeal of Shamil's imamate was quite limited, and that Shamil's state was based on repression and terror against the general population if they resisted his orders. Russia, on the other hand, according to Degoev, was more attractive to the non-Russian peoples because it represented order and the prospect of a better future with material benefits for all—irrespective of ethnicity, class or religious denomination. Degoev thus asserts that Russia essentially offered all of the North Caucasians exactly what Imam Shamil had failed to achieve, namely an end to mutual bloodshed, to raiding, to blood-feuds and to polytheism.[109]

This line of argumentation is consistent with the view, which was already disseminated by Russian propaganda in the nineteenth century, that Shamil's state was oppressive and ultimately failed due to internal strife.[110] Although the introduction of sharia and the centralised nature of Shamil's rule certainly raised tensions that were detrimental to the cohesion of the state, one should not assume that these two factors were the main reasons for the collapse of the

imamate, since the question remains of why the state endured for a quarter of a century. This would not have been possible without a minimum of consent among the population. That both Shamil and his imamate continue to embody a positive era in the collective memory of many people suggests that most of the population was rather well disposed towards Shamil and his state. This may be because, even during wartime, people seem to have asserted their freedom to celebrate weddings or the breaking of the fast, as the written memoirs of former Russian prisoners attest.[111]

The picture outlined by Degoev is also inconsistent with the fact that, after the defeat, thousands of families from the North Caucasus preferred to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire rather than submit to the Russian conquerors.[112] Finally, it is important to remember that Bariatinskii's policies, especially the embrace of sharia and of the co-optation of Muslim leaders, were intended as tactical and thus temporary measures to weaken Shamil's state. Russia did not pursue an active policy of religious conversion with regard to the peoples of the North Caucasus.[113] Nevertheless, both rhetorically and ideologically, the Russian leadership remained sceptical of Islam and distrustful of the Sufi leaders in the region, as proven by the events that followed.

It was a mix of ruthless military force and skilful diplomacy, combined with economic incentives, that brought about Russia's victory and Shamil's surrender. For Russia effectively managed not only to build up an administrative bureaucracy that competed with the imamate but also to persuade Chechens to participate actively in the war against Shamil's forces. In this conflict, the army increasingly also employed those Chechen youth who had been rejected as *abreks* by Shamil. Instead of branding these *abreks* as outlaws and bandits, Russia sought to win them as collaborators in the war against Shamil (who had pursued the same policy initially, by expanding his troop recruitment pool to include men who had previously lived as *abreks* and outcasts from society).[114]

Against this background, the assertion by Caucasus historian Moshe Gammer that 'then, as in the 1990s, Chechens rarely went to war against each other' cannot be supported—neither for the 1850s nor for the later period.[115] Indeed, we find many occasions throughout history when Chechens did fight each other, including during the last phase of the 'Great Caucasus War'. In late February 1855, the supreme commander for the Caucasus, General Count Nikolai Nikolaevich Murav'ev-Karskii (1794–1866), reported in a missive to General Ermolov that,

> we see today a great number of peaceful *auls* settling on the perimeter of the fortress [Groznaia] that we have built. These Chechens accompany us on military expeditions and fight mercilessly [*bezposhchadno*] against their not yet subjugated relatives. We have already established here five *naibstvos* [administrative districts headed by a *naib*], as well as a *pristav* and a court of justice that was modelled on your Kabardian Court [referring to a legal system that Ermolov had installed in Kabarda].[116]

However, this statement should not be seen as evidence of pro-imperial sentiments among the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples, nor can it support the view that the Caucasus wars were a kind of civil war among the peoples themselves that had been triggered by the wish of many to join Russia.[117] Such positions misinterpret the motives that inspired individual communities to join the conquerors.

As part of its strategy for the consolidation of power, Russia sought wherever possible to form militia units from members of the indigenous population, who could either be entrusted with local defence tasks or deployed as irregulars serving side by side with Russian military forces in various theatres of conflict throughout the Caucasus.[118] They were frequently motivated not so much by a pro-Russian stance as by concrete interests and the prospect of expanding their estates and areas under their control. It is significant that already in the second half of the eighteenth century, and on repeated occasions thereafter, Kabardian princes—the local antagonists of the Chechens—took part in the suppression of revolts.[119] The same later applied to the Chechens who took part in significant numbers from the 1850s onwards in the campaigns against Shamil's forces. The decentralised structure of their communities made it easy for third parties to stir up strife between one group and another if the appropriate incentives were in place. On the other hand, those Chechens that did temporarily ally themselves with Russia in no way regarded themselves as subjugated peoples because of this. The Russian supreme military commander, Count Murav'ev-Karskii, was aware that truly 'subjugating' a people ultimately required more than an army of occupation. He himself envisaged a long-term process accompanied by the establishment of civilian structures, construction of schools and integration into the imperial space through trade and a boosting of economic activity.[120]

The pledges of loyalty to Russia that the Chechen communities of the Terek plain increasingly gave in the early 1850s were thus not necessarily evidence of a changing attitude towards the Russian Empire. They were just another example of the time-honoured strategy of securing survival through

alliances with external powers without having to give up traditional ways of life, religious views or political liberties. At the time, the representatives of the indigenous peoples could not have anticipated the long-term consequences of their submission. Although a small segment of the North Caucasian elite, including individual Chechen families, did enter the imperial service, major armed revolts broke out in the mountains of Chechnia as early as 1860, that is, almost immediately following Shamil's surrender. Two years earlier, Ingushetia had also seen unrest and armed clashes in connection with Russia's land distribution and settlement policies.[121]

The military conquest had largely been completed with the surrender of Shamil and the dissolution of his imamate in the north-eastern region of the Caucasus. Nevertheless, the war continued—not just against the Cherkess in the west, who were not subdued until 1864, but also against rebel groups in the eastern territories of the North Caucasus that had already been conquered. After the war, tens of thousands of Chechens were resettled from their traditional homelands to the interior of Russia or driven away to the Ottoman Empire. The next chapter will examine the situation as it presented itself in Chechnia immediately after Shamil's surrender.

2

MUSA KUNDUKHOV AND THE TRAGEDY OF MASS EMIGRATION

The expulsion of the Cherkess and other North Caucasian peoples in the 1860s is one of the darkest chapters in Russia's history of imperial expansion. Today, the fact of mass emigration is undisputed. In the Russian-language literature, it is usually referred to as *mukhadzhirstvo* (derived from the Arabic word *muhāğir*, meaning 'refugee' or 'émigré'). The topic remains highly charged, both emotionally and politically, and is being interpreted in varying ways even in the more recent historiography. Viewpoints range from the demands by Cherkess diaspora groups to have the expulsion of 1864 officially recognised as 'genocide', to the position of conservative Russian historians who view the exodus of the North Caucasians as a voluntary move and seek to shift any blame to Ottoman policies.[1]

Whenever historians have dealt with the mass expulsions in the North Caucasus in the mid-1860s, they have almost exclusively studied the case of the Cherkess people.[2] The causes of the simultaneous emigration of other Muslim communities, and specifically the Chechen exodus, have been far less explored.[3] While the Chechens did not leave their homes in their hundreds of thousands, as did the Cherkess, the Chechen exiles still numbered tens of thousands. Even before the tribes south of the Kuban had been subdued, Russia was already developing plans to cleanse the areas that had been conquered, or that still remained to be conquered, of ethnic groups perceived as being potentially troublesome. Nevertheless, the circumstances leading to

the systematic Cherkess mass migration to the Ottoman Empire differed in certain ways from those of the peoples settling in the central and eastern parts of the North Caucasus.

After the military defeat of 1864, almost all of the Cherkess emigrated from their homeland to the Ottoman Empire even before they had come under Russian rule. Only a minority took up the Russian offer of resettling in the Kuban plains.[4] However, in the case of the Chechens, some parts of this people had already submitted to Russian rule in the early 1850s. Only in the mountain areas did the struggle of individual groups continue even after Shamil's surrender in 1859. While the mass exodus of populations south of the Kuban was a direct result of Russia's policy of forced displacement, the migrations of the other peoples were caused by a combination of factors that might include continued fighting and unrest, but also economic and social predicaments. In addition, emissaries from the Ottoman Empire played a prominent role by spreading false rumours in order to persuade people to leave their homes. However, here too, a key factor was Russia's policy, which finally prompted thousands of families from the central and north-eastern parts of the Caucasus to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire.

Muslim members of the imperial military elite in the North Caucasus were also important players in these migration movements. In the migrations of Muslim Ossetians, Karabulaks and Chechens in 1865, it was an ethnic Ossetian Muslim and general of the Russian Imperial Army, Musa Kundukhov, who played a crucial role. Having participated in Russia's various Caucasus campaigns, Kundukhov served as administrator in the district of Vladikavkaz and later, following Shamil's defeat, as administrator of the newly conquered Chechen territories. When he organised the mass emigration of Chechens and other Muslim peoples to the Ottoman Empire in the mid-1860s, he also departed together with his family, and later became a highly decorated general in the sultan's forces. By studying the biography of this individual, it will be possible to shed light on the situation in the north-eastern part of the Caucasus as well as the features of Russia's rule in the early 1860s, and thus to illuminate a still little-understood aspect of the history of Russia's conquest of the Caucasus.

Emigration and colonisation

Resettlement and colonisation were regular features accompanying Russia's southward military expansion and the consolidation of imperial power. The

constant advance of the Caucasus Military Line was accompanied by new foundations of Cossack *stanitsy*, while Cossacks were resettled, occasionally by force, to territories further and further south.[5] Russia's decision of whether to leave the subjected indigenous populations in their homelands or to resettle them often depended on the circumstances of their conquest. If a community submitted without resistance, Russia left these people in their ancestral areas of settlement. However, if they failed to yield and fought back, the Russian army would displace these peoples and resettle them from the mountains to the plains after their military subjugation.

The conquerors found the democratically organised Chechen and Dagestani mountain communities to be particularly troublesome, as their societal organisation made it difficult for the Russians to agree with them on the specific terms of their submission. This was noticed not only by the tsar's commanders in the Caucasian theatre of war but also by contemporary Russian observers. In an essay published in 1823, the Decembrist Pavel Ivanovich Pestel' (1793–1826) stated flatly that in its inevitable conquest of the Caucasus, Russia must distinguish between 'peaceful' (*mirnye*) and 'savage' (*buinye*) peoples. While the former ought to be left in their own lands and integrated into the Russian state and legal system, the latter should be forcefully deported to the interior of Russia, split up into small groups and resettled in various Russian communities. The Caucasus itself, he argued, should be colonised by Russians.[6]

Pestel's remarks would later not only be echoed in multiple variations in many publications on the Caucasus but also become tragic reality with the Russian forced displacement and resettlement policy of the 1860s. Indeed, for the tsarist generals, war and expulsion often appeared to be the only means of subduing peoples such as the Chechens. General Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin (1816–1912), who would later become minister of war, served as chief of the General Staff of the Caucasus Army from 1856 to 1859. In a letter to the Ministry of War dated 29 November 1856, he notes:

> The conquest of the region takes place in accordance with one of two methods: 1) either through subjection of the local residents and [permission for] them to remain on the land they inhabit, or 2) by taking away the land from those who dwell there and replacing them with the victors. ... Russia mainly applies the first method to those tribes or communities that are ruled by a hereditary state power or an aristocracy. The second [method] is used in the case of those democratic tribes that have neither a state nor a societal order, where it is impossible to come to an agreement with the entire population regarding submission. In the South

> Caucasus *krai*, in the case of numerous Dagestani principalities, in Kabarda, Ossetia, and some other parts submitted to the [Russian] government, the locals kept their land. However, for more than half a century, Russia has been advancing towards the Kuban and the Terek, pushing the half-savage peoples who live there back into the mountains, and resettling the newly won lands with Cossacks.[7]

Russian pressure repeatedly compelled parts of the indigenous population to leave their homelands for the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, until the late 1850s, Russia did not pursue an active policy of displacing the indigenous populations of the North Caucasus out of Russia. The main goal was to subjugate them and resettle them in the lowland areas, which Russia was better able to control. Based on these considerations, the Russian conquerors, even though their policies might appear as quite inhumane, did not at all perceive themselves as villains, especially if compared with developments in other parts of the planet that had been colonised by Europeans. For example, in the same letter quoted above, Miliutin noted that Russia, unlike the European settlers in the Americas, had not exterminated the indigenous peoples, since 'in our age, [there is] an obligation towards humanity that requires us to take advance measures to ensure the existence even of nations that are hostile to us, whom we displace for reasons of state from their homelands'.[8]

However, this attitude had already begun to change during the second half of the 1850s, as seen notably in the treatment of the increasing numbers of refugees escaping from Shamil's foundering state to Russia's protection. As long as the war against Shamil had not yet been won, the Russian generals were interested, from a military–strategic point of view, in encouraging defectors. However, at the same time, they registered this phenomenon with growing unease, since they did not really know what to do with these growing masses of peoples. A typical response was that of the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus forces, Count Murav'ev-Karskii, who reported the following regarding Chechen defectors on 23 April 1856:

> They [i.e. the Chechen defectors] cultivate land earmarked for the Cossacks and furthermore receive considerable disbursements of grain at the exchequer's expense. The number of those who cross over to our side increases daily. Thus, once we establish complete rule over the Chechen plains, we will find ourselves living amongst a people that is unreliable and refuses to be disarmed. This state of affairs is not compatible with our notions of rule, for it is impossible to establish an economy [*promyshlennost'*] swiftly among savage peoples, although this is the only

> way to assuage these [savages]. Now, however, we are forced to maintain troops in the fortresses we have built. To solve this problem, we have no other choice than to resettle these people to the rearward line or even further back; but this is where we are confronted with a new question that will require more attention: where to, exactly?[9]

This question would occupy the Russian rulers for years to come, especially since Chechnia experienced massive internal migration during the period from 1857 to 1859. Several tens of thousands of people left the highlands to settle in the plains.[10] Russia was not really interested in these 'savages', however; this became unmistakeably clear after Shamil's surrender, when the Russian military leadership began to subjugate the peoples in the North Western Caucasus, with eviction to the Ottoman Empire finally becoming a central element of the policy of conquest and rule. The army leadership's primary aim was to strip the mountain regions of their populations to ensure that once the conquest had been completed, all potential for insurgencies would be shut down once and for all. If the individual peoples refused to leave their homes and be resettled in other places chosen by Russia, the conquerors only left them with the option of emigrating to the Ottoman Empire. It is true that Russia's policy of conquest in the North Western Caucasus was not designed to physically eradicate individual peoples. However, the Russian officials would take no responsibility for the high casualty rates resulting from the arduous journey out of the Caucasus and across the Black Sea.

In October 1860, the military leadership decided at a meeting in Vladikavkaz to vanquish the last remaining territories south of the Kuban that were not yet under St Petersburg's direct control, but had been settled by Cherkess (Adyghe) tribes. The eviction of these peoples and the resettling of Cossacks in the depopulated territories were part of the plan of conquest that had been elaborated by General Nikolai Ivanovich Evdokimov (1804–73) and approved by Prince Bariatinskii. Evdokimov categorised ethnic groups in terms of the danger they posed for Russia and in some cases recommended they be driven out to the Ottoman Empire, while in other cases he proposed that they be resettled from the mountains to the plains.[11] The plan to evict people en masse, which was also supported by Tsar Alexander II, was not uncontroversial, and there were critics of this project on the Russian side too, especially since a venture on this scale could not be kept a secret. Both Prince Bariatinskii and Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov (1832–1909), who would later become the tsar's viceroy in the Caucasus, advocated

emigration as a way of finally resolving a vexing problem for Russia. Thus, Bariatinskii is said to have remarked at the aforementioned meeting in Vladikavkaz: 'Let me tell you something. Actually, it's not even such a bad thing if this rabble [*svoloch'*], who are just a burden on us, go away. Don't hold them back, let them go away to Mecca or wherever they like.'[12]

From the late 1850s onwards, Russia's military pressure caused an increasing emigration movement to the Ottoman Empire. The first great wave occurred in 1858 and 1859, when about 30,000 Nogai left the north-western part of the Caucasus for the Ottoman Empire. In 1861, 10,000 Kabardians emigrated. At the same time, Adyghe peoples such as the Abadzekhi, the Shapsugi, and the Ubykhi continued to resist, in the naïve hope of gaining international support.[13] The apex of the migration was reached between the end of 1863 and the middle of 1864, when the Cherkess began to leave their homeland in masses. The army leadership had presented them with an ultimatum: they could submit and agree to be resettled in the Kuban plain, or they would have to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire.[14] They were given until 20 February 1864 to decide.[15]

It is highly questionable, however, whether Russia's offer to resettle these people within the Russian Empire was really sincere. The Russian high command was aware that most of the peoples would never consent to it,[16] a view confirmed by the subsequent decisions by a large majority of the indigenous peoples to emigrate. The Russian military leadership made no serious effort to stop this process. Due to Russian military pressure, practically all of the Cherkess living south of the Kuban (probably about half a million, but maybe up to one million people—the numbers remain disputed to this day) had left the North Western Caucasus for the Ottoman Empire by the end of 1864. The majority of these were members of Adyghe tribes or of the closely related Abkhaz people.[17] Tens of thousands of these emigrants died along the way or due to inadequate living conditions and epidemics within the first weeks and months upon their arrival in the Ottoman Empire.[18] A minority initially withdrew even deeper into the mountains, but they were later dislodged from there by the Russian forces. Fewer than 100,000 people (an estimated one-sixth of the original indigenous population in the southern Kuban territory) agreed to be resettled from the highlands to the plains, according to Berzhe.[19] Presumably, however, the real numbers were considerably less. According to statistics from the early 1880s, there were only about 50,000 Cherkess and other members of the Adyghe people settling in the North Western Caucasus.[20]

There had already been migration movements in both directions between Russia and the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. But the 1860s marked a new dimension, when hundreds of thousands of Muslims emigrated to the Ottoman Empire. Most of them were mainly settled in the Ottoman Empire's border regions—in the Balkans, in Asia Minor, and in the Levant. Much like the Russians were doing with the Cossacks, Istanbul also used the North Caucasians as armed settlers to secure the country's borders. However, the Ottomans also formed militia units made up of North Caucasians that were used to suppress internal rebellions or in war (including the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8).[21] Conversely, Christians, including Armenians as well as various Slavic peoples, left the Ottoman Empire and were resettled by Russia in the border territories.[22] Thus, both sides certainly had an interest in this exchange of populations, which was also agreed repeatedly at the highest diplomatic level.[23] Russian historians writing in the nineteenth century, like Berzhe, had already noted that the Ottoman Empire had conducted a veritable propaganda campaign among the Muslim populations of the North Caucasus to persuade them to leave their settlement areas.[24] According to these historians, the Sublime Porte had spread this propaganda via emissaries travelling to the Caucasus, but also through exchanges of letters with local spiritual authorities, which often included wild rumours about imminent forced Christianisation and the transformation of the whole of the non-Russian indigenous population into Cossacks.[25] In this respect, the Ottoman Empire did play a certain role in the exodus, which it encouraged by offering people the option of emigrating and by calling upon them to leave their homes. However, those who cast the Ottomans as the chief culprit in the emigration, as some contemporary historians in Russia have done,[26] trivialise the role of Russia's policy and ignore the deeper causes of the decision of the North Caucasians to emigrate.

While the Cherkess exodus was indeed the result of a systematic policy of forced displacement on Russia's part, the reasons for the emigrations of other populations were more complex. Especially in Kabarda, in the settlement areas of the Ossetians of Muslim faith, and in the khanates of Dagestan, the abolition of feudal hierarchies and privileges, including the prohibition of serfdom, and the elimination of the claims of the ruling class to their traditional estates, deprived many families of their existence and compelled them to leave. Conversely, in the eastern part of the North Caucasus, it was land confiscation, arbitrary rule by the local potentates and the threat of internal resettlement that prompted many people to emigrate.[27]

In the process, Russia repeatedly pledged to the indigenous peoples that it would not touch their estates. The tsar's first viceroy of the Caucasus, Count Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov (1782–1856), stated in his famous 'Proclamation to the Mountain Peoples' of 1845 that Russia would permit them to retain their religion, sharia law, *adat*, their land and their property.[28] Vorontsov made this promise just as the war in the Caucasus reached its climax. In reality, however, not only did Russia confiscate land as their military advanced, but Imam Shamil also had residents evicted from settlements that were not loyal to him. This is why the Chechen theatre of war, in particular, witnessed almost constant migration movements. An ethnic Georgian general in the tsarist army, Grigorii Dmitrievich Orbeliani (1804–83), commented in a letter of 1962 that throughout Chechnia, 'not one *aul* nor one farm' remained that had not been resettled 'several times from one place to another'.[29] Russia confiscated the property of the locals who had fled from the advancing troops into the mountains, arguing that they had abandoned their possessions, and gave the land to Cossacks and other settlers from Russia to develop.[30]

In a similar move, in his 1860 'Proclamation to the Chechen People', Bariatinskii vowed that the Chechens would be permitted to exercise their religion and their local traditions freely (blood-feud excepted) and that there would be no interference with their landholdings, their people's courts, their trade or the practice of their crafts. Moreover, the Chechens were to be exempt from government taxes for five years.[31] However, concerning the question of land ownership, the wording of the proclamation itself was already so equivocal that, in practice, land confiscation was easy to justify. For instance, in the third paragraph of his proclamation, Bariatinskii promised the Chechens that all 'areas and forests in the plains where the Chechen people [had lived] until the unrest in the year 1839' would be returned to them as their 'eternal possessions'. However, the proclamation excluded areas that were already being used as well as those areas in the mountains that had not been used 'by the people before the unrest'.[32] In fact, in doing so, the tsar's viceroy merely confirmed the policy of colonisation, under which the Chechen lands were distributed to loyal Cossacks, Russian officers and ethnic Slavic settlers (Ukrainian as well as Russian), and on rare occasions also to Chechen families loyal to the empire.[33] During military campaigns against insurgents in the 1860s and 1870s, there were repeated confiscations of lands that were subsequently colonised and reallocated. Moreover, landless Chechens and other North Caucasians were time and again resettled from the mountains to

the plains, where they found themselves forced to lease land from Cossacks at rates that were often unfavourable.[34]

Starting as early as the mid-1860s, Russia passed legislation to stop the exodus of North Caucasians; the great wave of emigration rolling down from the North Western Caucasus had by this time swept up the peoples of Kabarda as well as the Chechens and Dagestanis.[35] Much as in the case of the Cherkess south of the Kuban, Russia initially aimed to deal with the peoples in the central and eastern parts of the North Caucasus by compelling only the 'dangerous' elements to emigrate. However, when the emigration threatened to become a mass movement like with the Cherkess, the authorities tried to counteract this development. Not only did it violate the agreement with the Ottomans on the numbers of migrants but the wave of refugees prompted Istanbul to limit their numbers.[36] Although emigration subsequently dwindled, with many Chechens in particular returning to their homeland, it once more picked up with the outbreak of the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1877 and the great rebellions that swept through Chechnia and Dagestan at the same time. Consequently, Russia again had thousands of families deported to the interior of the empire and to Siberia. Although the Russian Empire no longer sought to promote mass emigration from the second half of the 1860s onwards, Russia's policies were still a major cause for emigration. Apart from the Cherkess, of whom only a few tens of thousands remained in Russia, about 40,000 Chechens and Ingush, about 40,000 Nogai, 8,000 to 10,000 Ossetians and 20,000 to 25,000 Dagestanis left their homelands between 1856 and 1925, according to official accounts.[37]

Between two worlds: General Musa Kundukhov

In the newly conquered territories of the north-eastern parts of the Caucasus, the representatives of the local elites played an important role in the exodus to the Ottoman Empire and sometimes even managed to make a lucrative business out of it. Most of these were (former) members of the Russian Imperial Army, occasionally also representatives of the Muslim clergy.[38] In the north-eastern part of the Caucasus, we find a particularly striking example in the case of General Musa Kundukhov.

This scion of the Alkhasta family, a wealthy and noble Muslim dynasty, was born in 1818 or 1820 in the district of Tagauriia in North Ossetia.[39] Initially, Kundukhov served in the Russian Imperial Army and was an active participant in Russia's wars against the North Caucasian peoples and the Ottomans. In

1865, his life changed dramatically. He resigned from the army and organised the emigration of about 5,000 families (mostly Chechens) from the North Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire, where he himself also settled with his family. The fate of Kundukhov is particularly instructive. In his memoirs, which he compiled towards the end of his life while living in the Ottoman Empire and which have been rediscovered only recently, he offers an account of his time in the tsar's service and his participation in the *mukhadzhirstvo*.[40] His writings are illuminating because they exemplify not only the difficult situation that prevailed in the newly conquered areas of the North Caucasus (and in particular in the mountain areas of Chechnia) but also showcase the fluidity of imperial identities in ethnically mixed border regions.[41]

Like many sons of the Caucasian nobility, Kundukhov was sent for his instruction to an imperial school that was far from home. During his administration of the Caucasus, General Ermolov himself had created the option for the noble families in the district of Tagauriia to send their children for training to the Orthodox seminary at Tbilisi. However, this connection did not last long. As the young Muslims from North Ossetia approached graduation, it was suggested to them that conversion to Christianity might be advantageous, prompting the aristocracy of Tagauriia to end the practice of sending their children to this institution.[42] At age twelve, accordingly, Musa Kundukhov was sent not to Georgia, but to the prestigious Pavlovsk Military Academy at St Petersburg. After six years of training, he left to join the Caucasus Army Corps (Otdel'nyi Kavkazskii korpus) for a very successful military career.[43] Clearly, the Russian military command had considerable confidence in his abilities, as shown in 1848 when he was entrusted with an important diplomatic mission by Count Vorontsov, who served as the tsar's viceroy in the Caucasus from 1844 to 1853: Kundukhov was to negotiate a ceasefire with Imam Shamil, who had inflicted serious defeats on the Russian forces. The talks between Kundukhov and two of Shamil's *naibs*, with whom he was personally acquainted, did not achieve their intended result, however; in his memoirs, Kundukhov blames the imam for the breakdown of these negotiations.[44]

In the ranks of the army, the fact that Kundukhov, a Muslim from the North Caucasus, maintained links with representatives of Shamil's state was viewed with suspicion. When Kundukhov returned to the Caucasus in 1852, after about three years' deployment in Poland, he was accused by several figures in the army leadership of continuing to maintain clandestine contacts with the enemies of Russia. This display of mistrust on the part of Russian

officers towards fellow soldiers recruited from the indigenous population was not unusual in the Caucasus. In the case of Kundukhov, suspicions were also nurtured by the fact that two of his brothers, Khadzhi-Murza and Khasbulat, had defected to Shamil's side. While Khadzhi-Murza joined Shamil in 1843 (and was killed in combat against Russian forces in 1844),[45] Khasbulat only entered his service in 1851 and was immediately appointed as *naib* of a section of Chechnia. Khasbulat's defection should probably be seen in the context of the Ossetian aristocracy's displeasure at a new imperial law curtailing their traditional landholdings.[46]

Musa Kundukhov's career in the military continued unabated, however: he took part in the Crimean War (1853–6), leading a cavalry detachment composed of North Caucasians against the Ottoman Empire. After the end of the war, he was once again promoted, but what was more, he was also for the first time entrusted with administrative duties in the Caucasus. In 1857, Prince Bariatinskii placed him in charge of the Vladikavkaz Military District—a position that Kundukhov held until 1859.[47] It seems that his advancement once again caused his Russian comrades to grumble. Within his army corps, rumour had it that Kundukhov was using his position to spread anti-Russian propaganda and to prepare a revolt of the North Caucasian peoples against Russia. However, contemporary documents also show that not everybody was comfortable with the fact that Kundukhov, a Muslim, was in charge of the administration in this largely Ossetian-settled territory, especially as a large part of the pastoral Ossetian community was Christian and Kundukhov categorically opposed any attempts at proselytising by the Orthodox Church.[48] However, Kundukhov tackled his new position with enthusiasm. Here, he saw an opportunity to work on behalf of the people's welfare and to prepare them to face the challenges of modernisation. This, at any rate, is what he writes in his memoirs:

> I was delighted at my appointment. It gave me the possibility to realise a sincere and long-cherished dream: to eliminate the customs that had persisted among the people since the age of the barbarians and which are detrimental to its wealth, stir up constant strife, and prevent the peaceful cohabitation that is essential for the well-being of the people. Moreover, I combined smaller *auls* into larger [units], and had gardens planted wherever possible. In some *auls*, I ordered schools to be built so that reading and writing could be taught … [I purchased] some agricultural implements and had land ploughed. In a word: I directed all my efforts and capabilities towards giving the people at least an idea of how they could use nature's bounty; on the other hand, not a single Russian administrator up to this point had seen fit to direct the people's attention towards these

> matters, although the top [Russian] leadership expressed this desire on paper and even demanded this [of the Russian administrators in the region].[49]

As a bearer of an imperial worldview, he felt it was his duty and responsibility to impart to the people the state's *mission civilisatrice* and to indicate to them, as subjects of the tsar, their obligations towards the empire and its laws. He banned traditional customs such as blood-feud and bride price. Obedience to the laws of the empire was important to him, and he punished any transgressions severely. Although he did not manage to eliminate the traditions in society that he viewed as pernicious during his short term in office, Kundukhov appears to have enjoyed great respect among the population in his administrative district. Even the army leadership seems to have fully acknowledged that he was successful in establishing peace and order.[50]

If Kundukhov presented himself in his memoirs as a mediator between two worlds, this did not mean that he himself could not be caught up in the tension between imperial and customary law. This can be seen in the case of a Chechen by the name of Bekho, whom Kundukhov shot dead in broad daylight on a street in Vladikavkaz in 1845 for having killed three distant relatives of Kundukhov's fifteen years earlier. The only reason why Bekho and his followers had even dared to come to Vladikavkaz and into the proximity of the Tagaurians there, which he had previously avoided doing for fear of being killed in a vendetta, was because he had dissociated himself from Shamil and submitted himself and his community to the authority of the Russian Empire. Kundukhov seems to have been irked by the fact that Count Vorontsov, the tsar's viceroy in the Caucasus at the time, had accepted this submission, for in his memoirs, Kundukhov calls Bekho a traitor to whom 'nothing was sacred' and who had already switched sides several times for opportunistic motives. Even more, however, Kundukhov must have been incensed that Bekho thought himself immune from existing customary law because his surrender afforded him the protection of imperial law. He was also vexed by the fact that Bekho had not even found it necessary to meet the relatives of the Tagaurians he had killed. Thus, he felt it was his right and his duty to kill Bekho. That he himself was giving preference to customary law over imperial law in this case apparently did not bother Kundukhov in the least. On the contrary, he managed to convince the commander in charge of the Vladikavkaz Military District, General Petr Petrovich Nestorov (1802–54), that the application of customary law had helped preserve the peace

because it had restored the equilibrium between Chechens and Tagaurians. Thus, the Tagaurians would take offence if Kundukhov were to be convicted, particularly since they had incurred a higher blood-toll than the Chechens. Nestorov accordingly refrained from punishing Kundukhov.[51]

Kundukhov and the Chechens

After Shamil had surrendered in 1859, Kundukhov was tasked with a new and far more challenging assignment: in 1860, as a major-general, he was appointed as the head of the Chechen administrative district. In his memoirs, he states that this deployment was due to the fact that revolts and clashes had once more broken out in the mountains of Chechnia, and that he 'therefore unfortunately ... had to leave the Ossetian district and everything [he] had begun to achieve there behind'.[52]

Kundukhov began his mission in Chechnia by advancing on the rebel centres in order to finalise the pacification of the area. Especially affected were the Ichkerskii and Argunskii districts, where the rebels were grouping around leaders such as Baisungur (Benoevskii), Atabaev and Uma Duev, all of whom had previously served under Shamil.[53] Essentially, these revolts were a continuation of the resistance by Chechens who had refused to submit to the Russians in 1859. Thus, for example, Shamil's son Gazi Muhammad declared to a Russian interlocutor while in exile at Kaluga that the revolt of Baisungur, a former *naib* of Shamil from the town of Benoi, was the result of his decision to keep fighting with a small band of fighters after the capitulation of Shamil and to die rather than surrender to the Russians. Subsequently, the Russian authorities threatened to expel the residents of Benoi unless they helped to secure Baisungur's arrest, whereupon the population of Benoi also took up arms and joined the rebels.[54]

While forces led by the supreme military commander in the Terek region, General Evdokimov, managed to beat the rebels in the summer of 1860, the rebels successfully regrouped in October, so that the Russian military once more moved out in order to put down the revolt.[55] Even though comparatively few fighters took part in this uprising on the Chechen side,[56] the Russian occupation forces found it difficult to quell the revolt because the rebels moved rapidly and rebellions broke out in various places at the same time. In order to be able to pin down the insurgents and to prevent the residents of various *auls* from supporting each other, the Russian army had to engage them in different places simultaneously and thus divide up its military forces.

Moreover, the Russians had to wait for autumn before they could track down the rebels hiding out in the dense deciduous forests. Thus, the campaign dragged on for months and involved large numbers of troops.[57]

Kundukhov was involved in this fighting from the start. As the Ossetian commander led his troops against the followers of the Chechen rebel Atabaev (also referred to in the sources as 'Atabai Atavov' or 'Atabi Ataev') in the autumn of 1860, his force also included a 500-strong Chechen militia.[58] According to contemporary Russian military reports, it was especially the presence of the Chechens serving under Kundukhov that compelled many of Atabaev's fighters to lay down their arms.[59] It is also reported that, with Kundukhov's help, the Chechens settling in the plains as well as the residents of the district of Ichkerskii were forced to swear an oath that they would not support the rebels. In this way, the rebellion was prevented from spreading.[60] Finally, as his situation became hopeless, Atabaev gave himself up.[61]

Nevertheless, not even Kundukhov could prevent the extremely bloody military operation that followed Atabaev's arrest. Since not all of Atabaev's followers wanted to surrender, the fighting continued for another two and a half weeks. Russian sources state that '200 *abreks* ... were annihilated to the last man', so that Atabaev's entire retinue was destroyed.[62] Subsequently, the victors had a number of Chechen *auls* razed to the ground, including the settlement of Benoi, and deported hundreds of families from the mountains to the plains. The most important leaders of the Chechens—Uma Duev and Sultan-Murad as well as Atabaev—were banished to exile in central Russia. However, the other key figure of the resistance, Baisungur, was executed, though this only further enhanced his status as a hero of liberation in Chechen memorial culture.[63]

Kundukhov has nothing to say about his military campaigns in Chechnia in his memoirs. Instead, he once again highlights his role as a mediator and peacemaker:

> Once I had taken over the administration of the Chechen district, I lost no time and began to travel through all of the *auls*, where both the clerics and the residents from all *auls* came to me openly with their complaints and frustration regarding the district administration as well as [their fears] regarding the future. With God's help, I succeeded in warding off yet another unnecessary and destructive war. I managed to calm down both the Chechens, who were ready to go to war again, and the army; I convinced the army leadership that it was essential to tell the Chechens what they could expect from the Russian leadership for the future; otherwise all measures and efforts to bring about the desired pacification would be in vain.[64]

According to this account, then, it was mainly due to Kundukhov's efforts that Prince Bariatinskii in 1860 issued the 'Proclamation to the Chechen People', in which he promised the Chechens that they would be free to follow their religion and their local legal traditions, and that their landholdings, the people's courts, trade and the exercise of their craftsmanship would not be curtailed.[65] It was in the spirit of these regulations that Kundukhov negotiated with the Chechen elders to persuade them to abandon their resistance and to submit to the imperial regulations. In his memoirs, he comments:

> After [Bariatinskii's] Act had been presented to the Chechens, I managed to bring about a complete pacification quickly and without great casualties, not only in Chechnia, but even in Shatoi and Ichkeriia, where I rode with my troops. I succeeded in resettling to the plains all those who had previously refused to submit and were hiding in the forests, and integrated them into great *auls*, so that by 1861, apart from the Left Flank, there was not a single person left in the entire province who had not yet been subdued.[66]

Kundukhov may indeed have been keen to establish peace in Chechnia. The mere fact that he managed to get the Chechens of the plains to swear allegiance ahead of the military operation in the autumn of 1860 suggests as much. However, this did not prevent him from suppressing the rebels with brute force, as the sources reveal. The resettlement operation, which he only mentions in passing in his memoirs, was also an extremely harsh measure. According to Russian accounts from the time, Kundukhov had 177 families resettled from the mountains to the plains.[67] This resettlement took place in the middle of winter, which even a contemporary Russian reporter referred to as a 'tough measure' (*mera zhestokaia*), though he regarded it as justified given the special wartime situation.[68]

However, even after the suppression of the revolts in the early 1860s, there was still no sustained peace in Chechnia. The atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion was further aggravated by the Russian administrators' harsh policy on religion, which was marked by Islamophobic tendencies. Following the experiences of the war against Imam Shamil, many Russians regarded sharia and the Sufi traditions as manifestations of 'Islamic fanaticism' and sought to suppress all tendencies that they interpreted as such. In doing so, they often failed to distinguish between the different Sufi brotherhoods and their respective spiritual tenets. Ironically, at the beginning of the 1860s, the Russians made an enemy of the very movement that, unlike the Naqshbandiyya, had expressly argued against armed resistance and in favour

of peaceful existence under Russian rule: the Sufi order of the Qādiriyya, led by Chechen sheikh Kunta-Khadzhi Kishiev (literally 'son of Kishi').[69]

After Shamil's defeat, the Qādiriyya, a Sufi order that arrived in the North Caucasus region during the nineteenth century,[70] rapidly spread under the charismatic leadership of Kunta-Khadzhi.[71] Unlike the Naqshbandiyya, this sheikh represented a quietist school of thought that emphasised individual rather than communal salvation and called upon the Muslims to turn their minds away from worldly matters towards prayer and moral purification. It was thus possible to be a good Muslim even under the foreign rule of Russia, as long as the individuals succeeded in mentally detaching themselves from the occupiers—a message that resonated strongly with the exhausted and war-weary population in the early 1860s. In terms of ritual, too, there were differences compared with the teachings and practices of the Naqshbandiyya, primarily the audible *dhikr* (Arabic: *ḏikr*, often also called *zikr*, literally 'mindfulness of God'), during which the faithful worshipped God through singing and rhythmic (dancing) movements. While the Naqshbandiyya also knew the audible *dhikr*, silent worship was more widespread.[72]

During the war against Shamil, the Russian administrators had tried to support Kunta-Khadzhi's alternative teachings; after the war, however, they opposed this school of thought, regarding it as a potential flashpoint for a religious unification movement. The tsar's bureaucrats were aware of the danger that a tough crackdown might help the cause of the unification movement and could even set off a new war. Initially, they attempted to weaken Kunta-Khadzhi by backing competing mullahs and political forces.[73] However, the *zikrists*, as the Russians generally called the adherents of the Qādiriyya, ultimately seemed to pose too big a threat. Despite Russia's best efforts, Kunta-Khadzhi grew more and more popular by the day. Contemporary Russian observers even claimed that the movement constituted the rudiments of a hierarchically structured underground state led by Kunta-Khadzhi as imam.[74] The *zikrists*' singing reminded the Russians of the war-songs that Shamil and his warriors had chanted before going into battle.[75] Finally, Kunta-Khadzhi, together with his brother and some of his followers, were captured in a surprise raid in early 1864. They were taken via Groznyi and Vladikavkaz to Novocherkassk, from where, after six months in a labour camp, they were transferred to a prison near the city of Ustiuzhkino in the government of Novgorod. The news of Kunta-Khadzhi's arrest caused massive unrest, to which the Russian colonial authorities responded with a wave of arrests among his *murids*. The practice of *zikr* was outlawed. After

three years of captivity in the harshest conditions, Kunta-Khadzhi died in his Russian exile on 31 May 1867.[76] However, this did not mark the end of the Qādiriyya. It was now firmly established in its rightful place beside the Naqshbandiyya in Chechen society. In later years, the Sufi order actually gained additional adherents due to persistent rumours that Kunta-Khadzhi was still alive and would soon return to liberate his people.

At any rate, this situation must have enormously complicated Kundukhov's position in Chechnia. Kundukhov writes in the preface to his memoirs that 'as a soldier', he belonged to 'the tsar', but 'as a human being, [he could] not help being part of the people as well'.[77] In the course of his term in office in Chechnia, however, this tension must have become increasingly difficult for him to handle, especially given his growing dissatisfaction with Russia's policy towards the indigenous Muslim population. On 25 August 1863, Kundukhov sent a letter to the chief of the Russian General Staff in the Caucasus, General Aleksandr Petrovich Kartsov (1817–77), whom he had known since his youth. In this missive, he noted certain grievances regarding the situation in Chechnia and called on the General Staff to reconsider its current policy:

> During my term in office [in Chechnia], I have succeeded in restoring quiet [*spokoistve*] in the entire region, I have not left a single *abrek* remaining. Unfortunately, though, I have failed to convince the natives [*tuzemtsy*] of the most important thing of all, which is that the state is not plotting to destroy them. However, the arbitrary rule of the Cossacks, and the fact that the latter refuse the natives all of their rights, and the constant conflicts between [Cossacks and natives], which mostly concern land rights, have not only stirred up enmity and hatred between these [two groups of the population], but have created among the mountaineers [*gortsy*] the firm conviction that the state is not favourably disposed towards them. The appointment of Grand Duke [Mikhail Nikolaevich] as [the tsar's] viceroy [in the Caucasus] is seen by the mountaineers as evidence of the tsar's paternal care, and after His Majesty's [Tsar Alexander II's] journey through the Terek region [in September 1861], they have gained confidence and hope of improvement. … [We] cannot and should not remain indifferent in this important matter.[78]

Kundukhov was careful to ensure that his text did not seem openly critical of the army's General Staff, let alone of the tsar himself. Not least due to his self-perception as a member of the imperial armed forces, such criticism would also have been most unlike him. In an extended report that Kundukhov had originally composed on 25 March 1863 and attached to his letter to Kartsov, he further detailed the problems he had raised, specifically the blatant

preference given to the Cossacks when it came to land distribution and the ill-treatment of indigenous non-Russian Caucasians who depended on the whims of the local military authorities. In this report, the ethnic Ossetian major-general noted the hard fortune that had befallen the Chechens and generally lamented the situation of the Muslim peoples in the North Caucasus, who after the war with Shamil had to endure not only increasing land-poverty but also attempts at Christianisation. As Kundukhov saw it, in the early 1860s, this pressure to convert was applied not only to the Ossetians but also to the Karabulaks (a subset of the Chechen people, also known as Arshtins, who settled in modern-day Ingushetia) and the Nazranians (Ingush living near the town of Nazran). This prompted the residents of more than 300 Ossetian farmsteads to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire (from where many returned utterly destitute), while it is reported that others resisted, some 'with weapons in hand'.[79]

Emigration and the aftermath

For Kundukhov, this marked the start of a development in the course of which he would also experience difficulties. He must have perceived the increasing pressure on Muslims, including the noble families of his own Tagauriia district, as pressure on his person as well.[80] His affiliation with the tsar's army and his Muslim identity must have been increasingly difficult to reconcile. His position as administrator of Chechnia was also becoming more and more precarious. That Russia was failing to keep the promises made in Bariatinskii's 1860 proclamation to the Chechens undermined Kundukhov's own position among the population, since after all it was he who had to negotiate with the Chechen elders on the basis of this legal document. As such, Kundukhov found himself increasingly powerless in a situation that he was unable to change. Kundukhov must have considered emigration not simply as a way of preventing new conflicts and revolts but also as a potential escape from his own personal dilemma.

Originally, Kundukhov had proposed that the Cossacks, whom the army leadership had decided to resettle in the newly conquered territories to secure Russian rule,[81] should evacuate their settlements and return the land to the Chechens.[82] However, at this point in time, Russian policymakers were discussing only two plans when it came to the Chechens: either all Chechens would leave their homeland and be resettled to the north of the River Terek or even expelled to the Ottoman Empire, or at least the Chechens living in the

mountains would be given new areas of settlement in the plains of the Smaller Kabarda in order to disrupt links between Chechens and Dagestanis, and thus also to eliminate once and for all the possibility of large-scale revolts.[83]

Kundukhov was opposed to both options. In his memoirs, he explains that he believed such a resettlement, which could only be carried out as part of a large-scale military operation, would not only set off a new revolt in Chechnia but would also provoke unrest in the entire eastern part of the Caucasus.[84] Count Mikhail Tarielovich Loris-Melikov (1825–88), an ethnic Armenian general of the Russian Imperial Army who at that time was in overall command of the armed forces in the Terek region, was a vehement advocate of resettling the Chechens. Reportedly, in this situation, he offered Kundukhov command of the troops being drawn together in Chechnia for the resettlement operation. However, Kundukhov declined what to him was a dubious honour, arguing as follows:

> [N]ot even a year ago, I presented [Bariatinskii's] appeal to the Chechen people and reassured them in the name of my monarch that its provisions, in their entirety, would remain a sacred commitment in perpetuity. If His Highness [the viceroy of the Caucasus, Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaievich] really wants to appoint me as army commander for the Chechen detachment, then, it seems to me, this is mainly because the Chechen people trust me and His Highness, who is well aware of this fact, hopes that this will help to bring about a smooth resettlement of the Chechens.[85]

Kundukhov responded by proposing to the army leadership a project of his own, under which only those Chechens who proved to be particularly dissatisfied with Russian rule would be resettled to the Ottoman Empire, together with parts of the Muslim Ossetians and Kabardians. On 17 May 1864, Tsar Alexander II approved of Kundukhov's project, and in close coordination with the Caucasus viceroy, the Ossetian major-general began to prepare the emigration. He travelled to the Ottoman Empire for negotiations and received assurances from the Sublime Porte that 5,000 families from the North Caucasus would be taken in.[86] Negotiations with the Chechens themselves proved to be considerably more difficult. Nevertheless, in 1865, Kundukhov persuaded them to emigrate; in total, more than 23,000 people, most of them Chechens, would leave for the Ottoman Empire. In his memoirs, he states that this was because he managed to convince the Chechens that they had no future in the Caucasus and nothing to expect except poverty and forced conversion to Christianity. Another major factor

would have been his promise that, together with the exiles, he would seize the first opportunity to expel 'our enemy from the Caucasus' together with the Ottomans.[87] However, Kundukhov did apparently also hand out about 10,000 roubles' worth of bribes to win influential personalities within the Chechen community for his proposal—a fact he fails to mention in his memoirs.[88]

Kundukhov's memoirs do not indicate hostility to the Russian people as a possible motivation for his emigration, nor do we find any fundamental distrust towards the Russian Empire that he had served for half a lifetime. Rather, Kundukhov's decision seems to have been made in direct response to the state's repressive measures against the peoples of the Caucasus—a policy that in his view had no legal basis whatsoever. In his writings, he justifies his decision to lead thousands of Chechens and other North Caucasians to their new home by saying that his objective at the time was to preserve the peace in the Caucasus. In order to ensure the success of the operation and to appear credible in the eyes of the locals, he says, he had no other choice but to end his career in the Imperial Army and to join the emigrants in exile, which the army leadership supposedly only accepted after some hesitation. Accordingly, Kundukhov refers in his memoirs to the great sacrifice that he personally was prepared to make in the interests of advancing the higher cause of peace.[89]

Whether such high-minded aims were indeed the key considerations in his decision is a question that must remain open for now. In any case, the entire arrangement had the appearance of a deal that was ultimately profitable both for Kundukhov and for the Russian army leadership: Kundukhov, who had been unhappy with his situation for some time anyway, would be permitted to leave the empire together with his family and was provided with a generous financial compensation. In return, the Russian military leadership wanted him to take as many Chechens as possible on his journey. Understandably, not everybody in the Russian army was pleased with this arrangement since the Ottomans would be getting Kundukhov, who was not only a high-ranking and experienced officer of the imperial Russian armed forces but also one of the best experts on the Caucasus there was. But the prospect of thousands of undesirable Chechens leaving Russia seems to have weighed heavier in the Russian leaders' strategic calculations at the time than the fear of gaining a potentially formidable opponent in the future. All the same, in direct negotiations with the Sublime Porte and in apparent contravention of the agreements Kundukhov had reached earlier, Russian diplomats succeeded in winning assurances that the Chechens would not be

settled in immediate proximity to the Russian Empire so as to make a return of these people more difficult.[90]

For Kundukhov himself, the decision to go into exile was a good deal, both financially and professionally. In addition to the sum of 12,000 silver roubles that he was paid for organising the emigration, the Russian army leadership awarded him a financial compensation of 45,000 silver roubles for his property, which he left to the Russian government—a figure that Kundukhov claimed was nowhere near the real value of his estate and house. However, supposedly, this was of no concern to him, since he like other Muslims was prepared to cast off his possessions 'to liberate himself from Russian rule'.[91] Yet what he fails to mention in his memoirs is that the state treasury also reimbursed him for all resettlement costs to the tune of an additional 130,000 silver roubles.[92]

The Ottomans received Kundukhov with open arms and awarded him considerable landholdings as well as the title of *pasha*. His military career in exile was no less impressive than that in the tsar's army: he was promoted to general and finally fought on the Ottoman side in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8. After the war, he commanded the garrison at Erzurum on the border with Russia. Henceforth, the Kundukhov family would become firmly established as part of the Ottoman elite. His son, Bekir-Sami Kundukh, would later even become foreign minister in the new Turkish Republic.[93]

On the losing side were the communities that left their homeland together with Kundukhov. Just a few years after their emigration, many Chechens, having in the meantime become completely impoverished, tried to return to their homes; some reportedly even agreed to convert to Christianity if the tsarist authorities permitted them to go back.[94] However, the Russians would have none of it, and only a few ultimately succeeded in returning to their homeland via Georgia and Dagestan.[95] Accordingly, the experiences that the peoples of the North Caucasus associated with Kundukhov were mainly negative. The Menshevik Akhmed Tembulatovich Tsalikov (1882–1928), an ethnic Ossetian and publicist, who would briefly play an important political role in the years of transition after the revolutions of 1917, did not have much good to say about Kundukhov either. Writing in 1913, Tsalikov states that it was the Russian leadership that approached Kundukhov with a proposal for expelling the Chechens. Kundukhov, he claims, only agreed on condition that he be recompensed financially. All of this, Tsalikov asserts, came at the expense of the North Caucasian exiles, who 'were sick, hungry, and died in droves' in foreign lands.[96]

After his emigration, Kundukhov was regarded as a renegade and traitor to Russia. The famous Nizhnii Novgorod Dragoon Regiment, which distinguished itself in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8 among other battle honours, long continued to sing of 'The Traitor Pasha Kundukhov' (*Izmennik pasha Kundukhov*). It was probably no accident that Russian soldiers destroyed the general's grave during their advance on the Ottoman Empire in the First World War.[97] This negative image of Kundukhov was echoed well into the 1920s in Ossetian folk songs, which cast the general as the one who had persuaded the people with false promises to emigrate.[98] In Soviet historiography, too, Kundukhov is mainly slated, though he is hardly mentioned at all there.[99]

The insight into the life and deeds of this personality makes clear how complex the realities of Russian policy in the ethnically mixed Caucasus were. Since identities were rarely fixed, especially in the case of military professionals from the ranks of the local Muslim population, it is particularly difficult to attribute specific motives to Kundukhov's choices in retrospect. But whatever may ultimately have motivated his decision to carry out the emigration project in 1865, the dismal outcome taints the image of the Ossetian general to a degree that it seems inappropriate to cast him as a hero, as some historians of Russia today seem inclined to do.[100]

3

THE NORTH CAUCASUS WITHIN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

The policy of expulsion in the first half of the 1860s reflected a view widely held among the Russian army leadership, which regarded the subjected peoples not as assets for the imperial project, but as a burden that Russia should relieve itself of as soon as possible. Nevertheless, once the wars of conquest had been concluded, Russia had no choice but to begin building the kind of governance structures that seemed suitable for incorporating the new territories and peoples into the imperial sphere. While the Russian conquerors may have regarded the societies of the North Caucasus as alien by nature and having questionable loyalties, there was never any doubt on the Russian side that this region, too, should henceforth be considered an integral part of the empire and would be absorbed in perpetuity, just like other territories where non-Russian populations settled. A number of measures would be taken to bring the other ethnic groups closer to the ambit of Russian culture and make loyal imperial citizens of them, for instance by promoting the alphabetisation of indigenous languages and building state schools.

In reality, however, the tsar's administrators in the Caucasus did little to advance real integration; they simply did not believe the necessary conditions were in place. To ensure maximum stability, the new rulers were mainly content to expand the existing system of military administration to the newly conquered territories and allowed the individual ethnic communities to retain their traditions and societal structures. This form of administration, which

tended to be rather informal and followed the example of other European colonial powers, did not constitute a coherent system. Instead, it sprang from a pragmatic attitude that aimed to finally pacify the region after the long war with minimal effort. This minimalist state-building project evolved with various regional variations and was reformed on several occasions. Although this model had originally been conceived merely as a transitional arrangement, it would nevertheless characterise the nature of Russian rule during the entire tsarist era.

At least initially, Russia allowed the vanquished peoples to retain most of their internal liberties. This was by no means due to the benevolent stance of the imperial state towards these Muslim societies, nor the outcome of any appreciation of their culture or way of life. On the contrary, the Russian rulers regarded these cultural features as nuisances to be eliminated by a modernising and civilising mission. To a large extent, policy was determined by the local rulers, in whom a great deal of authority was vested. At the same time, Russia's efforts at reform were characterised by the desire to consolidate the administrative–territorial order of the region and to bring local customary law in line with imperial legislation. There was, however, no serious attempt to integrate the communities of mountain dwellers into the imperial orbit. Instead of providing funds for schools and infrastructure, for example, which would have been important prerequisites for incorporating these peoples into the empire's social space, in practice Russian policy consisted mainly of repeated attempts to curtail time-honoured rights and traditions without anything being offered in exchange. The Russian military administrators dismissed village elders of whom they disapproved; they restricted certain religious practices; they gave preference to Cossacks and other ethnic Slavic residents in distributing scarce land; and in a number of cases, they imposed collective punishments on entire villages for individual transgressions.

This policy, which the non-Russian indigenous population viewed as unfair and despotic, did not create conditions conducive to a lasting stabilisation of the region. The individual communities repeatedly rebelled against Russian rule. The causes of these revolts were manifold. They might be set off by increases of taxes or duties, changes to the administrative structure, the threat of resettlement, bans on religious practices, or land confiscation. Often, revolts were triggered by mere rumours, for instance about imminent Christianisation. Only in 1877, after Russia had managed to put down a major uprising of Chechens and Dagestanis, was a noticeable pacification

achieved in military terms. Moreover, the 1877 revolt would be the last to mobilise large parts of the population against Russian rule under the banner of jihad.

The upshot of these revolts was an increase of state repression, which further complicated the amalgamation of the North Caucasian peoples into a unified imperial space. Especially in the Terek region, home to Chechens and Ingush, the state now relied even more heavily on police authority and Cossack forces. The indigenous peoples were blatantly discriminated against compared with Cossacks and Russians. They were barred from state schools and largely excluded from economic and political life, and with the introduction of a passport scheme, even their freedom of movement was strongly curtailed. For a while, Chechens in the Terek region were even prohibited from settling in cities and other major settlements. It was only in the early twentieth century, when the tsar adopted slightly more liberal policies due to nation-wide demands for liberty and political participation, that the discriminatory measures in the North Caucasus were also abolished.

This chapter traces the trajectories in the North Caucasus from the end of the Caucasus wars of conquest until 1917. A detailed treatment of this epoch is necessary due to the fact that historical investigation of the post-war period, as opposed to the Caucasus wars themselves, has been rudimentary to date. While Russian historical research has begun to study this period systematically based on new sources,[1] albeit without reaching any kind of consensus in assessing Russian policy, the Western literature has only dealt with this epoch in cursory overviews.[2] With Christian W. Dettmering's monograph on the Chechen and Ingush cases, a study has at least been published that offers a detailed investigation of the phase up to the 1877 revolt,[3] yet the entire subsequent period remains largely unexplored. The existing Western literature on the North Caucasus tends to regard the developments from the end of the Russian conquest in the 1860s to the revolutions of 1917 in a rather undifferentiated manner as a transition period in which the subjugated peoples rebelled in various ways against the foreign rulers, only to express their desire for liberty once more after the revolutions of 1917. This chapter will attempt to remedy some of these deficiencies by looking more closely at the nature of Russian rule in the Caucasus. It will also take into account the societal responses and changes that took place during this period.

The establishment of informal rule: ideals and realities

For the tsar's officials, the North Caucasus presented itself as a single, massive reform project. As in other territories settled by non-Russian ethnicities, the ultimate goal was to 'civilise' and 'modernise' these peoples until their 'melding' (*sliianie*) with the Russian people. Given the perceived cultural differences and the deep-rooted distrust that had taken hold during the long years of war, the Russian conquerors did not believe that this could be achieved in the near term, however. Therefore, in building up the public administration, the state representatives on the ground were guided by convictions and ideas that were not out of the ordinary in the age of colonialism and imperialism. Many were particularly attracted to the administrative model referred to in the literature as 'informal' rule, as practised by the French in Algeria or the British in India, for example. These parallels between Russia's colonial rule in the North Caucasus and the practices in other parts of the colonial world were by no means coincidental. Even before the end of military conquest, the desirability of following the examples of other European great powers was already being discussed in the highest political circles. For example, Evgenii Aleksandrovich Golovin (1782–1858), the commander of the tsarist forces in the Caucasus between 1837 and 1842, wrote to the War Ministry during the final year of his term in office: 'There is no doubt that the political means that allowed England to extend her rule over India could be used for the same purpose here [in the Caucasus].'[4]

Indeed, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a far-ranging exchange of knowledge between Russia and other European colonial powers. The transfer took place via correspondence between high-ranking military officers, the dissemination of publications, and diplomatic and academic contacts. At the request of the Russian government, a number of people who would later occupy administrative positions in the Caucasus travelled to French-administered North Africa or studied the situation in the Ottoman Empire to gather experiences. Orientalist literature translated from the French, which traded in stereotypes about the exotic orient, gained a great deal of traction, although these works often tended to reflect the fertility of the European imagination rather than the actual conditions on the ground.[5] In Russia, these fantasies were amalgamated with idiosyncratic images of the Caucasus, as perpetuated in the published memoirs of Russian officers (such as those of Baron Tornau[6]), and as early as the 1820s, in the writings of

Russian authors and writers, from Romantics such as Pushkin, Lermontov or Gribaedov to the political activists of the day.[7]

While many of the Russian Romantics had a love–hate relationship with the Caucasus, marked in equal parts by Russian arrogance and fascination with the 'noble savage',[8] the emerging Russian nationalism and the Slavophile movement in the second half of the nineteenth century helped create an image of the North Caucasian mountaineer that was marked by negative and even racist attitudes. For example, the influential Slavophile writer and doyen of the Eurasian movement, Nikolai Iakovlevich Danilevskii (1822–85), stated in his 1871 book *Russia and Europe*, referring to the peoples of the North Caucasus: 'With their fanatic religion, their ways of life and customs, but also due to the traits of the land in which they live, the Caucasian mountaineers are by nature robbers and looters who will not, and cannot, ever leave their neighbours in peace.'[9]

By drawing comparisons with England's military operations against the Scottish highland clans, Danilevskii was obviously trying to garner sympathy for Russian policy, which could no more tolerate such rebellious tendencies than the English Crown could.[10] However, geopolitical considerations played a greater role in the North Caucasus than in Scotland. From a Russian perspective, the fear was that third-party powers—at the time, mainly the Ottoman Empire and the United Kingdom—might exploit the instability on the imperial boundaries and goad the locals into revolt against Russia.

The image of the North Caucasian mountaineer was not always distorted by such racist stereotypes. However, even more strongly than in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tsarist policy in the second half of the nineteenth century was essentially marked by a sense of superiority and a *mission civilisatrice* as was also typical for the other great European powers. Russia and its representatives regarded themselves as bearers of culture who were bringing civilisation and progress to the 'backward' (*otstal'ye*) Muslims.[11] Russia was not content with merely co-opting the elites into the imperial system of service, but also aimed, through the spread of trade and education, to create a rudimentary cultural stratum, and especially to familiarise the population with the concept of *grazhdanstvennost'*.[12] As far as the tsar's administrators were concerned, this mainly meant compliance with the law and loyalty towards the monarchy and to the fundamental principles of imperial statehood.[13]

Scholars such as the famous Russian philologist Petr Karlovich Uslar (1816–75), motivated by an enlightened worldview, asserted that the

indigenous peoples were fundamentally capable of developing culturally. Because Uslar believed that *grazhdanstvennost'* could be communicated most effectively in the vernacular languages, he began in the 1860s to develop a specific Caucasian alphabet based on Cyrillic script, with help from locals. Based on this alphabet, he made the first attempts to introduce literacy to several North Caucasian languages, including the Chechen and Avar languages, which up to that point had no alphabets of their own (up to this point, Chechens and Dagestanis almost exclusively used Arabic for written communication).[14]

In legal-normative terms, the perception of great cultural discrepancies was illustrated by the fact that Russia ranked the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus among the *inorodtsy* or 'aliens', rather than among the regular inhabitants of the empire, just like the Muslims of Central Asia or the nomad hunters of Siberia.* Formally, the peoples of the North Caucasus were no longer being ranked among the *inorodtsy* by the end of the nineteenth century.[15] In everyday usage, the term *inorodtsy* was also largely discontinued. The collective term *gortsy* (mountaineers), which was much more prevalent, included both Muslim and Christian non-Russian peoples in the North Caucasus. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the word *tuzemtsy* (natives) came into general currency, marking an important semantic shift in as far as the term expressed a certain acknowledgement of the rights of these indigenous peoples. Whatever monikers may have been in use for the North Caucasian peoples, throughout the tsarist period, they were subject to regulations that also applied to other 'aliens': they were excused from military service and could only serve in the armed forces as volunteers. In return, they paid an indemnity (from 1866 onwards), while the public administration in St Petersburg allowed them to keep their social structures and legal traditions largely unchanged.[16]

* Originally, *inorodets* (plural *inorodtsy*) was a legal term that referred to all non-Russians, non-Orthodox and non-Slavs of the Russian Empire. The collection of legal texts (*Svod zakonov*) of 1857 included the 'mountaineers' (*gortsy*) of the North Caucasus in the category of *inorodtsy*. The term remained unclear, however, the definitions changed over time, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the categorisation of individual peoples and ethnic groups did not follow any formally established norms, but was largely subjective and arbitrary. The all-Russian census of 1897 classified the majority of the Islamic peoples of the North Caucasus, among those also the Chechens, as 'peasants'. However, a part of the nomadic peoples of the region (the Nogai, the Kalmyk and the Kumyk peoples, as well as the Tatar-speaking inhabitants) were listed under the category of *inorodtsy*.

The manifestation of Russia's approach to formulating and implementing policy in the North Caucasus depended not so much on St Petersburg, but on the local administrators who, in the Caucasus, enjoyed far-reaching powers. Much like in Poland, Russia had already created the institution of the viceroy (*namestnichestvo*) in 1844. This was a form of vice-regency by a governor (*namestnik*), who was appointed by and reported directly to the tsar. In practice, this institution, which in the Caucasus continued to exist until 1916, following an extended hiatus from 1881 to 1905, implied that a single person acted as the de-facto ruler of the entire Caucasus region. In the person of the tsar's viceroy, military and civilian power were unified, giving him the authority to adapt imperial legislation to local conditions. A Caucasian Committee (Kavkazskii komitet) was created to streamline operational contacts between St Petersburg and the governor in the Caucasus. It existed from 1845 to 1882 as an independent entity that was in effect the coequal of the other ministries.[17]

In establishing practical administrative structures in the newly conquered parts of the Caucasus, the Russian army leadership in the early 1860s certainly referred to existing models used by other European powers; however, it also took recourse to its own experiences in informal patterns of rule, which the army leadership had already imposed on the subjected khanates of Dagestan and Azerbaijan at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[18] The driving force behind the establishment of administrative structures in the North Caucasus was Prince Bariatinskii, who served as the tsar's viceroy in the Caucasus from 1856 to 1862. Towards the end of the wars, the supreme command of the Caucasus Army developed an administrative structure based on experiences with informal models of rule in the South Caucasus. Already in 1852, while still serving as commander of the Left Flank of the armed forces on the Caucasus Line, Bariatinskii had imposed this administrative system on the subjected territories in the Chechen plains. After Shamil's surrender, it was extended to the entire conquered region.[19] Count Illarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov (1837–1916), who served as governor of the Caucasus from 1905 to 1916, in retrospect described this form of rule as a system based on 'the concentration of administrative power in the hands of a few officers under the overarching guidance of the supreme commander of the Caucasus Army, and on the granting of the people's right to manage their own affairs according to their *adats*'.[20]

There was no elaborate plan underlying this model of rule. Rather, already under Prince Bariatinskii, Russian policy was largely spontaneous and highly

experimental in nature. Evidence of this can be found in the many directives and instructions that it produced, which taken together give a contradictory image of Russian policy.[21] Also, local self-administration for the indigenous population was in reality a tenuous matter at best. Immediately after the end of military conquest, Russia did allow local power structures to survive in the interests of temporary stabilisation and as a reward for displays of loyalty. Often, Moscow would even leave people who had served under Shamil in leadership positions, or appoint personalities to high office who enjoyed social prestige among the local population. That, for instance, was how Bariatinskii dealt with Chechnia after the introduction of the first administrative structures from as early as 1852 onwards.[22]

Since conditions were perceived differently in the various parts of the region, the exercise of rule was not practised uniformly. This became most visible in the occupation of bureaucratic positions in the early 1860s. In the places where Russian rule had been established for a longer period and where at least part of the population understood Russian, for instance in the areas settled by Kabardian, Ossetian or Ingush people, it was not only the districts that were ruled by Russian officers but also the administrative units within the districts. The idea was to ensure that 'Russian state power should be as close to the people as possible', as the commander of the Caucasus Army, Count Grigorii Orbeliani, put it in a letter to the minister of war on 28 January 1862.[23] In those parts of the region where the Russians felt conditions were not ripe, the army leadership preferred to appoint indigenous people to local administrative positions. However, as Orbeliani reported, the problem among the Chechens in particular was that there were not enough 'subservient' individuals available for such tasks. Therefore, he believed, Russia had to build a state from scratch in Chechnia and familiarise the people with a new system of rule in this country racked by 'twenty years of continuous war' and massive internal population movements.[24]

Because the Russian authorities could not discern any kind of social hierarchy among the Chechens, they tried to create one. Towards the end of the Caucasus wars, Chechens who had distinguished themselves in the war (mainly army officers) were assigned plots of land, which the governor declared were now their personal property. However, of the fewer than sixty individuals concerned, only a handful received particularly sizeable estates of more than 500 *desiatins* (one *desiatin* being equal to 1.1 hectares). Among them were the Chechen families of Colonel Kasim (Kosum) Kurumov, Colonel Artsu Chermoev (1825–95), and Major Bata (Basha) Shamurzaev.[25]

Land allocations also took place later, for instance in 1867 and in 1873.[26] Often, individuals from such veteran families with long histories of service were appointed by Russia as provosts of a *naibstvo* (Artsu Chermoev was for a short time the provost of Ichkerskii district). Generally speaking, initially, the *naibstvo*, which together with the *uchastki* constituted the administrative units within the Chechen-settled areas, were governed exclusively by Chechens. When, in 1866, Cossack officers were also admitted to the *naibstvo*, the reason may have been that Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, who served as the tsar's *namestnik* in the Caucasus from 1862 to 1881, trusted the Chechens less than his predecessor had done.[27] Generally, it soon became clear that Russia had never regarded the local power structures as coequal forms of rule, but viewed them as temporary structures at best that would later be eliminated or adapted to imperial structures and laws. Russia's ultimate aim was to create a unified, centralised form of government. To this end, the entire North Caucasus was structured according to similar principles based on regions (*oblasti*), districts (*okruga*), and individual administrative units (plural *uchastki* or *naibstva*). In 1860, the Chechens, Ingush, Kabardians, Ossetians and Kumyks were settled together with the Cossacks in the Terek region, where these peoples came under strong pressure in the late tsarist period due to emigration and the arrival of new settlers. On the other hand, the Dagestani mountain communities and khanates were organised into a separate administrative Dagestan region. The western part of the North Caucasus became the Kuban region.[28]

However, over time, the administrative designations and boundaries changed repeatedly. Already in 1867, the army leadership abolished the khanates in Dagestan and re-designated them as districts.[29] As part of general reforms undertaken by Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich in 1870, the number of districts in the Terek region increased from six to seven.[30] In 1883, as part of another major administrative restructuring, most of Chechnia was amalgamated with the city of Groznyi, which received full municipal status in the same year, to form the Groznyi district. Throughout Russian and later Soviet rule, Chechnia and Dagestan would remain distinct and separate administrative–territorial units.[31]

Unification tendencies under Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich were also the reason for the decision by the viceroy on 1 January 1871 to formally abolish military rule over the Terek and Kuban regions and to replace them with a civilian central administration. In Dagestan, however, the military–civilian administration remained in place.[32] The integration of the newly

conquered territories into the empire's civilian administration was intended to create better conditions for the expansion of *grazhdanstvennost'* to encompass a population whom Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich regarded as savages on the lowest rung of civilisational achievement, as he declared unabashedly in a review of his term in office in 1873.[33]

In practice, not much changed for the non-Russian indigenous populations after the establishment of a civilian administration in the North Caucasus. Administrative power continued to be concentrated in the hands of (mainly Russian) officers, who embodied a surveillance state that did not hesitate to intervene directly in the local affairs of the indigenous population, to strike down the decisions made under sharia or *adat* or even to dismiss the elected village elders if they saw fit. Although the administrative structures in the Terek and Kuban regions were already Russian- and Cossack-dominated from the mid-level downwards, the situation in Dagestan was different in the sense that the power structures were generally more dominated by locals. In Dagestan, these were mostly people who had been appointed as *naibs* under Shamil but had defected to the Russian side shortly before his defeat. In Dagestan, Russians and other ethnic Slavs were in the minority, and not just when it came to the administrative apparatus. They were also concentrated in the few cities, and accounted for just a small percentage of the overall population. However, in Dagestan too, the heads of individual districts were army officers, and the governors at the higher regional administrative level were in most cases people from outside the region.[34]

In its governance practices, the Russian administration further undermined the assurances it had given regarding local legal traditions by systematically codifying and integrating into imperial legislation the norms of *adat*, which had largely been handed down through oral tradition and had strong local variations. Archaic legal conventions, such as the rules on blood-feuds, dowries or confiscation of property as compensation for crimes, were now banned. With respect to religious policies, Bariatinskii made another about-face in 1859, adopting a decisive stance against sharia in order to diminish the influence of the Muslim clergy. For as long as the Muslims' societal cohesion was predicated on the laws of Islam, the Russian viceroy had little prospect of integrating these peoples into a Christian nation. It was with this goal in mind that Bariatinskii restored the khanates in Dagestan, hoping that they would constitute a counterweight to the prevailing theocratic political structures.[35] The codification of customary law, too, was not so much an expression of the Russians' special appreciation of local traditions as an attempt to create a

secular legal system and associated institutions that could push back against the influence of sharia courts and thus of the Muslim clergy.[36] The Russian authorities aimed to establish control over these courts by co-opting the existing religious hierarchies into the pan-imperial structures. The hope was that, in the long term, they might nurture a form of Islam that was suitable for the projection of imperial rule.[37]

In the Muslim areas of the South Caucasus, Russia established two official Muslim organisations in Tbilisi (for members of the Sunni and Shi'ite branches of Islam, respectively) patterned on the example of the older muftiate of Orenburg and the Taurid muftiate on the Crimean Peninsula. However, no comparable institutions were founded in the North Caucasus (nor, for that matter, in the newly conquered territories of Central Asia) until 1917, although there had been certain initiatives to that end in the 1860s and 1870s.[38] By creating a hierarchically structured Muslim organisation, the empire stood to gain the loyalty of the Muslim elites, who enjoyed tangible privileges. For instance, in the case of the South Caucasus organisations led by a Sunni mufti or a Shi'ite sheikh, these included tax exemption, financial support from the state and the prospect of being elevated into the nobility. In the North Caucasus, the tsar's administrators feared that by creating such muftiates, they would be ceding control over the activities of the local clergy—of the very people who derived their considerable influence from their close proximity to the public. In Dagestan, for example, the mullahs and *qadis* were elected by the local population and subsequently had to be approved by the Russian administration. Within the muftiate system, the local clergy would have been subordinate to the higher Islamic authorities, which would have diminished Russia's ability to exert direct influence.[39] Moreover, there was a fundamental distrust on the part of the tsarist administration towards the adherents of Sufi orders, which were judged to be dangerous. Although the tsar's officials did try to cooperate with local spiritual leaders in the North Caucasus, they preferred to deal with those who were opposed to Sufism and showed a willingness to support an 'orthodox' form of Islam.[40]

Bariatinskii's original aim of pushing back sharia in favour of *adat* proved to be a protracted undertaking that ultimately ended in failure.[41] Often, the village courts would base their decisions both on traditional and on Islamic law. The law of *adat* was applied in disputes over land rights and regulated societal interactions within a village community and between villages. Sharia, on the other hand, was applied mostly in family matters, such as

disagreements between husbands and wives, and in religious life.[42] Despite the efforts to codify the laws of *adat*, archaic forms of jurisprudence endured stubbornly, especially in the mountain areas of Dagestan and in Chechnia. In practice, local communities often attempted to circumvent the temporal authorities and judged even severe offences (such as murder) based on their own legal traditions, such as the blood-feud. Disputes over land rights, too, were often settled not in the courtroom, but by force of arms. The situation of women was particularly dire. For instance, in central Dagestan, it appears to have been common for female offenders to be stoned to death by the (male) village community.[43]

Finally, the diverse reform and standardisation efforts of this period should not blind us to the fact that the military and the police had free rein and were essentially authorised to intervene directly in any area they wished. Accordingly, their actions occasionally seemed utterly arbitrary—at least from the perspective of the general population. Notably, severe offences against state institutions or authorities were handled exclusively by Russian military courts.[44] Not much changed after the 1871 reform, since Russian officers often also chaired the civilian courts.[45] Against this background, it is unsurprising that, in the mountain areas in particular, there were repeated revolts and local rebellions against Russian rule, which were brutally suppressed by Russia on a regular basis. In this context, we will look in a separate section at the last great uprising of 1877, which developed a dynamic that would affect the entire region.

The 'last jihad'

Even after the suppression of the revolts in the early 1860s, Chechnia remained a hotspot of unrest. However, the focus of armed resistance increasingly shifted to Dagestan, where history records eighteen revolts against Russian rule between 1859 and 1877, all of them based in mountain areas.[46] Since these rebellions were all local in scope, the Russian army managed each time to suppress them in the usual manner, by applying brute military force. The situation worsened in 1877, when the North Caucasus witnessed the last large-scale uprising of the indigenous peoples against Russian rule under the banner of jihad. At its apex, this revolt swept up hundreds of settlements in Chechnia, Dagestan and in certain cases also in other parts of the North Caucasus as well as some villages in the north of what is today Azerbaijan.[47]

There is no evidence that this rebellion was organised by the Sufi brotherhood of the Qādiriyya, as some contemporary post-Soviet historians claim.[48] It is true that the Qādiriyya adopted a much more confrontational stance towards Russian rule from the mid-1860s onwards, following the arrest of Kunta-Khadzhi, and some rebel leaders or their followers may certainly have been Qādiriyya adherents or at least sympathisers. But just as it would be wrong to view the Naqshbandiyya as a network that organised the resistance against Russia under Shamil, it would be equally misguided to cast the Qādiriyya as such. Rather, it was an anti-Russian movement with broad support that broke out in April 1877 in one of the mountain *auls* of Ichkeriia and spread swiftly to other parts of the region.

Two factors made the outbreak of the revolt possible. The first was the situation in the North Caucasus. Among the mountain population at the time, there was a great deal of discontent over the measures that Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich had taken to ban the exercise of their religion, such as outlawing the *zikr*. In Dagestan in particular, this situation was compounded by the fact that under the administrative overhaul, former local potentates had lost their earlier influence and were thus driven into opposition to Russia. Furthermore, abuse of power by local administrators could also stoke popular resentment against Russian rule. Finally, the revolts also fed on the widespread poverty in remote mountain areas and the perception (especially in the Terek region) of unfair preference being given to the Cossacks when it came to land distribution.

The second factor had to do with the international situation, which seemed auspicious. The renewed outbreak of war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire tied down large military forces and created what seemed like a promising opportunity for a rebellion. A direct nexus with the international situation can hardly be disputed. According to Russian sources, letters from Istanbul inciting the population to rebellion were already circulating in the years leading up to the revolt, including certain letters allegedly penned by Gazi Muhammad, the son of Imam Shamil, who was serving in the Ottoman army.[49] Emissaries from the Ottoman Empire, recruited from the ranks of North Caucasian *mukhadzhirs* (emigrants), sought to mobilise the mountain dwellers for battle against the infidel.[50]

In any case, it was no accident that in mid-April 1877, at the same time as the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, the first rebellion started with an uprising of the Ichkeriian population against their Russian overlords. Around sixty residents from various villages and settlements elected Alibek-Khadzhi

Aldamov (1850–78) as their imam and leader.[51] Shortly before the Russo-Turkish War broke out, Alibek-Khadzhi, from the small township of Simsir (or Semsir), was on his *Hajj* (Arabic: *Ḥaǧǧ*), the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he must have heard rumours of imminent war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Here, he may indeed have been goaded by 'Turkish patriots' to organise a revolt against Russia.[52] The notion that he even met with Imam Shamil's son, Gazi-Muhammad, cannot be ruled out, but nor can it be confirmed, for Alibek-Khadzhi and his family had little influence and few connections. If he allowed himself to be persuaded by whatever party that an uprising against Russia ought to begin in the case of war with the Ottoman Empire, it must have been due to his genuine convictions and perhaps also his youth, as he was only around twenty-five years old at the time (although this is disputed, as some believe he must have been much older, given his title and standing among the Chechens).[53]

Alibek-Khadzhi's goals were independence from Russia and the establishment of an imamate like Shamil's. Accordingly, he appointed two *naibs* for his future state—Sultan-Murad from the town of Benoi and Suleiman from the *aul* of Tsontaroi, less than 10 kilometres away from Benoi.[54] In total, about 300 to 500 armed men joined Alibek-Khadzhi.[55] Former resistance leader Uma Duev, too, would become an important figure in the Chechen revolt. After his arrest in 1860, he had been banished to the interior of Russia and only returned to the Caucasus in 1876. After initial hesitation, he joined the rebels in mid-July 1877, eventually rising to become one of their most important leaders.[56] In Dagestan, the revolt began about a month later in a mountain area bordering on Chechnia. It spread to other districts and by the end of the summer had encompassed large swathes of Dagestan, including the villages bordering Dagestan in modern-day Azerbaijan.[57]

The rebels followed the same modus operandi everywhere: They ambushed smaller groups of soldiers, attacked fortified structures, and by destroying bridges tried to cut off the supply and communications lines of the Russian armed forces, which in Chechnia was composed not only of regular infantry units but also of Cossack formations and local militias. As in days of old, the all-male village war-bands formed the core of the armed resistance. Though Russia had tried to smash these fraternities after the end of the Caucasus wars, they were now formed anew. The Russians, for their part, treated the rebels as they always had: with severe harshness and by burning down entire settlements. The Cossack troops would on occasion use these opportunities

to drive off the Chechens' livestock, so that the military conflict also took on the nature of an extended cattle raid.[58]

Hundreds of towns and villages and thousands of armed fighters throughout the North Caucasus took part in the uprising, making it difficult for the Russians to establish control over the rebellious areas quickly. Overall, however, the movement lacked coordination and a strong leadership that might have unified the Chechen and Dagestani resistance movements. When the people of Avaria asked Sheikh Abdurakhman Sorgatlinskii (1792–1891) to accept the title of imam, and thus the leadership of the movement in Dagestan, he declined and instead suggested his son Muhammad Khadzhi, who was elected as imam in August 1877.[59]

An aggravating factor for the rebels was that while many sympathised with them, by no means all took part in the uprising, not even in Chechnia. Specifically, Alibek-Khadzhi did not manage to gain support for his cause among the Chechens of the plains. For instance, the residents of Shali even opposed the imam on several occasions and prevented his troops from entering.[60] However, each time, the situation in Chechnia was on a knife's edge, since every success also boosted the imam's authority. Moreover, rumours about an imminent Ottoman victory over the Russians or stories of rebel successes in Dagestan could bring about a shift in opinion: villages that had only recently professed their attachment to Russia would unexpectedly switch to Alibek-Khadzhi's side. Strikingly, this occasionally happened against the wishes of the village elders, who were apparently either unwilling or unable to rein in the enthusiasm of those young men who set out on their own to join Alibek-Khadzhi's forces. Conversely, news about rebel defeats could just as quickly cause existing alliances among the communities to break down again as erstwhile rebel villages once more swore fealty to Russia.[61]

Special circumstances prevailed in Dagestan, where many who had formerly served under Shamil and later entered into the service of the Russian Empire remained loyal to Russia and in some cases fought side by side with the tsarist troops against the rebels, which may ultimately be considered evidence that the tsarist policy of cooperation and co-optation was a success.[62] One of these individuals was Said Abdurakhman (1837–1900/1) from the Kazikumukhskii district in the mountainous central part of Dagestan. Abdurakhman, who was married to one of Shamil's daughters, fought until the last day with the imam against the Russian conquerors and finally joined him in his Russian exile in Kaluga. With Russian permission, he returned home in 1866 and joined the Russian imperial service. In his report about the

1877 revolt, which he witnessed as a participant on the Russian side, he specifically notes his disappointment that even some of the residents of his own village had risen up against Russia. One reason for his complaint was that the residents there had been regarded up to that time as especially loyal subjects of the tsar and had always supported him against his enemies. Accordingly, the tsar had proven especially gracious towards these residents after the crushing of the rebellion and only punished those who had taken part in the 'unrest'. However, Abdurakhman's report also implicitly criticises the Russian local administration: while he condemns the murder of L.M. Chember, the governor of Kazikumukhskii district, he simultaneously accuses the latter of having treated the population roughly and failing to appreciate the local customs and conventions.[63]

The revolt and its final suppression, which took place in Chechnia in early October 1877 and in Dagestan during November 1877, showed clearly that despite the loyalty of many members of the North Caucasian elite, large parts of the mountain population still rejected Russian rule. At the same time, the course of the rebellion proved that, in view of Russia's military superiority, there would be no return to the conditions that had prevailed under Imam Shamil. For what the rebels lacked was not least a personality who could serve as an integration figure, bringing together the diverse interests of the mountain population, and enforcing among the often quite youthful fighters the military discipline that would have been required to stand up to the well-organised Russian army in battle. Although Alibek-Khadzhi, Uma Duev and their allies would withdraw to Dagestan in early October 1877 to make their last stand,[64] there was no chance, according to a version presented in a Russian contemporary source, that the Dagestanis could have acknowledged the young and largely uneducated Chechen Alibek-Khadzhi as their leader and imam.[65]

The Russians responded by suppressing the unrest with utmost severity. They burned down numerous settlements, confiscated land and once again resettled large parts of the mountain population in the plains or in the interior of the country. And once again, thousands left their homes and headed to the Ottoman Empire. In Dagestan, the tsarist government imposed a special levy on each household whose members were suspected of having taken part in the uprising.[66] The tsar's officials had all significant rebel leaders punished in the spring of 1878. Thirteen of the eighteen Chechen rebel leaders were sentenced to death by hanging, including Alibek-Khadzhi. And this time, the Russian occupiers showed no mercy to Uma Duev either: he too was sent to the

gallows.[67] A similar fate befell the rebels in Dagestan: around 300 participants in the uprising were punished, their families (about 5,000 people) exiled to the interior of Russia, and their *auls* laid waste.[68] It is thus unsurprising that Tsar Alexander II, who is generally remembered in the history books as a 'reformer' and 'liberator' thanks to the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, remained a despot in the memories of many people in the North Caucasus; and this is also the image expressed in later accounts of the revolt in folklore and song.[69]

Cossack rule and segregation policy

For the non-Russian indigenous population, the period following the defeat of the last great uprising in 1877 was a precarious one. Repression increased, and the policy of resettlement and displacement reached a new culmination point. The assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 further aggravated the situation, triggering a wave of counter-reforms and repression across the empire. In administrative terms, the year 1881 marked a turning point for the North Caucasus in that the very powerful institution of *namestnichestvo* was abolished, and the Caucasus was absorbed in its entirety, at least initially, into the general civil administration of the Russian Empire.

In 1888, the tsar decreed that both the civilian and the military administration should come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War. Through its representatives in the various military districts, it steered the development not only of the entire region but also, via the civilian provosts, of the individual territorial–administrative units. In the Terek region, the Cossack element and the individual *atamans* (Cossack leaders) became even more influential as they took on policing and monitoring tasks, including oversight of the *auls* inhabited by Chechens and Ingush. The militias made up of locals were nominally subordinated to the Cossack leaders of the various divisions.[70] However, the administration structure of the North Caucasus remained a mosaic. Unlike in the Terek region, the military–civilian administrative system remained in place in Dagestan until 1917. Because the administrative structures in Dagestan had been increasingly filled with locals from the very start, the problem of Russian and Cossack dominance never became as acrimonious as in the Terek region. Accordingly, in Dagestan, the imperial authorities encountered all the more resistance in their attempts to enforce Russification measures. When the tsarist administration ordered in 1913 that all official business in Dagestan was to be conducted in Russian

(which would also have amounted to a de-facto Russification of the judiciary system), a revolt broke out that would go down in Russian historiography as the *anti-pisarskoe dvizhenie*. Due to these events, and the great resistance on the part of the Muslim clergy, the scheme had to be called off.[71]

If Russian rule had already felt unjust and arbitrary to many, it must have seemed all the more so in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was a time of utmost exclusion for the members of the non-Russian indigenous population, who were degraded to second-class citizens by a series of government regulations. This was most clearly illustrated in the Terek region, where a decree of 14 May 1893 stated that those members of North Caucasian ethnicities who were not in government service were prohibited from settling in the city of Groznyi or the towns (*sloboda*) of Vozdvizhenskii, Shatoi, and Vedeno, or doing business there. Families that were already living there, but did not fall into the category of government employees, had to leave those townships.[72] Of Groznyi's 15,564 residents registered in the 1897 census, only 502 stated that Chechen was their native language (*rodnoi iazyk*). The overwhelming majority of urbanites were Russians, members of other Slavic ethnicities or Jews.[73] According to the 1897 statistics, only 3.2 per cent of all Chechens lived in towns.[74] While the regulations for Groznyi were lifted again in 1901, those concerning Vozdvizhenskii remained in place until 1906. The restrictions for Vedeno and Shatoi even stayed in effect until 1916.[75] Also in 1893, a decree signed by the tsar gave local authorities practically unlimited powers to arrest members of the non-Russian indigenous peoples and to sentence them summarily and without regard for due process. The local authorities in the Terek region were further authorised to have North Caucasians and their families deported to Siberia in cases of actual or even suspected crimes.[76]

While the policy of segregation certainly accorded with the spirit of the predominant political tendencies among Russia's imperial elites, which was marked by hyperbolic Slavophile sentiment and Great Russian nationalism, it was the individuals on the ground who shaped actual policy. The driving force behind the segregation policy in the Terek was the *ataman* of the Terek Cossack troops, Semen Vasilevich Kakhanov (1842–1908), who was governor of the region from 1890 to 1899.[77] For instance, he drafted the text of a law, passed in 1894, that permitted collective punishments against entire village communities for the transgressions of individual members of a 'mountain people'—a law that would remain in force until the abolition of tsarism.[78] Kakhanov also introduced a passport system that prohibited members of a

certain people from taking up residence in towns occupied by another ethnicity, and which strongly restricted the freedom of movement of the locals.[79] The Cossacks were instructed to avoid making the acquaintance (*kunachestvo*) of 'mountaineers'. Conversely, the latter were not permitted to visit Cossack settlements.[80] Generally speaking, the movements of members of non-Russian ethnicities were highly restricted at this time. This was especially disadvantageous for people living in the mountains, who customarily drove their cattle to the plains in the winter. According to a directive issued by the governor of the Terek region in 1884, this type of migration from the mountain *auls* to the plains was only permitted if the *aul* in the plains provided land for the migrants.[81]

Any attempt to explain this policy as the outcome of forced 'Russification' (a generic term used in Western literature to describe the nature of tsarist rule over areas settled by non-Russians in the late nineteenth century) seems inadequate and has limited explanatory power in the case of the North Caucasus.[82] At least regarding the situation in the Terek region in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, it is probably more accurate to describe the form of rule as a kind of apartheid system that separated members of the non-Russian, predominantly Muslim indigenous population from the other residents of the region, the Christian Russians and Cossacks, and which discriminated against the former in many respects. A targeted campaign of Russification, in the sense of a displacement of local elites and forcible propagation of Russian culture and language, could thus only take place to a limited degree since the locals were hardly represented in the political structures. Furthermore, they were only marginally affected by the societal mobilisation processes taking place elsewhere in the empire with the spread of industrialisation and the secular education system. For instance, there were no secular schools in Chechnia's *auls* at the time. On the orders of the Terek region's governor, the only school for indigenous people in Vedeno, which had been opened in 1870, was closed again just seven years later.[83]

Children from members of the non-Russian North Caucasus indigenous populations were permitted to attend the few 'mountain schools' (*gorskie shkoly*). Prince Bariatinskii had created the legal basis for establishing such schools in 1859.[84] The purpose of these institutions, which were initially opened in the urban settlements of Vladikavkaz, Nal'chik, Temir-Khan Shura, Ust'-Labinskii, Groznaia and Sukhum and encompassed either three or four school years, was the dissemination of *grazhdanstvennost'* and education for a select group of children from respected families from the ranks of 'peaceful

mountaineers' who had submitted to Russia, and from the families of Russian officers serving in the Caucasus. Bariatinskii's plan was to admit forty children to the school near Groznaia fortress, including twenty-five children of 'respectable Chechens and Kumyks' and fifteen children of Russian officials.[85] The pupils lived in boarding houses attached to the school. In addition to secular subjects (Russian language, arithmetic, penmanship and geography), classes in religious education were also taught (Orthodox Christianity for the Christian children, Islamic law for the Muslims).[86] As a rule, lessons were taught in Russian. Exceptionally, in the Caucasus, even secular schools might occasionally teach in the vernacular languages, if local teachers were available. However, from 1891 onwards, only Russian was permitted as the language of instruction throughout the region (as well as in other parts of the empire with non-Russian residents).[87]

Generally, however, the educational situation in the Terek region remained a concern at the end of the nineteenth century when it came to schooling non-Russians: as of 1893, there were already 222 institutes of learning for 14,000 students in total (including three secondary schools for boys and one for girls). Of the thirty primary schools to which indigenous non-Russian children were admitted, twenty-four were located in Ossetia and funded by the Society for the Restoration of Orthodoxy, an institution founded by Prince Bariatinskii in 1860. However, as of 1893, the rest of the North Caucasus had just six schools, where 458 children from the other ethnicities (Kabardians, Chechens, Ingush, Kumyks and others) were taught.[88] Only very rarely were students from these 'mountain schools' accepted as students at institutes of higher learning.[89]

In this context, the statistics of 1897 are instructive. Collected as part of the first pan-imperial census, the data, though incomplete, manages to convey an idea of the situation on the ground. At the time of the census, in the North Caucasus, only 759 respondents (0.43 per cent) of those who gave their native language as Chechen (which includes the Ingush) stated that they could read Russian. Of all of the peoples in the North Caucasus, the Ossetians were most copiously represented in the survey with 5,175 or 7.7 per cent. By comparison, among the Russian-speaking peoples of the North Caucasus, which included the Cossacks as well as the Russians themselves, about one quarter of respondents were literate. Still, among the Chechen speakers, the census found that 4,721 people (2.59 per cent) were able to read in other languages, suggesting they had been educated in Arabic at an Islamic school.[90] In a few cases, Islamic schools might also teach Russian, but no actual campaign to

displace Islamic schools, or even Islam as such, was underway at the time. The Terek region did have 115 *madrassas* (Arabic: *madrasa*, literally 'place of study', a higher institute of Islamic scholarship) and 138 Islamic primary schools (Arabic: *maktab*), in which over 3,000 students were enrolled.[91] While Bariatinskii initially promoted the spread of Orthodox Christianity through entities such as the aforementioned Society for the Restoration of Orthodoxy, the Orthodox Church was prohibited by law as early as 1878 from engaging in missionary work in Muslim-dominated areas such as Chechnia and Dagestan. Moreover, there was a strong increase in the number of newly constructed mosques and Islamic schools until the outbreak of the revolutions of 1917.[92]

The inequality was most evident in the distribution of land, however. In the Terek region, this was the most incendiary issue, contaminating relations between Chechens and Ingush on the one hand and Cossacks on the other for years to come. Agriculture and cattle breeding were by far the most important economic sectors in the Terek and formed the very basis of Chechen and Ingush livelihoods. This can be seen in the fact that according to the 1897 census, 97 per cent of the 271,310 people who listed Chechen as their native language were farmers. The rest were mainly traders and craftsmen. Comparatively few Chechens at the time worked in other professions such as the army (188 people) or the administration (748 people).[93]

Land poverty was particularly prevalent in the mountains of Chechnia. They were home to about one-third of the population, but due to shortage of arable land, these people were simply not able to feed themselves, as contemporary observers noted.[94] This gap between Chechens in the plains and those in the mountains was only surpassed by the disparity between the Terek Cossacks and the Chechens. While the Cossacks of the Terek on average had more than 21.3 *desiatins* of land per male taxpayer (*nalichnaia dusha muzhskogo pola*), the Chechens living in the plains had just 4.1 *desiatins* each (and the Chechens in the mountains just 1.23 *desiatins* on average).[95] The Chechens thus also had less land than the other peoples of the North Caucasus, such as the Kabardians (8.37 *desiatins*), the Ossetians of the plains (5.3 *desiatins*), or the Ingush settling near Nazran (4.3 *desiatins* per capita on average).[96] In contrast to the situation among Terek Cossacks, only a small part of Chechen lands was privately owned (primarily by officer families who had received it from the Russian government). The greatest part was managed communally by individual *auls*, in accordance with traditional Chechen practice.[97] It was not only the distribution of land between Chechens and

Cossacks that was seen as unjust but also the way land was allocated among the Chechens themselves. When the Chechens approached the tsar with a petition in 1888 in order to draw attention to their precarious situation, they also complained that the best estates had been distributed to just a few Chechen families, putting the surrounding *auls* at a disadvantage.[98]

The shortage of land not only caused repeated minor conflicts among the communities in the region; at the dawn of the twentieth century, it was also discussed at the highest level of politics for the first time. The representative of the Terek region, Anton Petrovich Maslov (1861–1916), laid out the overall situation in a speech delivered to the newly formed Russian parliament, the State Duma, on 5 July 1906:

> [T]he Caucasus is settled by Cossacks, natives [*tuzemtsy*], and newly arrived Russians, so-called outlanders [*inogorodnye*]. All of the lands are divided between these population groups [*narodnosti*]. The Cossacks account for one fifth of the overall population, but when it comes to land [ownership], the proportion between them and the rest of the population is inverted. The locals, including Chechens, Ossetians, and other ethnicities, are in a terrible state. ... You cannot begin to imagine how shabby the rural settlements are among the Chechens, for instance: 1/5, 1/10, 1/4, and 1/3 of a *desiatin*. If you ask [a Chechen] how much land he owns, he will say that he has as much as he can fit under his cloak [*burka*]. Land is expensive there. For instance, you would pay as much for the land underneath a cow as for the cow itself.[99]

While these comparisons were clearly exaggerated, the appeal did not fail to achieve its intended purpose. Soon, the tsar's new viceroy in the Caucasus, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, appointed a commission to study the land situation in the North Caucasus in detail. The results were sobering: on average, in the mountain areas of the North Caucasus, each male inhabitant had around 7.5 *desiatins* of land; however, only about 0.57 *desiatins* of such a plot would be arable land. The rest was used as grazing land and meadows for cattle husbandry. By comparison, an average Cossack in the Terek region had 18.8 *desiatins* of land, most of it arable fields. In July 1912, Georgii Tsagalov published an article in the *Terskie vedomosti* newspaper based on the findings of the commission. He lamented that the area provided to the peoples settling in the mountains could feed only 14 per cent of the population. The rest, he argued, were forced to choose between emigration and poverty—or leasing land from the Cossacks, at often very unfavourable terms.[100]

This dearth of land was compounded by the uneven development of the region through construction of roads and railways. Not only did the

mountainous parts of Chechnia, Ingushetia and Dagestan remain largely cut off from the rest of the country due to poor roads. At the same time, new settlers from Russia's interior were drawn to the plains of the North Caucasus by the expansion of the road infrastructure in the lowlands, especially the construction of new rail links from Rostov-on-Don to Vladikavkaz and from Beslan to Petrovsk-Port and on to Derbent and Baku. The scarcity of available land plots in the plains further encroached on the traditional economic structures of the non-Russian population in that the latter depended on being able to drive their flocks, which formed the basis of their livelihood, from the mountains to the warmer climes of the lowlands in autumn and winter.[101]

The North Caucasus on the eve of revolutions

The tsar's decision to reintroduce the position of the viceroy in 1905 was probably prompted by the acknowledgement that the 'last twenty years had returned some pretty terrible results', as the tsar's *namestnik* in the Caucasus, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, noted retrospectively in a report dated 10 February 1907.[102] When considering developments in Russia proper, it was probably no coincidence that this happened in 1905 specifically. After all, this was the year in which the reputation of the monarchy was tarnished nationwide following the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, the bloody crackdown by Cossack troops on a peaceful protest march in St Petersburg, and social and ethnic unrest throughout the country. Faced with demands for liberty and political participation, the tsar found himself forced to make concessions by approving a constitution and allowing an elected national assembly, the State Duma, to be established for the first time. The presence of representatives of non-Russian parties and Muslim peoples in this parliament reflected a political and cultural awakening, which, in the case of the Muslims, also manifested itself in a frenzied surge of publications both in Arabic and in the indigenous languages of the various ethnic groups.[103]

While the political clout of the Duma remained very limited and the tsar dissolved this institution twice during its existence, and although free speech of the press was repeatedly and severely curtailed, the Duma did remain in existence as the national representative body of the people, with interruptions, until the October Revolution of 1917 and formed a platform for the discussion of diverging viewpoints. Even within the press landscape, despite the suppression by tsarist censorship, there were niches that facilitated a modicum of free expression. In the first years of the twentieth century,

Russification tendencies and attempts to reinforce Orthodoxy were still hallmarks of imperial policy, but on the non-Russian-populated periphery, the monarchy now acted with more restraint than had been the case in the 1880s and 1890s.

Compared with some parts of the South Caucasus, which were repeatedly visited by ethnic unrest (especially in cities such as Baku or Tbilisi) as well as peasants' revolts, the revolutionary stirrings that emerged in the Terek region and in Dagestan in the early twentieth century were not immediately perceptible. One exception was the city of Groznyi with its petroleum industry, which saw significant and on occasion bloody workers' strikes in the summer of 1906.[104] In the face of these mass protests, the heads of the various oil companies were forced to meet demands for improved working conditions. Certain demands issued by the workers referred specifically to the situation of the Muslim workforce. Thus, for instance, the Muslims were to be permitted to stay at home on religious holidays; mosques and prayer rooms were to be provided at the workplace, so that they could do their devotions properly; and finally, the workers also requested that the company management should treat Muslims 'without negative prejudice' and admit them 'to work on drilling and in the workshops on par with the Orthodox workers'. Although the managers refuted the accusation that Muslims did not enjoy the same rights as ethnic Slav and Orthodox workers, the fact was that the former were hardly represented at all in the positions requiring higher qualifications, and were presumably not encouraged to pursue careers in that area either.[105]

While the countryside was not affected by revolutionary developments, the upheavals in the cities did make themselves felt in rural areas, which were increasingly at risk of slipping from government control. Especially in the areas settled by Ingush and Chechens, the unrest increased in the early twentieth century to such levels that postal delivery had to be suspended, as noted in the memoirs of Swiss entrepreneur Charles Manuel, who visited Vladikavkaz during his journey to the Caucasus and Turkestan.[106] This was despite the fact that, during the very same period, the government was making an effort to communicate its goodwill to the non-Russian population, for instance by loosening restrictions on the non-Russians' freedom of movement in the Terek region and by containing the arbitrary legal practices that had been commonplace under the Cossacks. In forming a commission to deal with the matter of land rights in 1906, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov signalled—at least on paper—that the state was keen on addressing the issue. The count also recognised that the main challenge in developing the region and integrating

it into the imperial space was the 'estrangement' between the state and the local indigenous population, whose cultural level, as he asserted in a report to the tsar on April 1910, remained in an almost 'aboriginal' (*pervobytnyi*) state.[107] In order to overcome this gap, the same report stated, it was necessary to inoculate the native population with *grazhdanstvennost'* and to foster the 'development of culture'.[108] Vorontsov-Dashkov demanded more funds, for instance for building Russian schools in the countryside, developing remote mountain areas by building roads, fostering agriculture and industry, expanding military conscription to include the Muslim population, and for augmenting and offering better pay to the government bureaucracy in rural areas where officials, it was claimed, often displayed 'criminal levels of inactivity'.[109]

In reality, the return to the previous system of military–civilian administration did not improve the lives of the vast majority of mountain dwellers any more than the count's acknowledgement that changes were inevitable. While a thin layer of a North Caucasian intelligentsia began to form at the turn of the century in the few cities and larger settlements of the region, which included teachers, legal practitioners, businesspeople and officers, this was only partially due to the Russian Empire's desire to accommodate the non-Russian indigenous residents of the Caucasus. The reason seems rather to have been that some members of these societies managed to come to terms with the new state of affairs and make use of the few educational opportunities and niches of social advancement offered by the empire. In the Chechen districts, and increasingly also in Groznyi and even Vladikavkaz, more and more Chechens succeeded in establishing business monopolies.[110] These elites were mostly scions of wealthy families that owned large estates and had already served in the Imperial Army or the tsar's administration in the 1850s, soon after the Russian conquest. Many of these now became wealthy through trade or in the booming petroleum industry.[111] At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian peerage even listed two wealthy Chechen families from the district of Groznyi, the Chermoev and Kurumov families.[112] Some Muslim clerics associated with the Naqshbandiyya also managed to leverage the urban boom in Groznyi and its petroleum industry, which employed a small number of ethnic Chechen labourers. For instance, Abdul-Aziz Shaptukaev (also known as 'Dokku Sheikh') founded the joint-stock oil extraction company Staro-Iurtovskaia neft'.[113]

When it came to education, too, Vorontsov-Dashkov's words remained mostly lip service. For instance, in S. Berdiaev's memoirs, who was in charge

of an administrative section in the Chechen district of Vedeno from 1908 to 1911, we read that during his three-year term in office, not only did the governor of the Terek region fail to make even a single appearance in the Vedeno district but even the chief administrator in this district never once travelled to the *auls* in the countryside to assess the situation on the ground. Similarly, the tsar's officials in the Caucasus and the authorities in St Petersburg made little tangible effort to foster cultural development among these peoples. On the contrary, such projects were actually terminated. Berdiaev notes that he succeeded in opening a school for local residents in his administrative section of the Vedeno district, which was received with great interest and enthusiasm. However, he states that when the director of the Russian primary school system found out about the project, he refused to sanction it. Berdiaev was thus forced to close his school again.[114]

In August 1914, St Petersburg announced the formation of the first North Caucasian regiments as part of the recently raised Caucasian Native Cavalry Division (Kavkazskaia tuzemnaia konnaia divizia, better known as the 'Wild Division'—Dikaia diviziia), which would henceforth be a regular unit of the Imperial Army. This development was not so much the expression of a change of heart, but rather a short-term response to an external threat after the outbreak of the First World War, when the tsar's government sought to mobilise as many men as possible for the frontline.[115] Especially in areas such as Chechnia, the raising of North Caucasian regiments (all led by Russian officers) was also conceived as a measure to combat 'banditry' (also referred to as *abrechestvo* at the time). Thus, the formation of North Caucasian units was coupled with an offer of amnesty for 'bandits' (*abreks*) in return for military service—an offer that hundreds took up. It was therefore possible to form a separate 'Abrek Company' that was recruited almost exclusively from *abreks* who had been granted amnesty, and which would gain special battle honours on the front.[116]

Controversial assessment

Throughout the tsarist period, Russian policy in the North Caucasus was multifaceted and incoherent. It is accordingly difficult to do justice to the nature of this policy using only a few terms and concepts. For instance, one dominant branch of contemporary Russian historiography, which ties in with views professed already by tsarist imperial historians, rejects any equivalence between Russia's rule and the exercise of power by other European colonial

powers, arguing that the Russian imperial experiment was unique in character. These historians claim that, since Russia had always aimed to absorb the region completely into the imperial space and worked to achieve an amalgamation of the conquered nations with the Russian people, it is inappropriate to describe Russian rule in the Caucasus as 'informal'. Also, they argue, other hallmarks of European colonialism, such as the extraction of raw materials, were lacking in the North Caucasus. Vladimir Degoev—one of the best-known representatives of this school of thought—argues that Russia's rule was hardly financially profitable because the resources that St Petersburg expended on the region were greater than the profits it managed to extract.[117] Other historians associated with such views assess the imperial policy of the day in strictly positive terms, since St Petersburg succeeded, with a massive effort and against all odds, in bringing peace and quiet to this traditionally restless part of the empire. This argument is made by Chechen historian Zarema Ibragimova, for instance.[118]

It is indeed true that Russia's longer-term goal was to completely absorb the North Caucasus and its peoples—for instance, by integrating the traditional local jurisprudence into imperial legislation and introducing the indigenous population to Russian culture through the establishment of mountain schools. And indeed, the Russian governors were prepared, up to a certain point, to respect the internal liberties of these peoples. Especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, the state must have realised—at least on paper—that repression was neither the only nor the best means of combating banditry, a rapidly growing problem at the time. Unlike the thin layer of the North Caucasus intelligentsia in the cities, the great majority of people lived in seclusion in their *auls* and did not speak any Russian. If the rural population ever even came into direct contact with the government authorities, the people they encountered were representatives of the tsar's security and police apparatus. When the latter were looking for bandits, they did not hesitate to punish entire communities for protecting bandits or refusing to reveal their hideouts. The government imposed collective punishments on the villages where outlaws, usually referred to as *abreks*, had been hiding by imposing severe fines, confiscating their weapons and often deporting to Siberia not only the bandits' families but also the residents of settlements that had extended protection to bandits. In such cases, the homes of family members and sometimes entire villages were razed to the ground.[119]

That certain families and social groups benefited from the new situation and found opportunities for advancement within the imperial system

indicates that adaptation did not simply mean submission in the sense of unconditional acquiescence. As in any borderland, the 'obverse of resistance' was often to be seen as 'the active pursuit of personal and communal interests within the frameworks provided by the empire itself', as US historian Charles King observes.[120] However, the fact remains that Russia demanded unconditional loyalty and only tolerated cultural differences as long as they were not seen as undermining Russian rule. Russian policy was only generous where it served the purpose of stability and if such a tolerant stance was compatible with the empire's goals at any given time. Otherwise, at least with regard to the conquered peoples of the North Caucasus, the Russian sense of mission and superiority, grounded on a dismissive and intolerant attitude, gave rise to a fundamentally repressive policy throughout the tsarist period. As such, integration was always a one-sided matter, since the vanquished were required to adapt to the new social conditions that the conquerors had defined.

It is important to note, however, that governing the North Caucasus did not simply mean 'Russian rule'. From the very start, the tsarist state sought also to recruit local administrators from the ranks of the indigenous non-Russian population. Since not enough trained professionals were available in Chechnia and Dagestan—in particular, for higher positions—those posts were often taken by other Caucasians, mostly from the Armenian and Georgian aristocracy, which certainly did not always go down well with the indigenous population. In Dagestan, for instance, the appointment in the 1860s of several Georgians triggered discontent among the Muslim locals, who rejected the 'tyranny and injustice of the Georgian bosses, with whom [they] were eternal enemies and have always fought [because] Georgians and Muslims bodies cannot be welded together, just as different oils can not be joined ...'[121] The tsar's administrators viewed with suspicion the form of Islam cultivated in the North Caucasus and the Sufi movement in particular. Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to deduce from this a general Russian stance towards Muslims or non-Russians, as the tsar's policies towards nationalities and Islam was anything but consistent. Russia's policy towards the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus can only be compared with its policies vis-à-vis the Central Asian nomads, who were viewed with similar aversion throughout the later tsarist period.[122]

4

REVOLUTIONS AND CIVIL WAR

The collapse of the Russian monarchy in February 1917 opened room for political dynamism on the ground. In an atmosphere of progressive change, it was mainly the secular-minded North Caucasian intelligentsia who took up the initiative, advocating the unification of the various peoples of the North Caucasus with the goal of integrating their region into a new, democratic and federally organised Russia. Within this movement, a religious faction soon established itself, which was oriented towards Islam, advocating a North Caucasian state based on sharia law. Within the first weeks of the February Revolution, however, relations among all elite groups were harmonious, and in May 1917 delegates from all parts of the region came together in Vladivostok proclaiming the Union of United Mountaineers of the North Caucasus and Dagestan (Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev Severnogo Kavkaza i Dagestana).

The collapse of central state structures after the 1917 October Revolution had devastating effects for further developments in the region. In November 1917, and in order to strengthen their unity, the executive committee of the Union of United Mountaineers proclaimed autonomy and the establishment of a Mountain Republic (Gorskaia Respublika). However, the already delicate relations among the various North Caucasian peoples, as well as the strains existing between secular and religious views on the future of a united North Caucasian state, were soon thrown out of balance by the arrival of a new power: the Bolsheviks. In this new phase of utmost insecurity, all of the

tensions that the authorities of the late tsarist era had only been able to suppress with the greatest difficulty now boiled to the surface. In particular, violence broke out between the Chechen and Ingush on one side and the Terek Cossack communities on the other. But even among the individual non-Russian ethnic communities, relations were often fraught with tension. The city of Vladikavkaz and its surrounding areas repeatedly became scenes of bloody clashes between Ossetians and Ingush. The situation was aggravated by the return of soldiers from the frontlines of the First World War, many of whom took up banditry, pillaging and marauding their way across the country. The Groznyi oil industry suffered heavy damage as Chechen bands repeatedly attacked the oil fields, setting them on fire.

As the Mountain Republic had hardly any military assets of its own, it was an easy task for the Bolsheviks and their Red Army to drive its government out of the region during their southward advance in the spring of 1918. In their desperate search for allies, the Mountain Republic's leaders sought a close alliance with the newly formed South Caucasian states of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, which had also reorganised themselves into a short-lived federation after the February Revolution. Moreover, they placed their hopes on the Ottoman Empire, which sought security from a resurgent Russia in the shape of a buffer zone made up of independent Caucasian states.

In the brief phase of their predominance in the North Caucasus, the Bolsheviks, too, initially failed to secure their hold on power. Their efforts to win over the individual ethnic groups for their cause ran into difficulties. Outside of the predominantly Russian-populated cities, the proclamation of the Soviet Terek Republic in March 1918 was barely noted. Another problem the Bolsheviks faced was that the individual ethnic groups mainly sought them as short-term allies in enforcing specific territorial claims. Whereas the Cossack delegates at the Terek People's Congress, which opened in the spring of 1918, tried to win the Bolsheviks for war against the Chechens and Ingush, the Chechens and Ingush sought the alliance with the Bolsheviks in order to win support for an expulsion of the Cossacks. Indeed, the Bolsheviks would win sympathies among some of the Ingush and Chechens precisely because, in the matter of land rights, they ultimately sided with the 'mountaineers' against the Terek Cossacks, who subsequently rose up against the Bolsheviks.

Power relations shifted once more when the anti-Bolshevik coalition headed by General Anton Ivanovich Denikin's (1872–1947) Volunteer Army had managed to conquer the entire North Caucasus by the beginning of 1919. In this situation, the Bolsheviks, who had so far failed to establish their hold

on power outside of urban areas, were the only feasible ally for the North Caucasian peoples in their fight against Denikin's volunteers. The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, was out of the running as a potential ally once Istanbul had capitulated in the First World War and subsequently reduced its military presence in the Caucasus dramatically. The Germans, too, who had entrenched themselves in Georgia in 1918, withdrew their forces from the Caucasus once they had lost the war. The victorious British, on the other hand, whose fleet was based in the Caspian Sea, were reluctant to support the peoples of the North Caucasus in their striving for independence. Instead, they backed General Denikin, whom they regarded as the only force capable of taking on the Bolsheviks. Denikin, however, not only declined any cooperation with the government of the Mountain Republic; he also made enemies of large parts of the non-Russian indigenous population by repudiating any autonomy aspirations, citing the slogan of a 'single and indivisible Russia', and by having entire settlements levelled in case of resistance. This ruthless behaviour was among the reasons why many North Caucasian communities, including some members of the Islamic clergy, finally sought an alliance with the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1918, which contributed significantly to Denikin's defeat at the beginning of 1920.

The chaos that the North Caucasus region experienced during the time of revolutions and civil war was unprecedented. When considering the various state-building attempts, two main conflicting tendencies may be identified: on the one hand, the national movements among the North Caucasian peoples were guided from the start by the notion of unity. The representatives of the various communities understood very well that they could only resolve the thorny issue of land rights as well as their multi-layered animosities under their own steam if they did so in the framework of an alliance among all peoples in the region. On the other hand, the North Caucasians would never manage effectively to realise their desire for unity as stated after the February Revolution. The Mountain Republic and its representatives might have been held in high standing among large parts of the native population. But the republic remained a state entity without a real power base, doomed to fail.

In a situation of uncertain power relations, each community sought first of all to defend its immediate interests. Moreover, the individual peoples—and first and foremost of these, the Chechens—never presented themselves as cohesive national entities. Throughout Russia's civil war period, political events were largely limited to the few cities and major townships, while in the vast countryside power was concentrated around spiritual leaders and their

well-armed constituencies. The main goal of the Bolsheviks during the war was to create as close bonds as possible with these societal forces. Being aware of the importance of the notion of unification, they also propagated the principle of the unity of peoples in their state-building attempts—from the establishment of the Terek Soviet Republic in March 1918 to the proclamation of the short-lived North Caucasian Soviet Republic in July 1918. That they ultimately succeeded, to some extent, in establishing alliances with individual North Caucasian groups was not necessarily due to the pro-Bolshevik sympathies of the population but can be explained by the presence of Denikin as a common external enemy whom they could only engage successfully if they joined forces.

This chapter will elaborate the main trajectories of these developments, which remain little known in Western historiography.[1] A close study of the various state-building and unification attempts in this context reveals clearly that the efforts by individual peoples cannot be understood with the simplistic notions of a 'war of liberation' or a desire to dissociate from Russia. The various political leaders and movements, both secular and religious, initially had the hope that the February Revolution would help resolve social problems in the North Caucasus in the framework and in cooperation with a reformed Russia. It was only the events in the centre of Russia in the autumn of 1917, the shifting geopolitical constellations caused by the First World War, and the escalation of violence in the Caucasus during the ensuing civil war that gave these developments often unexpected twists and new directions, ultimately resulting in a broad desire for full independence. But at no point in time did these efforts reflect a collective 'national interest'. As a violent war raged on, most communities were primarily interested in safeguarding their existence. While many did indeed dare to ally themselves with the Bolsheviks during the final phase of the war, others fought strictly for their own cause under the leadership of local political and religious authorities—while still others even allowed themselves to be recruited into Denikin's forces. In this way, any efforts that could have aimed at an independent North Caucasian state were rendered impossible.

The February Revolution and the dawn of nations

The peoples of the Russian Empire perceived the February Revolution of 1917 both as liberation and as an opportunity. Within a short time, mainly on the periphery settled by non-Russians, about forty more or less stable national-

territorial units had constituted themselves, initially demanding far-reaching autonomy, but not yet secession from Russia.[2] In the North Caucasus, the military–civilian administration known as *namestnichestvo* was abolished and replaced with a purely civilian structure—in the Terek region, by the Terek Regional Civilian Executive Committee (Terskii oblastnii grazhdanskii ispolnitel'nyi komitet).[3] However, at no point did this institution have any real power base, since it very soon faced competition from numerous other bodies of popular representation. Almost every ethnic group, including the Cossacks, created autonomous local councils, so-called soviets, within their separate territories. Especially in the Russian-populated urban areas, as in the rest of the country, soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers were established, which the Bolsheviks subsequently sought to use for consolidating their power.[4]

In the North Caucasus, national state-formation projects proved difficult, and not just because of the disintegrating central power structures. This region, which had become part of the Russian Empire comparatively late, had only developed the rudiments of a 'national intelligentsia' whose representatives could have had become societal integration figures and pillars of a future state entity. Nevertheless, the first attempt at establishing a sovereign state in the North Caucasus was promising: only weeks after the overthrow of the monarchy, representatives of the region's political and cultural leadership met in March 1917 to prepare the proclamation of a federation of the peoples of the North Caucasus. In May 1917, about 300 delegates and guests from all parts of the region (Chechens, Ingush, Kabardians, Adyghe, Ossetians, Balkars and Karachaians), including a sixty-strong Dagestani delegation as well as representatives of Cossack communities, met in Vladikavkaz to establish the Union of United Mountaineers of the North Caucasus and Dagestan.[5]

The assembly elected a Chechen and former tsarist officer, Abdul-Medzhid (Tapa) Chermoev (1882–1936/7), as the chairman of the seventeen-member Central Committee (Tsentral'nyi komitet; CC), the Union of United Mountaineers' executive organ. Chermoev was the scion of a wealthy Chechen family from the Groznyi district. His father, Artsu Chermoev, had served in the tsar's army and fought with distinction in the Crimean War (1853–6) as well as the Russo-Turkish War (1877–8). It was thanks to his good relations with the Russian generals that his son Tapa was accepted at the prestigious Nikolai Cavalry School in St Petersburg, marking the start of a brilliant military career.

By the time the First World War broke out, Tapa Chermoev had been promoted to adjutant in the newly created Caucasian Native Cavalry Division, the so-called 'Wild Division'. Outside of the military, Chermoev had also been involved in the burgeoning Groznyi oil industry, where he acquired great wealth. Chermoev was thus not only one of the union's main initiators, but as a rich petroleum industrialist also served as its most important financial backer.[6] Chermoev funded the union's first official newspaper, entitled *Gorskaia zhizn'* (Mountain life) and first published on 4 (17) August 1917 in Vladikavkaz.[7]

In the composition of the union's executive committee, great attention was devoted to ensuring that all major ethnic groups and administrative-geographical districts were represented.[8] In addition to officers like Chermoev, the leadership comprised mainly intellectuals and aristocrats, such as the Kumyk Prince Rashidkhan Zabitovich Kaplanov (1883–1937); the jurist and scion of a Kabardian noble family, Pshemakho Tamashevich Kotsev (1884–1965); Dagestani scholar Bashir Kerimovich Dalgat (1870–1934); Ingush intellectual Vassan-Girei Izhievich Dzhabagiev (1882–1961); Kumyk engineer Zubair Temirkhanov (1868–1952); or Nukh-Bek Shamkhal Tarkovskii from Dagestan, a prince and former officer in the Russian Imperial Army (1878–1951).[9] Tarkovskii, who would play an important role in the later stages of the civil war, was an ethnic Kumyk who had commanded the First Dagestani Cavalry Regiment in the First World War and was now appointed the union's minister of war.[10]

Also, a separate muftiate was now established in the North Caucasus for the first time. The assembly elected Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii (1859–1925), a Muslim scholar from the Avar village of Gotso, as mufti and thus as the supreme Muslim spiritual authority in the North Caucasus. Within the union, Gotsinskii was simultaneously the head of the spiritual faction.[11] Remarkably, delegates of the Terek Cossacks also took part in this first meeting. For instance, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Karaulov (1878–1917), the *ataman* of the Terek Cossacks, is reported to have met with enthusiastic support from the delegates when he noted the need for stronger cooperation between the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the Caucasus and the Cossacks.[12]

Many speakers at the assembly emphasised the similarities among the various North Caucasians that transcended religious and ethnic barriers, explicitly including not only the Cossacks but also the predominantly Christian Ossetians. In the context of preserving and protecting specific cultural features, the field of education was not surprisingly one of the main

concerns of the assembly. The participants decided to create a special committee for education headed by the Dagestani writer and scholar Said Ibragimovich Gabiev (1882–1963).[13] As core measures to foster the culture of the non-Russian inhabitants of the Caucasus, Gabiev's report recommended the introduction of education in Caucasian languages from the first year of primary school and instruction in the Russian, Arab and Turkish languages in later years. This did not, however, signal a repudiation of Russia. Russian was declared the official language within the union. Many speakers professed their solidarity with the Russian people by explicitly stating their determination to defend, at Russia's side, the democracy and liberty won by the February Revolution. The fundamental political aim of the union was to take part, within the framework of Russia's Constituent Assembly, in the construction of a new federative and democratic order.[14]

However, with its inaugural session in May 1917, the union had almost reached its zenith. In advance of the second meeting that began on 20 August (2 September) 1917 in the Dagestani mountain village of Andi, the members of the union were divided over the issue of religion: the representatives of Chechnia's and Dagestan's clergy pushed for the establishment of a theocracy, which they regarded as the only possible foundation for a common state and the unification of the North Caucasian peoples. Most of the members of the Central Committee were opposed to such an idea. They advocated the creation of soviets and an alliance with Russia based on secular principles.[15] Just days before the assembly at Andi, in front of a large crowd of people gathered at Vedeno, Chechnia, Gotsinskii was appointed the imam of the North Caucasus (i.e. the spiritual and political head of a future theocratic state (imamate)).[16] It was probably the respected and quite elderly Sheikh Usun-Khadzhi Saltinskii (ca. 1845–1920), another Dagestani scholar of Avar extraction, who pressed Gotsinskii to take this step.[17]

In light of this development, it was initially unclear whether the assembly at Andi could even be opened. The secular-minded delegates of the union spoke out in opposition to the honorific of 'imam' and insisted that Gotsinskii should continue to style himself a 'mufti', as before. Had he insisted on the title of 'imam', it was feared, not only the secular forces within the union but also the ethnic Slav and Orthodox parts of the population might have become estranged from the Muslims. In the end, Gotsinskii agreed to relinquish the title of 'imam' and only to call himself 'mufti'.[18] However, in no way did this mean that he was backing down on the principles of sharia law, which he propagated to the Muslim population as pillars of the new legal framework of

the state. Many people as well as a majority of the clergy, namely Usun-Khadzhi, continued to view him as the rightful imam and continued to refer to him as such.[19]

In view of the huge crowds and the presence of many spiritual dignitaries, the meeting in Andi could not be carried out as planned. Moreover, numerous members of the union had already left the assembly early in protest against the appointment of Gotsinskii as imam. Nevertheless, the assembly must have been an impressive and solemn event, as Pshemakho Kotsev writes in his eyewitness account. At the time, Kotsev was not only a member of the union's executive committee but also the chairman of the government of the Terek region, founded in May 1917, and the most important actor in the union's Central Committee after Chermoev (he would actually replace the Chechen as chairman of the Central Committee in January 1919).[20] His report offers a vivid description of how the assembly might have progressed in view of the colourful mix of languages and ethnicities:[21]

> Around 9 a.m. on 10 September,[22] groups of seven to eight delegates each from almost all ethnicities arrived. Among them were clerics from the ranks of the Dagestanis, Chechens, Ingush, Ossetians, and Kabardians. We waited for Nukh Bek Shamkhal Tarkovskii, who soon arrived with a group of six or seven horsemen. It was 3 p.m. when Nazhmuddin-Efendi (Imam) [Gotsinskii] arrived. This time, the meeting with him resulted in complete agreement. The *dzhumkhuriet*, the proclamation of a republic of all peoples of the North Caucasus, was affirmed by all present. The decision was written down in Arabic, Avar, and Kumyk and finally also in Russian.
>
> On the morning of 20 September, at an assembly of the entire *dzhamaat* (the people), this decision, countersigned by all of the clerical dignitaries, was to be publicly read out.
>
> 20 September was a great feast-day in Andi. In the western part of the *aul*, on the main square and the surrounding hills, thousands of people gathered. Representatives of all tribes [*plemen*] and ethnicities, from the distant Black Sea to Zakatal,[23] were in attendance. All these were citizens of the future Mountain Republic. But there were also guests in attendance from Azerbaijan and Georgia and other places. ...
>
> On the flat roof of a low house were the members of the Committee [of the future Mountain Republic]. They were five persons in all: Chairman Tapa Chermoev, the chairman's comrade [*tovarishch*] Pshemakho Kotsev, Prince Nukh Bek Shamkhal Tarkovskii, Mekhmed Kady Dibir, and M. Khizroev and a few others, including Major Girei. Also, seated beside them on the roof the building are ten members of the clergy, with Nazhmuddin at their head. Usun Gadzhi

> [i.e. Usun-Khadzhi Saltinskii] is absent. Facing the delegates on the roof on benches are more than one hundred *khadzhis*[24] and elders. On the surrounding hills, *zikrists* are dancing their prayers and the pleasant sound of the *zikr* may be heard.
>
> The assembly begins with a welcome address by the chairman in the Chechen language, which is translated into Arabic, Avar, and other languages. In a separate group are the translators who translate into the various local languages. ... All of these [translators] are not only trained in Islamic theology, but are educated people in a broader sense. Among them are personages who were trained in Egypt and Turkey. All of them are also fluent in Russian.
>
> From the above group [of translators], Abdukh Kermin from Khodzhalmakh stepped forward with a sheet of paper and read out the summary of the main aims [of the discussion]. He did so first in Arabic; then he himself translated it into Avar and the Khodzhalmakh dialect, finally also into the Kumyk, Karachai, Chechen, Cherkess, and Ossetian languages.
>
> This was followed by a reading of a short prayer by the three elders of the clergy, whereupon the youth, some on horseback, who were some distance away, fired their guns into the air and commenced the general *ziko* (celebration).

However, the Union of United Mountaineers, which had been joined by Abkhazia at this session, found itself confronted with a near-insoluble task. The Central Committee was trying to establish itself as the government of a state entity with no real powers; the organisation had only as much power and influence as the individual parties accorded it. It did not exert control over any clearly defined territory, had no permanent residence, and the government had no robust army or police forces at its disposal. However, the union offered the various representatives of the peoples a platform for discussing important issues such as land ownership rights, economic and educational matters, or the future political orientation. Moreover, individual members of the executive committee played important roles when it came to peace-making. For instance, Tapa Chermoev as the union's chairman still had sufficient authority in the initial months after the February Revolution to intercede as a moderating force in the increasing tensions between Chechens and Cossacks or in the disputes between Ingush and Ossetians.[25]

However, as more and more soldiers returned from the front, the security situation in the North Caucasus deteriorated progressively in the summer of 1917. In early May 1917, there were attacks on Chechens living in the city of Groznyi. Many houses of Chechens were ransacked and put to the torch by bands of brigands made up of war deserters and Cossacks. In July 1917, the

city of Vladikavkaz saw bloody clashes between marauding soldiers and the Ingush population.[26]

Looking for ways to come to grips with the growing anarchy, Chermoev was now even more eager for cooperation with the Terek Cossacks. But the situation in the North Caucasus did not calm down subsequently. The October Revolution would impart a new dynamic to the national movements and further exacerbate tensions among the peoples as well as within the individual societal and religious groups.

The October Revolution and independence aspirations

The 1917 October Revolution acted as a catalyst for national independence movements on the periphery of the empire. As central-state structures broke down, and in response to the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Russian Peoples' proclaimed by Soviet Russia's new government, the Council of People's Commissars, on 2 (15) November 1917, which asserted the right of self-determination including full secession from Russia, a number of non-Russian-populated territories declared themselves fully independent states in the months that followed. In this situation, the determining factors were not only the respective political constellations within the individual non-Russian border areas but also the international situation, which shifted abruptly following the foreign interventions from February 1919 onwards, fuelling the war between the Bolsheviks and their adversaries as well as boosting national independence movements.[27]

After the 1917 February Revolution, the peoples of the Caucasus initially responded with reticence. Neither the government of the Union of United Mountaineers nor the representatives of the South Caucasus nations could conceive of a future outside of a pan-Russian federation. Much like the North Caucasus, after the February Revolution the South Caucasus had seen the formation of a provisional government (which, after the October Revolution, called itself the South Caucasus Commissariat) for the administration of the region's various territories and governorates. From the very start, this government, which had its seat in Tbilisi and from February 1918 also boasted a *sejm* (parliament), was not only confronted with serious internal tensions and territorial disputes among the different ethnicities; following the dissolution of the former Imperial Army in the Caucasus, it also found itself threatened by external claims to power, particularly those emanating from the Ottoman Empire.[28]

It was only when Ottoman forces advanced into the South Caucasus and took the port city of Batumi in mid-April 1918 that the *sejm* decided, on 22 April, to declare independence and proclaimed the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic (Zakavkazskaia Demokraticheskaia Federativnaia Respublika).[29] In doing so, however, the delegates were not so much stating their determination to break away from Russia, but rather giving in to pressure from Istanbul, which saw a historic opportunity to weaken Russia via the establishment of an independent state in the Caucasus, thus establishing a buffer zone that would counteract potential future claims of its ancient rival. Moreover, the Ottomans regarded a federation of the South Caucasians as an opportunity to contain and thus neutralise the Armenians within a coalition of Georgians and Muslims. All of these outcomes were in line with Istanbul's efforts to counter any potential future territorial claims by the Armenians, whose historic areas of settlement also included Ottoman territory in Eastern Anatolia.[30]

However, the independent South Caucasus republic was an extremely weak entity from the start. While a narrow majority of the *sejm* had voted for independence, not all national delegates were equally supportive of the decision: the Armenian delegates voted against independence, the Georgians were divided, and the representatives of the pro-Turkish Musavat party, whose power base was among the Muslims of Baku, voted in favour.[31] The lack of solidarity within the new state entity became evident as Georgia refrained from aiding the Armenians when they found themselves once more at war with the Ottomans. Instead of supporting the Armenians, the Georgians, who themselves were confronted with territorial claims by the Ottoman Empire, decided to leave the federation. On 26 May 1918, they declared independence and committed themselves to German patronage.[32] Although Germany had been an ally of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, Berlin competed directly with Istanbul in the Caucasus, where it sought to use Georgia as a base for asserting its power, with its gaze firmly fixed on the oil of Baku.[33] By the end of May 1918, Armenia and Azerbaijan had finally also left the Transcaucasian Federation and declared independence. Istanbul immediately recognised these states once they had agreed to accept Turkish conquests in the Caucasus and were prepared to make certain concessions to the Sublime Porte, such as granting the Ottoman Empire the right to use the railway lines within Georgia and Armenia for the duration of the war with Britain.[34]

A similar constellation would lead to the independence of the North Caucasus Union of United Mountaineers. In November 1917, in response to

the Bolsheviks' power grab at Petrograd, the executive committee of the union declared autonomy and elevated the union to the status of a republic. Henceforth, the executive committee called itself a 'government'. After the Bolsheviks had taken Vladikavkaz in March 1918, its seat was moved to Temir-Khan-Shura on Dagestani territory. However, the republic's government could still not field any appreciable military forces and had nothing with which to oppose the growing Bolshevik threat.[35] Seeking allies in their struggle against the Bolsheviks, representatives of the Mountain Republic led by Tapa Chermoev and the ethnic Kumyk legal scholar Gaidar Bey Nazhdimovich Bammat (also known as Bammatov, 1890–1965), in charge of foreign relations, convened at Tbilisi in early April 1918 for talks on cooperation with the republics of the South Caucasus.[36]

However, the South Caucasian government representatives had already departed to Trabzon for peace talks with the Ottomans, so the North Caucasian delegation followed. Upon arrival, the delegates from the North Caucasus asked to be accepted into the South Caucasus commissariat, which would have amounted to a de-facto amalgamation of the North and South Caucasus governments. While the Ottomans were well disposed towards the idea of a unified greater Caucasus, the delegates from the South Caucasus could not reach any decision.[37] After the proclamation of independence of the South Caucasus republic, it was only natural that the North Caucasus, too, would formally decide to take this step. On 11 May 1918, while in Istanbul, Chermoev proclaimed an independent Mountain Republic. At the same time, his foreign minister, Gaidar Bammat, was in Batumi seeking to win support for the cause of this new state during another peace conference. Bammat was also to hold further exploratory talks on the possibility of unification with the South Caucasus.[38]

While Istanbul, as part of its containment strategy towards Russia, recognised the Mountain Republic as an independent state, the German delegate at the Batumi conference promised to back this project as well (though an independent North Caucasian state would never be formally endorsed by the German government or parliament).[39] However, this support did nothing to change the utterly desolate situation of the Mountain Republic. The main problem was that while the republic and some of its individuals did enjoy a certain authority among the population, the state as such still had no real power, and no significant military assets of its own.

Boris M. Kuznetsov served as an officer in Denikin's Volunteer Army and the armed forces of Southern Russia. At the beginning of 1918, he

commanded a cavalry formation under Prince Nukh-Bek Tarkovskii in Dagestan. In his memoirs, which were published in 1959 and deal largely with the civil war in Dagestan, he describes the situation in the Mountain Republic as follows:

> Generally speaking, the government had no 'house of its own'. There can be no doubt that the people within this government had only the best of intentions, namely to defend their region from the growing threat of Bolshevism. But since they had absolutely nothing—no money, no army, no weapons, no food for the population, and most of all, no experience—they were forced to rely on individuals who were business-minded and determined. Among these were the Russian officers I mentioned, who hailed from the ranks of the mountaineers, such as the colonel, Prince Nukh Bek Shamkhal Tarkovskii, or Colonel Rusul Bek Koitbekov. These men were mainly determined to cleanse Dagestan of the Bolsheviks, who were based in the city of Petrovsk-Port.[40]

Indeed, Tarkovskii and the ethnic Dagestani Rusul Bek Koitbekov (sometimes also written Rasul Bek Kaitbekov, 1880–1921), both of whom had served as officers in the tsar's army, were among the few commanders who placed their forces from the beginning at the service of the Union of the United Mountaineers' government after withdrawing from the front in the Dagestani theatre of war—even though they had never formally ceded command to the government. In the Terek region, the rulers could count on no such support. This is why they decided, at the end of 1917, to consolidate their position by strengthening the alliance with the Cossacks. The government members of the union had already participated at the founding session of the short-lived, so-called South Eastern Union, which essentially constituted a sort of anti-Bolshevik Cossack alliance, in October 1917. In December, the alliance with the Terek Cossacks produced a short-lived joint government residing in Vladikavkaz. Together with Cossack *ataman* Mikhail Karaulov, the representatives of the Union of United Mountaineers managed to form an Interim Military Committee of the Terek region, within which Cossack units together with parts of the former 'Wild Division' were to provide local security.[41]

But the formation of a joint Terek–Dagestani government was not popular with many Cossacks nor with the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus, and least of all with the Chechens and Ingush. Since there was no broad support for an association between North Caucasian ethnicities and the Cossacks, the authority of this government remained limited to a

small circle of people whose rule did not extend far beyond Vladikavkaz. At the time, real power resided with the individual local ethnic communities, the city councils, and within the *auls*. Especially in the Muslim communities of the mountains, it was concentrated among charismatic spiritual leaders and their followers.

Accordingly, the situation in Chechnia in particular was completely unfathomable for external observers. For example, a report by Major-General B.P. Lazarev (born 1882; year of death unknown), compiled for the high command of anti-Bolshevik forces in Southern Russia early in 1919, states that '[there are] about seventy sheikhs in Chechnia, each of whom [has] his own retinue and [is plotting] against the others'.[42] Similar reports were sent from Dagestan. However, Lazarev's report also states that compared with the other territories of the Mountain Republic, there was noticeably less anarchy in Dagestan, which was also less afflicted by the scourge of *abrek* banditry.[43]

While the assertion about Chechnia's alleged seventy sheikhs appears spurious, it did in fact persist in the Russian imagination until the beginnings of the Soviet era.[44] However, there is no denying that Chechnia's political landscape was very fragmented, and that relations among the various societal leaders were not always free from tensions. There was no universally recognised leadership to represent the Chechens as a whole. This situation, which must have seemed chaotic to outside observers, was simply a reflection of the Chechens' political makeup at the time—even though at the beginning of the February Revolution, the Chechens in particular certainly sought unity, as expressed, for instance, in the huge mass rallies in the early summer of 1917. As early as March 1917, representatives of the Chechen people had assembled in Groznyi for the first Session of the Chechen People. They elected delegates who were to attend the founding of the Union of United Mountaineers in Vladikavkaz, and appointed the so-called Chechen National Council, which consisted of thirty-six members and was headed by Akhmet-Khan Magomedovich Mutushev (1879–1943).[45] Mutushev, a legal scholar and advocate of socialist ideas, would later also become a member of the union's first executive committee.[46]

However, the congress at Groznyi, which according to Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov was attended by about 10,000 people and deputies of all political stripes as well as the most important representatives of the clergy, was only superficially a harmonious affair.[47] Soon after the October Revolution, the internal contradictions surfaced all too visibly. At the second Session of the Chechen People, which took place in early 1918 in Urus-Martan, a

majority of delegates voted against the Mountain Republic. At the same time, the overwhelming majority also voted against the Bolshevik programme of Sovietisation. A new *medzhlis* (council), based in Starye Atagi and again led by Akhmet-Khan Mutushev, was appointed as the supreme organ of the popular assembly. As a representative of secular ideas within the *medzhlis*, Mutushev was confronted with a majority adhering to a religious movement that aimed to establish a sharia-based Muslim state. The *medzhlis* was ultimately dissolved after Mutushev stepped down from his post as chairman. Some of the people involved remained for some time at Atagi under the authority of Ali Mitaev and Ibragim Chulikov (year of birth unknown; died in 1943). The left wing of the council, led by the former Chechen Duma delegate of the Terek region, Tashtemir El'zhurkaevich El'darkhanov (1870–1934), split off and decamped to the village of Goity, where they elected a new people's soviet. It was from this small group under El'darkhanov that the new Soviet leadership of Chechnia would later be recruited, following the Bolshevik victory in the ensuing civil war.[48]

Among the Chechens as well as the other North Caucasians, there were heated discussions on how to exploit their recent liberation from the tsar's authority after the upheaval of 1917 and how to organise power. Although the notion of subordinating themselves to the authority of an overarching mountain government ultimately found no majority, the concept of unification as such was certainly popular among the Chechens, too. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that individual members of the government continued to be highly respected by the local population later during the civil war as well. The commitment to a sharia-based state entity, as expressed in the appointment of Gotsinskii in August 1917, can ultimately be understood as an expression of a shared identity transcending ethnic boundaries.

All of these state-building projects, as well as all subsequent ones, whether secular or religiously influenced, ultimately failed, however, due to differences in the political conceptions of the various North Caucasian societal leaders, the growing tensions among the peoples, and the uncertainty over the future constellation of power in Russia. In view of this uncertainty, all sides initially relied on their own strength for the enforcement of their interests, or sought strong allies to help them safeguard those interests. In this situation, the government of the Union of United Mountaineers (i.e. the later Mountain Republic) did not really suggest itself as an ally: it had no instruments of power, such as a potent military, nor was it capable of settling the most pressing issue of the day—the redistribution of land in the interests of the

mountain population. Peace between the non-Russian North Caucasian ethnic groups and the Cossacks could only last for as long as there was any prospect of finding an equitable solution for the question of land ownership within the framework of an overarching state. However, after the collapse of the old order in October 1917, this bracket was eliminated, and the land issue would prove a flashpoint for the ensuing brutal violence.

Path to violence

Like in other parts of the former Russian Empire, the North Caucasian societies, dominated by peasants and herdsmen, associated the revolutionary events mainly with tangible social aims. In the mountain areas of the region, which were marked by an extensive form of agriculture, with cattle and grazing-based farming the dominant form, the central issue was control of land.

As a fighter on the Bolshevik side, Kazbek Savvich Butaev (1893–1937) had gathered first-hand experience of the civil war in the North Caucasus and later held prominent state and party leadership positions in his home region of North Ossetia. In his view, there were obvious reasons for the violence against Cossacks, which was mainly perpetrated by Chechens and Ingush.[49] In his unpublished personal account, compiled in 1920, he states clearly that it was the Mountain Republic's pro-Cossack stance that provoked the conflict between North Caucasian peoples and Cossacks:

> All of this [collaboration between the Central Committee and the Terek Cossacks] is happening at the top, in the leading circles. And down below, the masses await and prepare for the revolution's measures. The mountain peoples await the destruction of Cossack rule, and the return of land property, and true national liberation, and power-sharing. Nevertheless, the princes and millionaires [of the Central Committee], seeking to defend their estates and capital from the growing anger of the masses, commit the fate of the mountain peoples to the hands of Cossack reactionaries, of those [people] who during the Tsar's rule had been the executioners [of the mountain population]. ... The masses saw all this, learned, and, gathering their strength, waited for the right moment to strike.[50]

However, 'the masses' in the sense of an organised popular movement, did not exist—instead, there were multiple communities and ethnic groups that took advantage of the general lawlessness to take the law into their own hands. What did this mean for the Terek Cossacks in practice? To some extent, the

answer can be inferred from a message sent in October 1919 from the *ataman* of the Terek Cossacks, Gerasim Andreevich Vdovenko (1865–1945), to the supreme commander of the White Army on the Southern Front, General Denikin. In December 1917, Vdovenko had succeeded Mikhail Karaulov, who had been killed in an ambush at the *stanitsa* of Prokhladnoi by soldiers and Cossacks from his own forces due to discontent over his policy of rapprochement with the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus.[51] Vdovenko writes:

> After the second overthrow of the government had taken place in October 1917, ... the Chechen and Ingush peoples exploited the temporary weakness of Russian power and of the Russian people; with enormous, ruthless fanaticism, they organised regular forces to destroy Russian settlements ... but especially to expel the Cossacks of the *stanitsy* along the Sunshenskii Line from Kakhanovskii to Karabulakskii on the left bank of the Terek River, in order to then found the North Caucasus Federative Republic [i.e. the Mountain Republic], which they declared to be independent of Russia. The destruction and conquest of Russian territory by the Chechen and Ingush peoples followed a well thought-out, systematic design.
>
> First of all, [the Chechens and Ingush] destroyed and pillaged the flourishing German colonies, the wealthy Russian economy and farms in the district [*okrug*] of Khasav-Iurt, and then some farmsteads in the vicinity of the *stanitsa* of Kakhanovskii ... and finally the Christian settlements in the district of Khasav-Iurt. ... At the same time, the Chechens ransacked the railway hubs at Gudermes as well as the *stanitsy* of Kadi-Iurt, Dzhalka, Argun, and elsewhere; and finally, at dawn on 29 December 1917, [they] carried out an organised assault on the *stanitsa* of Kakhanovskii—the last stronghold of the Russian people. The residents and their small garrison fought a tenacious engagement with the Chechens, from four in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon, but due to lack of reinforcements, they could not hold out against the pressure and retreated beyond the Terek. ... The *stanitsa* of Kakhanovskii ... was burnt to the ground. ... On 30 December 1917, the Chechens attacked the small *stanitsa* of Il'inskaia. The Cossacks of this village withdrew to the *stanitsa* of Petropavlovsk; the [*stanitsa* of Il'inskaia] was also pillaged and plundered by the Chechens. Subsequently, in January 1918, [the Chechens] looted the great, utterly defenceless and unarmed settlement of Khasav-Iurt. ... In November 1917, the Ingush carried out an assault on the *stanitsa* of Fel'dmarshalskii, which they burned down from all sides and razed to the ground.[52]

Violence in the North Caucasus did not always manifest itself as large-scale and seemingly well-organised assaults, as described by Vdovenko in his report, but was also perpetrated by veterans of the former Russian Imperial Army and armed bandits who roamed the region, pillaging and looting without any

apparent political objectives, taking advantage of the chaotic situation. While the Mountain Republic lacked the resources to impose order by force, it seems that even the appeals of the Muslim clergy went largely unheeded at this time. This was even true for the most influential spiritual leader of his time, Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii, who as the elected mufti of the North Caucasus felt obliged to bring all of his weight to bear.

In November 1917, Gotsinskii addressed an urgent appeal to the mullahs of the North Caucasus muftiate, calling on them to reinstate law and order based on the precepts of sharia. At the same time, he sought to come to an agreement with the government of the Mountain Republic, emphasising that his demand was in line with that body's goal of raising 'the political and cultural standards of our peoples ... and their rights' at a time when 'numerous perils threaten the existence of our peoples'. Gotsinskii ordered the immediate election of 'God-fearing men' who would be 'compelled to enforce the full extent of sharia law in the struggle against thieves, felons, and murderers and [in doing so] work together with the representatives of the temporal authorities'.[53]

It was with a view to the conflict between Orthodox Cossacks and Sunni Chechens in particular that Gotsinskii, writing in November 1917, tried to add weight to his request by reminding everyone that he would 'have [his] authorised representatives cut off the hands of any Muslims perpetrating crimes against other Muslims; and that for crimes carried out by [Muslims] against the property or the person of a Christian, the same persons [i.e. his plenipotentiaries] would carry out the death penalty against the criminals'.[54]

This harsh threat appears to have had little assuasive effect, however. As the ringleader of a rebellion against the Bolsheviks that would spread throughout large parts of the mountainous North Caucasus from the autumn of 1920 onwards, Gotsinskii was cast in Soviet historiography as the ultimate foe of Soviet power.[55] In Western literature, on the other hand, he was remembered as the leader of the 'last uprising' against the Russian conquerors.[56] In reality, Gotsinskii during this period acted as a rather moderate politician aiming for balance and compromise; however, he strictly rejected any alliance with the Bolsheviks, a course of action that had been advocated by some of the other sheikhs after Denikin's arrival on tactical grounds.

Gotsinskii was highly educated in religious matters, but was certainly no fanatic. He consistently advocated introducing sharia law, which he saw as the only way of establishing law and order; however, this stance was not directed at Russians or the adherents of other religious communities. The fact that, like

other representatives of the Mountain Republic, he was fundamentally opposed to tsarism, but not to Russia, may be due to his personal biography: his father, Donogo Muhammad (date of birth unknown; d. 1889), who as *naib* had fought side by side with Imam Shamil, entered the tsar's service after the end of the Caucasus wars, was the recipient of several honours, and was promoted to the rank of *rotmistr* in the Russian Imperial Army. Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii also had a distinguished career in the tsar's administration. He was a delegate to the Dagestani People's Court and in 1895 was appointed to succeed his father as the provost of the Koisubulinsk sector in the Avar district. After the death of his father, he inherited his extensive landholdings. The tsarist administration suspiciously monitored the activities of this cleric who, like many others, was viewed with distrust due to his journeys to Mecca and the Ottoman Empire. However, this did not detract from his influence, which soon spread from Avaria to the mountains of Chechnia. He acted as mediator in a number of disputes and was regarded as a pragmatic. It was probably this personality trait that, after the February Revolution, made him a universally acceptable candidate for the position of mufti and clergy delegate within the Union of United Mountaineers proclaimed in May 1917.[57]

The violence did not soon decline. On the contrary, the struggle between Cossacks and Chechens in the Terek region came to a head at the end of 1917, when Cossacks murdered Sheikh Deni Arsanov (1850–1917), a man highly respected among the Chechens, together with about thirty of his followers. They had been lured into an ambush after the breakdown of peace talks with Cossack delegates in Groznyi.[58] Besides figures such as Sheikh Ali Mitaev, who was one of the most important leaders of the Qādiriyya movement in Chechnia after the death of his father Bamat Girei Khadzhi in 1914, Deni Arsanov was at the time considered the most influential leader of the Sufi Naqshbandiyya order, which was still widespread at the time.[59]

In the bloody autumn of 1917, there was thus no authority that held sufficient sway to stem the increasing lawlessness and violence. In the spring of 1918, the Bolsheviks appeared on the stage, staking their claim as a new force that would restore order. Initially, though, they too would only achieve short-term success.

The Bolsheviks and their state-building projects

Given these distortions in the political landscape, the Red Army, founded by the Bolsheviks at the beginning of 1918, had no difficulty pushing the

Mountain Republic's government out of the Caucasus. In March 1918, the Bolsheviks took Vladikavkaz with the help of Cossack units. Most government officials fled into exile to the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. Individual members of the Mountain Republic government, such as Gaidar Bammat, had already taken up permanent residence in Tbilisi before the arrival of the Red Army. From here, Bammat was better able to establish contacts with potential allies—especially the neighbouring South Caucasian states and the Ottoman Empire.

The Bolsheviks undertook initial attempts at state-building in North Caucasian region as early as the beginning of 1918. In January of that year, they proclaimed the Soviet Republic of Stavropol'. This entity only lasted a few months, however, and was confronted with large-scale peasant revolts.[60] The second Bolshevik state-building attempt in March 1918 saw the proclamation of the Terek Soviet Republic. The constituent session began on 3 March in Piatigorsk, and was continued in Vladikavkaz after the Bolsheviks had expelled the Terek–Dagestani government from the city.[61] Mid-March 1918 saw the founding of the Soviet Republic of Chernomorsk, on the territory of the former governorate of the same name, followed by the establishment of the Kuban Soviet Republic in April. Just weeks later, the two republics merged into the Soviet Republic of Kubano–Chernomorsk.[62]

These first Soviet state-building projects did not replace the existing power structures, but overlapped, complemented or competed with them. As such, these projects had only very limited impact on the rural areas populated by non-Russians, especially since social-revolutionary organisational structures on which the Bolsheviks might have counted for support were scarce in those regions. With the exception of North Ossetia, where a social-revolutionary movement could be discerned among the intelligentsia as early as 1905, there were no comparable movements among other ethnic groups of the North Caucasus. Accordingly, after the February Revolution of 1917, it was only in North Ossetia that a larger social-revolutionary movement was actually formed. However, by the middle of the year, it had already split into two difference factions: the Menshevik wing, led by Simon Alievich Takoev (1876–1937), faced off against the 'Kermen' organisation, headed by Sakhandzheri Gidzovich Mamsurov (1882–1937), which was programmatically closer to the Bolsheviks and already several hundred members strong at the beginning of 1918.[63] In addition, especially among the Christian Orthodox majority of Ossetians, there was an influential officer caste that had little time for Bolshevik ideology and was inclined towards

collaboration with the Cossacks.[64] The other non-Russian areas of the North Caucasus had no party organisations on a comparable scale at the time. Social-revolutionary cells would coalesce around individual personalities, and were thus mainly restricted to the location of that person's power base.

Although there was consequently hardly any social-revolutionary organisation worthy of the name in the non-Russian-populated parts of the North Caucasus, the arrival of the Bolsheviks led to a rearrangement of the parameters of power politics overnight. Each ethnicity and community had to decide to which extent cooperation with the new power suited their specific interests. Conversely, in the North Caucasus outside of the Russian-dominated urban centres, the Bolsheviks were still so weak that they needed all the support they could get. Initially, therefore, the Bolsheviks felt themselves to be in a comfortable situation, as not only parts of the non-Russian ethnic groups but the Cossacks too signalled their disposition towards cooperating with them. For instance, immediately after the October Revolution, a number of Cossack communities pledged allegiance to Soviet power. It was also clear, however, that in doing so, both the non-Russian indigenous peoples and the Cossacks mainly hoped to win support in their war against their respective opponents. This finally became unmistakably clear at the first Terek People's Congress from 25 to 31 January (7 to 12 February) 1918, when around 400 delegates met at Mozdok to elect the Terek People's Council (Terskii nardonyi sovet) as the supreme representative of Soviet rule in the region.[65]

The Bolshevik delegate Sergei Mironovich Kirov (real name Kostrikov, 1886–1934), who was one of the speakers at this session, had first intended to remind the delegates that the main aim was to unite the 'revolutionary forces in the Terek region' in order to suppress the counterrevolution. Instead, he accused the assembled delegations of only wanting to gain advantages in their war with their respective opponents by recognising Soviet power:

> It has been said here: In order to beat the Ingush and the Chechens, it is necessary to recognise the power of the Council of People's Commissars. But if that's the case, then the Ingush will also meet up for an assembly tomorrow and acknowledge the authority of the Council of People's Commissars in order to beat the Cossacks. All of this trouble is due to the fact that the Cossacks and [the] mountaineers are led by people who do not care about the well-being of the people. If we only acknowledge Soviet power in order to be able to make war with other peoples, it is better not to recognise such a power.[66]

Indeed, hardly any representatives of the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus took part in the first meeting at Mozdok, and not a single delegate of the Chechens or Ingush attended. In his memoirs, Kazbek Butaev recounts that the Cossacks, who were among the main initiators of the assembly, deliberately did not send invitations to the Chechens and Ingush, as their stated goal was to mobilise the other delegates for a military campaign against the Chechens and Ingush.[67] However, the alliance that the Cossacks hoped to build would never materialise, as 'the socialist parties got involved in this matter' and thwarted the military plans, which had already been seen as a done deal, according to the unpublished memoirs of another contemporary witness, Cossack officer Nikolai Nikolaevich Baratov (1865–1932).[68]

At the second Terek People's Congress, which was in session from 16 February to 4 March in Piatigorsk and again from 6 March 1918 at Vladikavkaz following the expulsion of the Terek–Dagestani government, Kirov appealed to Cossacks and the non-Russian indigenous population to end their conflict immediately. Primarily, though, he urged the Cossack delegation to relent, while making no efforts to hide his aversion towards the Cossacks.[69] The Ingush now also appeared at the Piatigorsk meeting, and the Chechens were represented for the first time ever, though initially only by one person—the Chechen Aslanbek Sheripov (1897–1919).

Like Tapa Chermoev, Sheripov, who is generally described in Soviet historiography as the 'first Communist' of Chechnia,[70] was a scion of one of the few Chechen families with a long record of service as tsarist officers. His grandfather had already joined the tsar's army in 1852, shortly after the Chechen communities of the plains had been subdued. Sheripov himself enjoyed a secular education and distinguished himself as a writer, poet and translator. Initially, he too endorsed the union of the mountain peoples and their demand for broad autonomy. However, the demand for independence, as voiced by the Mountain Republic's government in the spring of 1918, was more than he could support; he believed that the North Caucasus only had a future in the framework of a reformed social-revolutionary Russia.[71] As a firebrand speaker and defender of the non-Russian peoples' cause, Sheripov caused quite a stir at the Terek People's Congress. Indeed, it was apparently also due to his commitment and charisma that the Bolsheviks ultimately lent their support to the concerns of the mountain people within the Terek People's Congress. In his memoirs, Butaev casts the appearance of the Ingush and Chechen delegates as a dramatic event and a historic moment, since it

marked the establishment of the first direct link between Soviet power, which was forming in the Terek region, and these two ethnic groups:

> The Ingush arrived; a 'breakthrough had been achieved on their front'. But the Chechens did not. They still maintained their 'republic', which was isolated on all sides. But through the frontlines and across the mountains of Ingushetia, the only representative of the Chechens arrived—Aslanbek Sheripov, who announced volubly at the assembly that the Chechens wished to end the war among the nations, but that the Cossacks were preventing this endeavour.[72]

Sheripov stated his desire for peace but assumed that the Soviet power would settle the land issue in favour of the Chechens:

> The land should belong to those who work it, without regard to ethnic and religious affiliation. The most important matter for us is the question of land ownership, and the Council of People's Commissars is settling it just as we require. And not just on paper, but [also] in reality.[73]

At the meeting, which according to Butaev was attended by about 1,000 delegates, Soviet power in the Terek was officially proclaimed, and a government consisting of representatives of the various ethnicities was appointed. The highest legislative body of the republic was the sixty-member People's Council, made up of national factions of Cossacks, representatives from the various non-Russian-majority regions (especially from Kabarda, Ossetia, Ingushetia and Chechnia), but also Russians and other 'outlanders' (*inogorodnye*).[74] Sheripov was appointed as Chechnia's representative on the council. Immediately after, Sheripov travelled back to Chechnia. In late March, following an assembly of several thousand people in the abovementioned Chechen *aul* of Goity, he and Tashtemir El'darkhanov founded the so-called Goitinskii Revolutionary Committee and proclaimed Soviet power in Chechnia. In this context, it should be noted that both El'darkhanov and Sheripov were part of the tiny group of Chechen social-revolutionaries and thus could at no point claim to represent the majority of Chechens.[75]

Like Sheripov, El'darkhanov was an educated man who, while lacking Sheripov's charisma, had great political acumen and had already ascended to high rank in the tsarist era. El'darkhanov was the son of the provost (*starshina*) in the village of Gekhi in the Urus-Martanovskii district and came from of a wealthy family with great landholdings. At age seven, he was sent to the village's Islamic school. Subsequently, he went to Groznyi to attend the only

secular school open to the non-Russian indigenous population, before completing his education in Vladikavkaz and in Tbilisi, where he became a teacher. In 1893, El'darkhanov completed his studies. His first position was as a public educator in a school for members of the mountain peoples in Maikop; from 1898 onwards, he worked in the same capacity at a school in Groznyi. He was a collector of Chechen folklore and folk tales, on which he published in scholarly edited volumes, and in 1911 he compiled a Chechen dictionary.[76] El'darkhanov was also a member of the Muslim faction representing the Terek region in the first and second Dumas (1906–7).[77]

While the Bolsheviks were sympathetic to the concerns of the non-Russian elements of the regional population from the start, it was not until the third Terek People's Congress, which took place in Groznyi in April and May 1918, that they deigned to make an actual commitment to the Chechens and Ingush. Sheripov, as a member of the Chechen delegation, warned that the North Caucasus faced an uprising of an 'army of landless mountaineers' if the latter were refused the rightful return of their lands. It appears that this warning did not fail to make an impression among the mainly Russian delegates in attendance.[78] The Groznyi congress basically approved the transfer of land to the Chechens and Ingush.[79] At the same time, the decision was made to resettle a number of Cossack communities from the Terek region, creating a precedent for the deportation of entire populations already at this earliest stage of Soviet history.[80]

Ethnic clashes repeatedly erupted in other places as well, such as the renewed violence between Ingush and Ossetians in April 1918 in the settlement areas along the line between Vladikavkaz and Murtazov. In his notes, Butaev gives special credit to the power of the new Soviet state and to the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Samuil Grigor'evich Buachidze (also known as Noi, 1882–1918),[81] for brokering a peace agreement between the two sides and helping to momentarily defuse the conflict.[82]

The Bolsheviks had no illusions as to why a majority among the non-Russian peoples supported the Soviet cause. The ethnic Georgian Bolshevik Grigorii (Sergo) Konstantinovich Ordzhonikidze (1886–1937), who in April 1918 had been appointed special plenipotentiary commissar (*vremennyi chrezvychainyi komissar*) for Southern Russia,[83] declared in a speech to the office of the mountain faction of the Terek People's Congress in December 1918: 'Of course I understand that the Ingush do not support Soviet power because Ordzhonikidze has pretty eyes—which he doesn't, by the way—but

because of the land that the Bolsheviks have promised and handed over to the Ingush people.'[84]

The decision ultimately to side with the Chechens and the Ingush may well have been due to the personal sympathies of individual high-ranking Bolsheviks. At the same time, such a step also corresponded to an ideological credo, as the Soviet authorities regarded themselves as liberators and protectors of the 'oppressed peoples' of the tsarist empire, though the Cossacks as a former mainstay of that institution were not included among that category. However, ultimately, the determining factors were pragmatic ones: against the background of a growing military threat, they did not want to make enemies of the non-Russian peoples. For while the Terek congress was in session, the Volunteer Army led by General Denikin, which had formed in late 1917 in the Don region, succeeded in overthrowing the Soviet power there with the help of the Don Cossacks. On their way towards the Kuban and Terek, the force was joined by further Cossack formations, swelling the ranks of the Volunteer Army into a formidable host that the Bolsheviks could not match for the time being.[85]

Simultaneously, the Bolsheviks faced the danger of an invasion of German forces from the South Caucasian states, which were now also newly independent. In May 1918, the Germans had gained a foothold in Georgia, where they acted as the protecting power of the Menshevik-oriented government. In addition, it was mainly the Ottoman Empire that tried to assert its power claims in the Caucasus. In June 1918, General Nuri Pasha (also known as Nuri Killigil, 1889–1949) and his Ottoman–Azerbaijani force began their advance on Baku to overthrow the Bolshevik-dominated Soviet government (the so-called 'Baku Commune'). Next, an Ottoman expeditionary corps of 500 soldiers and seventy-seven officers led by an ethnic Cherkess major of the Ottoman army, Ismail Hakki Berkok (1890–1954), advanced towards Dagestan. Most of the soldiers and officers, too, were descendants of North Caucasian emigrants who had left for the Ottoman Empire after the end of the 'Great Caucasus War'. Ismail Hakki Berkok was given the task of recruiting members of non-Russian ethnicities for his army and to train them for the coming conflict with the Bolsheviks. Another Cherkess serving in the Ottoman army, Major-General Yusuf Izzet Pasha (1876–1922), was given overall command of the forces in the North Caucasus in August.[86]

In this situation, Sheripov, in his dealings with the Bolsheviks, once again managed to exploit this growing external threat with much more rhetorical

cunning than his Cossack adversaries. During the third session of the Terek People's Congress in April/May 1918, having once more spoken at length about the 'heroic' resistance of the North Caucasian peoples against the tsar's generals in the nineteenth century, Sheripov appealed to his audience: 'Give us a home, and you will find it peopled with worthy comrades who will join you reliably and selflessly in fighting any [external] incursions.'[87]

In protest against the Bolsheviks' land policies, some of the Terek Cossacks, led by ethnic Ossetian General Georgii Fedorovich Bicherakhov[88] (1878–1920), rose up at the end of July 1918 in a widespread armed revolt joined by some 12,000 armed fighters.[89] As a Menshevik, Bicherakhov did not oppose Soviet power as such—after all, he himself had been one of the main initiators of the first Terek People's Congress—but he disagreed with Bolshevik policies towards the Cossacks. However, his revolt would ultimately prove unsuccessful. His badly organised Cossack units, and the Ossetian units allied with them, did succeed in briefly expelling the Bolsheviks from Vladikavkaz in August 1918. However, only a week later, the Bolsheviks retook the city together with Ingush forces. If the Ingush population had borne the brunt of Bicherakhov's assault, the re-conquest of Vladikavkaz involved pogrom-style attacks on the Ossetian population and shootings of Ossetian officers. Moreover, the Ingush again attacked Cossack settlements and drove away their inhabitants.[90] It was not only the rural Cossack population that suffered the terrible consequences of these armed clashes; in the summer of 1918, even the capital of the North Caucasus region, Vladikavkaz, was turned into a 'dead city, one fifth of which lay in ruins', as Cossack officer Baratov notes in his memoirs.[91]

Bicherakhov's attempt to take Groznyi, which he besieged for three months, was also unsuccessful. The city was able to ward off his assault; it was assisted not just by the Chechen forces of Aslanbek Sheripov and Red Army units but notably also by strong Cossack formations that came to the rescue from the Sunzheskii *raion*—indicating that the Cossacks also failed to form a united front throughout this period.[92] Responsibility for the defence of Groznyi had been entrusted to Nikolai Fedorovich Gikalo (1897–1938), a Bolshevik and Russian by birth who had grown up in Groznyi and would play a crucial role in the civil war as commander of a Red Army detachment in the North Caucasus.[93] After the defeat of his Cossacks, Bicherakhov and some of his forces marched on to Dagestan, where they joined the army led by his brother, General Lazar' Fedorovich Bicherakhov (1882–1952).[94] The latter had advanced from Baku towards Dagestan in the summer of 1918 and, with

the help of the British, had taken Derbent and Petrovsk-Port.[95] Against the backdrop of the struggle against the Bolsheviks, Lazar' Bicherakhov not only wanted to link up with General Denikin, who at the time was still based in the Kuban region together with his forces, but also attempted rapprochement with Nukh Bek Tarkovskii, whose cavalry units were stationed at Temir-Khan-Shura in Dagestan.[96]

While Lazar' Bicherakhov refused to cooperate with the Ottomans, he was sufficiently pragmatic to reach selective agreements with the Bolsheviks operating in the cities of Dagestan; however, in the end, he found himself in open conflict with them.[97] At the same time, neither Bicherakhov nor Tarkovskii had any illusions about the difficulties of collaborating with the formations led by men like Gotsinkii or Usun-Khadzhi that were operating in the mountains of Dagestan and Chechnia. These were regarded as unreliable partners, and external observers professed their difficulty in understanding their motives. In this respect, it is again instructive to note the assessments offered by Boris Kuznetsov, who in 1918 was a participant and eyewitness to the conflict in the Dagestani theatre of war:

> In this lost struggle, we unfortunately had two 'allies' that weighed us down like unnecessary ballast: The first was Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii, who calls himself the imam of Dagestan, [i.e.] the supreme spiritual leader of the Muslims. I have already mentioned him earlier as a bitter foe of the socialists, but in reality, he was opposed to anybody who refused to acknowledge him. He himself was a mullah from Gotsatl' *aul*, incredibly overweight, always on horseback, surrounded by his supporters bearing the green standards of the *gazavat*. He himself did not participate in any kind of combat, instead slowing down the advance of our marching column with his frequent calls to prayer. The second 'ally' was Usun-Khadzhi, a Chechen[98] of small stature (that is why he was called *usun*, or 'short'). He had visited Mecca many times, and his campaign under the banner of the *gazavat* was directed not so much against the Bolsheviks, of whom he knew nothing, but against all 'infidels' in general. The only person who might have been of any use to us in fighting the Bolsheviks was Ali Mitaev, a Chechen with a great deal of influence in Chechnia; however, the Chechens were at this time absorbed by their own affairs. They were settling scores with the Terek Cossacks and looted all those whom they had not looted already.[99]

Faced with this pressure from all sides, the Bolsheviks also tried to strengthen their forces in July 1918 by proclaiming the North Caucasian Soviet Republic (Severo-Kavkazskaia Sovetskaia Respublika) in Ekaterinograd, which amalgamated the various existing Soviet republics in the North

Caucasus into a single administrative unit.[100] However, this North Caucasus republic only lasted a few months. After Denikin's Volunteer Army had eliminated Soviet power in the Don by June 1918, its representatives in the Kuban, Stavropol' and Chernomorsk republics were also swept away by the onslaught of his troops by September 1918. In early 1919, the Volunteer Army succeeded in conquering the entire North Caucasus, from the Black Sea to the Caspian.[101] But General Denikin's rule in the North Caucasus, too, would be tenuous and short-lived.

The North Caucasus after Denikin's arrival

Upon Denikin's arrival, the North Caucasus seemed to be lost to the Bolsheviks, as the appearance of the Volunteer Army had once more caused a drastic shift in the balance of power. However, the conquest of the North Caucasus by Denikin's forces should not be regarded as a replacement of Bolshevik rule. The White forces did constitute the most important power factor in the region by late 1918, but at no time was their rule in the region absolute. Indeed, the frontlines and power relations in the North Caucasus theatre of the civil war were highly confusing; and even direct participants often found it difficult 'to get their bearings and distinguish friend from foe', as Kuznetsov notes in his memoirs.[102]

Necessity facilitated alliances and compromises even between parties that had nothing in common except a shared external enemy. Thus, faced with the advances of the White forces in late 1918, the Bolsheviks were so despondent over their own seemingly hopeless situation that they considered coming to terms even with the hated leadership of the Mountain Republic. In November 1918, two high-ranking commissars of the Terek Soviet Republic arrived in Tbilisi for negotiations with the government of the Mountain Republic. However, the government presented them with preconditions for cooperation—the 'absolute rejection of Soviet power' and the recognition of the Mountain Republic's independence—that were unacceptable to the two delegates. This showed clearly that the Mountain Republic government no longer regarded the Bolsheviks as a force to be reckoned with in the Caucasus and did not seriously consider them as potential allies.[103]

That, however, would prove to be a fatal miscalculation, since the Mountain Republic was in the end left without a single strong alliance partner. This was despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire had recognised the Mountain Republic's independence at the Batumi Peace Conference and had

promised military support to its government. Indeed, the Mountain Republic would succeed, with help from the Ottoman military, in reoccupying the Dagestani town of Temir-Khan-Shura. The Ottomans supported Tarkovskii and installed him as the representative of the Mountain Republic in Dagestan. But Istanbul's support for the Mountain Republic evaporated after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. In November 1918, with Ottoman combat forces on the ground in the Caucasus, initially unaware that the Central Powers had already surrendered and that the Sublime Porte was engaged in ceasefire negotiations with the British, the Turkish troops did achieve a last important victory over Lazar' Bicherakhov, who had ensconced himself with his forces in the Caspian seaport of Petrovsk-Port. However, shortly after the taking of Petrovsk-Port, Istanbul withdrew most of its troops from the North Caucasus. Bicherakhov, for his part, marched with his remaining Cossacks and some British units on Baku, where the British took control of the city after the evacuation of Ottoman troops. While the British remained stationed in Azerbaijan until August 1919, they recognised the republic's independence and supported the government there.[104]

It was not the Bolsheviks, however, who would deliver the death blow to the Mountain Republic, but General Denikin. Until his Volunteer Army conquered the North Caucasus, the two camps were widely seen as natural allies in the struggle against Bolshevism. After the withdrawal of the Ottomans, the Mountain Republic government received military support from the British, who were subsequently the dominant power in the Caucasus. After the conquest of the Caucasus by Denikin's volunteers in early 1919, it soon became clear that the White generals had no interest in any form of collaboration with an independent Mountain Republic. The British, who were counting on Denikin's support in their own conflict with the Bolsheviks, were now careful not to oppose this policy openly and urged the representatives of the Mountain Republic government to come to terms with Denikin. The question of recognition for the Mountain Republic was to be postponed and only discussed as part of the Paris Peace Conference.[105]

However, the conflict between Denikin and the Mountain Republic government quickly escalated. In February 1919, General Pavel Nikolaevich Shatilov (1881–1962), the commander of Denikin's forces in the Caucasus, sent a letter to the newly appointed president of the Mountain Republic, Pshemakho Kotsev, ordering him to submit forthwith. In return, he offered the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus self-rule in the framework of a common state, with the details to be elaborated, however.[106]

When the Mountain Republic government dispatched a high-ranking delegation to Ekaterinograd for direct talks with General Denikin about an alliance, he refused to receive the delegates.[107] The delegates felt slighted by the general's insulting behaviour, and instead of meeting with General Vladimir Platonovich Liakhov (1869–1919), who would later be appointed commander-in-chief of the Terek–Dagestani *krai*, the ambassadors from the Mountain Republic government preferred to return to Temir-Khan-Shura without result.[108]

Subsequently, the White generals showed little patience in dealing with the non-Russian peoples. While they managed to bring both the north-western part of the North Caucasus, Kabarda and North Ossetia under their control rather swiftly, they initially encountered stiff resistance in their advance towards Ingushetia and Chechnia. In their campaign, they deployed a tactic that had already been used with success by General Ermolov in the nineteenth century: as part of 'punitive actions', they burned down entire *auls* in order to break down the resistance of the population.[109] Another important reason for the Volunteer Army's harsh behaviour was the fact that the Chechens in the mountain areas, in particular, refused to hand over Red Army soldiers hiding in their *auls*—while the Chechens of the plains, on the other hand, behaved rather cooperatively.[110] However, even in the mountainous areas, it was apparently not necessarily the local population's sympathies that favoured the Bolsheviks, but a tradition of hospitality that prohibited the rendition of a guest.[111]

More than anything, however, it was the brutal warfare conducted by the Whites against the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus that united all parties. General Denikin states in his memoirs that just one military operation by General Daniil Pavlovich Dratsenko (born in 1876, year of death unknown) in mid-March 1919 against Chechen settlements killed at least 1,000 Chechens.[112] In its operations against the settlement of Alkhan-Iurt, it appears that the Volunteer Army even used heavy artillery to bombard the village for three days.[113]

However, such punitive actions were only seemingly effective. In the case of the Chechens, they subsequently made a show of submission at a major assembly in Urus-Martan; in Denikin's presence, they declared their willingness to form up one Chechen division and an Ingush brigade for his disposal. According to Denikin, there were between 3,000 and 4,000 members of non-Russian ethnicities fighting in the ranks of his Volunteer Army, including Chechens. But there would be no formation of independent

Chechen or Ingush units as permanent elements of the Volunteer Army.[114] Like other Russian generals before him, Denikin misjudged the meaning of 'submission'. The apparent compliance of the Chechens in no way indicated feelings of partnership with the White forces. As Denikin later noted in his memoirs, the Chechens at the time trusted neither their own *medzhlis* nor the Volunteer Army, but did 'not [go] beyond the tangible interests of their own *aul*'.[115]

Even as Denikin began his campaign to subjugate the Chechens and Ingush, resistance was forming in the mountain areas of Chechnia and Dagestan, which so far had defied the control of the Volunteer Army and still offered a hideout for small groups of Bolshevik forces—while other Bolsheviks had withdrawn across the border to Georgia. Nor did the relations between the individual peoples and the government of Pshemakho Kotsev break off altogether. It is true that the Mountain Republic government had only very few military forces at its disposal; among Chechens and Ingush in particular, it had lost standing partially because of its collaboration with the Cossacks. However, Kotsev and other members of his government had sufficient authority among the local population to allow them to agitate openly against the White occupation forces at assemblies in Chechnia, for example.[116] In the run-up to the military operation against Chechen settlements in mid-March 1919, it was Kotsev as the representative of the Mountain Republic government who negotiated with the General Staff of the Volunteer Army, trying to dissuade them from attacking Chechnia.[117]

However, in May 1919, the Mountain Republic collapsed permanently. After Denikin's Volunteer Army had taken Petrovsk-Port and Derbent without encountering much resistance, there was a change of power in Temir-Khan-Shura. The General Staff of the Volunteer Army appointed an ethnic Avar major-general of the former tsarist army, Mikael' Magometich Khalilov (1869–ca. 1921), who had previously served as a member of the executive committee of the Mountain Republic. He was named ruler (*pravitel'*) with dictatorial plenipotentiary powers for Dagestan.[118] Tarkovskii's forces withdrew to the highlands, and the Kotsev government once more emigrated to Tbilisi, where it would no longer play any notable role in the events in the North Caucasus.[119] The Bolsheviks also experienced a setback in Dagestan, where the majority of the members of the Dagestan *obkom* of the RKP (b)) was arrested in May 1919 and later shot.[120]

Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks and their allies would succeed less than twelve months later in driving the White forces out of the North Caucasus again.

This success was closely linked to developments in the southern Russian theatre of war, where the balance of power began to tilt against the Whites from the autumn of 1919. After successful advances into central Russian territory, they had suffered serious defeats at the hands of the Red Army. Subsequently, the Volunteer Army was also weakened by unrest in their own ranks: there was a major falling-out with the leaders of the Don Cossacks, who were pushing for more autonomy in their areas of settlement.[121]

However, another momentous factor securing Bolshevik victory was the position adopted by the commanders of the White Army in their dealings with the non-Russian indigenous population. General Denikin was convinced that 'only a strong Russian power' would be able to resolve the problems in the region, which he believed were characterised not only by tensions between the peoples but also by 'pan-Islamist and separatist tendencies', as he states in his memoirs.[122] Even a contemporary Cossack observer such as Nikolai Baratov could see that this policy was headed for a dead end. To the non-Russian ethnicities, Denikin's attitude smacked of an attempt to reinstate the old regime that they so detested, which could only evoke antagonism.[123]

The efforts of the White leadership to win popular support after their campaigns of conquest against Chechnia were too little, too late. For instance, in an appeal to the Chechen people in the spring 1919, General Liakhov promised internal self-rule and respect for their religion. It was untrue, he declared, that the Volunteer Army was trying to re-establish 'the old regime' and to 'subjugate [the Chechens] to Cossack rule'. As he put it, the confrontation with the Chechens in mid-March 1919, which had resulted in a large number of casualties and great destruction, was the result of a 'simple misunderstanding' that had arisen due to the Chechens being misinformed as to the true aims of the Volunteer Army. In order to demonstrate his forces' good intentions to the individual peoples, Liakhov presented a plan for an administrative structure under which each district would be administered by a representative of the ethnicity in question. The governor of the Terek–Dagestani *krai*, too, was to be an ethnic Caucasian and elected by a national congress of peoples.[124] For Chechnia, Liakhov appointed an experienced ethnic Chechen general of the artillery by the name of Eris Khan Sultan Girei Aliev (born in 1855, year of death unknown).[125] As commander-in-chief, he would serve as a caretaker for as long as no other person had been elected by popular vote to replace him. The only condition was that any future administrator would also have to be a higher-ranking member of the

military.[126] To the Chechens, however, this sounded like a cynical ploy, since Denikin's command staff had up to this point refused to heed any calls for autonomy; in truth, they had never hesitated to use extreme and violent measures against any community that resisted subjugation.

The Bolsheviks took a completely different approach. On the one hand, the Bolshevik leadership was also essentially centralist-minded and wanted to avert further dissolution of the former empire by all means. In the North Caucasus, this became apparent in the fact that the Bolshevik leadership condemned the Mountain Republic government's declaration of independence issued on 11 May 1918 in the strongest possible terms, noting that it did not reflect 'the will of the broad masses'.[127] However, unlike the White generals, the Bolsheviks immediately became outspoken advocates at least on the declarative level of peoples' right to self-determination, and explicitly also cast themselves as defenders of the Muslim peoples on the southern periphery of the former Russian Empire. Thus, Stalin and Lenin in their famous 'Appeal to All Labouring Muslims of Russia and the East', issued in November 1917, called on all nations—with specific reference to 'the Chechens and the mountaineers of the Caucasus'—to claim their rights to exercise freely and without hindrance their 'beliefs and customs, their national and cultural institutions', which they said had been 'trampled on by the tsars and oppressors of Russia'.[128]

However, beyond these rhetorical distinctions, it was ultimately political practice that made the difference from the population's point of view. The Red Army had up to this point committed no crimes against the Chechens—unlike the Volunteer Army with its operations against the Chechen *auls* in mid-March 1919. And what is more, even now and despite promises of autonomy, the leaders of the Volunteer Army showed no sign of deviating from their earlier scorched-earth policy. In the second half of 1919, responsibility rested with General Ivan Georgievich Erdeli (1870–1939), who had taken supreme command of the forces of the Volunteer Army in the Terek–Dagestani *krai* in July 1919 after the assassination of General Liakhov.[129] In protest at the policy of massive violence perpetrated by the Volunteer Army, but also because he objected to the Chechens' counter-actions, General Aliev, the *pravitel'* of Chechnia appointed under Liakhov's watch, resigned in November of the same year.[130]

Thus, while many did believe that Bolsheviks were genuinely concerned with the well-being of the peoples, the White generals were so reviled among the population due to their actions that military alliances suddenly became

possible that had previously seemed inconceivable: specifically, a pact between the Bolsheviks and the Muslim leaders of Chechnia and Dagestan.

The political reports on the situation in the North Caucasus that were regularly compiled for the generals of the White forces between the spring and autumn of 1919 indicate how confusing the situation had become, namely with regard to the role of the clerical leadership, whose real influence was difficult to gauge. This is especially true for Dagestan, where the situation appears to have become completely chaotic after the Volunteer Army command had appointed General Khalilov as governor in May 1919. A report by the Volunteer Army for the period from 1 to 15 May 1919 has the following to say about Dagestan:

> Power was transferred to the military council headed by General Khalilov ... The suggestion was made that Kotsev too should join the [Khalilov] government as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Public Education. Other sources state that in [Temir-Khan-] Shura, power has shifted to U[s]un-[Kh]adzhi, who is reported to have arrived there at the head of 800 *murids*. Rumour had it that the mullahs regarded U[s]un-[Kh]adzhi and Nazhmuddin [Gotsinkii] ... as the real leaders of Dagestan. There [we]re further rumours about U[s]un-[Kh]adzhi, Nazhmuddin [Gotsinkii], and [Akhmet-Khan] Mutushev (a Bolshevik hothead) having proclaimed the *gazavat*.[131]

If this report already claims to have identified a connection between the spiritual leaders of Dagestan and the Bolsheviks, the following account for the period from 15 May to 1 June 1919 appears to substantiate this assumption further. Of particular concern must have been the news that Usun-Khadzhi had allied himself with Aslanbek Sheripov:

> In mid-May [1919], we received reports that Usun-Khadzhi was inciting the Chechens to carry out an attack on Groznyi together with the Ingush. In this connection, he found the support of Sheripov (the former chairman of the soviet of the Bolsheviks in Chechnia, an intelligent and energetic Chechen who has large funds at his disposal and conducts a highly effective propaganda campaign under the banner of pan-Islamism), who is rallying disaffected elements for an assault on the Volunteer Army ... There were further reports that in the *auls* of Gekhi, Valerik, Katyr-Iurt, Shama-Iurt, and Achkhoi-Martan, Bolshevik agents and members of the Red Army hiding out there are engaged in widespread agitation for the attack on the Volunteer Army; provocative rumours are spread alleging that our army is fleeing before the armies of Georgia and Azerbaijan. A certain Shity [Shity probably refers to Shita Istamulov[132]] and his followers have reportedly attempted once more to persuade the people in the district of Vedeno to fight against the

> Volunteer Army, but encountered almost no sympathy wherever they turned. The Bolshevik agitation efforts in the district of Khasav-Iurt similarly met with failure. This is why Shity and his followers have withdrawn to the mountains of Chechnia, where sources report up to 1,000 former Red Army members living in squalor and serving the Chechens as labourers. There were also reports about Turkish agitation; it is reported that in the *raion* of the *aul* Shatoi, a Turkish emissary [had managed] to raise up to 150 people for an assault on the Volunteer Army.[133]

The developments in the Chechen mountains signalled the beginning of an extensive revolt that broke out in Dagestan in June 1919 and by the autumn would engulf the entire mountain region of Chechnia, Ingushetia, Dagestan (with the exception of Avaria), Kabarda and Ossetia.[134] Although the report's author erroneously counted Sheripov among the pan-Islamist camp, it indicated that even after the end of the First World War, officers of the Ottoman army played an important role in the organisation of the revolt, mainly in the Dagestani theatre of war, although they would fail to forge the peoples of the North Caucasus into an effective fighting force. Georgia and Azerbaijan also contributed modest financial and military support for the broad anti-Denikin movement.[135] It is hard to assess how closely Sheripov and Usun-Khadzhi collaborated during the summer of 1919. Indeed, severe tensions appear to have arisen repeatedly between these two men, and open confrontation was mainly averted because of the presence of their common enemy, the Volunteer Army.[136]

Sheripov himself would not live to see the end of the civil war. On 29 August 1919, he was injured near the town of Vozdvizhenskoe when the Bolsheviks, together with Usun-Khadzhi's followers, made a successful attack on the forces of the Volunteer Army; he succumbed to his injuries soon after. Subsequently, Gikalo took charge of organising the Bolshevik resistance in Chechnia.[137] The brutality with which this war was waged on both sides can be seen in the fact that after the victory at Vozdvizhenskoe, Usun-Khadzhi ordered all captured officers of the Volunteer Army to be hanged.[138]

Meanwhile, the representatives of the Mountain Republic had also realised that only close cooperation with the Muslim clergy offered any prospect of success in the struggle for an independent North Caucasus Mountain Republic. Thus, the Mountain Republic government, headed by Pshemakho Kotsev, made active efforts in its Tbilisi exile to form alliances with important Muslim clerics in Chechnia and Dagestan. Already in early September 1919, prompted by the Mountain Republic's initiative, representatives of the anti-Denikin conflict parties met for a large assembly

in Tbilisi to coordinate their joint struggle against the White forces. They appointed an eleven-strong group chaired by the ethnic Ossetian Akhmed Tsalikov as their executive body. In October 1919, this group produced the Dagestani Defence Council (Dagestanskii sovet oborony), a coalition government supported by a broad alliance of anti-Denikin forces, including Bolshevik participation.[139]

The Defence Council was dominated by spiritual leaders under the chairmanship of Sheikh Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii (1847–1930), who had already been elected as 'Sheikh-ul-Islama' (mufti) of Dagestan in January 1918.[140] Akushinskii's appointment was controversial because it effectively stripped Gotsinkii of his title as mufti—a step that nearly resulted in open conflict between the two.[141] While Gotsinkii and his supporters eventually withdrew to the mountains and refused to participate in the anti-Denikin coalition, Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii, supported both by the Bolsheviks and by Ottoman forces, conducted a particularly effective partisan warfare against the forces of General Denikin in the Dagestani theatre of war.[142]

In the Soviet literature, no mention is made of the fact that the resistance led by Akushinskii was ultimately based on the idea of the unity of the North Caucasian peoples, as already propagated in the spring of 1917 in the framework of the Union of United Mountaineers. In fact, Akushinskii had been in close contact with individual representatives of this union from early on. In Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, two members of the Mountain Republic government—Alibek Takho-Godi (1892–1937) and Gaidar Bammat—represented the interests of the Defence Council.[143] Accordingly, when the body's initial session was held on 19 October 1919 in the Dagestani village of Levashi, the stated goal was to 'stop the destruction of the mountain peoples' unity', as Magomed Piralov, the leader of the insurgents in the Gunib area, explained. If this was to be achieved, the resistance would have to be coordinated beyond Dagestan with other movements in the North Caucasus. In real terms, this meant seeking cooperation with Usun-Khadzhi, another important leader of the opposition against Denikin. This venture was doomed to failure, however, as the latter had plans of his own for the establishment of state structures in the North Caucasus.[144]

Sheikh Usun-Khadzhi Saltinskii, also from Dagestan, had been born around the year 1845 and was thus a generation older than Gotsinkii. Unlike him, Saltinskii had childhood memories of the terrors of the Caucasus wars and the destruction of his village. He may even have participated actively in

the 1877 revolt. Usun-Khadzhi, like Gotsinkii, was a Muslim cleric, but unlike the latter had never had an official function in the tsarist administration. After taking part in a large revolt in Dagestan in 1913, he was banished to exile in Siberia, escaped, and then slipped away into hiding in Chechnia. With Denikin's conquest of the North Caucasus, Usun-Khadzhi founded a resistance movement in Chechnia that recruited not only Chechens but also members of other nationalities seeking shelter from the White onslaught, including Kabardians, Balkars, Ingush, Dagestanis and even Russians.[145]

While Usun-Khadzhi was just as opposed to the Bolsheviks as Gotsinkii was due to their atheist convictions, he recommended an alliance with them on tactical grounds. Having managed, together with the Bolsheviks, to largely evict the Volunteer Army from the mountains, in September 1919 in the Chechen town of Vedeno, Usun-Khadzhi proclaimed the independent North Caucasus Emirate and was confirmed by the assembled throng as *emir* (ruler). He appointed Prince Inaluk Arsanukaev Dyshninskii, an ethnic Chechen, as grand vizier and supreme commander of the armed forces and ordered him to form a government whose seat would henceforth be in the Chechen settlement of Vedeno.[146] This sharia-based state entity was built along similar lines to the Shamil state; it had ministries and even a currency of its own, and immediately enjoyed the backing of Georgia, Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire, which continued to have an interest in establishing a buffer zone in the Caucasus.[147] Due to military–tactical considerations, the Bolsheviks, too, immediately recognised the North Caucasus Emirate.[148] However, it was clear from the start that the alliance with the Bolsheviks was a fragile one. One indication of close collaboration between the Bolsheviks and the emirate, for instance, was the fact that Usun-Khadzhi listed Gikalo's troops as the '5th Red Army' on the roster of his own forces.[149] While many Chechens agreed to cooperate with the Bolsheviks, they refused to serve under Gikalo, whose troops were almost exclusively recruited from members of the Russian-dominated working class of Groznyi.[150]

Other groups in Chechnia, however, flatly refused to ally themselves with the Bolsheviks from the start. For instance, a Chechen band of several hundred men formed under the leadership of Ibragim Chulikov, calling itself the 'Committee to Expel the Gang of Bolsheviks and Usun-Khadzhi from Chechnia'.[151] As a former brother in arms of the Mountain Republic and of Tapa Chermoev, Chulikov, though a member of the Chechen National Council and representative of the liberal intelligentsia, nevertheless also adopted a critical stance towards Denikin's policy at the same time.[152]

The Bolsheviks had little faith in the spiritual leaders of the region, whom they not only rejected as agents of religious convictions that the Bolsheviks viewed as obsolete but also did not intend to tolerate as sources of alternative models of government. Conversely, the Muslim clerics were similarly sceptical towards the openly atheist Bolsheviks. Thus, one reason why Gotsinskii did not actively participate in the war against Denikin was that he regarded Bolshevik atheism as the larger evil and sharply condemned the alliances that Usun-Khadzhi and Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii had concluded with them.[153] But even these two clerics regarded their alliance as nothing more than a marriage of convenience. In Dagestan, this was clearly seen in the clergy's initial refusal to accept Communists as members of the Defence Council. The claim, often seen in Soviet publications, that there were ten Bolshevik cabinet members is therefore improbable and most likely reflects the tendency in the Soviet literature to exaggerate the significance of the Bolshevik element in the Dagestani 'struggle for liberation'.[154]

The tide finally turned in favour of the Bolsheviks in February and March 1920, when the 11th Red Army arrived. After they had succeeded, together with the troops led by Muslim clerics, in driving Denikin's troops out of the Terek region and Dagestan, it is not surprising that they liquidated the North Caucasus Emirate almost immediately upon achieving military victory. They could not tolerate this entity, which had already been in dissolution due to internal tensions, if for no other reason than that the government led by Prince Dyshninskii strictly upheld its claim to complete independence and actively sought support for his state abroad. To avoid making an enemy of Usun-Khadzhi after the end of the civil war, the Bolsheviks tried to integrate him into political life by offering him the title of mufti of the North Caucasus. However, three months later, the death of this sheikh, who was already well advanced in years, rid the Bolsheviks of a potentially very bothersome alliance partner.[155]

At the same time, there was a political shift in Dagestan as the Bolsheviks succeeded in grasping power within the Dagestani Defence Council. The further the forces of General Denikin were pushed back, the more openly they operated against their alleged enemies, including primarily the representatives of the Mountain Republic government and the Turkish military envoys. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks continued to exercise restraint in their dealings with the most important spiritual leader, Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii, whom they left in the government for the time being. Gotsinskii, however, had to withdraw under pressure from the Red Army to the Georgian border lands with his followers.

Once the Bolsheviks had won the war against the Volunteer Army in the North Caucasus, they began to win back the South Caucasus: in April 1920, the Red Army occupied Baku; in October, the Dashnak government in Yerevan, isolated on all sides, surrendered; and finally, in February 1921, the Bolsheviks conquered Menshevik Georgia after targeted efforts to stoke unrest among the non-Georgian population and inciting the Ossetians into rebellion. To some extent, the successes of the Bolsheviks were also achieved thanks to a favourable constellation of international affairs: while the British had largely withdrawn militarily from the Caucasus, Turkey supported the Bolshevik project. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the new, nationalist government of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk, 1881–1938) was interested in stabilising borders in the Caucasus and in fostering good relations with Bolshevik Russia, in order to be able to deal with more pressing challenges in the West, in Anatolia, where the French, the British and the Italians were staking territorial claims.

A missed opportunity

The representatives of the local North Caucasus intelligentsia must have perceived the years of revolutionary upheavals and wars as a time of missed opportunities. Indeed, the peoples in the region at the time had a chance to realise, by themselves, a state project that might have united the various societal forces and ethnicities as part of a reformed Russia. That this never came to pass was just as much due to internal contradictions as well as external conditions.

While the protagonists of a national and secular-oriented independence movement continued to enjoy a degree of respect among the population even after the October Revolution, in military terms, they lacked a sufficiently broad base to maintain control of developments in the North Caucasus, which culminated in all-out war. In this uncertain situation, the particular interests of the various communities came to the fore and made common projects impossible. Conversely, the authority of individual spiritual leaders increased. However, even religiously motivated state-building projects such as the North Caucasus Emirate had no chance of survival. Such endeavours were focused on single personalities who, while endowed with charisma and appeal, never represented a majority of the Muslim population. Moreover, the Islamic clergy, too, were divided into conflicting factions that had coalesced around rival sheikhs. For instance, if Gotsinkii had not withdrawn, but decided on

tactical grounds to join the anti-Denikin coalition of Usun-Khadzhi and Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii with the Bolsheviks, developments in the North Caucasus might have transpired quite differently.

From this perspective, the greatest tragedy was the failure of Denikin as the embodiment of the old order to treat the peoples of the North Caucasus as equals and to hold out a prospect for them as part of a future common state that would have been sufficiently attractive for them to join the fight against the Bolsheviks. The upshot of the conflict between the Volunteer Army and the Mountain Republic was that both parties ended up as the greatest losers of the war. The supporters of the Mountain Republic would spend much time in emigration regretting the apparent missed opportunity for an independent North Caucasian state, as reflected in political activism and in publications. In the Second World War, parts of the North Caucasus diaspora allowed themselves to be co-opted for Hitler's campaign against the Soviet Union, hoping to be able to realise their dream of independence under a German protectorate.[156]

Also on the losing side were the Terek Cossacks, who had dared to stand up to the Bolsheviks. The first Cossack communities had been resettled as early as 1918. After the end of the civil war, the new Bolshevik leadership once more had thousands of Cossacks resettled in order to clear land for the Chechens and the Ingush.[157] It thus came as no surprise that most of the non-Russian indigenous population initially viewed the victory of the Bolsheviks as a victory for their own cause, for many regarded the Bolsheviks as the party that most closely reflected their own aspirations. The Bolsheviks not only paid lip service to national autonomy and liberty on the declarative level but appeared also to be working to implement those goals insofar as they had sided against the Cossacks in the land question. They also soon understood that, in their state-building efforts, they had to take into account the notion of unity in order to provide alternatives to the state-building concepts being developed by the North Caucasian intelligentsia at the time.

Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that the Bolsheviks initially did not proclaim any territories that were purely ethnically defined after the Red Army's victory in the North Caucasus in 1920. Instead, in accordance with the unity projects that had surfaced during the civil war period, they proclaimed an autonomous Soviet mountain republic comprising all peoples in the region (with the exception of Dagestan, which was to receive its own autonomous republic). Generally speaking, the Bolsheviks operated with much more

tactical cunning during the war than the White generals did. While they were openly atheist, their support for freedom of religion was no mere formality; they even went so far as to collaborate with key spiritual leaders of the Muslim clergy. At least for a short period, they even recognised the sharia state of Usun-Khadzhi and sat side by side with representatives of the Muslim clergy in the Dagestani Defence Council.

Finally, the Bolsheviks—again, in complete contrast to Denikin and his generals—were masters of propaganda and deception. On 12 June 1918, in order to promote the Bolshevik cause among the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus, Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin (real name Dzhugashvili, 1878–1953), in his role as the people's commissar for nationality affairs, set up, within the ministry, a separate Department of the Mountaineers of the Caucasus (Otdel gortsev Kavkaza), which also included representatives of these peoples.[158] Early in 1919, the ministry even suggested that a portrait of legendary Imam Shamil be put up in the building of this department as well as in all official institutions of the North Caucasian peoples. The Bolsheviks thus cunningly adopted Shamil into their propaganda by portraying him as a symbol for the decades of resistance of the 'Mountaineer proletariat' against tsarism.[159] Indeed, after the Bolsheviks rose to power in the North Caucasus, portraits of Shamil would hang next to, or even replace, the images of Lenin. Throughout the whole of the 1920s and into the 1930s, the Bolsheviks made a deliberate effort to fan the cult of the imam in order to gain sympathies among the indigenous peoples.[160]

During the civil war era, and through their close alliances with the mountain populations, the Bolsheviks gained deep insight into the complexities of these societies and learned lessons that would later stand them in good stead during the concrete organisation of Soviet power in the region. While many Bolshevik representatives even in the North Caucasus were Russians, there was also a very strong and influential group from the Caucasus proper. Stalin himself was a Georgian, while Sergo Ordzhonikidze, another Georgian, and Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian (1895–1978), a native Armenian, were among the most important actors in the Caucasian theatre during the civil war. Ordzhonikidze and Mikoian in particular would leave the greatest mark on Bolshevik policy during the 1920s in the North and South Caucasus. But it also soon became clear that the new rulers were pursuing other aims in realising national liberation than the peoples themselves did. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the start of the Soviet era was marked by major misunderstandings.

5

ILLUSION OF FREEDOM

CHECHNIA IN THE EARLY 1920s AND THE CASE OF ALI MITAEV

Although the Bolsheviks had won the war, in the spring of 1920 their domain did not yet extend far beyond the Russian-inhabited cities. The war had killed tens of thousands in the North Caucasus, the economy was devastated, and countless groups of bandits were marauding through the ravaged countryside. In the villages, practically every male was armed. Many people had fought side by side with the Bolsheviks against the forces of General Denikin. But now, the Red Army was increasingly behaving like an occupation force. The army generals and Communists on the spot often had little regard for the population's religious traditions and customs. Conflicts became more frequent. At the same time, the military threat had not yet been completely eliminated either. Already in the summer of 1920, a major revolt broke out in the mountainous parts of Dagestan and Chechnia. One of its main leaders was the former mufti of the North Caucasus, Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii, who had already been a declared enemy of the Bolsheviks during the civil war. His movement was supported by the government of the North Caucasus Mountain Republic, whose seat was in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, still an independent state at the time. Furthermore, members of the Mountain Republic government tried to drum up support for their struggle against the Bolsheviks in Paris, London and Istanbul. At the same time, General Petr Nikolaevich Vrangel' (1878–

1928), who had taken command of the Volunteer Army from Denikin, tried to reassemble the remaining forces on the Crimean Peninsula. Fresh from victory, the Bolsheviks found themselves beset by domestic and foreign foes.

The Bolsheviks' first priority in this situation was to stabilise their hold on power. Even as they responded militarily to internal and external threats, they tried to shore up the alliances they had forged with the various indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus during the war. The Bolshevik leadership urged the local comrades to be more tolerant in dealing with the Muslim population. In order to defuse the problem of land shortage in the mountains, the Soviet authorities simply had several hundred Cossack families removed from their estates and made the land available for settlement by Ingush and Chechens. At the same time, and in order to win the non-Russians and Muslims over, the Bolsheviks sought to accommodate aspirations for self-determination through the creation of autonomous administrative–territorial units. Within these territories, members of the so-called 'titular nations' were actively promoted to administrative positions of power. This policy constituted an important aspect of the Bolshevik programme of *korenizatsiia*, the promotion of national languages and cultures.[1] Through the establishment of new institutions of power, the Bolsheviks also hoped to diffuse socialist ideology. Moreover, the creation of new national–administrative territories was meant to strengthen (or create) ethnic national identity as opposed to Muslim or larger regional (e.g. 'pan-Turkic') identities, and was thus seen as an essential step towards efficient control and modernisation of these economically backward borderland regions.[2]

In November 1920, following the initiative of the Bolshevik leadership, the Mountain Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Gorskaia ASSR) was created that brought together the peoples of the former Terek region into a single state entity. The peoples of Dagestan received a Soviet republic of their own—the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Dagestan (Dagestanskaia ASSR). The Soviet government promised the inhabitants of both entities far-reaching autonomy, and even pledged that the Muslim population could retain or even restore the sharia courts. While the Dagestan republic would endure, the Mountain ASSR disintegrated into several parts until 1924. In order to secure the loyalty of the individual peoples and in the hope of stabilising the region, the Bolshevik leadership was willing to take

into account the demands even of minuscule ethnic groups. This dissolution of the republic was not the outcome of a 'divide-and-rule' policy by Moscow, but reflected the great ethnic complexity and diversity of interests among the various peoples in the North Caucasus. In a situation where the new Bolshevik leadership was promising the peoples of the former Russian Empire liberty and land, the representatives of the different ethnicities tried to secure the maximum versions of their demands. The reordering of the region took the shape of a struggle, occasionally armed, to secure territory and borders, with the authorities of the central government mainly playing the role of arbiters. The national elites perverted the concept of national autonomy into attempts to advance their own interests in the names of the peoples they claimed to represent.

A particularly tricky situation prevailed in the case of Chechnia, where the Bolsheviks encountered more problems than usual in building up state structures in the form of soviets (councils) and party organisations. The small group of indigenous 'national Communists' (as the Bolsheviks called them), led by Tashtemir El'darkhanov, had hardly any influence at all. While the Chechens initially enjoyed an untroubled relationship with the new Soviet rulers immediately after the end of the war, a significant increase in attacks by armed Chechen 'bandits' on Red Army members, the railway line and even on the Groznyi oilfields was registered in subsequent years. It was against this background that the Bolshevik leadership decided in late 1922 to decouple Chechnia from the Mountain ASSR and create an autonomous region administered by Chechens and in which a Chechen government was assigned responsibility for restoring security.

But even this concept of letting indigenous cadres do the job often failed in the face of the social realities. As long as the Bolsheviks were weak, they had no choice but to come to terms with the facts on the ground and to work together even with societal actors they did not appreciate, such as the still very powerful Muslim dignitaries. Only from the mid-1920s onwards did the Bolsheviks become sufficiently confident to take a considerably tougher line. Local powerbrokers who did not suit them were removed from their posts. It soon became clear that, in the new socialist world, there was no place for the Muslim clergy, not even one that declared to serve the Soviet state loyally. Since the clerics represented a divergent social model in the shape of sharia, and occasionally had a significant following of armed men, it was only a question of time before the Bolsheviks would eliminate them. This was the

goal that the state secret police, the GPU (known as OGPU from November 1923 onwards), set itself.*

In the early 1920s, the most natural allies for the Bolsheviks were Muslim socialist reformers and members of the nationalist intelligentsia, some of whom allied with the Bolsheviks during the civil war, while others fiercely opposed them. Apart from these Russian-educated Muslims, however, the Bolsheviks went as far as to co-opt Muslim traditional believers or Sufi sheikhs into party and state structures, in several instances even into regional governments: in Dagestan, Sheikh Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii, one of the key leaders of Muslim resistance against the White movement in the North Caucasus, was included into Dagestan's provisional government, the *revkom*, in 1920 and appointed head of the Sharia Department of Dagestan's People's Commissariat of Justice. He held this post until December 1921, when he fell out with Soviet power.[3] In Bukhara, at least one out of the eleven members of the regional Soviet government in 1923 was apparently a 'mullah'.[4] In Turkestan in the early 1920s, the party's Central Committee had a Muslim majority,[5] and half of the members of the regional Communist party were reportedly religious believers.[6]

This chapter sheds light on one of the most intriguing of these co-optations: the case of the Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev. At first an ally of the Bolsheviks during the civil war, he fell out of grace with the leading Bolshevik representative in Chechnia in early 1920. It was during a meeting in Urus-Martan in January 1923 that Mitaev was invited by the Soviet delegates to a discussion and an initial agreement was reached to include him into the *revkom*, whose official member he became in April 1923. After holding this office for about a year, he was arrested by the secret police in April 1924 and was put to death in October 1925. Shortly before his execution, the Soviet leadership launched a major disarmament drive in Chechnia and removed

* The state secret police was created by V.I. Lenin in December 1917 under the name 'ChK' ('Cheka'), an abbreviation of 'All-Russian Emergency Commission for Combating Counterrevolution, Speculation, and Sabotage'. In February 1922, the Cheka was formally resolved and reconstituted under the new name GPU (State Political Directorate; Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie), which was subordinated to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (NKVD RSFSR), and from November 1923 onwards, to the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Subsequently, the organisation once more changed its name to OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate; Ob"edinënnoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie). The OGPU was incorporated into the newly formed NKVD of the USSR in 1934.

leading figures of the Chechen government from their posts, including El'darkhanov, who had been a supporter of Mitaev. Also, it was during the disarmament campaign that Gotsinskii and a number of other leading anti-Bolshevik rebels were captured, arrested and shot.

By tracing Mitaev's life story, this chapter provides an insight into the fluidity of the state-building processes that characterised the situation in one of the most troublesome spots of the Soviet Union. The case of Mitaev illustrates how the key players at the time, namely the Chechen government led by El'darkhanov, the South Eastern Bureau led by Mikoian, as well as the agents of the local branches of the Soviet secret police (the GPU/OGPU), whose members had been opposed to co-opting Mitaev in the first place, viewed the political situation and sought to enforce their various claims. Investigating the case of Ali Mitaev will also allow for a better understanding of Soviet nationalities policies, the Bolsheviks' attitude towards Muslims, as well as the complex struggle for power and influence in the non-Russian Muslim borderland areas of the Soviet Union.[7]

The foundation and dissolution of the Soviet mountain republic

If there was one thing the Bolsheviks had learned from the era of civil war, it was that alliances could fragment as quickly as they had been created. Accordingly, after the end of the war, they felt compelled to secure these pacts by transforming them into robust state institutions. This was to be achieved with maximum caution. Given the oftentimes very harsh behaviour of the local party representatives and Red Army soldiers, Lenin himself repeatedly counselled greater sensitivity when dealing with the indigenous population. Writing to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, at the time the chairman of the North Caucasus *revkom* and thus responsible for the establishment of Soviet power in the North Caucasus, Lenin demanded 'utmost goodwill' towards the Muslims; he also urged the local comrades to demonstrate the greatest possible sympathy for their desire for 'autonomy' and 'independence'.[8] Lenin had already sent a similar message to his Central Asian comrades urging them to devote 'the utmost attention' to the establishment of 'comradely relations with the peoples of Turkestan',[9] for, just as in the North Caucasus, the Bolsheviks found that their relations with the Muslims of Central Asia were becoming increasingly tense. Already in 1918, the Ferghana Valley was the scene of a large-scale uprising that subsequently spread to other areas of Turkestan and the former tsarist protectorates of Khiva and Bukhara. Not

until mid-1922 would the Bolsheviks succeed in suppressing this large anti-Soviet movement—generally known as the 'Basmachi Revolt'—and armed groups would remain active in the region far into the 1930s.[10]

However, not even the representatives of the central government could agree what exactly this autonomy for non-Russian peoples entailed. Leading Bolsheviks such as Trotskii, Zinov'ev, Kamenev and Bukharin, who had been raised in urban milieus, mainly regarded the October Revolution as heralding the liberation of the urban underclasses; they largely disregarded the national question.[11] Lenin himself initially did not devote much attention either to the national question, which played only a minor role in Marx's thinking. He, too, was initially wary of federal state structures and an avowed advocate of strict centralisation. Presumably, Lenin only adopted the federalist point of view in mid-1917, when the non-Russian periphery of the country experienced signs of dissolution amid the revolutionary turmoil.[12] This shift also brought the national question into the focus of his policies.

In the case of the North Caucasus, the Bolshevik leadership was just as opposed to secessionist demands as the White generals had been. However, the Bolsheviks understood that they could not discount such national aspirations altogether either. The peoples of the North Caucasus in particular had not entered into an alliance with the Bolsheviks based on ideological convictions, but had gone to war for tangible aims such as land, liberty and respect for their religious beliefs and practices. All of these had been solemnly promised by the new Soviet government after the October Revolution. And thus, in the minds of many North Caucasians as well as other non-Russian peoples of the former empire, Bolshevik victory was linked to the smashing of the fetters with which the tsar had bound them. Such national aspirations, the Bolshevik leadership of Lenin and his followers now argued, could only be absorbed under a federal state. Already at its first meeting in February 1920, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet; VTsIK), nominally the highest legislative, administrative and revising body of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), defined federalism as the fundamental principle of the state's structure.[13] Even though the debate over policy regarding nationalities was only resolved by the passing of the first Soviet constitution in 1924, and even then only provisionally, the endorsement of federalism already signalled in early 1920 that Russia's administrative structure on the non-Russian periphery would be drawn in accordance with ethnic criteria. In doing so, the Soviet leadership was essentially following the concept of autonomy defined

by Stalin in his programmatic publication on 'Marxism and the National Question', published in 1913. According to Stalin, the nation was 'a historically evolved stable community of humans' characterised by a 'community of language, of territory, of economic life, and of shared mentality as revealed by the community of culture'.[14] None of the ethnic minorities could make any claim to 'nation' status unless they were settling in clearly defined territories. Accordingly, the right to autonomy was always linked to a territory and could only be realised in the form of territorial autonomy.[15]

This was not a novel idea, but was based on concepts that had been circulating in Europe during the late nineteenth century. However, the implementation of this concept seemed revolutionary in a country that, as the first Soviet census of 1926 revealed, contained about 190 different ethnic groups. While Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s would be accompanied by serious efforts to establish autonomous territories in line with the criteria set by Stalin, this was, however, essentially an unsolvable task, not least because it was often not even clear to which ethnic group a given people belonged and how many of the numerous ethnic groups should be considered 'nations' with claims to a territory of their own. To this end, the Bolshevik government appointed an army of ethnographers. Already in the late tsarist period, members of this profession had systematically gathered information on the various peoples and their languages, customs and lifestyles.[16]

At the same time, nationalities policies were subordinate to a political diktat. In the final instance, it was the state officials at the centre in Moscow who decided which peoples had a claim to a territory, and within which boundaries. The borders were never drawn based on ethnic considerations exclusively; economic considerations and larger international security concerns were always also factored in—and often, personal preferences and networks were decisive when ultimate decisions were made. Accordingly, there would be repeated changes over time in the number of official 'nations' and in the Soviet Union's administrative–territorial configuration. Few other regions of the Soviet Union experienced as many re-drawings of boundaries as the North Caucasus. Strictly speaking, the creation of the Mountain ASSR in particular was actually an anomaly in this respect, since this entity was explicitly created not according to strictly ethnic criteria, but based on overarching political considerations.

The Caucasian Bureau (Kavburo), created on 8 April 1920, had a leading role in building up party cells and state institutions at all administrative levels.

The Kavburo was the plenipotentiary representation of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CC RCP (b)). Its first head was Sergo Ordzhonikidze, while his deputy was Sergei Kirov. The Kavburo had its seat at Rostov-on-Don and was responsible for implementing directives from Moscow in a region that included not only the North Caucasus (which in turn encompassed Dagestan, the Terek region, as well as the Russian- and Cossack-settled areas of the Don, Kuban and Stavropol') but also the Bolshevik-controlled areas south of the Caucasus.[17]

Initially, the idea of organising the peoples of Dagestan and the Terek within autonomous territorial units met with little enthusiasm among the local party officials. When Ordzhonikidze called the leading representatives of the executive state and party organisations of the various national districts to Vladikavkaz in order to discuss the establishment of a common republic of the peoples living in the Terek region, the vast majority of participants voted against the granting of autonomy for the non-Russian indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus after heated debate. The stated reason was the worry about stoking secessionist aspirations, since it was feared that the creation of a common autonomous republic would essentially accomplish what the various 'counterrevolutionary' forces were trying to achieve.[18]

The Bolsheviks' reasoning was precisely the opposite. The same month, the Soviet government dispatched Stalin to the North Caucasus to assess the situation on the ground and take appropriate measures. At the time, Stalin was already one of the most powerful figures within the Communist Party. However, he had not yet acquired the kind of total power he would assemble in his function as the Communist Party's secretary-general from 1922 onwards and which he would further solidify after Lenin's death in 1924. However, as the head of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs—a post that he occupied from 1917 until a few months before its dissolution in April 1924—Stalin had a crucial say in the formulation and implementation of policy vis-à-vis the non-Russian peoples of the former empire.[19]

Stalin had to act swiftly. While the Communists were still arguing over the virtues of granting the peoples of the Terek autonomy within the framework a common republic, stability in the region was threatened by a new uprising in the mountains. Having returned from exile in Georgia, Gotsinskii organised a large anti-Soviet movement in the summer of 1920 that fought under the banner of jihad to create a sharia-based state.[20] The movement, which called itself the Sharia Army of the Mountain Peoples, and by early 1921 had grown into an army of several thousand, was joined by a number of

other prestigious Dagestani sheikhs.[21] While Gotsinskii's movement was clearly inferior to the Red Army in military terms, the Bolsheviks viewed the revolt as part of a more comprehensive threat. Not only were the Soviet authorities in the North Caucasus confronted with further rebellions by Cossacks and remnants of Denikin's army; the international situation, too, seemed menacing. Specifically, as long as Georgia, at this time still controlled by a Menshevik government, remained outside of their control, the entire southern flank was unprotected. This also meant that certain potential links would remain open that could be used by Georgia and other hostile governments as well as Caucasian émigrés to support the rebels. It is telling, for instance, that even Shamil's nineteen-year-old great-grandson, Said Bek, came from Turkey to join Gotsinskii's rebels and raise the prestige of the rebellion by lending his illustrious name.[22]

In this situation, with Bolshevik rule barely extending to the mountain areas, there was also a real danger that the border regions on the southern perimeter of the North Caucasus might be tempted to align their foreign policy with that of Georgia, since they had already maintained close relations with their southern neighbour during the civil war. On 2 June 1920, during a visit to Tbilisi, Kaitmaz Alikhanov, the governor of the Avar district bordering on Georgia, sent a letter to the foreign minister of the Democratic Republic of Georgia trying to sound out the possibility of a close alliance between the approximately 300,000 Avars living in Dagestan (i.e. including those not living within the boundaries of the Avar district) with Georgia, up to and including a complete absorption as part of a territory that enjoyed autonomy from Georgia. The stated reason for his letter was the 'bloody chaos' that had been visited on his people, first by the troops of the Volunteer Army and then by the Bolsheviks, compounded by the unwillingness of the Avar population to become part of a new Russian-dominated state, no matter its ideological underpinnings.[23]

Given the threat that Gotsinskii posed to the Bolsheviks, and given the nuisance of the existence of an independent Georgian state, swift action was required. In securing power, short-term tactical considerations had to be prioritised, no matter the cost. Since the Bolshevik hold on power was still far from consolidated on the non-Russian periphery of the former tsarist empire, the leaders of the new Soviet state decided to handle the implementation of its nationalities policy 'elastically' (i.e. to adapt it to the situation on the ground), as Stalin stated in a position paper on nationalities policy in October 1920.[24] Unifying the peoples of the North Caucasus in the framework of an

independent autonomous republic, in which even Muslim law would be tolerated in the form of sharia courts, appeared to the Bolsheviks to be the best way of undermining the social basis for competing state-building projects, such as the one professed by the government-in-exile of the Mountain Republic in Tbilisi or Gotsinskii's planned Islamic theocracy. Thus, the Bolshevik state-building efforts can certainly be viewed as direct extensions of their earlier projects during the civil war.

In doing so, the Bolsheviks sought to win the loyalty of the non-Russian population at the expense of the Cossacks, as they had already done in the case of the short-lived Terek Soviet Republic in 1918. In a telegram to Lenin dated 26 October 1920, Stalin was full of admiration for the North Caucasus 'mountaineers', who had presented themselves 'in the best light' during the war and even thereafter had 'advanced, weapon in hand, against the bandits together with [Bolshevik] units'. Stalin was similarly satisfied with the work of the Kavburo. In the same report, he stated there was 'no doubt that the Kavburo and Ordzhonikidze had wisely implemented [the Bolshevik] policies by successfully binding the mountaineers to the Soviet authorities ...'[25] On the other hand, he regarded the Cossacks as enemies and reported that some settlements had received 'exemplary punishment'.[26]

Indeed, within a single year, beginning in the spring of 1920, the Soviet authorities would deport approximately 25,000 Cossacks, or one-tenth of the entire ethnic Cossack population of the Terek region, from their *stanitsy*. Among these were communities that had fought on the Bolshevik side in the civil war.[27] Specifically, these evictions targeted the Cossacks in the *stanitsy* of Sunzhenskaia, Tarskaia, Vorontsovskaia, the hamlet (*khutor*) of Tarskii and the *stanitsy* of Romanovskaia, Ermolovskaia, Semashkinskaia and Mikhailovskaia. Their land was given to Ingush and Chechen settlers.[28] In Ingushetia especially, the expulsion of the Cossacks defused the land shortage in the mountains. Many Ingush families moved from the mountains to the plain to occupy the farming and grazing lands recently vacated by Cossacks. The land transfer seems to have left a lasting impression on the Ingush, making 'Ingushetia a loyal supporter of Soviet power', as a contemporary source notes with some enthusiasm.[29] On the other hand, the transfer of Cossack land to the Chechens did not do much to alleviate their land-poverty.[30] This was because Gotsinskii's ongoing rebellion in the mountains of Chechnia prevented an organised handover of land. Only in the autumn of 1921, after the suppression of the revolt, did the first major resettlements of Chechens to the plains take place. The plots of land were too small, however, to have a

significant alleviating impact on the problem of land-poverty and to ease Chechen grievances.[31]

Even as the Red Army engaged Gotsinskii in gruelling combat, initially suffering severe losses,[32] Stalin and the Kavburo hastily prepared the creation of two new republics. Kirov was tasked with drafting a constitution for a future Soviet mountain republic. V.M. Kvirkeliia, the chairman of the executive committee (*ispolnitel'yi komitet*; *ispolkom*) of the Terek region, was tasked with calling an assembly of the peoples of the Terek for mid-November 1920 at which the proclamation of the republic was to be approved.[33] The councils of the various national districts held assemblies to elect delegates to this meeting. Around 500 delegates—one per 5,000 residents—finally met in the Vladikavkaz Theatre on 17 November 1920 to solemnly proclaim the Mountain ASSR.[34] Just four days earlier, 300 delegates from all parts of Dagestan had proclaimed the Dagestan ASSR.[35]

The main speaker at both events was Stalin, who was mainly concerned with impressing upon the delegates the significance of autonomy.[36] He affirmed that autonomy did not come with the right to secede from Russia, but was intended as a way of restoring to the peoples the liberties that the tsarist 'bloodsuckers' had stolen from them.[37] Autonomy, Stalin explained, included the right to handle their internal affairs—'within the framework of the general Russian constitution'—according to their respective lifestyles, manners and customs, among which he explicitly counted sharia, since 'Soviet power had no intention whatsoever of declaring war on sharia.'[38] The 'purpose of autonomy', he explained, was to have each ethnic group represented by 'their own people' at all levels of the administration, who would be familiar with '[their] language, [their] way of life': 'Autonomy will teach [you] to stand on your own feet—that is the aim of autonomy.'[39] Stalin made no bones about the fact that in return for autonomy, the Soviet rulers demanded unconditional loyalty and a commitment to the Soviet state at large. In view of the perceived acute threat to the Bolshevik hold on power, the people's commissar explained to the Dagestani delegates that support in the fight against Gotsinskii's forces would be seen as a vote of confidence in Soviet power, which had given them autonomy: 'If you drive out Gotsinskii, the enemy of the working people [of Dagestan], [you] will justify the trust that the highest Soviet power has placed in [you] by bestowing autonomy [on Dagestan].'[40]

The Bolsheviks also wanted to make clear that autonomy was not tantamount to re-establishing the Mountain Republic that had been

proclaimed by representatives of the North Caucasus intelligentsia in the spring of 1918. Ordzhondikidze stated as much in his speech in Vladikavkaz on 17 November 1920:

> To be sure, some of you don't even know what the autonomous Mountain Republic [i.e. the Mountain ASSR] is about, believing that people like Tsalikov, Dzhabagiev, or Kotsev can be brought back—people who always deserted you in your hour of need in the most treacherous way, who always cheated you, and who aim to deliver power not to your hands ... but their own.[41]

On 20 January 1921, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee formalised the foundation of the two new republics by decree.[42] In administrative terms, the Mountain ASSR was subdivided into six national districts (*okruga*): one each for the Ingush, the Chechens, the Ossetians, the Kabardians, the Balkars and the Karachaians. The Cossacks were split up among the various national districts; only one group, the Cossacks of the Sunzha, received a district of their own.[43] Vladikavkaz was chosen as the capital of the new republic. Groznyi, being a petroleum centre of national importance, was awarded a separate administrative status within the Mountain ASSR. While the central bureaucratic apparatus was dominated from the very start by Russians and Ossetians, its political leadership consisted in equal parts of members of the other ethnic groups. In addition to Russian, the respective indigenous vernaculars were declared official languages.[44]

The republic's leadership also abided, at least nominally, by Stalin's promise regarding sharia. At its first constituent assembly in Vladikavkaz, which took place between the end of March and beginning of April 1921, and at which the members of the republic's executive committee were elected, the Muslims once again received explicit confirmation that their right to retain sharia courts would remain intact. Moreover, the assembly also decided that all citizens of the republic, including those 'mullahs' who had distinguished themselves as 'active revolutionaries and advocates of the working masses' interests', would enjoy full suffrage.[45] This was in accord with the directives of the Soviet government, including those of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs, which urged the local authorities to abstain from repression against members of the Muslim clergy (indicating that, in practice, abuses were common), and to permit preaching in mosques or private homes.[46]

While Dagestan persisted as a separate republic, the Mountain ASSR was short-lived. The dissolution process was initiated not by Moscow, however, but from the periphery. In May 1921, the chairman of the executive

committee of the Kabardian district, Betal Edykovich Kalmykov (1893–1940), urged that the district inhabited by Kabardians be split off and made into an autonomous region (*oblast'*). He viewed the administrative ties with Vladikavkaz, with which Kabarda had 'nothing in common', as obstacles preventing successful economic and cultural development.[47]

It was no coincidence that Kalmykov should have chosen this point in time to voice his discontent. From the Bolsheviks' point of view, the security situation had seen marked improvement since the suppression of Gotsinskii's revolt and other anti-Bolshevik groups, and since the South Caucasian states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia had by now all been absorbed into the new Soviet state. In talks held within the Mountain ASSR in June 1921 about the breakaway of the Kabardian district, Kalmykov made clear that Kabarda had already aspired to become a self-sufficient autonomous territorial unit between 1918 and 1920, efforts that had been thwarted by circumstances in wartime. After the end of the war, he argued, the Kabardian delegates had only agreed to participate in the Mountain ASSR because the suggestion had been made by the centre, and because external circumstances had been unfavourable, given the situation in Georgia and the clashes with remnants of the Volunteer Army led by Vrangel'.[48]

Indeed, in the face of the acute threat it saw in the North Caucasus, the Bolshevik leadership did not take the time, nor did it have the means, to establish in advance whether these entities were even in accordance with the interests of the various peoples and their representatives. The extent to which the formation of the Mountain ASSR was driven by short-term political considerations may be gleaned from the minutes of a conversation between Stalin and the ethnic Ossetian Bolshevik Nikolai Ivanovich Dzedziev (1889–1941), who was the party secretary of the Mountain ASSR at the time. This conversation was part of discussions in the summer of 1921 over whether to split off Kabarda. While Stalin initially tried to avoid committing himself either way over the question of Kabarda's secession from the republic, he then indicated clearly that since the proclamation of the Georgian SSR on 21 February 1921, following the Red Army's conquest of Georgia, the existence of a collective autonomy in the framework of the Mountain ASSR was no longer a priority. However, the people's commissar noted: '[I]f [withdrawal] is what the workers of Kabarda want, we should grant their wish.'[49]

Thus, the change in the overall threat picture in the spring of 1921 also marked the beginning of the end for the Mountain ASSR. In terms of its

agricultural potential, Kabarda was the most important part of the republic, as well as being the largest territory in size, together with the Chechen district. Due to its central location, the Karachai district would essentially be cut off from the rest of the republic once the territory had been split off. Moreover, since the borders between the various districts had not yet been fixed and many land ownership issues between the various ethnic communities remained unresolved, the departure of Kabarda would inevitably bring conflicts over boundaries and land rights.

It was against this background that the leading party and state representatives of the Mountain ASSR initially put up a vehement defence against Kabarda's departure. They feared not only an increase of local conflicts but also a boost for separatist tendencies in the other national districts. When the Kavburo supported the Kabardian demands in the dispute, however, the matter was all but settled. Based on a report by the Kavburo, the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs recommended that Kabarda be split off—which the All-Russian Central Executive Committee confirmed by a decree of 1 September 1921. At the same time, Kabarda became an autonomous region (*avtonomnaia oblast'*; AO).[50]

Even before the formal separation, bloody conflicts broke out between individual settlements over land in the border areas of Kabarda with the Karachai district. A special Red Army unit was even despatched to separate the hostile parties. Repeated conflicts would break out over land and borders between other ethnicities, and the various arbitration commissions appointed by the centre could not always defuse them.[51] In connection with land disputes between Kabarda and its neighbours alone, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee had formed five commissions by the summer of 1923, none of which were able to complete their tasks satisfactorily. The local Communists chided Moscow for appointing commissions that were unfamiliar with the situation on the ground and therefore made mistakes in their judgements.[52]

It was not just in the matter of land rights that the secession of Kabarda came to a head. Now, the expected domino effect made itself felt. The Karachaians, the Balkars, but also the Cherkess people living in the neighbouring region of Kubano-Chernomorsk now clamoured for the creation of autonomous territories. They sent delegations to the capital to make their case directly to the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs. The commissions appointed by the People's Commissariat to deal with these matters were not opposed in principle to these people receiving autonomy.

However, they did not believe that it made sense to form autonomous territories for tiny ethnic groups. The Karachai district had about 41,500 residents in 1921, the majority of them ethnic Karachaians. The same applied to the Balkar district with its population of just 35,000. Moreover, both peoples mainly settled in mountainous terrain, and their economic survival depended on trade and commerce with the lowlands.[53]

The solution, the People's Commissariat believed, was to merge different peoples. When the All-Russian Central Executive Committee announced the departure of the Karachai district from the Mountain ASSR by a decree of 12 January 1922, the former merged with parts of the Cherkess-settled region of Kubano–Chernomorsk to form an autonomous region, which would, however, break up again in 1926 due to ethnic tensions. Four days later, the Balkars followed suit and joined with the Kabardians to form the Kabardino–Balkar AO. Here, too, inter-ethnic relations would be marked by tensions, a particularly difficult matter being the appointment of a government whose ethnic composition was accepted as fair by all sides. Even though the Kabardians accounted for a clear majority of the population, the two peoples agreed under pressure from the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs to form a fifteen-strong executive committee composed in equal parts of Kabardians, Balkars and Russians.[54]

The next step in the Mountain ASSR's dissolution was the detachment of Chechnia, which also received the status of an autonomous region on 30 November 1922. Groznyi was chosen as the seat of the Chechen government, although the city itself was separated from the republic and subordinated directly to the RSFSR as a separate administrative unit (it was only in 1929 that Groznyi was amalgamated with Chechnia into a unified administrative region).[55]

The final step was the dissolution of the Mountain ASSR's remnants. This process dragged out well into the year 1924 because Ingush and Ossetians could not agree on the partition of Vladikavkaz, which both peoples claimed for themselves. When the Mountain ASSR was formally dissolved on 7 July 1924, the mainly Russian-populated city remained the administrative centre for both Ingush and Ossetians; however, much like Groznyi, it initially constituted a distinct administrative unit that was directly subordinate to the Moscow centre. On the territory of the truncated former republic, the autonomous regions of Ossetians and Ingush were established. While Stalin was initially favourably disposed towards the unification of North Ossetia and the South Ossetians living in Georgia, he later changed his mind and opposed

a merger.[56] The Cossacks on the Sunzha kept their autonomous district until 1929, when it was allocated to Chechnia, together with Groznyi.[57]

Autonomy for the Chechens

Initially, the creation of a separate autonomous *oblast'* for the Chechens was on nobody's agenda. Unlike in Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachai, the Chechen leadership under Tashtemir El'darkhanov, the chairman of the executive committee of the Chechen national district within the Mountain ASSR, did not approach the centre in Moscow with demands for autonomy. El'darkhanov apparently believed Chechnia would be better served by remaining within the republic than by leaving it. The territory's economic development depended primarily on its link with the city of Groznyi, which was a booming industrial town with about 23,000 workers at the time.[58]

A significant part of Chechnia's budget was financed by the allocations of funds from the Grozneft' petroleum company to the Mountain ASSR. Chechnia was mainly rural in character; it had no cities of its own nor an industry that could have served as a catalyst for progress. Accordingly, the notion that Chechnia could survive as an autonomous territorial unit detached from the larger Mountain ASSR must have seemed rather fanciful.

And indeed, the representatives of the central state initially did not consider establishing a separate, autonomous Chechen territorial entity. For them, other priorities mattered, such as how to stem the growing phenomenon of banditry. After the end of the civil war, Chechnia was no more of a headache for the Bolsheviks than the other parts of the North Caucasus. Here, just as elsewhere, armed bandits prowled the land. Except in some larger communities, no regularly elected soviets had managed to establish themselves. Otherwise, however, relations between the Soviet rulers and the Chechens were seen as rather unproblematic. After all, most of the Chechens had fought with the Bolsheviks against the White forces during the war.

However, from 1922 onwards, Moscow received more and more unfavourable reports from Chechnia. Of particular concern was the fact that the Chechens were no longer only raiding Cossack settlements, as they had repeatedly done in the past. With increasing frequency, the Chechens also attacked the railway line. They killed Red Army soldiers and even targeted the petroleum infrastructure near Groznyi.[59] Frequently, Chechen militias tasked by the government of the Mountain ASSR with combating banditry would take part in these raids.[60] It was therefore unsurprising that members of the

non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus were only admitted to the Red Army under exceptional circumstances. In the spring of 1923, Moscow would even issue restrictions on recruiting members of the indigenous non-Russian populations to the local police units for fear that the weapons they were issued might find their way into bandit hands. Only individuals regarded as loyal to the Soviet state were to be admitted to the militia.[61] However, the ban on accepting Chechen militia recruits was later lifted, though the restrictions concerning the Red Army would remain in place until 1939.[62]

The secret police, too, grew increasingly alarmed over the situation in Chechnia. Karl Ivanovich Lander (1883–1937), the top representative of the security police in the North Caucasus at the time, noted in a report in early 1922 that there was increasing unrest among the 'mountaineers' who had been 'so far favourably disposed' towards the Bolsheviks, 'such as the Chechens, the Kabardians, and the Karachaians', and that the Chechens had begun to carry out attacks on the oilfields near Groznyi, 'which [had] not happened so far'.[63] This was a matter of particular concern to the correspondent because the domestic issues were compounded by the perception of a considerable external threat. Even after the conquest of Georgia, he believed Russia was threatened by its enemies, namely the Entente powers of Britain and France. These, Lander believed, were planning an 'attack on the North Caucasus' together with agents recruited from White forces and the Caucasian diaspora; to this end, he argued, they were trying to whip up anti-Soviet fervour among the Terek Cossacks and the 'mountain dwellers'.[64] Against this background, Lander felt that the entire Caucasus was on the brink of a 'catastrophe' that could only be warded off if rigorous measures were taken to control the situation.[65]

Many local Bolsheviks did not see how the establishment of an autonomous Chechen region would help alleviate this problem. On the contrary, Lander, for instance, thought the 'Soviet-type autonomists'—among whom he specifically counted Ordzhonikidze and the Kavburo representatives—were a danger to the region, because their autonomy projects played straight into the hands of the 'counterrevolutionary' forces who were working to split off the Caucasus from Russia. Lander even demanded that Ordzhonikidze be deposed and suggested an alternative approach designed to stabilise the situation in the North Caucasus and gain the loyalty of the non-Russian residents. Specifically, all of the Cossacks would have to be deported. In this way, the Soviet rulers would not only have rid themselves of a hostile population segment but at the same time they would have finally settled the Chechen demands for land. In order to suppress the influence of anti-Soviet

forces effectively, the parts of the region bordering Georgia were to be placed under direct control of the military. At the same time, 'responsible workers' would be seconded to the region to build up party and state structures. Finally, Lander recommended that the most progressive forces among the non-Russian population should be relieved of their current administrative duties and sent to the mountains for 'political work'. Their posts were to be taken up by Russians—according to Lander, this was what the 'mountaineers' themselves demanded, since they did not 'trust their own'.[66]

The Soviet leadership did not go along with Lander's suggestions. For the time being, there would be no more large-scale, systematic resettlements of Cossacks. On the contrary, during the 1920s, relations between the Soviet authorities and the Cossacks would gradually improve. The Bolsheviks allowed this minority to live in separate districts of their own, and also made symbolic concessions by allowing them to wear their national garb and to refer to their villages as *stanitsy* again.[67] But still, there was almost no active political work worth mentioning in the North Caucasus. Instead, by the autumn of 1922, the situation in Chechnia had deteriorated further. There was widespread discontent among the population over the tax in kind (*prodnalog*), which forced farmers to deliver a significant part of their crops to the state. This practice, introduced by the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1921 as part of the New Economic Policy and originally intended to replace the even harsher measure of grain confiscation by the state (*prodrazverstka*) during the period of War Communism, led to major unrest. Because some of the farmers refused this tax and the local authorities inflicted arbitrary measures on the population, unrest and bloody clashes between Chechens and Red Army soldiers followed once more.[68]

Soviet archival documents describe a situation that was seemingly out of control. For instance, during this time, self-defence units—so-called sharia regiments—seem to have been formed in Chechnia and Dagestan. These were apparently often organised along clan relations.[69] The Bolsheviks regarded this as a strengthening of the 'reactionary' elements in the village, the 'kulaks, mountebanks, and mullahs' who sought in this way to shore up their positions of power vis-à-vis the poorer parts of the population.[70] In fact, these units were probably a form of self-help. Given the absence or failure of functioning state structures and the perceived injustice of the state's interventions as manifested in the collection of taxes, society sought to help itself by establishing its own sharia-based justice system and raising armed units to protect villages and fend off bandits.

The party leadership was spurred into action. Upon the request of the local authorities, the South Eastern Bureau (Iugovostochnyi biuro; Iugovostbiuro) of the CC of the RCP (b) appointed a committee to investigate the situation in Chechnia. The South Eastern Bureau had been split off from the Kavburo in March 1921 and was headed by Anastas Mikoian. The bureau, which also had its seat in Rostov-upon-Don, existed until May 1924 and essentially took over the work of the Kavburo, which had been closed on 22 February 1922 after ceding its functions in the South Caucasus to the newly created South Caucasus *krai* committee of the RCP (b).

The South Eastern Bureau advocated a tough stance in Chechnia. In his report to the CC of the RCP (b) dated 1 October 1922, Mikoian even went beyond the demands that had also been proposed by Lander, arguing for a military approach in Chechnia. While the report also envisaged other measures such as a review of the tax in kind, Mikoian was convinced that a large-scale military operation was inevitable if the situation in Chechnia was to be normalised.[71] Not only would the armed groups have to be smashed but the population was to be disarmed. Mikoian estimated that there were still about 70,000 rifles in civilian hands. In order not to jeopardise the autumn harvest, the Red Army was to arrive in mid-November 1922 and to wrap up the operation by January or February 1923 at the latest, before the fields had to be tilled in spring.[72]

In his memoirs, which were only published much later, Mikoian noted that he had advocated a tolerant line towards the Chechens and stated his conviction that once the latter came to power, the situation would stabilise itself.[73] However, it is doubtful whether that is really what he thought at the time. In his report of 1 October 1922, at any rate, Mikoian unabashedly advocated a hard line, castigating the 'peace-loving policy' that had prevailed so far for allowing 'bandits' to get away with impunity. He explicitly blamed this policy for creating a situation that, in his opinion, threatened not just the stability of Chechnia but also that of neighbouring territories, especially Dagestan.[74]

The disarmament drive in Chechnia would indeed take place, but not until the late summer of 1925. For the time being, the political leadership chose a different approach. Based on the Mikoian report, the situation in the Mountain ASSR was debated at the meeting of the Organisational Bureau (Orgburo) on 9 November 1922. The Orgburo of the CC of the RCP (b) had been founded in 1919 and was composed of members of the Central Committee. As the leadership body of the party, it was tasked with similar

responsibilities as the Secretariat of the Central Committee and its Political Bureau (Politburo). While the Orgburo continued to exist until 1952, its importance relative to the other two boards rapidly diminished. Certain members of the Orgburo, including Stalin, were intermittently members of all three bodies.[75]

It is likely that the Bolsheviks first considered the formation of a separate autonomous Chechen region at the Orgburo session of 9 October 1922. In order to ponder the matter, the bureau decided to form a commission including Mikoian, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov (1881–1969), the supreme commander of forces in the North Caucasus Military District (Severo-Kavkazskii voennyi okrug; SKVO), and Kirov, the first secretary of the Azerbaijan CC of the RCP (b). As is evident from the minutes of the meeting, until the question of a separation had been resolved, no repressive measures against the Chechens were to be undertaken.[76]

In his memoirs, Mikoian writes that the idea of a national territory for the Chechens had been his own. Initially, we are told, he discussed it with Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinskii (1877–1926), the founder and head of the state secret police, before approaching Stalin, who proved favourably disposed towards the suggestion.[77] However, the text of the Orgburo's decision of 9 October 1922 does not include any reference to the idea having been floated by Mikoian. We are only told that at the meeting, Stalin introduced 'the new question regarding the possibility of splitting off Chechnia in the form of an autonomous region [*oblast'*]'.[78]

Presumably, it was only after this meeting that the Chechens were even consulted on the matter. On 22 October, after discussions with them, the commission introduced a list of thirteen future members of a Chechen government that was to be formed as a *revkom*, a provisional 'revolutionary committee'. Such institutions, some of which had been formed as far back as the civil war, had originally been conceived as extraordinary instruments of governance for the duration of a transition period until they were replaced by elected soviets. However, due to the difficulty of holding elections for the soviets, the *revkoms* in Chechnia remained in place, with interruptions, until the mid-1920s, sometimes in parallel with the executive committees of elected soviets.[79] In addition to El'darkhanov, who was given the chair of the *revkom*, the government included ten more Chechens, but only three Communists. Both of the non-Chechens were Communists.[80] Thus, it is likely that a large percentage of the Chechen Communists living in Chechnia at the time were integrated into the government.[81]

The minutes of the commission's meeting do not reveal whether the decision not to merge Groznyi with Chechnia led to friction with the ethnic Chechen representatives. After all, the commission's report not only called for comprehensive financial aid to Chechnia but also set out the budget for income from the oil industry at Groznyi—though the exact level of contributions was to be defined later. Also, about half of the tax in kind that had been paid to the state was to be returned to the Chechens.[82] The Orgburo accepted the commission's proposal largely unchanged and on 10 November 1922 recommended that an autonomous Chechen region be established. After the party had made its decision, the remaining proceedings were merely formalities. By decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of 20 November 1922, Chechnia was separated from the Mountain ASSR, and on 30 November 1922 it received the status of an autonomous region by decree.[83]

Why did the Bolshevik leaders change their minds? Why was no military operation carried out? Assuming that Stalin himself advocated the creation of a separate autonomous Chechnia and may indeed have been the driving force behind the idea, this decision also reflects his fundamental views regarding the nationality question. As a community of around 290,000 people living in compact areas of settlement, bound together by language, territory and a shared economic and cultural life, the Chechens fully met the requirements for attaining autonomous status.[84] Moreover, Stalin's interest in the matter should also be seen against the background of internal power struggles at the time. By promoting autonomy, he saw another opportunity to enhance the standing of the Bolsheviks and the new Soviet state, as well as his own personal reputation as chairman of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs, in the eyes of the non-Russians. Given his personal power ambitions, these factors were not insignificant. German historian Jörg Baberowski rightly notes that the integration of the non-Russian periphery was a crucial factor in Stalin's power struggle against Trotskii, Zinov'ev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Rykov. Without the support of the non-Russians, Stalin might not only have been unable to implement his concept of autonomy but might also have been defeated in his internal struggle against his adversaries.[85]

However, the debates over whether to grant autonomy were also affected by the especially difficult situation in Chechnia. Instead of embarking on a military operation, as Mikoian had recommended, which would have risked antagonising the population even more against Soviet rule and possibly galvanising further unrest, the Bolsheviks preferred to transfer responsibility

to the Chechens themselves for the time being. Accordingly, there were conditions attached to the granting of autonomy status. Paragraph seven of the 22 October 1922 commission report called directly upon the Chechen *revkom* to take all measures to ensure that 'attacks by the Chechens on Red Army members, industry assets, [and] railway lines' were stopped. Thus, autonomy also implied a clear apportioning of blame going forward, since, as the report stated, 'the Chechen *revkom* should bear responsibility for every violation of public order in autonomous Chechnia'.[86] In this way, the Bolsheviks kept themselves out of the firing line while retaining the option of denouncing the *revkom* if problems should arise.

Hardly anybody familiar with the situation in Chechnia at the time believed that the *revkom* under El'darkhanov would succeed, under its own steam, in rapidly stabilising the situation and laying the groundwork for an orderly political process as well as elections to the soviets. Within Chechen society, allegiances were still primarily owed to the families, clans and village communities as well as individual charismatic clerics. As an ethnic Chechen, El'darkhanov might have enjoyed sympathies among the population, but that did not give him the authority required to enforce the new order. Without the clergy's support, this new authority could not be established. When a delegation of the Soviet government, headed by Mikoian, travelled to the *aul* of Urus-Martan in the beginning of 1923 to deliver Moscow's decision on creating an autonomous Chechen region, this realisation ultimately prompted the delegates to ask Sheikh Ali Mitaev, one of the most influential Chechen authorities at the time, to become a member of the Chechen government.

Meeting with Ali Mitaev

On 15 January 1923, a high-ranking Soviet delegation travelled to Urus-Martan, the biggest *aul* of Chechnia. The purpose was to inform the population that Soviet power had granted the Chechens an autonomous region. Originally, the meeting was to be held in Groznyi, which was not an administrative part of the new Chechen region, but where the newly established *revkom*, the provisional government of Chechnia, had its seat. However, if the larger population was to be acquainted with Soviet power, the news had to be taken outside the confines of Groznyi, a city living largely from its oil industry and inhabited mostly by Russians, to the *auls* of the Chechen-populated countryside.[87]

The Soviet delegation was led by Anastas Mikoian, head of the South Eastern Bureau, and included Kliment Voroshilov, member of the South Eastern Bureau and commander of the North Caucasus Military District, as well as two of his deputies, Semen Budennyi and Mikhail Levandovskii. Also joining the Soviet delegates was Tashtemir El'darkhanov, one of the few indigenous Chechen Communists and head of the Chechen *revkom*, and several other members of the Chechen government. Though the Soviet delegates considered a journey to Chechnia to be a risky undertaking, they did not want to appear as a hostile power and thus refrained from bringing a military escort. They were, however, accompanied by two military bands whose musicians apparently had weapons hidden under their coats.[88]

Some 2,000 to 3,000 riders on horseback accompanied the delegation on the last section of their journey to Urus-Martan, where they were greeted by a crowd of 10,000, inhabitants of Urus-Martan as well as representatives from different Chechen *auls*.[89] The people gathered in Urus-Martan, among them a large number of village elders and religious figures, gave the Soviet delegates a friendly welcome. After the Bolsheviks and the representatives of the Chechens gave their speeches, the village elders managed to persuade their guests not to return to Groznyi but to stay overnight.[90] The atmosphere during the evening was festive, dances and plays were organised, and Budennyi, whose speech, according to Mikoian, made a most favourable impression on the Chechens, successfully performed the *lezginka*, the traditional dance of the mountaineer peoples of the Caucasus.[91]

Although the meeting with the Chechens was largely harmonious, the world the Bolsheviks encountered was far from their liking. According to Voroshilov, who described his impressions in a letter to Stalin on 21 January 1923, the 'Chechens were no better or worse than other mountaineers [*gortsy*]', yet they had more 'mullahs, sheikhs and other devilry [*chertovshchina*] than others, for example the Karachai and even the Kabardian peoples' and '[their] fanaticism, backwardness and ignorance [were] extraordinary'.[92] Voroshilov was convinced that a socialist transformation of 'mullah-dominated Chechnia' was eventually possible, but only once the Bolsheviks were able to rely on a 'cadre of efficient and loyal party workers'. As long as this was not the case, he saw no other option than to cooperate with 'mullahs and similar such misters [*mull i prochikh gospod*]'.[93] To be sure, he also greatly disliked El'darkhanov, whom he described as a 'spineless, weak-minded, stupid, and arrogant old geezer'.[94] This was a typical attitude of leading Bolsheviks towards indigenous local Communists whom they often regarded as being too

lenient and inclined to compromise, and thus not likely to enforce radical changes. Yet Voroshilov acknowledged that, for the time being, there simply was no other to rely on.[95]

Mitaev, who showed up at the meeting in Urus-Matan with a stately escort of armed men on horseback, must have made a grand impression on the Soviet delegates. In his letter to Stalin, Voroshilov calls him a 'devilishly smart and crafty man'.[96] On the same evening after the end of the meeting, the Soviet delegates asked El'darkhanov to establish contact with Mitaev through local Chechens and invite him to talks.[97] According to Mikoian's detailed description of this meeting, Mitaev, who arrived with two heavily armed bodyguards, was a 'well-proportioned [man], in Chechen dress, armed with a dagger [*kinzhal'*], a saber [*shashka*] and a pistol [*mauser*]'.[98] As he apparently did not speak any Russian, El'darkhanov served as translator. After a long discussion, the Soviet delegates offered to make Mitaev a regular member of the Chechen *revkom*, a proposal to which the young sheikh agreed.[99] On 12 April 1923, the leaders in Moscow gave their blessing and Mitaev was officially appointed a member of the Chechen government, and put in charge of guarding trains and stations from ambushes. Henceforth, a 100-strong detachment of his *murids* was paid by the Soviet government to fulfil this task.[100]

Ali Mitaev was born in the settlement of Avtury in what was later the Shalinskii district, presumably around the year 1891.[101] He went to primary school in Groznyi, and afterwards studied at an Islamic institution, where he was trained as a cleric. Besides Chechen and Arabic, he probably spoke some Russian, yet the sources differ over his proficiency in this language.[102] Ali came from an influential Chechen family. His father was none other than Sheikh Bamat Girei Khadzhi Mitaev (1838?–1914), an adherent of the famous Chechen Sheikh Kunta-Khadzhi, the founder of the Sufi brotherhood of the Qādiriyya in Chechnia. After Kunta-Khadzhi's death in Russian exile in 1867, Bamat Girei Khadzhi rose to become one of the most important leaders of the Qādiriyya. He was revered as a 'holy man', and had a large group of *murid* followers.[103] In 1912, the tsarist administration, as a punishment for the sheik's alleged support for the notorious Chechen *abrek* Zelimkhan, exiled him and six other Chechen sheikhs to inner Russia.[104] When Bamat Girei Khadzhi died in exile in Kaluga in 1914, his firstborn son Ali followed in his steps.[105] Ali not only inherited his father's *murids* but apparently reinvigorated his followers.[106] In his district, he appeared as a patron of education by having a school built in his hometown of Avtury in 1913.[107] The people of those parts of Chechnia where Mitaev wielded most influence (mostly in the Shali

and Vedeno districts) regarded him as a benefactor who 'paid out of his own pocket for schools to be built in the villages' and constructed 'bridges for passage and journey' in order to 'help the poor and backward citizens'.[108]

In his youth, Ali witnessed the repressive policy of Cossack rule. According to the autobiographical records that he is alleged to have written in prison from 1924 to 1925, he was an eyewitness to a massacre of Chechens in Gudermes in 1909 committed by Lieutenant General Verbitskii and his Cossacks.[109] It was his father's deportation in 1912, however, that must have left the deepest impression in forming a negative view of tsarist rule. After the overthrow of the tsarist regime, Mitaev would refer to this event in public speeches,[110] and also bring up this issue during his discussions with the Soviet delegates in Urus Martan.[111]

It was thus not surprising that, during the civil war period, the White generals, as representatives of the old regime, found Mitaev their bitter enemy. While Soviet historiography generally tends to downplay or conceal the role of the Muslim leaders, North Caucasian historians have sought to revise this perception as far as possible.[112] For example, Chechen historian Maskhud Zaurbekov writes in his biography of Ali Mitaev that this sheikh played a far more important role than those figures mentioned in Soviet historiography like the Communist Nikolai Gikalo, who was commander of the Red Army in the Terek region during the civil war, or Aslanbek Sheripov, whom Soviet historiography has commonly portrayed as the 'first Communist' of Chechnia.[113]

However, the comparison between Mitaev and Gikalo drawn by Zaurbekov is problematic insofar as Mitaev's interests were always focused on local issues and aimed at defending the settlements he controlled in the areas where he was influential.[114] After the outbreak of full-fledged war with the arrival of Denikin's army, Mitaev, like many other Chechen leaders, opposed Denikin in these areas, but he was hardly interested in alliances that did not align with his local interests. In his home district, however, it was Mitaev who during the turmoil of the war embodied the power that provided a 'minimum of organisation', as stated in a report of the White forces on the situation in the North Caucasus from the beginning of 1919.[115]

Ali Mitaev was an important political figure in Chechnia after the February Revolution. He was a member of the Chechen National Council elected in March 1917; he was open to new socialist ideas, and was close to similarly minded members of the council. A contemporary witness of events, Aleksandr Shliapnikov, who was sent by the Soviet government to the North Caucasus

in 1918 in his capacity as a commissar for labour, portrays Mitaev, whom he encountered during the session of the peoples of the Terek region held from 25 January to 2 February 1918 in Mozdok, as a 'convinced socialist' who gave a 'fiery speech' in favour of the revolutionary cause and was ready to stand up 'with a whip in his hand' against those Chechen 'fanatics' who wanted to do away with the Soviet delegates during the meeting.[116]

Probably as early as the beginning of 1920, discord arose between Mitaev and Gikalo, who at the time was the most important representative of the Bolsheviks in Chechnia.[117] According to Zaurbekov, Mitaev had organised a large meeting of the Chechen people in his birthplace Avtury at the end of March 1920 without previously informing Gikalo. This meeting, a normal event in Chechen political and social life, was viewed as a provocation by Gikalo. At a meeting convoked by the Bolsheviks in Groznyi a few days later, Gikalo openly accused Mitaev of being a counterrevolutionary. In his book, Zaurbekov quotes letters in which Mitaev not only vehemently contradicts Gikalo's accusations and casts himself as a stunt supporter of Soviet power but also questions Gikalo's merits in the defence of Chechnia during Denikin's rule in 1919.[118] Even though the Chechen historian's evidence is shaky (often, the cited documents lack specific archive references, or he refers to the recollections of contemporary witnesses), his statements largely concur with the impressions that Voroshilov conveyed of his meeting with Mitaev in Urus-Martan January 1923. Thus, according to Voroshilov, Mitaev himself asked the Bolshevik delegates to take measures as soon as possible to rehabilitate him completely. In doing so he 'swore to all prophets, that he had been defamed in the eyes of the Soviet power', which might indicate a quarrel between himself and Gikalo.[119]

In any case, after this rift in 1920, cooperation between Mitaev and the Bolsheviks broke down, a situation that must have been unsettling for the state security services as they feared that sheikhs like Ali Mitaev might pursue more than just local interests. This is clear from a letter sent to Stalin in early 1923 by a certain Gorodetskii, head of the Department for the Struggle against Banditry (Upravlenie po bor'be s banditizmom) within the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. It stated that Mitaev had organised another large meeting of about 1,000 people in September 1922. According to the correspondent, the basic theme discussed during the meeting was 'Chechnia's secession [from Russia] and its orientation towards Turkey'.[120] It is unclear in how far this evaluation indeed reflected Mitaev's political agenda or the writer's fears. People like Mitaev must have been suspect in the eyes of

outsiders if only for their Muslim faith. Since large gatherings of Chechens were often accompanied by mass prayers in the form of the *zikr*, this was often deemed sufficient proof of the Chechens' fanatical mind-set or pan-Islamic orientation, or even the preparation of a *gazavat*, a holy war against infidels.[121]

The mere fact that sheikhs like Mitaev could carry out mass demonstrations unhindered by any state authority must have unsettled the Bolsheviks. Subsequently, Mitaev increasingly came into the sights of the local secret police, who observed the young sheikh from as early as December 1922 under the code name of Tikhii (Quiet). Apparently, the reason why a secret investigation on Mitaev was opened was a note by the military commissioner of the 28th Mountain Division, a certain Zhivin, who claimed that Mitaev was the 'leader of the sharia and the sharia movement' in Chechnia and the 'richest, most authoritarian, and most popular of all Chechens'.[122] When Mitaev became a member of the *revkom*, the local branch of the secret police was naturally displeased. It should come as no surprise that the members of this organisation did everything in their power to bring about the sheikh's downfall.

Under the secret police's observation

Only two weeks after Mitaev's official appointment as a member of the Chechen *revkom*, a report from Sergei Mironov reached the South Eastern Bureau of the GPU in Rostov-on-Don. Within the organisation, Mironov was the head of the Eastern Department. While Voroshilov had stated unequivocally in his letter to Stalin that it would be an illusion to believe the situation in Chechnia could be influenced without the clergy, Mironov argued the exact opposite: the 'anarchy', the 'increase of banditry and religious zeal' that he claimed to have observed in Chechnia, could only be fought successfully by a determined effort to weaken sharia and its followers.[123] In order to win over the impoverished classes of peasantry in the mountain areas, land should be allocated to them, he argued. All of these measures should be implemented not by the current Chechen government, but by the Communist Party, which Mironov suggested should be built around the core of a vaguely defined 'small group of national Communists' who were to replace El'darkhanov and his close associates as soon as possible.[124]

Mironov did not provide concrete names as to who exactly was to replace El'darkhanov. Yet with Gotsinskii's rebellion beaten down, Mironov must have felt confident enough to push for a radical change, and thus remove any

figures or groups he considered a potential danger for the establishment of Soviet power. This at least is how his report is to be interpreted, when he sought to achieve maximum effect: 'Peace in the entire Caucasus depends on peace in Chechnia, and the increase in religiousness observed by us ... is extremely dangerous and indicates a tendency, vindicated by history, that any armed rising of the mountain peoples is preceded by a strong surge of religious fervour.'[125] Ali Mitaev epitomised this negatively perceived situation. Mironov claimed that Mitaev had joined forces with Sheikhs Gotsinskii, Emin Ansaltinskii and Bilo Khadzhi to form a kind of 'higher sharia council', which aimed at nothing less than the preparation of a 'holy war' against Soviet power.[126]

The report achieved its desired effect. On the same day that Mironov's letter reached Rostov-on-Don, the person in charge, Iakob Peters, forwarded the letter to the Central Committee for the attention of Stalin.[127] Under the auspices of Mironov and Efim Evdokimov, the plenipotentiary representative (*polnomochnyi predstavitel'*; PP) of the OGPU in the North Caucasus scrupulously pursued its prosecution of Ali Mitaev and compiled report after report for the attention of the regional party headquarters in Rostov-on-Don. In doing so, the secret police did not limit itself to general accusations, but took great pains to substantiate these with detailed information. After all, arguing against the inclusion of Mitaev meant going against the decision just taken by the South Eastern Bureau and approved by Moscow.

Mironov and his team essentially followed two lines of argument: on the one hand, they sought to prove that Mitaev's appointment to the *revkom* had been a mistake, since it had failed to stabilise the situation in Chechnia. One GPU report mentions '40 cases of bandit attacks on industrial compounds, the railroad, and members of the Red Army', with all these attacks allegedly being 'political in nature'.[128] Later, the secret police even claimed that Mitaev's *murids* themselves had taken part in these attacks.[129] On the other, the secret police tried to prove that Mitaev was organising a rebellion against Soviet power and was in contact with other 'counterrevolutionary forces'. Besides Gotsinskii, whom he was supposed to have met in person 'on 9 or 10 March 1923',[130] the reports mention ties to Georgian Prince Kakutsa Chelokaev (Cholokashvili, 1888–1930), a former colonel in the tsarist army who operated with his group of rebels near the border with Chechnia. Furthermore, the secret police claimed that Mitaev maintained relations with General Rogoshin, the leader of a group of Cossack rebels, with followers of the pan-Islamic party 'Ittihad Islam' (Islam united), and with Turkish and

other foreign agents. In all these schemes, the secret police officers claimed, Mitaev was only waiting for the right moment until the 'external front' against the USSR had been formed before striking.[131] Regarding the allegedly close ties between Mitaev and Gotsinskii, Mironov and Evdokimov tried to offer proof in the form of supposedly original copies of letters between the two, mentioning mutual support and supplies of weapons.[132]

To what extent have these accusations been confirmed by third parties? As far as the ambushes on the railroad and industrial compounds were concerned, they certainly must have been exaggerated. In his memoirs, Mikoian himself admits that Mitaev's appointment to the *revkom* brought about 'a certain pacification' of Chechnia.[133] This is confirmed by the other parties directly involved. For example, R.N. Sokolov, representative of the military commissioner's office in Chechnia, stated in one of his reports in July 1923 that the situation had improved considerably after Mitaev's integration into the *revkom* and 'banditry had decreased to a minimum'.[134] The native Georgian secretary of the Chechen division of the Orgburo, Asnarashvili, concurred with the assessment that after Mitaev's admittance, the assaults on railroads had been 'quickly liquidated'.[135]

While Sokolov did not mention the alleged ties between Mitaev and Gotsinskii at all, Asnarashvili described them in great detail. He must have read Mironov's report, because in his letter he agreed with him about the severe danger of a possible union of 'these two forces, the plains and the mountains'. Interestingly enough, he admitted that Mitaev was a 'most correct and faultless' person, who primarily followed his 'duties towards the state'. For example, he had delivered the 'full amount of tax in kind five months ago'. However, Asnarashvili claimed that the picture of the 'outwardly honest citizen' was deceptive, because Mitaev was 'slippery as a snake', trying to use his new position in the *revkom* to increase his influence and to make El'darkhanov dependent on him.[136] In this, Sokolov asserted, Mitaev had largely succeeded. While Mitaev was reported to act carefully under the constant observation by the secret police and had supposedly even succeeded in persuading Gotsinskii to temporarily leave Chechnia, Asnarashvili did not believe this meant that Mitaev had dissociated himself from Gotsinskii. This was, according to Asnarashvili, disproven not only by the frequent visits by Gotsinskii's followers to Mitaev but also by the fact that Mitaev, as his father before him, was a follower of pan-Islamic ideas, which Gotsinskii fundamentally shared.[137] Sokolov and Asnarashvili agreed with Mironov insofar as both called for Mitaev's removal. Unlike Mironov, however, they

advocated a different line of action by strengthening El'darkhaknov and the Chechen *revkom*.[138] Until a new generation of a 'Chechen intelligentsia' had been educated in Soviet schools, Asnarashvili argued, it was imperative to support El'darkhanov as there was no alternative, and to redirect him to his 'former course'.[139]

It is impossible to determine whether Mitaev was actually cultivating contacts with anti-Soviet rebel groups and how close these may have been. Concerning his relationship with Gotsinskii, he was probably careful enough to avoid direct contact. Not only Asnarashvili, but other reports during this time mention that Gotsinskii might have resided outside of Chechnia, maybe in Azerbaijan, from the summer of 1923 at the latest.[140] However, we cannot exclude the possibility that Mitaev met with persons close to Gotsinskii or other groups hostile to Soviet power. While Mitaev would later, during interrogation in prison, categorically deny any contacts with Georgian rebel leaders,[141] Georgian sources report such contacts that supposedly took place during the summer of 1923.[142]

If Mitaev indeed received guests who were openly opposed to the Bolsheviks, then this could be seen as an indication that he was aware of the fragility of his ties with the Soviet state and its security organs, and therefore felt he was well advised to cultivate relations with other parties, possibly in order to be able to procure support from such groups in case of a threat. The notion that Mitaev was actively pursuing plans for a rebellion, however, seems rather far-fetched. Mitaev's membership in the *revkom* was helpful insofar as he could strengthen his influence in his home district and thus further advance his goal of establishing law and order. In fact, Mitaev had told the Soviet delegates during their meeting in Urus-Martan rather bluntly that he would become a member of the *revkom* if he was able to keep his influence in his area and be able to keep his entourage of loyal supporters.[143] Against this background, it is difficult to see how he could have had an interest in threatening this position.

Mitaev's arrest and the opening of the power struggle

In the Bolshevik worldview, sheikhs like Mitaev could ultimately only be enemies to be eliminated sooner or later, especially if they commanded a power base of their own. Moreover, members of the governmental security organs had an institutional interest in presenting the situation as more threatening than it really was. The better the results, expressed in the number

of people arrested and sentenced per month, the more essential the agency made itself in the eyes of the Soviet leadership. However, even for the North Caucasus branch of the secret police, which was composed of mostly hardened Bolsheviks, veterans of the civil war, it was not easy to bring down as significant a personality as Ali Mitaev. At the beginning of the 1920s, the members of the secret police were reluctant to go into the Chechen countryside. But in Groznyi, too, it was difficult to arrest Mitaev, since he was always escorted by an armed retinue on his trips to the meetings of the *revkom*.[144]

Because Mitaev must have anticipated the possibility of being arrested by the secret police, he was alert. This was also the case on 16 April 1924, when he was in Groznyi for a meeting of the Chechen *revkom* and picked up a rumour that the secret police was trying to arrest him. He left the town that same night in order to escape detention. Since Mitaev refused to return to Groznyi afterwards, the Chechen division of the Orgburo, the extended arm of the CC of the RCP (b), ordered the head of the Chechen government, El'darkhanov, to do everything to persuade Mitaev to return to town. El'darkhanov knew that Mitaev could only be enticed to make such a move if he received assurances of safe conduct. Therefore, El'darkhanov issued a letter promising Mitaev immunity and sent him the letter via his brother, Omar Mitaev, whereupon Ali Mitaev did come to town on 18 April in order to attend the meeting of the *revkom*. The secretary of the Chechen Orgburo and the deputy representative of the local branch of the OGPU were present at the meeting as well. Both assured him that a member of the executive committee could not be arrested. However, they accused Mitaev of cowardice and reproached him that he did not know his civil rights. Apparently, Mitaev was persuaded to come to the secret police's headquarters, where he was invited under the pretext of filling in a form. When he arrived there in the company of the deputy head of the *revkom*, Zaurbek Sheripov (the brother of the famous Communist Aslanbek Sheripov), he was arrested and transferred to Rostov-on-Don on the same day.

This description of events is based on a letter sent by El'darkhanov to the party's Central Committee for the attention of Stalin on 20 May 1924.[145] El'darkhanov, who was apparently unaware of the secret police's plot to arrest Mitaev, asked Stalin for Mitaev's immediate release. El'darkhanov did not claim that Mitaev was entirely guiltless; however, he did not consider him a danger either. Despite Mitaev's 'faults and confusions', El'darkhanov argued, he had been supportive as a member of the *revkom* and had guarded the

railroad with his followers. Since Mitaev was very popular, his liquidation would only strengthen his authority and his status as a 'martyr for religion'. El'darkhanov even warned of intra-Chechen conflicts, arguing that 'according to local customs, a Chechen who [betrayed] another Chechen' would become 'subject to a blood-feud by the victim's entire clan'.[146]

El'darkhanov found himself in a particularly precarious position: he was forced to defend Mitaev's appointment to the *revkom*, but at the same time, he could not afford to give the appearance that he was overly sympathetic to Mitaev or even dependent on him for security in his region, as he wanted by all means to avoid giving the Soviet leadership an excuse for open military intervention in Chechnia. However, El'darkhanov knew that his own fate was tied to that of Mitaev. Since Mitaev had only come to town because of a letter from El'darkhanov, he was now under his personal protection. If El'darkhanov did not succeed in having Mitaev released, the secret police's perfidious action threatened to discredit not only the *revkom*'s reputation with the Chechens, but his own as well, as he complained in the letter to Stalin.[147] It was thus hardly astonishing that El'darkhanov would move heaven and earth to have Mitaev released.

Moscow did not respond to El'darkhanov's request. The Central Committee passed the case on for examination to the Politburo, which forwarded the matter to the Orgburo on the grounds that its comrades were more familiar with the case.[148] On a meeting on 4 June 1924, the members of this institution decided to 'refuse El'darkhanov's request concerning Ali Mitaev's release' and to leave the Mitaev case 'in the jurisdiction of the OGPU'.[149]

Following Mitaev's arrest, the North Caucasus branch of the secret police tried further to undermine El'darkhanov's position. In May 1924, a particularly negative report on the situation in Chechnia reached the party's North Caucasus office in Rostov-on-Don. Its authors, Mironov and Evdokimov, sketched a picture of the Chechen *revkom*, which was marked by factional infighting, corruption inside the government and the excesses of its members. It was charged that the money Chechnia received from the central government was being misapplied or even misused, which had led to a budget deficit of 400,000 roubles.[150] In a second letter, Mironov went even further, attacking El'darkhanov directly and accusing him of embezzling money for personal purposes and thus enriching his own clan.[151]

El'darkhanov, however, did not admit defeat and took the initiative himself. He was particularly fierce in his rebuttal of the claim by the secret

police that Gotsinskii and Mitaev had cultivated an active relationship and exchange of letters. In order to disprove this charge, he instigated his own investigation in the framework of the *revkom*. According to various witnesses whose statements were taken for the record, the letter that Gotsinskii had sent to Mitaev, and in which he called for a rebellion against Soviet power, was a forgery. A certain Osman Nashaev, a known forger of documents, was stated to have fabricated the seal. A group including the Chechens Kusi Baigireev (a relative of Nashaev), Maslak Ushaev[152] and Magomet Vachigov from the village of Dyshni-Veden' was said to have masterminded the plot. They had tried to give the impression that the letter from Gotsinskii had been intercepted by the group and later brought to Rostov-on-Don by Baigireev. According to witnesses, Baigireev received '15 chervontsy' (Russian gold coins), which he shared with Maslak Ushaev. Apparently, the group's scheming was only revealed because the third person involved, Magomet Vachigov, took offence after receiving only a small share of the money and started to tell people in the village about the plot.[153]

At the same time, El'darkhanov compiled numerous statements and declarations by Chechen representatives on the record, including from Mitaev's own Kunta-Khadzhi (Qādiriyya) brotherhood. The purpose of these minutes was to substantiate the huge amount of popular support for Mitaev. El'darkhanov had copies of the documents sent to the Eastern Department of the South Eastern Bureau of the OGPU as well.[154] In addition to this 'proselytisation among the population', as the secret police described El'darkhanov's activities,[155] the Chechen head of government also gave the secret police agents an immediate impression of the agitation among the Chechens when they showed up for the first All-Chechen Congress of Soviets, which took place under the chairmanship of El'darkhanov from 29 July to 2 August 1924 in Groznyi.

At this meeting, which was attended by some 400 delegates, the *revkom* was officially abolished as a form of transitional government and replaced by a regularly elected regional executive committee (*oblastnyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet; oblispolkom*).[156] Also, it was during this session that a Chechen faction of the Russian Communist Party with some fifty members was founded.[157] Although it had not been on the agenda up to this point, the case of Ali Mitaev became one of the major subjects of the meeting. Numerous speakers demanded that the Mitaev brothers (besides Ali, his brother Omar had been arrested by the secret police as well) be released from detention. Confronted with these demands, Mikoian, who appeared as the main speaker

on the first day of the meeting, promised to communicate the Chechens' demand to the responsible authorities. He also tried to calm the crowd by stating that the conditions of Mitaev's detention were much better than those of other prisoners. At the same time, he made it understood that the secret police had made the arrest and that the case was outside his area of jurisdiction.[158]

Evdokimov also took part in the meeting in Groznyi and must have noted how strongly Mitaev's arrest had stirred up the population.[159] Despite all the efforts of his department, it seemed that the case of Mitaev might even strengthen El'darkhanov's position. It was possibly during this very meeting that Evdokimov became even more determined not only to remove El'darkhanov from power but to have Mitaev physically eliminated as well.[160] Thus, the secret police continued to collect incriminating material against Mitaev. By the autumn, they had developed the charges to the point where, in a letter of 28 November 1924, they could state that shooting Ali Mitaev was an absolute necessity. The execution, they claimed, would deal a blow to the 'reactionary sharia counterrevolution of the entire North Caucasus' and would stem the threat emanating from the 'Mitaev sect'.[161] However, the representatives of the secret police also noted that if Mitaev were executed, acts of revenge against themselves and against El'darkhanov would have to be expected.[162]

Accordingly, the secret police aimed to avoid having the case heard in open court, and had this evaluation confirmed by the North Caucasus *prokuratura*, the public prosecutor's office. In fact, the *prokuratura* also came to the conclusion that Mitaev's execution might lead not only to blood vengeance but to an increase in banditry. Therefore, a public trial of the case was not recommended.[163] The Bolshevik party leadership must have agreed to this request, because the case did subsequently remain in the hands of the secret police. The members of its highest committee, the OGPU-Collegium in Moscow, however, initially refused the request of their colleagues in the North Caucasus. On 19 January 1925, they sentenced Ali Mitaev to ten years' detention. It was probably shortly thereafter that Mitaev was transferred from Rostov-on-Don to a prison in Moscow.[164]

The documents do not clarify why Mitaev was left alive. Maybe the fear of acts of revenge by followers of Mitaev actually discouraged the secret police from taking this step. If we believe the explanations in a report by the Bolshevik writer Aleksei Kosterin, who visited Ali Mitaev's birthplace Avtury at the beginning of July 1924, tensions ran high among the local population.

The *murids* with whom Kosterin talked were apparently ready to take revenge if Mitaev was killed. They were honour bound to do so by their oath of allegiance to Mitaev.[165]

During this period, petitions were signed at village assemblies in numerous Chechen settlements for the brothers' liberation or for the reduction of their sentences. Apart from one, which was addressed to Mikoian directly and signed by the wives of the Mitaev brothers,[166] these petitions were issued in the form of the respective village councils' resolutions or presented as the minutes of the village council meetings and accredited with a seal of the secretary of the Chechen government. Because all these documents were written during the same period of time, between 22 and 28 April 1925, and because these petitions show a great similarity in wording (up to literal repetitions of whole paragraphs), it can be assumed that the whole activity was centrally coordinated and orchestrated. The only possible instigator appears to have been the Chechen government under El'darkhanov. Documents to this effect are available for sixteen settlements in the districts of Vedeno, Shali, Urus-Martan and Novo-Chechenskii, which points to Mitaev's popularity among the population.[167]

Disarming Chechnia

On the whole, the situation in Chechnia was strained in the months after Mitaev's arrest, but not quite as dramatically as the reports by the secret police might make us believe. For instance, the assaults on the railroad, after increasing initially, noticeably decreased again from the second half of 1924, apparently after Mikoian, who had travelled to Chechnia for this specific purpose, had again tasked an armed Chechen unit led by a 'former leader of a band' with guarding the railroad.[168] Also, the fight against banditry in general reportedly made huge progress. According to Mikoian, up to '500 bandits' had been arrested, and many bandit leaders had surrendered.[169] In an unpublished dictation (*diktovka*) of August 1971, Mikoian declares: '[I]t seems to me that he [Feliks Dzerzhinskii, the head of the secret police] and the leading figures of the ChK [Cheka] are exaggerating the danger of assaults on the trains [in Chechnia]. Because at this point, they stopped.'[170]

One reason why the secret police was unwilling to adjust its negative view of Chechnia in any way may have been the fact that, in the meantime, the notion of conducting a large disarmament campaign in Chechnia had taken hold among the Soviet leaders.[171] Chechnia was still heavily armed up until

this point, and the Bolsheviks had already conducted limited disarmament operations as early as the spring of 1924 in reaction to disturbances during elections to the soviets.[172] The major disarmament campaign, however, was conducted only in the late summer of 1925. Altogether, about 7,000 men, including Red Army troops and armed units of the OGPU, were involved in the operation, which started on 23 or 25 August 1925. Their procedure was the same in each case: they surrounded the settlement in question and called on the inhabitants to surrender their weapons. If the people did not follow the order, the army had the villages shelled, including with airplanes and heavy artillery in some cases. According to a report by the North Caucasus army staff, 25,299 guns, 4,319 revolvers, one machine gun and about 80,000 rounds of ammunition were confiscated during the two-week operation.[173] While the Chechens managed to hide some of their weapons and ammunition, the army probably succeeded in confiscating most of the Chechen arsenal in the course of the operation.[174]

A key aim of the operation was to arrest leading members of rebel bands. At the beginning of September, a group of the army discovered Gotsinskii in the area of Sharoevskii, and called on the local population to surrender the wanted person. To apply pressure, the soldiers apparently took forty elders as hostages. When the population did not comply with the demand, the army had the settlements of the area shelled for two days. Only after that, on 5 September 1925, did Gotsinskii surrender, apparently a broken and critically ill man, who did not offer any resistance to his arrest.[175] The extent of Gotsinskii's authority became obvious on the journey to Groznyi, when according to Mikoian's unpublished memoirs, 'the Chechen religious population' threw themselves at his feet and kissed his clothes.[176] This was probably one reason why Gotsinskii was transferred to Rostov-on-Don immediately and was sentenced to death by decree of the OGPU of the North Caucasus *krai* on 15 October 1925. Together with him, his sixteen-year-old son, two of his daughters and further members of the family were executed as well.[177] Apart from Gotsinskii, other sheikhs and band leaders were executed in the process of the operation.[178]

The military intervention was not considered an act of punishment, and accordingly, the losses were kept within a limit. In their report, the army command listed only five dead and nine wounded members of the Red Army and the secret police. Six civilians were listed killed and thirty wounded by artillery fire. Twelve rebels were killed and 300 persons arrested, 105 of whom were allegedly shot shortly afterwards.[179] The secret police mentioned higher

numbers in their report; according to its records, 800 persons were arrested, of whom 115 were shot (as of 12 October 1924).[180] Five members of the secret police, among them Mironov, received the prestigious 'Order of the Red Banner' (Orden Krasnogo Znameni) for their achievements in arresting Gotsinskii and other 'counterrevolutionaries' during the disarmament campaign.[181]

Since the danger of an armed rebellion appeared to have been averted at this point, the representatives of the secret police now apparently saw the option of physically eliminating Mitaev in a different light. Based on new charges submitted by the headquarters of the OGPU to their colleagues in Moscow, the OGPU-Collegium rescinded its former resolution. On 26 October 1925, it decided to have Ali Mitaev shot.[182]

In parallel to the disarmament action and the liquidation of rebel leaders, the Chechen government experienced political upheavals. Not only was El'darkhanov deposed from office on 27 September 1925 but two other representatives of the government, Zaurbek Sheripov and Abas Gaisumov, were also forced to step down, suggesting that the Soviet party leadership was determined to make a fresh start in Chechnia.[183] Chechen Communist Daud Arsanukaev was appointed new chairman of the Chechen government, having served as a member of this institution up until this point.[184]

The end of illusion: Bolshevik policy in the Muslim periphery

Mikoian refers to the co-option of Ali Mitaev in his memoirs as an 'experiment', which was ultimately unsuccessful because Mitaev remained essentially 'hostile to Soviet power' and played a 'double game'.[185] To be sure, the 'experiment' failed not because of Mitaev's allegedly anti-Soviet activities, but because the Bolsheviks never seriously intended to share power with such a figure in the first place. In fact, it was precisely during the time of Mitaev's appointment as a member of the *revkom* that overall Soviet policy started to shift and became markedly less flexible regarding cooperation with Muslims.

After the Red Army managed to put down the Gotsinskii-rebellion in the North Caucasus by the spring of 1921, and the Basmachi armed movement by mid-1922, the Bolsheviks' hold on power, although still fragile, was not seriously threatened by any third force. Thus, to people like Evdokimov or Mironov it must have appeared odd to seek the cooperation of a Chechen sheikh precisely at a time when the Bolshevik grip on power seemed stronger than ever before. In fact, the Bolshevik leadership itself signalled that it would

take a tougher line when it had the well-known Tatar Communist Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev (1892–1940), one of the most outspoken representatives of co-existence between socialism and Islam, and a supporter of a united 'Turkestan', arrested in May 1923.[186] Possibly spurred by this arrest, Moscow also sought to weaken the strong clerical establishment in Soviet Central Asia when the Central Asia Bureau of the Communist Party initiated extensive purges of party and state organisations in Bukhara.[187]

The actions of the local branches of the secret police in the North Caucasus, crude as they might have appeared, were thus ultimately in line with the overall strategy to further cement the Bolsheviks' hold on power by cleansing government and party structures of 'undesirable elements'. The contradictory views regarding the inclusion of Mitaev in the *revkom*, which manifested themselves mainly between the representatives of the South Eastern Bureau and the North Caucasus branch of the secret police, were thus never over strategy but tactics.

Precarious, in this respect, was the position of indigenous national Communists who were oftentimes caught between the fronts. Although these were convinced Bolsheviks, many of them advocated co-existence between Islam and socialism. For example, Sultanbek Kodzhdanov, the deputy first secretary of the Turkestan Communist Party, argued during a large session of delegates from the national regions and republics held in Moscow in June 1923 that going against religion would only play into the hands of those who condemned the Bolshevik Sovietisation attempts as a new colonial project. He considered Islam 'a very good thing' that was to be used as a civilising force in order to tie the people to the Soviet cause and counter anti-Soviet tendencies.[188] Moreover, as his comrade from Bukhara, Faisulla Khodzhaev, explained during the same meeting, restoring sharia courts or returning confiscated *waqf* property to the mosques were means to restore functioning societal structures in light of the almost total absence of Soviet state structures.[189] Like Sultan-Galiev, all of these national Communists would ultimately be removed from power.

What eventually brought about the fall of El'darkhanov in Chechnia was not so much that he, like other national Communists, was viewed with suspicion and at times even outright hostility by some of the leading Bolsheviks in the North Caucasus region, but his entanglement with the Mitaev case. Instead of clearly distancing himself from Mitaev after the latter's arrest, El'darkhanov tried to mobilise Chechen society for his concerns. In this, he seems to have been only moderately successful, however, as numerous

Chechen Islamic authorities, especially in the mountain regions, apparently never regarded themselves as followers of Mitaev (or, consequently, of El'darkhanov) and reportedly even offered the Soviet authorities their active armed support against these 'counterrevolutionary' forces.[190]

Despite the drama surrounding the case of Mitaev and the subsequent political upheaval, the intervention of the Bolsheviks in Chechnia ultimately remained selective. The removal of El'darkhanov in the mid-1920s did not yet mark the beginning of arrests and executions of national Communists on a mass basis. This would take place at a later time, when a whole generation of Russian and non-Russian Communist leaders was wiped out during the Stalinist purges of 1937/8. Not insignificant in this respect is the fact that El'darkhanov, after his removal from power, was not arrested, but received a new administrative function in the newly formed committee of the Communist Party of the North Caucasus *krai* (Kavkraikom) in Rostov-on-Don. In 1929, he returned to Groznyi to take on an executive position in the oil company Grozneft'. On 14 November 1934, El'darkhanov died after a short illness.[191]

Also, the disarmament campaign of 1925, heavy-handed though it may have been, was an operation with clearly defined military and political aims, and should not be seen as a prelude to 'genocide', an attempt to carry out a concerted and systematic annihilation of the Chechen people and their heritage, as some Chechen (and Western) historians claim.[192] Disarmament campaigns were not confined to Chechnia. Similar operations had been carried out in other places, for example in Karachai–Cherkessia in 1921/2,[193] or in different areas of Azerbaijan during 1923–6.[194] After the military action in Chechnia, disarmament drives were also carried out in North Ossetia and Ingushetia in the autumn of 1925 and in Dagestan in September 1926.[195] However, it was only towards the end of the 1920s that the Bolsheviks, in parallel with their collectivisation campaign, started their all-out onslaught on religion and tradition, which continued throughout the 1930s, when the sharia and *adat* courts were officially prohibited, numerous Islamic schools and mosques were forcefully closed, *waqf* was nationalised and thousands of members of the Muslim clergy throughout the USSR were exiled, imprisoned or shot.[196]

In terms of securing their hold on power, the first half of the 1920s may be regarded as a distinct historical epoch in that it not only encompassed the rise and fall of the Mountain ASSR and the creation of new national regions but also marked the period when the Bolsheviks succeeded in largely eliminating

potential military threats including the remaining, fairly large rebel groups in the North Caucasus and other Muslim-dominated areas of Central Asia. At the same time, they secured their power internally through disarmament drives and the elimination of alternative societal powerbrokers. To be sure, however, the heavy-handed intervention of the Bolsheviks in the political affairs of Chechnia did not yet mark a reversal of Soviet nationality policy, but demonstrated the limits of the freedom that the Bolsheviks had solemnly promised the Chechens and other non-Russian peoples as part of their autonomy in the early 1920s.

6

STATE AND SOCIETY

In the early 1920s, the city of Groznyi was the seat of two governments. On the left bank of the River Sunzha was the government building of the Russian-dominated municipal administration, which was responsible for life within the city and the surrounding industrial estates. On the right bank was the seat of the government of the Chechen autonomous region, a body controlled by an ethnic Chechen majority. The river marked more than just a physical boundary; it also symbolised the parallel existence of two worlds that, despite their immediate proximity, hardly ever intersected. The workers of Groznyi consisted almost entirely of Russian and other ethnic Slavs. Only a small number of Chechen labourers, who often lived in precarious conditions on the edge of town, were admitted to work at the state-owned petroleum enterprise Grozneft' or for guard and security duties in the industrial installations. Otherwise, the Chechens occupied the vast hinterland, with the great majority of them employed in agriculture and hardly participating in the changing economic and cultural life of the city. Moreover, not only was the countryside cut off from the urban modernisation processes; the reach of the state's power hardly extended to the rural areas. The Chechen government, based in Groznyi, ruled a space that it did not control and represented a society whose laws and rules were a far cry from Soviet expectations of modernisation.

The disarmament campaigns and the wave of arrests that the North Caucasus experienced during the mid-1920s were the actions of a weak state

striving for control. But these measures were also intended to create the conditions for overcoming the vast divide between state and society. The state was to gain access to society in order to be able to initiate transformation according to the socialist vision of modernisation. As elsewhere in the countryside, elected soviets were to replace archaic structures based on village elders and village assemblies. The new institutions were to be staffed with representatives of the poorer peasant classes who would displace the representatives of the clergy and the more prosperous farmers. Soviet schools would replace religious ones, and Muslim institutions would give way to secular bodies. People were to be recruited to work in the urban factories as a way of extracting them from their familiar environments and re-educating them to think and act socialist. In the countryside, the first attempts were made to establish *kolkhozy*, collective farms.

In order to assuage suspicions among the non-Russian indigenous population that the Sovietisation campaign was a thinly disguised colonisation programme steered by a Russian-dominated centre,[1] the reshuffle was to be guided by the policy of *korenizatsiia*. This required targeted promotion of members of the respective 'titular nation', the people after whom the ethnically defined territory in question had been named. Not outsiders, but locals from the respective non-Russian ethnic groups were to permeate as many areas as possible of political, societal, cultural and economic life in their respective autonomous territories. This policy was by no means an end unto itself, but was justified in the Bolsheviks' theoretical discourse by the need to create nations as a necessary interim stage in the transition to socialism. The Bolsheviks identified the nation as the ideal format for transmitting the substance of socialism. In this connection, they especially emphasised the promotion of the various national languages under the policy of *korenizatsiia*.[2] The Bolsheviks were convinced that the ideas of socialism could only be fully understood when transmitted in the languages of the respective peoples. For the vernacular languages themselves, which often lacked an alphabet, they chose Latin letters to distinguish them from Cyrillic writing, which epitomised tsarism (it would not be until the 1930s that the Soviet leadership returned to systematic use of Cyrillic script throughout the Soviet Union).[3]

This was a highly ambitious undertaking. At the time, social reality in the Muslim-populated parts of the North Caucasus was further removed from the Bolshevik ideas of societal transformation than in almost any other part of Soviet Russia. For instance, Chechnia had not just the highest illiteracy rate of all the North Caucasus administrative–territorial units but also the lowest

degree of industrialisation and above-average poverty rates. Much like in Dagestan, religion and clerical authority were still important factors in Chechnia, even after the wave of arrests that ensued as part of the disarmament drive and the pushback against sharia law in public life. Despite the appearance of change, these transformations were often adapted to the realities of village life. For example, elections to the soviets were finally held in Chechnia and other parts of the North Caucasus. Nevertheless, the traditional societal structures of councils of elders and village assemblies often remained in place. They determined matters of societal and political life. The village and family ties protected individuals from the reach of state security organs and helped them elude the Soviet judiciary. The Muslim clergy maintained a social system that was largely independent of official state structures. It supported the socially disadvantaged and funded Muslim schools.

The Bolsheviks were also mistaken in thinking that socialist transformation would meet with greater acceptance among the population if it was backed by members of the non-Russian 'titular nations', as anticipated under the policy of *korenizatsiia*. Chechen society in particular did not look to a superior state authority for guidance, but was still primarily oriented towards the village community with their council of elders, and the clan. At lower administrative levels, the members of the state and the Communist Party organs could only gain the trust of the population if they adapted to societal conditions and the existing traditions to a certain degree. In this early stage of Soviet history, it often seemed as though it was not the state that shaped the transformational processes in society, but rather that society conditioned the behaviour of a state that was, at this stage, generally still treading quite warily compared with the brutality of the collectivisation campaign starting in the late 1920s.

For the first time since the Russian conquest in the nineteenth century, the indigenous populations of the North Caucasus were confronted with the claims of a state authority that was not content with submission and loyalty, but aimed for a comprehensive transformation in which it demanded that all should take part. This chapter will trace how people perceived this claim and how they reacted to it. It highlights the various strategies of domination with which the state aimed to gain access to society. The policy of *korenizatsiia* and its manifold implications will be discussed, as will the attempts to bridge the divide between the city and the countryside by various campaigns and administrative rearrangements. The difficult relationship between Groznyi and Chechnia illustrates the problem of this Bolshevik modernisation drive particularly well. Again, the situation in 1920s Chechnia will be portrayed as

exemplified in the specific fate of an individual—this time, using the case of Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov.

Dilemmas of Sovietisation

For many people in the North Caucasus, 'the Bolsheviks' were no more than an abstract notion.[4] During the 1920s, most of the population hardly came into contact with them. The new power had only a sporadic presence in the countryside, mostly in the shape of state security officials, members of the military or party inspectors; occasionally, representatives of the tax authorities also made an appearance. It would be comparatively rare for the heads of the next-higher levels of the administration, the individual districts (singular *okrug*, later *raion*) of the region or the regional (*oblast'*) level itself, to pay visits to the villages. As late as the end of the 1920s, there were *auls* in the more remote mountain valleys where no government agent had ever ventured.[5] And where they did show up, they often could not make themselves understood; there were no interpreters to translate into the respective languages, and texts could not be reproduced for lack of typewriters using the new Latin characters. Colourful propaganda posters forwarded by the regional party centre at Rostov-on-Don to the local organs adorned the walls of municipal offices, but nobody could read them.[6] The circulars sent by the regional governments to the local administrations suffered a similar fate. Usually, they were consigned to the wastepaper basket.[7] Even years after the start of Sovietisation, core texts of Marxism–Leninism and important party documents had not yet been translated.[8] It often took a long time before key decisions relating to the affairs of a given territory were published. For instance, after the CC of the VKP (b)* had passed a resolution on Dagestan on 4 March 1927, it was a full year before the text was published in *Krasnyi Dagestan*, the republic's official party organ.[9] Dissemination of information was also delayed by the fact that the country remained underdeveloped in terms of telephone and telegraph links, while written communications by mail often only reached their recipients in remote areas after long delays, owing to the bad tracks and roads. Many mountain *auls* were very difficult to reach even at the end of the 1920s, and in winter, they were sometimes completely isolated from the outside world for weeks or months at a time.[10]

* In 1925, the RCP (b) was renamed as 'All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)' (Vsesoiuznaia kommunisticheskaia partiia (bol'shevikov); VKP (b)).

However, the lack of infrastructure and language skills was not the only obstacle to communication between state and society; there was also a fundamental misunderstanding when it came to the aims and goals of Soviet state-building efforts. The Chechens and other peoples of the North Caucasus did not perceive themselves as subjugated peoples, but as allies and equals who had fought side by side with the Bolsheviks against Denikin. The way they conceptualised their relations with the new Soviet state was essentially predicated on the notion of a partnership between equals. They expected to be rewarded for their loyalty and believed they could end their alliance with the external power if it no longer suited their interests. After all, it was the Bolsheviks themselves who had created such expectations as part of their propaganda about the freedom and equality of peoples during the times of revolutions and civil war. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks had a conception of the state that foresaw much more than a loose alliance. Their attempts to communicate these ideas initially met with sheer incomprehension.

This must have been Mikhail Kalinin's experience on 16 May 1923 when, as head of state of the newly created USSR, he visited the Chechen *aul* of Urus-Martan with a delegation of other high-ranking Soviet officials. The Chechens' mood was agitated. Their expectations of being rewarded for their support and of a better life had not been fulfilled despite the granting of autonomy. They therefore used the meeting at Urus-Martan mainly to express their displeasure and submit demands. For instance, a certain Bis-Sultan Dokaev complained that, in the war, the Chechens had 'defended Soviet power and shed their blood for it'.[11] He continued:

> [M]any lost their best sons, their *auls* were destroyed. For this support, the young representatives of the Soviet state had declared that once the counterrevolution had been suppressed, they would supply them with factories and all the goods required for Chechen life. ... [B]ut the Soviet authorities have so far failed to fulfil the promises that their young representatives made. As a representative of the poor population, I will state openly that we have reached such levels of hardship that we lack all means and cannot continue to exist.[12]

Other speakers called upon the Soviet representatives finally to hand over all Cossack lands to them and to resettle the remaining Cossack communities. Kalinin's rejoinder that there were only around 6,000 Cossacks remaining in Chechnia anyway, and that displacing them would hardly contribute substantially to the problem of land scarcity, was dismissed.[13] They also rejected charges of banditry with which the Soviet delegates confronted the

Chechens. A certain Ata Shantukaev went so far as to blame Soviet power for the Chechens' predations against the Cossacks and their neighbours, arguing that they had not offered enough support to the Chechens and had thus forced them to engage in such behaviour.[14]

Kliment Voroshilov, who was travelling in Kalinin's entourage, had little sympathy for the Chechens' demands. He explained to those in attendance that nobody had promised it would rain 'mountains of gold' upon the creation of autonomy, which at this time was only three-and-a-half months old; rather, the Chechens should be grateful that they were now in charge of their own affairs within their territory. They now had a 'pure-blooded' Chechen government, he added, which they ought to support. They should work to advance the common good and support each other, said Voroshilov, adding: 'Happiness—that means work.'[15] Kalinin also demanded that the Chechens now begin to help 'the people who govern here'.[16] At the same time, he tried to make clear that the state would demand more than just loyalty from the population. For Kalinin, it was 'not enough' that the Chechens were prepared to die for the Soviet cause. He requested cooperation on a 'permanent basis'.[17] Kalinin rejected the option that 'Chechnia would be fully independent', arguing that 'in that case, starting tomorrow, the European imperialist states would want to conquer [the Chechens]'. He went on: '[T]herefore, every Chechen must not only be a citizen of his Chechnia, but also a citizen of his Soviet Federation.'[18]

The Soviet representatives not only demanded that the Chechens henceforth regard themselves as members of the new Soviet state and contribute actively to its development; they also demanded acceptance of a state concept that was alien to the Chechens in its current form. If the Soviet representatives stated that the Chechens ought to support a government that would be 'familiar' with the population and 'speak [their] language',[19] they assumed a degree of national unity among the Chechens that simply did not exist at that point, and expected the population to approve a superior authority made up of indigenous agents whom they had not elected.[20] The Chechens present at the meeting in Urus-Martan did not openly criticise El'darkhanov. But this did not mean that the Chechens had accepted El'darkhanov's authority or recognised the Chechen government as a superordinate authority for all Chechens. El'darkhanov was familiar with affairs in Chechnia and understood that he could not even assert such a claim with respect to the Chechens. In view of the divergent interests of the various communities and clans, he could only hope for a compromise and offer his

services as a mediator in case of conflicts. While Moscow may have viewed El'darkhanov as the official representative of Chechnia, from the standpoint of Chechen society, he was primarily a member of a specific clan whose interests he was bound to defend, but which also served as a power base for consolidating his own position. Of secondary importance was his role as a representative of the Chechen people, who never viewed him and his administration as their leaders, but at best as advocates of their concerns vis-à-vis third parties. Accordingly, the population gauged his societal authority in terms of how far he actually managed to advance the causes of the various societal groups.

It was with good reason, therefore, that many regarded El'darkhanov and his government as weak.[21] This weakness was visible for all to see when El'darkhanov failed in his attempt to get Mitaev released and had to watch helplessly as the Red Army and the armed branches of the intelligence services intervened militarily in Chechnia in the late summer of 1925. When the Chechen government decided at its meeting on 25 September 1925 to depose El'darkhanov, Sergei Mironov, who was representing the OGPU at the meeting, stated that the Chechen leadership had 'no connection with the popular masses' and was therefore also to blame for the Red Army's intervention.[22] Mironov's statement could hardly have been more cynical, since he and his agency had used every opportunity to undermine El'darkhanov's position. However, the lack of identification between the population and their chairman may be seen in the fact that El'darkhanov's deposition apparently did not cause any notable protests—in sharp contrast with the outrage that had ensued upon the arrest of Mitaev, who enjoyed a great deal of respect in the community due to his lineage and status as the son of a famous sheikh.

Indigenous agents of state power like El'darkhanov thus found themselves caught in a dilemma. Though they themselves were steadfast adherents of social-revolutionary ideas, they could hardly make the necessary changes by themselves, lacking both the authority and the means to do so. If they did not wish to squander what remained of the population's trust, they could hardly afford to crack down on existing traditions and lifestyles. For society specifically expected its representatives to protect their internal liberties against external interference. This was especially true for the domain of religious life. In Chechnia, but especially in deeply religious Dagestan, it was not unusual for party members at the lower administrative levels to visit mosques, to marry in secret according to religious rites or even to have several

wives. As late as 1927, it is reported that in certain parts of Dagestan, between 60 and 70 per cent of party members regularly visited mosques, which strictly speaking should have gotten them banned from party membership.[23]

If the indigenous office-holders did not wish to fall from favour with the party leadership, they had to demonstrate accomplishments. Hence, in Chechnia, like in other parts of the North Caucasus, the regional governments preferred to engage in politics from the safety of the city instead of seeking direct encounters with society in the rural areas. The government authorities engaged in pointless activities for the sake of looking busy. The members of the soviets at the district or regional levels met for meetings, passed decisions, formulated instructions and discussed how to alleviate the existing situation. In the minutes of their meetings and reports that they sent to the next higher administrative level, they sought to present the kind of picture that would please their superiors. Any problems in the establishment of infrastructure and Soviet institutions were attributed by the local authorities to severe underdevelopment, for which they blamed the legacy of the tsarist 'yoke'; or they complained that they were not receiving sufficient funds from Rostov-on-Don or Moscow to step up the pace of their modernisation projects. The soviet district chairmen who were part of the Chechen regional government also preferred to commute between their respective district centres and the regional capital rather than keeping an eye on matters affecting the villages in their own districts. Though the Chechen government in July 1928 issued instructions for the local district provosts to spend at least five days a month in the countryside, not much changed.[24]

The authorities in Rostov-on-Don and Moscow were fully aware that great expenditures were required in the projects to modernise the underdeveloped North Caucasus. But the reorganisation that the Bolsheviks had in mind was not only a question of tight budgets; it was also linked to the policy of *korenizatsiia* itself. Not only was the local skilled workforce too small to allow modernisation without external support but the indigenous population was also reluctant to be involved in projects that exposed them from the beginning to the risk of becoming unpopular among the broader population or which they could not carry out due to entanglement with their own family ties. In the 1920s, there were certainly also some successful examples of interaction between *korenizatsiia* and economic growth; one model of success was Karelia in the far north of Russia.[25] But especially on the southern, predominantly Muslim perimeter of the former Russian Empire, developments lagged far behind, and accordingly, the Bolshevik leadership's policy on nationalities met

with more and more criticism in Moscow political circles. It was not only 'revolutionary impatience' that was working against the policy of *korenizatsiia*, however. There was also an increasing awareness that Soviet power could only endure if it was held together by firm top-down political control. Autonomy was thus pitted from the start against a centralist tendency that found its institutional expression in the establishment of a hierarchically organised 'dual' power system in which each level of state structure was complemented with organs controlled by the Communist Party. It was believed that the overarching goals of modernisation could only be achieved if political power was concentrated in a single place and if planning, production and the allocation of resources were coordinated centrally.[26]

And indeed, especially in the notoriously restless North Caucasus, the Bolsheviks were careful from the start not to delegate too much power to the local level. Notably, in these non-Russian areas, outsiders frequently occupied leading positions not only in the regional party organisations but also in the organs of state. This was especially true for Chechnia, where the party cadres aimed for tight control over the Communist Party of Chechnia. Already in December 1923, the party's South Eastern Bureau at Rostov-on Don had decided to relieve El'darkhanov as party chairman of Chechnia and replaced him with Magomed Alievich Eneev (1897–1928), a Communist and ethnic Balkar. He in turn would be deposed in September 1925 and replaced again with a non-Chechen, the ethnic Abkhaz Efrem Alekseevich Eshba (1893–1939), who remained in charge of party organisation in Chechnia for two years. On the other hand, the party secretaries in the individual Chechen districts were mostly locals, while their deputies were often Russians.[27] Another distinct feature in Chechnia was that, ever since El'darkhanov's dismissal, it was no longer a Chechen, but always an outsider who was appointed to the position of the deputy head of government. Conversely, the fact that a Caucasian, Georgii Ioanisiani from Georgia, was selected for this post recalls a phenomenon already widespread in the North Caucasus during the tsarist era of choosing not Russians, but members of other Caucasian ethnic groups for influential positions.

While in other, non-Russian territories, the Bolsheviks also sought to achieve a balance of locals and external actors, the Chechen case was special in the sense that the job of regional party chairman, effectively the most influential position within this territory, would always remain occupied by a non-Chechen until as late as 1989. In most other non-Russian regions and republics, members of the titular nations usually carried out this function—

while their deputies were mostly outsiders.[28] Under Soviet rule, just as during the tsarist era, the apparatus of state power in Dagestan was much more strongly dominated by representatives of indigenous ethnicities than in Chechnia.

In this way, the Bolsheviks tried to build a system of control that would give them access via various channels to developments on the periphery. Moreover, this system was to ensure that local power was never concentrated in the hands of a single institution or person, but was always divided among multiple agencies. This artificial rivalry was to enable mutual surveillance and control. The centre of power also aimed for fairly frequent rotation of the outsiders occupying these posts, presumably to prevent them from developing sympathies for the local population. However, this ultimately had the opposite effect of inciting distrust; at the lower levels of administration, this could result in state bodies dominated by locals turning against the outsider-controlled organisations and trying to exclude these from their activities.

Probably the most important institution through which the authorities of the central state tried directly to influence the course of events on the North Caucasus periphery was the secret police. In Chechnia, the local branch of the secret police was always headed by a non-Chechen, and most members of this department were also members of ethnicities other than Chechens. And it is here that representatives of the centre diagnosed a 'troubled' relationship: for instance, it is reported that in the individual districts of Chechnia, the local OGPU representatives were not even admitted to *ispolkom* meetings, although they were nominally members of these local government organs. For instance, in the district of Shali, the local OGPU agent, a man by the name of Savenko, was not invited to the *ispolkom* meeting of 6 July 1928, even though a party commission led from Rostov-on-Don had already pre-emptively cautioned the district chairman on this matter.

In general, however the party organisations and the Komsomol, the Communist Party's youth organisation, seem to have interfered little with the work of the state authorities in the districts and villages. According to the report of an inspector from Rostov-on-Don, their existence was largely an 'isolated' one.[29] A campaign carried out under the Chechen government's leadership in the same year to examine the role of the party's activist collective in around 10 per cent of all villages revealed that the party members did not participate sufficiently in political affairs.[30] However, considering that there were only about 400 Chechen Communists in 1928, they also simply lacked the necessary resources.[31]

Through massive arrests and disarmament campaigns, Bolshevik power was unchallenged by the mid-1920s. Yet Sovietisation was still in its infancy. While, formally, Soviet institutions were established, this did not yet lead to changes in the local balance of power, ways of life or societal structures. On the contrary, at this early stage, such state-building processes led not to an overthrow of the existing order in the countryside, but rather to a consolidation of that order.

Village life between stasis and change

Rural communities proved to be remarkably resilient against external interference. In many North Caucasian *auls*, but especially in Chechnia, Ingushetia and the mountain areas of Dagestan, it was still the clans and the village communities with their leaders and elders who formed the bedrock of societal structure. The latter were mostly identical with the power brokers of the pre-1917 era. The leaders of each community met to organise life at the local level. They determined the distribution and allocation of land and mediated in disputes within a village or between villages according to the customary code of *adat*. Mainly, however, their job as head of a community was to offer protection of their individual members in case of an emergency. The community not only guaranteed material assistance in case of bad harvests, fire or cattle perishing; it also defended each individual in blood-feuds with another clan or from prosecution by state authorities.

The elections to the local soviets, first held on a large scale in Chechnia after the disarmament drive between 1925 and 1926, did not change much in terms of the societal roles of the elders and the village community. From the Bolsheviks' point of view, the result of this first regular election was sobering: apparently, less than 40 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls. The electoral rules of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which excluded 'anti-Soviet elements' from the election—particularly targeting the clergy and former members of the White movement—were frequently circumvented. Although the election commission excluded 1,102 people from the polls, a number of individuals were elected to soviets and chairmanships in the villages and districts who were undesirable from the central authorities' point of view.[32] When these first elections were repeated later in the year 1927, the results were not much better. Voter turnout was only marginally higher, and although four times as many voters were excluded from the polls this time (4,173 or 2.8 per cent of the electorate), from the viewpoint of the

party inspectors in Rostov-on-Don, the Soviet administrative apparatus was still badly 'contaminated' with 'anti-Soviet elements'.[33]

In other parts of the Caucasus, too, hundreds of voters were struck off the rolls, while the authorities complained of low turnout and violations of the electoral guidelines. But nowhere else did the situation appear as grave to them as in Chechnia.[34] This was despite the fact that the election results were rarely reflected accurately in the social composition of the delegates. For the Bolsheviks, elections were a success when as many members of the 'underclasses' as possible were elected. In the city, these were working-class people; in the countryside, they were the *bedniaki*, which the Bolsheviks defined to include those farmers who had no more than one head of cattle and little or no land of their own, or who were tenants of richer farmers. The Bolshevik nomenclature also listed the middle-sized farmers, the so-called *seredniaki* (a 'middle peasant', i.e. an average wealthy peasant, in the Bolshevik economic categorisation), who owned several heads of cattle and simple agricultural machinery; and finally, there was the category of 'wealthy [singular *zazhitochnyi*] and kulak farmers', which encompassed farmers with their own homestead, farm hands and cattle-breeding facilities. At this point, there was no reliable information as to who would be in which category, how land ownership would be distributed and how exactly these interdependencies among farmers would play out. Some of the data on ownership in the country harkened back to the year 1864.[35] The farmers themselves often had little reason to disclose their real assets and possessions and reported figures for their possessions of land titles and cattle that were much smaller than what they really owned, in order to reduce their state tax burden. Especially in the mountain areas, where verification by the authorities was difficult, it was not unusual for farmers to report a property of 1.5 to 2 *desiatins* when in reality they owned up to ten times as much land.[36] When considering election results, the local state authorities also had little interest in supplying accurate numbers; after all, their standing with their superiors improved in line with the number of *bedniaki* they could report among their newly installed soviets. In this connection, the secret police noted in a report in the spring of 1928 that the authorities had reported a 67 per cent share of *bedniaki* within the Soviet apparatus at the 1927 elections in Chechnia, while later research had shown that the real share stood at 59 per cent.[37]

The party's central office at Rostov-on-Don also regarded the Chechen authorities' statements with suspicion. A commission tasked with shedding light on the situation in Chechnia and the work of the responsible local

authorities sought to gain a more precise picture, specifically regarding the social composition of the elected deputies. To this end, it reviewed the results in two Chechen districts, the Itum-Kalinskii and the Shalinskii. Its report, published in early August 1928, showed that about 20 per cent of the elected representatives in the village councils, and about the same percentage again of the members of the *ispolkom*, the council's executive committees, consisted of individuals in the category of 'wealthy farmers and kulaks'. The *seredniaki* accounted for about one-quarter of the deputies, while about 40 per cent were *bedniaki*. The small remainder were farm labourers and salaried employees. The rich and middle-class farmers eclipsed the poor ones even more conspicuously at the district level, where the former accounted for four-fifths of the deputies.[38]

The relatively high-level of representation of poor farmers in the local soviets often distorted perceptions of their real position within the hierarchy of power. Because many of them were dependent on the richer farmers who leased land to them, they found themselves forced to take their interests into account; in the words of a secret police report, the 'kulaks' engaged 'in politics by means of the *bedniaki*'.[39] In many cases, these farmers were 'mouthpieces for the village authorities', as Jörg Baberowski has also noted regarding the situation in Azerbaijan.[40] Moreover, in Chechnia, but also in other non-Russian-populated areas of the Caucasus, it was customary for the population to elect their own family and clan members to the councils, while simultaneously trying to exclude members of other groups. Especially during elections, conflicts sometimes broke out in the villages. While the responsible authorities tried in their external communications to frame these disagreements as 'class struggle', they were actually conflicts over power and influence between hostile clans. Everything hinged on the composition of electoral commissions in the respective villages and districts, which issued lists of people barred from voting. A 1928 secret police report asserted that many electoral commissions in the national areas of the North Caucasus, 'especially in Chechnia, in Kabarda, and in Ossetia', were riddled with 'kulaks' and anti-Soviet elements who had abused their positions on a massive scale. For instance, in some villages of Kabarda, it seems that 24 per cent of all eligible voters had been struck off the rolls as 'anti-Soviet elements'. The secret police believed this was just a pretext for the true reasons: divorces, family disputes or simply 'personal payback'. On the other hand, the secret police registered hundreds of cases where electoral commissions had allowed 'Muslim clerics and kulaks' to vote.[41]

It was also not uncommon for the village chief to secure the chairmanship of the newly appointed village soviet directly, or for the newly elected chairmen to continue to take their cues from the decisions handed down by village assemblies and councils of elders. For even after the elections, true power resided with the popular village assemblies and elders, who usually convened at the mosque after Friday prayers to discuss important matters. The decisions made at these meetings sometimes had long-term effects on the course of Sovietisation. For instance, they determined whether a community should support the construction of a Soviet school and send its children there, or whether young men were to be sent to work on a canal or a road. The decisions handed down by these assemblies were frequently adopted and issued in 'official' format by the village soviets.[42] It was usually the literate Russians who, being able to read and write, were charged with taking notes and recording decisions; serving as secretaries or deputies, they had mostly technical responsibilities, but they also ensured that the Soviet apparatus was able to function formally at all in the countryside (in some mountain *auls*, however, this was not the case). According to a report commissioned by the party headquarters of the North Caucasus *krai*, in 1928, up to 90 per cent of the secretaries of the village soviets were Russians.[43]

Frequently, in the larger settlements, the entire Soviet apparatus was controlled by a single clan. What exactly was understood by the term 'clan' is mostly left unstated in the Soviet documents of the period. They employ the rather general term *rod*, a Russian word referring to an extended family; however, they never explicitly use the words *teip* or *tukhum*, which might indicate that the external reporting authorities, at least, were not familiar with these concepts at the time. This does not mean, however, that the word *rod* was never used to describe people who were in fact members of a *teip*. Significantly, the term *teip* begins to appear more frequently in Soviet documents of the late 1930s, when Moscow started to pay more attention to developments in the North Caucasus, and in Chechnia in particular. This suggests that, at least among the Chechens themselves, the term *teip* was in general use.[44]

A contemporary source tells us that in 1927, in the *aul* of Vedeno, it was the Zeikhanskii clan that largely pulled the strings and excluded outsiders from political life. Thus, the local party secretary, who hailed from Azerbaijan and had no clan base of his own, had no way of shaping the course of political events in the *aul*.[45] At the same time, members of certain clans might try to exploit their positions in the public service or in the party for their own benefit—as seems to have been the case, for instance, with the chair of the

Chechen Komsomol movement, which had its seat in Groznyi. When the 1927 elections to soviets in Chechnia had to be repeated, he tried to fill all of the positions in the election office with relatives and allies by leveraging his family connections in the *aul* of Shatoi.[46]

This tendency at the political level could also be observed when it came to economic life in rural areas. When Chechnia reported the establishment of the first collective farms, it seems that these organisational forms were in reality often only chosen to secure government loans. Frequently, the agricultural collectives were farmed exclusively by members of one or two clans, which meant that the entire property controlled by members of one clan would henceforth be declared a *kolkhoz*, while the distribution of land and management would in most cases be handled just as before.[47] Accordingly, there seems to have been hopeless confusion over how many *kolkhozy* and cooperatives had even been established in Chechnia during the 1920s (that is, before the start of total collectivisation in 1929/30). Some of the numbers cited by the various authorities differ vastly in scale.[48] A statement by the Chechen government, which claimed in its report on activities for March 1927 to October 1928 that the total number of collectively operated enterprises had increased from twenty-six in October 1926 to fifty-six in May 1928, does not seem very plausible.[49]

The great importance of religion, too, was initially undiminished by Sovietisation. The Muslim clerics had an active societal role in the village and were represented at village assemblies. Although the Soviet leadership stepped up its pressure on the clergy in the second half of the 1920s, the state officials in the North Caucasus acted with great restraint when it came to enforcing anti-religious policy measures.[50] This was probably the reason why, for example, as late as 1928, there were reportedly still around forty 'sects' in Chechnia, grouped around sheikhs and their respective retinues and comprising several tens of thousands of *murids* in total.[51] Moreover, Chechnia boasted 675 public mosques, and there may have been over 2,000 small mosques in city quarters located in the private houses of elders.[52]

The influence of religion could also be seen in the field of education. In accordance with the Soviet constitution, in which the principle of separation of state and church was codified, teaching Muslim dogmas in secular schools was not permitted. However, a May 1924 directive from the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs explicitly permitted Islamic schools in 'parts of Turkestan inhabited by Uzbeks, as well as in Chechnia, Dagestan, and Adzhiristan'.[53]

Even in the second half of the 1920s, Islamic schools were not explicitly banned; however, the Bolsheviks tried to cut them off from their economic basis and to establish competitive Soviet schools that would ultimately consign them to irrelevance. Initially, they were not successful. A study commissioned by the party central office at Rostov-on-Don states that while there were 105 secular schools with over 6,000 students in Chechnia in 1928 (with girls being visibly underrepresented, since their families would often forbid them to go to school due to traditional thinking), there were at least 180 Arabic schools in which about 3,000 pupils were enrolled.[54] A secret police report gives even more dramatic figures: for example, it says that the Arabic schools in Chechnia had gained much ground compared with the Soviet ones during the course of 1927; the number of Qur'an students, it claims, had grown from 3,000 to 5,000, while pupils were abandoning the Soviet schools in droves.[55]

Only in Dagestan was the relationship between Arabic and Soviet schools more extreme than in Chechnia: as late as 1927, up to 40,000 Qur'an students were reportedly enrolled, compared with 24,000 pupils at secular schools.[56] That the increase in secular schools coincided with a rise in the number of Islamic schools seems to have been no coincidence, since the clerics often specifically chose the locations where Soviet schools were being built to establish their own Islamic schools. In this competition for students during the 1920s, it was often the religious schools that prevailed, thanks to financial support from the community at large. For instance, a Soviet intelligence report for the year 1927 reports that, in the Dagestani district of Khasaviurt, only a handful of the fifty students enrolled at the Soviet school actually attended classes, while the *madrassa* had sixty students.[57]

Often, the division between religious and secular schools was not as clear-cut as the party would have liked. The question of which school a student attended depended, first of all, on availability. If a village had both types of schools, it was not uncommon for a student to visit the secular and the Muslim school in parallel or to spend some of his study time at the Arabic school and some at the state-run institution. Among the faculty, too, the boundary between these two educational spheres could fluctuate. Due to the shortage of local instructors and teachers as well as the absence of a broad-based, youthful, social-revolutionary national intelligentsia, the problem from the start was that the forces employed for reshaping society were still largely part of the world they were charged with abolishing. Arabic scholars from the religious schools were given crash courses and retrained to avoid having to

compensate for the teacher shortage with an inflow of Russians. Of the 252 instructors teaching at all of the government educational institutions in Chechnia in 1928, 127 were Russians, eleven were members of other ethnic groups and 114 were Chechens. Reportedly, three-quarters of the Chechen teachers had originally been trained at Islamic schools. In some cases, Chechen teachers continued teaching at the Islamic school when classes at the Soviet school were over.[58]

The great importance of the Muslim clergy and of religion was not limited to spiritual and political life, but was also important for material life. Just as the elders levied fees within their communities to ensure the common welfare, the requirement for *zakat* (Arabic: *zakāt*, 'purity') and the waqf (Arabic *waqf*, 'endowment') gave Muslim clerics access to resources whose total sum, in terms of financial assets, sometimes exceeded the government's entire tax revenue. The *zakat*, or alms tax, was a mandatory Qur'anic obligation. Each Muslim was to contribute one-fortieth of his annual income from trade and business to the mosque, which distributed the funds among the poor, the needy and single women, but also used it to finance projects such as Islamic schools. For owners of large estates and cattle breeders, the share might be even higher.[59] *Waqf*, on the other hand, was a direct disbursement to the mosque; not on a regular basis, but as a one-time remittance. Usually, it was not money, but material assets such as landholdings, farms or buildings that were transferred. In the most general sense, *waqf* can be understood as a type of private endowment from whose revenues certain undertakings, such as the establishment of schools, support for the poor or construction of bridges, could be financed.[60]

In view of the widespread destruction and poverty in the wake of the Russian Civil War, the Bolsheviks were initially prepared to make certain allowances for these traditional societal institutions in the North Caucasus. While the people were also receiving aid from outside, it was nowhere near enough to alleviate conditions in the region, which were sometimes terrible. Instead of banning *zakat* or *waqf*—thus raising the spectre of rebellion, as the Bolsheviks had experienced after a similar attempt in the early 1920s in the Central Asian part of the Soviet Union—they wanted to use these institutions for their own purposes, if possible. In the North Caucasus, for instance, they tried to use the so-called Committees for Farmers' Social Mutual Assistance (singular Komitet krest'ianskoi obshchestvennoi vzaimopomoshchi; KKOV), which had been formed back in 1921 as a way of alleviating the social conditions of poor farmers, to persuade the Muslim population to transfer

their *zakat* dues to these committees instead of the mosques. In a few cases, the authorities succeeded; for example, in Kabarda, large *zakat* contributions to the KKOV in 1924 made it possible to purchase agricultural machinery and to extend aid to poor farmers. In the case of Chechnia, however, this attempt largely failed.[61] As late as 1931, a Soviet report on Chechnia refers to the 'fight against *zakat*'.[62]

The Bolsheviks also faced a difficult situation in Dagestan, where *zakat* and *waqf* were initially tolerated as well. When the Orgburo, under the leadership of Viacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (1890–1986), met with leading Dagestani politicians in March 1927 to discuss various contentious issues concerning a resolution on Dagestan, much of the discussion revolved around the issue of *zakat*. The head of Dagestan's government, Nazhmuddin Samurskii, asserted that 'irrespective of which decision [they made], the religious population [would] continue to bring *zakat* to the mosque'. Since any measure to suppress *zakat* would be seen as anti-religious propaganda by the population, the comrades in Dagestan were not yet prepared to act against this institution.[63] Therefore, Samurskii urged restraint rather than banning *zakat*, as some outsiders occasionally demanded. Instead, attempts should be made to redirect these funds towards the KKOV. This would not only weaken the clergy but also generate huge new revenues for the state; after all, as Samurskii pointed out, the *zakat* payments were equal to around two-thirds of Dagestan's tax revenue.[64]

Molotov and the other Orgburo members were manifestly reluctant to support a religious institution.[65] Finally, however, they supported the motion of their Dagestani comrades to allow *zakat* to continue at least for a transition period, while redirecting the income to the KKOV fund wherever possible.[66] Yet in the end, the Central Committee decided to hand over *waqf*—and thus, all endowments under the control of mosques—to the KKOV completely. Decisions on the abolition of *waqf* had already been made earlier.[67] But it was only after the Central Committee's decision that the state made an earnest effort to implement these measures. By November 1927, the intelligence service in Dagestan had confiscated around 7,000 *desiatins* of *waqf* land, forty-two mills, eighty-eight houses and five *madrassas*. Moreover, the secret police destroyed numerous *waqf* libraries that were associated with the mosques.[68] By 1930, all of the mosques' *waqf* property throughout the Soviet Union had been fully nationalised.[69] By banning this institution, the authorities had also deprived the Islamic schools of an important economic basis.[70]

From the viewpoint of the party inspectors sent from Rostov-on-Don or from Moscow, Sovietisation may have been inadequate and fallen short of the Bolshevik leadership's expectations. However, from the point of view of ordinary people, things looked different. The creation of Soviet institutions and the passing of new regulations and laws presented the people and the communities with new challenges—and required them to react adequately. Societal responses to these innovations were driven by a variety of motivations; however, quite often, what influenced the behaviour of people were pragmatic and often quite banal reasons. For instance, the OGPU believed that the reason why many young Chechens displayed a particular interest in joining the Komsomol just after the disarmament drive of 1925 was that they hoped that membership in this Communist organisation would help them get permission to bear arms again.[71] While there may certainly have been other, and indeed more honourable reasons why individuals wanted to join the party or government service, it is also certain that people hoped it would improve their own situation and their standing in society—or, in the words of one Chechen who aspired (without success) to join the local secret police, they sought a position they could use as a means to 'get even with certain people'.[72]

Though communities occasionally adopted an openly hostile stance towards the state's reform efforts, this did not necessarily imply hostility towards Soviet power as such, but might have resulted from the simple fact that people were familiar with their own trusted institutions and saw no reason to abolish them. For village communities in the North Caucasus were largely self-regulating social organisms. Nevertheless, one would be mistaken to view the rural community as some kind of idyll. The strong sense of community that was the most noticeable trait among peoples such as the Chechens, the Ingush or the mountain communities of Dagestan was not just an asset, but also an Achilles' heel, as it preserved archaic traditions such as blood-feuds or forced marriages of female minors. Some vendettas and conflicts over land were decades old and sometimes so convoluted that they seemed insoluble for all parties involved and created a burden on the community at large.

In the villages, the wealthier farmers had an important function. They were responsible for the smooth operation of the entire village economy; they gave the poorer farmers urgently needed loans for procurements; and they also had land available for lease. It is reported that in the remote mountain districts of Itum-Kalinskii and Shalinskii, at the end of the 1920s, half of the population was dependent on about twenty wealthy farmers, each of whom owned several

thousand head of cattle.[73] However, the situation of the poorer farmers also made them susceptible to exploitation. Their condition became especially precarious if they were new arrivals who, though they may have moved to a given area forty or fifty years earlier, were still categorised as 'temporarily settlers'. Since they did not belong to the local clans, they had no vote at village assemblies. Neither did they own any land; instead, they often had to lease it at unfavourable rates from the wealthier farmers.[74]

The strong clan or family ties could be an advantage for the members of one's own clan, but disadvantageous to others, for instance if a member of a given clan tried to use his official position only to enforce the interests of his own clan and allies. In the Novo-Chechenskii district, for example, the head of the financial department, a certain Korotaev, reportedly exempted a large number of his relatives from tax duties. The head of the village soviet in the *aul* of Staro-Sunzhenskoe, one Khasuev, who was himself regarded as a wealthy farmer, purportedly exempted the local mullahs, the elders and his own relatives from taxation and made up the shortfall in revenue by imposing additional duties on the ordinary farmers. Although the Chechen government was informed of both these cases, it did not intervene decisively, but only issued stern warnings to the perpetrators.[75]

In view of this state of affairs, it should come as no surprise that the grievances submitted by the population to the higher authorities concerned not just the arbitrary interventions of the secret police but also complaints about their own local elites.[76] For instance, in the autumn of 1928, two letters were received by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in Moscow that had been composed on behalf of several representatives of Chechen settlements in the Shatoiskii district. In one of them, the Chechens complained about the difficult situation that had arisen over the activities of their village provost, a certain Daud Bamatgireev. He had been appointed to this position by El'darkhanov, who was apparently related to him, and had managed to hold on to it ever since thanks to his family connections, despite complaints over maladministration and accusations of vote-rigging and misappropriation of funds. Since the Chechens' complaints had fallen on deaf ears with the local authorities and courts, they now turned to Moscow 'hoping that [they would] finally be heard'.[77] In the other letter, the senders complained about the arbitrary behaviour of the local authorities, who among other misdeeds had conscripted unfit individuals, including children and elderly citizens, for forced labour in road construction. They also noted that due to the obligation to help with road works, there had not been enough

people available to harvest the corn in time.[78] These Chechens, too, complained that family connections were preventing the individual from obtaining justice, since 'where there [were] family members, the law [was] silent and traditional customs [prevailed]'.[79]

The commission appointed by the Rostov-on-Don party centre on Moscow's instructions confirmed the accusations against Bamatgireev, who was subsequently removed from office. As far as the Chechen government and Rostov-on-Don were concerned, that was the end of the matter. However, at least for the correspondent who was monitoring and reporting on the case on behalf of the Moscow-based All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the question remained whether the members of the Shatoevskii district government, many of whom were related to one another as well as to Bamatgireev, had not become complicit in the affair, as they had protected Bamatgireev and obviously attempted to cover up his malfeasance.[80] In the second case, the commission found no fundamental violation of the law; it found that the complaints had been submitted by wealthy farmers who hoped thus to avoid work assignments or having to pay a 21 rouble fee in lieu of labour. However, the commission admitted it had found one case of infringement where a disabled person had been compelled to serve on work duty.[81]

The community could offer its members protection and aid. However, it could also become a source of coercion for any individual who did not submit to the decisions of the collective or accept the lifestyle and way of thinking prescribed by the community—or for those who belonged to a disadvantaged social group. As the example of the two Chechen complaints shows, individuals who sought help from local courts and authorities often found their efforts were in vain. While they might turn to a higher authority in Rostov-on-Don or address themselves directly to Moscow, this was often a very protracted and laborious procedure that would not necessarily be successful. Sometimes, the only alternative was to move away from the village altogether, and this option was increasingly considered by the younger generation. In the summer of 1923, a Chechen youth named Abdurakhman, who would later adopt the surname Avtorkhanov, chose this path for himself. The circumstances of his flight from his native village and his experiences in the city of Groznyi in the early 1920s, which he describes in detail in his published memoirs, give an idea of how the situation at the time appeared from an individual perspective.

The town–country divide: the case of Abkurakhman

In the West, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov acquired a reputation as a historian and author. His writings, published during the Cold War under the pen name of 'Aleksandr Uralov' (or 'Alexandre Ouralov'), were extremely critical of the Soviet regime.[82] In these as well as his later publications, however, Avtorkhanov failed to disclose that he himself had been a beneficiary of the Communist system, which he and many others had initially welcomed: in his youth, he had enjoyed a secular education, and in the late 1920s/early 1930s, with an official mandate from the Chechen government, he had compiled two short treatises on Chechen history, in which he glorifies the accomplishments of the October Revolution.[83] He was a member of the Communist Party, occupied high-ranking positions in Chechnia and in 1937 acquired a university degree from the prestigious Institute of Red Professors (Institut krasnoi professury; IKP) in Moscow.[84] It was only after he—like many other Soviet citizens—had come into conflict with the system in the late 1930s, was arrested and incarcerated, and finally managed, after the outbreak of war, to flee across the front to the Germans in 1942, that his outlook changed; and with it, also his view of the past, which he would henceforth interpret in a new way. However, at least as far as the early 1920s are concerned, his memoirs are of great value. Published in 1983 and only available in Russian, their reception in the Western literature so far has been scant.[85]

Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov's exact date of birth is unknown. He himself states in his autobiography that he was born 'God knows when exactly approximately between 1908 and 1910' in the Chechen village of Lakha Nevrii (Nizhnii Naur in Russian).[86] His great-grandfather, we are told, had fought against General Ermolov, while Avtorkhanov recalls his grandfather as a 'peaceful Chechen' who had even enjoyed an education that allowed him to read Russian newspapers and books.[87]

Avtorkhanov fled his native village when he was about fourteen years old,[88] driven by curiosity and the lack of options available. The immediate cause, though, was his expulsion from the *madrassa* by the local mullah, who had discovered his young Qur'an student secretly reading secular books in Russian. Avtorkhanov was able to read Russian because he had initially attended the Soviet school in his village. However, as only five grades were taught there, he apparently had no other choice than to continue his training at the Arabic school in the same village. In his memoirs, Avtorkhanov tells us that his father, despite beating him upon hearing of his expulsion, was secretly pleased to be

able to use his son for daily work on the fields and tending to the cattle. Avtorkhanov, however, finding himself deprived of any prospects for further education, saw the city as the only place where he had a real future.[89]

As the journey to Groznyi was far and not always safe, he persuaded his friend Mumad, about six years his elder, to accompany him. After two days' journey on foot, they reached the petroleum industry complex at Starye Promysly, which impressed the two runaways, not least because of its electric lighting.[90] Avtorkhanov called this chapter of his memoirs 'Flight from Home' (*Pobeg iz domu*), most likely because he had undertaken his journey to the city without his father's consent and thus against his wishes.[91] Once he had arrived at Groznyi, a return to his village was out of the question. In order to be admitted to Chechnia's only boarding school, which only accepted orphans, he not only claimed that he had been orphaned by his father's death; acting on the advice of Mumad, who accompanied him to the school, he even went so far as to supply a false surname: 'Avtorkhan' was not his father's, but his grandfather's name. According to the memoirs, the school principal was none other than the Chechen Ibragim Chulikov, of civil war fame, who put this down as 'Avtorkhanov' in accordance with the usual spelling convention in Russian.[92]

The passage shows that this young Chechen apparently only gained entry into a new world because he had broken off contact with his father and thus with his own immediate past. For Avtorkhanov himself, it was the beginning of a long education and professional career that would take him to the Communist Party, to various positions in the regional government apparatus of Chechnia, and also to Moscow. However, Avtorkhanov would remain largely insulated from the reality of Chechnia's rural life during his entire period of political activity.

Initially, however, Abdurakhman's and Mumad's experience upon arriving in the new world of the city was probably typical for that of many Chechens: they were immediately detained at the police station. Because they had completed the last stage of their journey from Starye Promysly to Groznyi by train, but without tickets, they were arrested by the railway police and put in prison. Mumad was even deprived of his revolver, 'which for him amounted to confiscation of half his life'.[93] Since Mumad spoke no Russian, Avtorkhanov was engaged as translator in the court proceedings against his friend. According to his recollections, the authorities mistreated Mumad during interrogation. To them, Mumad—a young, uneducated and armed Chechen—must have been the embodiment of the typical Chechen bandit.

Accordingly, they tried to get him to confess to which criminal organisation he belonged. The interrogation concluded with Mumad physically attacking the police officers, whereupon he was taken to a separate cell.[94]

When the pair appeared before the bench once more a few days later, they faced another judge who explained that they were to be released. The judge had received an attestation from the executive committee of their home district stating that the two were no criminals. According to Avtorkhanov, the previous judge had been disbarred for his insulting behaviour towards 'the Chechen people'.[95] Mumad even received his gun back. At their release, the judge pointed out that they could turn to a municipal institution created for members of non-Russian indigenous Caucasian peoples, the 'House of the Mountaineer' (Dom gortsa), where they would receive aid. Soon, Mumad's 'new friends' helped him to join the cavalry squadron stationed near Groznyi. Avtorkhanov was allowed to remain with him until he had settled down in the city himself.[96]

It is uncertain whether all this happened exactly in the way described. It is, however, possible. After all, Avtorkhanov's journey to Groznyi occurred at a time when the Bolshevik leadership began actively to promote members of the individual non-Russian ethnicities and to clamp down on ill-treatment of certain ethnic groups. People such as the judge mentioned by Avtorkhanov were themselves pilloried in the rush of *korenizatsiia* efforts under the Bolshevik slogan of 'combat great-power chauvinism' (Lenin).[97] Thus, the first judge in Avtorkhanov's memoirs could be regarded as representative of a tendency that was opposed to this policy on nationalities. Accordingly, Avtorkhanov explained that the judge's disbarment had been brought about by the 'Chechen "autonomous" government lodging a protest with the municipal leaders of Groznyi against the official's chauvinism', whereupon the latter had apparently preferred to replace the judge. Avtorkhanov was convinced that this was also one of the reasons why he and Mumad had ultimately been released.[98]

Tensions between Russians and Chechens and between town and countryside did in fact exist, and Avtorkhanov's arrival in Groznyi coincided precisely with the period in which the Bolsheviks aimed to defuse this situation by means of propaganda. For instance, the Groznyi party section responsible for agitation and propaganda (Agitprop) organised festivities in November 1923 on the sixth anniversary of the October Revolution under the motto 'Union [*smychka*[99]] with Chechnia and the countryside.'[100] In this context, the party sent thirty Russian workers as representatives of the city to

various Chechen *auls*, while it invited the Chechens to come to Groznyi to attend the dedication of a memorial in honour of Chechen revolutionary Aslanbek Sheripov, who had fallen in combat against Denikin in 1919. According to the Agitprop report later sent to Moscow, 'several thousand people' attended the unveiling of the monument, including Chechen government representatives from Groznyi, Sheripov's family, and young Chechen Komsomol members.[101] Probably with good reason, the author of the report remained vague on the exact number of Chechens in attendance. One can only surmise as to how many of Sheripov's relatives and members of the Chechen Communist Party and government apparatus were present for the occasion. The Chechen Komsomol organisation, at any rate, had just twenty-two members at this point in time.[102]

It is impossible to tell whether the responsible party cadres in Groznyi were really making a serious effort to improve relations between the Chechens and the mainly ethnic Russian workers of the city, or whether their aim was rather to present Moscow with a report that cast them in a favourable light. At any rate, their actions had little notable effect. In reality, the situation was marked by mutual distrust and deep-seated biases, ethnic tensions and discrimination against Chechens both within the city and in the oil industry outside of Groznyi. The Chechens complained about the Russian-dominated police and their rough treatment of Chechen traders trying to sell their wares on the markets of Groznyi, random arrests, arrogant behaviour on the part of the municipal authorities towards Chechens and the generally miserable conditions of Chechen factory workers, who often lived in squalor on the edge of town and had to walk long distances to their plants.[103] During one of the many re-drawings of administrative borders, the Chechen territory was allocated land near Groznyi where Russian factory workers lived. These, fearing that their settlements would soon be populated by 'Chechen mullahs and bandits', reportedly not only refused the Chechens residence but did not allow a single Chechen to enter their residential quarters, as the OGPU noted in a situation report for the month of October 1925.[104] During this time, fights and clashes along ethnic lines were frequent occasions, and not limited to the Chechens and Russians in and around Groznyi. Often, Russians working in the state and party apparatus of Chechen rural settlements were treated with hostility by the population. In other parts of the North Caucasus, too, the secret police reported ethnic tensions. Occasionally, a single incident had the potential to touch off mass brawls between members of the respective ethnic groups.[105]

For the Chechens, Groznyi was not just important as an administrative centre and a market for trading goods. It was also the city from which Chechnia's cultural development was to proceed. Here were schools for Chechen children and institutes of higher education, but also printing shops where schoolbooks in the Chechen language could be published. With its industry, Groznyi was essentially the only place at the time where Chechens could earn a living outside of agriculture. The city itself, however, with a population already burgeoning due to the increasing importance of the oil industry and an infrastructure that was already completely overburdened, was hardly interested in an influx of Chechens. Not only would new apartments have to be built for them; they were also an irritation for the Grozneft' petroleum enterprise if they caused tensions within the workforce. The history of the Sovietisation of Chechnia and the North Caucasus can also be seen as a history of the attempt to bridge the divides between town and country, between Russians and non-Russians. To this end, locals were to be employed in the city's factories. In the case of Chechnia, that endeavour, however, would prove to be thoroughly unsuccessful.

Failed experiment: the creation of a Chechen proletariat

In Russia, where well over 80 per cent of the population were still making a living from agriculture at the outbreak of the 1917 revolutions, the cities played a huge role in the Soviet transformation project. As the Bolsheviks saw it, cities were to be motors of development and modernity. The revolutions had emanated from the cities and were supported by the working class. Industrialisation and urbanisation brought forth the proletariat, which made economic development possible. The elite of the world's first socialist state was generally recruited from urban dwellers—and it was from the city that it sought to reshape the vast countryside. However, for the small strata of North Caucasian revolutionaries, this was simply not an option. For example, in a contemporary report on the situation in the Mountain ASSR and in Chechnia, compiled in May 1922, we read that 'in view of such a development of societal forces in the mountain villages [where power was concentrated among kulaks and the clergy], an active intervention of the proletariat in the affairs of the mountain people' was not possible. In the countryside, it stated, the Communist organisation was simply too weak to form 'strong class cadres in the mountain villages'.[106]

In any case, in the early 1920s, the two largest cities of the North Caucasus region, Vladikavkaz and Groznyi, were—at least administratively—still integral parts of a common republic. However, things changed after the republic had broken up. Apart from Kabardino–Balkaria with its principal town of Nal'chik (which in September 1921 was given the status of a city), none of the newly created autonomous administrative–territorial units had national centres of their own. The governments resided outside of their own ethnic regions, in predominantly Russian-settled towns. This was not only true for the Chechen government, which was based in Groznyi, but also for Ingushetia and North Ossetia, both of which were ruled from Vladikavkaz. Krasnodar (formerly Ekaterinograd), the administrative centre of the Kuban district (*krai*), hosted the seat of government of the Adyghe (Cherkess) region, the Karachai regional government was based in Russian-populated Batalpashinsk. None of the territorial units in these areas had sizeable industrial cities, and thus they lacked a suitable base for the formation of an urban proletariat.[107]

The fragmentation of the political space was the result of a nationalities policy that tried to draw the boundaries of newly created autonomous territorial units mainly along ethnic divisions, but in doing so, neglected the question of the new areas' economic viability, even though already in the early 1920s, serious voices argued against this policy. Its most prominent adversary was the State Planning Committee (Gosudarstvennyi planovyi komitet; Gosplan), which in the early 1920s maintained very vehemently, but ultimately without success, that the Soviet Union ought to be structured strictly along economic rather than ethno-national principles.[108] When representatives of this agency held a meeting in June 1923 to discuss the spatial layout (*raionirovanie*) of the North Caucasus as part of the general restructuring of the Soviet Union, Gosplan Chairman Gleb Maksimilianovich Krzhizhanovskii (1872–1959) complained that the local authorities were largely disregarding the ideas of his committee. He dismissed the argument that the North Caucasus with its ethnic diversity could not be regarded as a single region, arguing that if such a line of reasoning was admitted, 'it [was] no longer necessary for [them] even to discuss the matter'. He added: 'We are firmly convinced that the only correct solution to the national question is a territorial structure that conforms to economic principles …'[109]

Initially, his appeal had little effect. For only a year later, the Mountain ASSR, too, would finally be dissolved and break up into its constituent parts. The creation of the North Caucasus *krai* in September 1924, with its

centre at Rostov-on-Don, introduced a superordinate level of administration that would also coordinate the overall economic development of the North Caucasus. As such, the North Caucasus *krai* committee of the Communist Party (Severo-Kavkazskii kraevoi komitet RKP (b)) essentially carried on the responsibilities of the South Eastern Bureau, which had been dissolved in May 1924. The continuity between the old institution and the new one also found its expression in the fact that the leader of the South Eastern Bureau, Anastas Mikoian, was also appointed head of the *krai* committee of the North Caucasus, a position he would occupy until September 1926. However, the problem of the huge discrepancy between town and country could not be alleviated by the creation of a new superior administrative unit; especially because it was never really clear how jurisdictions were delineated between the party centres in Rostov-on-Don and Moscow. For, at least under the terms of the Soviet constitution, the individual autonomous regions (just like the autonomous republics) had the right to maintain direct relations with Moscow. The district centre at Rostov-on-Don represented the Moscow party centre and was responsible for ensuring that its directives were implemented. However, this agency was not an immediate manifestation of ruling power, as it was in turn dependent on instructions from Moscow. Accordingly, the various regional representatives always sought to establish direct links with Moscow wherever possible, perceiving the authorities in Rostov-on-Don as obstacles rather than as advocates of their interests.

The separate administrative status bestowed on the city of Vladikavkaz after the dissolution of the Mountain ASSR was due specifically to the tensions between Ingush and Ossetians, who each claimed exclusive rights to the city and were unable to agree on a partition among themselves. The case of Groznyi was slightly different. It was mainly the great importance of the nearby oil industry that prompted the decision not to merge Groznyi with the Chechen region. Until the beginning of the Second World War, Groznyi's oil industry, together with that of Baku, was one of the Soviet Union's most important petroleum extraction sites. The two state-owned enterprises of Grozneft' (until May 1922 'Central Petroleum Administration of Groznyi') and Azneft' accounted for over 90 per cent of national oil production. While the civil war severely affected oil production at Groznyi, causing a significant drop in production by March 1920,[110] by the early 1920s, the company's managers had already managed to stabilise production, and by the end of 1923, it had returned to pre-revolution levels. Especially in the second half

of the 1920s, Groznyi and its industry experienced extremely rapid development. While the Grozneft' corporation, which employed 18,000 workers at the time,[111] accounted for 28 per cent of nationwide oil production in the mid-1920s, this share increased to 37 per cent by the end of the 1920s. At the same point in time, Azneft' was even responsible for 57 per cent of oil production.[112] This boom period for the industry also found its expression in the city's population numbers: while the 1897 census showed just 15,564 people living in Groznyi,[113] that number had already increased to 45,185 by 1921.[114] According to data compiled by the secret police, there were really 97,000 people living in the city by 1927, though this figure included just 2,700 Chechens.[115] The population of Groznyi would increase to roughly 150,000 by 1930, in line with the tendency towards rapid urbanisation that the Soviet Union experienced during this period.[116] While in absolute figures, the number of Chechens living in Groznyi at this point had actually increased slightly, the 1926 census found that the share of Chechens living in urban centres stood at just 2 per cent and thus even below the level recorded in 1897. For the Ingush, the share was even lower and stood at 0.8 per cent in 1926.[117]

When Chechnia was carved out from the Mountain ASSR in November 1922, it was the management of Grozneft' that lobbied energetically for the municipal boundaries to be expanded to include not just the city and its surrounding industry but also the areas where industrial workers lived and the lands earmarked as potential oil extraction fields, even if they were mainly populated by Chechens. The aim was to preserve Groznyi and its petroleum industry as a unified overall complex; for, as the company's deputy director wrote to the administrative commission of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in a letter dated 5 December 1922, 'this city lives only thanks to oil, and only for oil; the end of oil extraction will also mark the end of Groznyi as a city, since it will revert to being an ordinary village'.[118] While the commission tasked by Moscow with determining the boundaries between the district of Groznyi and the Chechen region had instructions not to accommodate each and every one of the company's wishes, even Moscow acknowledged the huge importance of the oil industry for the still frail state and its economy and ruled in favour of developing an expanded, unified industrial complex. Chechnia was given rights to certain smaller plants (including a mill, a tannery, a dairy, a machine factory, an alcohol distillery and a brick manufacture), but it also had to cede certain parts of its territory.[119]

While the Chechen *revkom* acknowledged that preserving a unified industrial complex was of greater importance than ethno-national particular interests, El'darkhanov jumped at the opportunity to voice his displeasure at the cession of land, which subordinated a number of Chechen settlements to the city's jurisdiction. In doing so, El'darkhanov skilfully worded his statements for the greatest possible effect. For instance, in a letter dated 14 September 1923 to the presidency of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, he threatened that '[t]he Chechen, who [had] already become accustomed to his autonomous rights, [would] not appreciate the administrative authority of the *grozispolkom* [the Groznyi municipal government]' and might regard it as 'an attack on his rights' and the 'start of a colonising influence', which '[might] result in undesirable complications'.[120]

Though El'darkhanov had failed to avert the large-scale land transfer, he hoped at least to get some capital for his region out of the bargain. He demanded compensation for the loss of land and reminded his correspondents that Grozneft' was still bound to the agreement under which Chechnia received a monthly allocation of 35,000 roubles, as agreed on 7 May 1923 by representatives of Grozneft' and the Chechen government.[121] For these funds, as El'darkhanov emphasised, were to be used to combat the scourge of banditry—hinting that the transfer of these funds to Chechnia was ultimately in Grozneft's own best interests.[122]

In this situation of territorial disputes and conflicts over the distribution of resources, in which each side aimed to secure the biggest possible portions for itself, nobody was yet contemplating a unification of town and country. On the contrary: in the summer of 1923, the Chechen side submitted a resolution to divide the city of Groznyi into two halves. The right bank of the River Sunzha, where the Chechen government building and other Chechen institutions were situated, was to be ceded to Chechnia in its entirety, while the left bank would remain under the jurisdiction of the Groznyi district.[123]

This was not to be. While the relationship between Groznyi and Chechnia would see borders repeatedly redrawn, the city with its surrounding industry initially remained a distinct administrative and territorial unit that was separate from the Chechen region. The Chechens' relationship with the city remained very difficult, however, not least because the leadership of Grozneft' was largely disinterested in its Chechen workers. The company's management believed that these people—unlike incomers from Russia's interior and from the Volga region—were generally unsuited for factory work, as the first

director of Grozneft', Iosif Vikent'evich Kozior (1893–1937), stated unabashedly in a letter to the Gosplan board in October 1922.[124]

The management of the petroleum corporation repeatedly submitted complaints to the Chechen government alleging that Chechen workers had stolen factory property. El'darkhanov proved uncooperative in such cases. When the Chechen government discussed one such accusation brought forth by Grozneft', El'darkhanov claimed that it was not Chechen, but Ingush workers who were to blame.[125] One indication of the antipathy that urban workers must have displayed towards the Chechens was seen during the disarmament drive in the late summer of 1925, when according to the secret police, the Grozneft' workers apparently demanded that all Chechen workers be laid off—this despite the fact that only some 300 Chechens were working in the Groznyi oil industry at the time.[126]

Certainly, incidents like this, but also the repeated attacks by Chechen gangs against the company, prompted the decision to hand over responsibility for guarding the oil installations to the armed branch of the secret police. Under the 7 May 1923 agreement, this had so far been the responsibility of the Chechen government, which had used local armed security forces composed of ethnic Chechens for the purpose.[127] This goes some way towards explaining the refusal of the Grozneft' management to abide by the agreement under which it allocated funds to the Chechen region—payments that the company had only paid out very grudgingly even before these incidents. Thus, the new Chechen president, Daud Arsanukaev, accused the company in February 1926 of having withheld payments to Chechnia's budget since 1 October 1925. Should the payments continue to be denied, he warned, his government would have to shut down 'schools, hospitals, and child-care facilities'.[128] It was not until after the authorities in Rostov-on-Don had intervened that Grozneft' agreed to abide by the earlier agreements and to continue payments on the same level.[129]

While the party cadres of Groznyi and Chechnia met regularly to discuss questions of common interest, it appears that the city representatives in particular were not much interested in deeper and more substantial cooperation with the Chechens, usually trying to play down problems or proposing spurious measures to improve the situation. For example, in November 1927, the representatives of the Groznyi party committee discounted the fact that only small numbers of Chechens lived in Groznyi by claiming that they were not much disposed towards life in the city, to which they were unaccustomed, where they had to pay higher taxes, and where they

were not permitted to bear arms.[130] In its reports, the secret police even alleged that certain measures undertaken by the city's party officials, such as the appointment of a Chechen as deputy head of the municipal administration, the integration of a Chechen worker in the Union of Miners or the recruitment of forty Chechens by the city police were only 'manoeuvres' to take the wind out of the Chechens' sails and undercut their demands.[131]

Measures to raise the share of Chechens working in the industry also remained largely confined to paper. For instance, the leading party representatives of Groznyi and the Chechen region agreed at a meeting in 1926 to boost the number of Chechen employees at Grozneft' to 2,000 within five years.[132] But this effort would remain unsuccessful: while the number of Chechens working at the company rose from 339 on 1 October 1926 to 645 a year later, it had dropped again to 507 employees by May 1928.[133] However, the Groznyi party officials did not see themselves as being at fault; rather, they attributed the decline to the restructuring measures undertaken by Grozneft' between 1927 and 1928, during which 3,000 workers had been laid off. In this context, the city's party office registered as a success the fact that despite these mass layoffs, the majority of Chechens had kept their jobs; in a written statement, it actually claimed this as an achievement of its policies, since it had prevented a mass sacking of Chechens by steadfastly resisting pressure from Russian workers and the company's management.[134] The report also seeks to put a gloss on the small number of Chechen workers by stating that more than half of the 507 Chechen employees were qualified staff, including those who had been given additional training within the company.[135] The municipal party authorities also played down the extent of ethnic tensions. They refused to acknowledge any problems in general; if tensions existed at all, they claimed, they were not between Russians and Chechens, but between Cossacks and Chechens, and anyhow, all problems of this sort had supposedly been confined to a single factory unit.[136]

The immediate reason why the party office of the Groznyi district even felt compelled to issue a comprehensive statement was that accusations had been made by the instructor of the Communist Party's CC of the RCP (b), Georgii Markarovich Karib (real name Tovmas'ian, 1896–1938).[137] Karib, an ethnic Armenian, was responsible for a large-scale investigation of the national regions in the North Caucasus. This enquiry was launched by the CC of the RCP (b) on 7 May 1928 and was tasked with studying all aspects of Sovietisation, from economic and cultural development and advances in *korenizatsiia* to the situation within the individual party organisations in the

various autonomous national regions, including the situation of the local soviets.[138] In various statements and reports, Karib noted the difficult situation between Groznyi and Chechnia. In doing so, he repeatedly and explicitly blamed the municipal party organisation, which he accused of harbouring 'great-power tendencies'. In particular, Karib criticised the negative reporting on Chechnia in the Russian-language press of Groznyi—specifically, the *Groznenskii rabochyi*—which tended to report less about achievements than about ambushes and other crimes perpetrated by Chechens and thus further stoked antipathies in the city.[139] Karib singled out the secretary of the municipal party of the Groznyi district, Liapin, for criticism over the tensions between Russians and Chechens. He accused Liapin of refusing to improve the situation. When, during a personal encounter, the instructor sent by Moscow demanded to be informed about developments regarding the integration of Chechens into the industry at Groznyi, Liapin refused to report on the matter altogether, according to Karib, whom he instructed in unfriendly terms to retrieve that information from the party committee of the North Caucasus *krai*, since he, Liapin, was 'not obliged' to report to 'any random passer-by'.[140]

It is probably due not least to the criticism offered by Karib and his reports that the party office at Rostov-on-Don became involved and called upon Grozneft' in a resolution dated 22 May 1928 to abide by the earlier directive and to increase the percentage of Chechen workers incrementally.[141] Grozneft' responded by approving a new five-year plan under which the share of Chechens in the workforce would be increased by 10 per cent or 1,306 people by 1933.[142] But in the following years, the situation remained difficult, and it would not improve much after Groznyi was amalgamated with the Chechen region in the late 1920s.

Struggle over space

Western historians have largely neglected the manifold realignments of the administrative, political and territorial configuration in the North Caucasus, but also in many other non-Russian-populated territories of the Soviet Union. In a country where power resided with the party organisation and not the state institutions, they ascribed little importance to the shifting of internal administrative borders, relations between the state's administrative territorial units or changes of status of an individual territorial unit within the Soviet Union's federal structure; and if they did, they regarded the repeated

administrative–territorial reconfigurations as evidence of the long reach of Moscow, which supposedly intervened in accordance with a 'divide-and-rule' strategy without taking into account local sensitivities.

While Moscow ultimately always had a crucial role when it came to matters of territorial and political organisation, even the Soviet leadership could not ignore local sensitivities, especially in non-Russian and ethnically diverse border regions. Since it sought political stability, Moscow was ultimately interested in finding the administrative–territorial layouts that offered the best possible formats for realising the Soviet project of modernisation and transformation. From Moscow's point of view, the frequent administrative–territorial changes in the North Caucasus essentially reflected the search for models in which local interests and the overarching interests of the state could be reconciled.[143]

Although the delineation of internal administrative boundaries in the North Caucasus in the early 1920s aimed to satisfy the respective particular interests of specific ethnic groups, as a way of pacifying a region still viewed as volatile, priorities shifted in the second half of the 1920s. Now, such alterations were also increasingly supposed to take into account economic and general societal considerations. The spatial fragmentation at the beginning of the 1920s was to be amended as part of new plans that were in accordance with economic criteria. The smallest administrative–territorial unit such as governorates (*guberniia*, the same status that the city of Groznyi had once enjoyed), autonomous districts (singular *avtonomnyi okrug*, such as that of the Cossacks on the River Sunzha), or *raions* located outside of specific regions (for instance, Batalpashinskii *raion* between Karachai and Cherkessia) were to be eliminated in favour of bigger autonomous regions (singular *avtonomnaia oblast'*) or autonomous republics (singular *avtonomnaia respublika*) that could function as economic entities. The Russian and Slavic element was to serve as a motor of development in this scenario.[144] While this territorial reorganisation did reduce the number of ethnically defined areas controlled by a specific 'titular nation',[145] it would be wrong to interpret this as a rollback of *korenizatsiia*. Promoting members of 'titular nations' within ethnically defined administrative–territorial units remained a stated goal of Soviet nationality policy.

In practice, the administrative–territorial realignment of space in the multi-ethnic North Caucasus region was extremely complex not least because the affected people ascribed enormous importance to these changes. Especially where rural and underdeveloped territories were merged with developed

urban areas, the shift in boundaries was not only symbolically significant but also had real-life impacts in political and economic terms. In one stroke, they increased not only the budget but also the development opportunities of a given territory. The local elites, too, had an interest in these changes, which not only broadened their access to resources and thus their own power base but also occasionally created new prospects for their careers. In particular, the expansion of a given territorial unit and its population could also entail a change of status. A populous autonomous region stood a better chance of being upgraded to the status of an autonomous republic. On the other hand, beyond its merely symbolic power, such an act could be of very concrete political and economic importance. The status boost gave the respective elites more direct access to the centres of power in Moscow and thus a greater say in the allocation of resources.

The representatives of the various ethnic groups were very aware of these factors. In the North Caucasus, the 1920s marked a period when each side tried to advance its interests with the higher-level authorities, including by referencing historic injustices inflicted during the tsar's rule and demanding reparations under the new nationalities policy. It was precisely because the claims of individual peoples in the ethnically mixed North Caucasus were often diametrically opposed that any interventions in the ethnic–territorial configuration were extremely sensitive matters. Such interference could occasionally have consequences that were hardly foreseeable at the point in time when a given decision was handed down. A good example is the merger of Groznyi with Chechnia, but an even clearer case was that of Vladikavkaz, which was more complex by orders of magnitude, as it touched upon the interests of three parties: the mainly Russian urbanites, the Ossetians and the Ingush. While the motives for these two fusion projects were similar, the decision-making processes and reactions were quite different.

The unification of Groznyi and Chechnia had been looming at least since Karib's report to the CC of the RCP (b) on the intolerable state of affairs in the relationship between the urban and the Chechen party organisations and the problems with the integration of Chechens in the oil industry. The overall lead in the unification process resided with the Communist Party's North Caucasus *krai* committee in Rostov-on-Don. It was probably upon its instructions that the united plenary of the Chechen–Groznyi party committees decided in early September 1928 to begin preparations for a merger.[146] At its meeting on 12 October, the party leadership of the North Caucasus *krai* formally approved the union of Groznyi with Chechnia, based

on the necessity of advancing the 'cultural–political and economic development' of Chechnia.[147] At a meeting the following day, the North Caucasus party leadership cited the exact same justification for another decision: the merger of the city of Vladikavkaz with North Ossetia.[148]

In the case of Groznyi, as was to be expected, Chechens and Russians reacted quite differently. A secret police assessment indicates that the Chechen leadership was ecstatic about unification, while the urban Russian population of Groznyi was more subdued. According to this report, the Russian workers and intelligentsia were beset with fears about an increasing 'Chechenisation' of the industry and concerns over growing unemployment. Many feared that a transfer of important leadership functions to inexperienced Chechens would lead to a general deterioration of the situation in the city. The Chechen farmers, to the extent that they were even aware of these developments, were favourably disposed towards unification, according to secret police reports. They hoped it would bring tax relief and regarded the merger as a sign that 'Chechens [were] finally receiving attention'.[149]

While advance notice was given regarding the unification of Chechnia with Groznyi, the party leadership in Rostov-on-Don seems to have chosen a completely different approach by deciding to integrate Vladikavkaz into North Ossetia without any kind of prior coordination with the Ingush or the Ossetian regional party authorities. For the Ossetians, this came as a welcome surprise, but the decision triggered an outcry of indignation among the Ingush. Already on 16 October 1928, the Ingush party office, headed by Idris Beisultanovich Ziazikov (1896–1938), passed a resolution protesting this decision in the strongest possible terms. For the Ingush, the main problem with this verdict was that it not only deprived the Ingush of their sole economic and cultural centre but also failed to offer any viable prospects for further development. At the same time, the Ingush sought to underpin their claim to Vladikavkaz by arguing that Ingushetia had closer cultural links to Vladikavkaz than North Ossetia did. They dismissed the fact that more Ossetians than Ingush lived in the city at the time, maintaining that this was the result of the civil war, in the course of which 'the alliance of the Cossack–Ossetian White Guard' had driven away the city's Ingush population and destroyed their economy. Finally, they also included in their document an undisguised threat, noting that the timing of the decision was also unfavourable because, in the context of 'national disputes between Ossetians and Ingush', it might abet 'anti-Soviet forces' and cause a deterioration of relations between these ethnic groups. In order to ensure that their protest was

heard by the responsible parties in Moscow, the office tasked the chairman of the Ingush *ispolkom*, Ali Isaevich Gorchkhanov (1898–1954), with conveying the resolution directly to the Central Committee in Moscow. At the same time, a telegram was to be sent to Stalin personally protesting 'the decision of the [North Caucasus] *krai* office'.[150]

Even before news of Ingush outrage had reached Moscow, the Politburo members received a telegram from the secretary of the Communist Party's committee of the North Caucasus *krai*, Andrei Andreevich Andreev (1895–1971), dated 13 October 1928. In it, he recommended the amalgamations of Vladikavkaz and North Ossetia as well as of Groznyi and Chechnia, respectively. With the exception of Molotov, who noted on the document that these matters were to be handled by the Orgburo, and Valerian Vladimirovich Kuibyshev (1888–1935) from Ukraine, who jotted on the telegram that a unification of Groznyi and Chechnia did 'not seem advisable', all members expressed agreement. No opinions of Politburo members were recorded concerning the matter of Vladikavkaz.[151]

When, in accordance with Molotov's motion, the Orgburo met on 22 October, it was confronted with the protest of the Ingush, which must have prompted some members to reconsider the matter. Following the Politburo's proposal, the Central Committee decided on 25 October only to agree to the union of Chechnia and Groznyi, but to forward the question of integrating Vladikavkaz into the North Ossetian autonomous region to the Soviet central state authorities for review, and then to transfer it to the Orgburo for sanctioning within two weeks, the deadline set by Stalin.[152]

On 1 April 1929, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RCP (b) finally approved the unification of the district of Groznyi with the Chechen autonomous region, to which was also added the Sunzha Cossack district.[153] The merger of North Ossetia and Vladikavkaz would be delayed, however. For, by now, there was a real danger of developments in this part of the North Caucasus spinning out of control altogether: The secret police reported that the news of the decision handed down by the party office of the North Caucasus *krai* had spread rapidly. The Ossetians celebrated the decision as a triumph and a sign that Moscow was finally going to do something about the Cossack-borne 'Russification' of Ossetia. Among the national intelligentsia, the decision reportedly raised hopes for the unification of the Ossetians of Mozdok and in the Southern Caucasus under a future 'Greater Ossetia', which would have grown to a sizeable area of 300,000 inhabitants whose interests could not simply be ignored any longer. One secret police

report also noted the idea being promoted in some quarters that Vladikavkaz should be renamed 'Iran' in recognition of the Ossetians' Iranian heritage.[154] At the same time, the secret police reported that the Ossetians displayed a disparaging attitude towards the Ingush, whom they viewed as culturally inferior, but also related the growing fear among Ossetians of a possible conflict with the Ingush.[155]

Such fears were certainly justified. While some representatives of the Ingush ruling elite openly threatened to pursue their claims by force, if necessary,[156] ethnic tensions erupted as brawls broke out between Ossetians and Ingush in the streets of Vladikavkaz.[157] The ethnic Russian residents of the city observed the developments with concern. The secret police assessed that the majority of them were opposed to unification. Like the Russians of Groznyi, they were worried about their jobs. The concern was that their city would be 'Ossetified', in which case they feared they would be forced to learn Ossetian. The secret police assumed that, in a future conflict between Ingush and Ossetians, most of the Russian population would sympathise with the Ingush.[158]

The picture sketched in the secret police reports must have raised concerns among the responsible authorities in Moscow. These and similar assessments may have prompted the members of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee at its meeting on 3 December 1928 to state that they did not support the decision of the North Caucasus *krai* committee and the Politburo. This verdict is remarkable, as it makes clear that this body—nominally the highest government organ of the Soviet Union—apparently was not always willing to rubberstamp the decisions of the party leadership. The presidium justified its move by arguing that 'under the prevailing conditions, both with regard to the regulation of national relations and with a view to the future cultural and economic development of the Ingush autonomous region', this project was not 'expedient'. Accordingly, as planned, the presidium returned the matter to the Orgburo.[159] Two weeks later, the Orgburo decided to take the 'matter of Vladikavkaz off the agenda'. At the same time, it instructed the comrades in Rostov-on-Don to work out 'the question of unification of the Chechen region and Ingushetia'.[160]

In this way, they tried to make up for lost time in finding a solution for Ingushetia in case North Ossetia and Vladikavkaz were to be amalgamated. The only viable alternative was to win support among the Ingush for a realignment towards Groznyi—and thus towards Chechnia. The whole

process would take several years, however. It was not until July 1933 that Vladikavkaz, which in 1931 had been renamed 'Ordzhonikidze' in honour of Sergo Ordzhonikidze, was finally unified with North Ossetia. On 15 January 1934, by decree of the All-Russian Central Committee, Ingushetia and Chechnia were joined to form the Chechen–Ingush AO. On 5 December 1936, its status was upgraded to that of an autonomous republic within the RSFSR.[161]

Unification tendencies between Ingushetia and Chechnia had already been discernible earlier. These, however, seem never to have been motivated by joint ethnic and linguistic ties, but resulted from political interest in the fact that a unified territory would have greater political weight. Also, a united Chechen–Ingush entity would be more likely to succeed in establishing direct ties with Moscow, and thus be better placed to promote its interests, while bypassing the party centre in Rostov-on-Don.[162] After the unification of Chechnia with Groznyi and the lost struggle of the Ingush for Vladikavkaz, the latter in particular changed their position: they ultimately felt their interests had been sacrificed and entered into the union with Chechnia with little enthusiasm.[163] While the Chechens were open to the unification project, at the end of the 1920s they seemed even more interested in merging with the grain-rich district of Khasaviurt in Dagestan. Here, close to the border with the Chechen territory, lived a significant Chechen minority (five *auls* with a population of around 17,000). Due to Chechen claims, this border area in particular was repeatedly the scene of violent conflict and guerrilla warfare during the 1920s, which placed a severe strain on relations between Chechnia and Dagestan.[164] For Chechnia, absorbing Khasaviurt would not only have been economically attractive but would also have accommodated Chechen territorial claims in the border dispute with Dagestan.

Chechnia in the late 1920s

While the amalgamation of Groznyi and Chechnia was a much less emotional affair and was much less fraught with potential violence than the case of Vladikavkaz, a certain disenchantment soon set in. The project did not deliver the desired results. Statistically, it is true that the quota of Chechens working at Grozneft' would slightly increase after unification; but the fact remained that many of them were not employed in production, but as 'couriers, guards, or tea-boys', as recorded by the well-known revolutionary and Communist, Semen Markovich Dimanshtein (1886–1938), in a publication of 1930.[165]

When Dimanshtein published his essay, just 773 Chechens were working for Grozneft', and indeed, only few of them were in leading management positions at this time.[166] It was also common for many Chechens to leave their jobs shortly after being hired. This was not only true for Grozneft' but generally applied to factories in the North Caucasus. In the thirty-two plants investigated by order of the party leadership of the North Caucasus *krai*, out of 903 'nationals' (as the Bolsheviks called the members of the respective non-Russian titular nations in their reports) who had been hired as part of a 1929–30 campaign to raise the involvement of non-Russians, 536 persons or about 60 per cent had lost their jobs again by the beginning of 1931.[167] This may have been due to tensions among the workforce, but also to a lack of effort on the part of management to integrate members of the indigenous North Caucasian population into their companies and familiarise them with factory life. Likewise, despite unification, relations between Russians and Chechens remained tense even within the party, and only relatively few Chechens were allowed to join the Communist Party's collective of activists in the city.

In the following years, too, the Bolsheviks would have only marginal success in forming an urban labour proletariat out of members of the non-Russian North Caucasus indigenous population. In Chechnia, the experiment was actually an abysmal failure. The numbers of workers increased only very little, and the quota of Chechen workers remained negligible far into the 1930s. As a contrast to the situation with Grozneft', it is worth considering the development at Azneft': here, the share of Azerbaijani workers compared with Russians was successfully increased to about 30 per cent by the end of the 1920s. However, from the start, the preconditions in Baku's oil industry had been different from those in Groznyi. While there were hardly any Chechen workers in Groznyi's oil industry before the 1917 revolutions, the contingent of ethnic Turkic workers (as the Azerbaijanis were referred to during tsarist times) already stood at 9 per cent even then.[168]

The claims of a Chechen historian who states that not only the 'goals of industrialisation' had been realised in Chechnia during the 1920s and 1930s but that during this time, a 'numerous and multinational working class' had emerged, are thus simply factually wrong.[169] The notion that cities such as Groznyi could provide the 'basis for the formation of a cadre of proletarians and socio-political workers' who would one day transform the entire region, as Karib once claimed, remained unattainable for the time being.[170] For the vast majority of Chechens, the city of Groznyi remained alien. The Chechen government's proposal in 1930 that Groznyi be renamed 'Nokhchi' can

certainly be seen as an attempt to overcome this foreignness. The official reason why the Chechens requested the change was that, for many, the name 'Groznyi' triggered negative associations with the tsarist conquest. While the party centre at Rostov-on-Don supported the proposal, Moscow turned it down.[171]

Not only did the Bolsheviks find themselves facing great problems in the development of a Chechen proletariat in the cities but the countryside, too, remained largely out of their grasp up to this time. And thus, from the Bolsheviks' point of view, it was only appropriate that in the framework of their collectivisation campaign at the end of the 1920s, they should start a major offensive to realise their socialist transformational goals throughout the entire country. With their experiment in collectivisation, in a departure from all previous efforts by the state to mobilise society for their socialist ideas, the Bolsheviks for the first time relied on massive terror. The result was a conflagration that would spread chaos to large parts of the North Caucasus. However, in Chechnia and other non-Russian-populated areas of the North Caucasus, the experiment in collectivisation would again largely fail.

7

THE NORTH CAUCASUS DURING COLLECTIVISATION

In mid-November 1929, the Bolshevik leadership approved the programme of 'total collectivisation' (*sploshchnaia kollektivizatsia*).[1] This marked the beginning of the state's frontal assault on the agrarian economic system and way of life across the entire country. The village in its traditional form was to be abolished. Village assemblies with their councils of elders, which had decision-making power on matters of social and political life, distribution of land and cultivation of the soil, were banned. Peasants were to become proletarians, to be drafted en masse for work in the *kolkhozy*, the collective farms. At the same time, the countryside was to be cleansed of the 'kulaks', the richer farmers. The state depicted them as enemies of the people, and in the course of the so-called 'dekulakisation campaign', hundreds of thousands of alleged 'kulaks' were arrested, deported and many of them shot.[2]

As soon as the collectivisation campaign began, the countryside descended into chaos. The Bolsheviks had no clear idea of how the measures were to be implemented, and did not bother to consider the potentially devastating effect of the campaign. They took no time for detailed analyses, nor did they believe it was necessary to investigate local peculiarities. The Bolsheviks considered the land and its population to be resources available for exploitation. They despised the rural way of life and culture, which in their eyes were the epitome of backwardness. The establishment of collective farms was intended to allow for more efficient control of agricultural production. This campaign, which

the Bolsheviks propagated as part of their 'great socialist transformation' plan, not only targeted the peasants but was also directed against religious institutions as well as their agents and symbols. The spiritual representatives of all religious denominations had already been subjected to persecution and repression earlier. However, once the urban brigades closed down scores of churches and mosques on their march through the countryside, harassing the clergy, burning icons and melting down church bells, collectivisation took on the character of an openly anti-religious campaign that had many people believing that the Apocalypse, the end of the world, had arrived.[3]

This broad assault provoked various forms of reactions, ranging from letters of protests from peasants to the party and state leaderships and voluntary mass slaughter of cattle and relinquishing of land and assets to the emigration of millions of mainly younger men to urban centres. Many peasants submitted to the massive pressure and finally resigned themselves to joining a *kolkhoz*. A substantial minority, namely including those peasants who had been classed as 'kulaks', saw no other option than to flee into the forests, mountains or steppes, where they occasionally joined up as armed bands.

Collectivisation was met with rejection and armed resistance by people in all parts of the country. According to data provided by the Soviet secret police, the largest number of mass disturbances during the height of the collectivisation campaign in the spring of 1930 was reported in the grain-producing and black soil regions, namely Ukraine, the North Caucasus (the Kuban and Terek plains), the Central Black Earth and the Lower Volga.[4] Yet it was in the ethnically mixed, non-Russian and predominantly Muslim-populated borderland areas that resistance more frequently evolved into large-scale uprisings and military confrontations often involving regular Red Army troops.

Apart from Central Asia, this type of conflict was especially prevalent in the non-Russian-populated parts of the North Caucasus, where resistance took on an exceptionally fierce form. To be sure, the hilly topography did not determine the resistance of the various peoples living there. However, the mountains offered options for retreat that enhanced the chances of successful opposition even against an enemy that was superior in terms of military technology. The social cohesion of the mountain communities, which was based on strong tribal bonds, not only established important relations of identity but also served as a network that protected individuals from the encroachments of the state. Ultimately, the rebellions remained unsuccessful,

and the revolts were brutally crushed. However, they were at least sufficiently violent for the Soviet leadership to decide that collectivisation would be completely suspended in the especially problematic national parts of the North Caucasus comprising Chechnia, Ingushetia, Karachai and several districts of Dagestan, until the mid-1930s.

Western literature has produced a number of studies on the situation in the Muslim areas of the Soviet Union during the collectivisation period, but it has so far mainly focused on Azerbaijan and Central Asia, while largely disregarding developments in the North Caucasus.[5] This is somewhat surprising, as it was this part of the country that the Soviet Politburo had explicitly designated as the pilot region for its collectivisation plan. At the November plenary of the party in 1929, Viacheslav Molotov stated his personal conviction that by the summer of 1930, 'collectivisation in the North Caucasus should be by and large complete'.[6] Molotov, who was responsible within the Central Committee for the collectivisation project, could not or would not foresee that the endeavour would end in a fiasco. All that mattered to him was the very tight schedule: the Bolsheviks had only about four months before it was time for sowing, by which time the collective farms had to be functional and productive.[7]

Generally, whenever mention has been made of the North Caucasus, Western historiography has largely uncritically adopted the account of Chechen historian Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov.[8] However, his depiction of the events with regard to collectivisation in Chechnia and the North Caucasus should be viewed with great caution.[9] It is true that Avtorkhanov was in Chechnia at the beginning of the collectivisation campaign in 1929–30, leading the organisational department within the party's regional committee (*obkom*).[10] During this time, he had access to certain information about the situation in the Chechnia, most likely basing his account largely on the monthly secret police reports, the so-called *svodki* (singular *svodka*, 'digest'), which were at the time authored by G.G. Kraft. Kraft headed the Chechen section of the secret police, the OGPU, from November 1929 to September 1930.[11] According to his own account, Avtorkhanov read these *svodki* on a regular basis.[12] This explains his detailed knowledge of the situation, since Avtorkhanov, like other Chechens who served in the region's central state and party apparatus at the time, was largely isolated from events that took place in the countryside.[13] Thus, Avtorkhanov was relying on accounts that he himself regarded as untrustworthy because they tended towards exaggeration and 'invented' fictional bandit groups, as he puts it in his memoirs.[14]

However, a comparison with declassified files from the Russian archives and new published sources shows that Avtorkhanov frequently fails to represent this information accurately, that he gives wrong places or dates or tends to exaggerate when writing on fighting in Chechnia. To this day, the problem remains that information is incomplete. Researchers are still denied access to Russia's federal security archive, where secret police reports are stored, and are faced with increased restrictions regarding access to Russia's other central archives. Also, the information available will remain partial if only because most of the North Caucasus rebels of that period were liquidated in the course of military operations, and there are thus hardly any written sources reflecting their point of view. Nevertheless, the publication of a fairly large number of secret police files, Red Army reports and other official documents allows us for the first time to reconstruct events in Chechnia and in other parts of the North Caucasus during the phase of collectivisation and dekulakisation in detail.

Following the decision on broad collectivisation in November 1929, the North Caucasus became a first test case for state policy—an experiment that would prove a failure in the mountainous parts of this ethnically diverse region, with devastating consequences. That the Bolsheviks chose to start their collectivisation campaign in the North Caucasus is quite astonishing, as the difficulties of collectivisation in the non-Russian-populated national regions of the North Caucasus could have been easily anticipated by the Bolsheviks. For there had already been a major revolt in connection with the acceleration of the state grain campaign (*khlebozagotovka*) in mid-June 1928 in the Baksan district of the Kabardino–Balkaria region. This rebellion anticipated the pattern of resistance that would later resurface in various local specificities in the much more violent unrest at the beginning of the collectivisation campaign.

Preface to tragedy: the Baksan uprising of 1928

By the time the revolt began in the Baksan district, the situation in many villages of Kabardino–Balkaria had already been tense for some time. In the course of various grain shortages, the state had intensified its campaign of confiscating grain from peasants. During the harvest of 1928 alone, more than 200 settlements in Kabardino–Balkaria were subjected to coercive state measures. The expeditions into the countryside, mainly led by uneducated party activists, were frequently accompanied by dispossession of farmers who

were deemed wealthy, but also by antireligious actions such as closures of mosques and *madrassas*.[15] Another unpopular measure was forced labour on state infrastructure projects such as roads or canals, since forced labour kept the people from working in their fields.[16]

The revolt was triggered by an incident in the Kizburun II settlement, which was only a few kilometres away from the district capital, Baksan.[17] According to a detailed report submitted to the Bolshevik leadership by the OGPU intelligence department a few weeks after the Baksan revolt had been suppressed, the initial spark was ignited on 8 June 1928, when the farmers were confronted with demands for 4,000 *puds* of grain (1 *pud* = 16.38 kilogrammes) to be provided during the month of June. After people had left the mosque following Friday prayers, a certain Urusov, a member of the village soviet and a person whom the OGPU report depicts as a *seredniak*, together with another farmer, called an ad-hoc assembly at which he urgently warned the villagers of a famine should the wealthier farmers again be forced to hand over large parts of their grain stores to the state.[18]

Due to the unrest, the members of the *ispolkom* of the Baksan district arrived in the village the same evening with militia units in order to assess the situation. They adopted an uncompromising stance towards the angry crowd and insisted that the farmers had to hand over grain contributions at the volume specified by the state. The Baksan militia arrested Urusov and another person, apparently one of the *bedniaki*. On the following day, 9 June, about 200 of their relatives and other villagers assembled and marched to Baksan, where they managed to have the prisoners released. The same evening, the district authorities and their armed militia arrived again at Kizburun II, re-arrested the peasant who had just been released as well as five other persons, and transferred them to Baksan. Urusov, on the other hand, managed to avoid arrest, according to the secret police report. Subsequently, Urusov had the head of the Kizburun II village soviet arrested together with his deputy and other members.[19]

The actual revolt began on 10 June 1928. In the early morning hours, hundreds of villagers assembled in Kizburun II with the aim of freeing the prisoners from jail. Before making their way to Baksan, they plucked up their courage by dancing and were cheered on by the assembled women.[20] According to the secret police report, the approximately 1,500-strong mob, armed with 'pitchforks, poles, and hoes', was led by Urusov.[21] Upon their arrival in Baksan, the crowd marched to the district government building to demand the prisoners' release. After negotiations with the authorities failed,

the militia opened fire on the crowd with a machine gun. However, the crowd managed to subdue and disarm the police officers. They beat up the head of the district administration as well as the police officers, severely injuring a policeman as well as the local state official. Then the crowd stormed the prison, released the inmates, and entered the arms depot. There, they seized two more machine guns, thirteen rifles and 2,500 rounds of ammunition.[22] Then the assembly dispersed, with many returning home. The remainder of the rioters, according to the account, heaped abuse on the representatives of the district government who had arrived from Nal'chik, the capital of Kabardino–Balkaria. These representatives included the chairman of the regional government, Betal E. Kalmykov (1893–1940), and Artur I. Mikhel'son (1898–1939), the head of the Kabardino–Balkaria section of the OGPU in the North Caucasus.[23] Possibly in order to avoid open confrontation and further bloodshed, the protesters did not offer any active resistance, returned some of the weapons they had seized and reluctantly surrendered to the authorities some of the people they had earlier liberated from jail. However, the people refused to betray the leaders of the revolt, who had withdrawn before the arrival of the government representatives.[24]

The following day, on 11 June, Kalmykov and the local secret police representative arrived in Kizburun II in order to persuade the crowd to surrender the leaders of the movement. Kalmykov also called upon the people not to allow residents of other villages to become involved in the affairs of Kizburun II. The residents then elected a new village soviet and expressed their remorse to Kalmykov.[25] But the efforts of Kalmykov would prove largely ineffectual: the rebels of Kizburun II had already sent messengers to the surrounding villages to ask their residents for support. On the evening of 11 June, there seems to have been a large assembly in Kizburun II, attended by about 3,000 people, about one-third of them from the neighbouring villages.[26] The revolt was now led by a 'rebel staff', which according to the secret police report was made up exclusively of 'kulaks' and adherents of sharia.[27]

At the assembly in Kizburun II, the rebels now issued demands that went far beyond calls for immediate cessation of the grain campaign. Specifically, they allegedly passed a resolution not only calling for an end to the grain campaign but also including demands such as 'reestablishment of sharia', 'opening the closed *madrassas*', 'freedom of religion', 'discontinuation of the organisation of [state] nurseries' and 'appropriate behaviour by the local state representatives'.[28] At the same time, the secret police also reported unrest in other parts of Kabardino–Balkaria, including disturbances in a village settled

by ethnic Balkars and a Cossack settlement in the neighbouring Terek district, both of which the secret police believed were closely linked to the events in Baksan.[29]

A fateful move for the future course of events was the decision by the Kizburun II rebels to march on Baksan once more on 12 June. It is unclear from the OGPU intelligence department's report why this decision was taken. According to one account found in the post-Soviet literature, a messenger on horseback from Baksan brought news to the people in Kizburun II that the towns of Piatigorsk and Kislovodsk had already fallen into the hands of rebel forces. The messenger called on the villagers to take action immediately: they were to march to Baksan together with likeminded residents of neighbouring villages, seize weapons and then capture the regional capital Nal'chik together with the rebels from other parts of the Kabardino–Balkaria.[30]

In any case, on 12 June, about 3,000 people marched on Baksan, some of them reportedly carrying firearms.[31] Upon their arrival, the crowd surrounded the building housing forty-five OGPU members and soldiers of the National Cavalry Division (a military unit consisting of local troops). The crowd demanded that these troops hand over their weapons. When warning shots failed to disperse the mob, the security forces opened fire. By their own accounts, they killed eight people and wounded twenty.[32] It was only now that the crowd dispersed. On the night of 12 June, fresh security police forces commanded by Mikhel'son arrived, reinforced the following day by regular units of the Red Army, which secured the entire town and its surroundings.[33] This essentially marked the end of the revolt. According to the report by the special commission convened on 17 June by the party office of Kabardino–Balkaria to investigate the events in Baksan, a total of twenty rebels were killed during those bloody days in June.[34]

Once the revolt had been crushed, the security forces went on the counteroffensive: in the following days, they carried out large-scale campaigns of arrests and purges in the surrounding villages; according to the secret police report, up to 160 arrests were made.[35] Of these, 118 were sentenced in summary proceedings before the end of June 1928. Eleven individuals, including most of the members of the rebel staff, were shot.[36] The other convicts were sent to penal colonies, and some of them sentenced to long jail terms. Notably, the individual cases were not processed by the public procurator's office, the *prokuratura*, which would have been the normal course of the judicial process, but were decided and enforced by the highest decision-making body of the secret police, the OGPU-Collegium.[37]

Patterns of peasant resistance

When the grip of the state on the peasantry began to tighten in the course of forced grain procurements and the toughening of the struggle against religion in 1928 and 1929, acts of violence were reported in many parts of the USSR with similar characteristics.[38] Yet the Baksan uprising was at the time not only one of the most violent and largest peasant upheavals; it also anticipated those patterns of peasant resistance that would become typical for the later, far larger rebellions after the start of the collectivisation campaign in the North Caucasus.

One of the decisive factors for the population's determination to join together in a mass uprising seems to have been the high degree of solidarity among the villagers. Societal relations were by no means always harmonious in the North Caucasus villages. Generally, however, social cohesion was stronger in the North Caucasian *aul* communities than in the Russian villages; accordingly, there was a greater possibility here of organising resistance in a larger collective. The community joined up to protect its 'kulaks', since they, just like the Islamic teachers, the mullahs, were often respected members of village life and its economy. Conversely, it was these individuals as natural authorities who were able to mobilise the population for an uprising in the first place.[39]

A further characteristic is the fact that the revolt increased to significant proportions within a very short time. Only one day after the first march on Baksan, on 10 June, the villagers of Kizburun II were joined by residents of a number of other settlements. Mutual assistance was not only possible because the villages were immediately adjacent and the people apparently knew each other personally but was likely also assisted by the fact that all villages involved in the uprising were situated in areas settled by Kabardians. However, the events also had effects in other parts. The mere news of the revolt in Baksan seems to have sufficed to fire up other settlements where people were also suffering from state encroachment. News passed on by word of mouth could rapidly grow into wild rumours, as illustrated by the erroneous reports that unrest had also broken out in other parts of the region and that the rebels were already enjoying successes. It is unclear who might have had an interest in launching such rumours intentionally. However, that such a rumour could circulate and meet with approval allows us to draw inferences about the general mood: the villagers of Kizburun II were prepared to believe such a rumour because it affirmed them in following up on their own scheme.

That the broader population in other districts of Kabardino–Balkaria and the North Caucasus did not actively participate in the Baksan uprising may be attributed mainly to practical reasons: the revolt was not planned in advance but was a spontaneous uprising. The rebels hardly had any weapons, nor could they resort to a large existing network for coordinating major actions. Also, time was too short to build up a hard-hitting organisation. The movement, which began as a protest march on 10 June, met with a bloody end only two days later. That the secret police nevertheless dedicated a large part of their report to analysing the events beyond the confines of the Baksan district hardly indicates that they were expecting a massive coordinated revolt across the entire region. Instead, it more probably points to the subliminal fear that, in this historically restless region, with its as yet weakly developed Soviet state structures, developments might rapidly get out of hand, and that the party leaders would be well advised to pay close attention to the events there. This uncanny feeling was certainly exacerbated by traditional stereotypes about 'fanatic Muslims', whom the state viewed with suspicion (this was especially true for the North Caucasus, but to some degree also for other Muslim-populated parts of the USSR, and the Central Asian region in particular).

Recourse to arms as a frequently used method of waging conflict in the North Caucasus is not only to be explained by the mountain peoples' warlike tradition but also by the fact that the peasant population, most of whom could neither read nor write, had few other options for protest. Especially regarding the period following the start of the collectivisation campaign, it is noticeable that the central archives have hardly any letters of protest from peoples from the North Caucasus, compared to a surge of protest letters from Russian farmers, who frequently turned directly to the state leaders to voice their grievances.[40]

Migration to urban centres, which for Russian peasants was another frequent form of passive resistance that allowed them to avoid the increasing state pressure, was largely not an option in the North Caucasus. For in the predominantly Russian-populated cities, the non-Russian and predominantly Muslim natives of the North Caucasus often faced rough treatment, and if unable to speak Russian, they could not manage in the urban centres. Even more than for the people of Kabardino–Balkaria, this was true for ethnic groups such as the Chechens and Ingush, who often faced open rejection from the Russian-dominated working class and party members in the cities of Groznyi or Vladikavkaz. Also, the phenomenon of mass emigration to neighbouring countries as a way of escaping the pressure of collectivisation

(which was in part the case with Central Asian nomad peoples emigrating to neighbouring countries like China, Afghanistan or Iran, but also to other regions within the USSR), was far less prevalent among the North Caucasian mountain people at the start of the campaign.[41]

The result of all this was that, unlike in the Russian villages, which their young people would leave in droves after the start of collectivisation,[42] many people in the North Caucasus remained in place, or withdrew to the mountains and forests, where they formed armed gangs and offered resistance. Active and armed resistance was also particularly widespread in the North Caucasus because the population was still relatively well armed. This was not the case with the residents of Kizburun II, who had first to capture their weapons. However, in other parts of the region, especially in Chechnia, Ingushetia and Dagestan, many had handed in only some of their weapons during the disarmament campaigns of the mid-1920s; they had either hidden the rest or had procured weapons just after disarmament from other regions where that campaign had yet to commence. The Chechens in particular had procured their weapons in the South Caucasus from across the largely unmonitored borders with Georgia and Dagestan.[43]

The frequent and rapid escalation into violence can also be attributed to a specific form of regime, which in the non-Russian periphery was dominated more strongly than elsewhere by the secret police, whose members never hesitated to use force. Especially in the remote mountainous areas of the North Caucasus, it was the Russian-dominated secret police and its agents who, in want of other functioning Soviet institutions, in some cases actually served as the only representatives of state power in the countryside.[44] Ultimately, both arbitrary acts by the secret police and retribution by the locals had caused sufficient hatred to build up to trigger extreme violence at the start of the collectivisation campaign. Thus, by the time total collectivisation officially started, all of the ingredients for the subsequent outbreak of violence had already been added to the mix.

Collectivisation between utopia and violence

The North Caucasus, with its fertile black soil in the Kuban and Terek plains and its favourable climate, was one of the nation's breadbaskets. As early as 4 July 1928, Andrei Andreev, head of the party's North Caucasus *krai* committee and member of the Politburo, presented to the Politburo a comprehensive report on 'socialist transformation' of the North Caucasus.[45]

At this point in time, however, the goals were as yet only vaguely phrased. The specific form of the collective farm had not yet been agreed upon, either. It is noticeable, however, that the Baksan revolt, which was only three weeks past at that time, was not mentioned even in passing either in the Andreev report or in the subsequent discussions among the Politburo members, even though developments in other non-Russian settlement areas of the North Caucasus also indicated that the *kolkhoz* concept had little appeal for peasants.

Yet the party leadership was neither willing nor ready at this time to ponder potential problems. The Bolsheviks regarded the traditional peasant as an adversary that had to be eliminated sooner or later in order to build socialism. Against the chaos of the civil war that followed the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Lenin had occasionally advised for a cautious approach. Yet by the end of the 1920s, the Soviet party leadership had run out of patience. If the Soviet Union was to finally take the leap from an agricultural country to a modern industrialised economy, it was time the Bolshevik state took up the war with the peasantry.[46]

Of all the national territories in the North Caucasus, secret police reports depicted mainly the north-eastern area inhabited by Ingush, Chechens and Dagestanis as a zone of permanent small-scale conflicts where OGPU troops, at times together with regular Red Army detachments, repeatedly conducted military expeditions against individual *auls* in order to carry out arrests and confiscate weapons. In fact, the major unrest that followed in large parts of the North Caucasus after the announcement of the collectivisation campaign in mid-November 1929 only marked yet another level of escalation in a development that had already been extremely tense for some time.

Throughout the 1920s, there had never been a complete let-up of what the secret police reports labelled 'banditry' (*banditizm*) in the North Caucasus. With the increase of state pressure, it made a stronger reappearance at the beginning of 1928.[47] In these reports, the secret police frequently portrayed local events as being part of a larger threat, for instance by suggesting that there was a connection between the counterrevolutionary movements of White generals in Ossetia, unrest in the Cossack areas of the Terek and Sunzha plains, and the activities of anti-Soviet groups in Ingushetia, Chechnia and Dagestan.[48] In Chechnia in particular, a rumour is said to have circulated in advance of collectivisation to the effect that Turkey and its allies were planning to conquer the Caucasus and restore Islam. The secret police identified Islamic clerics, but also wandering preachers, as the source of such rumours. In its reports, the secret police noted signs of incipient war hysteria,

such as the fact that people were making emergency preparations and acquiring provisions and weapons. Furthermore, according to the secret police, there were rumours about large-scale revolts in the Muslim parts of Central Asia and an imminent collapse of Soviet power.[49]

All of these events, according to a secret police report of October 1929, 'dictate the necessity of carrying out disarmament operations and liquidating counterrevolutionary bandit elements in Chechnia and Ingushetia'.[50] By 5 November 1929, thus before the actual start of mass collectivisation, the security forces had confiscated a total of 12,475 weapons in a large-scale operation in Chechnia and Ingushetia (about four-fifths of them confiscated in Chechnia), liquidated several armed gangs and arrested a number of rebel leaders as well as dozens of 'bandits', 'kulaks' and other 'counterrevolutionary elements'.[51] At the same time, the secret police was also beginning the 'liquidation of counterrevolutionary organisations' in the Dagestani districts of Andiiskii, Avarskii and Khazav-Iurtovskii, which in previous years had also served as refuges for rebels. Certainly, these were also pure campaigns of retribution, since members of the secret police had also repeatedly been targeted by assassins in these areas.[52]

While the disarmament campaigns were predominantly directed at mountainous areas, it was mainly the peasants in the lowlands who felt the pressure in connection with the state's grain campaign. In Chechnia in November 1929, the secret police reported mass gatherings and riots, occasionally resulting in clashes with the local militia, particularly in the lowland settlements of Goity in the Urus-Martanovskii district and Avtury in the Shalinskii district. The stated aim of these demonstrations was to push back against the policy of 'theft and violence' by the local state apparatus. However, sporadic unrest was also reported from the mountain areas. For instance, in the village of Benoi in the Nozhai-Iurtovskii district, an angry crowd is reported to have expelled all members of the village soviet at the time.[53]

The actual uprising in relation to the state's collectivisation assault thus began in the Chechen lowlands on 7 December 1929, when members of two *teips* in the *aul* of Goity cordoned off their living quarters with guards of their own and thus de facto seized power. A similar development took place the following day in the settlement of Shali, where residents disarmed the local militia in response to an attempt by the authorities to dispossess 'kulaks'. The secret police identified Shita Istamulov (date of birth unknown; died in 1930) as the ringleader of the events in Shali. Clearly exaggerating his

significance, an OGPU report described him as an important 'ideologue in the Chechen struggle against Soviet power' and a key 'spiritual leader'. Istamulov was accused not only of having headed the resistance in Shali but also of having tried to incite the surrounding settlements 'in order to organise a major armed uprising'.[54]

The secret police immediately responded to the events in the two settlements: on 8 December 1929, the local secret police demanded support from the Red Army, which was reiterated two days later by an official request from the authorised OGPU representative in the North Caucasus. The command of the armed forces in the North Caucasus Military District subsequently put together a combat force in Groznyi consisting of two companies from the Vladikavkaz Infantry School, one company of the 82nd Infantry Regiment, one squadron of the 28th Caucasus Infantry Division, and a battery of mountain guns. On 11 December, these military units advanced together with armed OGPU sections from two directions towards Goity and Shali, but were immediately forced to call up reinforcements after strenuous resistance prevented them from taking the villages. Finally, a total of 2,000 men, equipped with around a dozen heavy artillery guns and supported by seven aircraft, formed up for a major attack on the two villages. The troops took Shali on 11 December and Goity on the morning of 12 December. The most important leaders of the rebellion, including Istamulov, were able to flee to the hills together with their armed followers. While units of the secret police and parts of the army subsequently continued to fight bandits south of Goity, other forces advanced to the mountainous south-eastern Nozhai-Iurtovskii district, where new unrest had been reported and where they conducted another major military operation from 20 to 27 December. Once again, however, they failed to apprehend the ringleaders. The price in blood was high on both sides: according to the army report, up to sixty Chechens were killed or wounded in the course of these operations. The army had suffered twenty-one dead and twenty-two wounded. In total, 450 people were arrested. The security forces confiscated hundreds of weapons.[55]

It was after these initial severe disturbances in Chechnia, if not before, that Andreev seems to have recognised that the prerequisites for 'socialist transformation' were different from area to area. Not only was it necessary to distinguish between Russian and non-Russian regions but differentiation was also required between the individual national territories of the North Caucasus. On the occasion of the Third Plenary Session of the North Caucasus *krai* committee on 13 January 1930, Andreev stated that conditions

in North Ossetia, for instance, were more comparable to those in the Russian-settled Kuban region of the North Caucasus than those in Chechnia, Ingushetia, Karachai or Balkaria, where 'pre-capitalist' agricultural structures based on 'clan and patriarchal forms' as well as strong 'religious prejudices' prevailed.[56] Any collectivisation that had to be enforced by Red Army troops and the deployment of 'brigades consisting of our Russian comrades' was worthless; this should be the task of national party cadres, which were, however, lacking in Chechnia and other national regions, as Andreev noted. Instead of pushing for total collectivisation, as the Chechen party leadership had decreed for the Gudermesskii and Shalinskii districts in mid-December 1929,[57] Andreev urged the comrades in Chechnia to 'wait a little' and first 'create the elementary preconditions for collectivisation'. He assured them that they would not be admonished for lagging slightly behind in collectivisation.[58] The latter point must have sounded particularly cynical to the Chechen delegates present at the session. For after the uprisings in December, the entire Chechen party leadership had been replaced.[59]

In calling for a more cautious approach to collectivisation, Andreev was by no means arguing for lenience or clemency. Rather, he called for a determined fight against the 'kulaks':

> In the national regions [of the North Caucasus], there are just as many kulaks as in the Russian districts. This kulak first has to be found there, however. The most important thing is finding the kulak before we begin with collectivisation; and I assure you, comrades, that our party organisations there do not yet know the kulak. ... And in Chechnia, we only managed to seek out the kulaks with the help of the army ... .[60]

Andreev's appeal did not meet with local consent. As in other parts of the country, the Chechen party leadership was intent on resolving the issues of collectivisation and dekulakisation with a single strike in order to achieve the best possible results in the shortest time. There was no question of exercising restraint. On the contrary, the Chechen party leadership was resolved to prevent their region from falling behind other regions in the statistics. Soon after the official collectivisation campaign had begun, the Chechen government reported impressive figures: in February 1930, according to these figures, the districts of Shalinskii and Gudermesskii had already reached collectivisation levels of 97 and 83 per cent, respectively. Two weeks later, it was even reported that collectivisation in these two districts had been completed altogether, with the Shalinskii district having even achieved 103

per cent over-fulfilment of the plan. According to official statements, the Chechen lowlands had already reached a collectivisation level of 80 per cent by mid-March.[61]

These remarkable collectivisation rates were possible, on the one hand, because short-term 'comprehensive collective farms' had been established in many *auls*. These sometimes included up to 1,500 farms, as was the case, for instance, in the settlements of Goity and Urus-Martan. Such accelerated collectivisation took place without previous restructuring of land use and land allocation. In many cases, entire areas were already regarded as collectivised if the farmers had formally agreed at meetings to join a *kolkhoz* that did not yet exist. Thus, such a collectivisation campaign could be carried out very quickly and with minimal personnel requirements.[62] On the other hand, in Chechnia, too, the local authorities applied pressure in the collectivisation campaign, further aggravating an already tense situation. There were more and more reports of bandit attacks on state facilities and of clashes with the secret police causing deaths and injuries.[63]

The situation was not much better in the areas bordering Chechnia. On 3 February 1930, rebels in Ingushetia carried out a spectacular attack. On the road leading to the village of Surkhakhi, they ambushed the car of Iosif Moiseevich Chernoglaz (1894–1930), who had only been appointed as first secretary of the regional party committee of Ingushetia in September 1929. They murdered him together with the chairman of the local district committee (*raikom*) as well as the driver of the car.[64] In the subsequent punitive operation, the secret police killed several 'bandits' and arrested around 200 people, apparently including the murderer of Chernoglaz.[65] While similar incidents with numerous deaths were reported from other non-Russian-populated areas of the North Caucasus, especially Kabarda,[66] the main focus of the secret police's attention was on the situation in Chechnia and Dagestan.

According to reports by the security agencies, a major uprising was to be expected here at any moment. While only about ten 'purely political gangs of bandits' were said to operate in Chechnia, the OGPU believed that these constituted the recruitment base for the organisation of a large-scale uprising that was being prepared by Istamulov together with his 'most trusted lieutenants, Ganuko Mulla and Kagirmanov'. According to one report, 'Istamulov is travelling through the villages and meeting clerics as well as [other] authorities with the purpose of beginning his attack at the beginning of March.'[67] The secret police also issued warnings about adherents of the 'Ali

Mitaev sect', which supposedly were preparing an uprising on the basis of their 'fanaticism and bonds of family and clan'.[68] Based on rumours that were supposedly circulating among the general population at the time, the secret police not only portrayed Istamulov as a rebel leader from Shali but attributed to him the potential to become a 'national hero' and 'fighter for the liberation of Chechnia from Russian despotism'.[69]

It is difficult to say with certainty based on the available sources how dangerous the situation really was and to what extent the insurgents were in mutual contact. Although the December revolt was limited to local events and Istamulov did not even have enough authority to manage to mobilise the neighbouring settlement for joint resistance, the fact that armed gangs could carry out attacks largely with impunity was more than just a nuisance. For Istamulov offered the simple farmers an alternative to joining the collective farms and gave peasants an opportunity to avoid deportation. Confronted with the might of the state, individuals did not have to fend for themselves, but had the choice of joining one of the existing rebel gangs. In other words: Istamulov embodied the very notion of an alternative—and the Bolsheviks were determined to do everything in their power to crush this kind of resistance. At the same time, the secret police had reason to depict it as threateningly as possible in order to justify their presence in the Caucasus and secure maximum support from the army in conducting any military operations. For this time, they were determined to be better prepared than in December 1929.

Abandoning collectivisation, crushing rebellions

In a missive to the party leaders in the national regions of the North Caucasus on 17 February 1930, Andreev complained that they were not observing directives and even further enforcing collectivisation in the mountain areas. Once more, he criticised the fact that work brigades manned with Russian Communists were being deployed in the *auls*. Andreev held to the view that this was in the interests of the local Communists, who could then deny any responsibility for potential mistakes. At the same time, he also clarified that the local party organisations were to refrain from dekulakisation using 'naked administrative measures' without preparing and educating the population beforehand. Furthermore, he believed, all of these developments were taking place at a most unfavourable point in time, since all attention should be devoted to sowing, which was in jeopardy due to the current circumstances.[70]

Any dispossessed peasant would simply join the rebels in the mountains, a fact that 'the national party organisations should not forget for even a moment'. Therefore, he argued, the focus should be on the 'struggle against the bandit holdouts'. Because bandits enjoyed the protection of their *auls*, Andreev urged that these 'network of accomplices' be destroyed.[71]

Andreev's criticism shows that the policy focus was no longer on collectivisation, but on decisive measures to combat 'banditry' and suppress ongoing or potential revolts. In fact, due to the massive internal unrests in many parts of the USSR in early 1930, the leadership of the Soviet armed forces was seriously concerned about the defence of the country.[72] When the unrest continued into February and March 1930, growing in size to the point where the sowing in spring was in jeopardy, the Soviet regime had no other choice but to intervene and take corrective political action. In order to remove themselves and the party leadership from criticism, it was convenient to pass the blame on to lower functionaries in the party hierarchy. Thus Stalin, in a *Pravda* article of 2 March 1930, accused local authorities, 'dizzy with success', of having committed mistakes in the enforcement of collectivisation.[73]

Stalin's call for moderation certainly did not signify that the Bolshevik leadership was reconsidering the principle of collectivisation as such in any way. The party leadership now simply switched to a somewhat more differentiated strategy. In view of the particularly difficult situation in the non-Russian and economically underdeveloped borderlands, the Politburo determined as early as late January 1930 that while the closure of churches and other places of worship was inevitable, a more cautious approach was advised.[74] On 20 February 1930, the party leadership decided to adopt a slower pace of collectivisation in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Dagestan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Buriat-Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Yakutia.[75] Acknowledging the difficult situation in the North Caucasus, only five days later, on 25 February 1930, the Politburo adopted Stalin's proposal to include Chechnia, Ingushetia and Kabarda in the list of areas where the original aims of total collectivisation were to be at least temporarily revised.[76]

With these decisions, the Politburo not only sanctioned Andreev's views to refrain from further collectivisation in large parts of the North Caucasus but also authorised the deployment of the armed forces to this troubled region. Thus, in the third section of its provisions of 25 February, the Politburo determined that 'in order to decisively and swiftly eradicate banditry', a 'sufficiently large number of armed troops' were to be deployed to Chechnia.[77] Two days later, the plenipotentiary representative of the OGPU

in the North Caucasus *krai* requested that the army command for the North Caucasus move large units to Chechnia.[78] Andreev and the heads of the secret police and the armed forces agreed that an operation named Ugroza (Threat) would begin on 10 March.[79]

Unlike in the case of the December operation, the security forces this time were determined also to utilise 'in every conceivable way' the assistance of 'loyal authorities from the ranks of the sheikhs' and to exploit any internal disputes within Chechen society for the purposes of their military mission. To this end, the local branches of the secret police established contact with various people and middlemen, including a certain Magomedov, who is said to have offered 'his services for the liquidation of Istamulov and his closest lieutenants'. Similar efforts were also reportedly made via other liaisons and groups; in particular, a number of followers of the Mitaev brotherhood, most likely under duress from the secret police, are also said to have offered their assistance in hunting down Chechen rebel leaders.[80]

The Chechen political leadership was only informed by directive of the operation, but was not involved in the preparations. The Chechen government was only ordered to improve its propaganda efforts among the population.[81] While preparations for the military operation were underway, military units were deployed and mountain garrisons were reinforced with additional troops, the Chechen government designed a detailed plan for carrying out mass events in the Chechen *auls* in areas affected by the unrest—events intended to educate the general public about the scourge of banditry in general and Istamulov, who was declared an 'enemy of the people', in particular.[82]

In total, the army high command drew up a force of almost 4,000 troops by mid-March, which were once more equipped with heavy weapons and supported by an air force squadron. In terms of its nature and its targets, this operation was no less than a military invasion for the purpose of occupying enemy territory. At least this was the way it was perceived by those involved. For instance, we read in a letter from a soldier who participated in the operation:

> The situation down here is very critical, we are at war. In Ingushetia and Chechnia, revolts have broken out, many gangs of bandits have been organised, and they are taking the field against us under the slogan 'Down with Soviet Power'. We are moving out to destroy these gangs—[signed] 'K', Natskavshkola, SKK.[83]

The plan was to move troops into those parts of Chechnia where the situation was most threatening. According to the Red Army's assessment, these consisted of two major areas: the south of Chechnia including the

southern part of the Urus-Martanovskii district (formerly the Galanchozhskii district*) and the Itum-Kalinskii district, and a zone comprising parts of the Shalinskii, Gudermesskii, Vedenskii and Nozhai-Iurtovskii districts.[84] When the security forces finally advanced on 16 March, the resistance was strongest in the Galanchozhskii district, where according to the army's report, around 500 armed fighters faced the troops. After heavy fighting, the army managed to break their resistance by 19 March, and 'the troops occupied the designated districts [*raiony*]'.[85] The situation was different in the second operational area, where the army encountered 'only resistance from individual clusters of gangs'. Up until this time, the losses on the side of the security forces were accordingly limited: the army report speaks of five dead and twenty injured. There are no figures for the number of Chechen casualties.[86]

An explanation for the differences in the reactions of the Chechens is offered by Efim G. Evdokimov (1891–1940) in a report dated 23 March 1930.[87] Evdokimov had been the plenipotentiary representative of the OGPU in the North Caucasus *krai* before being appointed a member of the OGPU-Collegium and head of its Secret-Operational Department (Sekretno-operativnoe upravlenie; SOU). He was thus largely responsible for organising and carrying out dekulakisation. By his own account, he personally travelled to the North Caucasus around 20 March because the comrades on the ground were 'not well oriented' and he wanted to study the situation for himself.[88]

According to Evdokimov, the reason why the army had met with such stiff resistance in the first operational area was because the appropriate educational efforts had been seriously neglected among the population there, whom he described in his report as 'extremely backward' and 'religious fanatics'.[89] In the second operational area, the situation was more favourable because the party had apparently conducted a successful propaganda campaign among the population. In secret negotiations, the authorities had managed to secure the loyalty of the key leaders of the Mitaev brotherhood, which largely controlled this part of Chechnia. It was not sympathy for the authorities or the security forces, but the knowledge that the fields had to be tilled that had tipped the scales towards individual bandit leaders and peasant rebels being persuaded to return from the mountains, after ultimatums to that effect had been issued.[90]

* The Galanchozhskii district existed as a separate administrative unit as part of the Chechen AO from 1925 to 1929, and again from 1934 to 1944 as part of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. I will refer in the following to the Galanchozhskii district when writing about the situation during collectivisation and rebellion.

The situation was likely further pacified by the policy, imposed by the central party authorities, of refraining at all costs from further attempts at collectivisation in the restless areas of the North Caucasus. While the military operation in Chechnia was underway, Andreev instructed the national leaderships once more at a party meeting on 18–20 March 1930 to desist completely from organising collective farms in the mountain areas. If at all, such farms were only to be established in the lowlands, preferably in the form of Associations for Cooperative Cultivation of the Land (singular Tovarishchestvo po sovmestnoi obrabotke zemli; TOZ). Unlike in the *artel'*, which the party leadership identified as the dominant form of the *kolkhoz* in the case of total collectivisation and which involved the communitarisation of most of the land, cattle and agricultural implements, in a TOZ, the agricultural tools and implements (including horses) used by the farmers in the collective work on the *kolkhoz* lands remained the property of the farmers. Thus, the *artel'* constituted a variant that was less radical than the commune, which did not allow any private property at all, but it was nevertheless far more radical than the TOZ, which had been the dominant model up to this point.[91]

Evdokimov was worried not only about the situation in Chechnia, where individual armed gangs, including that of Istamulov, continued to operate, but also about the neighbouring areas, where the events in Chechnia apparently were having destabilising effects. For instance, after the advance of the military, parts of the population in the Galanchozhskii district had left their *auls* and headed towards Ingushetia, where they clashed with local militia. Later, however, negotiations with influential authorities apparently succeeded in slightly calming the situation in Galanchozhskii district as well.[92] A likely positive effect may have been due to the fact that the population in the Galanchozhskii district received supplies of corn from the state, relieving the precarious supply situation.[93]

The situation in the Dagestani areas bordering on Chechnia was particularly difficult. Here, the OGPU had already registered unrest after the first major Chechen uprising at the end of 1929.[94] However, major confrontations did not erupt in Dagestan until the beginning of April 1930. The region around the Didoevskii sector of the Andiiskii district as well as other parts of Dagestan were caught up in the disturbances. As late as May 1930, the secret police was reporting heavy fighting in the south of Dagestan:[95] in his missive, it was the Karachai region that Evdokimov identified as 'the worst affected place in terms of banditry', since practically

the entire area settled by Karachaians was 'in the grip of revolt'. In order to reinforce the secret police forces and to oppose the advance of several hundred armed rebels towards the regional capital of Mikoian-Shakhar as well as other settlements, even regular army units were withdrawn from Chechnia at short notice and redeployed to Karachai.[96] Evdokimov feared that, if the situation there was not rapidly brought under control, there would be destabilising effects on neighbouring Kabarda, where the security forces had only put down a major uprising a few days earlier, in the course of which 'more than a hundred' people had been killed, and hundreds had been arrested or had surrendered.[97]

It is impossible to determine with certainty how many people were killed during the events in the spring of 1930. There is no doubt, however, that especially the conflicts in Karachai and Chechnia caused a very large number of casualties. According to a secret police report, the security forces killed around 200 'bandits' in Karachai within ten days of intense combat operations. Hundreds were arrested or surrendered.[98] The commander of the Red Army's North Caucasus Military District, General Ivan P. Belov (1893–1938), reported in April 1930 that the fighting in Karachai and Chechnia had caused twenty-four deaths and thirty-four injured on the side of the security forces, most of them Red Army soldiers. Altogether, 417 'bandits' were reported killed in Karachai. The report gives the number of Chechens killed as nineteen, but states that the true number was likely to be much higher, since the Chechens would often carry away their fallen and only leave them behind 'when they flee in panic due to pressure from the army and air force'.[99]

However, the losses on the side of the secret police and army are also likely to have been higher. An army report on fighting in the southern part of Dagestan at the end of April and beginning of May stated that the rebels had suffered forty-six deaths, while the army had only suffered five injured.[100] How far this is from truth may be gauged by a letter from a Red Army soldier who was an immediate participant in the fighting in the southern part of Dagestan in May 1930: 'We travelled [to] Dagestan to liquidate bandits. The battle took four days, it was very difficult. There were forty men in our company, eighteen of whom were killed by the bandits; many fell into the gorge—[signed] 'K', 2nd Infantry Regiment, South Caucasus.'[101]

That the army leadership admitted serious losses on their own side in the Chechen area of operations may be taken to indicate that the true number of victims should also be revised upwards. It is likely that both the Chechens and the security forces suffered their heaviest losses not during the first phase of

the military operation in mid-March, but in the subsequent engagements between the retreating armed groups and the security forces, which in Chechnia lasted well into April. According to a secret police report, thirty-five rebels were killed and fifty-eight arrested during the period from 20 to 26 March alone, while 223 surrendered voluntarily. It is claimed that among the dead were the leaders of important bandit groups (Mal'sagov und Temirgoev), while others (Khadzhi-Murat) were arrested. On the side of the security forces, eight dead and eighteen injured are reported for the same period. A large part of an operative unit led by a certain Chigirin, who himself was killed in combat, were taken captive by the Chechens.[102] Avtorkhanov's assertion that, while fighting the security forces in the spring of 1930 near Goity, the Chechens destroyed the entire 82nd Infantry Regiment, and even succeeded in annihilating 'an entire division' commanded by General Belov near Shali, a claim that has also been accepted uncritically in the Western literature, appears to be a complete exaggeration, however; also, Avtorkhanov says nothing at all about Chechen losses.[103]

As far as the accounts on the number of rebels and bandits are concerned, even the secret police reports, which tend towards exaggeration, always only refer to hundreds, but never thousands of gunmen. But even this number is most likely too high. The tendency of the secret police to exaggerate must have irritated even the military leadership, which relied on secret police intelligence in preparing its operations. In his personal analysis of the fighting in Chechnia in the spring of 1930, the commander of the 28th Mountain Infantry Division, Aleksandr D. Kozitskii (1891–1937), reports that the secret police in its *svodki* of 17 and 19 March had referred to 600 bandits, while he himself had only encountered forty; in another location, the secret police told him to expect 300 bandits—however, his detachment only came across ten people.[104]

Aftermath of a brutal war

The suppression of the revolts in Chechnia and Dagestan in April and May of 1930 marked a temporary end to the period of major revolts in the North Caucasus. With the security forces already having largely destroyed the bases of Istamulov's resistance in the course of their March campaign, the Chechen department of the secret police managed to track him down in the vicinity of the *aul* of Shali and killed him on 20 June 1930.[105] Again, this account, in turn, does not mesh with the version provided by Avtorkhanov, who claims that Istamulov was only killed in the autumn of 1931 after the head of the

local OGPU unit, Baklalov, had enticed him with false promises of an amnesty from Moscow to come to his office, where he shot him. Though severely injured, the story goes, Istamulov nevertheless managed to stab Baklalov to death before being killed by a guard.[106] This did not mean that banditry had been completely eliminated. Shita's brother Khusein remained at large and continued to lead the resistance well into the mid-1930s.

Even ordinary people were quite aware that the mountain areas of Chechnia and Dagestan remained dangerous places. One example is Stepan Stepanovich Torbin, who resided in the Dagestani capital of Makhachkala from the early 1930s onwards. In his unpublished memoirs, he describes life in Dagestan around 1931 as 'easier and richer' than in other areas of Russia, since 'you didn't have to worry too much about the next day. If someone had no meat, he had fish.' Torbin knew that life was better in Dagestan from observing the starving people who went there from other parts of Russia and sometimes died in the streets from exhaustion. These people must also have brought Torbin 'reports of violent collectivisation, the destruction of settlements and villages, and farmer families being robbed'. At the same time, however, he was aware that the mountainous areas of the Caucasus were also 'not tranquil': 'Discontented with their lawless status, the terror, and the repression, the mountain people organised armed bands and channelled the bloody outrages committed against them at the innocent Russians, but also at anybody who happened to fall into their hands.' Because 'bands of nationalists' were forming in the mountains, the city dwellers organised 'self-protection detachments, the "partisan detachments of 1932". After 9 or 10 p.m., nobody risked leaving the house.'[107]

What Torbin is describing was simply the aftermath of a conflict that had been conducted with utter ruthlessness. For instance, an army report dated from the time of fighting stated that 'bandits' involved in an encounter in Kabarda in February 1930 had brutally murdered members of the security forces and cut off their 'heads and hands'.[108] But the security forces were apparently not squeamish either. Even Belov in his report of April 1930 criticised the brutal practices of the secret police, such as burning and decapitating of dead bodies, for unnecessarily antagonising the population.[109] Rapid reconciliation was thus hardly possible and acts of vengeance inevitable. Tensions were further fuelled by the massive repression and arrests by the secret police in the aftermath of the revolts. This approach was probably one of the reasons why another rebellion broke out in Chechnia in March 1932 that once more could only be put down with the help of regular Red Army

troops. However, this revolt was largely limited to the Nozhai-Iurtovskii district bordering on Dagestan, which is why the security forces managed to overcome the rebels, commanded by a certain Imam Mutsu Shamiliev from the *aul* of Shuani, in a relatively short period.[110] This time, too, the blood toll was high: the army reported twenty-four dead bandits and nine wounded. Among its own ranks, the army reported one dead and two injured.[111]

Regarding the nature of the revolts at the time of collectivisation in the North Caucasus, sources agree that they were in each case widespread, and that occasionally the entire population of a certain district participated in the resistance. For instance, the abovementioned report by Belov states: 'In Chechnia, as in Karachai, we were dealing not with individual counterrevolutionary uprisings of bandits, but with actual revolts encompassing whole districts (Galanchozhskii), with nearly the entire population participating in the armed insurgency.'[112] However, at no point after the beginning of collectivisation had 'all of Chechnia exploded', as Avtorkhanov claims; rather, the uprisings were always concentrated in specific areas.[113]

The great number of troops and masses of military equipment that the army leadership had concentrated in March 1930 were in no way commensurate to the actual threat from the individual armed gangs. Certainly, there will have been contacts between the insurgent groups, but these were spontaneous and not well coordinated. At no point was there a unified leadership, and even within Chechnia, the best-known leader, Shita Istamulov, apparently did not have sufficient backing to be able to mobilise larger parts of Chechnia for the revolt beyond his own area of influence. The call to *gazavat*, the 'holy war', cited repeatedly in the secret police files as the rebel slogan, had no function as a unifying element. That Chechens in particular did not form a national unit can be seen in the fact that several groups of Chechens allowed themselves to be co-opted for the arrest of Istamulov. A distinguishing characteristic of the 1932 rebellion is that the population of the settlements bordering on the district of Nozhai-Iurtovskii apparently refused to join the resistance. In the report on the 1932 revolt, the army leadership explicitly praised the good morale of the 'national parts' of the Red Army, including the serving Chechen and Ingush soldiers, only two of whom had deserted ahead of the operation, but not a single one during the operation itself.[114]

The insurgents were not fighting for independence in the first place. Rather, the peasants were trying to resist the brutal interference with their traditions and customary rights. They were revolting against the harshness of state measures and the capriciousness and despotism of certain local

authorities. At this point, the North Caucasian mountaineers did not differ significantly from the peasants in Russian-populated parts of the Soviet Union. However, the fact that in the mountain areas of Chechnia and other parts of the North Caucasus the local embodiment of the authorities was often the Russian-dominated secret police gave the conflict an ethnic component that was absent in Central Russia. It is in this context that Andreev's remarks criticising the lack of engagement by local state and party cadres is to be understood. Often, workers' brigades were dispatched from the cities to carry out collectivisation, while members of the Russian-dominated secret police were responsible for arresting 'kulaks'. The local cadres not only had no interest in making enemies in the countryside through unpopular actions; they were not even involved in key decisions.[115] They were sent out as mediators in advance of military operations or were charged with spreading state propaganda among the local population. In the case of conflict, minor state officials and members of local militias only had the choice of joining the rebels or fleeing, as adopting a neutral stance was difficult under the given circumstances. Several reports indicate that the local militias made up of natives had little interest in helping the security forces. Often, they gave their weapons to the rebels, and in some cases even joined them.[116]

The army and secret police reports also make clear that little had changed in the way the North Caucasian peoples were viewed by the representatives of the central state. The natives of the North Caucasus were regarded as unreliable allies who lived according to the rule of the fist, and only accepted authorities if the latter dealt with them severely enough. This, in any case, is what we are given to understand in a personal analysis of the fighting in Chechnia written by Kozitskii in the spring of 1930:

> A few words about the methods of combat in the Caucasus. The soft measures that we apply do not have the same effects on the mountain people [*gortsy*] as they do on culturally developed peoples. On the contrary, they reinforce their conviction that we are weak. This is in accordance with the nature of the mountain people. ... Take, for example, the case of a Red Army soldier ... who was maimed in Chechnia, where the inhabitants of the village that had tortured the Red Army soldier were not appropriately punished, but instead, a search was made for the perpetrators who were being hidden in the village. They say that our behaviour in such a case is due to our humanitarianism [*gummannost'*], which due to their customs and traditions (non-observance of a blood-feud dishonours the entire clan) they cannot understand.[117]

Archaic traditions such as the blood-feud and the notion of collective liability certainly continued to be of great importance in the rural structures of Chechen society, which were based on clans and family ties. However, the conclusion that the notion of humanitarianism was completely alien to the mountain dweller (compared to whom the Russian military commanders must have felt themselves to be bearers of this humanitarianism) was based on similarly undifferentiated stereotypes as those that were typical of the Russian conquerors during the colonial wars of the tsarist era. In this sense, Kozitskii's words might also have been written by a Russian commander of the Caucasus wars of the nineteenth century.

Assessing the campaign

It would certainly be misleading to understand resistance during collectivisation as part of some mythical 400-year Chechen anticolonial struggle against Russia, a narrative that became prominent during the independence movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s among leading Chechen political and intellectual figures.[118] Nor was Soviet policy to be understood as part of a 'policy of genocide' specifically aimed at the Chechens and Ingush, as some Chechen (as well as certain Western) historians would have it.[119] Yet if the resistance during this period is to be read as the continuation of a colonial campaign of subjugation, as Avtorkhanov contends,[120] one must at least take into account that the Bolsheviks treated not just the North Caucasus but all of the supposedly antiquated farming sector as a kind of 'internal colony' that they sought to exploit and ultimately to eradicate.[121] Yet in ethnically mixed, largely Muslim-populated borderland regions such as the North Caucasus or Central Asia, which both look back on violent traditions of armed resistance, this campaign more frequently than in Central Russia escalated into large-scale military conflicts.

What is remarkable in this context is not so much that the Soviet state ordered military operations to crush armed insurrections, but that it finally desisted from carrying out the campaign to its conclusion in parts of the non-Russian-populated North Caucasus. Due to the violent unrest, collectivisation was temporarily suspended across the USSR in the spring of 1930. But while the campaign was resumed and continued unabated only a few months later in most parts of the country, it was de facto stopped in the mountain areas of Chechnia, Ingushetia, Karachai and parts of Dagestan and only began again in the mid-1930s.[122] The restraint imposed by the central power (which the

local authorities would not always comply with over the period that followed) was also expressed in the official collectivisation rates, which differed considerably in the various national areas of the North Caucasus: in April 1931, the official statistics showed that Adygeia, North Ossetia and Kabarda had been almost completely collectivised. Cherkessia at this point had a collectivisation level of 65 per cent. At the bottom of the list were Chechnia, Ingushetia and Karachai, which had official collectivisation rates of between 18 and 32 per cent at this point.[123] Also, the deportation of 'kulaks' was not enforced as systematically here as it had been in the Russian and Cossack settlement areas of the North Caucasus. It is noticeable that in view of the continuing conflicts, the secret police files for the year 1930 show no listing of how many 'kulak' farms had been resettled from the individual national regions of the North Caucasus.[124]

The conflicts that followed the failed attempts at total collectivisation and dekulakisation of Chechnia and other national regions of the North Caucasus would remain traumatic memories for the affected people. However, ultimately, the state campaign brought far less profound economic and societal upheavals here than in the Russian and Cossack settlement areas. It was also less comprehensive than in North Ossetia, in parts of Dagestan, in Kabarda, in Cherkessia or in Adygeia, where the peasant economy and way of life would be drastically transformed by the introduction of collective farms and the mass deportation of 'kulaks'. Thus, the Chechens and other mountain people continued to take only a very limited part in the great Stalinist transformation project.

While no large-scale collectivisation took place for the time being in Chechnia and some of the other North Caucasus national regions, the great problems of the mountain areas in particular were still unresolved. Not only did rural poverty and supply shortages persist. These regions also often lacked fundamental infrastructure such as healthcare, schools or roads. Ethnic tensions and disagreements over land assets continued to stoke conflicts; nor was the plague of banditry ever fully suppressed. During this time, attempts were also made to resettle families from the mountains to the lowlands, but such projects often failed because people were inadequately cared for after being moved to the lowlands, causing many of them to return to their mountain villages. The 'mountain problem', as one party instructor put it in a report of June 1931, was still far from being resolved.[125]

It was only in May 1934 that the party committee of the North Caucasus *krai* gave the party leadership of the Chechen–Ingush AO the directive to

engage on the path of total collectivisation.[126] Some two years later, on 5 June 1936, Ali Gorchkhanov, the chairman of the Chechen–Ingush *ispolkom*, was able to announce that 'collectivisation of the mountain area [was] to eighty-five per cent completed'.[127] In a February 1939 *Pravda* article, on the occasion of celebrating 'Twenty Years of Existence of the Chechen–Ingush Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic', the republic's first party secretary, Fedor Petrovich Bykov (1901–80), even claimed that 'ninety-two per cent of all peasants' were now united in 472 collective farms.[128]

It was quite another story, however, how effectively these collective farms actually worked. The central Russian archives store many reports indicating that, in reality, collective farms, at least in the mountainous parts of Chechnia and Ingushetia, largely existed on paper, as they in fact functioned according to similar rules and norms as before collectivisation. Decisions concerning the distribution of land and the organisation of labour, for example, were oftentimes still taken by the rural communities with their councils of elders.

Thus, the North Caucasus 'mountain problem' was, at least in Moscow's view, in no way solved when the Second World War broke out. When negative reporting from Chechnia and other parts of the North Caucasus on mass evasions of military service, anti-Soviet insurgency and collaboration with the enemy reached the party leadership, Stalin ultimately took these reports as a pretext to do away with this perceived problem once and for all when he decided to deport the entire Chechen, Ingush, Balkar and Karachai nations to Central Asia. There is no archival evidence to support the thesis that the rebellions of 1929/30 had a direct impact on Stalin's decision to deport the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples. Yet almost continuous negative reporting on the situation in the North Caucasus throughout the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s could not but have influenced this fatal verdict, as will be shown in the next chapter.

8

AT THE FRINGES OF THE STALINIST MOBILISING SOCIETY

THE PATH TO DEPORTATION

It was a newspaper story that set off the turmoil. On 11 April 1939, the weekly journal *Bezbozhnik* covered an 'outrageous incident' that had taken place in the Achkhoi-Martanovskii district (*raion*) of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. A certain Magomed Ianarsaev[1] from the village of Valerik had married a girl from the neighbouring village of Zakan-Iurt, Rakhat Dashaeva. The bride's brothers were 'not happy' with this marriage and demanded that Ianarsaev pay a dowry (*kalym*). Should the bridegroom fail to meet their demands, Rakhat's brothers threatened to kill him. Even after the dowry was paid, the brothers seem not to have been satisfied and were said to have approached the wife of Ianarsaev's brother 'with impudent demands'. In order to resolve the conflict, the village elders were consulted, who sided with Rakhat's brothers.[2]

In response to this public news report, the USSR's public prosecutor's office, the *prokuratura*, asked the local authorities to examine the incident. The *prokuratura* of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR and that of the Achkhoi-Martanovskii district both came to the conclusion that 'Citizen Rakhat Dashaeva had married Citizen Ianarsaev Magomed of her own free will' and that the so-called 'bride kidnapping' had 'simply been staged'. The investigators could find no evidence that Rakhat's brothers had demanded money from the bridegroom or asked for his brother's wife in return. They also reported that neither bride nor groom had any brothers, adding further

doubts to the credibility of *Bezbozhnik*'s version. The results of the investigation were submitted to the *prokuratura* of the USSR, which approved the report.[3]

The department of public prosecution considered the case closed. *Bezbozhnik*, however, did not. Its editors decided to send their special correspondent, V. Pomerantsev, on location in order to clarify whether the *prokuratura* had been misled by the locals involved.[4] Indeed, Pomerantsev came to the conclusion that the investigation by the *prokuratura* had 'from beginning to end been conducted improperly'.[5] According to Pomerantsev, there was only one reason why the dispute, which the marriage of Magomed Ianarsaev and Rakhat Dashaeva[6] had set off between the clans of the respective parties, was ultimately resolved without bloodshed: the chief of Magomed Ianarsaev's clan had agreed to send his own wife to Rakhat Dashaeva's clan relatives for the purpose of having sexual intercourse. Apparently, however, she was not good enough for them, and they demanded a 'more beautiful' woman. Ianarsaev's clan is said to have met this demand as well. Before her return, a piece of the woman's shirt was cut out by the enemy clan to stigmatise her visibly. Only then had peace been restored between the two clans.[7]

For Pomerantsev, the main problem were the village elders, those 'religious fanatics' whom the whole village had been afraid of and who enforced archaic rules according to which 'women were traded like commodities' and 'murder was a means of retribution'.[8] According to Pomerantsev, it was these same elders who had knowingly misinformed the authorities in the case of the marriage of Ianarsaev Magomed and Rakhat Dushaeva in order to be able to resolve the matter in accordance with their own customs and conventions.[9] Pomerantsev, however, also held the secretary of the Communist Party organisation of the *aul* of Valerik responsible, as he had been aware of the events, but had done nothing to stop them.[10]

The journalist from Moscow spent his three weeks in Checheno–Ingushetia mostly in the Achkhoi-Martanovskii district.[11] Here, he encountered a world that was not only alien to him, but which he resolutely rejected. This is hardly surprising. As a representative of *Bezbozhnik*, a weekly journal with a run of 500,000 and edited by the organ of the central council of the League of the Militant Godless (Soiuz voinstviuiushchikh bezbozhnikov), Pomerantsev belonged to an organisation that was wholeheartedly committed to the fight against religion and traditions in any form.[12] He could simply not be expected to have any kind of sympathy with the particular customs and conventions of the North Caucasian *gortsy*. At

the same time, Pomerantsev believed that in no corner of the USSR were the social conditions more permeated by 'evil and reactionary elements' than in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR.[13] He regarded Chechen society as an impenetrable 'front' that was impervious to external influence and functioned internally according to rules that he viewed as 'barbaric'. According to Pomerantsev, the Chechen clan communities, the *teips*, played an important role in this. They offered the individual a point of identification and, according to the Russian journalist, featured 'an enormous degree of cohesion'.[14]

Pomerantsev regarded the mountains as the place that had defeated Soviet modernity for two decades—and only, he complained in his report, because Soviet policy during that period had been guided by too much 'consideration for local circumstances'. Even more infuriating to him was the fact that this indulgence for 'the most savage relics of the dark ages' had not paid off, but on the contrary, had resulted in a situation where 'many mountain dwellers [were] unwilling to adapt to Soviet conditions'.[15] Pomerantsev considered many *kolkhozy* to be pure 'fiction': in these collective farms, farmers hardly turned up for work and mainly took care of their own farms instead, sometimes using the *kolkhoz* inventory or even farming *kolkhoz* land privately. Apparently, men generally avoided farm work anyway, since such work was considered 'shameful' according to the precepts of North Caucasus customary law, the *adat*.[16]

If collectivisation, according to Pomerantsev, existed merely on paper, the same applied to the building of Soviet state institutions and the party organisation. Formally, they were omnipresent. At least in the countryside, however, Chechen Communists and government officials did little to counteract archaic customs. On the contrary, Pomerantsev claims to have noted that even Communist Party commissars travelling to the countryside submitted to the rules of *adat* by wearing local garb and expensive daggers as well as deferring respectfully to the village elders by refraining from sitting in their presence. While religion was not celebrated openly, it was still practised within the clans and families. Even funerals of Communists were reportedly held according to Muslim rites. Furthermore, because the mountains and small farms in the region were considered 'bandit' holdouts, Russian workers were said to be afraid to travel to the hinterland.[17]

Pomerantsev generally describes the mountains as the region on which Soviet modernity had broken its teeth over a period of two decades—solely because, in his view, Soviet policy had over that time been guided by what he

viewed as an incomprehensible 'respect for local mores'. This consideration of 'barbaric survivals from the middle ages' had not had the desired result, he argued, but had on the contrary led to a situation where now 'many mountain-dwellers [were] not willing to adapt to Soviet conditions'.[18]

As the logical consequence of this, he believed, it was high time to cast aside the 'fear of "the mountains"', and take radical measures to change the situation, comprising the dissolution of small farms and formation of larger settlements, and the populating of mountain regions with non-Chechens. On the other side of the equation, young Chechens should also move to the cities to work in industry, otherwise Chechens and the other peoples of the North Caucasus would largely remain non-participants in the colossal restructuring and mobilisation project of modernity that the Soviet Union was undergoing in the 1930s: 'If we could succeed in employing 10,000-15,000 Chechens in production ... much would have been gained.' He also argued that the party should undertake efforts to strengthen Soviet law against the traditions of the *adat*, and conduct intensive propaganda campaigns against the *teip* in the press, in order to break their power.[19]

Terror, bandits and the ambivalence of modernity

Pomerantsev's report reads like an exaggeration. Nevertheless, it bespeaks a fact that could be observed at the time not just in Chechnia, but more generally in rural and non-Russian areas of settlement in the multi-ethnic Soviet empire: in the course of their socialist remodelling project, which was frequently accompanied by mass terror, the Bolsheviks never managed to fully overcome economic ways of life, legal customs and primordial social bonds. Pomerantsev's observations, though certainly extreme, were not unusual.[20] Essentially, he described the powerlessness of a regime that had failed, despite its totalitarian pretensions, to exercise complete control over the many societal groups and their ways of life.[21]

The *teip* obviously still played a major role, even though they seem not to have been frequently referred to in Soviet documents in earlier years. Pomerantsev's article indicates that the *teip* clearly had a dual function: on the one hand, they protected individuals from attacks from outside (from the state authorities or members of other *teips*), and on the other they operated as a clientele system, providing opportunities for advancement and other benefits for their members.[22] Despite the strongly cohesive nature of the *teip*, conflicts and blood-feuds among their members were also not exceptional.[23] There is

no doubt, however, that traditional social bonds of this kind were an important identification reference for individuals, alongside their families and relatives.[24] Evidence for the possibility that the *teip* may even have increased in significance in the 1930s can be found not only in Pomerantsev's reports but also in other Soviet reports from the time.[25]

At first glance, this is quite astonishing, given the repeated massive purges that had taken place in Soviet society before this time, which had been specifically designed to eradicate local traditions and the social bonds that had existed since time immemorial. A terror campaign ordered by the Communist Party leadership to be launched in the spring of 1937 had been particularly brutal. The goal was to bring about a definitive transition of local society to the new socialist way of life, even at the cost of many casualties, including many 'honest Communist', who fell victim to the persecutions by mistake, as admitted by Viacheslav Molotov in retrospect.[26] In an unprecedented wave of violence, within a relatively short time, the regime, with the help of the secret police, had liquidated virtually the entire top leadership of the party, the state and the armed forces. There were mass killings of 'kulaks', clerics, family members of the former revolutionary elite, criminals and camp detainees, and many foreigners and members of ethnic minorities were arrested or killed.[27] A total of around 1.5 million people were arrested during the time of what would later be referred to as the 'Great Terror', which reached its climax between July 1937 and November 1938, and around 700,000 of their number were shot.[28] There is proof that Stalin personally signed off death lists containing the names of 40,000 people.[29] The Chechen–Ingush republic was included in this state-initiated operation for the 'repression of former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements'.*[30]

According to a report by the Soviet secret police dated 15 January 1938, 5,610 people were arrested in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR during the first phase of the Stalinist purges of 1937/8. Of these, 2,408 were subsequently shot and 3,202 sent to labour camps. Those shot or deported included virtually the whole of the leadership of the republic and many intellectuals and clerics.[31] The terror of 1937/8 decimated the elite, and in non-Russian areas such as in Checheno–Ingushetia it also had the effect of eliminating

* The sentence in quotation marks refers to the title of the infamous operative order no. 00447 of the NKVD of 30 July 1937, signed by the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Nikolai Ivanovich Ezhov (1895–1940). The order was confirmed by the Politburo one day later and marked the beginning of the 'Great Terror'.

(apart from Russians and other Slavs) precisely those people who had been recruited from the already sparse stratum of Communists from the local ethnicity, and were receptive towards a limited degree of assimilation as supporters of socialist ideas.[32] Yet the terror did not denote a turning away from the nationalities policy, since it was not targeted specifically against non-Russians, even if suspicions that this was the case were sometimes voiced by members of the indigenous leadership who bore the brunt of the purges.[33] The goal of the nationalities policy was to impart Soviet content in national form, but few could have predicted that this would also open a doorway through which traditional power structures and value systems could gain entry into the political domain. Rather than conveying modernity in one direction only, the Soviet state-building project was also imprinted by insidious influences from the recruitment of strata of the local population.

The purges had even less influence in rural areas. For example, according to a report prepared in July 1938 for Stalin and other high party officials by the then first secretary of the Communist Party in Checheno–Ingushetia, Fedor Bykov, sixty active gangs had been liquidated, and up to 800 'kulak bandits', 300 mullahs and 300 'leaders and activists of Muslim sects' had been arrested.[34] Yet Bykov also acknowledged that operations against 'bandits' (which in reality were mostly people trying to escape the Stalinist purges in those years) had had no real impact on the situation. The same report describes a marked increase in attacks in mountain areas because of the actions of the security forces. The many acts of terrorism reported in the republic were not, however, to be understood as a *gazavat* against Russia, the report said, but were directed primarily at Chechen 'traitors', including state officials, teachers and *kolkhoz* chairmen of Chechen origin.[35] In his report to the Central Committee in Moscow, Bykov sought permission to conduct a major operation over four or five months to root out the bandits. He also asked for the creation of a 15-kilometre wide safety zone around the city of Groznyi, for the more effective protection of the oil industry and related infrastructure against acts of sabotage and bandit attacks.[36]

In the following period, the local NKVD troops would vehemently suppress the remaining 'bandit' groups, liquidating dozens of 'professional bandit groups' and 'gangs of thieves' and killing and arresting hundreds of their members.[37] However, while the phenomenon of 'banditry' was thus significantly reduced by the end of 1940 in Checheno–Ingushetia,[38] and seems to have largely ceased to exist in most of the North Caucasian national

republics and regions as well, at least in some areas of Chechnia as well as in Dagestan it was never entirely eliminated up to the outbreak of war with Nazi Germany.[39] More importantly, however, as acknowledged in a report to the CC of the VKP (b) dated 7 November 1940 and compiled by Viktor Aleksandrovich Ivanov (1903–63), who would replace Bykov as first secretary of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, the problem of 'sectarianism' (*sektanstvo*) continued to exist and to be largely tolerated. Ivanov estimates that there were still some 20,000 *murids* organised in twenty-five different 'sects' (brotherhoods) in Checheno–Ingushetia, where the Khunta-Khadzhi 'sect' alone allegedly counted some 10,000 followers. As these organisations, according to Ivanov, agitate 'systematically' against Soviet power, their existence was dangerous, because 'in all [past] uprisings, the *murids* have played an active part'.[40]

It is unclear to what extent the figures provided by Ivanov were a reflection of social reality. We find other figures in other Soviet documents, and there seems to have been little understanding on the part of Soviet officials and Russian party cadres of the nature of Chechen society. It is, however, certain that while the state would never completely relinquish its claim to exercise total control and would continue to go after tradition and religion, it did switch to a notably more pragmatic course at the end of the 1930s by indicating a willingness to accept as ultimately inevitable the authority of loyal clan chiefs and religious authorities, the system of patronage or the private shadow economy.[41] After the purges of 1937/8, the central state acknowledged the need to put the project of total socialist transformation on hold not least because the increasing clout of Nazi Germany in Europe unmistakably indicated a looming war, and the Soviet leadership needed domestic stability more than ever. In return, however, the state expected that the plan goals would be achieved in all areas—namely in the spheres of agricultural production, output of industrial goods and (from the autumn of 1939 on) recruitment and deployment of soldiers for the Red Army. In other words: Moscow demanded unconditional loyalty even from those parts of the population that had so far barely been affected by Soviet modernity at all. But for the Chechens in particular, this was too much to ask. The mobilisation that was the specific expression of that loyalty did not attract their participation to the extent that the state required. This essentially marked the beginnings of the process that just a few years later was to lead to the tragedy of the deportation.

In Moscow's sight

In the central state's overall perception, the North Caucasus, with its predominantly Muslim populations, had always been regarded as a restless region that was difficult to control. Overall, however, Moscow had essentially shown little interest in its southern periphery. Also, the North Caucasian nationalities were not targeted by the terror that had repeatedly been visited upon other non-Russian ethnic groups in the 1930s. For instance, the Soviet leaders had already deported tens of thousands of Cossacks from the Kuban area as early as 1933 as punishment for resisting collectivisation. In 1935/6, the state terror was specifically aimed at Germans, Latvians, Estonians and Finns living in and around Leningrad, who were deported to Central Asia as a preventive measure with a view to the prospect of war with Germany. In Belarus and Ukraine, too, tens of thousands of Germans and Poles were persecuted and deported. In the course of the repression campaign of 1937/8, the state shifted its sights to the Kurds on the Soviet Union's border with Turkey, the Koreans in the Far East and Central Asian nomads on the Afghan border. In 1938/9, thousands of Iranians, mostly from the Azerbaijani ASSR, were exiled to Central Asia.[42] At the same time, the Chechens and other North Caucasian mountain peoples were not categorised as 'enemy nations' at the time.[43] In the absence of any real reason to distrust them, the question of their loyalty was simply not relevant in Moscow's view. Thus, it was not towards the end of the 1930s, against the background of a growing war threat in Europe, that the Caucasus was once more accorded greater scrutiny. The region, which in the past had repeatedly served as the stage for dangerous encounters between great powers, appeared vulnerable from Moscow's point of view, not least because the industrial areas of Maikop, Groznyi and Baku together accounted for almost all of the Soviet Union's petrol production and refining.[44]

Only one week before the war began with the German attack on Poland on 1 September 1939, the Soviet leadership was still convinced that the non-aggression pact with Berlin had secured its western flank for the longer term. During the period that followed, Stalin did not expect a German attack on his own country (which proved to be a disastrous miscalculation). Yet the Soviet Union nevertheless mobilised and modernised its armed forces on an unprecedented scale: between 1939 and 1941, the Red Army increased in manpower from two to five million troops.[45] As envisaged under the secret additional protocols of the German–Soviet treaty, which settled the extensive division of Eastern Europe between Germany and the

Soviet Union, the Red Army attacked Poland on 17 September 1939 and conquered its eastern half. On 30 November of the same year, the USSR began its attack on Finland, which, however, put up much stiffer resistance than expected. The Soviet Union was now at war. The Caucasus as the most important oil-producing and oil-refining region had a crucial role to play during these mechanised military operations.

The period when Pomerantsev was jotting down his observations also marked a change in the threat perception of the Soviet regime. Against the background of a looming war, Moscow began to scrutinise reports from the Caucasus more carefully. In a situation where Moscow's gaze was already increasingly focused on its southern border region, it was also Pomerantsev's negative report on the Chechen–Ingush republic that contributed to an already worrisome picture.

It was self-evident that Pomerantsev's reports to the editors of *Bezbozhnik* could not be communicated to the general public in their original form.[46] The situation as described by the journalist stood in stark contrast to the image projected by Soviet propaganda: according to the official version, the Chechens, Ingush and other North Caucasian 'mountaineers' were 'freedom-loving peoples' whose history had been marked by decades of struggle against the tsarist colonisers and the national bourgeoisie until they had finally come into their own under Soviet rule. Ever since, it was claimed, these peoples had developed culturally and economically in a way that had transformed them 'beyond recognition'. This, at any rate, was the view presented to Soviet readers of an article published in the daily newspaper *Izvestiia* on 15 January 1939 on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the unified Chechen–Ingush ASSR's foundation.[47]

While Pomerantsev's story was not released to the public, it did reach the highest echelons of power, where it generated a considerable amount of controversy. Emel'ian Mikhailovich Iaroslavskii (real name Gibel'man, 1878–1943), the editor of *Bezbozhnik*, was convinced that 'what [Pomerantsev] report[ed] about Checheno–Ingushetia deserves utmost attention' and decided to send a copy of his employee's report to Politburo member Andrei Andreev on 21 July 1939.[48] The reaction from Moscow was prompt: only four days later, the secretariat of the Communist Party's headquarters in Moscow forwarded Pomerantsev's report to the Chechen–Ingush party offices requesting their comment on the matter.[49]

In the Leninist–Stalinist system, criticism of the party was an element of ritualised communicative practice. Criticism was to inspire self-criticism. It

was to have an expurgatory function by recognising and eradicating mistakes and by identifying and, if necessary, eliminating the guilty parties.[50] It was not surprising that the Chechen–Ingush party office also responded with an admission of guilt to the external rebuke it had received. Nevertheless, four months passed before a meeting of the party leaders of the small Caucasus republic, chaired by First Party Secretary Bykov, declared itself guilty as charged. In his report of 22 November 1939, Bykov proposed a ten-point list of measures intended mainly to signal the party's willingness to tackle the problems. Party cells at the levels of the republic and individual districts, Komsomol organisations, the press, the *prokuratura* and state authorities—all were urged to take up the fight against *adat* and religion and to make proposals for removing excrescences from the past.[51]

In order to ensure better protection of women, Article 89 of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR's constitution, which codified equality of men and women, would be expanded; henceforth, 'resistance against the actual emancipation of women' would be penalised, an offence that specifically included 'forced marriage of minors, polygamy, dowries, or organising resistance against the admission of women to education, agricultural work, industry, governmental service, or socio-political life'.[52] In addition to these declarative measures, the party leadership also showed its determination to take action in other areas: by the end of 1939, half of all the *kolkhoz* managers in the republic, a total of 230 people, and twenty-one of the twenty-four chairmen of the district executive committees (singular *raiispolkom*) had been deposed, and charges were brought against many of them.[53]

While the authorities in the region believed that with these steps they had met their obligations towards Moscow, this did not mean that they agreed with Pomerantsev's criticisms. This is revealed in a detailed report prepared under the aegis of the Chechen–Ingush party secretary, N. Mikhailenko, ahead of the party resolutions of 22 November.[54] In exactly the same way as the Chechen–Ingush party leadership had done, Mikhailenko too initially had no option but to agree with Pomerantsev that the party's actions against the *teip* and *adat* traditions were inadequate, and that the accusations expressed in the letter were 'essentially correct'.[55] Nonetheless Mikhailenko, in his report, tried to put a more positive spin on the extremely negative picture conveyed by the Russian journalist, and where possible to divert blame for any shortcomings to former office-holders.[56] Mikhailenko first addressed each point of Pomerantsev's criticisms in turn; some of them he accepted without reservation, others he corrected or rejected. He then

accused the journalist of focusing his report solely on shortcomings, without saying a word about the major progress that had been made in overcoming 'the old reactionary order'.[57]

Mikhailenko did not deny the facts presented by Pomerantsev outright, but tried as far as possible to modify them. In his report, for example, he described the republic as essentially on the path towards modernity. He was not prepared to acknowledge *adat* and *teip* as immutable, immovable structures, but rather as survivals from a past that would surely be overcome, in a process that was only a matter of time. While he did not deny the existence of two parallel worlds, he was clearly reluctant to draw a clear line of demarcation between Russians and Chechens, the mountains and the plain. He decisively rejected the characterisation of the mountains as nothing but a breeding ground for banditry, along with the claim that the Chechens formed an anti-Russian 'front', and that as a result Russians were even afraid to venture into rural districts. While he saw room for improvement in the recruitment of young Chechens to work in industry, he opposed the 'peculiar, politically harmful proposal' of settling large numbers of non-Chechens in the region. In his report, Mikhailenko put this proposal down to the fact that Pomerantsev stayed in a district that was not representative of the overall situation in Checheno–Ingushetia.[58] Blame for the obstacles on the path towards Soviet modernity was attributed to segments of Chechen society in a milieu of 'kulaks, mullahs and gang elements'. These were claimed to have long received support from the 'Trotskiite–Bukharinist and bourgeois–nationalist' forces in society, which had an interest in preserving the old order with a view to causing harm to the Soviet Union. Here, he was referring to the leadership stratum of the republic that had seen most of its members arrested, and in some cases shot, during the purges of 1937/8.[59]

Despite these efforts, the Chechen–Ingush party leaders would not be able to pull out of the affair easily. For now, Moscow dispatched its own instructors to investigate the situation on the ground. Their report was extremely negative.[60] It laid the blame for declining output rates in the oil industry and agriculture squarely on the Chechen–Ingush party leadership, and held it responsible for a misguided cadre policy. The leaders were also accused of having made too little effort to promote Chechen and Ingush (i.e. the members of the 'titular nations') to positions in the state and party apparatus. Thus, while a large number of Chechens and Ingush had indeed been recently accepted as new party members, the instructors suspected that this had been done mainly for statistical reasons, since in reality, nobody was giving them

serious political schooling.[61] The instructors' report was especially critical regarding the matter of petroleum extraction. The instructors did not accept the explanation that production quotas had been set too high from the start and could not be met also due to purely geological as well as technological factors (petroleum production around Groznyi had already peaked at the beginning of the 1930s).[62]

The party leadership in Moscow was determined to set an example in this case, and reacted as it usually did: by imposing administrative sanctions. It was thus no great surprise when the Politburo in its decision of 26 April 1940 accused Bykov of being out of his depth and deposed him.[63] What was noticeable at this point was that the Politburo's findings of 26 April made no mention at all of the obsolete *teip* structures or the rules of *adat* that had been referenced in all of the previous reports. This shows quite clearly that the top echelon of the party was disposed to accept traditional power arrangements and certain traditional and religious customs as necessary evils if they ensured that stability and loyalty were guaranteed and planned output was met. However, the inability of Checheno–Ingushetia to do so was illustrated by the failed attempts to accelerate mobilisation to the degree demanded by the state. The most visible evidence of this was the unsuccessful recruitment campaign for the Red Army.

Weak state, difficult mobilisation

It was certainly no coincidence that the Politburo chose Viktor Ivanov, an experienced oil manager, as new first secretary of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. After all, Ivanov had led the petroleum department of the Chechen–Ingush party office up to this point. His task was now to rectify the problems in the republic, and in particular to bring oil extraction back on track.[64] And indeed, Ivanov was able to announce as early as mid-November 1940 that the 'enemy theory' according to which there was insufficient oil near Groznyi had already been disproved by an increase of production. The oil-refining industry near Groznyi that processed about one-third of all Soviet oil at the time had also managed to stabilise its output.[65]

In fact, however, Ivanov had little more control over the situation than his predecessor. While the petroleum industry recorded a few minor successes, the production figures from the *kolkhozy*, for example, still lagged far behind plan targets. Again under Ivanov's leadership, the Moscow instructors' reports continued to express the view that the republic's collective farms were still

operating 'extremely poorly', because the peasants preferred tending their own fields to going to work in the collective farms.[66] It was not against the law for peasants in the Soviet Union after collectivisation to be allowed to retain small plots of land and sheep and goats for solely private use.[67] However, the reports from Checheno–Ingushetia described a rather different situation, whereby peasants, particularly in mountain regions, were still farming private land and livestock to an extent that was excessive if compared with other parts of the Soviet Union.

In the Shatoievskii district, for example, of 9,000 hectares of arable land, only 900 hectares was collectively farmed. And of a total of 3,443 *kolkhoz* workers in the sector, 1,300 owned private plots of 2 to 10 hectares.[68] All attempts by the state to make any substantial changes to this situation failed. In the spring of 1940, when the Chechen–Ingush party leadership attempted in certain mountain regions to collectivise large tracts of land that were in the private ownership of *kolkhoz* workers, this prompted outbreaks of violence, leading the authorities to abandon the idea. The situation in the mountain regions was reportedly still tense in the autumn of 1940.[69]

Since it was ultimately the party that became the target of criticism when such events occurred, Ivanov was prudent enough to notify Moscow in exhaustive detail of his new plans to bring about changes in the agricultural sector. Presumably with a view to protecting his own situation in the event of his efforts too being unsuccessful, he made no attempt to gloss over the situation, and instead painted it in the darkest possible colours. This probably also explains his report to the Moscow party leadership of 7 November 1940, seeking permission to definitively implement collectivisation in the mountain regions in 1941–2, and massively reduce the level of the individual farming of land and livestock (which did not, however, go ahead because of the start of the war with Germany on 22 June 1941).[70]

The state's difficulties in conducting measures in an orderly and effective fashion were finally revealed unambiguously in the campaign to mobilise and deploy men for the Red Army: on 1 September 1939, a law took effect that introduced the military draft for all fit male citizens, without restrictions and irrespective of their ethnicity or religious allegiances.[71] This marked the first time in Soviet history that members of non-Russian indigenous nationalities of the North Caucasus, which had previously only served voluntarily in the army, could be drafted on a regular basis. The same applied to other non-Russian peoples, which partly served in separate 'national regiments'.[72] This action by the state has to be seen in the context of the efforts undertaken in

1938 towards the creation of a unified army in which Russian would be the language of everyday communication.[73]

In view of their distinguished fighting tradition, the highlanders of the North Caucasus could not be accused of having shirked military service in the past when they were given the chance. Like the tsar's administrators before them, however, the Bolsheviks too were quite reluctant to give large bodies of men from the Caucasus access to weapons and military training. After all, the Red Army had been kept busy well into the 1920s confiscating weapons from the male population in these regions in order to diminish the potential for insurgencies. It is true that the Soviet state was promoting the cultures and languages of non-Russian nationalities in the framework of their policy of *korenizatsiia*. However, when it came to national security, there were clear limits to the confidence of the leaders in their own citizens. Indeed, in this sensitive area, the Soviet leaders treated the Caucasian 'mountaineers' no differently than the tsars before them had done: as *inorodtsy*, as aliens. While there had been repeated similar efforts to step up army recruitment among the indigenous non-Russian population of the North Caucasus in the early Soviet era, they had always been refused by the responsible authorities.[74]

The foundations for introducing universal conscription had in principle been laid in the new Soviet constitution of 1936, which in Articles 132 and 133 stated that 'every citizen of the USSR' was obliged to defend the fatherland.[75] In that same year, the army leadership began preparations for creating a brigade comprising North Caucasians for subsequent integration into the Red Army. There had been very little participation by Chechens and Ingush in this process, however.[76] When the first recruitment campaigns were subsequently launched after the corresponding law on the general draft took effect, it was not only the responsible local authorities who were completely unable to cope. The population, which had so far not been admitted to military service, was also not prepared; the purpose of conscription was not clear to them. This was especially true for the Chechen–Ingush republic, which was the focus of an investigation to ascertain the 'facts about mass avoidance of service in the Red Army'—a study that the Red Army's headquarters for political propaganda commissioned one year after conscription had begun.[77]

According to the report, a total of 6,246 men were registered in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR in the 1939 round of conscription. Of these, 3,325 were directly inducted into the Red Army. The remaining 2,921 people who initially served in the reserves were also drafted into the armed forces on the

orders of the army staff of the North Caucasus Military District in February and June 1940. However, 529 people were reported to have absented themselves from military induction by escaping from either the army's assembly places or its rail transports, or by not showing up at the designated assembly points in the first place. Of those drafted into the Red Army, eighty-four soldiers had already deserted by the autumn of 1940. As of 18 September 1940, 180 deserters had been arrested.[78]

The inspectors believed one of the key reasons for this was the completely unacceptable work of the Communist Party, Komsomol, and other Soviet and societal organisations ahead of mobilisation. In some districts, even Communists are alleged to have sheltered deserters. Of even greater concern to the observers was the phenomenon of district and village authorities submitting false age statements en masse, or issuing all sorts of forged certificates to excuse males from military service. As a result, the statistics for individual districts showed only a few hundred instead of the expected thousands of men fit for military service. For instance, out of a total of 4,221 people of military age between eighteen and fifty, the Achkhoi-Martanovsii district had listed only 643 for the armed forces. In the Shatoievskii district, the number was 852 out of a total of 2,892 males. Incomplete data and falsified statistics made it difficult or impossible even for the investigators to arrive at an accurate description of the situation. They estimated that, across the entire republic, between 60 and 70 per cent of all potential draftees remained unregistered.[79]

Even obvious violations of the law, such as forgeries of birth dates on a massive scale, were difficult to sanction. As an explanation, the investigators noted that in many cases, family bonds and bribes had played an important role in securing protection for relatives and friends. However, even among the Chechens who were party members, there appears to have been little interest in denouncing other Chechens for such offences.[80] One important reason for this was apparently the Chechens' fear of incurring feuds with other parties. First Party Secretary Ivanov himself complained in his report of 7 November 1940 that due to fear of retribution or violations of *adat*, it was near impossible to expect support from Chechen party members in tracking down 'bandits', especially if they were in any way related.[81]

As always in such cases, the report investigating mass evasion of induction to the Red Army triggered further investigations intended to ensure that these findings were correct. Essentially, however, these follow-up reports also agreed that the local authorities were mainly to blame for the

deficiencies, as they had failed to prepare properly for mobilisation and implemented it shoddily. Even the explanation that most of the draftees who had failed to show up at the designated locations had intentionally deserted was dismissed in one of these reports by the instructors; rather, it stated, the conscripts had been informed too late and had not had enough time to arrive at the designated gathering places. The responsible authorities, it was argued, had failed to allow for the fact that travel from the mountain areas to the muster points often took three to four days. Nevertheless, these men had been falsely accused of desertion and arrested.[82] Subsequently, the army dismissed the military commissars responsible for recruitment in nine districts of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. At the next recruitment drive in 1940, organisation was evidently better: of the 5,463 called up, 5,442 indeed showed up at the muster points.[83]

It is noticeable that while all these reports give detailed information on the problems of recruitment and induction to the armed forces, they are silent on the motivations that drove many people to avoid service. There was no mention of the possibility that numerous men might be shirking service because they did not want to risk their lives for abstract Soviet interests somewhere in Finland, or that avoidance of military service might be based on a fundamental distrust of the state on the part of many people.[84] Giving voice to such notions would have been politically risky at the time, because they would have amounted to criticism of the Soviet leaders' decision to treat all citizens equally when it came to military service. This basic concept would, however, soon be challenged once more—not by the instructors, who only attacked the various local authorities, but by the very leaders of the Soviet Union.

By the time the German Wehrmacht began Operation Barbarossa, its attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, tens of thousands of men from the North Caucasus, including thousands of Chechens and Ingush, were already serving in the ranks of the Red Army. They subsequently participated in the military operations on various fronts, and were given medals and other awards for their services during the war.[85] However, if it had been difficult enough up to this point to mobilise members of the mountain peoples for military service, they had yet to face their true test. This war, which for the Soviet Union was initially nothing less than a sheer battle for survival, would also determine the fate of individual North Caucasian peoples.

The Nazi–Soviet war—and the regime's fear of its own citizens

When historians debate the reasons for Moscow's decision to deport individual North Caucasian peoples, it is essentially a debate over the degree of their loyalty, which is measured in terms of how many North Caucasians served in the ranks of the Red Army, how many refused to serve and how many joined rebel groups.[86] While contemporary North Caucasian historians condemn the deportations as an unjustified act by citing the great merits of these people in fighting Nazi Germany,[87] conservative Russian historians regard the numerous desertions, the widespread phenomenon of anti-Soviet revolts and cases of collaboration with the German forces as clear evidence of anti-Soviet activities and accordingly voice their understanding for the party leaders' decision to deport these peoples.[88] However, this debate is largely superfluous because in the end, everything at that time depended on how the party leadership in Moscow perceived the situation, and what it decided to do as a result.

The attack of the German forces on the Soviet Union marked the beginning of the greatest and most devastating military conflict that the country had ever experienced in recent history. However, for the Soviet Union, the war was not only about warding off an external aggressor; the country's leadership also regarded it as a test of fire in terms of domestic politics. From the start, Moscow was concerned about the cohesion of the nation and devoted no less attention to the presumed threat from internal enemies than to the German menace. At his first public appearance after the outbreak of war, on 3 July 1941, Stalin not only appealed to the people and the armed forces to stand together and protect the fatherland but also urged them outright to engage in an unforgiving struggle against domestic 'deserters, fearmongerers, purveyors of false rumours ... spies and saboteurs'.[89] The Soviet leaders' fear of their own people was expressed even more visibly in the order issued by the People's Commissariat for Defence on 16 August 1941 identifying deserters and defectors as a dangerous phenomenon that might weaken the armed forces' combat-effectiveness.[90]

Indeed, the Red Army found itself facing the problem of defections and desertions by all nationalities on all fronts, thus further fuelling phobias about the spectre of the internal enemy. The precise numbers of defectors among North Caucasian nationalities is disputed and difficult to establish. A Western study estimates that about 100,000 people from all ethnicities of the North and South Caucasus region, including not only defectors but also members of

the Caucasian diaspora and prisoners of war, are alleged to have actively participated in the German Wehrmacht military operations against the Soviet Union. Even more served in various German construction and auxiliary units.[91] Defectors' statements contained in German military reports largely confirm that, on the Caucasus front, desertion among the non-Russians soldiers was widespread, even though the men knew of the risks involved when caught in the attempt.[92] From these reports, it is evident that while Chechens also defected and went over to the German side, they were, if the opportunity presented itself, much more likely to flee 'to their nearby mountains',[93] or hide in the woods and hills organising armed groups and waiting for the Germans.[94]

It is in this context that the oppressive measures ordered by the Soviet military high command on the instructions of the party leadership is to be understood: the army was permitted to shoot deserters on the spot and without due process. The category of 'deserter' included not just anyone who absconded from their unit or defected to the enemy but could also be applied to someone who shrank from attacking.[95] Illustrative, in this respect, is the account of a Chechen who in August 1942 went over to the Germans, and recalls events in an interview several years later (the following quote is from the unpublished original English interview transcript of 1951):

> In December of that year [1940] I was asked to serve in the Red Army, to defend the Chechen–Ingush Republic against the common enemy. So I found myself in the army as a cavalry man. At this time two divisions were supposed to be organized exclusively of Chechentsi and Ingushi. These two divisions were to be composed of [16,000] men but many of the men fled to the mountains as soon as they got their arms. ... However, the Soviets recruited new men and did not give them arms immediately. ... We were transferred to Krasnodar. There the first eskadron received arms early in 1942. Prior to that we had only daggers and swords (*shashki*). However, they gave this eskadron Finnish rifles together with 10 bullets. But that night the men in this eskadron fled to the woods because no one wanted to fight for the Soviet regime. People were barefoot and poorly fed. They caught 8 of those who had fled, because they had poor horses, and they shot them in front of us. Before they shot them they asked them why they had fled and they said openly that they were not going to fight for Russian interests. We were then sent to Rostov on the Don where [Semen Budennyi] ordered that arms be given to us although he said that the government, and he was in agreement with the government, had been against giving us arms since we were against the government. However, he said that we could atone for this (*opravdat' sebia*) by fighting for the Chechen autonomous republic. A Kabardinian division was with us and we were

> thrown against the Germans in the summer of 1942 in [Rostov-on-Don]. On August 4, 1942, I led 60 men over to the German side and we surrendered. ... The Germans did not take our arms away from us since we were Chechens and Moslems. We moved to the rear with our arms intact. We were offered the opportunity to go into the SS [Schutzstaffel] but we refused. Then we had our arms taken away from us. I worked for the German counter-intelligence but I did not fight for the Germans.[96]

In this tense atmosphere resulting from a fear of internal enemies combined with desperation due to the heavy defeats in the early phases of the war, certain non-Russian nationalities were also targeted by the state terror, as has often happened in such cases. Repressive measures could be visited upon anyone merely for being a member of a nation hostile to the Soviet Union or of a minority that had ethnic ties with nations outside of the state territory. The most blatant example of this was seen in the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 28 August 1941 to dissolve the Volga German ASSR and ordering the deportation of the entire ethnic German population to Central Asia.[97] Other nationalities that had ethnic ties beyond the national boundaries were not immediately deported in each case, but were often no longer drafted into the Red Army after the outbreak of war. Members of such ethnic groups that were already serving in the armed forces were either transferred to the reserves or dismissed from the armed forces altogether. This was the fate, for instance, of the Adzharians (Muslim Georgians) who lived on the border with Turkey, or the Kurds in the settlement areas near the Iranian border. However, other, sometimes much smaller peoples were also affected, such as the Khevsurians or the Svans living in the Georgian highlands. Despite the ruling of 1 September 1939 that all citizens were to be treated equally, certain ethic groups such as the Germans, Turks, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Poles, Finns, Balts and Bulgarians living in the Soviet Union were never subject to general conscription. When the war broke out, soldiers from one of these peoples serving voluntarily in the military were often removed from the ranks of the armed forces.[98] It is important to note, however, that probably not all members of these peoples were discharged from the armed forces, as is evident from army statistics on awarded decorations.[99]

In this most difficult phase of the war, instead of devoting all its resources solely and exclusively to combating the German aggression, and endeavouring to mobilise every able-bodied male for this purpose, the Soviet leadership focused on excluding from the army all ethnicities that it saw as potentially hostile to it, or as unreliable. Rather than being based on any kind of active

stance adopted by members of these nationalities against the Soviet Union, this was a preventive measure, designed to forestall possible alliances between external enemies and domestic sympathisers. This was the same attitude that had prompted the ethnic deportations ordered before the outbreak of war. In the North Caucasus Military District alone (without North Ossetia and Dagestan), according to army figures, as of 1 February 1942 there were 75,000 able-bodied males who had not been called up for active military service in the army for political reasons.[100] In a sense, the recruitment and mobilisation policy of the Soviet leadership in the years of the Second World War therefore reflected the extent of the distrust expressed by Moscow towards the individual ethnicities within the country.[101]

Against this background, it appears remarkable that the non-Russian natives from the North Caucasus initially continued to be tolerated in the armed forces. However, since the Soviet leaders had never had high expectations of these peoples in the first place, it was only to be expected that any negative development, be it ever so small, that was reported from this part of the Soviet Union could provide occasion for terminating regular recruitment. And, indeed, reports from the region were not very positive, as the mobilisation campaigns undertaken after the outbreak of war were again trouble-ridden: in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, for instance, a first consignment of 8,000 men and then another of 4,733 men were mustered as part of a first major mobilisation drive in the late summer and autumn of 1941. However, a total of 631 of these failed to show up at their assembly points. In a second wave of mobilisation in the spring of 1942, only 4,395 of the 14,577 men subject to military conscription were drafted into the armed forces. At the time, the republic reportedly already counted 13,500 deserters.[102] It was likely due to these facts that the army leadership, prompted by the People's Commissariat for Defence, issued an order on 14 April 1942 transferring all regular soldiers and non-commissioned officers of Chechen and Ingush ethnicity to the reserves.[103] According to a German report (based on a defectors' statement), this decision was taken because the Chechens were 'repeatedly rebellious' and the Red Army saw them as 'totally unreliable elements' and therefore largely 'worthless'.[104]

In correspondence with this directive, it seems that most Chechens and Ingush were indeed dismissed from their army units, at least in the Caucasus theatre of war.[105] However, the real turnaround in terms of recruitment in the North Caucasus did not come until Hitler gave the order on 28 June 1942 to open up a southern front and launch the Operation Fall Blau (Case Blue), the

attack towards the Caucasus in order to capture the Caucasian oil fields.[106] Two days later, the State Defence Committee headed by Stalin, which served as a kind of war cabinet in coordinating the overall defence of the country,* issued an order to stop recruitment among the peoples of the North Caucasus.[107] On 24 August, a specific corresponding order for the members of Dagestani ethnicities was issued. While the Ossetians were not specifically mentioned in these directives, they were de facto also included under the order (it was, however, not until later that the end of recruitment was also formally expanded to North Ossetia).[108]

In the case of the peoples in the western part of the North Caucasus, including the Karachaians, the Cherkess and the Adyghe people, the question of recruitment resolved itself during the summer of 1942, when the German forces managed to occupy the areas inhabited by these peoples.[109] However, the Wehrmacht operation was a failure as it did not result in the occupation of the rest of the Caucasus, and Hitler thus proved unable to capture the Groznyi and Baku oil fields. The German forces only managed to occupy the oil installations at Maikop in Adygeia, which had largely been destroyed by the retreating Soviet army. Already in early 1943, but ultimately after the defeat at Stalingrad, the Wehrmacht was beginning to withdraw from the Caucasus. During January and February 1943, almost the entire North Caucasus was liberated from its German occupiers.[110]

The recruitment freeze imposed by the leadership in Moscow did not mean, however, that men from the North Caucasus were now completely excluded from the armed forces. For one, not all members of the North Caucasian mountain peoples who were already serving in the army at the time the directive was approved were dismissed.[111] Apparently, the Red Army dismissed the soldiers who were serving in the Caucasus itself, but not the ones who were already on duty on various fronts outside of their homelands. This is evident from the fact that among the North Caucasian deportees were thousands of army men who were, by the time of the start of the deportations of their peoples, taken from their units and exiled to Central Asia.[112] Also, the Soviet leadership approved the possibility of *dobrovol'stvo*, or voluntary

* The State Defence Committee of the USSR (Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony; GKO) was established on 30 June 1941, bringing together the political, military and economic leadership of the USSR. Besides Stalin, who acted as its chairman, the committee's members included Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov and Beriia. In February 1942, they were joined by Mikoian, Voznesenskii and Kaganovich; in November 1944, by Bulganin who replaced Voroshilov.

induction, as an alternative to regular military service after the recruitment freeze had been imposed.

The institution of *dobrovol'stvo* was intended to serve as filter that would only let those serve in the armed forces who were willing and prepared to lay down their lives for the Soviet cause.[113] However, at the same time, this also meant that recruitment increasingly had an ideological function: the number of volunteers was an indicator for the Soviet leadership to measure the degree of patriotism of a given ethnic group. The local leaders were also quite aware of this. They were already displeased with the recruitment freeze and regarded *dobrovol'stvo* as a way of compensating. While recruitment into the army was officially voluntary, it was nevertheless conducted like a regular conscription drive. In order to avoid falling behind in their competition with other North Caucasus administrative territories, the officials in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR also appear to have made use of coercive measures by drafting men against their wishes and sending them off to the army in guarded convoys.[114]

In reality, however, the republican authorities only achieved the opposite of what they were aiming for. Not only did many Chechens desert at the earliest possibility but the Chechen–Ingush republic also returned significantly lower numbers than other national regions such as North Ossetia or Dagestan. Out of a total of 4,208 men (mostly Chechens) who were drafted in the framework of the volunteer mobilisation in Checheno-Ingushetia by mid-March 1943, only 1,850 were ultimately sent to the army.[115] Subsequently, the leaders of the republic refrained from further mobilisation campaigns.[116]

The exact figures of Chechens and Ingush ultimately serving in the Soviet military during the Second World War are highly disputed in the literature. Not only is there no reliable data but it is also difficult to count the exact numbers given that many of those enlisted were later again discharged or put to the reserve. Also, not all those who served their country during the war did so as soldiers in Red Army units, as some also served in other functions. According to Chechen historian Kh.A. Gakaev, around 17,000 persons were mobilised within the Chechen–Ingush ASSR at the start of the war, around 50 per cent of whom were ethnic Chechens and Ingush. Altogether, according to these accounts, 50,000 people were mobilised, about 30,000 of them Chechens.[117] Chechen historian Musa Ibragimov, in a more recent monograph, claims that 'all in all, the Chechen–Ingush people sent 27,500 people to the defense of the homeland', not counting some '17,000 people who were members of militias tasked with the defence of Groznyi and its surroundings'.[118]

Even if we assume that these figures are correct, they do not provide an accurate picture on the numbers of Chechen and Ingush actually taking part in the Second World War as regular members of the Red Army, since many deserted or were transfered to the reserve. A more realistic idea may be obtained from data on the numbers of Chechens and other North Caucasians discharged from the Red Army and deported to Central Asia. According to data from the Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, among the Chechens, Ingush, Balkars and Karachaians discharged from the Red Army and deported to Central Asia in 1943/4 were 710 officers, 1,696 non-commissioned officers and 6,488 regular soldiers.[119] Add to this people killed or perished during the war (according to recent statistical calculations, about 2,300 Chechens and Ingush were killed or missing in action during the war with Nazi Germany[120]), it can be assumed that the number of Chechens and Ingush actively serving as soldiers of the Red Army during the Second World War is far lower than the figures provided by Chechen historians.

What mattered in the end, however, was how the Soviet leadership viewed the situation on the ground, and Moscow made sure to keep precise track of developments. In particular, Lavrentii Pavlovich Beriia (1899–1953), who at the time was the head of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and member of the State Defence Committee, was very aware that with regard to the mobilisation efforts in the context of *dobrovol'stvo*, some areas were more successful than others. While he repeatedly praised the Ossetians and the peoples of Dagestan for their active participation in the war effort, he refrained from mentioning the achievements of the other North Caucasian peoples.[121] In retrospect, this may explain why the Ossetians and members of the Dagestani peoples were later spared deportation (notwithstanding the fact that, in Dagestan, not unlike in Chechnia, the NKVD was confronted with a fairly large insurgency movement during the war.[122])

In addition to the difficulty of mobilising men for the armed forces, the North Caucasus—like other non-Russian settlement areas on the perimeter of the Soviet Union, especially the western part of Ukraine—faced the problem of anti-Soviet insurgencies. During the autumn of 1941, separate local departments for the struggle against banditry were formed in many parts of the Soviet Union, including, in the North Caucasus, in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR and in the republic of Dagestan.[123] The problem of banditry, however, gained particular traction only in the second half of 1942 as the Wehrmacht launched its attack southwards. One may gauge the extent of

these revolts from the fact that armed units of the NKVD by their own account in 1942 conducted no fewer than forty-two military operations against insurgents in the North Caucasus (not counting Red Army operations) and liquidated 2,342 'bandits'.[124]

The 'bandit' phenomenon, in turn, was particularly prevalent in the Chechen–Ingush republic, where several thousand people (contemporary sources give varying figures) joined the various armed groups and their leaders in the mountains at the peak of the insurgency in the summer and autumn of 1942.[125] In some mountain areas, the state structures largely collapsed during the course of 1942. Numerous *kolkhoz* managers, state functionaries and party members went underground or even decided to join the rebels themselves. One Soviet report makes clear that, as the front approached in August 1942, eighty party and state employees of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR laid down their work and went into hiding, including sixteen leading party members in various districts, eight leading members of district executive committees and fourteen *kolkhoz* managers.[126]

From reading contemporary NKVD reports, one may easily get the impression that not only did the uprising, especially in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, take on mass character but that the key leaders of the insurgency (including namely Mairbek Sheripov and Khasan Israilov) coordinated their actions among themselves and were also able to count on the help of 'religious authorities'. This, for example, is evident from an NKVD report describing the first large armed uprising in Chechnia in late October 1941 with its centre in the village of Barsoi in the Shateovskii district.[127] However, as will be shown in more depth in the next chapter, not only the uprising in Barsoi but the entire anti-Soviet insurgency was poorly organised from the beginning, there were often far fewer rebels taking part in such undertakings than mentioned in the NKVD reports, and the individual combat groups were not really cooperating but were often at odds with one another. Also, even though we find evidence in the sources that there were also 'mullahs' among the insurgents (among them Dzhavatkhan Murtazaliev, a religious authority who took part in the Gotsinskii rebellion in the early 1920s and was also a leading figure in the uprisings during collectivisation before he went underground[128]), these rebellions were not religiously motivated, and unlike the dire picture presented by Ivanov in his report of 7 November 1940 regarding the problem of 'sectarianism', the individual Sufi brotherhoods and their leaders seem not to have played any significant role. Even the German

special operation units deployed behind the frontline in Chechnia realised that the situation inside Chechnia was marked by severe tensions between the various groups and their leaders. Not only did the rebels lack weapons and ammunition, but due to these infights, destroying the bands of insurgents was easy work for the Soviet security forces. Between 30 September 1941 and 1 June 1943, the NKVD reported that it had 'liquidated' fifty-five 'bandit groups' in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR alone and had arrested a total of 5,383 anti-Soviet minded people.[129]

The problem of banditry in this republic was, from the Soviet point of view, further compounded by the fact that the rebels in Checheno–Ingushetia maintained negligible, but nevertheless traceable contacts with the Germans, who between July/August 1942 and August 1943 deployed small groups (some eighty men altogether) behind the front to carry out sabotage and reconnaissance missions and establish contact with the insurgents, all of this being part of the German plan to conquer the Caucasus and its oilfields.[130] These troops consisted mainly of members of the North Caucasian diaspora recruited and trained by the Germans in advance of the operations (according to NKVD reports, two out of the eight groups parachuted into the Chechen–Ingush ASSR were led by Germans, the other by North Caucasians).[131] From reports written by members of the 'Special operation "Shamil"' (*Sonderunternehmen 'Schamil'*), who were deployed behind the frontline in order to prepare the grounds for capturing and securing the oil production facilities and refineries near Maikop and Groznyi, it is evident that the Germans were of the opinion that the general mood among the North Caucasians, notably the Chechens, was deeply anti-Bolshevik.[132] Thus, First Lieutenant Reinhard Lange, the commander of one of the German paratroop forces that was deployed south of Groznyi in August 1942, notes in his report that 'given the attitude of Chechens and Ingush, it appears possible, to recruit from these areas at least 50,000 men, whose combat value [*Kampfwert*] through the right training could excel [the combat value] of other indigenous units substantially'.[133]

Given that Lange and other members of this special operation met with only a small section of society, it was impossible for them to form a comprehensive picture of the actual situation in the Chechen–Ingush republic, let alone in other areas of the non-Russian-populated North Caucasus. But even if it is assumed that many people indeed harboured sympathies for the Germans, there was never wholesale collaboration with the enemy, if only for the simple reason that the territory of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR (apart from a small sector at Mozdok) was never occupied by the

Germans. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership later adopted 'collaborationism' into the catalogue of accusations used as a pretext to expel the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples from their homelands.

Another negative development that was closely observed in Moscow was the fact that, as the front approached, agricultural output also largely collapsed in the non-occupied parts of the Caucasus (i.e. in Checheno-Ingushetia and Dagestan), and recovered only slowly after the German retreat. This is particularly noticeable in the reports of the Central Party Control Commission (Tsentral'naia kontrol'naia komissiia VKP (b)), the highest body of control and discipline of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[134] A report about Checheno-Ingushetia of 26 November 1942, for example, states that the republic's leadership was considering the evacuation of Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) but had completely neglected work on *kolkhozy*. In some of the republic's districts, farming is reported to have ceased altogether. In the autumn, according to figures reported by the local branch of the Central Party Control Commission, over the republic as a whole, 58.2 per cent of the sunflower crop and just 21.3 per cent of the maize crop had been harvested.[135] Reports from Dagestan were similarly negative. Many Avars were reportedly driven by hunger to come down from the mountains to the lowlands. Reports of food theft from *kolkhozy* are more prevalent for Dagestan than for its neighbouring republic.[136] Due to mistakes in food policy, the Soviet leadership even decided to replace the Dagestani party leaders, which seems to have had a positive effect on the situation within the republic and in the recruitment of volunteers.[137]

It would be a distortion of reality to regard all these phenomena as mere hostility of parts of society towards the Soviet Union, as certain conservative Russian historians would have it.[138] The many reports of sabotage and food theft in the years 1942 and 1943, for example, were often due not to individuals trying to exploit the distress of the state for their own benefit, but to desperate actions of a population that was in dire straits and starving due to a failed distribution policy on the part of the local authorities, who supplied food for the troops but not for the ordinary people.[139] As in previous years, the difficulties in the 1941/2 mobilisation campaign were also the result of a lack of organisation and information. Many men who avoided military service and hid out in the forests and mountains were not trying actively to promote the collapse of Soviet power, but because they did not wish to go to war for a cause that was incomprehensible to them. However, many also shirked military service

because they were afraid of mistreatment in the army, a fear that was often justified. For non-Russian peoples, especially if, like the Chechens, they spoke little or no Russian, were frequently discriminated against by Russian officers. The latter often refused to arm the mountain people at all after regular recruitment.[140] Furthermore, the Red Army itself was often quite hard-nosed in its dealings with locals and antagonised them through inconsiderate behaviour.[141]

The Soviet leadership must have been quite aware of this. If the North Caucasian 'bandits' had indeed consisted entirely of inveterate anti-Soviet militants fighting for a free Chechnia, the Soviet leadership would not have succeeded in persuading them to voluntarily give up their armed resistance in the repeated amnesty campaigns that were conducted during the war in the struggle against banditry.[142] In fact, we read in NKVD reports of numerous occasions where 'bandits', when accepting the offer to surrender, were amnestied (i.e. 'legalised' (*legalisovano*)), in the jargon of the time. According to one NKVD report, in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, between September and December 1942, thirty-eight gangs were 'liquidated' numbering a total of 1,145 'bandits'. Of these, 257 were killed, 489 arrested and 399 'legalised'. In Dagestan, during the same time period, 1,178 bandits out of 1,706 bandits were 'legalised', the rest was killed or arrested.[143]

The situation on the ground in Checheno-Ingushetia at the end of 1942 is illustrated by a report dated 4 December 1942. It was commissioned by the Main Political Administration of the Worker–Peasant Red Army (Glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie Raboche-Krest'ianskoi Krasnoi Armii; GlavPURKKA) and analyses the situation on the South Caucasus front.[144] The report's authors (under the lead of Brigadier Commissar Stavskii) initially deplore the prevalent view among the army leadership that the non-Russian peoples are unable or unwilling to fight. They criticise the often-condescending attitude of the Russian-dominated army leadership towards the Caucasian peoples, which they write are often referred to in pejorative terms as 'blacks' (*chernye*). The officers are said to be particularly supercilious towards those soldiers who speak no Russian. The rapporteurs do not try to conceal the 'negative phenomena' among non-Russian soldiers, including wholesale defection to the enemy as well as cases of desertion; however, they state that the same is true for Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The report also cites examples from the front showing that non-Russian divisions had accounted for themselves very well, and argues that it is unfair to draw conclusions about entire peoples based on isolated incidents. While the authors describe the

overall situation on the South Caucasus front, their accounts of relations between the army and the local population are based mainly on Chechen-Ingushetia, where the report identifies several serious problems:

> There is a noticeable hostile attitude towards the Red Army [in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR] ('Why did they come here into our country—to fight?'), there is evidence of openly anti-Soviet statements ('We don't want war, we are neutral'). There are also cases of hostile activity, German espionage, [illegal] arms purchases, killing of members of the armed forces, formations of anti-Soviet groups based in the mountains, and sporadic statements wishing the Germans would come. The [Red Army] men are surprised that the Chechens and Ingush they meet behind the frontlines are often well and expensively dressed and hanging about. While the soldiers are at least told (but by no means always and everywhere) about the reasons why the male population [of the North Caucasus] is not admitted to the armed forces, it is much more difficult to explain why the [local] population is permitted to be idle while at the same time, the harvest on the field is not taken in on time and parts of the Red Army have to be deployed [to work in the fields] in order to prevent the harvest from spoiling [while] only the females of the local population work, and so on. The soldiers enquire why the male labour force is not used elsewhere, where it is desperately needed, on the labour front, in building roads, in the factories, etc.[145]

Despite these critical observations, the rapporteurs decline to impute an anti-Soviet attitude to the entire population. While parts of the population did display such sentiments, they underline that this was also due to the behaviour of the Red Army, which often disregarded local traditions and lifestyle. Therefore, the report argues, increased political education is necessary both among the locals and within the Red Army. The authors not only demand more awareness of local customs and traditions but even propose that these could be used in the fight against the Germans. Thus, the population should be incited to a blood-feud against the fascist occupiers, and the spiritual leaders should be encouraged to issue a call for *gazavat*, a holy war, against the Germans.[146]

While targeted propaganda among non-Russians had largely been neglected in the Red Army up to this point, newspapers now began to use heroic figures and images from the past in a targeted manner by glorifying the nineteenth-century struggle for freedom against tsarist Russia or referring to stereotypes about the 'fearless Caucasian', whom they contrasted with the 'ugly German' in order to win the people over for a common struggle. The Red Army's propaganda department also leveraged traditional topics such as

blood-feuds or *gazavat* against the Germans as part of its social mobilisation efforts.[147] The sources do not report, however, whether this sort of propaganda had any tangible effects on the morale and combat readiness of the Chechens and other North Caucasians.

In any case, none of this would change the Soviet leadership's insistence on a complete ban on regular conscription of North Caucasians until the end of the war. The Soviet leaders harboured enormous distrust of the non-Russian and non-Orthodox parts of the population. Evidence of this can be found in their recruitment policy not only towards the indigenous non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus but also towards the non-Slavic population in general. For instance, in the autumn of 1943, when the German attack had been warded off and the Red Army was already marching westwards, Moscow for the first time imposed a recruitment freeze on the larger non-Russian peoples of the South Caucasus and Central Asia as well.[148] Desertions and an inclination to refuse military service were a widespread phenomenon in these parts of the country as well.[149]

To be sure, in his public appearances, Stalin himself never referred to the nationalities' problem, which manifested itself in particular in conscription policy. Throughout the war, he emphasised the 'indestructible friendship among peoples' and described the war as a 'common cause of all workers without regard to nationality or religious affiliation'.[150] Since the nationality issue therefore did not officially exist, Moscow was cautious enough to avoid giving detailed reasons for the respective decrees concerning restrictions on the draft and did not respond to related queries from local authorities.[151]

The tragedy of deportation

The Soviet leadership did not deport the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples because of any real security concerns, as the remaining rebels posed no serious threat to Soviet power after the German retreat. While many armed men remained in hiding in the mountains, and numerous ambushes and minor revolts still took place in the course of 1943, the major rebel groups had all been smashed by the beginning of the year. The economic situation also began to stabilise slightly after the German troops had begun to withdraw from the territory of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR.[152] Not an imminent threat perception, but the unique occasion brought about by the wartime situation was crucial for the Soviet leaders' decision to engage on the deportation project. The extraordinary conditions

during the war created the opportunity to impose order once and for all on a region that seemed very difficult to control. Additionally, it was easier for the Soviet leadership during wartime than in peace to provide the necessary troops and infrastructure (such as train wagons), since the armed forces had already been mobilised.

Deportation was a measure that had been applied on multiple occasions in Russian and Soviet history. The particularly radical and systematic manner in which this deportation was carried out (deportation of all members of a people declared to be a hostile ethnicity, except for just a few families) reflected the state's claim to total control, but was also possible due to a simple practical reason: the 'nationality' (*natsional'nost*) of all Soviet citizens (except Russians) was entered in their internal passport and registered with the relevant authorities. Every Soviet citizen was therefore assigned an ethnic category. Whereas, during the measures taken against the 'kulaks' it was first necessary to establish who they were, the attribute of ethnic origin was unambiguous and absolute. Any individual, even an officer on active service in the army, could be identified as an enemy and punished accordingly.

But it was not just the comprehensive nature of this deportation that made it different from earlier such operations. On this occasion, the measure had some unmistakeable characteristics of genocide: while it was not aimed at physically annihilating an entire ethnic group, it was accepted that it would entail a large number of casualties. Estimates on this point vary, but relying on data provided in NKVD reports, it is likely that well over a fifth of all exiled North Caucasians died during the journey or in the first years of their exile (probably more than 130,000 people).[153] In view of the high numbers of victims, it is certainly appropriate to see genocidal elements in this undertaking.

It is not clear in all cases exactly when the Soviet leadership decided on the deportations of the respective peoples. It is, however, certain that these were not operations planned far in advance. In the case of the Karachaians, deported in November 1943, two different scenarios have been put forward by post-Soviet researchers. According to historians Nikolai Bugai and Askarbi Gonov, the Karachai people (numbering almost 70,000 people in all) were deported only following the failure of an attempt made in the summer 1943 to stabilise the situation in this area by the relocation of rebel leaders and their families, and in particular the failure of attempts to eliminate banditry.[154] A different view is taken by Russian historian Aleksei Bezugol'nyi, who has carried out detailed research on the recruitment of Caucasians into the Red

Army during the Second World War. He believes that the decision to deport the Karachaians had already been made in principle in the spring of 1943, because from that time the Soviet leadership categorically prohibited the drafting of members of this ethnicity into the army, and Karachaians already serving in the army were discharged and sent home. According to Bezugol'nyi, this was done in order to ensure the maximum concentration of members of this ethnic group in their home territory. For the same reason, he claims, members of armed gang formations had their legal rights restored and were told to return to their villages.[155]

Nor is it known exactly when the decision to deport the Chechens and Ingush was made. Given that on this occasion around half a million individuals were involved (Soviet statistics of the day recorded around 400,000 Chechens and 90,000 Ingush, most of whom lived in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, but with minority populations in adjacent republics), a longer period of preparation would have been required for the organisation of the deportation itself and the resettlement of these peoples in Central Asia. In November 1943, representatives of the NKVD travelled to the Central Asian republics to which the deportees were to be resettled to discuss the relevant arrangements with local officials. The final resettlement plan was probably drawn up in mid-December 1943.[156]

However, the implementation of the operation, under the code name Chechevitsa (Lentil), is precisely documented. On 29 January 1944, Beriia approved 'guidelines for the implementation of the resettlement of the Chechens and Ingush'.[157] Two days later, this decision was endorsed in principle by the State Defence Committee.[158] On 11 February 1944, the matter was discussed in the Politburo. Its members agreed on the essential objective of the deportation—the only debate was on the timing of the operation. Molotov, Zhdanov, Voznesenskii and Andreev supported immediate implementation, whereas Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Khrushchev, Kalinin and Beriia proposed that the deportation should take place only after German troops had been completely driven out of the USSR.[159] Stalin's opinion is not mentioned in the source documents, as is often the case in such situations. But given that the operation was in fact carried out less than two weeks after the Politburo meeting, it is reasonable to assume that Stalin's vote decided the issue in favour of starting the operation immediately.[160]

Beriia, who was in charge of the operation, travelled to the region personally on 20 February 1944 to coordinate an undertaking that had necessitated a concentration of up to 19,000 members of various state security

services (from the NKVD, NKGB,* SMERSh†) as well as around 100,000 additional Interior Ministry troops.[161] Members of neighbouring peoples, including around 3,000 Ossetians and 6–7,000 Dagestanis, were also drawn on for the execution of the operation.[162] On 22 February, Beriia met with top Chechen and Ingush party and state officials and several clerical leaders to inform them of the planned operation and ask for their support. According to Beriia, the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, the Chechen Sup'ian Kagirovich Mollaev, burst into tears on receiving this information but promised to follow Moscow's instructions.[163]

Yet the operation did not proceed without violent incidents. More than 2,000 people were arrested in the days following the start of the operation on 23 February, and 20,000 weapons were confiscated.[164] There was at least one case of a massacre of the civilian population: when NKVD troops at the *aul* of Khaibakh had apparently been unable to organise the transportation of the local population, the commanding officer gave the order to drive the people into a barn, and then to set the building alight. Several hundred civilians (the numbers vary according to the various sources) are reported to have been burned alive.[165] Despite the snow that prevented all Chechens from the mountain areas being resettled in the allotted time period, Beriia reported to Stalin on 29 February 1944 that the large majority of Chechens and Ingush, for a total of 478,479 people, had been deported. Of the 177 trains available for the operation, he said that 159 were now already on the way to distant Central Asia, to destinations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[166]

During this time, Beriia was also making preparations for the deportation of the Balkars. In a telegram to Stalin dated 24 February 1944, he said that the Balkars, just like the Karachaians, had collaborated with the Germans, and that in the years 1942 and 1943 alone a total of 1,227 individuals had been arrested for 'anti-Soviet activities and banditry'. The Balkars had also sought a

* The People's Commissariat for State Security (Narodnyi komissariat gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti; NKGB) was the result of a partitioning of the NKVD. From February to July 1941, it functioned as a separate state commissariat. When the war broke out, it was once more united with the NKVD. In 1943, it was again separated from the NKVD and became an independent state commissariat equivalent to a ministry, existing under the name Ministry of State Security until 1953.

† SMERSh was a Soviet military intelligence service established in the Second World War. Its name is a contraction of the words 'death' (*smert'*) and 'spy' (*shpion*) and stands for 'Death to Spies' (*smert' shpionam*).

union with the Karachaians, he claimed.[167] Apprehension over a union between these two peoples, both Turkic-speaking, under a possible Turkish protectorate, precisely reflected the deep-seated historical fears that influenced Moscow's assessment of the situation on the country's borders. At that time, however, such a scenario would have appeared completely unrealistic. A more important consideration was probably the idea that through the exile of the Balkars it would also be possible to eliminate the simmering tension between this predominantly mountain-dwelling people and the larger population of the Kabardians, which had repeatedly given rise to conflicts in the past. But the overriding factor here, above all other considerations, was the fact that the troops Beriia needed to undertake such a resettlement operation were already on hand in the region, as he pointed out to Stalin on 25 February.[168] Stalin concurred—and hence the way was clear for another tragedy: by 11 March 1944, Beriia was able to report that 37,103 Balkars had already been deported to Central Asia.[169]

The territories in question were renamed, and the internal borders were redrawn. Parts of the Chechen–Ingush republic were allocated to the neighbouring peoples, the Ossetians, Dagestanis and Georgians, and the remainder, under the new name 'Groznyi district', was initially incorporated in the Stavropol' territory, but on 22 March 1944 was given the status of an autonomous region, to which was added the Kizliar *okrug* and the Naurskii *raion*.[170] The ethnically cleansed territories were settled with people from the neighbouring territories, and also from the Russian and Ukrainian heartland. In the territory of the former Chechen–Ingush ASSR, the Soviet leadership ordered that street and place names be changed, statues and archives destroyed, and books from the libraries removed; entries on the deported peoples were even deleted from the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia.[171] The graves of Chechens and Ingush were systematically destroyed and the stones used for building construction. All statues commemorating the heroes of the Russian Civil War were dismantled. In Groznyi, the authorities removed the monument to Aslanbek Sheripov that had been erected in 1923. Every reminder of the existence of these peoples was to be eradicated, their contributions during the civil war and to the building of socialism were to be denied.[172] On the other hand, the statue of General Ermolov in Groznyi was re-erected, after having been removed earlier in the Soviet era.[173]

Not everyone went willingly into exile. Several thousand people took refuge in the mountains and gave themselves up only after a period of months, or even years in some cases. Many were arrested or killed during

special operations conducted by NKVD units. The last gangs on the territory of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR are reported to have been completely eliminated only in 1953.[174] One of the luminaries of the Chechen resistance was Khasan Israilov, who led the armed revolt against Soviet rule for more than two years up until his death in December 1944. The story of his life is told in the next chapter.

9

CONFORMITY AND REBELLION

THE CASE OF KHASAN ISRAILOV

To outside observers, the Chechen society they encountered in the late 1930s may have appeared fairly resistant to change, unwilling to break out of certain traditions and adapt to the requirements of Soviet modernity. But this is not necessarily how the people in question perceived the situation. In two decades of Soviet rule, they had been confronted with an almost continuous stream of new requirements and demands, had been forced constantly to reassess their scope of action and consider anew the advantages and drawbacks of their every move. A certain form of social conduct, which an outsider may have viewed as resistance to Sovietisation, could, from the perspective of the parties involved, constitute a specific form of conformity and an attempt to find suitable state–society arrangements. Chechen society did not reject Sovietisation altogether; rather, what the external observers encountered were simply the specific local manifestations of the Soviet state-building project on the Muslim-populated southern periphery of the former Russian Empire.

The previous chapter showed the importance of analysing outside perceptions on the North Caucasus region. Unfavourable portrayals of North Caucasian 'bandits' and insubordinate 'mountaineers' certainly had a large impact on the Soviet leadership's final decision to deport Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples in 1943/4. Negative reporting on developments in the region became more frequent from the end of the 1930s onwards, as international tensions were mounting. With the threat of war looming, the

Soviet leadership was increasingly worried; Moscow's gaze was more and more directed towards border regions such as the Caucasus, which appeared vulnerable not only because of the ethnically mixed population structure and the uncertain loyalties that entailed, but also because of the strategic importance of its oil fields. However, only the view from within society allows us to arrive at a deeper understanding of how the people themselves perceived the Sovietisation processes and why they decided to take certain actions. The focus on concrete individuals and their life stories can show that even open resistance was never to be understood one-dimensionally as a direct reaction to state interference, but often had manifold causes that were due to a concurrence of external circumstances with specific realities within society and personal circumstances.

To illustrate this complex causality, this chapter considers the fate of one of the most illustrious personalities of the anti-Soviet Chechen armed resistance during the Second World War: the case of Khasan Israilov. After the outbreak of the Nazi–Soviet war, he rose to become one of the leading figures of the armed rebellion against Soviet rule. His diaries, ostensibly written during the period 1941–3, are among the rare accounts by an anti-Soviet resistance fighter that have survived. The example of Israilov, who at various times during his career was a Qur'an and university student, a party member, a prisoner, a poet, a judge, and maybe even an operative of the Soviet state security service, shows particularly well that the path to armed resistance was not foreordained. If we wish to understand the motivation for Israilov's choice, we must take into account the ambiguities of his biography.

Israilov as reflected in historiography

Depictions of the Second World War in Soviet historiography make no reference to Khasan Israilov, or indeed to any other anti-Soviet resistance fighters or revolts that broke out in the Caucasus and other parts of the Soviet Union. In a publication from 1960, Soviet historian V.I. Fil'kin, who worked as a secretary in the Chechen–Ingush *obkom* in 1941–3, rejects the claim that there were anti-Soviet rebellions in the mountains of Chechnia during the Second World War (in a later edition issued in 1989, however, he would admit that only very few—some 500 people—actually took part in these rebellions).[1] After this, the topic was not brought up again and became a taboo subject in Soviet historical writings on the war period. Thus it is not mentioned in A.A. Grechkov's seminal work *Battle for the Caucasus*, published

in 1973.[2] This should come as no surprise, since writing about an anti-Soviet insurgency in the non-Russian-populated parts of the Soviet Union would have gone against the official narrative, according to which it was largely thanks to the solidarity among the various peoples of the Soviet Union that Nazi Germany had been brought to its knees in what is referred to as the Great Patriotic War—according to the official Soviet view, the most important event in Soviet history since the October Revolution.

Only during the phase of national independence movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the role of the resistance discussed in public and referred to in the historiography again. It was Russian historian Nikolai Bugai who, working for the first time with Soviet archival material, mentioned Khasan Israilov in an essay on the deportations of the Chechens and the Ingush published in 1990.[3] Since then, several Western studies have appeared investigating the nature of the anti-Soviet resistance movement in the North Caucasus, referring also to Khasan Israilov.[4] In the internal Chechen discourse on history, as manifested since the late 1980s, Khasan Israilov made a reappearance as a figure whose resistance offered a reference point in the narrative of the Chechen–Russian history of confrontation. Israilov's stated goal of creating an independent, secular state was in line with the national goals as pursued by the first elected president of separatist-minded Chechnia, Dzhokhar Musaevich Dudaev (1944–96). The 'provisional government', which Dudaev claimed Israilov had already proclaimed in February 1941, presents an important bench mark in the former Chechen president's narrative of a perpetual 400-year Chechen struggle against 'Russism' (*Rusizm*).[5]

Nevertheless, Israilov, who in 1991 was rehabilitated together with many others persecuted by the Soviet regime,[6] did not receive nearly as much appreciation among the Chechens as one might have expected. In the pantheon of the Chechen culture of remembrance, his memory is much less present than those of Sheikh Mansur, Baisungur or Zelimkhan. No epics have been composed in his honour, and his deeds are not proclaimed in folk songs.[7] Moreover, his name is less frequently found on the lists of famous personalities on relevant Chechen websites.[8] While other Chechens whose existence Soviet historiography has attempted to suppress are now celebrated as national heroes (including Ali Mitaev, after whom several streets are named in modern-day Chechnia),[9] Chechen historians have been and still remain more cautious in Israilov's case. For instance, Musa Geshaev's series of books on the lives of famous Chechens does not even dedicate a separate chapter to Khasan Israilov. He briefly appears in the chapter on Khasukha Magomadov (1905–76), who

was a comrade of Israilov's during the Second World War (and would go down in Chechen history as the 'last of the *abreks*', hiding in the Chechen mountains until 1976). Magomadov described Israilov as a 'heroic' man and a 'hot-headed patriot' who had led the struggle against Stalin's regime of oppression.[10]

There is a simple reason for this omission. Khasan Israilov's anti-Soviet resistance represents not only a liberation movement but also the 'betrayal' of which Stalin and the Soviet leadership accused Chechens and other North Caucasians in order to deport them to Central Asia. The most important exponents of Chechen historiography within the national-patriotic orientation of the early 1990s, Dzhabrail Zhokolaevich Gakaev (1942–2005) and Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, never deny the anti-Soviet uprising as such in their writings, but reject the related charge that Israilov and other insurgents closely coordinated their revolt with Nazi Germany and envisaged the creation of an independent state under a German protectorate.[11] According to these authors, Israilov's struggle for liberation was mainly driven not by external circumstances and collaboration with Nazi Germany, but can be primarily explained in terms of the Chechen people's long history of oppression by Russia. Avtorkhanov, who claims to have known Israilov since childhood,[12] tries to prove this by noting that Israilov's rebellion began in the winter of 1940/1, long before Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union.[13] Gakaev and others believe that it began even earlier.[14] In this fight for freedom, Khasan Israilov is portrayed as a man of integrity, someone who chose the fight for freedom over a party career or the promising prospects that his education offered him, a man who decided, despite the risks it involved to his life, to dedicate himself fully to the cause of liberty and to lead 'his people' in this 'near-hopeless struggle'.[15]

A more recent strain of Chechen historiographical scholarship argues differently. For instance, Magomed Muzaev, the head of the Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic, rejects the notion of an anti-Soviet rebellion in the mountain areas of Chechnia. The revolt, he believes, was nothing more than a fabrication by the NKVD, whose aim was to consciously exaggerate the extent of the anti-Soviet resistance movement in order to present the regime with a pretext for the later deportation of Chechens.[16] The tendency to deny any form of collaboration between Chechens and Germans is also apparent in larger circles of the Chechen intelligentsia: a famous Chechen writer and publicist, in a statement to the author of this book, claimed that the German paratroopers who were deployed in Chechnia in 1942 were shot dead by the Chechens while still in

the air; after this, the Chechens took their uniforms and weapons and were mistakenly taken as Germans by the NKVD, who eventually captured and shot them.[17] A few Chechen historians even go so far as to claim that people like Israilov were double agents who maintained relations with the Soviet secret police or acted on their behalf. As such, they argue, Khasan Israilov brought immeasurable suffering and inexcusable misery on his people.[18]

There is enough archival evidence to assert that relations between resistance fighters and members of the state security organs of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR did in fact exist, and that the situation was complicated, especially if the people involved were relatives who were active on different sides of the front. For example, the commissar for internal affairs of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, the Ingush Sultan Albogachiev (1906–68), who was tasked, among other things, with the liquidation of anti-Soviet rebel groups operating on his territory, not only was in contact with Israilov but apparently also had relatives among rebel groups operating around the Ingush city of Nazran.[19] Nevertheless, such blanket statements—that Israilov was an agent of the Soviet intelligence services, or that he allowed himself to be exploited by them—also serves in historiography to trivialise or even deny the possibility of a resistance based on rejection of the Soviet regime and genuine sympathies for Nazi Germany. Since the end of the Second Chechen War, representatives of this branch of Chechen historiography have been committed to a point of view that aligns with the political leadership of the Russian Federation and the increasingly strident demands that have accompanied its forced revival of the myth surrounding the Great Patriotic War.[20] In this narrative, the contributions of the individual peoples to victory are to be emphasised as far as possible, while the claims of solidarity among peoples are to be exempt from critical examination. It is thus not surprising that many historians prefer to omit the resistance against the Soviets altogether from their historical accounts of the Second World War.[21] Musa Ibragimov, although admitting that anti-Soviet rebellions and desertions took place, categorically rejects the notion that these were widespread phenomena; instead, he points to the wave of Soviet patriotism that gripped the entire Chechen and Ingush nation with the beginning of war with Nazi Germany, underlining the contribution of these peoples in the victory over Fascism.[22]

Finally, a third strain of post-Soviet historiography can be identified. While it is more properly part of the genre of popular-science literature, it currently enjoys the greatest currency: these are the authors within Russia who choose to use Israilov's anti-Soviet rebellion as evidence to back up their portrayal of

ethnic groups such as the Chechens, then as now, as disloyal, renegade societies who can be counted on to stab the Soviet or Russian state in the back in its hour of greatest need. Accordingly, these authors do not try to hide their sympathies for Stalin's decision to deport these people and are equally supportive of Russia's massive military interventions in the 1990s and 2000s. These authors seek to underpin their arguments regarding the anti-Soviet revolts during the Second World War with the exact same documents that Chechen (and other) historians refute as intentional disinformation about the situation disseminated by the Soviet security organs in order to discredit the Chechens.[23]

In truth, historiography in Russia has made almost no progress towards a factual reappraisal of this key chapter of Soviet history since the partial opening of the former Soviet archives, which has expanded the basis of documentary material. On the contrary, the various sides use the documents as evidence to shore up their respective positions and to construct 'truths' that are as unambiguous as possible. In the case of Khasan Israilov and his anti-Soviet revolt, this is especially true for those texts that are directly ascribed to Israilov himself, in particular the diaries that he purportedly wrote during the period of his active armed resistance.

The Israilov diaries

The discovery of these diaries was reportedly an adventurous tale of derring-do: on 26 August 1943, the 263th regiment of the Tbilisi division of the NKVD under Lieutenant Alekseev and *starshina* Netsikov are said to have come across Israilov's carry bag, containing his notes and correspondence, by chance in pursuit of his gang in the Itum-Kalinskii district in the area of Khildekharoi (Khildekharoiskoe sel'skoe poselenie). In addition, the NKVD reportedly found ammunition, weapons, cash and a Qur'an. That, at any rate, is what we are told in the report by the head of the Georgian branch of the NKVD, Grigorii T. Karanadze (1902–70). Karanadze analysed the documents, had parts of the texts transcribed and authored a nine-page report summarising the most important information gleaned from the diaries. On 18 September 1943, he forwarded his report, together with the copied documents, to the head of the Soviet Union's People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, Lavrentii Beriia.[24]

According to Karanadze's report, the five notebooks (680 pages in total) carried the following titles: (1) 'History of the Latter [i.e. Israilov] under the

Soviet Regime, Uprising in Checheno-Ingushetia' (*Istoriia poslednego, pri Sovetskoi vlasti, vosstaniia v Checheno-Ingushetii*, 150 pages); (2) 'Important Episodes from the Diary in the Winter of 1941–1942' (*Vazhnye epizody dnevnika zimy 1941–1942 gg.*, 381 pages); (3) 'Constitution of the Special Party of Caucasian Brothers (OPKB)' (*Ustav Osoboi partii kavkazskikh brat'ev (OPKB)*, 40 pages); (4) 'Conclusions of the CC of the Chechen–Ingush Special Party of Caucasian Brothers (OPKB) Regarding the Reasons for the Uninterrupted Persecution of Terloev Khasan on the Part of the Bolshevik Government' (*Vyvody TsK Checheno-Ingushskoi Osoboi partii kavkazskikh brat'ev (OPKB) o printsipakh nepereryvnogo presledovaniia Terloeva Khasana so storony bol'shevistskikh vlastei*, 59 pages); (5) 'Order no. of the CC of the OPKB with Regard to the Activity of Mister Khamzaev Kudus (*Prikaz Nr. TsK OPKB po otchetu deiatel'nosti gospodina Khamzaeva Kudusa*, 48 pages).

While some Chechen historians treat these documents (even though it is doubtful that many are actually familiar with the precise contents of these diaries) as pure *kompromat* (a portmanteau of *kompromitiruiushchii material*; compromising material) authored by the NKVD in order to discredit the Chechens with a view to their subsequent deportation, conservative historians in Russia cite certain statements from these documents as authentic evidence for Chechen collaboration with the Germans and the mass character of the anti-Soviet resistance movement.[25] In order to be able to verify the transcripts unequivocally, one would have to compare the copies with the original documents. However, this is not possible, since the originals cannot be located.[26] But not even the copied extracts of Israilov's diaries and other documents from the same file (including Karanadze's report) can currently be examined, as they have been removed from the Russian State Archive and are no longer accessible to researchers.[27] Nevertheless, since the present author possesses transcripts of extended extracts from three diary volumes (notebook numbers 1, 2, and 4), it is possible—always assuming that the underlying sources are authentic—to paint a more comprehensive picture of Israilov as a person and to trace his long path to active, anti-Soviet resistance.[28] A thorough analysis of these diaries, together with other archival material, will show that many of the statements cited in the literature fail to take into account Israilov's career and the motives for his opposition. The latter can only be understood based on a comparative review of the diaries and further documents relating to Israilov, and the anti-Soviet revolt more generally.

It is unlikely that the diary entries of Khasan Israilov were fabricated from whole cloth by the NKVD to compromise him. Israilov himself was an active

journalist and author. He wrote for newspapers and published poems.[29] According to a statement by his brother, Khusein Israilov, who was a member of Israilov's armed group until July 1943 when he turned himself in to the NKVD voluntarily, Khasan Israilov did keep a diary during his time in the resistance movement.[30] We also find evidence in the sources that Israilov left more written documentation. While chasing Israilov's gang in February 1944, NKVD troops discovered his hiding place where they again found lots of material, including 'original written records by Khasan Israilov' with a 'weight of about two kilograms'.[31] Finally, a forgery on this scale seems unlikely because even the copied documents, though only extracts, still encompass a sizeable quantity of pages that the NKVD would have had to fabricate within a very short time. Creating an entirely fictitious document would only have been possible if the NKVD had already prepared the entire forgery much earlier and in meticulous detail. The diary entries are rich in information, and contain many names of people that Israilov had met during his life. If this was an entirely fictitious account, it could only have been fabricated by someone who knew Israilov and his entourage very well and was intimately familiar with the state of affairs in Chechnia. What is more, assuming that the Soviet leadership did not seriously consider the option of deporting the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples until the late autumn of 1943 (as explained in the previous chapter of this book), the documents, which were all composed before August 1943, cannot have been originally written in order to cast aspersions on the Chechens with a view to their deportation.

Moreover, it is crucial in this context to note that the diaries do not give a coherent picture of Khasan Israilov's personality and the nature of his resistance. Karanadze himself underlines this in his report to Beriia, writing that while he is convinced that the author is Khasan Israilov, he feels 'obliged to note that these documents ... contain numerous contradictory statements and unconvincing and unrealistic facts'. In particular, Karanadze questions Israilov's assertions regarding the total number of insurgents (in one place, he claims there are 25,000 men, while in another passage, he refers to 5,000) or his allegation that the NKVD had stationed 45,000 troops in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR to combat Israilov's insurgency and had been forced to use combat aircraft to suppress the rebels.[32]

The NKVD was notorious for exaggerating the size and strength of armed gangs in its reports. But as far as these specific documents are concerned, what reason would Karanadze have had to forge details that he himself then calls

into question? In his comment, Karanadze attributes Israilov's 'fantastic' statements to his desire to underscore his 'popularity among the masses and his role in the struggle against Soviet power'. Karanadze states that the papers, which were to serve as evidence of Israilov's fight, were intended for the Germans, to whom he planned to offer his services as a leading authority in the case of an occupation of the Caucasus: 'The records, I believe, [were] designed to build authority in the eyes of the German in fraudulent ways, that is, by presenting to the Germans, in case of the latter's occupation of the Caucasus, a document confirming [Israilov's] "heroic" struggle against Soviet power in the rear.'[33]

An analysis of the content shows that two of the three diary notebooks available to the author of this book (notebook number 2, 'Important Episodes', and notebook number 4, 'Conclusions of the CC') may indeed have been propaganda writings that were apparently aimed not just at a local audience but mainly at the advancing Germans. In these journals, Khasan Israilov creates the image of a firmly managed resistance organisation based on a set of statutes and a hierarchical structure.[34] According to these notes, his organisation, the Special Party of Caucasian Brothers (Osobaia partiia kavkazskikh brat'ev; OPKB), which appears in the files under other names as well,[35] was led by an organisation office that apparently coordinated operations in five rebel districts, supposedly with thousands of fighters.[36] In these two journals, Israilov himself is depicted as the undisputed leader. His autobiographical sketch tells of a life marked since the earliest days of youth by oppression and the struggle against the Soviet regime. Israilov also tries to portray himself as an advocate of Nazi race theory by depicting Jews generally as enemies and Caucasians as pure-blooded Aryans, which also suggests that he wanted to offer himself to the Germans as an influential leader in a future independent Chechnia.[37] Possibly in order to avoid the suspicion that he himself might be Jewish, based on his surname 'Israilov' (as derived from 'Israil', sounding like 'Israel'), in the documents intended for the Germans, he uses the name Khasan Terloev, after 'Terloi,' the name of his *teip*.

However, not all of his diaries are propagandistic in nature. In the journal entitled 'History of the Latter' (notebook number 1), Israilov gives an account of his life that is far less in line with the image of a hero and leader. Rather, here he describes a societal reality shaped by blood-feuds, murder, (attempted) rape, corruption, petty crime and long prison sentences. Moreover, certain factual details recorded by Israilov in this notebook do not agree with entries in the other journals. This diary, too, sketches Israilov's

path to resistance, but it is portrayed as chaotic and badly organised. While Israilov refers to 5,000 fighters who have sworn an oath of loyalty on the Qur'an to his resistance organisation, apparently only a few hundred armed men ended up actively supporting the revolt, which to Israilov's chagrin was not successful, not only because of a severe lack of weapons and ammunition but also because of failed coordination and infighting among the various armed groups.[38]

That this diary includes episodes from Israilov's life that tell of organisational failure and criminal offences by the protagonist—and thus essentially undermine the authority that he needed to gain as leader of the resistance movement—may indicate that this journal was indeed meant to be a personal account, neither intended for the Germans nor as *kompromat* to be used by Israilov against internal enemies. On the contrary, as Karanadze also believes, Israilov made sure that these journals were hidden away since he knew very well that, if these facts came to light, it would severely compromise him and his family.[39] It is unclear under which circumstances and when exactly Israilov wrote this journal. It seems likely that he composed this diary at a time when it must have become very clear to him that the insurgency would not be successful. The separation from society during his time in the resistance movement and the constant awareness that every day might be his last may have prompted him to speak frankly about his life in this written account. Indeed, this diary almost seems like a last will and testament, and the descriptions of questionable episodes in Israilov's life appear to constitute a kind of confession. This, at any rate, would explain the preliminary remark to his biographical account that 'mankind in its perfection bears guilt' and that no person alive has ever been 'free from sin': 'Therefore, there is no point in wondering about my negative attitude [*otritsatel'nost'*], my mistakes, and my sins when I describe these in a number of episodes.'[40]

Due to the incomplete record, but mainly because the originals of these journals cannot be traced, we cannot entirely exclude the possibility of a forgery or at least of manipulation. This should not, however, prevent us from examining these texts critically or enquiring as to the realities of which they tell us. Therefore, we must at least admit the possibility of multiple truths. As the example of Khasan Israilov shows, people are never guided by only one truth in their lives, and realities cannot be made to fit into the simplified cognitive patterns into which they are often shoehorned by historiography.

From Qur'an student to resistance fighter

Khasan Israilov was born in the mountain village of Nikaroi in southern Chechnia, in what would later become the Galanchozhskii district (*raion*) of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. A variety of dates are given for his birth. Avtorkhanov states that the year of birth was 1910.[41] According to a secret intelligence report by the People's Commissariat for State Security, Israilov was born in 1903.[42] However, the notes in Israilov's own diary give his year of birth as 1907.[43]

Israilov's diary journals offer two different accounts of his career. In one of the propagandistic diaries (notebook 4, 'Conclusions of the CC'), the different phases of his life appear to be mere stages of a preordained campaign against the regime.[44] The relevant passages of his biography read like a résumé for a job application: Israilov attended Arabic school from 1914 to 1923 and Soviet schools from 1923 to 1927, all in Groznyi. During this time, he joined the Komsomol and later the Communist Party. He served in the Soviet state apparatus as a judge, as a public prosecutor, and even as authorised agent of the Soviet intelligence service. He claims that at the age of seventeen to eighteen years, he had become a 'known enemy of the Soviet state', maintaining ties with practically all well-known people in Chechnia, both with religiously motivated insurgents such as Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii and with nationalist Chechen leaders like Tashtemir El'darkhanov.

Already in 1925, he alleges that he was given his first one-year prison sentence for banditry, ambushes, murders of a state official and a correspondent, distribution of anti-Soviet propaganda and connections to anti-Soviet groups, although he was soon released. He then claims that, in 1926, in recognition of his anti-Soviet activities, he was made a member of an 'executive committee' (on which no further information is given) of an anti-Soviet underground organisation operating in Chechnia. At the same time, he alleges, he succeeded in gaining the trust of the Bolsheviks and the Communist Party, who regarded him as one of their own. In 1927, he was again arrested together with his brother Khusein, but supposedly again granted early release.

In general, Israilov—who writes about himself in the third person in this report—notes that his stints in prison were never long ones. In the course of his life, we are told, he was arrested four times, but his unmatched skill at misleading the authorities with false information helped him avoid serious consequences every time. Israilov omits the 1930s in this journal, jumping

straight to the year 1940, when he says he finally dropped his 'mask' and showed the Bolsheviks his true 'enemy face'. As early as January or February 1940, he allegedly organised a first revolt in the area of Khildekharoi in southern Chechnia. To this is added a long list of further revolts and important battles that he claims for himself.

In this testimony, Israilov is at pains to ensure that his resistance does not seem like an opportunistic act that only began with the German attack against the Soviet Union. He seeks to prove this with many references to his resistance activities during the Soviet era up until the first revolt that he supposedly organised in early 1940, more than a year before the Wehrmacht's invasion of the Soviet Union. His Soviet life, his membership in Komsomol and in the Communist Party, and various activities in the service of the state are portrayed as part of a deliberately staged double life. All this was presumably intended to demonstrate that he was familiar with the mechanisms of the regime and played an important role in it. However, Israilov makes clear that his government service was only intended to provide cover for his true feelings and his longstanding clandestine plans to overthrow the hated regime.

He describes his hatred for the regime as more than just a momentary phenomenon; it had been stoked by those 'facts of history' that tell of the long struggle the 'freedom-loving peoples of the Caucasus' have been waging against Russia. Israilov describes this conflict as a personal campaign: in a subchapter entitled the 'Historic Roots of Mr. Terloev's Hatred of the Russian Enslavement of the Caucasus', he makes reference to his great-grandfather, who had fought at the side of Sheikh Mansur against the 'Russian colonisers' in the late eighteenth century. Then he mentions his grandfather, who served for twenty-three years under Imam Shamil, and whose deeds, we are told, are sung of in Chechen epics to the present day. Finally, he references his own father, who joined the gang of the famous Chechen *abrek* Zelimkhan after the incorporation of Chechnia into the Russian Empire. We are told that his father died at a young age from a gunshot injury sustained during the famous raid on the government treasury at Kizliar (which took place in the spring of 1910). In this way, Israilov seeks to join the ranks of this dynasty of famous heroes in order to claim a place for himself as a national leader. And essentially, it is this view of Israilov and his personality that has been adopted by the national-oriented strain of Chechen historiography and that has at least partially been absorbed into Chechen commemorative culture.

In those sections of his diary (notebook 2, 'Important Episodes') that are directly addressed to the 'Gestapo', 'Göhring [Gering]' and 'Hitler', Israilov

seeks to prove the military potential of his insurrectionists by providing precise figures and numbers:[45] In a sub-chapter of this section of the diary, titled 'Concrete Data on the Results of Uprisings, That Is, Rehearsals for the Future Uprising in Checheno-Ingushetia …', Israilov claims that in the period until December 1941, the units commanded by him (a total of 24,970 men organised in five districts) had so far destroyed '972 enemies' in nine different areas of the insurgency, while the Chechens lost only seventy-five men. These victories, he claims, were gained notwithstanding the insurgents' very poor military equipment, and despite the fact that the enemy applied overwhelming military force, including a total of 185 war planes. With this, Israilov seeks to signal to the Germans that the morale among his fighters was high, and the potential for an all-out uprising in the Caucasus in place. At the same time, he also makes it clear that the rebels urgently needed weapons in order to be able to accomplish the task. Addressing himself directly to the Germans, he writes: 'As long as your front is not moving closer to Checheno-Ingushetia, we are not in a position to raise the uprising everywhere, dreading extreme repression measures by the evil Bolsheviks, who kill us not asking for names.'

It is not entirely clear how Israilov hoped to get these reports to the Germans. In one place, he writes that he 'intended to cross the front and get to the German authorities, in order from there to initiate [his] anti-Bolshevik activities in the Caucasus …'[46] But he also seems to have been, at least initially, in contact with the commissar for internal affairs of the Chechen–Ingush republic, Albogachiev. The sections of his diary addressed to the Germans contains a reference to Albogachiev, whom, he writes, he had sent the material 'for urgent dispatch' to the 'Gestapo agents'.[47] Whether or not Israilov actually sent any of the material is unclear, but it might well be that he acted on Albogachiev's initiative when preparing it. Among Israilov's documents, the NKVD found a letter from Albogachiev addressed to Israilov and dated 10 November 1941, in which the commissar urges Israilov 'to write about the results of the current uprising and send these to [him]' as he is 'in the position to immediately dispatch these to the Germans'. And he adds: 'Tear this letter apart … as times are dangerous, I am afraid.'[48]

The role of Albogachiev is unclear, however, and it is likely that he played a double game, trying to gain Israilov's trust in order to lure him into a trap. In the letter of 10 November 1941, he warns Israilov that, if captured, they will shoot him, and suggests that both of them should pretend to be 'implacable enemies' in order not to raise any suspicion. To achieve this impression, Albogachiev urges Israilov to write a hostile letter, threatening

him, Albogachiev, 'with all kinds of things', and in response, 'I will start pursuing you[,] burn down your house, arrest some of your relatives ...'[49] That Israilov did indeed write such a letter is evidence that he seemed to have trusted Albogachiev at this point time.[50] Albogachiev, after being given ample warning that he was not going resolutely enough against banditry,[51] would be removed from his post in September 1943 (interestingly enough, however, Albogachiev was not at this point arrested but transferred to another position, which may indicate that the authorities did not think he was directly collaborating with the enemy).[52] Together with Albogachiev, the Ingush Idris Aliev (born 1901; date of death unknown), head of the NKVD's Chechen–Ingush Department for the Struggle against Banditry, was also removed from office.[53] However, much more archival evidence will be needed in order to establish the precise role of Albogachiev and other officials from the ranks of the indigenous non-Russian population. What we learn from later entries in Israilov's personal diary (notebook 1, 'History of the Latter'), however, is that he must have lost all trust in Albogachiev or in fact in any other Chechen or ethnic Caucasian members of the republican government or the local security services in later years, since these had, according to Israilov, tried to lure him into a trap and also sought to infiltrate his own insurgent group.[54]

The account of his career that Israilov presents in this personal diary also paints a completely different version of his life and active resistance.[55] Among his reasons for working actively to overthrow Soviet power, the first general part of his journal cites injustices and acts of violence against himself and his people. At the top of the list is the campaign to create *kolkhozy*, which the farmers perceived as 'worse than graves', taxation, and the arbitrary behaviour of the secret police, which had Chechens shot without proper trials. Next, he condemns the behaviour of the Soviet regime towards the 'smaller nations' of the Caucasus, who still feel that they are 'slaves of the Greater Russian people', and denounces the behaviour of the Russians who continue to act like a master race towards the locals.

Israilov then turns to his own biography, in which he aims to show the 'torments' that the Soviet regime has inflicted on him and which ultimately prompted him to join the resistance. However, at the heart of the notes that trace the stages of Israilov's life, we find not the struggle with Russians or with a Russian-dominated oppressor state; rather, most attention is devoted to societal conditions in Chechnia and his own difficult situation. Israilov sketches out a path of life that is nowhere near as consistent as he would make us believe in his propaganda writings. The years from 1925 to 1927, the first

stage of Israilov's résumé, were not dominated by anti-Soviet activities and a life underground. Instead, the situation as Israilov describes it here was entirely connected to events in his home district:

> In the years 1925–1927, through my hard work, with the help of my younger brother, and by hiring a certain number of labourers every year, I managed ... to set up a decent farming enterprise and to become a wealthy man with sufficient bread, meat, and land at my disposal. I was nineteen or twenty years old at the time, and my brother was seventeen or eighteen.[56] ... In 1927, two of our oxen were stolen. After an intense search, I found the thieves. They were a certain Azigov and a certain Musaev, who refused to return our oxen [to us]. We reported them to the militia of the Galanchozhskii district; however, because the head of the militia and the criminal investigation department's inspector as well as the chairman of the executive district committee [*okrispolkom*] were close relatives of the thieves, they dismissed the charges against them, but instead pressed charges against us for defaming 'decent people'. My brother went into hiding, and I was sentenced to two years in prison. However, I managed to escape from the cell while on remand at the district militia. Then my brother and I took Azigov's only cow and stole three oxen from Musaev. Afterwards, a big criminal case was brought against us; we were blamed for every instance of cattle rustling and all the missing livestock in the mountainous part of the [district], and were made out to be major cattle and horse thieves. To add to the humiliation we had already visited upon Musaev's family, my brother then raped his mother, an old woman, while I plucked out the whiskers of the paterfamilias; under the customary code of the highlands, such acts are far worse and far more dishonourable than murder. Now, there were several criminal proceedings against us, and we were wanted men; and because of all this, our farming enterprise went under. [The authorities] took our mother hostage, and we had no other choice but to turn ourselves in. We were held on remand for quite a long time, and ended up having to sell our entire farm for bribes before we could get the charges against us dismissed.[57]

After this first serious stroke of misfortune, Khasan Israilov began working in 1928 as a teacher and secretary in the village soviet of Nikaroi. His notes include nothing to suggest that he was already a party member, let alone a secret agent at this point. Also, he seems not even to have attended a secular school yet; rather, he describes himself as self-taught, as he has only visited Arabic schools up to this point.[58] At this stage of his life, too, he appears to have still been exclusively concerned with local affairs, focused on wreaking vengeance on his tormentors while restoring his standing in society:

> I was furious at the officials in the district of Galanchozhskii who had mistreated my brother and me, and I began to take revenge against them in all sorts of ways. While my vendetta dealt them some painful blows, they, knowing the power of the state on their side, managed to have us listed in the register of kulaks and landowners, and at a meeting about purges of the Soviet apparatus, they decided to have me suspended for life from service in the Soviet administration; subsequently, the commission responsible for purges ... passed a resolution to this effect, which was published in the district newspaper. It was only after I had defended myself vigorously with relevant evidence [of my innocence], which I had taken all the way to Moscow, that I managed to have my rights reinstated, both the right to professional training and the right to work in the public service, and my name was removed from the list of kulaks and clerical elements.[59]

Only now did Khasan Israilov begin his actual training under Soviet guidance in the North Caucasus *krai* capital of Rostov-on-Don.[60] Here, at the Communist University of the North Caucasus, he studied law and graduated with distinction. It was probably around this time that he also joined the Communist Party.[61] As part of the policy of *korenizatsiia*, under which preference was given to non-Russians in filling government job vacancies, he received a position with the Procurator's Office for Transportation in the North Caucasus *krai*. In this role, he reportedly enjoyed the special patronage of the head of the procurator's office, who was Jewish. His sympathies for Israilov were not only due to the latter apparently being a capable jurist but also because Israilov allowed his employee falsely to believe that he was a member of the Mountain Jews minority. Israilov tried to pass off his name, 'Israil', as evidence of his Jewish ancestry. However, as he himself writes, that name had no connection to any kind of Jewish heritage, but was simply the name his father had chosen for himself.[62] For reasons that Israilov does not discuss, however, new charges were brought against him in this position. He was removed from his post and due to serve another prison sentence, which he managed to avert by travelling to Moscow to settle matters himself.[63]

After his return from Moscow, Khasan Israilov was appointed people's judge of the 1st and 2nd circuits (singular *uchastok*) in the city of Groznyi. And apparently, it was only now that he became politically active, taking part in the organisation of resistance against collectivisation.[64] He states that in preparation for the revolt, he contacted people from his home district and members of the same *teip*, as well as spiritual authorities from other mountain areas of Chechnia. The revolt, which finally broke out in March 1930, was quite swiftly and brutally suppressed by the Red Army. Israilov subsequently

withdrew deep into the mountains, from where he participated with other activists in sporadic raids and acts of sabotage. During this time, he reportedly also worked as a legal practitioner in the mountain areas.[65] Finally, however, people engaged in blood-feuds with Israilov prepared a new set of charges 'in three volumes'. In April 1931, he was arrested with a group of fifteen people and expelled from the party.[66] He then spent two years in prison, during which time, we are told, he was in solitary confinement without access to books or newspapers. In this situation, which drove him 'nearly mad', Israilov twice attempted to commit suicide and sought to set the prison on fire; his repeated attempts at escape failed. Apparently, it took massive bribes paid by wealthier fellow prisoners on their own and his behalf for Israilov to be released and rehabilitated in 1933; he was subsequently accepted as a party member once again.[67]

According to his diary entries, Israilov remained at liberty for just over two years. At the time, he was enrolled as a student at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (Kommunisticheskii universitet trudiashchikhsia Vostoka; KUTV*), where he maintained close contact with other members of the Chechen intelligentsia, including first and foremost Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, who was also studying in Moscow at the Institute of Red Professors. Israilov portrays the period up to his next arrest in April 1935 as an attempt to unify the various forces within Chechen society for the struggle against the Soviet regime. On the one hand, he claims to have organised individual 'combat groups' in different parts of Checheno-Ingushetia, including some with his brothers Khusein and Atabaev in their home district of Galanchozhskii. On the other hand, he also tells us he was engaged in efforts to unify all forces within the Chechen intelligentsia. According to Israilov, these efforts were in vain because the Chechens '[were] mired in mutual political and personal vendettas, plotted against each other in every possible way, and even used force of arms to completely annihilate their enemies'.[68]

Israilov places himself at the centre of the action when he writes that the internal power struggle among the Chechens was mainly carried out between

* The KUTV was established in 1921 by the Communist International (Comintern) as a college of training for Communist cadres. Students came mostly from Europe, America and the (former) European colonies in Asia and Africa, but also from non-Russian areas of the Soviet Union. The university was closed in 1938 when the task of educating non-Russian Communist cadres was transferred to smaller institutions in the Soviet Union (at the same time, the Comintern was also dissolved).

two groups: the faction led by himself and Avtorkhanov, which consisted mainly of writers and journalists, and that of their antagonists, mainly composed of high-ranking party functionaries led by Khasi Gaitukaevich Vakhaev (born 1908, year of death unknown), the Communist Party's deputy secretary in Checheno-Ingushetia at the time.[69] According to Israilov, it was not ideological differences, but personal grudges that formed the main obstacle to an alliance: '[Vakhaev's group] respected me because I was opposed to Soviet power, but they were hostile towards me and beat me because I was their personal, implacable mortal enemy [*krovnyi vrag*].'[70]

That Vakhaev and several other renowned Chechen party authorities were members of the same *teip* as Israilov was completely extraneous to their blood-feud, as Israilov complains in his journal. In any case, the dispute ended when the group around Vakhaev, which had much greater means and possibilities due to its influential position within Checheno-Ingushetia, managed in April 1935 to have Israilov arrested after he had gone into hiding together with his brother Khusein. Shortly thereafter, Khusein also turned himself in to the authorities voluntarily. Both brothers reportedly received five-year prison sentences, which they served in a labour camp in Western Siberia. Israilov was released early in the first half of 1938, while his brother was released about a year later.[71]

Following his release, Israilov secured a complete rehabilitation thanks to a set of forged documents. Upon his return, he was given the job of secretary in charge of the soviet (*raisovet*) in his home district of Galanchozhskii. He may have benefited from the fact that, in the meantime, the entire Chechen–Ingush leadership cadre, including his main antagonist Vakhaev, had been removed from their positions during the Stalinist purges of 1937/8. Even Avtorkhanov, who to Israilov's surprise had remained at liberty despite the conflict with Vakhaev's group, was finally arrested in October 1937.[72]

But Israilov did not manage to hold on to his new job for long, either.[73] During a drinking binge, he came to blows with a high-ranking representative of the Chechen–Ingush party office, who was a Russian; he was involved in a serious conflict over the wife of a friend, the party chairman of the Galanchozhskii district, and subsequently found himself forced to murder, with the help of some of his relatives, the local head of the NKVD, who on the instructions of the aforementioned party chairman was gathering incriminating evidence against Israilov in preparation for his arrest. Having been removed from his post, Israilov moved to Groznyi, where he worked as a writer and commentator. As the threat of war loomed increasingly larger, he

and other like-minded individuals debated the 'likelihood or unlikelihood' of Soviet power being overthrown. After coming down with tuberculosis in Groznyi, he returned to his home district to recover. At the start of 1939, he travelled to Western Siberia to get his brother Khusein released from prison; he had managed to secure forged documents for him through the same channels that had already facilitated his own release from prison and rehabilitation.

By June 1939, Israilov's health had stabilised, but he lacked funds, and so once more took up work as a lawyer (*advokat*). He was responsible for the legal requirements of the mountain areas of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. But these years also appear to have been rather dark ones in Israilov's life. Once again, he tells of many minor offences, including brawls, drunken binges, and apparently at least one attempted rape. For these crimes, several criminal proceedings were brought against him between 1939 and 1941 in the districts of Itum-Kalinskii, Galanchozhskii and Shatoevskii as well as the city of Groznyi. He also spent ten days in prison in Groznyi and appears only to have been released thanks to the intervention of relatives. While he subsequently managed to get charges dropped in three cases, the proceedings in the Shatoevskii district were still underway when he wrote the journal.

First, however, another external event intervened that would mark the final turning point in Israilov's life: the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Following the invasion, Israilov's situation would dramatically worsen. In Israilov's words, 'having announced the happy news of the German attack on the USSR', the Soviet leadership '[approved] a decree that all undesirables, but especially those whom the court had branded a danger to society, were to be dealt with'.[74] Whether any such decree was ever passed remains uncertain. However, especially during the first phase of the war, Stalin constantly referenced the danger from internal enemies and had such adversaries persecuted. In any case, Israilov was uncomfortable in this atmosphere, in which the state demanded unswerving loyalty from its citizens and a total mobilisation of society. He writes that, after the outbreak of war with Germany, he and his brother had to take care not to be seen in 'dangerous places'. From here, it was only another small step to life underground and armed resistance.

Even though we find evidence in NKVD reports that 'bandit activity' was on the rise in Chechnia in January–February 1941 in the area of Khildekharoi in the Itum-Kalinskii district, that is, precisely the part of the Chechen–Ingush republic where Israilov's anti-Soviet movement would later be most

active, there is no evidence from Soviet sources that Israilov took take part in it.[75] This concurs with his own account in his personal diary where he makes it clear that it was only after the German military invasion that he went underground and started to organise his active armed resistance. He writes:

> [After the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union] I, Terloev, asked myself the question: 'To sleep or to act in this extraordinary time of war [*Spat' ili deistvovat' v eto zamechatel'noe veonnoe vremia*]?'. And in responding, I decided: 'To sleep is shame, but to act and fight for one's idea is honor [*Spat' pozor, a deistvovat', borot'sia za svoiu ideiu—pochet*]'. ... I always thought that the peace treaty between the government of Germany and the USSR [would not hold]. ... I was always convinced, that there could never be peace between Communists and National-Socialists. I knew that Germany would at any convenient moment attack the USSR.[76]

This resistance, however, was poorly organised, as is evident from Israilov's personal diary. According to Israilov, the first major uprising occurred in late October 1941 in the village of Barsoi in the Shateovskii district and came completely unexpected, erupting well before the preparatory work for a coordinated uprising was completed (from an entry contained in the journal titled 'Important Episodes', Israilov writes that 'the uprising was scheduled for 10 January 1942'[77]). The Barsoi rebellion, in which some fifty armed insurgents took part, was put down by armed forces of the NKVD after five days of intensive fighting and with the use of the air force, leaving ten Chechens and some seventy Soviet troops dead or wounded. The news of the Barsoi uprising, of which we also find evidence in German sources,[78] reached Israilov only on the fifth day of the fighting, on 30 October 1941. Israilov writes that he immediately issued orders to various villages to send armed men to meet in order to discuss the next steps. Israilov also decreed to destroy a bridge and a telephone line in order to disrupt the enemies' abilities to communicate and move military equipment. When, at midnight, some 100 armed men finally gathered at the assigned meeting point, the insurrection was already over. The discussions went on until five in the morning, when the gathered men essentially reached the conclusion that '[they] lack[ed] the power for a common uprising against the enemy ...' After this, everybody went home.

The picture presented by Israilov on the Barsoi uprising contrasts with NKDV reports, such as the one prepared in August 1944 by A.M. Leont'ev, head of the Department for the Struggle against Banditry of the NKVD of

the USSR, where he gives an overview on the 'Struggle against Banditry, Desertion and Refusal of Duty in the Red Army' during the war. According to this report, some 800 people took part in this uprising, which included villages in the districts of Shatoevskii, Galanchozhskii and Itum-Kalinskii; as the 'organisers and leaders' of the uprising the report mentions Mairbek Sheripov, Khasan Israilov and the two Musostov brothers, each operating in different areas. According to Leont'ev, the uprising indeed lasted five days and was finally put down on 3 November 1941, leaving nineteen rebels dead and four wounded. The NKVD forces also suffered casualties: nineteen soldiers were killed and twenty-one wounded; three went missing.[79] Leont'ev confirms that aviation was used to fight the insurgents, a fact that is also mentioned in German sources.[80] Clearly, however, Leont'ev got it wrong when suggesting that Israilov was part of the Barsoi uprising.

There would be other insurrections, armed attacks and battles over the course of the following months. But the Chechens would never manage to unite their forces and efficiently coordinate their armed rebellion. This was apparently not only due to a lack of weapons and ammunition but also because of continuing squabbling among the different rebel groups and their leaders (especially between Sheripov and Israilov), something that Israilov laments in several places in his diary. Apparently, the main problem was that each group, which usually consisted of men from a certain village or *teip* (Israilov refers in his diary to 'armed associations'—*boevye druzhiny*—named after the respective villages), focused their main energy on arming their own men and preparing for the defence of their own *auls*, rather than coordinating their efforts and forming a joint resistance organisation.[81] That the anti-Soviet resistance in Chechnia was very badly organised did not go unnoticed by the German special forces. When the group led by Corporal Rekkert, who met with the rebels in the summer of 1942, distributed weapons from their supplies to about 300 to 350 men, the 'bandits, having received their weapons', returned immediately 'to their villages', 'before they could be properly recorded on a roster'. Moreover, '[m]ost of the men ... had had no instruction in the use of arms'.[82]

Assessment: resistance during Stalinism and war

It is difficult to verify the reliability of Khasan Israilov's autobiographical sketches in the diary with personal characteristics. Individual episodes, especially those relating to the 1920s, may indeed have taken place the way he describes them. Other passages, especially those relating to the second half of

the 1930s, appear less credible, to the extent that Israilov's role was probably never as important as he would have us believe. For ultimately, Israilov's career and his path to resistance are much more in line with traditional manifestations of *abrek* banditry than with his self-image as a champion of national liberty.

In this context, the most questionable part of Israilov's writings is the passage in his diary where he describes the conflict with Vakhaev's group. The exaggeration of his own role is unmistakeable when he claims that three commissions of the Communist Party's Central Committee in Moscow and of the *prokuratura* of the RSFSR and the USSR, as well as five commissions appointed by the party leadership of the North Caucasus *krai* in Rostov-on-Don, were sent to mediate in this dispute. Another seven commissions, he claims, were formed at the level of the Chechen–Ingush republic, including the regional committee (*obkom*), the *prokuratura* and the Chechen–Ingush section of the NKVD.[83] If the conflict had really been as significant as that, one would expect to find references to it in other contemporary sources. However, no other mentions are to be found. Avtorkhanov, whom Israilov regarded as an ally in the dispute with Vakhaev, makes no reference to such quarrels in his memoirs; on the contrary, he has nothing but praise for Vakhaev, describing him as a likeable person with a good sense of humour with whom he apparently maintained friendly relations.[84]

In this description, we encounter a psychological aspect that is crucial for understanding Israilov's decision to engage in armed resistance following the German invasion: in the political landscape of Checheno–Ingushetia, Israilov was never as significant as he would have liked to be. He was largely isolated from politics and was not part of the inner circles of the most influential groups. Revealingly, concerning the conflict with Vachaev, he writes that he and Avtorkhanov had tried 'everything possible [to find] a way out of the present isolation'.[85] That he spent at least four years in prison during the 1930s must have further contributed to his isolation, but also to his increasing resentment. Even though Israilov did hold higher offices during the 1930s, he failed to use these opportunities to enhance his profile, instead becoming repeatedly embroiled in minor disputes that won him nothing but criminal prosecution and new enemies. In his writings, Israilov does not explain why he allowed himself to be side-tracked by these actions. Instead, at the end of his autobiographical account, he rails against Russia and the Soviet regime as the authorities responsible for his personal misfortunes and blows of fate: 'So, these were the main reasons for my personal and moral suffering under the

yoke of the Soviet regime. This is why, in my innermost being [*dushoi*], I could not be content with Soviet power.'[86]

While Israilov seems only to be stating what many people in the Soviet Union thought and felt at the time, he apparently suffered not only from the repression of a dictatorial regime but also agonised over himself, over inherited traditions and over the manifold tensions intrinsic to Chechen society. It is these very societal conditions that Israilov describes in his diary as the actual driving forces of his personal story. Once Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, in an event that he must have regarded as a sign of imminent deliverance, he not only saw an opportunity to overthrow the hated Soviet regime. For him personally, too, the outbreak of war offered a way out of his extremely thorny situation. He saw the chance of a new beginning and grasped the opportunity to achieve the historic significance he had so far been denied.

Khasan Israilov's struggle was officially directed against the Soviet regime. However, his biography largely describes a fight against those forces in society that stood in the way of his vision of a unified Chechen nation. In the passage describing his disagreement with Vakhaev, he complains that they were both essentially working to achieve the same goal—to overthrow the Soviet regime—but that an ongoing blood-feud prevented an alliance between them. Israilov does not tell us what the vendetta was about. It is also unclear how anti-Soviet Vakhaev's views actually were at the time. In retrospect, the fact that he, like many others, had been dismissed from his job and arrested in the Stalinist purges must have been sufficient grounds for Israilov to ascribe an anti-Soviet stance to Vakhaev and the entire Chechen elite.

However, if we are to understand this passage correctly, it is crucial to note that this reading dovetails seamlessly with Israilov's narrative of the supposedly uniform desire of the entire Chechen people to shake off Russian rule. According to Israilov, it was the discord among Chechens that prevented this goal from being realised. Evidence of this can be found in the official slogans that Israilov issued on behalf of his resistance organisations during the war. These slogans contained not just the usual accusations against the Soviet Union as well as against Russians and Jews and calls for religious freedom, but also exhortations such as 'Down with the Law of Blood-Feuds' or demands to end the depredations among the Caucasian 'fraternal peoples'.[87]

In this respect, Khasan Israilov seems to be a 'modern' insurgent inasmuch as he also perceived his struggle to be aimed at overcoming antiquated societal structures and traditions and fostering national unity. His conception of the 'nation' encompasses not just calls for unity among Chechens but also the

vision of a unification of the Caucasian peoples (among which he explicitly includes the Cossacks and the peoples of the South Caucasus) in a federal state entity. In doing so, Israilov engages with notions that had been prevalent just after the revolutions of 1917 among the secular-driven unification movements.[88] It therefore comes as no surprise that after the war with Nazi Germany broke out, Israilov committed himself with boundless energy to the task of building a resistance movement that could serve as the basis for a subsequent state entity. He composed a party platform, issued decrees in the manner of a statesman, wrote letters to the Nazi leadership and travelled ceaselessly from *aul* to *aul* in order to recruit fighters and coordinate operations. He also repeatedly sought contact with rebel groups in other parts of the Caucasus, regarding himself as the future leader of a pan-Caucasian state under a German protectorate. In doing so, it seems he struggled with the idea of power-sharing. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that, after initially refusing all cooperation, he later agreed only reluctantly to cooperate with other resistance movements on Chechen–Ingush territory, including specifically the group around Mairbek Sheripov.[89]

Like Israilov, Mairbek Sheripov, who was born in 1905 (and killed during a special operation of the NKVD on 7 November 1942[90]), belonged to a new, secular-educated generation of Chechens. He was the son of a tsarist officer and brother to none other than civil war hero Aslanbek Sheripov. Mairbek Sheripov was a member of the Communist Party; he was arrested for anti-Soviet activities in 1938, but released from prison in 1939. In the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, he held a higher post than Israilov, however, serving as the representative in the council responsible for the republic's woodworking industry (*lespromsovet*). During the Second World War, his base of operation was in the district of Shatoevskii, where he was able to rely on a large network of relatives and family.[91]

The German special forces operating in Chechnia also noted that the situation there was characterised by serious tensions between the various groups and their leaders. For instance, First Lieutenant Lange states in his report that there were six major bands in Chechnia altogether, the most numerous of which was the organisation led by Israilov:

> In Chechnia, there are six major gangs operating, one in the area of [Makhhety?], one south of [Kharo-Argun?] under the leadership of [Mairbek Sheripov], one west of Itum-Kalinskii under the leadership of Israilov, one near Nikaroi under the leadership of [Idris Magadonov], one west of Shatoi under the leadership of

> [El'murzaev] and one near [Saumsoi?] under the leadership of Mullah [Dzhavatkhan Murtazaliev]. The gangs comprise [a total of] about 1,000 men, which are, however, poorly armed and, most of all, have no ammunition. ... The individual groups of bandits are engaged in mutual intrigue. They are badly organised, their military command is wholly inadequate, their intelligence service is less than rudimentary. The bandit groups consist largely of criminals, most of whom have come into conflict with the authorities due to theft of livestock. Therefore, they enjoy little respect among the population and will be opposed to any form of governmental authority.[92]

Lange's report contrasts these actors against the 'politically ostracised' individuals who are persecuted by the regime. Keeping their distance from these armed bands, they enjoy protection among the entire population.[93] Lange describes Israilov as a 'windbag' (*Schwätzer*) who has 'rounded up his entourage with sheer brutality'. However, Lange must have adopted Israilov's information uncritically, since he writes that his organisation of 'Caucasian brothers' (*Kaukasische Brüder*), which was constituted in 1940 in Ordzhonikidze and considers itself an 'integral part of the NSDAP' (National Socialist German Workers' Party), but 'whose goals, by the way, are entirely nebulous', has 'about 32,000 members' and is sustained by supporters in the mountain areas of Chechnia and Ingushetia.[94] By comparison, Lange assesses Mairbek Sheripov far more positively, calling him the 'most intelligent leader' of the Chechen insurgents.[95] Also, and in sharp contrast to the situation in Chechnia, Lange finds only words of praise for the insurgency in Ingushetia, where small bandit groups, consisting of four to five people, maintain friendly ties with each other, and also manage to coordinate larger actions very well.[96]

We cannot know for sure whether Israilov really believed in his own significance and destiny. However, he was very much aware that there was no turning back from the path he had chosen. In late 1944, when the net was closing around him and his group of armed followers shrank to only a few men, Israilov sought to find a way out of his predicament. In late November and the beginning of December 1944, the NVDK, through one of its agents (a certain Isbakhiev, who formerly was a member of Israilov's group), received several letters, one addressed to V.A. Drozdov (1902–66), who had replaced Albogachiev as commissar for internal affairs of the former Chechen–Ingush ASSR (now the Groznenskii AO). In this letter, Israilov is essentially begging Drozdov to intervene on his behalf with the Moscow leadership in order to seek 'pardon for [Israilov's] sins, which are not as grave as they are presented'.[97] Whether or not Israilov really considered surrendering himself to the

authorities must remain open to question. Unlike many of his companions, including his brother Khusein, who turned themselves in during the course of 1943 as the Wehrmacht's retreat from the Caucasus heralded the rebels' doom, Israilov remained faithful to his cause. Knowing that he could hardly count on the mercy of the Soviet regime, we learn from his diary entries (compiled before August 1943) that he categorically rejected all of the NKVD's offers to surrender.[98] However, it might well be that after the deportation of his people, and given that most of the insurgency leaders were either captured or killed (Sheripov was killed in November 1942, Dzhavakhtan Murtazaliev and his brother Aiub were captured in February 1944), he changed his mind and hoped to find a way out of his dire situation.

At the end of Khasan Israilov's life, his armed resistance was targeted directly at the regime and its representatives. However, his own path involved a confrontation with adversities within society that he could not overcome and who prevented his advancement. It is thus hardly surprising that these bitter internal social realities would finally catch up with him at his end. The fatal injury he received during the night of 15 December 1944 was inflicted not by Russian soldiers, but by Chechens hired by the NKVD.[99] Two weeks later, on 29 December, the last of his supporters handed over Israilov's corpse to the local NKVD representatives. Once the representatives had identified Israilov, he was buried in the *aul* of Urus-Martan.[100] His killing marked the end of a life that had been dedicated from the outset to a doomed cause.

10

AFTER DEPORTATION

HISTORY, MEMORY AND WAR

Memories are always only selective snippets of the past and subjected to the changes of the present. Over time, certain past events are imbued with new significance. Long-lost heroes are rediscovered, while others are being banished. In the North Caucasus, no other event has been as deeply seared into the collective memory as the forced deportations during the Second World War. In the case of the Chechens, the difficulties arising from the way this memory was handled would have a decisive impact on their further development path—finally culminating in the post-Soviet dream of independence and the tragedy of war in the 1990s and 2000s.

The deportations were intended not only to establish order in the Caucasus. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, uprooting entire peoples would also lead to the elimination of their 'obsolete' traditions and customs. A new species of Soviet men and women would be forged in exile. It was thus no accident that the 'special settlers' (*spetspereselentsy*), as they were known in the NKVD jargon, were settled in distant Central Asia, in small groups, dispersed across huge territories. The purpose was to eliminate social ties between individuals. The local security organs established a rule of control that relied on repression and intimidation. The 'special settlers' were not permitted to travel farther than 3 kilometres from their hometown. The elders who had responsibility for a group of 'special settlers' had to report to the local NKVD commander every ten days. Offenders were severely punished.[1]

Such measures were intended to force people to assimilate. Sufficient food rations were only given to those who fulfilled their work duties in the state farms and industries.[2] Especially in the early years, this gave rise to protests in which religious authorities played an important role.[3] For societies that had hitherto largely made their living from animal husbandry in the mountains, work in the fields was a new and unaccustomed challenge. In the beginning, entire groups of people refused repeatedly to show up for work to till the soil and work in the *kolkhoz* fields.[4] Many parents initially tried to avoid sending their children to Soviet schools.[5] In some cases, the parents failed to register their children's births to avoid compulsory schooling.[6]

Life in exile was one of indescribable suffering. Thousands perished due to famine and disease. Out of the 506,656 North Caucasians who were deported to the Kazakh ASSR in 1943/4, 73,681 people had died by 1 July 1946. By contrast, only 8,000 births were registered during the same period.[7] By 1 July 1949, the number of deaths recorded for the Kazakh ASSR had increased to more than 100,000.[8] For the North Caucasian 'special settlers' who had been sent to the Kyrgyz ASSR, the situation was not much better. More than one quarter of these 135,932 exiles had died by 1 July 1946.[9] It was not until 1949/50 that the situation somewhat stabilised and the statistics once more showed the birth rate exceeding deaths.[10] People tried to help each other as best they could, which slightly alleviated the suffering. The 'special settlers' from the North Caucasus also established good relations with the indigenous Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations—though not with the local Russians.[11]

After Stalin's death in 1953, the regime of control was relaxed, and repression lessened. However, nothing changed at first regarding the status of the exiles. It was only three years after the dictator's death, on 16 July 1956, that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed a decree lifting the constraints associated with the exiles' special status.[12] However, the right of return to their homeland was not yet granted at this time. When thousands nevertheless set out to return home on their own, the party's Central Committee decided on 24 November 1956 to grant all North Caucasian deportees permission to return and agreed to restore their national home territories.[13] The presidia of the Supreme Soviets of both the USSR and the RSFSR confirmed this decision on 9 January 1957.[14] By the beginning of the 1960s, the majority of deportees had returned to their ancestral lands in the Caucasus. However, several tens of thousands of Chechens and Ingush remained in Central Asia, where they had made a new home for themselves.[15]

The years in exile had left people changed. For the first time ever, most Chechen children, now also including girls, enjoyed a secular education and learned the Russian language, which many had previously been unable to speak (the North Caucasian languages were not taught in the schools in exile).[16] Also for the first time, men and women worked together in state enterprises and were trained in the use of modern agricultural techniques and industrial work. While the typical attributes and manifestations of Caucasian and Muslim traditions and customs disappeared in everyday life in exile, the awareness of ethnic affiliation was strengthened far from home. In the intimate circle of their family, people tried to preserve their traditions and religion. By contrast, there was growing distrust and rejection of Russia and the Soviet state, which people blamed for their situation. The large-scale return of Chechens and Ingush to the Caucasus during the second half of the 1950s also caused ethnic strife that sometimes turned violent. For instance, Groznyi in particular witnessed repeated brawls between Chechens and Russian urban residents that sometimes resulted in broader unrest, as happened on 26 August 1958 following the murder of a Russian, when the city was shaken by severe, pogrom-type violence that left numerous people killed and injured.[17]

On several occasions, the country also saw minor conflicts break out between returnees and those people from the neighbouring republics who had been resettled there after the deportations.[18] These conflicts arose because the return from exile was badly organised, and because during 1957 and 1958, far more Chechens and Ingush returned home than had been anticipated. Thousands of Avars, Dargins and Laks who had been settled in the vacated territories after the deportation of the Chechens now had to return to their former areas of settlement in Dagestan.[19] Conflicts over settlements also arose because the borders of the re-established national entities were not in every case congruous with those of the territories as they had previously existed. It was these unresolved border issues that would subsequently cause repeated tensions among the peoples, finally resulting in sometimes violent conflicts in the early 1990s. In the North Caucasus, the bloodiest of these conflicts erupted in 1992 between Ingush and Ossetians over the Prigorodnyi *raion*, causing about 550 deaths. Subsequently, almost all Ingush were driven out of the territory.[20]

If the return of the Chechens and Ingush was a conflict-ridden affair, the repatriations of other peoples took place without any problems. For instance, not only was the return of the Balkars better organised; it is also reported that,

on their arrival at the train station, the people were welcomed by other inhabitants, including Russians, Kabardians and Mountain Jews.[21] However, even in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, the situation appeared to have stabilised itself by the early 1960s, not least due to the engagement of the Soviet state and the programme it initiated in the early 1960s to foster economic development and education.[22] Overall, the republic experienced a recovery that was visible in the lively construction projects in cities like Groznyi, in the increased degree of industrialisation, and in the modernisation of infrastructure. During the long term in office of Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev (who lived from 1907 to 1982 and was first secretary of the CPSU from 1964 until his death), people for the first time experienced a degree of normality in everyday life, resulting in a higher-than-average birth rate among Chechens and Ingush.[23]

However, this should not blind us to the fact that, even during the late Soviet period, Chechens and Ingush remained second-class citizens compared with the local Russian population. According to the last Soviet census of 1989, the Chechens accounted for 57.8 per cent of the republic's population (the Ingush accounted for 12.9 per cent, the Russians for 23.1 per cent), but only one-quarter of them lived in cities. Thus, among the major non-Russian ethnic groups in the Caucasus, the Chechens had the lowest quota of urban dwellers (by comparison, in 1989, 35.4 per cent of the Ingush, 43 per cent of the Kabardians, 59.2 per cent of the Balkars and 63.9 per cent of the Ossetians were urban dwellers).[24] And it was still the Russians who occupied most of the higher positions in the government and party apparatus as well as the top jobs in state enterprises and the local industry. It was not until 1989 that Doku Gapurovich Zavgaev became the first Chechen to be appointed first party secretary of the republic.[25] Most Chechens were industrial or agricultural labourers, occupied lower administrative positions and lived in the less fashionable suburbs of Groznyi or the surrounding villages.[26] Industry was booming, but still only very few Chechens found jobs there. Among the roughly 50,000 workers employed by the republic's two main petrochemical factories, Grozneft' and Orgsintes, there were only a few hundred Chechens.[27] The failure of the republic's authorities to promote the integration of Chechens into the local industry resulted in tens of thousands of unemployed young Chechen males in the 1980s. Many of them left for Moscow and other Soviet cities to make a living. Some joined organised crime groups and earned their money through illicit activities—and it was this generation of youths who would later form the core of the armed resistance against Russia.[28]

While the statistics showed that the number of Chechens with school-leaving qualifications had increased strongly since the 1960s, education remained rudimentary, especially in the rural areas. There was a lack of teachers, and many children only attended school intermittently. The Russian language was dominant in institutions of higher learning, placing the Chechens at a disadvantage compared with the Russian students due to their lack of language skills.[29] By 1989, just 5 per cent of Chechens had a high-school diploma; 15 per cent appear to have received no schooling at all.[30] The results of the 1989 census reveal that, of all the autonomous regions and republics of the USSR, Checheno–Ingushetia had the lowest level of education.[31]

Especially in cities like Groznyi, many Chechens felt like second-class citizens.[32] Their discontent was further stoked by the fact that throughout the latter stages of the Soviet era, it was forbidden to speak openly about the injustice inflicted on the Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples by the state-mandated deportation. Not only was there not even a single memorial plaque to recall this traumatic event; throughout the late Soviet period, the authorities failed to erect even one statue dedicated to Chechen or Ingush heroes of the October Revolution or the Russian Civil War. By contrast, the statue of General Ermolov in Groznyi was left untouched even after the return of the North Caucasian deportees.[33] Soviet historians largely remained silent on the tragedy of deportation when discussing the history of Checheno–Ingushetia. Only during a short phase in the early 1960s were historians at least permitted to make reference to the fact of deportation and the dissolution of the Chechen–Ingush republic. However, even these historians failed to comment in any way on the real background of the deportation and the severe hardship for the people involved.[34]

Already in the late Soviet period, it was the collective memory of past injustice that would inflame the ire of the Chechens. In the early 1980s, celebrations were held in Groznyi under the lead of the republic's ethnic Russian First Party Secretary M.A. Suslov to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the 'peaceful union' of Chechnia with Russia. One group of intellectuals that had coalesced around Chechen historian Magomed Muzaev, who would later become the head of the Chechen National Archive, responded by submitting a letter of protest. They condemned the interpretation of history that had been propagated in the textbooks since the early 1970s as a falsification of facts. For their troubles, Muzaev and others involved in the affair were persecuted by the local secret police, banned from speaking or writing in public, and dismissed from their jobs.[35]

The situation only changed in the late 1980s, as the party's new first secretary, Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, introduced liberalisation measures. One of the main aims of Gorbachev's reform, and part of the new openness, was a reckoning with the Stalinist past. On 14 November 1989, the Supreme Soviet declared that the violent displacement of peoples, including specifically the 'Balkars, Ingush, Kalmyks, Karachaians, Crimean Tatars, Germans, Meskhetian Turks, and Chechens', was an 'illegal and criminal' act of the 'barbarian' Stalinist regime.[36] The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR under its chairman, Boris Nikolaevich El'tsin (1931–2007), followed the Soviet Union's decisions, and Article 2 of a law passed on 26 April 1991 even explicitly branded the deportations under Stalin as a 'policy of defamation and genocide'.[37] While Soviet newspaper articles had already been discussing the crimes of Stalin since the late 1980s,[38] the early 1990s saw the publication of the first journal articles to base their arguments on secret police files from the Soviet archives.[39]

Not only entire populations but even individuals who had been subject to repression during the Stalin era were rehabilitated. By the 1990s, their numbers had grown to 800,000 people, including thousands of members of North Caucasian ethnicities.[40] In the early 1990s, Moscow was also active on the ground in helping to come to terms with the tragedy in practical ways. The North Caucasian peoples who had suffered under Stalin were given funds from the federal treasury to build memorials for the victims of deportation. Moscow also supported the production of films and edited volumes providing and disseminating information about the deportation of the individual peoples.[41] The Kremlin extended special financial support to the Ingush, who had split off from the Chechens in October 1991 to form a republic of their own. Moscow's attention to the Ingush was probably to prevent this people from following the path of secession as the Chechens had done.[42] The new policy of openness met with a strong response in the respective republics of the North Caucasus. In Chechnia, the topic of deportation was now a subject for broad debate in the public forum as well as in literature, music and poetry.[43]

At this point in time, there was certainly the potential for a true reconciliation with Russia, and with history. Few would have anticipated that out of all the North Caucasian peoples, the Chechens alone would later find themselves embroiled in such a violent direct military confrontation with Russia. However, already in the late 1980s, it was becoming apparent that some of the nationalist-oriented Chechen elites were adopting a confrontational stance towards Russia. When Chechnia commemorated the

anniversary of the deportation on 23 February, which the leaders of Chechnia and Ingushetia designated the official Memorial Day,[44] they treated the deportation not as an isolated event, but as part of the larger context of a centuries-old conflict with Russia. With this narrative, Chechnia contradicted the Soviet propaganda of 'friendship among peoples' and the 'peaceful annexation' of Chechnia with Russia. This was seen, for instance, in late 1989, when a Chechen people's assembly demanded that ethnic Russian historian V.B. Vinogradov, the main proponent of the 'peaceful annexation' theory, be stripped of all his academic titles and lose his status as citizen of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. Protestors gathered outside Vinogradov's house and pilloried him as an 'enemy of the Chechen people'.[45]

The narrative of a long-lasting, ingrained tradition of resistance can already be found before the deportation, for example in writings by Khasan Israilov dating to the early 1940s.[46] However, the notion of a permanent Russo-Chechen conflict that had already lasted for 300 or even 400 years was a new one in the sense that it marked a first radical departure from the historical lines of tradition that understood Chechen history as also being part of Russian imperial and Soviet history, by occasionally referencing with a certain degree of pride the achievements of Chechen officers in the tsar's army or the important role of Chechens in the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War.[47] However, this also removed the basis of Chechnia's continued existence as part of the Russian Federation. For the narrative of permanent conflict became a symbol of Chechnia's independence aspirations and would be used to legitimise the subsequent armed resistance against Russia.

In the spring of 1990, Dzhokhar Dudaev, a former Soviet air force officer, became the strident leader of a Chechen independence movement whose demands were mirrored by those of many other peoples of the Soviet Union in the atmosphere of the general 'national awakening' that began in the late 1980s. After taking power in an armed putsch, he was elected the first president of the so-called 'Chechen Republic of Ichkeriia' in a controversial poll in October 1991.[48] When the parliament of the Russian Federation questioned the legality of Dudaev's election, he not only challenged Russia's jurisdiction over Chechnia but demanded that a peace treaty be signed between Russia and Chechnia to end what he called the '300-year war between the Russian Empire and the Chechen people'.[49] As tensions between Russia and Chechnia increased, Dudaev's rhetoric grew more heated. He openly described the deportation of the Caucasians as an act of genocide that had killed 400,000 or even 600,000 people,[50] which Dudaev framed as part

of a long list of crimes perpetrated by the Russian-dominated state not only under Stalin but since Russia's first military operations in the sixteenth century. Accordingly, Dudaev identified 'Russism' and its 'inhuman ideology' as the 'key source of violence' against the Chechen people.[51] In this view, Dudaev portrayed Chechnia's decision to secede from the RSFSR, which the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR formally adopted on 27 November 1990 (the republic's full independence was declared by the All-Chechen Congress on 8 June 1991),[52] as a legitimate act of liberation from Chechnia's 'unjust occupation', first by the Russian military in the second half of the eighteenth century, then by 'Russian Bolshevism' in 1920.[53]

In this heated atmosphere, the administration of then-president El'tsin severely miscalculated by deciding to suppress Chechnia's striving for independence by brute force. As if the prevailing Chechen historic narrative required any further validation, Moscow ordered a military invasion in December 1994 and deployed tens of thousands of soldiers in the small Caucasian republic.[54] In an interview, Dudaev once offered an explanation for why the Chechens now, as in centuries past, resisted so fiercely, arguing that

> the Chechen people are not made to be slaves. Due to the geographic situation of the Caucasus, there is no doubt that [this region presents] the cradle of human civilisation. The mental potential, the moral potential, and the potential of natural resources—all of these preclude the Chechens, the Chechen people as an ethnic group of the Caucasus, from being slaves.[55]

It was not only their determined resistance, however, that facilitated the Chechens' initial successes over the Russian army but also the fact that the Soviet forces had left behind large stockpiles of arms and ammunition upon their withdrawal from their garrisons in Chechnia until 1992. These were seized by Dudaev's army and were instrumental in allowing his forces to counter the Russian attack.[56]

When a ceasefire was agreed in August 1996 and the federal troops withdrew, Chechnia descended into a chaotic phase that was marked by political infighting and gang warfare; this was the brief period of Chechnia's de facto independence. It ended two years later when Russia once more intervened militarily in August 1999. The intervention was sparked by a raid on Dagestani border villages by Chechen Islamists led by rebel commander Shamil Basaev (1965–2006).[57] After extended fighting and severe casualties, Russian President Vladimir Putin officially announced the end of the 'counter-terrorism operation' in Chechnia on 31 January 2006.[58] However, the war

continued unabated, and on 16 April 2009, Putin once more declared the end of military operations, although some guerrilla fighters still remained at large.[59] But even as the situation in Chechnia was slowly stabilising, the conflict had already spread to the neighbouring republics. Specifically, Ingushetia and Dagestan—and in some instances, also Kabardino–Balkaria and other republics of the North Caucasus—now fused with Chechnia into a single, vast conflict zone in the North Caucasus. This region has experienced terrorist acts, bandit raids and clashes between government security forces and armed underground fighters on a near-daily basis ever since.[60]

The two wars that Russia fought against Chechnia between 1994 and 1996 and then again after 1999 not only killed tens of thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands; in Chechnia, they also resulted in an attempt to destroy Chechen culture. Especially during the First Chechen War, Russia's armed forces deliberately targeted archives, libraries, museums and monuments. The destruction of the Chechen National Archive was especially devastating: 80 per cent of its holdings, including memoirs of the deportees, were destroyed by fire following a Russian air raid.[61] For the victims, Russia's reckless behaviour was only comparable to the terror of the Stalin era. Many Chechens viewed it as further evidence that Chechnia's striving for independence was driven by the pent-up anger of a people that wanted to 'rid itself of the power that had bullied, suppressed, and robbed it for centuries', as the Chechen writer Sultan Iashurkaev, who experienced the First Chechen War in Groznyi, notes in his memoirs.[62]

The path to the Russo-Chechen confrontation of the 1990s can only be understood if we consider the power of specific historical myths. Such myths should not be regarded simply as false or fanciful narratives; rather, they exist by virtue of the significance attributed to them by individuals and societies. In the words of Roland Barthes, 'myth' is a type of speech, a system of communication that always incorporates a clear message.[63] Myths alone do not set off wars. However, they are a crucial requirement in mobilising societies for war. The Chechens, like other peoples, saw the wave of newfound sovereignty that swept the non-Russian peripheries of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s as an opportunity to be grasped. However, without the myth of a perpetual Russo-Chechen conflict, which was first propagated in its radical form by Dudaev, the Chechens could not have been mobilised to such a degree for the goals of independence and war against Russia.[64]

Why exactly did the myth of permanent conflict find such fertile societal ground in early 1990s Chechnia in particular? 'Objective' reasons such as the

deportation or the repeated conflicts and insurrections under Russia's long rule hardly suffice as explanations. For many North Caucasian peoples have a history of armed resistance to Russia, and it was not only the Chechens who experienced traumatic events such as resettlements and deportations during the tsarist and Soviet eras. Thus, one reason why only Chechnia entered into a military confrontation with Russia is that at least parts of the population were prepared to attribute such enormous symbolic power to the myth of permanent conflict with Russia as promoted by charismatic leaders such as Dudaev.[65]

During transitional periods, myths are particularly contested; they are manipulated for political gain and interpreted in new ways, and they change over time. Evidence of this can be seen in the latest developments in Chechnia. It is true that Ramzan Kadyrov, who has been ruling the republic with an iron fist since 2007 with the Kremlin's blessings (and Russia's financial help), has never openly denied the tragedy of deportation. However, when it comes to discussing culpability and responsibility, he avoids all reference to specific causes or individuals.[66] Though Kadyrov has nominally continued the commemoration of the deportation, he summarily decreed in the spring of 2011 that the date was being moved from 23 February to 10 May. Henceforth, the deportation would be commemorated within the context of a general 'Day of Remembrance and Shame of the Peoples of Chechnia'. However, this day now not only commemorates the suffering of the Chechens but is primarily a memorial day for Kadyrov's father Akhmat Kadyrov (1951–2004), who was murdered on 9 May 2004. In the first war, like all Chechens, he initially fought against the federal troops; but later, he switched sides and was appointed ruler of Chechnia by Moscow. From this viewpoint, the history of Chechnia as an autonomous republic began not with Dzhokhar Dudaev, but with Akhmat Kadyrov. Because the anniversary of his death overlapped with the national Memorial Day on 9 May, the 'Day of Victory over Fascism', Ramzan Kadyrov ordered that the Day of Remembrance be moved to 10 May.[67]

Kadyrov's decision essentially dovetails with the Soviet notion of 'friendship among peoples', a concept that is also currently fostered by the Kremlin. This may be regarded as an effort to stabilise the relationship between Chechnia and Russia. However, in Chechnia in particular, the latest developments are evidence of the huge potential for conflict that such political interpretations of history hold in store. Against this backdrop, the task of the historian of Russia has become ever more important, especially regarding a critical reappraisal of the past of such a troubled region as the North Caucasus.

CONCLUSION

PRECARIOUS RULE AND CONTESTED LOYALTIES

This investigation of the history of the North Caucasus under Russian imperial and Soviet rule has identified a number of features that also characterise historical trajectories in other parts of the country, particularly in the Islamic areas of the South Caucasus and in Central Asia. But the situation in the North Caucasus presents itself as one of extremes: nowhere did the expanding Russian Empire encounter as much stubborn resistance from the local non-Russian populations. In particular, the north-eastern part of the region, home to the Chechens and Dagestanis, would remain the most difficult to govern part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union.

While from a military–strategic point of view the peoples of the region no longer represented a serious threat after the completion of the Russian military conquest in the mid-nineteenth century, neither the tsars nor the Bolsheviks ever succeeded in creating the kinds of conditions needed to eliminate any possibility of armed opposition. The intractable nature of the societies in the North Caucasus became especially evident whenever the state tried to restrict the inner freedoms and mores of these peoples. The major uprising of 1877 and the mass revolts during collectivisation in 1929/30 were both ultimately a response to heavy-handed state intervention attempts.

Over the course of history, therefore, the central state has repeatedly appeared to the peoples of the region as an outside power and occupier when rebellions had been put down by brute military force. Yet it would be a

mistake to see all unrest and disturbances in the North Caucasus as directly linked to central state policy. In many cases, they were the result of dissatisfaction with the governing practices followed by local administrators. This study has further shown how important it is to regard violence also as an intra-Caucasian phenomenon, rooted in the societal structures and traditions of the region. Conflicts over land, assets and honour had the potential to gain additional momentum when the state became involved. The readiness of North Caucasian societies to take up arms is partly to be explained by the fact that the residents of mountain villages in the region, particularly through the clan structure, retained their traditional social networks and modes of behaviour until well into the Soviet era.

This investigation has also shown that it would be a mistake to regard the relationship between the central state and the non-Russian population of the North Caucasus as solely one of tension and violent conflict. The absence of major rebellions for extensive periods, and the fact that not all parts of society were equally involved in them, indicate that, even in this region, the arrangements arrived at between state and society were ultimately characterised by a relatively high measure of stability. Whereas tacit acquiescence was taken as a sufficient sign of loyalty under the informal rule exercised by tsarist government representatives in the Caucasus, the Bolsheviks demanded unconditional and active participation in their socialist mobilisation project and the radical transformation of societal relations. As part of this process, the state, through its local representatives, directly intervened in local affairs. Yet even the Soviet state with its aspirations of total control was forced to accept compromises in the face of societal resistance, and acknowledged arrangements that allowed for the continued existence of certain traditions and mores. This was not in any way to be seen as any kind of tolerance on the part of the Bolsheviks towards the North Caucasian peoples and their culture. But in order to stabilise this historically unruly peripheral region, the Soviet state was, in practice, prepared to accept certain social conditions as unavoidable, at least on a transitory basis.

Another stabilising factor can be seen in the prospects for social advancement opened up by the introduction of a new societal order, which considerable numbers of citizens welcomed as an opportunity for themselves. The Bolsheviks worked much harder than the tsarist authorities had ever done on co-opting social elites and were also at pains, through their policy of *korenizatsiia*, to create new perspectives for the broad mass of the population. The creation of ethnically defined autonomous territories succeeded in

generating attitudes of loyalty that were in any event sufficiently robust that, even in Chechnia, there were thousands who were prepared to be mobilised in the struggle against Nazi Germany on the outbreak of the Second World War. Over time, the increasingly decisive demarcation was not that between the non-Russian peoples of the North Caucasus and the central state, but rather that between modernity, located in the cities with their educational institutions and industrial centres, and rural areas, which from the Bolshevik perspective represented the epitome of backwardness that, over the shorter or longer term, need to be overcome.

Hence neither the tsars nor the Soviet state pursued solely oppression-based policies in their efforts to control this region and secure the allegiance of the non-Russian population. In any case, rule by the state was never constituted solely in the context of a centre–periphery relationship. There was rather a matrix of power relations, involving different segments of society. The Bolshevik state and its representatives were always only one entity of societal relations—admittedly of central significance—which competed with other societal actors and institutions, but were also interlinked with them in many and varied ways. In this context, society has emerged as not simply being an entity oppressed and manipulated by the state but also as an actor in its own right, which participated in state-building processes at the periphery, and helped to define them. The establishment of central state rule in the North Caucasus manifested itself as an ongoing process of negotiation over the precise arrangements between the state and the various societal actors. Such arrangements have at times been subject to abrupt change, as seen when they were shaken by major events such as wars and revolutions, and the attendant collapse of central state power. These watershed events also had the effect of making visible the social identities and loyalties that had formed. Just how contested these were became evident particularly during the time of civil war following the October Revolution.

Whereas the dynamics after the February Revolution were initially driven by the idea of North Caucasian unity, but not an anti-Russia movement, the collapse of the central state order after the October Revolution created a political constellation that was largely determined by the differing interests of the various ethnic groups and their respective leaders. This prompted efforts to unify North Caucasians on a secular or theocratic basis, and also efforts to form alliances with various military forces, both those within Russia and those of external powers. The landscape of repeatedly changing alliances defined power constellations until well into the 1920s. It was only

from the mid-1920s, after the last major armed rebellions had been put down, and following the arrest of prominent religious authorities and comprehensive disarmament campaigns, that the Bolshevik-controlled Soviet state became the dominant power.

During the Second World War and the arrival of Nazi Germany as a new power factor in the region, the North Caucasus was again exposed to massive societal perturbations. Yet the fact that in Chechnia, in particular, many were unwilling to take part in the war against Germany was not always attributable to a hostile attitude towards the Soviet state among the population; in some cases, it was also the result of inadequate information, poorly conducted mobilisation campaigns and mistreatment of Caucasians in the Red Army. How complex the situation was in reality has been demonstrated through the life story of Khasan Israilov, whose path to active armed resistance was by no means straightforward.

The decision by the Soviet leadership to deport the Chechens and other North Caucasians in 1943/4 can be understood as an operation designed to break the resistance of these peoples to Stalin's mobilisation project once and for all. Above all, however, it can be characterised as the action of an essentially weak state, whose rule in the North Caucasus was always precarious, and for which the deportation represented a last, radical measure to cleanse the region of undesirable peoples and finally assert its full dominance. The inability of the state to genuinely consolidate its rule in the ensuing years and decades was highlighted particularly clearly in the case of the Chechens, who during the collapse of the Soviet Union, again rose up in arms against Russia in an effort to win their national independence.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. GARF, fond (f.) r-9401, opis' (op.) 2, delo (d.) 64, list (l.) 165.
2. The deportation of the Karachai people took place in the autumn of 1943. The Balkar people were forced into exile in March 1944, after the deportation of the Chechen and Ingush. The Kalmyks, a steppe people living in the North Caucasian plains, were exiled in December 1943. On the deportations, see Chapter 8 in this book.
3. The decree of 7 March 1944 is published in: V.A. Kozlov et al. (eds), *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast': Problema Chechni i Ingushetii vo vnutrennei politike Rossii i SSSR (nachalo XIX–seredina XX v.)*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011, pp. 674–6. The Soviet (and, with them, the world) public learned of the deportations and the liquidation of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR on 26 June 1946 through an article published in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestiia*: 'Ob utverzhdenii Ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR', *Izvestiia*, no. 149, 26 June 1946, p. 2.
4. The most influential among these authors is the Chechen historian Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, whose writings on Chechen and Soviet history have been much cited by Western historians. The following essay of his is particularly well known: Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, 'The Chechens and the Ingush during the Soviet Period and Its Antecedents', in Marie Bennigsen Broxup (ed.), *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World*, London: Hurst, 1992, pp. 146–94. For a critical review of Avtorkhanov's works, see: Michael David-Fox, 'Memory, Archives, Politics: The Rise of Stalin in Avtorkhanov's Technology of Power', *Slavic Review*, vol. 54, no. 4 (1995), pp. 988–1003; Ehren Park and David Brandenberger, 'Imagined Community? Rethinking the Nationalist Origins of the Contemporary Chechen Crisis', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2004), pp. 543–60, here pp. 545–51.

5. Marie Bennigsen Broxup, 'Introduction', in Bennigsen Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 1–17, here p. 1. Cf. other works along this line: John B. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Ben Fowkes (ed.), *Russia and Chechnia: The Permanent Crisis*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998; Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800–2000: A Deadly Embrace*, Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001; Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: Politics and War in the Russian Caucasus*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1998. There are exceptions, however, that challenge longstanding narratives, such as the excellent study by British historian Alex Marshall: Alex Marshall, *The Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, London: Routledge, 2010.
6. Yaacov Ro'i, 'The Transformation of Historiography on the "Punished Peoples"', *History and Memory*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2009), pp. 150–76.
7. A prominent representative of this view is the Russian publicist Igor' Pykhalov: I.V. Pykhalov, *Za chto Stalin vyselial narody? Stalinskie deportatsii—prestupnyi proizvol ili spravedlivoe vozmezdie?*, Moscow: Iauza-press, 2008.
8. Representative for this trend in Russian historiography: Kh.I. Ibragimov and V.A. Tishkov (eds), *Chechenskaia Respublika i chechentsy: Istoriia i sovremennost'; Materialy vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii, Moskva, 19–20 aprelia 2005 goda*, Moscow: Nauka, 2006. Among Chechen historians disputing the thesis of 'perpetual conflict' and instead stressing commonalities and harmonious aspects in the history of Russian–Chechen relations, Zarema Ibragimova is among the most prominent. See, for example: Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy*, Moscow: Probel-2000, 2000. For an overview of Chechen historiography: Moshe Gammer, 'Nationalism and History: Rewriting the Chechen National Past', in Bruno Coppieters and Michel Huysseune (eds), *Secession, History and the Social Sciences*, Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press, 2002, pp. 117–40.
9. For an overview of this literature: Park and Brandenberger, 'Imagined Community?', p. 544 (note 2); on the thesis of 'perpetual conflict', see also Chapter 10 in this book.
10. If the Soviet Union had persisted some twenty years longer, a 'Chechen problem' would not have occurred, according to Russian historian Vladimir Kozlov: 'Chechnia i imperskaia vlast': Vozvrashchenie i promezhutochnyi itog (chast' 7)', *Radio Svoboda*, 7 September 2003 (radio transmission with Vladimir Tolts and Vladimir Kozlov; the transcript at: http://archive.svoboda.org/programs/TD/2003/TD.090703.asp, last accessed 15 June 2017).
11. V.V. Degoev, 'K vozobnovleniiu izdaniia "Kavkazskikh sbornikov"', in N.Iu. Silaev (ed.), *Kavkazskii sbornik*, vol. 1, no. 33, Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2004, pp. 8–10, here p. 9.
12. Iakov Gordin, *Kavkaz: Zemlia i krov'; Rossiia v Kavkazskoi voine XIX veka*, Saint-Petersburg: Zhurnal 'Zvezda', 2000, p. 27.
13. See Chapter 3 in this book.
14. This definition draws on: Jürg Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*, 4th edn, Munich: Beck, 2004, p. 21. Tellingly, however, Osterhammel does not include the Russian case in his seminal study on colonialism.
15. Aleksei Miller, 'Between Local and Inter-imperial: Russian Imperial History in Search

of Scope and Paradigm', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2004), pp. 7–26, here p. 16.

16. Linda Colley, 'What Is Imperial History Now?', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What Is History Now?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 132–147, here p. 136.
17. Seminal, in this respect, is the publication of Stepan Podlubyi's diary by German historian Jochen Hellbeck: Jochen Hellbeck (ed.), *Tagebuch aus Moskau, 1931–1939*, Munich: DTV, 1996. Cf. also: Heiko Haumann, 'Blick von innen auf den Stalinismus: Zur Bedeutung von Selbstzeugnissen', in Heiko Haumann (ed.), *Erinnerung an Gewaltherrschaft: Selbstzeugnisse, Analysen, Methoden*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 51–76.
18. Cf. on nationality issues and nationality policy in the tsarist period: Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich*, Munich: Beck, 1992.
19. Christian W. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis: Die Integration der Tschetschenen und Inguschen in das Russische Reich 1810–1880*, Mannheim: Dryas Verlag, 2011, p. 86.
20. On this issue, see Chapter 1 in this book.
21. The Chechens and the Ingush are two different peoples, each with their own distinct history. They are, however, closely related ethnically, and their language falls into the same group of Nakh languages (spoken only in Chechnia, Ingushetiia and by a very small minority group in Georgia, as well as the Chechens and Ingush living outside of their republic). Their two territories were united into the Chechen–Ingush AO only in 1934 (upgraded to ASSR in 1936). After the dissolution of the USSR, the Ingush split from the Chechens and formed their own autonomous republic as part of the Russian Federation. On the different historical trajectories of the Ingush and Chechens until the 1880s: Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*. To date, there is no comprehensive Western study of the history of the Ingush during the late tsarist and Soviet periods. For a seminal study on the Ingush in the Russian language: Mar'iam Iandieva and Adam Mal'sagov (eds), *Ingushetiia i ingushi*, vol. 1, Nazran' and Moscow: Memorial and Zerkalo, 1999; Mar'iam Iandieva and Bersnak Gazikov (eds), *Ingushetiia i ingushi*, vol. 2, Moscow: Novaia planeta, 2002.
22. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 225–7, 333.
23. Especially in the mountainous parts, not all Chechens seem to have adopted Islam at this particular time, among these the Kists, a subethnos of the Chechnens, living today in the Pankisi Gorge in eastern Georgia: ibid., pp. 168–9.
24. Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
25. On these continuities from tsarist to Soviet times: Jörg Baberowski, 'Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit: Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und in der Sowjetunion', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 47, no. 4 (1999), pp. 482–503.
26. On the *inorodtsy*, see also Chapter 3 in this book.
27. Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles and Clyde Kluckholm, in their study *How the Soviet System Works*, published in 1956 and which is based on hundreds of interviews with Soviet migrants, define a totalitarian society as 'a society in which those who hold political power attempt to coordinate for the attainment of their goals all the material

and human resources of their society, extending even to the private feelings and sentiments of the populace': *How the Soviet System Works: Cultural, Psychological and Social Themes*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 20.

28. Cf. Manfred Hildermeier, 'Revolution und Kultur: Der "neue Mensch" in der frühen Sowjetunion', in *Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs 1996*, Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1996, pp. 51–68.
29. Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann, 'Einleitung', in Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann (eds), *Stalinistische Subjekte: Individuum und System in der Sowjetunion und der Komintern 1929–1953*, Zurich: Chronos, 2006, pp. 9–37, here p. 13.
30. On nationality policy in the early Soviet period, see: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001; Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. These two studies do not, however, treat Soviet nationality policy with regard to the peoples of the North Caucasus in any comprehensive way. For a Russian-language study on the subject: V.G. Chebotareva, *Natsional'naia politika Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 1925–1938 gg.*, Moscow: Moskovskii dom natsional'nostei, Obshchestvennaia akademiia nauk rossiiskich nemtsev, 2008.
31. Studer and Haumann, 'Einleitung', pp. 13–14.
32. With regard to Russian-language historiography, there is a vast amount of literature providing an overview of the character of individual peoples of the North Caucasus and their histories. On the history of Chechnia and the Chechens, see, for example: Kh.V. Turkaev (ed.), *Chechentsy v istorii, politike, nauke i kul'ture Rossii: Issledovaniia i dokumenty*, Moscow: Nauka, 2015; M.M. Ibragimov (ed.), *Istoriia Chechni s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei; V dvukh tomakh*, 2nd edn, Groznyi: GUP 'Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo', 2008. A number of publications have recently been published in the West. Next to those already mentioned, there are, for example: Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Chechens: A Handbook*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005; Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Circassians: A Handbook*, New York: Palgrave, 2001; Elza-Bair Guchinova, *The Kalmyks*, London: Routledge, 2006; Walter Richmond, *The Northwest Caucasus: Past, Present, Future*, London: Routledge, 2008; Robert Bruce Ware and Enver Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010.
33. For critical reflections of Western writings on the North Caucasus: Richard Sakwa, 'Introduction: Why Chechnya?', in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London: Anthem Press, 2005, pp. 1–20, here pp. 4–8.
34. Miller, *Between Local and Inter-imperial*, p. 16. On the concept of 'thick description': Clifford Geertz, 'Dichte Beschreibung: Bemerkungen zu einer deutenden Theorie von Kultur', in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Dichte Beschreibung: Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987, pp. 7–43.
35. These efforts are reflected in the numerous publications in the form of document collections, book series and journals, namely: *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago* (Russian military documents in twelve volumes, issued in Tbilisi and published between 1866 and 1904); *Kavkazskii sbornik*, Tbilisi 1876–1912 (military–historical

journal, published between 1876 and 1912, issued in Tbilisi); *Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh* (ethnographic studies published as a book series, issued in Tbilisi in 1868–81); *Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnosti i plemen Kavkaza* (ethnographic/anthropological journal issued in Tbilisi in 1881–1915); Kavkazskii kalendar' (annual journal on various topics of the Caucasus region, issued in Tbilisi in 1845–1917); *Zapiski Kavazskogo otdela Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva* (scientific book series on historical, geographical and botanical topics, as well as expedition reports, issued in Tbilisi in 1852–1916); *Izvestiia Kavkazskogo otdela Imperatorskogo Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestvo* (scientific contribution on various topics, published at irregular intervals, issued in Tbilisi in 1872–1917).

36. On Kundukhov, see Chapter 2 of this book.
37. All fonds from GARF have been viewed in Moscow, with the exception of fond r-9479 (Fourth Special Section of the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR), which the author viewed on microfilm at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.
38. The holdings from this archive (fonds 6 and 89) have been viewed on microfilm at the British Library (Russian microform resources) in London.
39. L.S. Gatagova et al. (eds), *TSK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros: Kniga 1; 1918–1933 gg.*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005; L.S. Gatagova et al. (eds), *TsK VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros: Kniga 2; 1933–1945 gg.*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009; Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*.
40. *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD: 1918–1939; Dokumenty i materialy v 4 tomakh*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998–; *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934)*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001–; *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni: Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie; Dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh, 1927–1939*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001–.
41. For the Mitaev case in particular, the author was also in contact with the staff at the Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic, which provided valuable documents. Mitaev's life and fate is described in Chapter 5 of this book.
42. A. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, Frankfurt am Main: Possev-Verlag, 1983. Avtorkhanov's life is discussed in Chapter 6 of this book.
43. I refer here to Khasan Israilov's unpublished personal accounts, which he wrote at the beginning of the 1940s. His life and fate is described in Chapter 9 of this book.
44. Most of these interviews are available online and in full text at: HPSSS, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, http://hcl.harvard.edu/ collections/hpsss/index.html, last accessed 31 May 2017. The collection of interviews contains about a dozen documents relating to people from the North Caucasus region, among these two Chechens (cases no. 101 and no. 434). Only case no. 434 is in the form of a longer transcribed interview. Summaries of interviews and transcripts are also available with several Ossetians and Cherkess, one person from Dagestan (Avar), one Balkar and one Kabardian. The author of this book has also scanned the archives of the human rights organisation 'Memorial' in Moscow, which has a large collection of unpublished memoirs from people living through the age of Stalinism; there are, however, no such reports from North Caucasians, and very few of the other accounts refer to life in the North Caucasus in Soviet times.

1. CONQUEST AND RESISTANCE

1. The title 'imam' (Arabic: *'imām*, literally 'leader') denotes an Islamic leadership position. Among Sunni Muslims, the term mostly refers to the leader of a Muslim community. The 'imamate' refers to an Islamic state ruled by an imam.
2. Russian historical writing on the Caucasus during much of the ninetheenth century was dominated by military historians and publicists, and steeped in a deep sense of Russian superiority. The most notable of these writers include Rostislav Andreevich Fadeev (1824–83), Dmitrii Il'ich Romanovskii (1825–81), Nikolai Fedorovich Dubrovin (1837–1904), Arnold L'vovich Zisserman (1824–97) and Vassilii Aleksandrovich Potto (1836–1911).
3. For an overview of the changing trends in Soviet historiography: V.V. Degoev, *Bol'shaia igra na Kavkaze: Istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2003, pp. 256–306 (chapter 'Problema Kavkazskoi voiny XIX veka: istoriograficheskie itogi'). On the representation of Imam Shamil in the Russian-imperial and Soviet historiographies: Lars Karl, 'Helden zwischen Moskau und Medina: Imam Shamil', Babäk und Alisher Navoi als imperiale Integrationsfiguren in den muslimischen Regionen der Sowjetunion', in Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (ed.), *Russlands imperiale Macht: Integrationsstrategien und ihre Reichweite in transnationaler Perspektive*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2012, pp. 155–78, especially pp. 159–69.
4. For an overview: Jürgen Breuste and Burkhard Malich, *Reisen im Kaukasus: Berichte aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1987.
5. Shamil's war against the Russians was well-known in Europe at the time, largely through the dissemination of publications such as the one by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt (1819–92), whose account (first published in 1848) became highly popular: Friedrich Bodenstedt, *Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen: Ein Beitrag zur neuesten Geschichte des Orients*, Münster: LIT, 1995 [1848].
6. F. Benvenuti, 'Rossiia, Zapad i Chechnia', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 15–20, here p. 15.
7. John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, London*: Longmans, Green* and Co., 1908.
8. Important, in this respect, was the 'Paris school' around historian Alexandre Bennigsen, which began publishing on Islam in the Soviet Union in the 1960s. For instance: Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *L'Islam en Union soviétique*, Paris: Payot, 1968 (published in English in the same year under the title *Islam in the Soviet Union*). For an overview of the research on Soviet Islam before 1990, see also: Eva-Maria Auch, *Muslim—Untertan—Bürger: Identitätswandel in gesellschaftlichen Transformationsprozessen der muslimischen Ostprovinzen Südkaukasiens (Ende 18.–Anfang 20. Jh.); Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Nationalismusforschung*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004, p. 11 (note 3).
9. In this context, it is important to refer to the work of Israeli historian Moshe Gammer (1950–2013), whose study of the Caucasian wars of the nineteenth century, published in 1994, represents the first comprehensive Western study on the topic since Baddley's monumental work of 1908: Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*, London: Cass, 1994. Among the

German-language books, the most thorough study on the history of conquest and resistance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is: Clemens P. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus: Antikolonialer Widerstand der Dagestaner und Tschetschenen gegen das Zarenreich (18. Jahrhundert bis 1859)*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007. For an excellent study, which focuses in particular on the difference between Chechen and Ingush attitudes towards the Russian military advance, see Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*. The Islamic people of the North Caucasus have also moved to the centre of more general studies on Islam: Michael Kemper, *Herrschaft, Recht und Islam in Daghestan: Von den Khanaten und Gemeindebünden zum ǧihād-Staat*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005. For newer Russian-language studies, see especially the works by historian and Orientalist Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, who also deals rather extensively with inner Caucasian aspects of violence: V.O. Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza: Obychai, pravo, nasilie; Ocherki po istorii i etnografii prava Nagornogo Dagestana*, Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura RAN, 2002.

10. Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 2. Also on Russia's southward expansion: Muriel Atkin, 'Russian Expansion in the Caucasus to 1813', in Michael Rywkin (ed), *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*, London: Mansell, 1988, pp. 139–87.
11. John LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650–1831*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
12. Nikolas K. Gvozdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760–1819*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, pp. 46–98. On the Russian conquest and incorporation of the South Caucasus into the Russian Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, especially pp. 55–143; Laurens Hamilton Rhinelander, 'The Incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian Empire: The Case of Georgia', PhD diss., Columbia University, New York, 1972; Auch, *Muslim—Untertan—Bürger*, especially pp. 65–132; D.I. Ismail-Zade, 'Die Entstehung des russischen Verwaltungssystems in Transkaukasien in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Berliner Jahrbuch für osteuropäische Geschichte*, vol. 2 (1995), pp. 107–22.
13. Sean Pollock, 'A New Line in Russian Strategic Thinking in North Caucasia', paper presented at the Russian and East European Historians' Workshop, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 16 December 2004, p. 4.
14. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 39–40. For an overview of Russia's policy in the Caucasus during the reign of Catherine II, see Sean Pollock, 'Empire by Invitation? Russian Empire-Building in the Caucasus in the Reign of Catherine II', PhD diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2006.
15. Sean Pollock, 'Claiming Kabarda: The Contest for Empire in North Caucasia from the Conversion of Korgoka Konchokin to the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardja', unpublished paper, History Department, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, n.d., p. 42. See also the document collection: R.U. Tuganov (ed.), *Cherkesy i drugie narody Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza v period pravleniia imperatritsy Ekateriny II 1775–1780 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov*, vol. 2, Nal'chik: 'El'-Fa', 1998.
16. G.L. Bondarevskii and G.N. Kolbaia (eds), *Dokumental'naia istoriia obrazovaniia*

mnogonatsional'nogo gosudarstva Rossiiskogo: V 4 knigakh; *Kniga pervaia: Rossiia i Severnyi Kavkaz v XVI–XIX vekakh*, Moscow: Norma, 1998, especially pp. 328–53 (documents nos. 124–45).

17. His accounts (in the form of diaries) were first published in two volumes under the title 'Reisen durch Russland und im caucasischen Gebürge' (edited by Peter Simon Pallas). I use the edition published in 1834, revised and edited by Julius Klaproth: Johann Anton Güldenstädt, *Beschreibung der kaukasischen Länder: Aus seinen Papieren gänzlich umgearbeitet, verbessert hg. und mit erklärenden Anmerkungen begleitet von Julius Klaproth*, Berlin, 1834, here pp. 150–1.
18. The corresponding document is contained in: A.P. Berzhe (ed.), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago*, vol. 6, part 1, Tbilisi: Tip. Glavnogo upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1870, pp. 900–1. These and other dates appear also in later Soviet and Russian publications and are referring to the date of the 'official incorporation' of Ingushetia. The date 1810 is, for example, mentioned in: *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 15, Moscow: 'Sovetskaia entsiklopediia', 1974, p. 997. In contrast, a publication issued in 1998 by a collective of Russian historians mentions the year 1770 as the date of Ingushetiia's incorporation: S.G. Agadzhanov et al. (eds), *Natsional'nye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: Stanovlenie i razvitie sistemy upravleniia*, Moscow: 'Slavianskii dialog', 1998, p. 291.
19. Bondarevskii and Kolbaia, *Dokumental'naia istoriia*, p. 259; A.P. Berzhe (ed.), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu archeograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago*, vol. 3, Tbilisi: Tip. Glavnogo upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1869, pp. 668–70, 1142–55. See also: Sh.A. Gapurov, 'Aktual'nye problemy istorii Chechni v XVI–XIX vekakh', in Ibragimov and Tishkov, *Chechenskaia Respublika*, pp. 40–8, here pp. 42, 45.
20. On the difference between direct and indirect imperial rule in the form of vassalage: V.V. Degoev, 'Kavkaz v sostave Rossii: Formirovanie imperskoi identichnosti (pervaia polovina XIX veka)', in Silaev, *Kavkazskii sbornik*, pp. 28–47, here p. 31.
21. Ermolov cited in V.O. Bobrovnikov and I.L. Babich (eds), *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2007, p. 61.
22. Degoev, *Bol'shaia igra na Kavkaze*, p. 18.
23. B.B. Zakriev, 'K istorii rossiisko-chechenskikh otnoshenii poslednei treti XVIII veka', in Ibragimov and Tishkov, *Chechenskaia Respublika*, pp. 254–61, here p. 259.
24. A detailed account of the revolt of 1779 is contained in: P.G. Butkov, *Materialy dlia novoi istorii Kavkaza s 1722-go po 1803 god: Chast' vtoraia (s piat'iu planami)*, Saint-Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1869, pp. 50–8.
25. Pollock, 'New Line in Russian Strategic Thinking', p. 45.
26. Butkov, *Materialy*, p. 51. See also: Michael Khodarkovsky, 'Ignoble Savages and Unfaithful Subjects: Constructing Non-Christian Identities in Early Modern Russia', in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 9–26, here p. 13.
27. Z.V. Kipkeeva, *Severnyi Kavkaz v Rossiiskoi Imperii: Narody, migratsii, territorii*, Stavropol': Izd-vo. SGU, 2008, p. 72.

28. A.P. Berzhe (ed.), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu archeograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago*, vol. 2, Tbilisi: Tip. Glavnogo upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1868, p. 1117.
29. On Russia's religious policy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the central part of the North Caucasus: E.Kh. Naskidaeva, *Konfessional'naia politika Rossii v gorskikh obshchestvakh Tsentral'nogo Kavkaza: Seredina XVII–nach. XX vv.*, Vladikavkaz: Severo-Osetinskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im K.L. Khetagurova, 2011.
30. A history schoolbook published in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR as late as 1988 refers to the year 1781 as the official date of the 'voluntary integration' of the Chechens into the Russian Empire*: Istoriia dobrovol'nogo vkhozhdeniia chechentsev i ingushei v sostav Rossii i ego progressivnye posledstviia (materialy k izucheniiu na urokakh istorii v srednikh shkolakh)*, Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1988, pp. 29–31. In contrast, the Soviet Historical Encyclopaedia does not mention the year 1781, but refers to 1859 (the date of Shamil's surrender) as the official date of Chechnia's incorporation into the Russian Empire: *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 15, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Sovetskaia entsiklopediia', 1974, p. 997. The date 1781 is frequent also in post-Soviet writings on the issue, for example: Agadzhanov et al. (eds), *Natsional'nye okrainy*, p. 291; R.G. Abdulatipov et al. (eds), *Kavkaz: Istoriia, narody, kul'tura, religii*, Moscow: Vost. lit., 2007, p. 190. After 1991, some historians took a more critical view of this reading of history, for example: Zakriev, 'K istorii rossiisko-chechenskikh otnoshenii', pp. 254–5. For a further reading on this: V.A. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami: Intellektualy i politika na Severnom Kavkaze v XX veke*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006, pp. 270ff.
31. Güldenstädt, *Beschreibung der kaukasischen Länder*, pp. 149–50.
32. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, p. 97.
33. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 226.
34. Ibid.
35. Butkov, *Materialy*, p. 109.
36. Gapurov, 'Aktual'nye problemy', pp. 45–6.
37. *Gazavat* (transliterated from Russian spelling) is an Arabic term referring to *ġazw* (or *ġazwah*) meaning battle, a military expedition or raiding. The English term 'razzia' derives from *ġazw*: T.M. Johnstone, 'Ghazw', in P. Bearman et al. (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, Brill Online 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ghazw-SIM_2499, last accessed 11 April 2017.
38. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 169.
39. On the Mansur rebellion: Sh.B. Akhmadov, *Imam Mansur: Narodno-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Chechne i na Severnom Kavkaze pod rukovodstvom imama Mansura v 1785 – 1791 gg.*, Groznyi: Elista, 2010.
40. Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 148–51.
41. M.A. Mamakaev, *Chechenskii taip (rod) v period ego razlozheniia*, Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1973 (first published in 1962).
42. For a reassessment of Mamakaev's model: Christian W. Dettmering, 'Reassessing Chechen and Ingush (Vainakh) Clan Struktures in the 19th Century', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2005), pp. 469–89. Also: S.A. Nataev, 'O probleme

chechenskogo taipa v istoricheskikh issledovaniiakh', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2009), pp. 107–13.

43. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 107–9.
44. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 9–10.
45. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 110.
46. Ibid., pp. 112–14.
47. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, p. 8.
48. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 122–3.
49. 'Mullah' is the designation for a person with a (mainly religious) education. It is sometimes applied disparagingly to Islamic teachers with little religious education: Werner Ende, 'Mullah', in Hans Dieter Betz et al. (eds), *Religion Past and Present*, Brill Online 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/ religion-past-and-present/mullah-SIM_14367, last accessed 11 April 2017.
50. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 122–4.
51. Ibid., pp. 135–6.
52. K.A. Aliev, M.R. Kurbanov and G.I. Iusupova, *Chechentsy-akkintsy Dagestana: K probleme reabilitatsii*, Makhachkala: Regional'nyi tsentr etnopolit. issled., 1994, p. 3.
53. A. Suleimanov, *Toponomiia Chechni*, Nal'chik: Izd. tsentr 'El'-Fa', 1997, p. 337.
54. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 12–17.
55. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 110–12, 138–42.
56. V.I. Sheremet, '"Pod tsarskoiu rukoiu ..." Rossiiskaia imperiia i Chechnia v XIX-nachale XX v.: Kratkie zamechaniia ob istorii vainakhov i ikh otnosheniiakh s Russkim gosudarstvom do nachala XIX v.,' in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 21–52, here p. 29.
57. M.Ia. Ol'shevskii, *Kavkaz s 1841 po 1866 god*, Saint-Petersburg: Zhurnal 'Zvezda', 2003, p. 63.
58. V.P. Pozhidaev, *Gortsy Severnogo Kavkaza: Ingushi, chechentsy, khevsury, osetiny i kabardintsy; Kratkii istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk*, Moscow and Leningrad: Gos.-Izd., 1926, pp. 15–16. On the self-designation of the Chechens: Ian Chesnov, 'Byt' chechentsem: Lichnost' i etnicheskie identifikatsii naroda', in D.E. Furman (ed.), *Chechnia i Rossiia: Obshchestva i gosudarstva*, Mir, progress, prava cheloveka, vol. 3, Moscow: Polinform-Talburi 1999, pp. 63–101, especially pp. 66–8.
59. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanamy*, p. 209.
60. Ol'shevskii, *Kavkaz s 1841 po 1866 god*, p. 63. On the Chechen language: Johanna Nichols and Arbi Vagapov, *Chechen–English and English–Chechen Dictionary = Noxchiin-ingals, ingals-noxchiin deshnizhaina = Nohchiin-ingals, ingals-nohchiin deshnizhaina*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, pp. 4–9 (introduction).
61. Thomas M. Barrett, 'Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus', *Slavic Review*, vol. 54, no. 3 (1995), pp. 578–601.
62. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 164–5; Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, p. 34.
63. Representative for a vast and growing literature on the Cossacks: M.P. Astapenko, *Istoriia kazachestva Rossii: V 15 knigakh*, Novocherkassk: Lik, 2010–2011. For a more recent Western monograph: Shane O'Rourke, *The Cossacks*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

64. Atarshchikov's fascinating life story has been reconstructed in detail in: Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
65. Barret, 'Lines of Uncertainty', p. 595.
66. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 162.
67. Barret, 'Lines of Uncertainty', p. 587.
68. Güldenstädt, *Beschreibung der kaukasischen Länder*, pp. 149–50.
69. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 45–6.
70. Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 30ff.
71. Mary L. Henze, 'Thirty Cows for an Eye: The Traditional Economy of the Central Caucasus; An Analysis from 19th Century Travellers' Accounts', *Central Asia Survey*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1985), pp. 115–29, here p. 120.
72. Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 30ff.
73. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 131.
74. A.L. Gisetti, *Sbornik svedenii o poteriakh Kavkazskikh voisk vo vremia voin Kavkazsko-gorskoi, persidskikh, turetskikh i v Zakaspiiskom krae, 1801–1885 gg.*, Tbilisi: Tip. Ia.I. Libermana, 1901, p. 129. Also on figures: V.V. Lapin, *Armiia Rossii v Kavkazskoi voine XVIII–XIX vv.*, Saint-Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo 'Evropeiskii dom', 2008, pp. 36–50, 381; Dmitrii Vedeneev, '77 tysiach', *Rodina*, nos. 1–2 (2000), pp. 108–10.
75. To be sure, most of the Russian liberals did not question Russia's claim to the Caucasus as such, but criticised the brutal war campaign, the high costs and human losses: Gordin, *Kavkaz: Zemlia i krov'*, pp. 3–39.
76. A.P. Berzhe, 'Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza', *Russkaia starina*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1882), pp. 161–76, here p. 168.
77. Ol'shevskii, *Kavkaz s 1841 po 1866 god*, p. 69.
78. Ibid.
79. Gordin, *Kavkaz: Zemlia i krov'*, pp. 97–135. For an overview of Ermolov and his time in the North Caucasus: Sh.A. Gapurov, *Severnyi Kavkaz v period 'prokonsul'stva' A.P. Ermolova (1816–1827): Monografiia*, Nal'chik: 'El'-Fa', 2003.
80. Barret, 'Lines of Uncertainty', pp. 592–3.
81. Berzhe, *Akty*, vol. 4, pp. 899–901.
82. Cited (without indication of date or the original source) in: V.A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: Ermolovskoe vremia*, vol. 2, Stavropol': Kavkazskii krai, 1994 [1887], p. 19.
83. A.P. Berzhe (ed.), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago*, vol. 6, part 2, Tbilisi: Tip. Glavnogo upravleniia namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1875, pp. 447–8, here p. 447.
84. Gapurov, *Severnyi Kavkaz*, pp. 294–343.
85. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 188–95.
86. Gapurov, *Severnyi Kavkaz*, pp. 228–9.
87. A.A. Alov and N.G. Vladimir, *Islam v Rossii: Nauchno-populiarnoe izdanie*, Moscow: Institut naseleniia, 1996, pp. 80–6. On the Islamisation of Chechnia: Anna Zel'kina, 'Islam v Chechne do Rossiiskogo zavoevaniia', in Furman, *Chechnia i Rossiia*, pp. 40–62, especially p. 40.
88. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 136–37, 146.
89. Michael A. Reynolds, *Myths and Mysticism: Islam and Conflict in the North Caucasus;*

A Longitudinal Perspective, Occasional Paper no. 289, Washington, DC: Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2004, p. 12.

90. The Naqshbandiyya is a major Sufi order of Sunni Islam. The order originates in the twelfth century in Inner Asia and later derived its name from Bahā' ud-dīn Naqshband (1318–89). The Naqshbandiyya arrived in the North Caucasus probably as early as the sixteenth century and took hold mainly in Dagestan and Chechnia. See: Clemens P. Sidorko, 'Die Naqshbandiyya im nordöstlichen Kaukasus: Ein historischer Überblick', *Asiatische Studien*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1997), pp. 627–50.
91. Anna Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, London: Hurst, 2000, pp. 235–8.
92. See: Alexander Knysh, 'Sufism as an Explanatory Paradigm: The Issue of the Motivations of Sufi Movements in Russian and Western Historiography', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2002), pp. 139–73.
93. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, p. 141.
94. Michael Kemper, 'Khālidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of Jihād', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2002), pp. 41–71.
95. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 239, 403, 433.
96. Ibid., pp. 403–4.
97. Such a view was dominant not only in the Russian perception of the North Caucasus mountain people's resistance during the nineteenth century (Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 141, 159, 404) but persisted also in later times, influencing Western historiography on the subject. For an overview: Michael Kemper, 'Introduction: Integrating Soviet Oriental Studies', in Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann (eds), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 1–25, here pp. 14, 24 (note 37).
98. One of the best accounts of Shamil and his imamate is by Russian historian N.I. Pokrovskii (1897–1947); Pokrovskii submitted his book manuscript in the form of a dissertation in 1934, but the book was published only posthumously in 2000: N.I. Pokrovskii, *Kavkazskie voiny i imamat Shamilia*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000.
99. An idea on the dimensions of slavery in the North Caucasus can be gained by looking through Russian official statistics on slavery from 1867. Tsar Alexander officially abolished serfdom in 1861; the statistics were a way to establish whether the decree was actually enforced. According to these data, there were some 21,000 slaves (serfs) in Kabarda. The phenomenon of serfdom was also widespread at the time among Ossetians, Kumyks and the peoples of the Kuban. Chechens, Ingush and the mountain peoples of Dagestan seem not to have had slaves in any significant numbers. See: *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh: Vypusk I,* Tbilisi 1868, pp. 15–50.
100. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 333–6.
101. Ibid., p. 399.
102. This is evident from an observation made by Gazi Mohammed, the son of Imam Shamil, in a conversation with Colonel Apollon Ivanovich Runovskii (1823–1874) in November 1959. Colonel Runovskii during 1859–62 held regular conversations with Shamil and his sons in Kaluga (the place of Shamil's exile after his surrender) and wrote these down in the form of a diary. The journals of Colonel Runovskii

(*Dnevnik polkovnika Runovskago*) are published in: E.D. Felitsyn and A.P. Naumov (eds), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskoiu chast'iu na Kavkaze*, vol. 12, Tbilisi: Tip. Glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskoiu chast'iu na Kavkaze, 1904, pp. 1395–1526, here p. 1512.

103. Baddeley, *Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, p. xxxv.
104. Sharkhudin Gapurov, 'Metody kolonial'noi politiki tsarizma v Chechne v pervoi polovine XIX veka', in Furman, *Chechnia i Rossiia*, pp. 113–27, here p. 125.
105. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 258–62. See also on Bariatinskii's system of administration: R.A. Tovsultanov, 'Administrativnaia deiatel'nost' kniaza Bariatinskogo v Chechne', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2009), pp. 114–16.
106. V.M. Mukhanov, *Pokoritel' Kavkaza: Kniaz' A.I. Bariatinskii*, Moscow: TsAO 'Tsentrpoligraf', 2007, p. 135.
107. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, pp. 424–5.
108. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 262–4.
109. Degoev, *Kavkaz v sostave Rossii*, p. 46; Vladimir Degoev, *Imam Shamil': Prorok, vlastitel', voin*, Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2001, pp. 260–3.
110. However, some Russian historians writing in the nineteenth century did in fact attribute a civilising effect of the Shamil-state on 'wild and unruly Chechnia': Evg. Maksimov, 'Chechentsy: Istoriko-geograficheskii i statistiko-ekonomicheskii ocherk", in G.A. Vertepova (ed.), *Terskii sbornik: Prilozhenie k Terskomu kalendariu na 1894 god; Vypusk tretii; Kniga vtoraia*, Vladikavkaz: Tip. Terskago Oblastnogo Pravleniia, 1893, pp. 3–100, quote from p. 28.
111. Sidorko, *Dschihad im Kaukasus*, p. 368.
112. See Chapter 2 of this book.
113. Firouzeh Mostashari, 'Colonial Dilemmas: Russian Policies in the Muslim Caucasus', in Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky (eds), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 229–49.
114. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 265.
115. Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule*, London: Hurst, 2006, p. 73.
116. D.M. Kobiakov (ed.), *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu archeograficheskoiu komissieiu: Arkhiv Kantseliarii Glavnonachal'stvuiushchago*, vol. 11, Tbilisi: Tip. Kantseliarii Glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskoiu chast'iu na Kavkaze, 1888, p. 58.
117. This is suggested by Russian historian V.A. Matveev: V.A. Matveev, *Rossiia i Severnyi Kavkaz: Istoricheskie osobennosti formirovaniia gosudarstvennogo edinstva (vtoraia polovina XIX–nachalo XX.)*, Rostov-on-Don: TsAO 'Kniga', 2006, pp. 28–34.
118. Lapin, *Armiia Rossii*, pp. 336–65.
119. Sheremet, '"Pod tsarskoiu rukoiu ..."', p. 29.
120. Kobiakov, *Akty*, vol. 11, p. 65.
121. On the Chechen uprising of 1860, see Chapter 2 in this volume; on the Ingush uprising of 1858: Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 269–72

2. MUSA KUNDUKHOV AND THE TRAGEDY OF MASS EMIGRATION

1. On the question of genocide: Richmond, *Northwest Caucasus*, pp. 77–80; Stephen D. Shenfield, 'The Circassians: A Forgotten Genocide?', in Mark Levine and Penny Roberts (eds), *The Massacre in History*, New York: Berghahn Books, 1999, pp. 149–62. For an overview of the Russian-language literature on the subject: Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz*, pp. 155–7.
2. The emigration of the Cherkess has been the object of Russian historical writing from early on. The most detailed study is Adol'f Berzhe's *Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza* ('The Expulsion of the Mountaineers from the Caucasus'), which was originally published in nine parts in the journal *Russkaia starina* in 1882 (vols. 33–34). Berzhe's study has been re-edited and is now available as a monograph: Adol'f Berzhe, *Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza*, Nal'chik: M. i V. Kotliarovykh, 2010. The expulsion of the Cherkess was mentioned also in Soviet historical writings (cf. N.A. Smirnov, *Politika Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI–XIX vekakh*, Moscow: Izd. sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1958, especially pp. 220–26), but was, in the later Soviet era, increasingly supressed in line with official propaganda of a peaceful incorporation of the North Caucasus into the Russia and the slogan of 'friendship among peoples'. Western historiography too has been concerned with the fate of the Cherkess from early on. The interest was mainly due to the tight relations that existed between the British Empire and Cherkess communities through the illustrious figure of David Urquhart (1805–77), a Scottish politician, publicist, diplomat and Russophobe. Urquhart, who travelled to the region on several occasions, campaigned for the Cherkess case in British politics and in the public, through his writings. A large amount of literature exists on the subject. Cf. Charles Webster, 'Urquhart, Ponsonby, and Palmerston', *English Historical Review*, vol. 62, no. 244 (1947), pp. 327–51; Peter Brock, 'The Fall of Circassia: A Study in Private Diplomacy', *English Historical Review*, vol. 71, no. 280 (1956), pp. 401–27. The first biography of Urquhart was published in 1920: Gertrude Robinson, *David Urquhart: Some Chapters in the Life of a Victorian Knight-Errant of Justice and Liberty*, Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1920. For a newer study: Charles King, 'Imagining Circassia: David Urquhart and the Making of North Caucasus Nationalism', *Russian Review*, vol. 66, no. 2 (2007), pp. 238–55.
3. An exception is the publications in early Soviet times. Historian G.A. Dzagurov, an ethnic Ossetian, has published a fairly extensive collection of historical documents on the emigration of North Caucasian peoples in the nineteenth century: G.A. Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev: Materialy po istorii gorskikh narodov*, Rostov-on-Don: Sevkavkniga, 1925.
4. Kipkeeva, *Severnyi Kavkaz v Rossiiskoi imperii*, pp. 274–316.
5. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, p. 667.
6. P.I. Pestel', *Russkaia Pravda: Nakaz' Vremennomu verkhovnomu pravleniiu*, Saint-Petersburg: Kultura, 1906 [1823], p. 48.
7. Letter of Miliutin, 29 November 1856, in: Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 757–63, here p. 762.
8. Ibid., p. 763.
9. Letter of Murav'ev-Karskii, 23 April 1856, in: Kobiakov, *Akty*, vol. 11, pp. 64–7, here p. 66.

10. A Russian historian of the nineteenth century mentions 14,290 farms (singular *dvor*), which had been resettled between 1857 and 1859, from the mountains to the plains. This is equal roughly to 70,000 people, if each *dvor* is comprised by at least five people: Maksimov, *Chechentsy*, p. 30.
11. F.A. Ozova, 'Plan generala Evdokimova (1856–1869): Chast' pervaia', *Arkhiv i obshchestvo*, no. 21, n.d., http://archivesjournal.ru/?p=4713, last accessed 24 October 2012; F.A. Ozova, 'Plan generala Evdokimova (1856–1869): Okonchanie', *Arkhiv i obshchestvo*, no. 22, n.d., http://archivesjournal.ru/?p=5046, last accessed 24 October 2012; Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 162.
12. Bariatinskii cited in: Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 162. Further reading on Bariatinskii and his role in the Caucasus: Mukhanov, *Pokoritel' Kavkaza*.
13. Richmond, *Northwest Caucasus*, pp. 75–6.
14. M.N. Pokrovskii, *Diplomatiia i voiny tsarskoi Rossii v XIX stoletii: Sbornik statei*, Moscow: Krasnaia nov', 1923, p. 229.
15. Kipkeeva, *Severnyi Kavkaz v Rossiiskoi imperii*, pp. 306–7.
16. Richmond, *Northwest Caucasus*, p. 75.
17. Berzhe provides the figure of half a million people who were forced to leave their Caucasian homeland between 1858 and 1864, but acknowledges that there is no precise statistical data and that the available figures are not reliable: Berzhe, *Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza*, p. 167. Also on numbers: V.S. Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow: OGI, 2005, p. 39.
18. Even though there are no reliable figures, contemporaries agreed that the numbers of victims were very high. Referring to a letter of the Russian consul in the Ottoman Empire, Moshchina, dated 10 June 1864, Berzhe writes that out of 247,000 Cherkess, which had arrived up to this point in the Turkic port of Trepizonde (today Trabzon), 19,000 died. According to Berzhe, the death rate was between 180 and 250 people per day: Berzhe, *Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza*, p. 353.
19. Ibid., p. 347.
20. Richmond, *Northwest Caucasus*, pp. 77–8.
21. Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, p. 41; also on this: Georgy Chochiev, 'Some Aspects of Social Adaptation of the North Caucasian Immigrants in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the XIXth Century (on the Immigrants' Applications to Authorities)', extended paper presented to the XVth Turkish Congress of History, Ankara 2006.
22. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 165–6.
23. Following Mark Pinson's work (Mark Pinson, 'Demographic Warfare: An Aspect of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854–1866', PhD diss., Harvard University, 1970), Russian ethnographer and historian Vladimir Bobrovnikov applies the concept of 'demographic warfare' with regard to the case of the expulsion of North Caucasians during the nineteenth century: Vladimir Bobrovnikov, 'Mukhadzhirstvo v "demograficheskikh voinakh" Rossii i Turtsii', *Prometheus*, no. 9 (2011), http://chechen.org/archives/162, last accessed 10 June 2014.
24. Berzhe, *Vyselenie gortsev s Kavkaza*, pp. 341–2, 347, 355–6, 363.
25. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 167–8.
26. Cf. Matveev, *Rossiia i Severnyi Kavkaz*, pp. 113–16.

27. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 164; Valerii Dzidzoev, 'Istoriia i sud'ba kavkazskikh pereselentsev v Turtsiiu (50-e–70-e gody XIX v.)', *Dar'ial*, no. 1 (2008), http://www.darial-online.ru/2008_1/dzidzoev.shtml, last accessed 28 March 2012.
28. N.P. Gritsenko, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Checheno-Ingushetii v poreformnyi period (1861–1900 gg.)*, Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1963, pp. 15–22.
29. Letter of Orbeliani, 28 January 1862, in: Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 1253–5, here p. 1254.
30. N.A. Smirnov, *Miuridizm na Kavkaze*, Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1963, pp. 206–7.
31. 'Proklamatsiia kniazia Glavnokomanduiushchego Kavkazskoi armiei, Namestnika Kavkazaskogo, general-feldmarshala kniazia A. I. Bariatinskogo', *Rodina*, nos. 1–2 (2000), pp. 135–6.
32. Ibid., p. 135.
33. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 69 (including note 7) and p. 83 (including notes 82 and 83).
34. See Chapter 3 of this book.
35. Bobrovnikov, 'Mukhadzhirstvo v "demograficheskikh voinakh" Rossii i Turtsii'.
36. Ibid.
37. Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, pp. 21–53; Bobrovnikov, 'Mukhadzhirstvo v "demograficheskikh voinakh" Rossii i Turtsii'.
38. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 165–6.
39. Alikhan Kantemir (1886–1963), who refers to conversations with Kundukhov's son, Bekir-Sami Kundukh (1865–1933), writes in his biography of Kundukhov that the Ossetian general was born in 1818: A. Kantemir, 'Musa Pasha Kundukhov (biografiia i deiatel'nost')', *Kavkaz*, vol. 4, no. 28 (1936), pp. 13–19, here p. 13. Zurab Avalishvili claims that Kundukhov was born in 1820, and bases this on the general's own memoirs: Z. Avalishvili, 'O vospominaniiakh Musa-Pashi Kundukhova', *Kavkaz*, vol. 8, no. 44 (1937), pp. 11–17, here p. 11.
40. Kundukhov's memoirs were published for the first time in Paris in the journal *Kavkaz* (*Le Caucase*) edited by members of the Caucasian diaspora. It was Kundukhov's nephew, Shevkhet Kundukh (Chevket Koundoukh), who made the manuscript available to the journal editors. The memoirs, in commented form, together with other documents, as well as a biography (by Alikhan Kantermir) and an afterword (by Zurab Avalishvili) appeared in several issues during 1936 and 1937 (nos. 1/25, 2/26, 3/27, 4/28, 5/29, 8/32, 10/34, 11/35, 12/36 in 1936; nos. 3/39, 5/41, 7/43, 8/44, 10/46 in 1937). The first three parts of the memoirs appeared in English translation in 1938 in the journal *The Caucasus Quarterly*. The memoirs were never published in the Soviet Union, and hardly anyone knew of their existence. Vladimir Degoev claims to have discovered the original manuscript by chance when doing research in the Archive of the Hoover Institution at Stanford in 1993: Vladimir Degoev, 'General Mussa Kundukhov: Istoriia odnoi illiuzii', *Zvezda*, no. 11 (2003), pp. 151–62, here p. 161. A full Russian version appeared (together with other documents) in the little-known journal *Dar'ial* in 1994 (no. 4) and 1995 (nos. 1–2). They are also available online at: 'Mussa Kundukhov: Memuary', *Dar'ial*, http://

biblio.darial-online.ru/text/Kunduhov/index_rus.shtml, last accessed 16 March 2012. An abbreviated version of his memoirs also appeared in the (much more well-known) journal *Zvezda* in 2001: 'Memuary Generala Musa-Pashi Kundukhova (1837–1865)', *Zvezda*, no. 8 (2001), pp. 100–23. In the following, I refer to the original publication of his memoirs in the Russian language in the journal *Kavkaz*.

41. On the life and deeds of Kundukhov: Degoev, 'General Mussa Kundukhov'; Vladimir Degoev, 'O Muse Kundukhove i ne tol'ko o nem', *Dar'ial*, no. 4 (1994), http://biblio.darial-online.ru/text/Degoev/index_rus.shtml, last accessed 11 January 2013; A.A. Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii: Zhizn' generala Musy Kundukhova', *Vostok (Oriens)*, no. 4 (2008), pp. 109–20; D.I. Oleinikov, 'Chelovek na razlome kul'tur: Osobennosti psikhologii russkogo ofitsera-gortsa v period Bol'shoi Kavkazskoi voiny', *Zvezda*, no. 8 (2001), pp. 95–9.
42. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava deviataia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 36, no. 12 (1936), pp. 31–6, here p. 34.
43. Kantemir, 'Musa Pasha Kundukhov', p. 13
44. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava tret'ia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1936), pp. 14–18, here pp. 17–18; Kantemir, 'Musa Pasha Kundukhov', p. 15.
45. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava vtoraia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1936), pp. 13–19, here p. 19.
46. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava chetvertaia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 28, no. 4 (1936), pp. 19–23, here pp. 22–3; Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', p. 112.
47. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava piataia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 29, no. 5 (1936), pp. 20–5, here p. 22.
48. Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', pp. 112–14.
49. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava piataia', p. 22.
50. Ibid., pp. 22–3; Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', p. 114.
51. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava tret'ia', pp. 15–16.
52. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava piataia', p. 23.
53. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 666, 687ff.
54. Asked about the causes of the uprising, Imam Shamil, during the same interview, told the Russian interlocutor that many Chechens resisted resettlement because they did not want to leave their ancestors' graves: Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, p. 1454. Cf. on the Benoi and Argunskii uprisings of 1860/61: Sh.A. Gapurov and A.V. Bakashov, 'Vosstanie v Ichkerinskom okruge Chechni v 1860–1861 gg. (Benoiskoe vosstanie)', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010), pp. 109–16; Sh.A. Gapurov and A.V. Bakashov, 'Vosstanie v Argunskom okruge v 1860–1861 gg.', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2010), pp. 85–95.
55. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 138.
56. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, p. 666.
57. Ibid., p. 1220.
58. Ibid., pp. 1220–23, here p. 1220.
59. In the sources, we read of up to 200 Chechen rebels who were arrested or surrendered: ibid., pp. 1247, 1250.
60. Ibid., p. 1249.

61. Ibid., p. 1250.
62. Ibid.
63. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 138; Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 70.
64. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava piataia', p. 23.
65. 'Proklamatsiia kniazia Glavnokomanduiushchego Kavkazskoi armiei', pp. 135–6.
66. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova: Glava piataia', p. 25.
67. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, p. 1221.
68. Ibid., p. 1222.
69. On Kunta-Khadzhi and the Qādiriyya: Moshe Gammer, 'The Qadiriyya in the North Caucasus', *Journal of the History of Sufism*, special issue, vols. 1–2 (2000), pp. 275–94; Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 73–83; Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 290–6.
70. Whether the brotherhood arrived in the Caucasus indeed only in the nineteenth century, as claimed in Western historiography, is not entirely clear, however. On this point: Sidorko, 'Die Naqshbandiyya im nordöstlichen Kaukasus', p. 645 (note 56).
71. The Qādiriyya is one of the oldest Sufi brotherhoods. The founder is the Persian mystic ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ǧīlānī (1088–1166).
72. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 75–6.
73. Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Chechnia posle Kavkazskoi voiny (1863–1875 gg.): Po arkhivnym istochnikam*, Moscow: Dialog-MGU, MAKS Press, 2000, p. 87; Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 76; Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 141.
74. A. Ippolitov, 'Uchenia "zikr'" i ego posledoveteli v Chechne i Argunskom okruge', *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh: Vypusk II*, Tbilisi, 1869, pp. 1–17, here p. 3.
75. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 141.
76. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 77–8.
77. 'Memuary gen. Musa Pashi Kundukhova (1837–1865): Predislovie', *Kavkaz*, vol. 25, no. 1 (1936), pp. 12–13, here p. 13.
78. 'Prilozheniia k memuaram gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova', *Kavkaz*, vol. 44, no. 8 (1937), pp. 24–9, here p. 25.
79. The report is contained in: ibid., pp. 25–9.
80. We learn from other sources that relations between Muslim Ossetians and the Russian conquerors worsened after Shamil's capitulation in 1859; Inal Dudarovich Kanukov (1850/51–1899) who, like Kundukhov, also stemmed from a Muslim Ossetian nobel family, writes in his memoirs that a general 'uneasiness' gripped the native population. Kanukov also served in the Russian Imperial Army but emigrated in 1860 with his family to the Ottoman Empire. In the Kars province, in the eastern part of Anatolia, he did not see a future for himself and returned with members of his family to the Russian Caucasus. His report, dated 8 September 1875, is contained in: I. Kanukov, 'Gortsy-pereselentsy', *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh: Vypusk IX*, Tbilisi, 1876, pp. 84–112.
81. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, p. 667.
82. 'Prilozheniia k memuaram gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova', pp. 27–8.
83. 'Memuary gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova: Glava sed'maia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 32, no. 8

(1936), pp. 24–30; see also the two letters of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces in the Terek region, Count M.T. Loris-Melikov, dated 14 July 1863 and 7 May 1864, published in: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, pp. 13–18.

84. 'Memuary gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova: Glava sed'maia', p. 24.
85. Ibid., p. 25.
86. Cf. Kundukhov's letters sent from Constantinople to Loris Melikov, dated 23 August 1864 and 7 October 1864, as well as Loris-Melikov's report to the viceroy of the Caucasus, dated 15 November 1864, all published in: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, pp. 30–5.
87. 'Memuary gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova: Glava sed'maia', p. 29.
88. The note on the bribe is contained in the letter of Loris-Melikov to Kartsov, dated 23 January 1865. Contained in: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, pp. 46–7, here p. 47.
89. 'Memuary gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova: Glava sed'maia', p. 29.
90. Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', pp. 117–18; see also the corresponding documents in: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, especially pp. 75–7.
91. He puts the estimated value of the house and land at 82,000 silver roubles: 'Memuary gen. Musa-Pashi Kundukhova: Glava vos'maia', *Kavkaz*, vol. 35, no. 11 (1936), pp. 26–9, here p. 27. See also the corresponding documents (especially the two letters of Loris-Melikov to Kartsov, dated 23 January 1865 and 15 April 1865) in: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, pp. 46–7, 66–70.
92. Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', p. 117.
93. Avalishvili, 'O vospominaniiakh', pp. 16–17; Kantemir, 'Musa Pasha Kundukhov', pp. 17–19; Degoev, 'General Mussa Kundukhov', pp. 151– 2; Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Politika i ekonomika*, Moscow: 'Probel-2000', 2009, pp. 310–13.
94. This is evident from a begging letter of Chechens to Loris-Melikov, written in the spring of 1867, where the Chechens complain that they were tricked by Kundukhov: Dzagurov, *Pereselenie gortsev*, pp. 151–2.
95. Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', p. 118.
96. Akhmed Tsalikov, *Kavkaz i Povolzh'e: Ocherki inogorodicheskoi politiki i kul'turno-khoziaistvennogo byta'*, Moscow: Izdanie M. Mukhtarova, 1913, pp. 20–1.
97. Kantemir, 'Musa Pasha Kundukhov', pp. 18–19.
98. Some of these songs are contained in: Dzidzoev, 'Istoriia i sud'ba kavkazskikh pereselentsev v Turtsiiu'.
99. In Smirnov's book (*Politika Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI–XIX vekakh*), Kundukhov appears as a 'reckless gambler [*avantiurist*] und traitor', who played a 'disgusting role' in the emigration of North Caucasians: Smirnov, *Politika Rossii na Kavkaze*, p. 221.
100. This goes especially for Degoev, who hails from North Ossetia. Degoev does not make this claim explicit, but when reading his text, it is fairly evident that he seeks to cast a positive light on Kundukhov, leaving out the more problematic aspects of his motivations and deeds: Degoev, 'General Mussa Kundukhov', especially pp. 159–62; overall, a much more balanced assessment is provided in: Ganich, 'Na sluzhbe dvukh imperii', pp. 109–20.

3. THE NORTH CAUCASUS WITHIN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

1. Cf. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*.
2. Cf. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 68–117; Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845–1917*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
3. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, especially pp. 273–327.
4. Golovin quoted in: Martin Aust et al. (eds), *Imperium inter pares: Rol' transferov v istorii Rossiiskoi imperii (1700–1917)*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010, p. 205.
5. Ibid. On the Russian notion of its 'own orient': Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, especially pp. 23–68.
6. During a military mission in the north-western part of the Caucasus, Baron Fedor Fedorovich Tornau (1810–90) was captured and remained a prisoner of the Cherkess for two years (from September 1836 until November 1838). His recollections were published for the first time in 1864 in two editions of the journal *Russkii vestnik* under the pseudonym 'T': F.F. Tornau, *Vospominaniia kavkazskogo ofitsera*, Moscow: 'AIRO-XX', 2000 [1864] (with an introduction by S.E. Makarova).
7. Cf. Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire*.
8. Regula Heusser-Markun, 'Eine russische Hassliebe: Aspekte einer Kolonisation', in *Der Kaukasus*, NZZ Folio, no. 9, Zurich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1995, pp. 7–11.
9. N.Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa: Vzgliad na kul'turnyia i politicheskiia otnosheniia Slavianskago mira k Germano-Romanskomu*, Saint Petersburg: Izdanie tovarishchestva 'Obshchestvennaia pol'za', 1871, p. 37.
10. Ibid.
11. Andreas Kappeler, 'Die zaristische Politik gegenüber den Muslimen des Russischen Reiches', in Andreas Kappeler and Gerhard Simon (eds), *Die Muslime in der Sowjetunion und in Jugoslawien: Identität, Politik, Widerstand*, Cologne: Markus Verlag, 1989, pp. 117–29, here p. 124. Also: Aust et al., *Imperium inter pares*, pp. 182ff. Futher reading on the Russian image of the North Caucasian 'mountaineers' during the Caucasus wars of the 19th century: Dominik Gutmeyr, *Borderlands Orientalism or How the Savage Lost his Nobility: The Russian Perception of the Caucasus between 1817 and 1878*, Vienna: LIT, 2017.
12. Austin Jersild, 'From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire', in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 101–14, here p. 107.
13. Agadzhanov, *Natsional'nye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, pp. 306–7. Cf. also: Baberowski, 'Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit', p. 489; Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 278–9.
14. Some of Uslar's findings were published during his life time; his works on the individual Caucasian languages appeared only after his death in the form of individual volumes. P.K. Uslar, *Etnografiia Kavkaza: Iazykoznanie*, Tbilisi: Tip. Kantselarii

Glavnonachal'stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chast'iu na Kavkaze, 1887–96/Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1979 (in seven volumes; vol. 2 on the Chechen language appeared in 1888, the seventh volume on the 'Tabasarinian' language was published only in 1979).

15. Cf. Christoph Schmidt, 'Stände', in Henning Bauer et al. (eds), *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897: A; Quellenkritische Dokumentation und Datenhandbuch*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991, pp. 416–19.
16. Cf. on the *inorodtsy* in the Russian Empire: John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *Russian Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (1998), pp. 173–90; V.O. Bobrovnikov, 'Chto vyshlo iz proektov sozdaniia v Rossii inorodtsev? Otvet Dzhonu Slokomu iz musul'manskikh okrain imperii', in *Poniatiia o Rossii: K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, vol. 2, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012, pp. 259–91.
17. G.G. Lisitsyna, 'Kavkazskii komitet: Vysshee gosudarstvennoe uchrezhdenie dlia upravleniia Kavkazom (1845–1882)', in G.G. Lisitsyna and Ia.A. Gordin (eds), *Rossiia i Kavkaz skvoz' dva stoletiia*, St Petersburg: Zhurnal 'Zvezda', 2001, pp. 154–68; Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 187–8.
18. V.O. Bobrovnikov, 'Voenno-narodnoe upravlenie v Dagestane i Chechne: Istoriia i sovremennost'', in Lisitsyna and Gordin, *Rossiia i Kavkaz*, pp. 91–107, here p. 100.
19. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 192.
20. Vorontsov-Dashkov's letter of 10 February 1907 is cited in: Ia.A. Gordin et al. (eds), *Kavkaz i Rossiiskaia imperiia: Proekty, idei, illiuzii i real'nost'; nachalo XIX–nachalo XX vv.*, St Petersburg: Zhurnal 'Zvezda', 2005, pp. 491–5, here p. 491.
21. Agadzhanov, *Natsional'nye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, p. 302.
22. See Chapter 1 of this book.
23. Orbeliani's letter of 28 January 1862 is published in: Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 1253–5, here p. 1254.
24. Ibid.
25. Later, some of the land these families obtained was again redistributed: Maksimov, *Chechentsy*, p. 51.
26. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 305. A list of Chechens in the districts of Vedeno and Groznyi, which were given land by the Russian imperial state, can be found in: Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki (1860–1900)*, Moscow: 'Probel-2000', 2006, pp. 204–5.
27. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, pp. 284–5.
28. Artur Tsutsiev, *Atlas etnopoliticheskoi istorii Kavkaza (1774–2004)*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Evropa', 2006, p. 22.
29. Bobrovnikov, *Voenno-narodnoe upravlenie*, p. 95.
30. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 285.
31. Tsutsiev, *Atlas*, pp. 24–9.
32. *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh: Vypusk V,* Tbilisi, 1871, p. 55.
33. *Otchet po glavnomu upravleniiu namestnika kavkazskago za pervoe desiatiletie upravleniia Kavkazskim i Zakavkazskim kraem ego imperatorskim vysochestvom kniazem Mikhailom Nikolaevichem, 6 dekabria 1862–6 dekabria 1872*, Tbilisi, 1875, pp. 60–3, here p. 60.

34. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 197–8.
35. This is evident from Bariatinskii's report to the tsar, compiled in December 1862, regarding his activities in the Caucasus. The report is contained in: A.L. Zissermann, *Fel'dmarshal' Kniaz' Aleksandr' Ivanovich Bariatinskii 1815–1879*, vol. 2, Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia Strastnoi bul'var, 1890, pp. 414–18, here pp. 415–16.
36. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, pp. 191–4; Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 142–75.
37. Juliette Cadiot, 'Searching for Nationality: Statistics and National Categories at the End of the Russian Empire (1897–1917)', *Russian Review*, vol. 64, no. 3 (2005), pp. 440–55, here p. 445. For further reading also: Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
38. Timothy K. Blauvelt, 'Military–Civil Administration and Islam in the North Caucasus, 1853–83', *Kritika*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2010), pp. 221–55.
39. Ibid., pp. 241–2.
40. Ibid., p. 246.
41. On the imperial Russian legal system and customary law in the North Caucasus during tsarism: Z.Kh. Misrokov, *Adat i Shariat v rossiiskoi pravovoi sisteme: Istoricheskie sud'by iuridicheskogo pliuralizma na Severnom Kavkaze*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2002, pp. 19–119.
42. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 197; Bobrovnikov, *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 203–4.
43. Interesting, in this respect, are contemporary Russian accounts under the section 'criminalistics' in the journal *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh*, in which incidents of this kind are described. On the punishment of women and the case of stoning in central Dagestan in 1866: 'Iz' gorskoi kriminalistiki', *Sbornik svedenii o Kavkazskikh gortsakh: Vypusk I*, Tbilisi, 1868, pp. 57–67.
44. Bobrovnikov, *Voenno-narodnoe upravlenie*, p. 96.
45. Dettmering, *Russlands Kampf gegen Sufis*, p. 277.
46. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 137.
47. On the 1877 rebellion: ibid., pp. 143–51. A detailed account of the rebellion is also provided in: Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 84–103.
48. Most notably Anna Zelkina, who claims that all rebellions after the end of the 'Great Caucasus War' were organised and led by Sufi sheiks, including the 1877 uprising: Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom*, p. 247. Along the same line, Chechen historian Emil Souleimanov argues regarding the 1877 uprising: 'Soon, an extensive uprising occurred in 1877–1878 under the zikrist flag. In the Soviet period, as well as during Chechen independence, the qadiriyya tariq lay at the centre of revolts against the regime, and stood uncompromisingly for the idea of national sovereignty.' Quote from: Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian–Chechen Conflict in Perspective*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2007, p. 69.
49. M.G. Gadzhiev et al. (eds), *Istoriia Dagestana s drevneishikh vremen do XX veka: V dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, Moscow: Nauka, 2004, pp. 525–6.

50. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 143.
51. 'Khronika chechenskago vostaniia 1877 goda', in P. Stefanovskii (ed.), *Terskii sbornik: Prilozhenie k Terskomu kalendariu na 1891 god; Vypusk pervyi*, Vladikavkaz: Tip. Terskago Oblastnogo Pravleniia, 1890, pp. 3–92, here p. 14.
52. N. Semenov, 'Iz' nedavniago proshlago na Kavkaze: Razskasy-vospominaiia o chechenskom vostanii v 1877 g.; Razkaz' pervyi', *Kavkazskii vestnik*, vol. 4 (1900), pp. 21–37, here p. 24.
53. Ibid.; Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 86.
54. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 144; Semenov, 'Iz' nedavniago proshlago', p. 27.
55. 'Khronika chechenskago vostaniia', p. 14.
56. Ibid., p. 28.
57. Gadzhiev et al., *Istoriia Dagestana*, p. 529.
58. 'Khronika chechenskago vostaniia', p. 88.
59. Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 146.
60. 'Khronika chechenskago vostaniia', p. 18.
61. This becomes evident in quite an impressive way in the published account of N. Semenov, who at the time of the 1877 rebellion was the provost of an administrative section of the Ichkerskii district. His recollections were published in several parts in the *Kavkazskii vestnik* (published in Tbilisi) in 1900.
62. Blauvelt, 'Military–Civil Administration', p. 254.
63. This text, originally written Arabic, is also available in a translated Russian version: 'Abdurrakhman iz Gazikumukha: Padenie Dagestana i Chechni vsledstvie podstrekatel'stva osmanov v 1877 godu (predislovie, tekst, perevod, kommentarii)', in *Dagestanskii vostokovedcheskii sbornik*, Makhachkala 2008 (translated and commented by S.M. Guseikhanov and M.A. Musaev), http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/XIX/Arabojaz_ist/Gazikumuchi/padenie_dagestana_1877.htm, last accessed 20 July 2017.
64. 'Khronika chechenskago vostaniia', p. 91.
65. N. Semenov, 'Iz' nedavniago proshlago na Kavkaze: Razskasy-vospominaniia o chechenskom vostanii v 1877 g.; Razkaz' tretii', *Kavkazskii vestnik*, vol. 7 (1900), pp. 1–14, here p. 9. For another version of Alibek-Khadzhis' relation with the Dagestanis, and his end: Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 98–100.
66. Ibid., p. 100.
67. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Politika i ekonomika*, p. 238.
68. Gadzhiev et al., *Istoriia Dagestana*, p. 531.
69. T.M. Aitberova et al. (eds), *Vostaniia dagestantsev i chechentsev v posleshamilevskuiu epokhu i imamat 1877 goda: Materialy*, vol. 1, Makhachkala: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond Shamilia, 2001, pp. 145–9, 168.
70. Agadzhanov, *Natsional'nye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, p. 310; Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Vlast' i obshchestvo*, Moscow: 'Probel-2000', 2009, p. 370.
71. Khadzhi Murat Donogo, 'Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 6 (2005), pp. 34–57, here p. 37.
72. Agadzhanov, *Natsional'nye okrainy Rossiiskoi Imperii*, p. 311.
73. A.A. Golovlev, 'Etapy i factory formirovaniia naseleniia g. Groznogo (1818–1998

gg.)', *Izvestiia Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2000), pp. 72–83, here pp. 75–6.

74. According to the 1897 census, 8 per cent of the Ossetians lived in urban settlements; this was the highest rate if compared with other North Caucasus 'mountaineers': Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, p. 59.
75. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Vlast' i obshchestvo*, p. 371.
76. Ibid., p. 368.
77. Ibid., pp. 367–70; 'Genealogicheskaia baza znanii: Persony, familii, khronika', http://baza.vgdru.com/post/1/15274/p46861.htm, last accessed 9 April 2013.
78. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Vlast' i obshchestvo*, p. 368.
79. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 32.
80. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Vlast' i obshchestvo*, p. 368
81. N.Iu. Silaev, '"Kavkaz ne stanet ..." Vladikavkazskaia zheleznaia doroga: Neskol'ko nezamechennykh siuzhetov', in Silaev (ed.), *Kavkazskii sbornik*, pp. 110–28, here p. 123.
82. It is more appropriate, in the case of the North Caucasus, to talk of Russification as a 'trend' rather than a comprehensive policy, as suggested by Austin Jersild: Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire*, p. 126.
83. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 22; Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Nauka i kul'tura*, Moscow: 'Probel-2000', 2009, p. 511.
84. The draft law of 20 October 1859 regarding the establishment of mountain schools is published in: Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 658–61.
85. Ibid., p. 659. Shortly afterwards, however, this school was again closed. In 1863, such a school was again established at the primary level: Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 19.
86. Felitsyn and Naumov, *Akty*, vol. 12, pp. 658–9.
87. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 17.
88. G.A. Vertenov, 'Obzor' Terskoi oblasti za 1894g.', in *Zapiski Kavkazkago otdela imperatorskago Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva: Knizhka XIX*, Tbilisi, 1897, pp. 115–60, here pp. 130–4.
89. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistikii*, pp. 20–1.
90. Only people over the age of ten were questioned. The data can be found in: Henning Bauer et al. (eds), *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897: A; Quellenkritische Dokumentation und Datenhandbuch*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991, pp. 239–40.
91. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 18.
92. Ibid., p. 16.
93. Henning Bauer et al. (eds), *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897: B; Ausgewählte Daten zur sozio-ethnischen Struktur des Russischen Reiches; Erste Auswertungen der Kölner NFR-Datenbank*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991, pp. 261, 287.
94. Maksimov, *Chechentsy*, p. 54.
95. The share of land in the individual mountain *auls* could range from just 0.05 to 5.3 *desiatins*: ibid., p. 53.
96. Ibid., pp. 53–5.

97. Ibid., p. 42.
98. Ibid., p. 56.
99. *Terskie Vedomosti*, no. 126 (1906), cited in: A. Avtorkhanov, *K osnovnym voprosam istorii Chechni (k desiatiletiiu Sovetskoi Chechni)* [Groznyi], 1930, pp. 40–1.
100. *Terskie vedomosti*, nos. 144, 145, 146 (1912), cited in: ibid., pp. 37–40.
101. Silaev, '"Kavkaz ne stanet ..."', pp. 118–20
102. Quote from Vorontsov-Dashkov's report of 10 February 1907, in: Gordin et al., *Kavkaz i Rossiiskaia imperiia*, p. 491.
103. Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich*, pp. 268–77.
104. M.S. Simonova et al. (eds), *Vtoroi period revoliutsii, 1906–1907 gody: Chast' vtoraia; Mai-sentiabr' 1906 goda; Kniga vtoraia*, Moscow: Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1962, pp. 221–9.
105. Ibid., pp. 225–6.
106. Charles Manuel lived and worked at the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia, and wrote down his impressions in unpublished memoirs; his memoirs contain accounts of the revolutionary events in Moscow in the summer of 1905, his impressions of his travels through the Caucasus and Turkestan in 1907, the First World War, the revolutionary events of 1917–18, and his expedition again to the Caucasus in 1919–20. His text, in the French original, is undated and contained in the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. His journey through the Caucasus in 1907 (title 'Turkestan et Caucase 1907') is the second part of his 329-page long memoirs and comprises twenty-five double pages: Hoover Institution Archives, Charles Manuel memoir, 1 item, p. 20.
107. Vorontsov-Dashkov's report to Tsar Nicholas II, dated 29 April 1910, was compiled in connection with the attack of a band of *abreks* under the leadership of the famous Zelimkhan on the treasury of Kizliar on 27 March 1910. His report is contained in: GARF, f. 543, op. 1, d. 462, ll. 1–21, here ll. 18ob–19.
108. GARF, f. 543, op. 1, d. 462, l. 19.
109. GARF, f. 543, op. 1, d. 462, ll. 15, 18–20ob.
110. S. Berdiaev, *Chechnia i razboinik Zelimkhan (iz dalekikh vospominanii)*, Paris, 1932, p. 16; D. Bagration, *Podvig Terskago Kazaka: Nyne dagestankago konnogo polka por. Kibirova, unichtivshago abreka Zelimkhana*, Petrograd: T-vo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg', 1914, p. 12.
111. Ibragimova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 31.
112. Ibragimova, *Tsarskoe proshloe chechentsev: Politika i ekonomika*, pp. 87–8; Ibrigamova, *Chechentsy v zerkale tsarskoi statistiki*, p. 56.
113. Džul'etta Mesxidze, 'Die Rolle des Islams beim Kampf um die staatliche Eigenständigkeit Tschetscheniens und Inguschetiens, 1925–1917', in Anke von Kügelgen et al. (eds), *Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations*, Berlin: Schwarz, 1998, pp. 457–81, here pp. 458–9; Z.Kh. Ibragimova, 'Chechenskie neftianye mestorozhdeniia: Istoriia ikh razrabotki', http://chechenasso.ru/?page_id=2407, last accessed 9 April 2013; GARF, f. 102, op. 146, d. 635–2, ll. 91–3.
114. Berdiaev, *Chechnia i razboinik Zelimkhan*, pp. 20–1.
115. Chechens and other members of the indigenous North Caucasian peoples served in the army in irregular militias or companies formed out of volunteers; some managed

to advance to high positions in the Russian Imperial Army. With the exception of the Ossetians, who served in the Imperial Army on a regular basis (some 3,000 officers of Ossetian origin supposedly fought in the First World War), the North Caucasus native Muslims were exempted from regular military service. Especially the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs opposed the integration of Muslims from the Caucasus, because they doubted their loyalty in case of war with the Ottoman Empire: Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 16; Salavat Midchatovič Ischakov, 'Die russischen Muslime im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Fikret Adanir and Bernd Bonwetsch (eds), *Osmanismus, Nationalismus und der Kaukasus: Muslime und Christen, Türken und Armenier im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden: Reichtert, 2005, pp. 253–69; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii 1917–1923: Entsiklopediia v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 2, Moscow: 'Terra', 2008, pp. 203–4.

116. Ischakov, 'Die russischen Muslime', p. 259.
117. Degoev, 'Kavkaz v sostave Rossii', pp. 43–4.
118. Z.Kh. Ibragimova, *Chechenskii narod v Rossiiskoi Imperii: Adaptatsionnyi period; Monografiia*, Moscow: 'Probel-2000', 2006, p. 8. On the historiographical trends: Bobrovnikov and Babich, *Severnyi Kavkaz v sostave*, pp. 132–5.
119. On *abreks*, *abrechestvo* and Russian policy towards the North Caucasus in late tsarist times: Jeronim Perović, 'Imperiale Projektionen und kaukasische Wirklichkeiten: Banditenwesen und das Phänomen Zelimchan im spätzaristischen Russland', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2014), pp. 30–60; Jeronim Perović, *Der Nordkaukasus unter russischer Herrschaft: Geschichte einer Vielvölkerregion*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2015, pp. 154–189.
120. Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 156.
121. This is a quote from the letter of an anonymous author, dated May 1868, and addressed to the administration of the Caucasus region, cited in English translation in: Blauvelt, 'Military–Civil Administration', p. 229.
122. For a general reading: Vladimir Bobrovnikov, 'Islam in the Russian Empire', in Dominic Lieven (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia: Volume II; Imperial Russia 1689–1917*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 202–23.

4. REVOLUTIONS AND CIVIL WAR

1. For a very good overview of developments in the Caucasus during 1917–1920: Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 51–147. Revolution and civil war are still major topics in Russian historiography. For an overview, including a short treatise of Soviet historical writings on the subject, see: P.M. Polian, 'Vainakhi v epokhu rossiiskogo mezhduvlastiia: 1917–1922 gg.', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 261–82.
2. Boris Meissner, 'Sowjetföderalismus und staatsrechtliche Stellung der Nationalitäten der RSFSR bis 1991', in Andreas Kappeler (ed.), *Regionalismus und Nationalismus in Russland*, Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1996, pp. 41–55, here pp. 42–3.
3. T.M. Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev: Russkaia revoliutsiia i narody Severnogo Kavkaza, 1917–mart 1918 g.*, Moscow: 'Partiia', 2007, pp. 6–44.

4. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 119–20.
5. G.I. Kakagasanov et al. (eds), *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev Severnogo Kavkaza i Dagestana (1917–1918 gg.): Gorskaia Respublika (1918–1920 gg.); Dokumenty i materialy*, Makhachkala: Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii, 1994, p. 4.
6. On Chermoev: Timur Muzaev, 'Tapa Chermoev', *Nakhskii zhurnal 'Teptar'*, 1 November 2007, http://archive.today/AXO4I, last accessed 21 April 2015; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii 1917 –1923: Entsiklopediia v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 4, Moscow: 'Terra', 2008, p. 396.
7. The editor of the newspaper was the Ossetian El'bazduko Britaev, who was also a member of the executive committee of the Union of United Mountaineers: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 160.
8. On the ethnic and social composition of the union: ibid., pp. 71–84.
9. For a list of members and candidates of the Union of United Mountaineers' Central Committee, as of 7 May 1917: ibid., pp. 384–5.
10. For short biographies of Tarkovskii: V.Zh. Tsvetkov, '... Dobrovol'skaia armiia idet na Ingushetiiu ne s mirom, a s voinoi', *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (1999), pp. 31–40, here p. 40; B.M. Kuznetsov, *1918 god v Dagestane (Grazhdanskaia voina)*, New York: Voennyi vestnik, 1959, p. 59; Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 453.
11. Donogo, *Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii*, p. 39.
12. Kakagasanov et al., *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev*, pp. 32, 35.
13. For a short biographical note of Gabiev: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 434.
14. Michael A. Reynolds, 'Native Sons: Post-Imperial Politics, Islam, and Identity in the North Caucasus, 1917–1918', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 56, no. 2 (2008), pp. 221–47, here p. 227.
15. Kakagasanov et al., *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev*, pp. 5–6.
16. According to Shalba Amiredzhvili, who took part as the delegate of Georgia to the assembly and published his impressions (in the Georgian language, in the journal *Sakartvelo*, no. 270, 12 December 1917), some 20,000 came together in Vedeno: N.[G.] Dzhavakhishvili, 'Maloizvestnye stranitsy istorii gruzino-dagestanskikh vzaimootnoshenii (pervoe dvadtsatiletie XX veka)', in *Mezhdunarodnaia nauchnaia konferentsiia 'Arkhelogiia, etnologiia, fol'kloristika Kavkaza': Sbornik kratkikh soderzhanii dokladov*, Tbilisi: 'Meridiani', 2011, pp. 377–85, here p. 378.
17. Donogo, *Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii*, p. 40.
18. I.Kh. Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo Dagestana i Sovetskaia vlast': Bor'ba i sotrudnichestvo*, Makhachkala: Dagestanskii gosudarstvennii universitet, 2004, pp. 159–61.
19. Donogo, *Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii*, p. 40.
20. On Kotsev: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 444–5; A.Kh. Karmov and M.Z. Sablirov, 'Zhizn' i obshchestvnenno-politicheskaia deiatel'nost' P.T. Kotseva', in *Kabardino-Balkarskii pravozashchitnyi tsentr*, n.p.: n.d., http://zapravakbr.ru/newfile_2.htm, last accessed 18 February 2010; M.A. Koshev, *Liudi, sobytiia, fakty istorii narodov Severnogo Kavkaza: V ocherkakh illiustratsiiakh i dokumentakh (konets XIX–XX vek)*, Maikop: Kachestvo, 1999, pp. 78–92.
21. Kotsev's report is cited in: Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, pp. 17–18.
22. According to the Gregorian calendar.

23. Place in present-day Azerbaijan.
24. Khadzhi (*Hajji*) is an honorary title for a Muslim who has successfully completed the pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca.
25. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 4, p. 396.
26. Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 110–19; see also the reports by P. Kozok, who was a participant in the civil war on the side of the Mountain Republic: P. Kozok, 'Revolution and Sovietization in the North Caucasus', *Caucasian Review*, no. 1 (1955), pp. 47–54, and no. 3 (1955), pp. 45–53. For events in the North Caucasus during February–October 1917: F.M. Kuliev, *Politicheskaia bor'ba na Severnom Kavkaze v 1917 godu (fevral'–oktiabr')*, Piatigorsk: Izd-vo Piatigor. gos. linvist. un-ta, 2004.
27. For an overview: Evan Mawdslev, *The Russian Civil War*, New York: Pegasus Books, 2007, especially pp. 21–37.
28. For a concise overview of developments in the South Caucasus during 1917 and 1918: Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 85–100.
29. Wolfdieter Bihl, *Die Kaukasuspolitik der Mittelmächte: Teil II; Die Zeit der versuchten Staatlichkeit (1917–1918)*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 1992, p. 46; Tsutsiev, *Atlas*, pp. 48–51.
30. Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 195.
31. Ibid., pp. 204–5.
32. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 90.
33. For an overview of the German policy in the Caucasus in 1917 and 1918: Bihl, *Kaukasuspolitik,* pp. 13–129.
34. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, p. 214.
35. Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 327–67.
36. A short biography of Gaidar Bammat is included in: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 431.
37. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, p. 201; V.D. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza ob"edinennykh gortsev Severnogo Kavkaza i Dagestana do Gorskoi ASSR (1917–1924): Nachal'nyi etap natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva narodov Severnogo Kavkaza v XX veke*, Vladikavkaz: Izd-vo Severo-Osetinskogo gos. Universiteta, 2003, pp. 27–8.
38. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, p. 206.
39. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, p. 28.
40. Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, p. 19.
41. Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 234–9, 282–4.
42. Lazarev's report is undated, but written before 24 January; published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 282–94, here p. 288.
43. Ibid., p. 291.
44. M.D. Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev: Patriot, mirotvorets, politik, genii; Etalon spravedlivosti i chesti*, Groznyi: Zori Islama, 2008, p. 158.
45. S.M. Ishakov, *Rossiiskie musul'mane i revoliutsiia (vesna 1917 g.–leto 1918 g.)*, Moscow: Izd. 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaia mysl'', 2004, p. 150.
46. On Mutushev: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 448–9. See also the (biased) portrait of Mutushev in: M. Geshaev, *Znamenitye chechentsy: Istoricheskie ocherki v 4-kh kn.*, vol. 2, Moscow 2005, pp. 277–303, online at http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/, last accessed 6 January 2013.

47. Avtorkhanov, *K osnovnym voprosam*, pp. 54–5.
48. N.F. Bugai et al., *Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Severnyi Kavkaz (1917–1941 gg.)*, Maikop: 'Meoty', 1995, p. 56; Kh. Oshaev, *Ocherki nachala revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Chechne*, Groznyi, 1927, p. 22.
49. For a short biography of Butaev: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, pp. 433–4.
50. Excerpts of Butaev's accounts, dated 10 October 1920, are published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 381–405. The quote is from: ibid., pp. 384–5.
51. This is evident from the report of Nikolai N. Baratov, a Terek Cossack and former tsarist officer, who during the Russian Civil War fought in the ranks of Denikin's Army of Volunteers. His impressions of the events during 1917 and 1918 are published under the title 'A Short History on the Revolutionary Movement in the North Caucasus, 1917–1918' ('Kratkii ocherk revoliutsionnago dvizheniia na Severnom Kavkaze v 1917–1918 godakh') and contained in an undated, seven-page report, which is located, together with other documents, in: Hoover Institution Archives, N.N. (Nikolai Nikolaevich) Baratov Papers, 1890–1934, 4 manuscript boxes, 2 envelopes, here Box 4, Folder 1 [p. 4].
52. Vdovenko's letter is dated 1 October 1919 and contained in: Kozlov et al. (eds), *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 377–80; the quote is from: ibid., pp. 377–8.
53. Gotsinkii's appeal is published in: Kakagasanov et al. (eds), *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev*, pp. 76–7.
54. Ibid.
55. Donogo, *Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii*, p. 34.
56. Marie Bennigsen Broxup, 'The Last Ghazawat: The 1920–21 Uprising', in Bennigsen Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 112–45.
57. Donogo, *Nazhmuddin Gotsinkii*, pp. 34–8.
58. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 123; Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 70.
59. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 121.
60. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 4, p. 155.
61. Ibid., pp. 205, 209.
62. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 2, p. 420.
63. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, especially pp. 387–8.
64. Ibid.
65. Extracts from the protocols of these sessions were published during Soviet times: *S"ezdy narodov Tereka: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov v 2-kh t.*, Ordzhonikidze: T.I. Ordzhonikidze „Ir', 1977. Parts of the first session are contained in: ibid., vol. 1, pp. 27–58.
66. Kirov's speech of 11 February (29 January) 1918 is contained in: K.I. Efanov, *Lenin i Checheno-Ingushetiia: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Groznyi: Checheno-Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1982, pp. 38–41, here p. 40.
67. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 388.
68. Hoover Institution Archives, Baratov Papers, Box 4, Folder 1 (Baratov, 'Kratkii ocherk', p. 4).

69. Kirov's speech of 20 February (5 March) 1918 is contained in: Efanov, *Lenin i Checheno-Ingushetiia*, pp. 42–8.
70. For example, in: *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 61, 1st edn, Moscow: 'Sovetskaia entsiklopedia', 1934, p. 534.
71. Reynolds, 'Native Sons', p. 246. On Sheripov: Efrem Eshba, *Aslanbek Sheripov: Opyt kharakter, lichnosti i deiatel' A. Sheripova, v sviazi s narodno-revoluts. dvizheniem v Chechne; K desiatiletiiu Oktiabr'skoi revolutsii*, 2nd edn, Groznyi: 'Serlo', 1929.
72. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 389–90.
73. Quote from Sheripov's speech during the second Terek People's Congress on 12 March 1918 in Piatigorsk: Efanov, *Lenin i Checheno-Ingushetiia*, p. 49.
74. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 391.
75. Bugai et al., *Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo*, p. 56.
76. Ibragimova, *Chechenskii narod*, pp. 435, 594, 609.
77. On El'darkhanov, see the biography by: Isa Shaipov, *Tashtemir El'darkhanov*, Groznyi: Checheno-ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1960.
78. *S"ezdy narodov Tereka*, vol. 1, p. 334.
79. Dzh.Dzh. Gakaev, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Chechni (xx vek): V dvukh chastiakh*, Moscow: KhKTs, 1997, pp. 60–3; S.S. Khromov, *Grazhdanskaia voina i voennaia interventsiia v SSSR: Entsiklopediia*, Moscow: Sov. entsiklopediia, 1983, p. 584.
80. Polian, 'Vainakhi', p. 266.
81. For a short biographical note on Buakhidze: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 471.
82. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 392.
83. Decree of the Council of People's Commissars, 9 April 1918, in: Efanov, *Lenin i Checheno-Ingushetiia*, pp. 50–1.
84. Quote from: Bugai et al., *Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo*, p. 57.
85. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 2, p. 6. On the White movement in Southern Russia: R.G. Gagkuev, *Beloe dvizhenie na iuge Rossii: Voennoe sotrudnichestvo, istochniki komplektovaniia, sotsial'nyi sostav, 1917–1920 gg.*, Moscow: 'Posev', 2012, here pp. 51–114.
86. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, p. 237. For further reading: V.V. Galin, *Interventsiia i Grazhdanskaia Voina*, Moscow: Algoritm, 2004.
87. Quoted from Sheripov's speech: *S"ezdy narodov Tereka*, vol. 1, p. 334.
88. A short biographical note on Georgii Bicherakhov is contained in: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 470.
89. R.T. Dzhambulatov, 'Grazhdanskaia voina v Terskoi oblasti v 1918–nachale 1919 g.', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 12 (2008), pp. 78–90, here p. 81.
90. Polian, 'Vainakhi', p. 368.
91. Hoover Institution Archives, Baratov Papers, Box 4, Folder 1 (Baratov, 'Kratkii ocherk', p. 6).
92. Khromov, *Grazhdanskaia voina*, pp. 67, 202, 401, 584.
93. For a biography of Gikalo: O.M. Morozova, 'Nikolai Fedorovich Gikalo', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (2011), pp. 37–57.

94. For biographical sketches of General Lazar' F. Bicherakhov, which also draw on his wife's account, see: Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, pp. 63–75. The first comprehensive biography is: A.Iu. Bezugol'nyi, *General Bicherakhov i ego Kavkazskaia armiia, 1917–1919*, Moscow: Tsentropoligraf, 2011.
95. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii 1917–1923: Entsiklopediia v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 1, Moscow: 'Terra', 2008, p. 184.
96. Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, p. 39.
97. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 97ff.
98. The author is mistaken. Like Gotsinksii, Usun-Khadzhi hailed from Dagestan, but was mostly active in Chechnia during the civil war.
99. Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, pp. 31–2.
100. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 4, pp. 62–3.
101. Ibid.
102. Kuznetsov, *1918 god*, p. 32.
103. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, pp. 37–8, 176.
104. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, pp. 250–1; Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 102–3.
105. Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 1 (1999), p. 34.
106. Kakagasanov et al., *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev*, p. 11.
107. Ibid., p. 12.
108. The delegates of the Mountain Republic notified their displeasure in a letter addressed to General Denikin, warning him of potential negative consequences. The two-page, undated document is contained in: Hoover Institution Archives, Baratov Papers, Box 4, Folder 1.
109. Polian, 'Vainakhi', pp. 274–5.
110. This is evident from a report compiled by General Liakhov of 22 March 1919: V.Zh. Tsvetkov, '... Dobrovol'skaia armiia idet na Ingushetiiu ne s mirom, a s voinoi', *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 2 (1999), pp. 52–61, here p. 53.
111. Aleksei Kosterin, *1919–1920: V gorakh Kavkaza; Istoricheskii ocherk Gorskogo revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia*, Vladikavkaz: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1921, pp. 16–17.
112. A.I. Denikin, *Ocherki Russkoi Smuty: Tom' chetvertyi; Vooruzhennyia sily Iuga Rossii*, Berlin: 'Slovo', 1925, p. 126. The high number of victims is confirmed also in the report of the Army Staff of the Volunteer Army on the battles at Alkhan-Iurt and Goity on 19 March 1919, contained in: Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 1 (1999), p. 39.
113. Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, p. 23.
114. Denikin, *Ocherki*, p. 116.
115. Ibid., p. 126.
116. See the report compiled by General P.A. Tomilov, deputy commander-in-chief of the White Army in the Terek–Dagestani *krai*, and the army's chief of staff, E.V. Maslovskii, addressed to the army headquarters (A.M. Dragomirov), dated 22 March 1919, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 309–12, here p. 310.
117. See the relevant document in: Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 1 (1999), pp. 27–38.

118. Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 2 (1999), p. 61.
119. Kakagasanov et al., *Soiuz ob"edinennykh gortsev*, pp. 13–14; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 1, pp. 494–5.
120. Report by General E.V. Maslovskii on the situation in the Terek–Dagestani *krai* and in Chechnia for the period 1–15 May 1919; the report was compiled before 27 May 1919 and is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 335–40, here p. 337; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 1, p. 494.
121. Denikin, *Ocherki*, p. 119; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 1, pp. 537–8.
122. Denikin, *Ocherki*, p. 114.
123. Hoover Institution Archives, Baratov Papers, Box 4, Folder 1 (Baratov, 'Kratkii ocherk', p. 7).
124. Liakhov's appeal to the Chechens is published in: Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 1 (1999), pp. 56–7.
125. A short biography of Aliev is contained in: ibid., p. 61.
126. Ibid., pp. 56–7.
127. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, p. 30.
128. The appeal, titled 'Ko svem trudiashchimsia musul'manam Rossii i Vostoka', was published for the first time in the newspapers *Pravda* (no. 196) and *Izvestiia* (no. 232) on 22 November (5 December) 1917.
129. Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 1 (1999), p. 40; *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 4 (1999), p. 63.
130. Tsvetkov, 'Dobrovol'skaia armiia', no. 2 (1999), p. 61.
131. Maslovskii report, before 27 May 1919, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 337–8.
132. On Istamulov, see Chapter 7 in this book.
133. Excerpts from the report compiled by General E.V. Maslovskii to the headquarters of the armed forces in South Russia, General A.S. Lukomskii, on the situation in the Terek–Dagestani *krai* and in Chechnia during the period 15 May–1 June 1919, written before 7 June 1919, are contained in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 340–5, here p. 342.
134. See the report on the situation in the Terek–Dagestani *krai* and Chechnia during the period 15 August–1 September 1919, prepared by the White's Army Staff in the South of Russia, addressed to General A.S. Lukomskii; the report is dated 22 September 1919 and published in: ibid., pp. 345–9.
135. See the report on the situation in the Terek–Dagestani *krai* and Chechnia during the period 15 September–1 October 1919, prepared by the White's Army Staff in the South of Russia, addressed to General A.S. Lukomskii; the report is dated 31 October 1919 and published in: ibid., pp. 356–62, here p. 356.
136. Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, p. 32.
137. Ibid., pp. 32–3.
138. Ibid., p. 32.
139. Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, pp. 106–31; I.Kh. Sulaev, *Sovet Oborony Severnogo Kavkaza i Dagestana: Neizvestnye stranitsy istorii*, Makhachkala: Dag. Gos. Universitet, 2004.

140. M.A. Abdullaev, *Triumf i tragediia sheikh-ul'-islama Dagestana Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskogo*, Makhachkala: Epokha, 2013, p. 253.
141. Ibid., pp. 249–78; *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 1, pp. 464–5.
142. Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, pp. 106–31.
143. Ibid., pp. 111, 115.
144. Ibid., p. 111.
145. Ibid., p. 87; Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, p. 28.
146. *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 4 (1999), p. 56.
147. Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, pp. 28, 35–7.
148. *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 4, p. 63.
149. Account of Kazbek Butaev, 10 October 1920, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 402; Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, pp. 44–5.
150. Report on the situation in the Terek-Dagistani *krai* and in Chechnia in the period from 15 September to 1 October 1919, compiled by the General Staff of the White Forces in South Russia, addressed to General A.S. Lukomskii; the report is dated 14 Dezember 1919 and published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 372–7, here p. 375.
151. Kosterin, *V gorakh Kavkaza*, p. 53.
152. Towards the end of the war, Chulikov surrendered himself to the Bolsheviks. He worked, for a brief period, as leader of the Department for Public Education in Groznyi. This is according to Avtorkhanov, who met him in this function in Groznyi: A. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, Frankfurt am Main: Possev-Verlag, 1983, pp. 83–5. Later, Chulikov was supposedly hired by the Soviet secret police and was sent to the West as a pro-Soviet agent in order to agitate among the large Caucasian diaspora for the Soviet cause. During his stay abroad, he defected, however, and became an ardent supporter of Caucasian independence. He died in 1943: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 993; Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 460.
153. Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, p. 53.
154. The claim that ten of the council's members were Bolsheviks can be found in: *Revoliutsiia i grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii*, vol. 1, pp. 494–5; see also: Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, p. 118.
155. On the Emirate of Usun-Khadzhi: ibid., pp. 86–106.
156. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 217–24.
157. Shane O'Rourke, 'The Deportation of the Terek Cossacks 1920', in Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake (eds), *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 254–79.
158. Polian, *Vainakhi*, p. 266.
159. Letter of the Department of the Mountain People to the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs, 4 January 1919, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 305.
160. This is confirmed by declarations made by contemporary witnesses: HPSSS, schedule B, vol. 7, case 81, p. 7. On the cult of Shamil: Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, p. 217; Karl, 'Helden', pp. 166–9.

5. ILLUSION OF FREEDOM

1. On the Soviet policy of *korenizatsiia*: Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.
2. Sergey Abashin et al., 'Soviet Rule and the Delineation of Borders in the Ferghana Valley, 1917–1930', in Frederick S. Starr et al. (eds), *Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2011, pp. 94–118, here p. 105; Alexandre A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979, p. 82.
3. After this, he retreated to his home district (Akusha), where he wielded large influence. He was arrested with his family in 1928: Vladimir Bobrovnikov, 'Waqf Endowments in Daghestani Village Communities: From the 1917 Revolution to the Collectivization', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 50, no. 3 (2010), pp. 477–502, here p. 481; 'Mirotvorets Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskii', *Dagestanskaia pravda*, 27 October 2009, http://dagistanhistory.livejournal.com/8232.html, last accessed 7 January 2013. For a defensive biography of Akushinskii: Abdullaev, *Triumf i tragediia sheikh-ul'-islama Dagestana Ali-Khadzhi Akushinskogo*.
4. This is according to Stalin, who alluded to this during his speech at the 4th session of the CC of the RCP (b), held in Moscow, 9–12 June 1923, with representatives from nearly all the national regions and republics. The publication (originally published in 1923) containing the transcripts of the speech was classified during Soviet times and is contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 165, d. 10. The original text has since been re-edited and published as a book: *Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP: Vosproizvedeno po tekstu 1-go izdaniia (Chetvërtoe soveshchanie TsK RKP s otvetstvennymi rabotnikami natsional'nykh respublik i oblastei v Moskve 9–12 iiunia 1923 g. Moskva. Biuro Sekretariata TsK RKP, Iun' 1923 g.)*, Moscow: INSAN, 1992, the reference to Stalin is at p. 262.
5. Most of these Muslims apparently belonged to the reformist, 'Jadid' movement, advocating co-existence between Islam and socialism: Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
6. This is according to Sultanbek Khodzhanov, delegate from Turkestan, during his speech at the 4th session of the CC RCP (b), Moscow, 9–12 June 1923: *Tainy natsional'noi politik TsK RKP*, p. 111.
7. On the case of Ali Mitaev and developments in Chechnia in the early 1920s, see also: Jeronim Perović, 'Uneasy Alliances: Bolshevik Co-Optation Policy and the Case of Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2014), pp. 729–65.
8. Cited from: W.I. Lenin, *Werke*, vol. 30, September 1919–April 1920, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961, p. 487.
9. Lenin's letter 'To the Comrade Communists of Turkestan' appeared on 7–10 November 1919 in *Turkestanskii Kommunist*, *Izvestiia TsIK Sovetov Turkestanskoi Respubliki* and *Krasnyi Front*. The text of his letter is published in: Lenin, *Werke*, vol. 30, September 1919–April 1920, p. 122.

10. Abashin et al., 'Soviet Rule', pp. 99–102. For an insider report on the Basmachi uprising: H.B. Paksoy, 'Basmachi Movement from Within: Account of Zeki Velidi Togan', *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1995), pp. 373–99.
11. Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus*, Munich: DVA, 2003, p. 195.
12. Margarete Wiese, *Russlands schwacher Föderalismus und Parlamentarismus: Der Föderationsrat*, Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2003, p. 52.
13. A.Kh. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR (1921–1924 gg.): Ocherki sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi istorii*, Saint-Petersburg: Izd. S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1997, p. 36.
14. Stalin's quote is from: J.W. Stalin, *Werke*, vol. 2, 1907–1913, Dortmund: Verlag Roter Morgen, 1976, pp. 266–333, here p. 272.
15. Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 194.
16. Francine Hirsch, 'State and Evolution: Ethnographic Knowledge, Economic Expediency, and the Making of the Soviet USSR, 1917–1924', in Burbank et al. (eds), *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007, pp. 139–68; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, especially pp. 21–61.
17. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 27.
18. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, p. 79.
19. On Stalin's rise to power in the 1920s: Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography*, London: Macmillan, 2004, especially pp. 240–50.
20. On the Gotsinskii rebellion: Bennigsen Broxup, 'Last Ghazawat', pp. 112–45.
21. Donogo, 'Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii', p. 48; Sulaev, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, pp. 142, 145.
22. Bennigsen Broxup, 'Last Ghazawat', p. 114.
23. The corresponding document is contained in Georgia's Central Historical Archive (f. 1864, op. 1, d. 25, ll. 60–1) and published in: Dzhavakhishvili, *Maloizvestnye stranitsy*, pp. 383–5.
24. Stalin's essay, which he wrote after 10 October 1920, is titled 'Soviet Power and the Nationality Question in Russia' (*Sovetskaia vlast' i natsional'nyi vopros v Rossii*), and published in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 39–41.
25. Stalin's telegram to the TsK of the Communist Party, 26 October 1920, is contained in: RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 1982, l. 7.
26. RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 1982, l. 7.
27. The figure of 70,000, as mentioned by some Russians historians (e.g. E.F. Zhupikova), is probably too high: E.F. Zhupikova, *Povstanskoe dvizhenie na Severnom Kavkaze v 1920–1925 godakh*, in *Akademiia istoricheskikh nauk: Sbornik trudov*, vol. 1, Moscow: Akademiia istoricheskikh nauk, 2007, pp. 114–319, here pp. 156–7.
28. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 196, ll. 18–19.
29. Report by N. Nosov to the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs of the RSFSR on the situation regarding the distribution of land and the 'class struggle' in Chechnia and in other parts of the Mountain ASSR, 17 May 1922, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 434–46, here p. 438.
30. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 24.

31. Nosov report, 17 May 1922, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 436–7.
32. The number of casualties in this war, which lasted for about eighteen months, is unclear. The Dagestani delegate to the 4th session of the CC of the RCP (b), held in Moscow, 9–12 June 1923, Dzhelaleddin A. Korkmasov, claimed that some 10,000 members of the Red Army were killed. His speech is contained in: *Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP*, pp. 186–92, here p. 188.
33. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 41.
34. Ibid., p. 42.
35. Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, p. 83.
36. Stalin's speech at the Congress of the Peoples of the Terek on 17 November 1920 is published in: J.W. Stalin, *Werke*, vol. 4, November 1917–1920, Dortmund: Verlag Roter Morgen, 1976, pp. 352–9. His speech at the Congress of the Peoples of Dagestan on 13 November is contained in: ibid., pp. 347–51.
37. Ibid., p. 354.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 358.
40. Ibid., p. 350.
41. Ordzhonikidze quoted in: Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, p. 90.
42. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 44.
43. The creation of a Cossack *okrug* was not mentioned in the decree; nor was the establishment of a separate ethnic Ossetian *okrug* contained in the decree (the Digorskii *okrug*), which existed between January and April 1921, and was also part of the Mountain ASSR: ibid., p. 182.
44. Ibid., pp. 44–5; Dzidzoev, *Ot soiuza*, pp. 94–5.
45. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, pp. 53–4.
46. Circular letter of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs, 16 December 1922, in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 90.
47. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 165.
48. Ibid., p. 169.
49. Quoted in: ibid., p. 171.
50. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 173.
51. Ibid., p. 174.
52. RGASPI, f. 74, op. 2, d. 53, l. 43.
53. The population numbers are based on figures provided by each district of the Mountain ASSR in 1921: K.S. Butaev, *Politicheskoe i ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Gorskoi respubliki (doklad na 2-i Gorskoi oblastnoi konferentsii RKP (b) 23 avgusta 1921 goda)*, Vladikavkaz: Gosizdat, 1921, p. 13. Based on the results of the 1926 census, there were 55,123 Karachaians and 33,307 Balkars living in the territory of the USSR. The data from 1926 (based on: *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926*, Moscow: Izdanie TsSU Soiuza SSR, 1928–1929) are available online at: http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/ussr_nac_26.php, last accessed 29 June 2017.
54. Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, p. 182.
55. Ibid., p. 186; see also Chapter 6 in this book.
56. The corresponding documents are contained in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 283, 286–7, 297–8.

57. On the creation of the Sunzhenskii *okrug*: Daudov, *Gorskaia ASSR*, pp. 149–57.
58. Ibid., p. 187.
59. Cf., for example, Mikoian's report to the CC of the RCP (b) of 1 October 1922 on the situation in the Mountain ASSR: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 84–87, 85; on the increase of ambushes by Chechen bands in the autumn 1922: ibid., pp. 84–7.
60. Telegram of members of the *gubkom* (*gubernskii komitet*) to the CC of the RCP (b) on Chechen robberies, dated between 14 and 27 October 1922: ibid., pp. 87–8.
61. 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', *Voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 2 (1997), pp. 118–74, here pp. 124–6; P.M. Polian, 'Sovetizatsiia po-vainakhskii', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 447–61, here pp. 449–50.
62. See Chapter 8 in this book.
63. Lander's report to the CC of the RCP (b) was written before 11 February 1922 and is published in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 60–4, here p. 61.
64. Ibid., p. 61.
65. Ibid., p. 64.
66. Ibid., p. 63.
67. It was probably Mikoian in particular who responded to the concerns of the Cossack population and advocated on their behalf. See Mikoian's related report for the attention of Molotov (undated, probably written at the end of 1924): RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 172, ll. 73–8; A.I. Mikoian, *Tak bylo: Razmyshleniia o minuvshem*, Moscow: Vagrius, 1999, pp. 224–6; see also his unpublished notes from 1971: RGASPI, f. 84, op. 3, d. 120, ll. 53–61. Cf. on this: N.F. Bugai and D.Kh. Mekulov, *Narody i vlast': 'Sotsialisticheskii eksperiment' (20-e gody)*, Maikop: 'Meoty', 1994, p. 49.
68. Report of the South Eastern Department of the GPU, 'Gosinfsvodka', no. 1, 6 January 1923, in: N.M. Peremyshlennikova et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934)*, vol. 1, part 2, 1922–1923, Moscow: Nauka, 2001, pp. 563–4.
69. Nosov report, 17 May 1922, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 442.
70. Ibid.
71. Report by Mikoian, 1 October 1922: Gatagova, *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 84–7.
72. Ibid., p. 85.
73. Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, p. 229.
74. Report by Mikoian, 1 October 1922: Gatagova, *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 85.
75. Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion: Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates*, Munich: Beck, 1998, p. 213; John Löwenhardt, *The Soviet Politburo*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 1982, pp. 78–80.
76. Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 87 (note 9).
77. Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, p. 229.
78. This does not exclude, however, the possibility that the idea could have originated with Mikoian: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 87 (note 9).

79. Bugai and Mekulov, *Narody i vlast'*, p. 71.
80. The minutes of the meeting of the commission of the CC of the RCP (b) concerning the question of Chechnia's separation from the Mountain ASSR of 22 October 1922 are contained in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 88–89.
81. In his report of 1 October 1922, Mikoian mentions that there was a grand total of ten Chechen Communists in Chechnia at the time: Gatagova at al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 84; El'darkhanov, in his remarks at the 4th Session of the CC of the RCP (b), Moscow, 9–12 June 1923, mentions that there were 'hardly any Communists' in Chechnia: *Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP*, p. 169.
82. Minutes of the meeting of the commission of the CC of the RCP (b) concerning the question of Chechnia's separation from the Mountain ASSR of 22 October 1922: Gatagova, *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 88–9.
83. Ibid., p. 89 (note 2).
84. The number 290,000 refers to the census of 1926 and includes over 90 per cent of the Chechens; the rest of the population was settled in neighbouring territories, mostly in Dagestan (almost 7 per cent). According to the data of the 1926 census, there were 318,522 Chechens living in the territory of the USSR as a whole: http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/ussr_nac_26.php, last accessed 6 February 2013. Also: N.F. Bugai and A.M. Gonov, *Kavkaz: Narody v eshelonakh (20–60-e gody)*, Moscow: INSAN, 1998, p. 58.
85. Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 199.
86. Minutes of the commission of the CC of the RCP (b) on the question of establishing a separate Chechen autonomous region, dated 22 October 1922: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 89.
87. A. Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', *Iunost'*, no. 3 (1967), pp. 44–56, here p. 51.
88. This is reported by Budënnyi in his memoirs: S.M. Budënnyi, *Proidennyi put'*, vol. 3, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973, pp. 305–6.
89. In his published memoirs, Mikoian gives the figure of 2,000 riders and 10,000 people who met them in Urus-Martan: Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 52. In his letter to Stalin of 21 January 1923, VoroshiIov mentions 2,500–3,000 riders and 7–8,000 people who gathered in Urus-Martan. According to Voroshilov, Urus-Martan had some 30,000 inhabitants in total: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 94–5, 94.
90. Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 52.
91. Ibid.
92. Voroshilov's letter to Stalin, 21 January 1923: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, 94.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., p. 95.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 53.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.

100. According to a report on the economic and socio-political situation written by El'darkhanov on 25 August 1923, ninety-eight persons were appointed to guard the railroad. El'darkhanov's report is contained in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 482–503, here p. 484.
101. The contemporary sources give different years. The author of this study tends to date the year of Mitaev's birth to the early 1890s, as this concurs with a document from 1911 commissioned by the tsarist administration of the Terek *oblast'*, which was written before the resettlement of a number of famous sheikhs to Kaluga, including Ali's father, Sheikh Bamat Girei Khadzhi. The entry for Bamat Girei Khadzhi mentions his two sons Ali and Umar. According to this source, Ali was twenty years old at that time and already married to his wife Nabi. Omar was sixteen and unmarried: GARF, f. 102, op. 146, d. 635–2, ll. 91–3, 92ob. This does not always exactly correspond to later reports. The North Caucasus prosecutor's document dated 24 September 1924, in which Mitaev's arrest is justified, states that Mitaev was thirty-six when arrested, thus born in 1888: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, ll. 116–121ob, 116. The birth year 1887 is given by Zaurbekov in his biography of Mitaev. Zaurbekov draws upon statements from persons close to Mitaev and his family: Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, p. 48.
102. Chechen historian Musa Geshaev, for example, writes that Mitaev was 'proficient' in Chechen, Arabic and Russian, and furthermore a distinguished expert in philosophy, religion, history and politics: Geshaev, *Znamenitye chechentsy*, vol. 2, p. 500. This, however, contradicts statements by contemporary observers: Mikoian writes on several occasions that Mitaev spoke little or no Russian: RGASPI, f. 84, op. 3, d. 117, l. 42; Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 53. Budennyi concurs with Mikoian when he states in his memoirs that during the talks with Mitaev in Urus-Martan, they had required the services of a translator (presumably El'darkhanov): Budennyi, *Proidennyi put'*, p. 311. Another witness of events in the North Caucasus in 1918, the Communist Aleksandr G. Shliapnikov, also confirms that Mitaev spoke Chechen, but makes no mention of his knowledge of Russian: A.G. Shliapnikov, 'Za khlebom i neft'iu', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 12 (2002), pp. 94–119, here p. 106.
103. Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 243–4; Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, pp. 15, 26–7, 38. According to the report commissioned by the tsarist administration of the Terek *oblast'*, dated 10 February 1912, Bamat Girei Khadzhi was married to three women and owned a large amount of real estate and a textile manufactory, which officials estimated to be worth 8,000 roubles: GARF, f. 102, op. 146, d. 635–2, ll. 91–3.
104. Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, pp. 25–6; Perović, 'Uneasy Alliances', pp. 746–7.
105. Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, p. 38.
106. Aleksei Kosterin, whose account of a journey to the *murids* in Chechnia was published in 1924, reports that Ali Mitaev's followers numbered some 10,000, a figure that later reappears in other sources: A. Kosterin, 'Po Chechne (putevye nabroski): U miuridov v gostiakh', in Artëm Veselii et al. (eds), *Pereval*, no. 2, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924, pp. 288–306, here p. 288.
107. AUP ChR, f. 236, op. 1, d. 343, ll. 1–3.
108. This is evident from the minutes of the village soviet of the settlement of Tsatsan-Iurt of 27 April 1925: AUP ChR f. r-1206, op. 1ks, d. 31, ll. 44–5, here l. 44.

109. Arkhiv KGB Chechenskoi Respubliki, f. 4971, tom. 2, p. 268, quoted in: Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, p. 50. According to a written statement from the head of the Archive Department of the Government of the Chechen Republic to the author of this book, Mitaev's notes can no longer be found because the contents of the KGB archive—and of other archives as well—were destroyed during the wars of the 1990s. Therefore, there is no way of verifying the quotes given by Zaurbekov, who according to his own account was able to view the document before 1994 (the start of the First Chechen War). Thus, Zaurbekov's book remains the only source of the quotes from Mitaev's alleged autobiography for the time being.
110. For example, during the meeting of the peoples of the Terek region, which was organised by the Bolsheviks and held from 25 January to 2 February 1918 in Mozdok, Shliapnikov writes in his memoirs that Mitaev gave a speech saying that 'his father had suffered for his beliefs and was heavily punished for it by the Russian government'. Quoted from: Shliapnikov, 'Za khlebom i neft'iu', pp. 110–11.
111. Mikoian notes that Mitaev complained during the discussion about the behaviour of the Soviet government and compared this behavior with the treatment of the tsarist regime of his father: Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 53.
112. The most prominent historian of the early Soviet period on the Russian Civil War in the North Caucasus is I. Razgon. If Razgon makes any mention of the role of religious figures, he maintains throughout his works that the '[i]nsurrection in the mountains of the Caucasus against Denikin was led by the Caucasus Regional Committee of the RKP (b)'. Quoted from: I. Razgon, 'Gikalovtsy', *Bor'ba klassov*, no. 6 (1936), pp. 45–56, here 52.
113. This is the way Sheripov is mentioned in the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia of 1934: *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 61, p. 534. On Zaurbekov's assessment: Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, p. 49
114. In fact, as early as the spring of 1917, Mitaev was organising armed units to fight banditry: Muzaev, *Soiuz gortsev*, p. 107.
115. The report, dated 24 January 1919, is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, 'pp. 282–94, here p. 288.
116. Shliapnikov, 'Za khlebom i neft'iu', pp. 108–11.
117. In January 1920, Gikalo was appointed commander of the Terek group of the Red Army: Morozova, 'Nikolai Fedorovich Gilako', p. 42.
118. Zaurbekov, *Sheikh Ali Mitaev*, pp. 70–6. New research indeed indicates that the Bolsheviks only played a minor role during 1919, when the North Caucasus was in the grip of Denikin's Army of Volunteers. Yet Mitaev's praise of the Chechen resistance also needs to be treated with some care. After the Chechens suffered severe losses against Denikin's troops, many changed sides and allied with the Whites: Morozova, 'Nikolai Fedorovich Gilako', pp. 40–1.
119. Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 95.
120. Quoted from: Bugai, *Narody i vlast'*, pp. 68–9.
121. On this subject, see also later GPU reports, e.g. by Sergei Mironov, head of the Eastern Department of the North Caucasus GPU, written before 21 April 1923: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 588, ll. 33–4.
122. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, l. 26.

123. The report is undated, but was written before 21 April 1923: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 588, ll. 33–4.
124. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 588, l. 33ob.
125. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 588, l. 34.
126. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 588, l. 33.
127. Stalin's reaction to this letter is not recorded: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 113 (note 6).
128. Peremyshlennikova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 973.
129. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 13–17.
130. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, l. 26.
131. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 26–33; Peremyshlennikova et al., '*Sovershenno sekretno,* vol. 1, part 2, p. 973, 979; N.M. Peremyshlennikova et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934)*, vol. 2, 1924, Moscow: Nauka, 2001, p. 33.
132. Russian translations of these letters from the Arabic can be found in: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 18–19.
133. Mikoian, 'Iz Vospominanii', p. 54.
134. Sokolov's report on Chechnia is undated, but written before 20 July 1923, and contained in: Kozlov at al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 133–5, here p. 134.
135. The letter was probably written on 22 October 1923 and is contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 59–65, here l. 62.
136. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 63.
137. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 64.
138. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 13–14, 64.
139. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 63–4.
140. See, for example, the letter (*zakrytoe pis'mo*) dated 25 July 1923 from Bol'shakov, secretary of the Groznyi party committee of the RCP (b), to his comrades (with a copy to Lazar' M. Kaganovich, then head of the organisational department of the secretary of the party's Central Committee): RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 63, ll. 32–6; the section on Chechnia is at ll. 34–5.
141. See the North Caucasus prosecutor's decision on the Mitaev case, dated 24 September 1924, in: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, ll. 116–21ob, l. 119.
142. N.G. Dzhavakhishvili, 'Bor'ba za svobodu Kavkaza: Iz istorii voenno-politicheskogo sotrudnichestva Gruzii i Severokavkaztsev v pervoi polovine xx veka', *Prometheus*, no. 8 (December 2011), pp. 35–49, here pp. 47–9, http://de.scribd.com/doc/50989765/PROMETHEUS-№8, last accessed 10 February 2014; N.G. Dzhavakhishvili, 'Bor'ba za svobodu Kavkaza: Iz istorii voenno-politicheskogo sotrudnichestva Gruzii i Severokavkaztsev v pervoi polovine xx veka: okonchanie', *Prometheus*, no. 9 (January–March 2011), http://de.scribd.com/doc/52365678/Номер-журнала-№9-5-04, last accessed 10 February 2014. The author quotes sources from the Georgian presidential archive (notably the Arkhiv Prezidenta Gruzii, f. 14, op. 2, d. 28, ll. 25–6), draws upon published contemporary documents (notably a publication titled *Delo Paritetnogo komiteta antisovetskikh partii Gruzii (obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie*, Tbilisi, 1925), the published memoirs of persons directly involved on the Chechen side and more recent Georgian secondary literature.

143. As reported in: Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 53.
144. Ibid., p. 54.
145. Letter from El'darkhanov to Stalin dated 20 May 1924: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 66–7. Various documents give various dates of Mitaev's arrest. The North Caucasus prosecutor's decision on the Mitaev case, dated 24 September 1924, states that Mitaev was arrested on 26 April 1924: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, 116.
146. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 67.
147. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 66ob.
148. Gatagova, *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 222 (note 1).
149. Ibid., p. 222.
150. The letter is addressed to the North Caucasus office of the RCP (b) and dated May 1924: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 144, ll. 3–10, 3.
151. Letter from Evdokimov to Mironov, May 1924: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 52–61, 54.
152. Maslak Ushaev (1897–1938) would later work for the secret police of the Chechen–Ingush AO and was appointed head of the Supreme Court in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR. In contemporary Chechen historiography, he is a hated figure. In the online encyclopaedia about the lives of famous Chechens, compiled by Andrei Zelev, he appears as 'Stalinist Chekist-sadist': 'Znamenytie chechentsy i ingushi', Entsiklopediia T-Ia, http://www.proza.ru/2009/02/15/185, last accessed 11 January 2013. Maslak Ushaev has a special entry on the dissident Chechen internet blog 'Chechen traitors' entitled 'Traitor and Executioner of the Chechen people Maslak Ushaev': http://chechentraitors.blogspot.ch/2011/10/blog-post_7000.html, last accessed 22 February 2013. Chechen writer Musa Beksultanov calls him an 'atheist, informer, and murderer' in one of his stories: Musa Beksultanow, *Der Weg zurück zum Anfang: Erzählungen, Novellen, Gedichte in Prosa*, trans. Marianne Herold and Ruslan Bazgiew, Klagenfurt and Vienna: Kitab-Verlag, 2012, pp. 138, 157 (note 5).
153. This is based on the report by one Khakim Sataev, inhabitant of the village of Dyshni-Veden, of 8 May 1924: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, l. 39. More reports can be found in: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 44–5.
154. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 49–50.
155. Quoted from: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, l. 60.
156. The minutes of the meeting can be found in: GARF, f-1235, op. 102, d. 495, here at ll. 2–2ob, 18–19. An abbreviated summary of the four-day meeting is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 503–15.
157. Mikoian, 'Iz Vospominanii', p. 55.
158. A summary of Mikoian's speech can be found in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 505–6; Mikoian, 'Iz Vospominanii', p. 56.
159. The name Mironov appears on the members' list of the minutes of the meeting: GARF, f-1235, op. 102, d. 495, l. 2ob.
160. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, l. 52.
161. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, ll. 114–25.
162. RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, l. 114.
163. The document is dated 2/3 December 1924 and found in: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 89, l. 115.

164. Peremyshlennikova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 1026.
165. Kosterin, 'Po Chechne', p. 292.
166. AUP ChR, f. r-1206, op. 1ks, d. 31, ll. 32–3.
167. The author of this study refers to documents to that effect from the settlements of Goity, Staro-Sunzhenskii, Berdykel'skoe, Urus-Martan, Gekhi, Alkhan-Iurt, Shali, Mesker-Iurt, Ustar-Gordoi, Avtury, Bel'gatskii, Chechen-Aul, Novye Atagi, Kuraly, Tsatsan-Iurt and one further settlement (with an unreadable name). The documents are contained in: AUP ChR, f. r-1206, op. 1ks, d. 31, ll. 21–62.
168. Mikoian, 'Iz vospominaniy', p. 55.
169. Ibid.
170. RGASPI, f. 84, op. 3, d. 120, l. 80. These dictations served as drafts for the memoirs he published later. See the respective section in: Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, p. 232.
171. According to Mikoian's unpublished notes of August 1971: RGASPI, f. 84, op. 3, d. 120, ll. 80–1.
172. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 171.
173. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1132, l. 8ob.
174. See: Pavel Aptekar', 'Vtoroe pokorenie Kavkaza', *Rodina*, no. 6 (1995), 43–8; A.Iu. Lashkov, '1925 god: Spetsoperatsiia krasnoi Armii; Tri chetverti veka nazad pravitel'stvennye voiska uzhe priobretali opyt likvidatsii chechenskikh bandformirovanii', *Nezavisimoe Voennoe obozrenie*, 21 April 2000, http://nvo.ng.ru/history/2000-04-21/5_sp_ops.html, last accessed 9 January 2013.
175. Lashkov, '1925 god: Spetsoperatsiia krasnoi Armii'.
176. RGASPI, f. 84, op. 3, d. 171, l. 37.
177. Donogo, 'Nazhmuddin Gotsinskii', p. 54.
178. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1132, l. 8ob; Lashkov, '1925 god: Spetsoperatsiia krasnoi Armii'.
179. Pavel Aptekar', 'Voina bez kraia i kontsa', *Rodina*, no. 1–2 (2000), pp. 161–5, here p. 163.
180. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 7, d. 54, ll. 3–4.
181. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1132, l. 3. See also: Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 314.
182. The exact date of the execution is unknown: Peremyshlennikova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 1026.
183. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 7, d. 54, l. 4.
184. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 7, d. 54, l. 4.
185. Mikoian, 'Iz vospominanii', p. 54.
186. Sultan-Galiev played a crucial role during revolution and war in the Volga and Central Asian regions, and was an important political figure in the early 1920s: R.G. Landa, 'Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8 (1999), pp. 53–70.
187. Out of the 202 Bukharan Communist Party members purged, 12.4 per cent were clergy: Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917–1941*, Westport: Praeger, 2001, p. 74.
188. *Tainy natsional'noi politik TsK RKP*, pp. 111–12.
189. Ibid., pp. 166–7.
190. Letter from Evdokimov to Mironov of May 1924: RGASPI, f. 65, op. 1, d. 142, ll. 60–61. That Mitaev never wielded much influence in the more difficult to access

mountain areas is recorded in various sources, see, e.g. Voroshilov's letter to Stalin from November 1923: RGASPI, f. 74, op. 2, d. 81, l. 135.

191. Shaipov, *Tashtemir El' darkhanov*, p. 24.
192. Gakaev, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Chechni*, p. 91. 'Soviet genocide' is the title of Chapter 2 (which deals with the early Soviet period) in: Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 40–84.
193. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 173.
194. Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 533.
195. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 173–74; 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 132–5.
196. Bobrovnikov, 'Waqf Endowments in Daghestani Village Communities', pp. 483–4, 496.

6. STATE AND SOCIETY

1. See, for example, Stalin's draft text on Soviet nationality policy, written in October 1920, and published in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 39–41, here p. 41.
2. Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 10–12; Michael G. Smith, 'The Tenacity of Forms: Language, Nation, Stalin', in Craig Brandist and Katya Chown (eds), *Politics and the Theory of Language in the USSR, 1917–1938: The Birth of Sociological Linguistics*, London and New York: Anthem Press, 2010, pp. 105–22.
3. Andreas Frings, *Sowjetische Schriftpolitik zwischen 1917 und 1941: Eine handlungstheoretische Analyse*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007, especially pp. 342–8.
4. See, for example, the statement by an ethnic Avar from Dagestan in an interview conducted in 1950: 'The Bolsheviks were only a word among us, we did not see any of their acts. You understand, their hold on power was still weak. Until 1928, the Bolsheviks were only feeling out the people. They bore themselves carefully towards each nationality ...' . Quote from: HPSSS, schedule A, vol. 13, case 159, p. 97.
5. Illustrative in this respect is the observation made by Aleksandr D. Kozitskii, who was the leader of the combat mission in Chechnia in the spring of 1930 tasked with suppressing the large-scale rebellions that broke out as a result of the misguided collectivisation attempt. He writes in his report that there were *auls* in Chechnia that had not yet seen a single Soviet representative since the revolution, and had a similar idea of Soviet power as he had of the 'organisation of the administrative region of the Mississippi'. The Kozitskii report is contained in: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 145–58, here p. 146.
6. Kosterin, 'Po Chechne', p. 295.
7. Report by D. Nagiev, head of the commission appointed by the party authorities of the North Caucasus *krai*, investigating the activities of the Chechen *ispolkom*, dated 4 August 1928 and published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 542–61, here p. 557.
8. A report on the situation in the national regions of the North Caucasus, compiled under the direction of Georgii M. Karib before 12 June 1929, notes that a total of

only forty-two books had been published in Chechnia until this point, mostly on topics of 'little use' such as fairy tales, stories or proverbs. Not a single book on agriculture, cattle-breeding or anti-religious topics, nor even the constitution of the Chechen region, had been issued in the Chechen language: RGASPI, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, ll. 86–59, here l. 68.

9. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 657, ll. 19–26, here l. 19.
10. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 313ob.
11. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, ll. 40–1.
12. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 41.
13. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, ll. 40, 46–7.
14. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 48.
15. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, ll. 50–3.
16. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 53.
17. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 53.
18. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 44.
19. RGASPI, f. 78, op. 1, d. 66, l. 51.
20. The members of the Chechen government were to be elected only during the first session of the regional soviets, which met from 29 July to 2 August 1924 in Groznyi: GARF, f. r-1235, op. 102, d. 495, ll. 18ob–19.
21. See the report by Asnarashvili, first secretary of the Chechen Orgburo, dated 22 October 1923; Asnarashvili cites a Chechen with the following quote: 'We have seen Shamil's power, the power of the Russian generals, the power of Usun-Khadzhi, we have got to know Soviet power, but never have we seen such a weak power [as that of the Chechen *revkom*].' Quote from: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 32–6, here l. 34.
22. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 102, d. 495, l. 89ob.
23. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, ll. 56–8.
24. GARF, f. R-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 301ob.
25. Pekka Kauppala, 'Sowjet-Karelien 1917–1941: Leistung und Schicksal eines sozialistischen Regionalexperiments', PhD diss., Philosophische Fakultät IV, Universität Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1992 (electronic publication 2009), http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/6678/, last accessed 27 March 2016.
26. Heiko Haumann, *Geschichte Russlands*, Zurich: Chronos, 2003, p. 78.
27. On the composition of higher offices in the Chechen party and state apparatus in 1921–34, see the reference to the Chechen AO and the Chechen–Ingush AO respectively, in the online lexicon: Nafthali Hirschkowitz (ed.), 'Spravochnik po istorii Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 1898–1991', http://www.knowbysight.info, last accessed 27 March 2017.
28. Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 137.
29. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 558.
30. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 178.
31. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 306ob.
32. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 543.
33. Ibid., pp. 543–4.
34. Ibid., p. 543.

35. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 245, l. 48.
36. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 544.
37. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 52.
38. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 544–5.
39. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 52.
40. Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 575.
41. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in December 1928, in: N.E. Bystrova et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934 gg.)*, vol. 6, 1928, Moscow: Nauka, 2002, p. 638.
42. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 555.
43. Ibid.; RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 74, l. 2.
44. See also Chapter 8 in this book.
45. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 461, ll. 26–8.
46. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 461, l. 28.
47. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 548–9.
48. Ibid., p. 549.
49. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 331ob.
50. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 47; GARF, f. r-1235, op. 105, d. 458, l. 333.
51. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 551.
52. Ibid.
53. Adzhiristan (Adzhariia) is a Muslim-populated part of Georgia, whose inhabitants are ethnic Georgians. The quotes are from a directive of the OGPU to the plenipotentiary pepresentatives of the OGPU (PP OGPU) in the departments of the eastern regions on Islamic education in schools, prepared before 12 May 1924, in: Gatagova et al., *TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 202–3, here p. 202.
54. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 551.
55. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 47.
56. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 268, l. 45.
57. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in July 1927, in: Iu.L. D'iakov et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934 gg.)*, vol. 7, 1929, Moscow: Nauka, 2004, p. 472.
58. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 551.
59. Ibid., p. 550.
60. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, ll. 55–6.
61. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 552–3.
62. Report by an anonymous author on the investigation of the organisation of the party in the Chechen AO in February 1931, written between 7 and 9 March 1931, published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 583–618, here p. 609.
63. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, l. 51.
64. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, l. 52.
65. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, l. 50.
66. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 270, l. 10.

67. V.O. Bobrovnikov, 'Vakf v Dagestane: Iz vcherashnego dnia v zavtrashnii', in I.L. Babich and L.T. Solev'eva (eds), *Islam i pravo v Rossii: Materialy nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara 'Musul'manskoe pravo v mire Rossii (Severnyi Kavkaz, Povolzh'e)'; Noiab. 2003*, vol. 2, Moscow: Izd-vo Ros. un-ta druzhby narodov, 2004, pp. 150–65.
68. Ibid.
69. Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*, London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983, pp. 47–8.
70. Bobrovnikov, 'Vakf v Dagestane'.
71. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in October 1925, in: L.P. Kolodnikova et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934)*, vol. 3, part 2, 1925, Moscow: Nauka, 2002, p. 637.
72. HPSSS, schedule A, vol. 22, case 434, p. 5.
73. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 83.
74. Nagiev report, 4 August 1928, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 546.
75. Ibid., p. 556.
76. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 68, d. 190, ll. 109–113ob.
77. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 123, d. 168, ll. 16–17ob.
78. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 123, d. 168, ll. 18–19.
79. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 123, d. 168, l. 18ob.
80. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 123, d. 168, l. 2.
81. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 123, d. 168, l. 2.
82. In addition to the already mentioned works, the following are representative for Avtorkhanov's widely known publications: A. Avtorkhanov (Aleksandre Ouralov), *Staline au pouvoir: Traduit du russe par Jaques Fondeur*, Paris: Les Iles d'Or, 1951; A. Avtorkhanov (Aleksandr Uralov), *Tekhnologiia vlasti: Protsess obrazovaniia KPSS*, Munich: Posev, 1959.
83. These writings have received scant attention in Western historiography: Avtorkhanov, *K osnovnym voprosam*; A. Avtorkhanov, *Kratkii istoriko-kul'turnyi i ekonomicheskii ocherk o Chechne*, Rostov-on-Don: 'Severnyi Kavkaz', 1931.
84. The Institute of Red Professors was an institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for graduate-level education of higher party cadres and teachers at academic educational establishments. The IKP existed between 1921 and 1938.
85. For a critical discussion of Avtorkhanov's writings: David-Fox, 'Memory, Archives, Politics', pp. 988–1003; Park and Brandenberger, 'Imagined Community?', especially pp. 545–54.
86. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 5.
87. Ibid., p. 70.
88. Ibid., p. 86.
89. Ibid., pp. 71–5.
90. Ibid., pp. 75–8.
91. The chapter with this title is contained in: ibid., pp. 70–85.
92. Ibid., pp. 84–5.
93. Ibid., p. 79.
94. Ibid., pp. 80–1.
95. Ibid., p. 82.

96. Ibid., pp. 81–2.
97. Lenin's letter to Kamenev, 'On the Battle with Great-Power Chauvinism', (*O bor'be s velikoderzhavnym shovinizmom*), dated 6 October 1922, is published in: V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 45, March 1922–March 1923, 5th edn, Moscow: Izd. politicheskoi literatury, 1970, p. 214.
98. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 82.
99. The notion of *smychka* contains the Bolshevik's ideological programme to fuse workers and peasants.
100. The Agitprop report (signed by the head of the Groznyi Agitrop section, Miller), is addressed to the CC RCP (b), and dates from 18 December 1923: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 60, d. 581, ll. 34–7, here l. 34.
101. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 60, d. 581, ll. 34–34ob.
102. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 1.
103. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 21; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, ll. 10–11; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 41.
104. OGPU report on the political situation of the USSR in October 1915: Kolodnikova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno,'* vol. 3, part 2, p. 638.
105. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in July 1926, in: G.N. Sevost'ianov et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934 gg.)*, vol. 4, part 1, 1926, Moscow: Nauka, 2001, p. 463.
106. Nosov report, 17 May 1922, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 443.
107. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 58.
108. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, pp. 62–98.
109. RGASPI, f. 74, op. 2, d. 53 ll. 40–40ob.
110. Z.A. Zakhiraeva, 'Razvitie Groznenskogo neftenosnogo raiona v 1916–1921 godakh', in Ibragimov and Tishkov, *Chechenskaia Respublika*, pp. 288–92.
111. The figure of 18,000 workers refers to data from the year 1922. See the Nosov report, 17 May 1922, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 435.
112. A.K. Sokolov, 'Sovetskii 'Neftesindikat' na vnutrennem i mezhdunarodnykh rynkakh v 1920-e gg.', in L.I. Borodkina (ed.), *Ekonomicheskaia istoriia: Obozrenie*, vol. 10, Moscow: Izd-vo MGU, 2005, pp. 101–31, here p. 104.
113. Golovlev, *Etapy i faktory*, pp. 75–6.
114. GARF, f. a-259, op. 14, d. 173, l. 181. According to data collected by the secret police, Groznyi had some 34,000 inhabitants in 1920: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 41.
115. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 41.
116. GARF, f. a-259, op. 14, d. 173, l. 181. On urbanisation in the Soviet Union between 1926 and 1939: Chauncy H. Harris, 'The Cities of the Soviet Union', *Geographical Review*, vol. 35, no. 1 (1945), pp. 107–21.
117. Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, p. 59.
118. The letter is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 463–4, here p. 463.
119. This is contained in the decree of the Commission of the VTsIK regarding the definition of boundaries between the city of Groznyi and the Chechen AO from 28 February 1923: ibid., p. 473.

120. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, ll. 54–55ob, here l. 54ob.
121. On 7 May 1923, representatives from Grozneft' and the Chechen government agreed that Chechnia would receive a monthly donation from Grozneft' of 35,000 gold roubles per month, corresponding to 150,000 *puds* (ca. 2,457 tons) of oil at a price of 21.5 kopecks per *pud*. Also, the two sides agreed that Chechnia would have the opportunity to buy oil products at a 25 per cent discount. In return, Chechnia obligated itself to take responsibility for the security of the industrial grounds. The Chechen *revkom* was to answer for any potential damages: GARF, f. r-1235, op. 121, d. 119, ll. 9–9ob; GARF, f. r-1318, op. 1, d. 476, ll. 88–88ob.
122. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 55ob.
123. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 84, d. 538, l. 21.
124. A.A. Igolkin, *Neftianaia politika SSSR v 1928–1940-m godakh*, Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2005, p. 86.
125. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 102, d. 495, l. 100ob.
126. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in October 1925, in: Kolodnikova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 3, part 2, p. 638. Mikoian's claim that 800 Chechens worked in the factories of Groznyi is probably exaggerated: Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, p. 230.
127. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1132, l. 7.
128. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 121, d. 119, l. 30.
129. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 121, d. 119, ll. 2, 11.
130. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, ll. 12–14.
131. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, l. 41.
132. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 90.
133. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, l. 17.
134. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, ll. 3–7, here l. 5.
135. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, l. 5.
136. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, l. 6.
137. Hirschkowitz, 'Spravochnik'.
138. The decree of 7 May 1928 is contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 620, ll. 11–16. The main report, presented by Karib on 12 June 1929, is in: GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, ll. 86–59.
139. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 58; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, l. 5.
140. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 473. ll. 1–3.
141. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, ll. 96–8, here l. 98.
142. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 89.
143. On these administrative–territorial shifts, see also the corresponding maps in this book.
144. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 10.
145. On these shifts, see: Tsutsiev, *Atlas*, p. 73.
146. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 463, l. 2.
147. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 671, l. 174. See also: Bugai et al., *Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo*, pp. 228–9.
148. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 671, ll. 176–7.
149. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 462, l. 12. On the local reactions, see also: OGPU report

on the political situation in the USSR in October 1928, in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 538.

150. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 671, ll. 178–9.
151. RGASPI, f. 585, op. 11, d. 63, l. 43.
152. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 671, ll. 172–3; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 710, point 1.
153. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 614 (note 110); E.I. Kobzeva, *Kratkaia istoricheskaia spravka ob administrativno-territorial'nom delenii Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR 1785–1946 gg.*, Groznyi: Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv checheno-ingushskoi ASSR 1957, pp. 9, 12; also available online at: http://akka.ru/?type=info&cat=12&subcat=111, last accessed 28 March 2016.
154. The Ossetian language belongs to the Iranian language group. See also the corresponding ethno-linguistic map in this book.
155. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 462, ll. 3–4. On the reaction of the Ossetians, the Vladikavkaz townspeople and the Ingush, see also the OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in June 1928, in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, pp. 535–7.
156. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 462, l. 7.
157. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 462, l. 28.
158. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 462, l. 9–10.
159. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 686, l. 140.
160. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 686, l. 138.
161. The decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of 15 January 1934 is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 623. The decree of 5 December 1936 on the upgrading of status, from region (*oblast'*) to republic, is contained in: ibid., p. 1006 (note 63). See also: Kobzeva, *Kratkaia istoricheskaia spravka*, pp. 13–18.
162. This is evident from a memo on the political–economic situation in the national regions of the North Caucasus written by the head of the OGPU informational department and sent to the CC of the Communist Party. The report was written after 13 April 1928 and is contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 67, d. 460, ll. 32–59.
163. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 141, d. 220, ll. 1–10.
164. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in October 1928, in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 538; OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in May 1929, in: D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 256.
165. S.M. Dimanshtein, 'Sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo i natsional'naia politika partii', *Revoliutsiia i natsional'nosti*, no. 6 (1930), pp. 3–12, here p. 8.
166. Igolkin, *Neftianaia politika*, p. 87.
167. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 245, ll. 59–60.
168. Igolkin, *Neftianaia politika*, p. 83.
169. T.U. El'buzdukaeva, 'Promyshlennoe razvitie Chechni v 20–30-e gody XX veka', in Ibragimov and Tishkov, *Chechenskaia Respublika*, pp. 295–300, here p. 299.
170. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 140, d. 1149, l. 58.
171. GARF, f. r-1235, op. 75, d. 190, ll. 1–5, 10–11, 20–21.

7. THE NORTH CAUCASUS DURING COLLECTIVISATION

1. This chapter is based on a shorter essay on the topic published in: Jeronim Perović, 'Highland Rebels: The North Caucasus During the Stalinist Collectivisation Campaign', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2016), pp. 234–60.
2. For a general overview on collectivisation in the Soviet Union: Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
3. On rumours of Apocalypse: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 45–7.
4. For an overview of the scale of rebellions in the USSR: Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, p. 140.
5. See, e.g., Jörg Baberowski's representative study on Azerbaijan (Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, on collectivisation pp. 669–752), the study of Turkmenistan by Adrienne Lynn Edgar (Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, on collectivisation pp. 197–220), or the comprehensive work on Stalinism in Central Asia by Niccolò Pianciola (Niccolò Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera: Colonizzazione agricola, stermino dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905–1936)*, Rome: Viella, 2009, on collectivisation pp. 347–96).
6. Molotov quoted in: V. Danilov et al. (eds), *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni: kollektivitsatsiia i raskulachivanie: Dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh; 1927–1939*, vol. 1, May 1927–November 1929, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999, p. 759.
7. Ibid.
8. Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', on collectivisation and the armed revolts, see pp. 157–61.
9. See also: David-Fox, 'Memory, Archives, Politics', pp. 988–1003; Park and Brandenberger, 'Imagined Community?', pp. 543–60, 545–51.
10. There, he worked closely with First Party Secretary Solomon A. Khasman (1886–1938), who was, however, replaced at the beginning of 1930. Khasman's successor, Georgii Karib, held this office from January 1930 until his reposting in August 1932: Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 157–97.
11. *Organy VChK-GPU-OGPU na Severnom Kavkaze i v Zavkavkaze (1918–1934 gg.): Prilozheniia k itogovomu otchetu po proektu 'Rabota s obshchestvennym mnenim Rossii dlia sozdaniia ob"ektivnoi i sbalansirovannoi otsenki deistvii Rossii na Severnom Kavkaze i Kavkaze v tselom'*, Mezhdunarodnoe obshchestvo 'Memorial', internet-SMI 'Kavkazskii uzel', July 2004, p. 28, available at: http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/system/attachments/0000/3107/Органы_ВЧК-ГПУ-ОГПУ_на_Северном_Кавказе_и_в_Закавказье__1918-1934_гг._.pdf, last accessed 16 November 2011.
12. Avtorhkanov, *Memuary*, pp. 167, 207.
13. Park, 'Imagined Community?', p. 551.
14. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 167.
15. Kh.G. Mambetov and Z.G. Mambetov, *Sotsial'nye protivorechiia v kabardino-balkarskoi derevne v 20-30-e gody*, Nal'chik: KBNTs RAN, 1999, p. 30.

16. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 340.
17. A good summary of events is given in: Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 202–5.
18. The report of the OGPU intelligence department (including appendix) can be found in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, pp. 339–42, 365–6.
19. Ibid., pp. 340, 365.
20. Ibid., p. 365.
21. In the post-Soviet literature, however, Urusov is not listed as a leader, since he was supposedly arrested on 9 June together with other farmers: O.O. Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii v period kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva*, Nal'chik, 2009, p. 2, also available at: http://vosstaniya.ucoz.ru, last accessed 26 March 2017.
22. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, pp. 340–1. According to other accounts, several hundred horsemen also took part in the attack, and the number of weapons seized was also higher: Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 3; N.F. Bugai and A.M. Gonov, *V Kazakhstan i Kirgiziiu iz Priel'brus'ia (20-e–50-e gody)*, Nal'chik: KBNTs RAN, 1997, p. 22. These authors base their accounts of the events mainly on reports of the local secret police, which they were able to study in the regional archives.
23. Mikhel'son headed the local OGPU unit in Kabardino-Balkaria from 30 November 1923 until 26 June 1928, when he was replaced by M.G. Raev: *Organy VChK-GPU-OGPU na Severnom Kavkaze i v Zavkavkaze*, p. 25.
24. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 341; Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 2.
25. Bugai and Gonov, *V Kazakhstan i Kirgiziiu iz Priel'brus'ia*, p. 23; Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 3.
26. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 341. Other sources report that this meeting did not take place until 12 June: Bugai and Gonov, *V Kazakhstan i Kirgiziiu iz Priel'brus'ia*, p. 23; Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 3.
27. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 341.
28. Ibid., p. 366.
29. Ibid., pp. 342, 366.
30. Mambetov and Mambetov, *Sotsial'nye protivorechiia*, pp. 72–5.
31. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, p. 341. Other accounts state that the number was even higher and that about 5,000 people, including 500 horsemen, marched on Baksan: Mambetov and Mambetov, *Sotsial'nye protivorechiia*, pp. 76–7.
32. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, pp. 339–41. Other sources refer to seven dead and twelve injured: Mambetov and Mambetov, *Sotsial'nye protivorechiia,* pp. 76–7.
33. Bugai and Gonov, *V Kazakhstan i Kirgiziiu iz Priel'brus'ia*, p. 25.
34. The commission's report is located in the FSB archive of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (f. 10, op. 1, d. 61, ll. 2–10) and is cited in: ibid., p. 28.
35. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 6, pp. 339–41.
36. Bugai and Gonov, *V Kazakhstan i Kirgiziiu iz Priel'brus'ia*, p. 28.
37. Aishaev, *Krest'ianskie vosstaniia v Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 3.

38. Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, pp. 100–31; Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, pp. 37–45.
39. It is certainly true that peasants sought to protect one another in Russian villages against the onslaught of the state (see: Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, pp. 67–99). Yet at least according to OGPU reports, internal strife among village communities seems to have been more a feature in the central, Russian and Slavic-settled parts of the country. Here, collectivisation frequently opened up conflicts among those who wanted to join the *kolkhoz* and those who did not. Also, in order to revive ancient enmities or even due to pure envy, neighbours denounced one another or took advantage of the situation for plundering and theft: N.E. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934 gg.)*, vol. 8, part 1, 1930, Moscow: Nauka, 2008, p. 29.
40. During the period from the end of 1929 to the spring of 1930, Stalin is reported to have received 50,000 letters of protest from farmers; Mikhail I. Kalinin, the formal head of state of the Soviet Union, received 85,000: Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, p. 92.
41. Tens of thousands of families in Central Asia left with the start of collectivisation, but many emigrated in the early 1930s because of famine and large-scale devastation: Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*, pp. 397–418. Adrienne Lynn Edgar describes the situation during collectivisation in the case of Turkmenistan as one of 'fight or flight': Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, p. 213.
42. Possibly some twelve million peasants left the village during the first five-year plan (1928–32): Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, p. 82.
43. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, 1929, pp. 498–9.
44. See the report written in April 1930 by the commander of the Red Army's North Caucasus Military District, General Ivan P. Belov: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 137–43, here p. 138.
45. Andreev's report, including the subsequent discussion, is published in: L.P. Kosheleva et al. (eds), *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politbiuro TsK RKP (b)—VKP (b) 1923–1938 gg.: V trekh tomakh*, vol. 3, 1928–38, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007, pp. 83–108.
46. Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, p. 24.
47. According to a secret police report of October 1929, the situation in the North Caucasus had settled down after the disarmament campaign of 1925; however, from 1928 onwards, the bandit activity increased once more. In the period from January to August 1929 alone, the OGPU reported thirty-five assaults in Chechnia and sixty-four in Ingushetia: D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, pp. 498–9.
48. Ibid., pp. 499–500.
49. Ibid., p. 253. Rumours about the imminent fall of the Soviet Union, the coming of war or (after the start of collectivisation) the end of time, were especially prevalent in the countryside during times of fear and insecurity. Soviet representatives often saw foreign agents, 'kulaks', priests and other 'counterrevolutionaries', but also marginal figures such as wandering pilgrims, beggars or women, as bearers of rumours. It is not clear, however, whether these were indeed the actual transmitters of rumours, or if the security police simply labelled them so: Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, p. 61.

50. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, pp. 499–500.
51. In Chechnia, the disarmament campaign concentrated mainly on three districts—Itum-Kalinskii, Nozhai-Iurtovskii and Galanchozhskii—with which the military commanders were already familiar from earlier operations, namely against the famous leader of the 1920/1 rebellion, Imam Gotsinskii: ibid., pp. 500–1.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., pp. 549–50, 560–2.
54. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 585.
55. The (undated) army report is published in: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 135–6. According to the secret police, 220 people were arrested in Shali alone, and 144 in Goity: D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 585.
56. RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 99, ll. 25–6.
57. On 10 December 1929, i.e. while the fighting was still fully underway, the Chechen party leadership decided that Chechnia should be completely collectivised within just one and a half years. On 18 December 1929, the Chechen party committee approved the total collectivisation of the Gudermesskii and Shalinskii districts, which was to be completed by the spring of 1930: M.B. El'zhurkaev, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v Checheno-Ingushetii: Uroki istorii (1927–1937 gg.)*, Makhachkala: Dag. gos. univ., 2000, pp. 73, 76.
58. RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 99, ll. 26, 28.
59. El'zhurkaev, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva*, pp. 99, 122.
60. The sentence underlined has been struck out by hand, and it is not found in later versions of Andreev's speech: RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 99, l. 27.
61. El'zhurkaev, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva*, pp. 73–7.
62. Ibid., pp. 77, 85–6.
63. A. Berelovich and V. Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD: 1918–1939; Dokumenty i materialy v 4 tomakh*, vol. 3, book 1, 1930–1, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003, pp. 144–7.
64. According to Avtorkhanov, the murder of Chernoglaz took place in the autumn of 1930 near the village of Galashkii, which is in another part of Ingushetia: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 165.
65. Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, vol. 3, book 1, p. 146; V. Danilov et al. (eds), *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni: Kollektivitsatsiia i raskulachivanie; Dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh; 1927–1939*, vol. 2, November 1929–December 1930, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000, p. 192.
66. Ibid., pp. 235–9.
67. Report by Comrade Rud' to Evdokimov on the aggravation of the political situation in Chechnia, written on 26 February 1930; the report was forwarded to Stalin and Voroshilov: N.E. Bystrova et al. (eds), *'Sovershenno sekretno': Lubianka-Stalinu o polozhenii v strane (1922–1934 gg.)*, vol. 8, part 2, 1930, Moscow: Nauka, 2008, pp. 1249–50.
68. Ibid., pp. 1249–50.
69. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, p. 586.
70. RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 26–7, here l. 26.
71. RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 97, l. 27.

72. A. Romano, 'Permanent War Scare: Mobilisation, Militarisation and Peasant War', in Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano (eds), *Russia in the Age of Wars 1914–1945*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000, pp. 103–19.
73. I. Stalin, 'Golovokruzhenie ot uspekhov (K voprosam kolkhoznogo dvizheniia)', *Pravda*, no. 60, 2 March 1930, p. 1.
74. Jörg Baberowski, 'Stalinismus "von oben": Kulakendeportationen in der Sowjetunion 1929–1933', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 46, no. 4 (1998), pp. 572–95, here p. 586.
75. Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, pp. 251–6. In the cotton-growing areas of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, however, total collectivisation was still the declared goal: Baberowski, 'Stalinismus "von oben"', p. 586.
76. Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, p. 260.
77. Ibid.
78. This is clear from the (undated) army report on the second military operation in Chechnia, which was conducted in March 1930: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 144–5, here p. 145.
79. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, pp. 1249–50.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. GARF, r-1235, op. 109, d. 114, l. 524.
83. Published in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1222.
84. 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', p. 144.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., p. 145.
87. The report 'On the Political Situation in the North Caucasus' was written by Evdokimov for the deputy leader of the OGPU in Moscow, Genrikh G. Iagoda (1891–1938). Iagoda forwarded the report to Stalin on the same day. Evdokimov's report is included in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, pp. 1347–9.
88. Stephen G. Wheatcroft, 'Agency and Terror: Evdokimov and Mass Killing in Stalin's Great Terror', *Australian Journal of Political History*, vol. 53, no. 1 (2007), pp. 20–43, here p. 31; Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1349.
89. Ibid., p. 1348.
90. Ibid.
91. RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 83, ll. 100, 102; RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, f. 102, l. 27.
92. OGPU report on the political situation in the USSR in December 1929, in: D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, pp. 587–8.
93. According to an OGPU report dated 23 June 1930, some 6,000 *puds* of corn were supplied to the Galanchozhskii district: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, pp. 977–81, here p. 978.
94. D'iakov et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 7, pp. 587–8.
95. Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, pp. 430–2.
96. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1349; 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', p. 145.
97. Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1349.

98. Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, vol. 3, book 1, p. 270.
99. Belov's report is published in: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 137–43, here p. 142. A short biography of Ivan P. Belov can be found in: ibid., pp. 172–3.
100. Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, pp. 430–2.
101. Published in: Bystrova et al., *'Sovershenno sekretno'*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1222.
102. Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, vol. 3, book 1, p. 271.
103. It is equally unlikely that the Chechens almost entirely wiped out a 150-strong unit of the secret police during the revolt of December 1929, as Avtorkhanov claims: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 159.
104. Koziskii's report is dated 9 April 1930, and published in: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 145–58, here p. 155. A short profile of Kozitskii is found in: ibid., p. 174.
105. A. Berelovich and V. Danilov (eds), *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD: 1918–1939; Dokumenty i materialy v 4 tomakh*, vol. 3, book 2, 1932–4, Moscow: Nauka, 2005, p. 708.
106. Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 160.
107. 'Memorial', f. 2, op. 2, d. 91, ll. 13–14, 27. Torbin wrote his memoirs (309 pages in total) between 8 January and 5 June 1964. He was living in the Soviet Union at the time.
108. Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, p. 239. In connection with the murder of Chernoglaz, Avtorkhanov reports that bandits left him 'headless': Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 165.
109. 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', p. 140.
110. Other sources report that the revolt was organised by Shita's brother, Khusein Istamulov: Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, vol. 3, book 2, p. 77.
111. The report is dated 31 March 1932 and is published in: 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', pp. 161–6, here p. 164.
112. Ibid., p. 137.
113. Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 157.
114. 'Chechnia: Vooruzhennaia bor'ba v 20–30-e gody', p. 165.
115. This is also criticised by Belov in his report of April 1930: ibid., p. 139.
116. Ibid., pp. 141, 164.
117. Ibid., p. 158.
118. Chechnia's first democratically elected president, Dzhokhar M. Dudaev, stated in a publication regarding the outbreak of rebellions during collectivisation that this was only a 'resumption of war against the Bolsheviks': Dzhokhar M. Dudaev, 'Kontseptsiia natsional'no-gosudarstvennoi politiki Chechenskoi Respubliki Ichkeriia' [published ca. 1995], p. 2, http://zhaina.com/history/258-koncepcija-nacionalno-gosudarstvennojj-politiki.html, last accessed 5 June 2017.
119. Cf. Gakaev, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Chechni*, p. 91; Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 40–84.

120. Avtorkhanov compares the resistance during the collectivisation period with the wars of liberation under Mansur, Ghazi Muhammad or Shamil: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 159.
121. Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, p. 20.
122. El'zhurkaev, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva*, pp. 160–2.
123. This enumeration omits the Balkars and makes no mention of Dagestan: V. Danilov et al. (eds), *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni: Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie; Dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh; 1927–1939*, vol. 3, end of 1930–1933, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, p. 125.
124. The original plan to resettle 20,000 'kulak' families was revised shortly after and reduced to 10,000 families. The operation began on 11 February and had been completed by 15 April 1930. However, it must have mainly involved peasants from the Cossack and Russian settlement areas in the North Caucasus, where collectivisation was carried out without any significant mitigation and where the alleged 'kulaks' as well as their families were deported in their thousands. On 6 May 1930, the secret police issued a summary report stating that they had deported 10,595 families from the North Caucasus to the Urals, totalling 51,577 men, women and children. These did not include 'kulaks' from Dagestan, who were to be deported at a later date, according to the report. There is no reference in this or later documents to members of indigenous ethnic groups form the other national regions of the North Caucasus: Danilov et al., *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, vol. 2, pp. 409–30, especially pp. 412–13.
125. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 245, ll. 64–5.
126. El'zhurkaev, *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva*, p. 160.
127. See the shorthand report of Gorchkhanov's speech during the session of the Presidium of the Soviet of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR on 5 June 1936: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 627–9, here p. 627.
128. F. Bykov, 'Dvatsat' let checheno-ingushkoi ASSR', *Pravda*, no. 34, 4 February 1939, p. 4

8. AT THE FRINGES OF THE STALINIST MOBILISING SOCIETY

1. In the original article, the name is spelt 'Magomet'.
2. 'Obuzdat' zarvashuiusia popovshchinu!', *Bezbozhnik*, no. 11, 11 April 1939, p. 3.
3. Letter of the *prokuratura* of the USSR to E.M. Iaroslavskii, main editor of *Bezbozhnik*, 29 May 1939: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 96.
4. Report of V. Pomerantsev to the editor of *Bezbozhnik*, undated, before 21 July 1939: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 91.
5. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 92.
6. In his report, Pomerantsev calls the bride 'Rakhat Dushaeva'.
7. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 93–4.
8. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 91.
9. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 91–2.
10. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 92.
11. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 117.

12. Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless*, Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 73.
13. This report, compiled in the form of a letter sometime before 21 July 1939, can be found in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 82–9. The subsequent quote is taken from: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, 26, l. 82.
14. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 82.
15. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 88.
16. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 86.
17. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 82–9.
18. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 88.
19. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 88.
20. We know from previous works on the Russian village that the Soviet state, despite its drive to achieve total control by mass terror, never managed to reach the people outside of major cities and industrial centres: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times; Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
21. Jörg Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde: Stalins Herrschaft der Gewalt*, Munich: Beck, 2012, p. 18.
22. It's not clear, however, whether Pomerantsev, when mentioning the *teip*, had a precise notion of it. He defined the *teip* in very general terms as 'clan' (*rod*): RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 82.
23. Cf. the life story of Khasan Israilov in Chapter 9 of this book.
24. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 82.
25. These reports usually refer to the *teip* in negative terms. See, for example, the report of the first party secretary of the Chechen–Ingush *obkom*, Vassilii Grigor'evich Egorov (1899–1950), addressed to Stalin, Andreev und Malenkov, on the alleged 'counterrevolutionary centre' in the republic, dated 29 July 1937; in this report, Egorov writes about the 'infection' of the party organisation through the *teip*. Egorov's report is published in: Gatagova et al., *TsK VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, pp. 272–5, here p. 273.
26. Molotov cited in: F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika F. Chueva*, Moscow: 'Terra', 1991, pp. 392–3.
27. Jörg Baberowski, *Der rote Terror*, Munich: Fischer, 2003, pp. 139–40.
28. V.N. Khaustov et al. (eds), *Lubianka: Stalin i Glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD; Arkhiv Stalina; Dokumenty vyshikh organov partiinoi i gosudarstvennoi vlasti, 1937–1938*, Moscow: 'Materik', 2004, p. 6. Also: Nicolas Werth, 'The Mechanism of Mass Crime: The Great Terror in the Soviet Union 1937–1938', in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2003, pp. 215–39.
29. Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, p. 22.
30. The document is published in: Khaustov et al., *Lubianka*, pp. 273–81.
31. A. Berelovich and V. Danilov (eds), *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD: 1918–1939; Dokumenty i materialy v 4 tomakh*, vol. 4: 1935–9, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2012, pp. 575–80, 577. For a list of people repressed during 1937–8 in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, see: 'Stalinskie rasstrel'nye spiski', http://stalin.memo.ru/regions/regi69.htm, last accessed 14 April 2013. Also on figures: Marshall,

Caucasus under Soviet Rule, pp. 236–7. Non-credible is Avtorkhanov's claim that in only one night (from 31 July to 1 August 1937) 14,000 people (3 per cent of the total population of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR) were arrested: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', pp. 174–5. Avtorkhanov's claimes have been adopted largely uncritically by many Western historians, for example: Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 55; Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010, p. 99. In general, this section of Chechen–Ingush history is still under-researched and not well documented. The situation, in this respect, is slightly better with regard to the Stalinist repressions in Dagestan: G.I. Kakagasanov et al. (eds), *Repressii 30-kh godov v Dagestane: Dokumenty i materialy*, Makhachkala: 'Iupiter', 1997, especially pp. 133–409.

32. The same development can be seen in other parts of the Soviet Union, for example Azerbaijan: Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 828.
33. See, for instance, the statement by Kh.G. Vakhaev, second secretary of the Chechen–Ingush *obkom*, complaining about the actions against national party cadres during the purges (Vakhaev was removed from his post on 29 September 1937): Gatagova et al., *TsK VKP (b) i natsional'nyi vopros*, p. 274. Chechen historian Dzhabrail Gakaev refers to the purges of 1937/8 as a purposeful policy of genocide against the Chechen–Ingush people: Gakaev, *Ocherki*, p. 96.
34. Bykov's report for the attention of Stalin, Andreev and Ezhov of 13 July 1938 is contained in: RGANI, f. 89, op. 73, d. 147, ll. 1–8, here l. 1.
35. RGANI, f. 89, op. 73, d. 147, l. 3.
36. RGANI, f. 89, op. 73, d. 147, l. 8.
37. According to a report by First Chechen–Ingush Party Secretary Viktor Ivanov dated 7 November 1940 and addressed to the CC of the VKP (b), for the attention of G.M. Malenkov, over the course of 1937–40, more than 100 of such gangs with a total number of 1,500 members had been liquitated: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 203, ll. 113–34, here l. 124.
38. Ibid.
39. According to the report on the 'Struggle against Banditry, Desertion and Refusal of Duty in the Red Army' compiled by A.M. Leont'ev, head of the Department for the Struggle against Banditry of the NKVD of the USSR, and dated 30 August 1944, there were still seven 'professional' and fourteen newly created gangs (totalling some ninty-six people) operating on the territory of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR when war broke out. With the exception of Dagestan, where Leont'ev reported eight gangs with a total of twenty-three members, no such formation existed in the other national territories of the North Caucasus. The report is published in: N.I. Vladimirtsev and A.I. Kokurin (eds), *NKVD-MDV SSSR v bor'be s banditizmom i vooruzhenym natsionalistichekim podpol'em na Zapadnoi Ukraine, v Zapadnoi Belorussii i Pribaltike (1939–1956)*, Moscow: Ob"edinennaia redaktsiia MVD Rossii, 2008, pp. 499–582, here p. 502.
40. Ivanov report, 7 November 1940, in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 203, ll. 124–5.
41. Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall*, p. 828.
42. Baberowski, *Der rote Terror*, pp. 139–40; Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, pp. 348–9;

Bugai and Gonov, *Kavkaz: Narody v eshelonakh*, pp. 81–117; Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*, Budapest: CEU Press, 2004, pp. 115–23; Nikolai Bougai, *The Deportations of Peoples in the Soviet Union*, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1996, pp. 39–48.

43. Jeffrey Burds, 'The Soviet War against "Fifth Columnists": The Case of Chechnya, 1942–4', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2007), pp. 267–314, here pp. 267–74.
44. For Soviet oil policy and production in the early Soviet era, cf. Igolkin, *Neftianaia politika*.
45. A.Iu. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza i Krasnaia Armiia, 1918–1945 gody*, Moscow: Veche, 2007, p. 140.
46. However, following up on their investigation, *Bezbozhnik* continued to report critically on the situation in the mountain districts of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, not only in the newspaper version but also in the *Bezbozhnik* magazine of August 1939: 'Zakony gor (putevye zametki)', *Bezbozhnik*, no. 8, August 1939, pp. 11–12. *Bezbozhnik*'s publication did, however, prompt the *prokuratura* of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR to revisit the case in the village of Valerik: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 95.
47. 'Piatiletie Checheno-Ingushetii', *Izvestiia*, no. 12, 15 January 1939, p. 4.
48. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 81. Pomerantsev sent two reports to the editor of *Bezbozhnik*, one on the specific case of Valerik (contained in RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 90–5), the other on the general situation in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR (contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 82–9). It is unclear whether Iaroslavskii sent Andreev both of these reports, or only the more general report on Checheno-Ingushetia.
49. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 116, d. 11, l. 39.
50. Cf. Lorenz Erren, *Selbstkritik und Schuldbekenntnis: Kommunikation und Herrschaft unter Stalin (1917–1953)*, Munich: Oldenburg, 2008, especially pp. 93–133.
51. The decision of 22 November 1939 (without appendix) can be found in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 92–4.
52. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 93; wording of the constitutional article: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 119, d. 1253, l. 105. It is unclear whether the article was indeed adopted into the constitution of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, and if so, whether this reflects the exact final wording.
53. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1022, l. 131; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, l. 86.
54. His report (undated, but before 22 November 1939) is contained in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 107–17.
55. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 109.
56. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 108.
57. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 116.
58. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, l. 117.
59. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 26, ll. 107–8.
60. This refers to the report 'On the Work of the Chechen–Ingush *obkom* of the VKP (b)', which was compiled at some point before 19 April 1940 for the secretary of the CC of the VKP (b), G.M. Malenkov. It was the basis for the later decision by the

Politburo of 26 April 1940. The authors of the report were staff members of the Organisation and Instructors' Department and the Department for Cadre Administration within the CC of the VKP (b), M.A. Shamberg and A.A. Savchenko. The report can be found in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, ll. 75–94.

61. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, ll. 87–9.
62. According to accounts provided in the instructors' report by Shamberg and Savchenko before 19 April 1940, the republic's oil industry had an output of 8,064.5 thousand tons of petroleum and natural gas as recently as 1932. This figure, however, had declined to 5,160.9 thousand tons by 1933 and to 2,288.9 thousand tons by 1939. Thus, the plan target had only been fulfilled to 76 per cent. While Grozneft' had accounted for 36.2 per cent of total Soviet oil production in 1932, that figure declined to 22 per cent by 1937: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, l. 76. See also: Igolkin, *Neftianaia politika*, p. 137.
63. The decision is included in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, ll. 131–3.
64. On 7 March 1937, the Politburo confirmed a decision to this effect by the CC of the Communist Party: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 87, ll. 131–3.
65. While the Grozneft' installations, according to Ivanov, still had an output of 5,978 tons of oil per day on average in June 1940, production in October that year already stood at 6,820 tons. Oil refining had also improved; the oil-refining industry at Groznyi accounted for one-third of all refined products in the Soviet Union: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 22, d. 3725, l. 2.
66. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, l. 38.
67. In the case of Checheno-Ingushetia, the Politburo accommodated the *kolkhoz* farms more than in other parts of the country when allowing individual farmers to hold one horse or two bulls as private property: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 1141, ll. 107–10, here l. 110.
68. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, l. 38.
69. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, ll. 49–50.
70. Ivanov report, 7 November 1940, in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 203, ll. 113–34, the collectivisation plan is discussed at ll. 130–4.
71. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza i Krasnaia Armiia*, p. 140.
72. Ibid., pp. 135–6, 140.
73. The decision of the Soviet leadership in early 1938 to introduce Russian as a compulsory subject at all schools in the Soviet Union was driven mainly by the necessity to enable smooth communication in the Red Army. This is evident, for example, from the corresponding (draft) decision of the CC of the VKP (b), compiled by Andrei Zhdanov for the attention of Molotov (undated, but before 1 April 1938): RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 920, ll. 1–7. Also on this: Frings, *Sowjetische Schriftpolitik*, pp. 342–8.
74. Thus, Kliment Voroshilov in his role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces in the North Caucasus Military District wrote to Stalin, Trotskii and Antonov-Avsenko as early as November 1923 requesting the party leadership establish training courses in Rostov-on-Don for mountain peoples with a view to the formation of national army units: RGASPI, f. 74, op. 2, d. 81, ll. 134–41. However, while such a school was indeed established, comparatively few members of the mountain peoples were

subsequently drafted for military service on a voluntary basis and on the understanding that such troops would mainly serve outside their national territories. Most of these troops were Ossetians (mainly from the southern part of Ossetia). Following the large-scale rebellions during collectivisation in 1929/30, conscription of members of North Caucasus mountain peoples was once again strongly reduced; plans for forming a national cavalry division consisting of highlanders were abandoned: Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza i Krasnaia Armiia*, pp. 134–9.

75. Ibid., p. 140.
76. If one is to believe the remarks by Chechen party representative Sup'ian K. Mollaev (1900–73), the lack of participation among young Chechens and Ingush was not due to a lack of will but the fact that those responsible did too little to make greater participation possible. Mollaev's speech at the Chechen–Ingush Party Congress, 29 May 1937, in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 5728, ll. 176–9.
77. Missive from Kuznetsov, deputy head of the Main Department for Political Propaganda in the Red Army, to the CC of the VKP (b), Andreev and Malenkov, on 7 October 1940, 'On the Outcomes of the Investigation of Facts concerning the Widespread Avoidance of Service in the Red Army in the Chechen–Ingush ASSR': RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, ll. 31–9.
78. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, f. 2, ll. 31–2.
79. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, ll. 32–7.
80. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, l. 33.
81. Ivanov report, 7 November 1940, in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 117, d. 203, l. 128.
82. Cf. the missive by M.A. Shamberg, deputy director of the Organisation and Instruction Department in the CC of the VKP (b), to Andreev, Zhdanov and Malenkov, 31 October 1940, which lays out the results of the enquiry investigating 'Widespread Avoidance of Service in the Red Army': RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, ll. 40–2. Shamberg's note is based on the comprehensive report by L.M. Akhmatov of 30 October 1940: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, ll. 44–54.
83. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 2, l. 41.
84. Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 269.
85. On 15 January 1943, the statistical office of the army counted sixty awards and medals given to Chechens and twelve given to Ingush soldiers. However, this figure is rather modest when compared with the total of 264,198 decorations and medals awarded to members of the Red Army for their fight against the German aggressors by mid-January 1943. By that date, of these decorations, 238,732 (90 per cent) had been awarded to Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The list of non-Slavic recipients was headed by Jews (6,767), followed by Tatars (4,384), Kazakhs (1,620), Mordovians (1,742), Chuvash (1,362), Georgians (1,322) and Armenians (1,306). Of the North Caucasus mountain peoples, the Ossetians (471) and Kabardians (112) received the most decorations. The figures can be found in: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 127, ll. 144–5. By the end of the war, the total number of awards and medals would grow to over one million. The corresponding figures can be found in: GARF r-7523, op. 17, d. 353, ll. 11–12.
86. Accounts of these deportations were published in the West during Soviet times (e.g.

Aleksandr Nekrich), yet the first account based on evidence from the Soviet archives was published in 1990 by Russian historian Nikolai F. Bugai: N.F. Bugai, 'Pravda o deportatsii chechenskogo i ingushskogo narodov', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7 (1990), pp. 32–44.

87. The Chechen point of view is represented by: Gakaev, 'Chechentsy v boiakh protiv nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov', pp. 235–42.
88. The most prominent exponent of this pro-Stalinist view is Russian author Igor' Pykhalov, whose book on Stalin's deportations has caused a great deal of comment—as well as consternation among Chechen historians: Pykhalov, *Za chto Stalin vyselial narody?*, especially pp. 144–318.
89. Stalin's radio message to the Soviet people of 3 July 1941 can be found in: I.V. Stalin, *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuza*, 5th edn, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1952, pp. 9–17, 15.
90. Aleksei Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg.*, Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2005, p. 65.
91. Albert Jeloschek et al., *Freiwillige vom Kaukasus: Georgier, Armenier, Aserbaidschaner, Tschetschenen u.a. auf deutscher Seite; Der 'Sonderverband Bergmann' und sein Gründer Theo Oberländer*, Graz: Stocker, 2003. For Russian studies on this subject, cf. E. Abramian, *Kavkaztsy v Abvere*, Moscow: Izdatel' Bystrov, 2006; S.I. Linets, *Severnyi Kavkaz nakanune i v period nemetsko-fashistskoi okkupatsii: Sostoianie i osobennosti razvitiia (iiul' 1942-oktiabr' 1943 gg.)*, Rostov-on-Don: Izdatel'stvo SKNTs VSh, 2003, especially pp. 328–53.
92. Prisoner's statement (anonymous defector), 6 October 1942, contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 78.
93. Cited from the statement of chauffeur Aleksej Efimowitsch Tassawoj (Aleksei Efimovich Tassavoi), who deserted his unit when stationed in the Caucasus; document contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 47.
94. See various defectors' reports contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108.
95. Reports to this effect are also found in German accounts that include statements by deserters and prisoners. See, for example, the following statement by a prisoner reported on 6 October 1942: 'To each [battalion] a blocking company is assigned whose task is to shoot on sight any soldiers caught trying to defect. Nevertheless, a propensity to defect is present'. Cited from: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 78.
96. HPSSS, schedule A, vol. 22, case 434, pp. 7–9.
97. The decree on deporting the Volga Germans of 28 August 1941 is published in: *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 1 (1991), pp. 144–5. Cf. also: Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937–1949*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999, pp. 27–60.
98. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 63.
99. After all, by 15 January 1943, 301 Poles, 103 Finns, fifty-five Bulgarians, twenty-six Germans and other members of 'enemy nations' were decorated and awarded medals: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 127, ll. 144–5. In the statistics compiled after the end of the war, the members of enemy nations, including the ostracised North Caucasian peoples, were no longer mentioned in the respective medal statistics: GARF r-7523, op. 17, d. 353, ll. 11–12.
100. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 62.

101. Ibid., p. 67.
102. This is evident from the information sheet dated 27 August 1956 and compiled by the head of the Interior Ministry department for the Groznyi region, G.M. Dement'ev, on the economic and political situation of the former Chechen–Ingush ASSR for the period 1937–44. His report is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 656–67, here p. 666. For the numbers of deserters and people denying service, see the report by Leont'ev of 30 August 1944: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, pp. 499–582. Chechen historian Musa Ibragimov presents much lower figures: M.M. Ibragimov, *Chechentsy: Vyselenie, vyzhivanie, vozrashchenie (1940–1950-e gody)*, Groznyi: Izd. 'Groznenskii rabochii', 2015, p. 77.
103. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 60–1.
104. Statement of deserter Sergej Samolow (Sergei Samolov), recorded on 22 June 1942, in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 121.
105. Ibid.
106. Joachim Hoffmann, *Kaukasien 1942/43: Das deutsche Heer und die Orientvölker der Sowjetunion*, Freiburg: Rombach, 1991, p. 59.
107. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 61.
108. Ibid.
109. For the advance of the German forces into the North Caucasus in the summer of 1942: Linets, *Severnyi Kavkaz nakanune i v period nemetsko-fashistskoi okkupatsii*, pp. 27–50.
110. For an overview of the course of the war, see: Hoffmann, *Kaukasien 1942/43*, pp. 59–81.
111. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 61–2.
112. The numbers are contained in: Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu*, pp. 230–1.
113. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 81.
114. Ibid., p. 86.
115. Ibid., pp. 82–6.
116. Ibid., p. 88.
117. Cf. Kh.A. Gakaev, 'Chechentsy v boiakh protiv nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov', in Iu.A. Aidaev (ed.), *Chechentsy: Istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow: Mir domu, 1996, pp. 235–42, here p. 235.
118. Ibragimov, *Chechentsy*, p. 77.
119. N.F. Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu: 'Posle Vashikh ukazanii provedeno sleduiushchee ...'*, Moscow: Grif i K, 2011, pp. 230–1.
120. G.F. Krivosheev (ed.), *Rossiia i SSSR v voinakh XX veka: poteri vooruzhennykh sil: Statisticheskoe issledovanie*, Moscow: 'Olma-Press', 2001, p. 238 (table 121).
121. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 88; Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, p. 265.
122. If the NKVD counted some sixty-four 'bandits' on Dagestani territory by 1 January 1942, the figure had risen to 1,500 by August of that same year: Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, p. 518.
123. Ibid., p. 421.
124. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 71–2.
125. See Chapter 9 for a discussion of numbers.

126. From Dement'ev's report on 27 August 1956: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 665.
127. Cf. Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, p. 506.
128. P.M. Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa": Nemtsy na Kavkaze i deportatsiia vainakhov v marte 1944 g.', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 639–49, here p. 643; N. Nukhazhiev and Ch. Umkhaev, *Deportatsiia narodov: Nostal'giia po totalitarizmu*, Groznyi: Biblioteka Upolnomochnogo po pravam cheloveka v Chechenskoi Respubliki, 2009, p. 75; T.M. Balikoev, *Natsional'naia politika sovetskogo gosudarstva na Severnom Kavkaze v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg.*, Vladikavkaz: Severo-Osetinski gos. univ. im. K.L. Khetagurova, 2003, pp. 178–9.
129. The NKVD document, dated 26 July 1943, is published in: *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 3 (2000), pp. 71–7.
130. In his report of 27 August 1956, Dement'ev refers to eight groups, altogether numbering seventy-seven men: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 666. Other Soviet sources refer to eighty-four people: V.P. Galitskii, '"... dlia aktivnoi podryvnoi diversionnoi deiatel'nosti v tylu u Krasnoi Armii": O natsionalisticheskikh vystupleniiakh v Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR v gody voiny i roli v ikh organizatsii fashistskikh spetssluzhb', *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (2001), pp. 17–25, here p. 24.
131. The leaders of the respective groups were: First Lieutenant (*Oberleutnant*) Reinhard Lange, Corporal (*Unteroffizier*) Rekkert, Colonel (*Oberst*) Osman Gube (an ethnic Avar), the Ossetian Dzugaev, the Ossetian Zosiev, the Ingush Khaminev, the Ingush Khautiev, and the Chechen Selimov. Cf. Galitskii, '"... dlia aktivnoi'", p. 24.
132. The three corresponding reports on 'Special Operation "Shamil"' (*Einsatzberichte Sonderunternehmen 'Schamil'*), written between January and May 1943, are contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143.
133. Report by Reinhard Lange, 5 January 1943, contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blätter 1/1–1/36, here Blatt 1/32. See also Chapter 9 on this subject.
134. The Party Control Commission (Komitet partiinogo kontrol'ia pri TsK VKP (b)) existed under this designation between 1934 and 1952. Its members were de facto appointed by the Secretariat of the CC of the CPSU (led by Stalin). From 1939 to 1952, the chairman of the commission was Andrei A. Andreev, who was simultaneously a member of the Politburo.
135. RGANI, f. 6, op. 6, d. 62, ll. 75–6.
136. RGANI, f. 6, op. 6, d. 64, l. 53; 96; RGANI, f. 6, op. 6, d. 65, l. 7ob; Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakkh SSSR*, p. 166.
137. Ibid., p. 87.
138. Cf., e.g., Pykhalov, *Za chto Stalin vyselial narody?*, pp. 144–318; Sergei Chuev, 'Severnyi Kavkaz 1941–1945: Voina v tylu; Bor'ba s bandformirovaniiami', *Obozrevatel'-Observer*, no. 2 (2002), pp. 104–11.
139. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 69.
140. HPSSS, schedule A, vol. 22, case 434, p. 8.
141. Witness the transcript (dated 14 October 1942) of the prisoner interrogation of

Second Lieutenant Schtscherbakow (Shcherbakov), who defected to the Germans in October 1942: 'After our [i.e. the Soviet] troops had retreated, 200 Chechens are supposed to have been shot in a Chechen village north of the Terek because they refused to let themselves be evacuated and treated the Germans in a friendly manner.' Cited in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 42.

142. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, p. 71.
143. Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, pp. 517–18.
144. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 104, ll. 200–3.
145. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 104, ll. 201ob–202.
146. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 104, l. 202.
147. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 186–7.
148. Ibid., p. 89.
149. For numbers provided by the NKVD: Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, pp. 540ff.
150. Citations from Stalin's speech on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of the October Revolution on 6 November 1943: Stalin, *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuza*, pp. 109–26, 118.
151. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza i Krasnaia Armiia*, pp. 150–1, 169.
152. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 79–80; Bugai, *Kavkaz*, p. 141.
153. The statement in the NKVD report of March 1944 to the effect that only 1,361 persons (or 0.27 per cent of the deported Chechens and Ingush) died in the 180 trains appears to be a too low estimate: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 710–11. For the numbers that perished during the first years of exile, see Chapter 10 of this book.
154. Bugai and Gonov, *Kavkaz*, p. 125.
155. Bezugol'nyi, *Narody Kavkaza v Vooruzhennykh silakh SSSR*, pp. 76–7.
156. Bugai, *Pravda*, p. 38.
157. Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa"', p. 644.
158. Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu*, p. 228.
159. *Rodina*, no. 6 (1990), p. 32.
160. Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa"', p. 644.
161. Letter from Beriia to Stalin, 7 March 1944: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', *Shpion: Al' manakh pisatel' skogo i zhurnalistskogo rassledovaniia*, no. 2 (1993), pp. 53–73, here p. 72.
162. Letter from Beriia to Stalin, 17 February 1944: ibid., p. 68.
163. Letter from Beriia to Stalin, 22 February 1944, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 668–70, here p. 669.
164. Letter from Beriia to Stalin, 29 February 1944, in: ibid., pp. 671–2, here p. 671.
165. Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa"', p. 646. The Khaibakh tragedy has a central place in the Chechen collective memory and has been described in various memoirs and personal accounts, e.g. Khassan Baiev, *The Oath: A Surgeon under Fire*, New York: Walker & Company, 2003, p. 37; Said-Emin Bitsoev, 'Khaibakh–aul, kotorogo net', in Aidaev, *Chechentsy*, pp. 275–7. See also for other accounts on the deportation:

S.U. Alieva (ed.), *Tak eto bylo: Natsional'nye repressii v SSSR 1919–1952 gody: V 3-tomakh*, Moscow: INSAN, 1993 (vol. 2 deals with the fate of the North Caucasians).

166. Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 671–2; Bugai, *Kavkaz*, p. 147. It is doubtful that the NKVD was able to state precisely how many people had been deported and how many remained to be deported; Beriia's main intent was to signal to Moscow that the NKVD was in complete control of the situation.
167. Beriia cited in: Bugai and Gonov, *Kavkaz*, pp. 165–6.
168. Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, pp. 450–1.
169. Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu*, p. 237.
170. Tsutsiev, *Atlas*, p. 78.
171. In volume 47 of the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, published between 1949 and 1958, which contains names referring to the letter 'Ch' (Ч), there is only a note that more detailed information on the Chechen–Ingush ASSR would follow in volume 51. This means that when volume 47 went to press (on 10 April 1957), no such entry was planned. Against the background of these peoples' rehabilitation under Khrushchev, this short entry in volume 47 was obviously added at the last moment: *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 47, 2nd edn, Moscow: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia, 1957, p. 342. Volume 51, which went to press on 28 April 1958 as a supplementary volume (that is, after the official restoration of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR), contains a detailed entry on the republic and the Chechens: *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia*, vol. 51, 2nd edn, Moscow: Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopedia, 1958, pp. 306–16.
172. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, pp. 229–30.
173. Brian Glyn Williams, 'Commemorating "The Deportation" in Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994–1996 and 1999–2000 Russo-Chechen Wars', *History and Memory*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2000), pp. 101–34, here p. 116.
174. GARF, f. r-9479, op. 1, d. 925, l. 20.

9. CONFORMITY AND REBELLION

1. V.I. Fil'kin, *Checheno-Ingushskaia partiinaia organizatsiia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny*, Groznyi: Checheno-ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1960, p. 42; V.I. Fil'kin, *Patriotizm trudiashikhsia Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR v period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny*, 2nd edn, Groznyi: Checheno-ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1989, p. 32.
2. A.A. Grechko, *Bitva za Kavkaz*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1973, especially pp. 83–215.
3. Bugai, *Pravda*, p. 37.
4. Cf. Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, pp. 159–65; Burds, 'Soviet War against "Fifth Columnists"', especially pp. 292–6; Alexander Statiev, 'The Nature of Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance, 1942–44: The North Caucasus, the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic, and Crimea', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2005), pp. 285–318, especially pp. 292–303.
5. Dudaev, 'Kontseptsiia', p. 2.
6. Information on 'Israilov Khasan Israilovich' was made available to the author of this

book by the Central Archive of the Federal Security Services of the Russian Federation (Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Federal'noi sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii; TsA FSB) with an official letter dated 5 June 2009: TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A–2399, ll. 1–2.

7. 'Nashe vse: Israilov Khasan', *Ekho Moskvy*, 18 November 2007, radio transmission on Khasan Israilov under the direction of Evgenii Kiselev with Sergei Arutiunov and Musa Muradov; transcript available at: http://echo.msk.ru/programs/all/56324.phtml, last accessed 5 June 2017.
8. Cf. the website of the Chechen opposition abroad: http://www.waynakh.com/eng/famous-chechens, last accessed 5 June 2017. This does not mean that some Chechen websites would not treat Khasan Israilov favourably, for example: http://nohchalla.com/lichnosti/hasan-israilov.html, last accessed 28 January 2013. Also, Lema Gudaev's internet-portal Checheninfo has Khasan Israilov on the list of famous Chechen personalities: 'Israilov Khasan', Infoportal 'Chechenskaia entsiklopediia', Seriia 'ZhZl', 6 October 2013, http://checheninfo.ru/18661-zhzl-israilov-hasan.html, last accessed 5 June 2017. Reading Chechen blog entries over the past years, one can discern a tendency to revive the memory of Israilov and to assign this 'forgotten hero' a worthy place in the long history of Chechen suffering. Cf. for example, 'Khasan Israilov (Terloev): Zabytyi geroi', http://www.vedeno.net/forum/index.php?showtopic=2030, last accessed 28 January 2013.
9. Several streets have been renamed after Mitaev, including in the city of Groznyi (ulitsa Sheikh Ali Mitaeva) and in Mitaev's home town Avtury (ulitsa Ali-Mitaeva).
10. The chapter on Khasukha Magomadov in Musa Geshaev's book (*Znamenitye chechentsy*) is also available in the form of several articles published by Prague Watchdog in the journal *Chechenskoe obshchestvo segodnia* in nos. 4 (2006), 5 (2006), 6 (2006), 7 (2006), 1 (2007). The reference to Israilov is to be found in: Musa Geshaev, 'Poslednii is Abrekov', *Chechenskoe obshchestvo segodnia*, no. 5 (2006), pp. 10–11, http://www.watchdog.cz/edit/uploaded/docs/ChOS_5_2006.pdf, last accessed 28 July 2017.
11. Cf. Gakaev, *Ocherki*, p. 98; Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', pp. 181–3.
12. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 575.
13. In his well-known essay published in 1992 ('Chechens and the Ingush'), Avtorkhanov claims that the uprising broke out in the winter of 1940: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', p. 181; in his memoirs, however, Avtorkhanov mentions January 1941 as the beginning of the uprising: Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 600.
14. According to Dzhabrail Gakaev, the uprising began in May 1940: Gakaev, *Ocherki*, p. 99. Cf. also: R. Karcha, 'Genocide in the Northern Caucasus', *Caucasian Review*, no. 2 (1956), pp. 74–84, here p. 78.
15. Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', p. 181.
16. In this connection, Muzaev also criticised Avtorkhanov, accusing him of having little knowledge of real events, being in jail at the time: M.N. Muzaev, 'O nachale i etapakh podgotovki vyselenia chechentsev i ingushei', in A.A. Mankiev (ed.), *Deportatsiia Chechenskogo naroda: Posledstviia i puti ego reabilitatsii; Materialy respublikanskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii, 18 fevralia 2006 goda, g. Groznyi*, Groznyi: Groznenskii rabochii, 2006, pp. 74–88, online in six parts at http://www.deport-chr.ru/index.php/2011-02-16-05-33-08/36-5, last accessed 28 January 2013.

17. The interview took place in Zurich on 3 December 2012.
18. This thesis is found in: Vakhid Akaev, 'Stalinsko-berievskaia deportatsiia chechentsev: Fakty, ideologemy, interpretatsii; Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man Chechenskoi Respubliki', n.d., http://www.islamtuday.com/статьи/вахид-акаев-2, last accessed 28 January 2013. Also in line with this: M.M. Ibragimov and I.Z. Khatuev, *Vklad chechenskogo naroda v pobedu nad fashizmom v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941–1945 gg.*, Groznyi: Groznenskii rabochii, 2005, http://www.chechen.org/history/218-vklad-chechenskogo-naroda-v-pobedu-nad-fashizmom.html, last accessed 28 January 2013.
19. This is evident, for example, from an NKVD report, dated 24 June 1943, and published in: GARF, r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, l. 370; the report is referred to in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', *Shpion: Al'manakh pisatel'skogo i zhurnalistskogo rassledovaniia*, no. 1 (1993), pp. 16–33, here p. 23 (note 2).
20. On the revival of the myth of the Great Patriotic War: Ivo Mijnssen, 'An Old Myth for a New Society', in Philipp Casula and Jeronim Perović (eds), *Identities and Politics during the Putin Presidency: The Foundations of Russia's Stability*, Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2009, pp. 270–91.
21. These books, which were published on the occasion of anniversaries commemorating the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, do not mention any anti-Soviet resistance of Chechens or other non-Russian nationalities during the war, but instead only highlight these peoples' large contributions in defeating the Germans. Cf. Kh.A. Akaev, 'Chechentsy i ingushi na frontakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', in G.I. Kakagasanov (ed.), *Narody Kavkaza v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941–1945 gg.: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 60-letiiu Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941–1945 gg.*, Makhachkala: IIAE DNTs RAN, 2005, pp. 92–112; N.F. Bugai, 'Repressirovannye grazhdane na zashchite Otechestva', in *Narod i voina: Ocherki istorii Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg.*, Moscow: Grif i K, 2010, pp. 272–94; V.Kh. Magomaev, 'Patriotizm narodov Severnogo Kavkaza v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010), pp. 132–41; Kh.A. Gakaev, '65-letie velikoi pobedy nad fashistskoi Germaniei', *Vestnik Akademii nauk Chechenskoi Respubliki*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2009), pp. 78–83.
22. Ibragimov, *Chechentsy*, pp. 72–114.
23. Cf. for conservative Russian views: Chuev, 'Severnyi Kavkaz'; Pykhalov, *Za chto Stalin vyselial narody?*, especially pp. 144–318.
24. Excerpts from Karanadze's report (contained in the original in: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9) are published under the title 'Iz dokladnykh materialov Narkoma vnutrennikh del Gruzinskoi SSR Gr. Karanadze na imia L. Beriia, 18 sentiabria 1943 g.', and contained in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', pp. 19–33, here pp. 19, 22; see also: 'Raznitsa vo vremeni: Operatsiia "Chechevitsa"', *Radio Svoboda*, 3 August 2003 (radio transmission under the direction of Vladimir Tolts with Pavel Polian; transcript available at http://www.svobodanews.ru/cont- ent/transcript/24204195.html, last accessed 3 August 2012). Other parts of Karanadze's report are available to the author in transcribed form. The report is no longer accessible in the Russian State Archive.

25. Cf. for the Russian view: Pykhalov, *Za chto Stalin vyselial narody?*; Chuev, 'Severnyi Kavkaz'. Cf. for the Chechen view: Adlan Beno, 'Khasan Israilov: "Primi prisiagu, i gotov' sebia dlia raia!"', *Chechenpress*, 2 February 2006 (republished on 15 April 2014), http://thechechenpress.com/history/6457-2014-04-15-19-02-33.html, last accessed 26 July 2017.
26. The author carried out the relevant research not only in Russian archives but also in the Georgian State Security Archive (now part of the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia). The reason why Israilov's diaries cannot be found in this archive may be due to the fact that some 80 per cent of the entire collection was destroyed during Georgia's civil war in 1990/1. See: 'The Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia', http://archive.security.gov.ge/history.html, last accessed 6 June 2017.
27. Copies of Israilov's notebooks in the form of transcriptions (which in Karanadze's report are referred to as 'The Diary of Khasan Terloev (Israilov)'), together with other documents, were originally stored at the State Archive of the Russian Federation in the 'Section of the NKVD of the USSR on the Fight with Banditry' (Otdel NKVD SSSR po bor'be s banditizmom; GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55). According to the author's on-site investigations, these files had been removed before 2009 and handed over to the FSB Archive; at least this is what was written on the note that was placed in the empty folder of the corresponding *delo* (d. 55). Responding to a written request by the author, the Central Archive of the FSB (with an official letter dated 6 March 2012, no. 10/A–1055) could not confirm the receipt of these files. The director of the State Archive of the Russian Federation, also responding to a written request by the author (letter to the author of 3 July 2012, no. 6776-V), claims that Israilov's diaries cannot be traced in the corresponding files of the State Archive either.
28. The author is in possession of transcribed excerpts of Karanadze's report (originally in: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9) as well as transcribed copies of three of his notebooks (referred to here as notebooks nos. 1, 2 and 4, originally contained in: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 55–78, 103–41). Because the transcribed texts do not correspond with the pagination in the original documents, I will, in the following, not cite any page numbers.
29. Avtorkhanov writes that Israilov was, for a time, an employee of the popular Soviet newspaper *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*, and that he wrote two volumes of poetry during his imprisonment: Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 575; Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 182. Israilov, at least in the parts of his diaries available to the author, does not mention his employment with *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* nor that he wrote two books of poetry. He does, however, point out on several occasions that he published articles and wrote poetry: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
30. Khusein's reference to Israilov's diaries is contained in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', p. 29.
31. The corresponding report, compiled by Ivan Aleksandrovich Serov (1905–1990) and addressed to Lavrentii Beriia, is published in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', pp. 66–7.
32. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9 (Karanadze-report). The reference to a force level containing 24,970 troops can be found in: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, l. 13;

the excerpt of this part of Israilov's diary is also published in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', p. 19. References to force levels and numbers of enemies killed are contained in: GARF, F. R-9478, Op. 1, D. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2). An impression of the scale of the uprising may be gained also from German sources, including the map contained in the 'operation schedule' (*Einsatzplan*) contained in the report on the 'Special Operation "Shamil"' of 5 January 1943. The map contains estimates on the numbers of rebels in the different rebel-held territories. The map is from: BArch Abt. MA, Blatt 1/36, and is also reprinted in a separate section in this book.

33. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9 (Karanadze-report).
34. Excerpts of these statutes are contained in: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 87–88, as cited in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', p. 23.
35. We also find Israilov's organisation under the name United Party of Caucasian Brothers (Ob"edinennaia partiia kavkazskikh brat'ev). In other sources (mostly NKVD), his organisation is at times referred to as the National-Socialist Party of Caucasian Brothers (Natsional-sotsialisticheskaia partiia kavkazskikh brat'ev).
36. French historian Nicolas Werth deems that the names of Israilov's rebel groups, which appear in official Soviet documents, were inventions by the NKVD: Nicholas Werth, 'The "Chechen Problem": Handling an Awkward Legacy, 1918–1958', *Contemporary European History*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2006), pp. 347–66, here p. 355. We need not to forget, however, that Israilov, being a former member of the Communist Party, was familiar with the Bolshevik vocabulary and the peculiarities of the organisation and functioning of the Soviet system. Cf. also on this issue: Burds, 'Soviet War against "Fifth Columnists"', on Israilov pp. 292–6.
37. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
38. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
39. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9 (Karanadze report).
40. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
41. Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 181.
42. The corresponding report is contained in: Chuev, 'Severnyi Kavkaz'.
43. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 4). 1907 also corresponds with the information on Israilov contained in the FSB Central Archive: TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A– 2399, ll. 1–2.
44. If not otherwise mentioned, the following is based on information from this notebook: GARF, f. r-9478, Op. 1, D. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 4).
45. If not otherwise stated, the following is based on this notebook: GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
46. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
47. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
48. Albogachiev's letter (contained in: GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55, ll. 1–9) is published in full text in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', pp. 22–3.
49. Ibid., p. 22.
50. Ibid., p. 23 (note 2); Israilov also mentions in his diary his letter to Albogachiev, dated 10 November 1941, thus written and sent the same day that he received Albogachiev's letter: GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1.)

51. See the corresponding decisions by the Chechen–Ingush *obkom* (Viktor Ivanov) regarding Albogachiev's activities, in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 1', pp. 24–5, 28.
52. 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', p. 66. Alexander Statiev writes in his essay on the anti-Soviet armed resistance that Albogachiev and Idris Aliev were arrested, but from reading the sources, this issue remains somewhat unclear: Statiev, 'Nature of Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance', p. 301.
53. Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, p. 531.
54. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1.)
55. If not otherwise mentioned, the following is based on information from notebook 1 ('History of the Latter') of Israilov's diary: GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
56. Again, Avtorkhanov is probably wrong when claiming that Israilov was the youngest of six brothers: A. Avtorkhanov (Aleksandr Uralov), *Ubiistvo checheno-ingushskogo naroda: Narodoubiistvo v SSSR*, Moscow: SP 'Vsia Moskva', 1991 [1952], p. 43. (This is a reprint of the edition of 1952, published under the pseudonym Aleksandr Uralov. In the following, I refer to page numbers from the 1991 online edition available at http://zhaina.com/history/149-ubijjstvo-checheno-ingushskogo-naroda.html, last accessed 26 July 2017.) In his diary, Israilov mentions, apart from Khusein, only one other brother by the name of Atabaev: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
57. Cited from: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
58. His brother Khusein would later state during interrogation that they were both schooled by their uncle. See the document 'Iz protokola doprosa Israilova Khuseina Israilovicha, 10–15 iiulia 1943g.', contained in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', pp. 63–4, here p. 64.
59. Cited from: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
60. From the minutes of Khusein Israilov's interrogation, it follows that both brothers commenced their studies at the Communist University (Komvuz) in Rostov-on-Don in 1929: 'Iz protokola doprosa Israilova Khuseina Israilovicha, 10–15 iiulia 1943g.', contained in: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', p. 64. Avtorkhanov writes that Israilov studied in Rostov-on-Don and in 1929 completed high school: Avtorkhanov, *Ubiistvo checheno-ingushskogo naroda*, p. 43.
61. Israilov does not make explicit in his accounts when precisely he joined the party, and if he was a full member of this organisation; he does, however, make allusions to party membership in different places. Avtorkhanov maintains that Israilov joined the party in 1929, after he had been member of the Komsomol: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 181.
62. That he even discussed his fake Jewish origins does speak in favour of the thesis that this part of his diary was indeed meant as a personal notebook, and not intended for the Germans. It is telling that in those parts of the diary with what appears to be propaganda, he mentions his father, who was allegedly part of Zelimkhan's gang, as 'Sadullaev Korail', also known under the name of 'Khitsigov Isab', but is careful not to write 'Israil' ('Korail' sounds like a version of 'Israil'): GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 4). To be sure, the information obtained from the FSB

Central Archive also confirms that his father's name was 'Israil': TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A–2399, ll. 1–2.

63. Israilov does not explain how precisely he managed to achieve this. He only writes that he travelled to Moscow for this purpose.
64. This is also confirmed by Avtorkhanov, who writes that Israilov was not politically active up until this time, and that he was mainly absorbed by his literary activities: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 182.
65. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
66. This concurs with Avtorkhanov, who writes that Israilov was arrested in 1931: Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and the Ingush', p. 182.
67. According to information obtained from the FSB Central Archive, Khasan Israilov was arrested in 1931 by the *raion*-militia and released in 1934: TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A-2399, ll. 1–2. Avtorkhanov claims that it was thanks to the 'energetic intervention' on the part of the editors of *Krest'ianskaia gazeta* that Israilov was set free: Avtorkhanov, *Ubiistvo checheno-ingushskogo naroda*, p. 44. In those sections of Israilov's diaries available to the author, we do not find any confirmation with regard to Avtorkhanov's claim.
68. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
69. On Khasi G. Vakhaev: 'Al'manakh "Rossiia: XX vek": Arkhiv Aleksandra N. Iakovleva, biograficheskii slovar'', http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/almanah-dict-bio/1006058/2, last accessed 4 February 2017.
70. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
71. It is unclear how long exactly Israilov was imprisoned. The entry in his own diary is somewhat ambiguous. He writes that he was arrested in April 1935 and sentenced to five years in prison, four of which he had to actually serve, and that he was released in 1938. According to information obtained by the author from the FSB Central Archive, Khasan Israilov, by decision of the NKVD Special Council (Osoboe Soveshchanie pri NKVD) of 9 December 1936, was sentenced to three years in prison to be served in a labour camp for 'anti-Soviet agitation, as a socially dangerous element' (TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A-2399, ll. 1–2). His brother Khusein, also per decision of the NKVD Special Council in 1937, received a three-year sentence, to be served in a re-education and labour camp: 'Chechentsy i ingushi: Paket dokumentov no. 2', p. 63.
72. According to information from the FSB Central Archive, Avtorkhanov was arrested on 10 October 1937, released on 25 March 1940, but re-arrested on 24/5 October 1941 and sentenced to three years in prison. On 10 March 1942, the sentence was revoked and Avtorkhanov was again set free: TsA FSB, Spravka, no. 10/A-2399, ll. 1–2.
73. If not mentioned otherwise, the following passages are based on: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
74. Cited from: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
75. Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, p. 504.
76. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
77. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).

78. In the statement of deserter Sergej Samolow (Sergei Samolov), recorded on 22 June 1942, we read that 'in the middle of November [19]41' an insurgency in the 'Chechen village of Barsoi' had to be put down 'using [armed forces] from the military academy in Groznyi and airplanes. The military academy suffered dead and wounded during this action.' The report is contained in: BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 121.
79. Leont'ev report, 30 August 1944, in: Vladimirtsev and Kokurin, *NKVD-MDV SSSR*, p. 506.
80. BArch Abt. MA, RH 24–40–108, Blatt 121.
81. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
82. Report of volunteer Zagolow (Zagolov), member of a group led by Corporal Reckert and part of the 'Special Operation "Shamil"', dated 8 March 1943, published in: BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blätter 2/3–10, here Blatt 2/5. Russian military historians have rather uncritically adopted the version contained in Soviet secret police documents, whereas Reckert, after being dropped with his group of paratroopers into Chechen rebel territory, supposedly armed and organised a group of up to 400 Chechens: Galitskii, '"... dlia aktivnoi"', p. 24.
83. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
84. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 279–81, 584.
85. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
86. Cited from: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
87. Israilov's organisation issued a total of forty-six slogans: GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
88. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 2).
89. Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa"', p. 643; Galitskii, '"... dlia aktivnoi"', p. 20.
90. Galitskii, '"... dlia aktivnoi"', p. 20.
91. N.N. Grodnentskii, *Neokonchennaia voina: Istoriia vooruzhennogo konflikta v Chechne*, Minsk: Kharvest, 2004, p. 56.
92. Report by Lieutenant Lange on the 'Special Operation "Shamil"', dated 5 January 1943, in: BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blätter 1/1–36, here Blatt 1/28.
93. BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blatt 1/28.
94. BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blatt 1/11.
95. BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blatt 1/9.
96. BArch Abt. MA, RW 49–143, Blätter 1/28–1/29.
97. The letter is dated 26 November 1944 and addressed to A.M. Leont'ev; the letter is contained in: GARF, f. r-9479, op. 1, d. 111, l. 191ob, and re-printed in: Dokumenty iz arkhiva Iosifa Stalina, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 29 February 2000, http://www.ng.ru/specfile/2000-02-29/10_top_secret.html, last accessed 23. May 2016. See also: Gammer, *Lone Wolf and the Bear*, p. 163.
98. GARF, f. r-9478, op. 1, d. 55 (Israilov-diary, notebook 1).
99. Chechen writer Musa Beksultanov writes in his account 'The Path Back to the Beginning' (*Der Weg zurück zum Anfang*) about Israilov's liquidation, who was killed 'by his own companions', nine people, apparently relatives from his mother's side: Beksultanow, *Der Weg zurück zum Anfang*, pp. 56–9. The precise circumstances surrounding his death are still not quite clear. A detailed account is offered in: Ibragimov, *Chechentsy*, pp. 102–7.

100. Pavel Polian, 'Operatsiia "Chechevitsa": Deportatsiia vainakhov v marte 1944 goda', *Zvezda*, no. 3 (2007), pp. 167–74, here p. 171; Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 1009 (note 12).

10. AFTER DEPORTATION

1. V.A. Kozlov and M.E. Kozlova, 'Paternalisticheskaia utopia i etnicheskaia real'nost'', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 679–710.
2. Cf. the report of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kazakh ASSR, 16 July 1946, in: ibid., pp. 748–74, here p. 751.
3. On the nature of Chechen resistance in the first years of exile, and the role of religious authorities: Ibragimov, *Chechentsy*, pp. 183–220.
4. Kozlov and Kozlova, 'Paternalisticheskaia utopia', p. 693. For an overview of North Caucasian workers, who as of 1 July 1946 worked in collective farms and factories, and in the local Kazakh industry, as well as a list of those refusing to work: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 750.
5. Due to a lack of educational establishments in the first years of exile, only a fifth of all children were able to attend school initially: ibid., p. 764.
6. Michaela Pohl, '"It cannot be that our graves will be here": The Survival of Chechen and Ingush Deportees in Kazakhstan, 1944–1957', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2002), pp. 401–30, here p. 413.
7. Report of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kazakh ASSR, 16 July 1946, in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 749.
8. This is evident from a report compiled before 1 July 1949: ibid., pp. 798–9.
9. Report of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kyrgyz ASSR, 18 July 1946, in: ibid., pp. 774–89.
10. Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, p. 94.
11. Pohl, '"It cannot be that our graves will be here"', p. 405.
12. V.A. Kozlov, 'Sindrom vozvrashcheniia: "Teper' komendanty nami komandovat' ne budut ...": Vainakhskaia ssylika posle smerti Stalina (1953–1954 gg.)', in Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 837–62, here p. 845.
13. The decree is contained in: RGANI, f. 89, op. 61, d. 13, ll. 1–7.
14. Kozlov, 'Sindrom vozvrashcheniia', p. 845. The decree of 9 January 1957 is published in: Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, pp. 875–6.
15. Until 1961, 469,000 Chechens and Ingush had returned to the Chechen–Ingush ASSR; 28,000 Chechens emigrated to their homes in Dagestan, 8,000 Ingush settled in Nordossetia. 56,000 Chechens and Ingush remained in Central Asia: Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, p. 95.
16. Birgit Brauer, 'Chechens and the Survival of Their Cultural Identity in Exile', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2002), pp. 387–400, here p. 393; Kozlov et al., *Vainakhi i imperskaia vlast'*, p. 764.
17. Kozlov, 'Sindrom vozvrashcheniia', p. 860; V.A. Kozlov, *Massovye besporiadki v SSSR pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve (1953-nachalo 1980-kh gg)*, Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 1999, pp. 120–54.
18. *Rodina*, no. 1–2 (2000), pp. 186–7.

19. Valerii A. Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 33.
20. The war claimed the lives of some 550 people before the autumn of 1992; 100 people were killed during skirmishes that dragged on for several more years: Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, Richmond: Curzon, 2001, pp. 251–62.
21. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 288–9.
22. Kozlov, 'Sindrom vozvrashcheniia', pp. 861–2.
23. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 86.
24. The share of the urban population in the North Caucasus was 57 per cent in 1989: Belozerov, *Etnicheskaia karta*, pp. 237, 247; Tishkov, *Chechnya*, p. 41.
25. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, p. 203.
26. Georgi M. Derluguian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 244.
27. Tishkov, *Chechnya*, p. 41.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 45.
30. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, pp. 201–5.
31. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, p. 339.
32. Tishkov, *Chechnya*, p. 52.
33. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, p. 318.
34. V.I. Fil'kin, who was among the few Soviet historians to mention the deportations in a book published in 1960, puts the blame entirely on Beriia, whom he refers to as an 'enemy of the party and the people': Fil'kin, *Checheno-Ingushskaia partiinaia organizatsiia*, p. 143.
35. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 82; Timur Muzaev, *Chechenskaia Respublika Ichkeriia: Obshchii obzor*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi institut gumanitarno-politicheskikh issledovanii (IGPI), 1997, http://igpi.ru/monitoring/1047645476/oct_97/chechen.html, last accessed 8 February 2013.
36. The declaration is published in: N.F. Bugai et al. (eds), *Reabilitatsiia narodov Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov*, Moscow: INSAN, 2000, p. 42.
37. The text of the law 'O reabilitatsii repressirovannykh narodov' of 26 April 1991 is published in: ibid., pp. 74–6.
38. Glyn Williams, 'Commemorating "The Deportation" in Post-Soviet Chechnya', pp. 119–21.
39. Bugai, 'Pravda o deportatsii chechenskogo i ingushskogo narodov', pp. 32–44. For the first commented document collection: N.F. Bugai, *Iosif Stalin–Lavrentiiu Berii: 'Ikh nado deportirovat"; Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii*, Moscow: Druzhba Narodov, 1992. On the historiography of the deportation, see also the section in: Bugai and Gonov, *Kavkaz*, pp. 5–52.
40. Bugai and Gonov, *Kavkaz*, p. 36.
41. Ibid., p. 37.
42. The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR transferred the separation of the Ingush and Chechens into formal law on 4 June 1992. The text of the law is contained in: Bugai et al., *Reabilitatsiia narodov Rossii*, pp. 117–18.

43. Tishkov, *Chechnya*, p. 30.
44. Glyn Williams, 'Commemorating "The Deportation" in Post-Soviet Chechnya', p. 121.
45. Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 296–7.
46. See Chapter 9 in this book.
47. Tishkov, *Chechnya*, p. 21.
48. On Duduaev and his political career in Chechnia: James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, pp. 21–9.
49. Dudaev cited in: Marshall, *Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, pp. 297–8.
50. Dudaev mentions the figure of 400,000 in: Dudaev, 'Kontseptsiia', p. 2. He refers to the figure of 600,000 in a speech given on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the deportation on 23 February 1994 in Groznyi. The speech is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZiF0k7XPJM, last accessed 8 February 2013. Western writings on the subject have largely adopted these figures. For example, Marie Bennigsen Broxup writes that the Chechens and Ingush have proven 'remarkably resilient' to Stalin's attempted genocide as they have 'survived the Second World War deportation during which half of their population died ...': Bennigsen Broxup, 'Introduction', p. 10.
51. Dudaev, 'Kontseptsiia', p. 2.
52. In this declaration, the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen–Ingush ASSR declared the elevation of the status of the republic to that of a union republic, which meant ultimately secession from the RSFR. Only at the All-Chechen Congress on 8–9 June 1991 did Chechnia declare its full sovereignty: Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, pp. 342–3.
53. Dudaev, 'Kontseptsiia', p. 2.
54. On the First Chechen War: Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus*, New York: New York University Press, 1998; Lieven, *Chechnya*.
55. Dzhokhar Dudaev, video-interview, [n.d., ca. 1995], http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WHEA55YWUM, last accessed 15 February 2013.
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61. Shnirel'man, *Byt' alanami*, pp. 349–51.
62. Sultan Jaschurkaew, *Auf Splitter gekratzt: Grosny 1995; Tagebuch aus Tschetschenien*,

trans. Marianne Herold and Ruslan Bazgiew, Klagenfurt: kitab Verlag, 2008, p. 47.

63. Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010, p. 251.
64. Cf. the works of US political scientist Stuart Kaufman, who sees myths as a relevant basis for ethnic mobilisation and the outbreak of conflict: Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 30–1, 34.
65. This does not mean, however, that this factor did not play a role in other conflicts in the post-Soviet space, namely, for instance, in the case of the Abkhaz, who saw their war of secession in the early 1990s as resistance to Georgian 'imperialism'.
66. See, for example, Kadyrov's speech on 10 May 2011 on the occasion of the introduction of the new 'Day of Remembrance and Shame of the Peoples of Chechnia': Ramzan Kadyrov, 'Obrashchenie Glavy Chechenskoi Republiki R.A. Kadyrova v sviazi s Dnem pamiati i skorbi narodov ChR', 10 May 2011, http://www.ramzan-kadyrov.ru/press.php?releases&press_id=3563, last accessed 5 February 2012.
67. Ramzan Kadyrov, 'V ChR uchrezhden edinyi Den' pamiati i skorbi narodov Chechenskoi Respubliki', 9 April 2011, http://www.ramzan-kadyrov.ru/press.php?releases&press_id=3524, last accessed 5 February 2012.

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