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Collective Memory and Politics: Remarks on Some Competing Historical Narratives in the Caucasus and Russia and their Use of a 'National Hero.'

Moshe Gammer*

The Soviet Heritage

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 created a vacuum in many fields. One of them was that of collective identity. With Soviet nationality policies caught in the contradiction between nation building of the different peoples of the USSR on the one hand and 'Soviet patriotism' and 'proletarian internationalism' on the other, none of the components of the ex-Soviet Union has completed its national consolidation. Thus the drastic changes created an urgent need for the re-construction of existing identities or the construction of new ones. This need has been felt in all the components of the previous USSR -- all of the 15 previous Union Republics which have become independent states, as well as all of the 'lesser' autonomous units which have remained within the Russian Federation.(1)

Such a re-construction of identity or the construction of a new one involves the re-shaping of the collective memory and the re-writing of history. In many cases a major theme in collective memory, and thus in collective identity, is the struggle against Russian conquest. The leaders of such struggles, 'national heroes' and foci of such identities for a long time, have now become the objects of new historical narratives constructed and disseminated by players aiming at divergent identities and with different political agendas. The 'national hero' in Chechnya and Daghestan is Shamil (1797 – 1871) -- the most famous and successful of the three imams (leaders) of the thirty year long resistance led by the Naqshbandi-Khalidi Sufi order.(2)

An 'alim (3) in his own right and an ordained Naqshbandi-Khalidi

Shaykh, Shamil led the resistance for 25 years (1834 - 1859). During these years he 1) built a regular army, 2) constructed and developed a state, 3) united for the first time in their history a multitude of tribal-like communities and taught them to be part of a 'regular' state on a permanent basis, and 4) -- perhaps his most important achievement in the long run -- completed the Islamisation of Chechnya and what one might call 'Sufisised' both it and Daghestan.(4)

Shamil had already become in his lifetime a legendary hero to both his countrymen and the Russians.(5) It was, however, Soviet historiography which enhanced his fame far beyond the Caucasus. To the Marxist historians who controlled the field from the early 1920s, Shamil was a great 'progressive' hero and leader of a 'national liberation movement' against Tsarist imperialism and colonialism. This description was not in the best interests of the regime, however, Shamil's name being connected with anti-Russian and anti-Bolshevik resistance.(6) In fact, the best course for the Soviet authorities was to keep a low profile on this issue. Yet matters were further complicated when, in 1950, Shamil was officially proclaimed a 'reactionary', 'anti-popular', 'Turkish [i.e. Ottoman] and English stooge'. In 1956, following an attempt to 'rehabilitate' Shamil and a stormy public debate, an official compromise formula was imposed on Soviet historians. According to this, Shamil had initially been the leader of a 'progressive', 'popular', anti-colonial, and 'national liberation' movement, but later on 'anti-popular' feudal and clerical elements had taken control over this movement and transformed it into a reactionary one. This formula remained in force practically until the dissolution of the USSR and during most of this time the Soviet authorities tried to impose silence over this issue.(7) In view of this history, it is hardly surprising that Shamil has become the 'national hero' for the Daghestanis and Chechens. Since the disintegration of the USSR, Shamil has been adopted and used by different camps in their political agendas. Each sheds a different light on Shamil and attributes to him a legacy consistent with its own aims and beliefs. At the moment of writing three historical narratives vie for dominance in reconstructing the collective identities of the Chechens and Daghestanis, as well as the collective memory of other peoples of the Caucasus and of the Russians. Four more loom, at least potentially, on the sidelines. All of them are, in one way or another, reactions to the Soviet narrative:

The Daghestani-Avar Narrative

The Daghestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) within the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was established as a multi-national entity. More than thirty languages have been spoken in the historical 'Mountainland'.(8) The speakers of these languages range in number from a few hundred inhabiting a single village to several hundred thousands. The Soviet authorities clustered these groups into 11 officially recognised nationalities. Stalin annexed to Daghestan the neighbouring lowlands with their Russian and Turkic population. Four more official nationalities were thus added to the new republic.

The Titular Nationalities of Daghestan

Nationality	1989 census		Mid-93 Estimate	
	No. (in thousands)	% of population	No. (in thousands)	% of population
Avars (9)	524	25.8	579	26.3
Dargins (10)	314	15.5	349	15.9
Kумыks	249	12.3	275	12.5
Lezgins (11)	231	11.4	249	11.3
Laks	98	4.8	105	4.8
Tabasaranians	94	4.6	106	4.8
Nogais (12)	32	1.6	35	1.6
Rutuls	19	0.9	23	1.0
Aguls	18	0.9	21	1.0
Tats (13)	11	0.5	12	0.5
Tsakhurs (14)	8	0.3	8	0.4
Azeris	84	4.1	92	4.2
Chechens	62	3.0	75	3.4
Russians	236	11.6	153	7.0
Jews (15)	20	1.0	8	0.4

The effort to build separate national identities, though countered by the attempt to create a Daghestani one, was fairly successful. This in itself has created national antagonisms. However, other measures taken by the Soviet authorities over 70 years -- most particularly the migration (sometimes forced, always encouraged) from the mountains to the lowlands and the consequences of the 'deportation' and 'rehabilitation' of the Chechens of Daghestan (16) -- aggravated the situation and transformed Daghestan into a maze of inter-connected national, economic, and social rivalries and conflicts.(17)

Whatever the official Soviet position, Shamil has always been a 'national' hero in Daghestan and Daghestani historians, backed by the local party, had been at the forefront of the attempts to 'rehabilitate' him. It did not come as a surprise, therefore, that in the late 1980s, as Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost reached the periphery, Daghestanis seized the opportunity to start Shamil's full rehabilitation. In 1990 the Imam's 'spiritual homecoming'(18) was reinforced by the establishment by the Avar national movement of the Shamil Foundation (Fond imeni Shamilia) which had strong informal connections to the (then) Daghestani Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. This institution has made a tremendous effort to re-establish Shamil in the collective memory of Daghestan by publishing academic as well as popular works on the Imam in Russian and in Avar, and sponsoring films, songs, festivals and other activities dedicated to Shamil. In that year, 1990, came 'Shamil's final official recognition'(19) by the authorities of Daghestan. These, under strong pressure from below, reluctantly renamed

in an official ceremony a recently built settlement Shamilkala.(20)

The Foundation's activities have been of major significance to the Avar national movement. To the Avars – the leading group in the republic since its inception -- Shamil has always been their own national hero. After all, the Imam was an Avar (as were his two predecessors). This fact added an important element to Avar national identity and collective memory. It also advanced the legitimisation of, and attached an historical dimension to, their dominant position in the republic.(21) Thus the Daghestani historical narrative has been developed mainly by the Avar elite and the mainstream of the Avar national movement. After the dissolution of the USSR the Daghestani-Avar narrative has been adopted by the establishment, the two -- the establishment and the Avar elite -- largely overlapping.

This narrative has never laid emphasis on the struggle per se, but concentrated on Shamil. The Imam is painted as a national hero, a strong ruler, a gifted general and an accomplished statesman. But his greatest significance and legacy is, as Daghestan's national poet (writing in Avar) phrased it, 'the forging of a united Daghestan'.(22) This is especially important to both the Avar nationalists and the establishment in view of the centrifugal tendencies of some national movements in Daghestan, which demand separation from the republic.(23) Thus a great emphasis is put on Shamil as the founder, state builder and leader of united Daghestan. Accordingly a great effort is devoted to describing the participation of each Daghestani nationality in his movement and struggle.(24)

Another important feature of this narrative is that while Shamil's victories are mentioned with great pride, the naming of his enemy is tactfully diminished to the absolute minimum possible. This reflects the feeling of both the establishment and the mainstream of the Avar national movement that Daghestan must remain part of the Russian Federation. To start with, Daghestan is dependent on Moscow economically and strategically. Almost no one in Daghestan can envisage its survival if the umbilical cord to Russia is severed. But for each of them the connection to Russia is also a matter of supreme importance. To the ex-Communist establishment Moscow's support is crucial for its very survival. The Avar national movement needs it both to keep the territorial integrity of the republic against separatist movements and to retain the Avars' dominant position in it. Thus the readiness of both to embrace in 1997 a new narrative and to integrate it with their own.

The New Official Narrative

The dissolution of the Soviet Union also created a vacuum in the centre. Since historians were not guided any more, they felt free to publish a great variety of hitherto forbidden facts, and to air prohibited subjects and interpretations. Shamil and what has been known in Russian and Soviet terminology as 'the Caucasian War' were no exception. A huge number of books and articles were published, a great many of them reprints of rare,

or even banned, books. However, the Russian invasion of Chechnya in December 1994 caused most Moscow professional historians – unlike many journalists and publicists – to react with a long established reflex: abstention from dealing with this subject, at least in public. Thus, academic publications and other scholarly activities relating to the history of the Caucasus in the 18th and 19th centuries stopped abruptly.(25) With official and academic silence, the historical dimensions of the conflict in the Caucasus were left to publicists in the media.

The official silence was reversed suddenly in October 1997 when the central government of the Russian Federation supported and participated in the events and celebrations marking Shamil's bicentennial. The bicentennial was marked and celebrated officially and with great fanfare in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kaluga and many other places in the Russian Federation (as well as in other member states of the CIS). These celebrations reached their peak in Makhachkala, the Capital of Daghestan. An official holiday was proclaimed, with a very tight schedule: a parade in period costumes followed by free parachuting in the central square of the city; folkloristic performances, food stands and festivities in the main avenue; ceremonies of renaming the longest (though not the main) avenue after Shamil and of opening the new national library named after him; a special festive session of the State Council of Daghestan, with the participation of official delegations from all over the CIS; and the premiere of a play by a young Daghestani (Avar) playwright especially written for this occasion.(26)

Moscow, it seems, followed the maxim: 'If you can't beat them -- join them' and 'adopted' Shamil into Russia's official pantheon of heroes. Thus a new official narrative was now constructed and diffused by the central authorities. This new narrative is based on the Daghestani-Avar one. In fact, it is similar to the latter apart from one thing: overwhelming emphasis is laid on the post-1859 Shamil, the leader who -- as the new narrative claims -- affected a reconciliation with the previous enemy, became an admirer of Russia and her culture, and bequeathed on his descendants and all future generations of Daghestanis (and by implication Chechens) the possibility to live in eternal friendship and unity with the Russian people. This was the main theme of all the official celebrations in October 1997. The building up of Shamil as a hero by the Daghestani-Avar narrative was, thus, moved from centre stage in the new official one, though it remained an important means of emphasizing the new message. After all, the greater the hero – the more important is his message.

For Moscow the aim of this new official narrative is clear and straightforward -- to disarm the Imam's legacy of struggle against Russia and to counteract its use in other narratives, first and foremost the Chechen one. But the new narrative has also been adopted by the Daghestani establishment and by the mainstream of the Avar national movement. (The latter combines it with its own narrative.) In the official celebrations in Makhachkala, for example, it was repeated in street slogans all over the city, in the addresses at the festive session of the State Council and in the new play mentioned above. In fact, one has the impression that high-ranking Daghestanis (27) and other Caucasians in the central government, as well as the authorities of Daghestan, had a crucial impact on Moscow's decision to adopt this line, not to say on the

construction of this narrative. The reason for that lies in the fact that all the other narratives – existing and potential – have been constructed by, and are used to, legitimise either marginal groups of the existing elite or alternative elites (at least potentially). They represent, therefore, existential threats to both the establishment and the mainstream Avar national movement.(28)

The Chechen Narrative

The Chechen historical experience is one of continuous repression by (and resistance to) Russia. From the beginning of their rule the Russians, in a classical 'divide and rule' policy, tried to detach Chechnya from Daghestan. Stalin finalised this by creating a separate Checheno-Ingush (29) ASSR within the RSFSR. Furthermore, Stalin included in it a sizeable Russian minority. By this he prevented the Chechens from forming a clear-cut majority(30) and enjoying the benefit of the dominant position in the republic.(31) The peak of this historical memory is the 'deportation' of 1944, regarded by the Chechens as an clear attempt at their genocide.(32) This ethos of repression and resistance solidified the Chechens – already a distinct ethnic group at the time of the Russian conquest – into a nation.(33)

It is natural, therefore, that the primary theme in the construction of collective identity and memory by the national movement and the authorities in Grozny since 1991 has been what they officially term 'the three hundred year long war for freedom against Russia'. Shamil, although not a Chechen himself, is one of the prominent leaders and symbols of this resistance. This was clearly demonstrated in May 1992, when the Chechen Republic issued its first series of postal stamps. Imam Shamil was one of the three heroes depicted on them.(34) Shamil's bicentennial was officially marked in the Chechen Republic. To emphasise their independence, however, the Chechen authorities celebrated it on 21 July 1997 (unlike elsewhere in the CIS, where it was celebrated in October). In the central ceremony of these celebrations President Maskhadov officially unveiled a memorial complex for Shamil in Vedeno, the Imam's 'capital' between 1845 and 1859. The complex comprises a mosque with a 25 m tall Minaret (symbolising Shamil's 25 years of leading the resistance), a Madrassah,(35) and a wall of his fortress, which had been destroyed by the Russian Army.(36)

Though a central figure in this historical narrative, Shamil is but one of several heroes promoted by the Chechen national movement and not the most important one. In the Chechen narrative the first place belongs to Imam Mansur, the first to lead resistance to the Russian conquest (1785 – 1791) and to call for unity of the Caucasian peoples (and for return to the shari'a, which is not mentioned by this narrative).(37) More important, he was a Chechen -- a point in favour of Chechen national pride and claim to leadership of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus.

Furthermore, the real hero of this narrative is neither Mansur nor Shamil – nor for that matter any other leader – but the Chechen people. Thus,

emphasis is laid on the centrality of Chechnya and the Chechens to Shamil's struggle and rule: it stresses the fact that the Chechens formed the lions' share of his army and were his most ardent supporters; it emphasises Chechnya's being the bread basket of his dominions and strategically its most important part; it highlights the fact that between 1840 and 1859 Shamil chose to locate his 'capitals' in Chechnya to prove its centrality to the Imam. More important, the emphasis is on the continuing resistance. Shamil was but one leader and the struggle he led but one phase in this ongoing 'three hundred year long war'. Thus, in some cases, promoters of the Chechen historical narrative have berated Shamil for his surrender in 1859.(38) In an extreme expression of this he was, in fact, accused of treason:

Imam Shamil was a Dahgistani. He led the uprising against the Russians. The Chechens joined him in his struggle. But when he surrendered, the Chechens called him a traitor [...] The Chechens consider Shamil a traitor. They do not consider this [his surrender – MG] as an acceptance of the Russian rule.(39)

As a counter to Shamil, and a symbol of 'true' resistance to the end, some Chechen circles promote one of his na'ibs (lieutenants) -- Baysungur -- who continued to fight the Russians for more than a year after the Imam. (40)

The United Caucasus Narrative

A second narrative which Moscow has tried to counteract by promoting its own is at the moment potential only. But if given shape, it might cause great damage to the interests of the Kremlin. This is the narrative which would stress the aim of Shamil's struggle -- unity of the Caucasus as a whole or at least of the Northern Caucasus.

The unity of the Caucasus, although it has its supporters, seems at the moment a utopia. The unity of the Northern Caucasus, though no less questionable, appears -- at least on the surface -- less unlikely. All the aboriginal peoples of the Northern Caucasus have a strong sense of belonging to this common 'family', culture, even the identity of 'Mountaineers' (gortsy) as they call themselves nowadays. This sense of belonging has not been replaced by the new separate national identities acquired during the Soviet period.

The political manifestation of this common 'mountaineer' identity and the ideal of unity is the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus established in August 1989.(41) The Confederation claims to be the legitimate heir of the short-lived 'Mountain Republic' of 1918, which it aims at re-establishing. So far the Confederation has failed to break out of the margins of regional and Russian politics. If it ever becomes an important political actor it might develop and propagate such a narrative.(42)

Another potential element which could develop and use such a narrative - separately or in unison with the Confederation is the Chechens. The

Chechen authorities under Dudaev publicly promoted the idea of North Caucasian unity. The Chechen Republic was the only government represented in the Confederation. Chechen volunteers fought on the side of the Abkhaz against the Georgians -- a fact highly publicised by Grozny.⁽⁴³⁾ Although at the moment such tendencies are held in low profile, they have not disappeared,⁽⁴⁴⁾ and might re-appear in no time if relations with Moscow deteriorate.

In such a case, the new narrative will concentrate on the joint struggle of the mountaineers against Russian conquest and on the attempts by different resistance leaders - beginning with Imam Mansur and ending with the 'Mountain Republic' (if not with Dudaev) - to unite all the mountaineers. It will also stress the leading role always played by the Chechens in this struggle. The new narrative will, thus, complement and fortify the existing Chechen one on two matters: on the home front it will strengthen Chechen identity and pride; outside Chechnya it will add legitimisation to the Chechen call to other 'mountaineers' to join their struggle and to their claim to lead it and the Confederation.

The Avar Revolutionary Narrative

There is a third narrative which both Moscow and Makhachkala are trying to counteract by promoting the new official version of the past. This narrative is almost completely similar to the Daghestani-Avar with one significant exception: like the Chechen narrative, it puts at the very centre the resistance to Russia. Unlike the Daghestani-Avar narrative, it emphasises the role of Shamil and the two other Imams as leaders of a liberation struggle against Russia and names with great pride later uprisings against Russian and Soviet rule and their leaders. In doing so it emphasises the fact that all these leaders were Avars, which adds to the Avars' claim to lead Daghestan as well as the other mountaineers and their struggle for independence.

At the moment of writing this narrative is on the fringes. It has been constructed by a very marginal group of Avar extremists. Its potential damage to the Kremlin's interests – as well as to those of the Avar mainstream nationalists and the present Daghestani establishment – should not be taken too lightly, however. This group does not seem to share the Avar mainstream's belief in the necessity to remain part of the Russian Federation. During the war in Chechnya (1994 – 1996) it strongly supported, at least verbally, the Chechens.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Daghestan, with its national, economic and social problems, a peak of 80% unemployment and a burgeoning crime rate might prove a fertile ground for such views. This narrative, whether on its own or in association with others, might give them a needed legitimacy.

The Muslim Conservative Narrative

It is no coincidence that all the above narratives completely omit the religious dimension of Shamil's leadership and struggle. All have been (or might yet be) constructed by, reflect the values and views of, and serve the interests of secular Soviet-educated elites. The two following narratives are associated with completely different social groups, which are therefore regarded as a menace by the existing elite. One of them has not been fully assimilated by the Soviet education system. The other has been partly de-Sovietised. Both promote Islam and as such look suspicious also to Moscow.

The Muslim conservative narrative is chronologically the first and has been constructed by the oldest elite -- the traditional Religious-Sufi (mainly Naqshbandi-Khalidi) leadership. Like the secular ones, it describes Shamil as the greatest leader of resistance, a 'national' hero, a strong ruler, a brilliant general and statesman. Like the Chechen and the Avar revolutionary narratives, it emphasises the resistance and enumerates all the uprisings and their leaders. However, in this narrative resistance was to the 'infidels' -- not Russians -- and the 'nation' of which Shamil has become the 'national' hero was the Muslim umma, i.e. the (Sunni) Muslim Mountaineers. Furthermore, this narrative underlines the fact that Shamil -- like almost all the leaders before and after him -- was an 'alim and a Naqshbandi-Khalidi shaykh. It thus stresses the religious legitimacy of his leadership as well as the leading role played in the past, and likely to be claimed in the future, by the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya. Being an Islamic narrative it can also easily supply an alternative identity and basis for North Caucasian unity.

In Daghestan, as in Chechnya, the Sufi orders have remained of central importance in social and economic life. Their leadership survived Soviet persecutions and successfully kept Islam alive underground. The result was that all through the Soviet period the Daghestanis (and the Chechens) remained the most devout Muslims in the entire USSR. Since the collapse of the USSR, the Sufi leadership in Daghestan has -- unlike its counterpart in the Chechen Republic (46) -- kept a low profile in political affairs. However, in other matters the importance of Islam and of the traditional Sufi leadership has increasingly been coming out into the open. An important and constant reminder of this is the re-opening of mosques and mazars (centres of pilgrimage, usually mausoleums of Sufi Shaykhs) and the gathering of thousands of people to celebrate such opening ceremonies. Unwilling to swim against the tide, the authorities joined such celebrations and made them official events.(47)

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union the establishment in Daghestan has been trying to accommodate Islam and to co-operate with the Sufi leadership. It has done so because firstly the collapse of Marxism-Leninism limited its means to legitimise its rule and mobilise the people, and secondly the weakening of the central government in post-Soviet Russia impaired its ability to back Makhachkala. Like everywhere else in the ex-USSR, religion -- in this case Islam - has remained the major alternative in the ideological wasteland left by 70 years of Soviet rule, and the religious leadership the only leadership with real authority.

However, while in need of support from the traditional Sufi leadership, the establishment has done its best not to co-opt it. To start with, it still

represents a potential threat and alternative to the establishment. Second, the establishment might have been weakened, but still commands sufficient means of coercion and enough support from Moscow to stay in control. Third, the Sufi leadership has not been keen to use its apparent power to come to the front. Such a move would be contrary to the Sufi – and Naqshbandi-Khalidi – frame of mind. But most important, the interests of the two meet in what both perceive as the threat of 'Islamic Fundamentalism.' And since the Sufi leadership is at the moment the primary target of this new force, it needs the backing of the establishment against the so-called 'Wahhabis.' It has, therefore, to co-operate with the establishment, which on its part tries to use it to contain them. These 'Wahhabis', in their turn, are the potential constructors of an as yet non-existent, but very plausible, narrative:

The Muslim Revolutionary Narrative

'Wahhabis' is the pejorative applied by the political and religious establishments to this new force all over the Muslim area of the ex-USSR. By doing so they aim to denigrate it and neutralise its influence. Far from being related to the official Saudi religious doctrine and not at all a homogeneous group, these 'Wahhabis' are, in fact, young people who have recently completed religious studies in the Middle East. Many of them – though not all – have indeed a 'wholist' perception of Islam and believe in establishing an Islamic society and state.

Having returned to their homeland, these young men have found many deviations from 'pure' Islam as they perceive it in the traditional religious practices. Their public criticism of these practices, of Sufism and of the old, traditional leadership -- all sanctified to the believers by two centuries of resistance and seven decades of anti-religious persecution -- arouse forceful, sometimes violent, reactions. The fact that the authorities identify the 'Wahhabis' as 'Fundamentalists' – with all the paranoia this term entails – has only aggravated the situation and in both Daghestan and Chechnya clashes have occurred, resulting in casualties.(48)

Shamil would be the ideal model for the 'Wahhabis' if they ever unite and decide to construct such a narrative. After all, he might well be presented as the archetype of the Islamic revolutionary: (49) He it was who raised the banner of 'true' Islam higher than that of liberation from foreign rule; the main declared aim of his struggle was the enforcement of the shari'a. This was a precondition for any successful struggle of liberation. Therefore, Shamil's main effort was directed at the 'unbelievers' within rather than the 'infidels' without – at the corrupt, 'collaborationist' local rulers and the erring, dispirited religious leaders who had led the people astray. He did not hesitate to use force against his own teacher in order to enforce the religious ban on alcohol.(50) Such a narrative, if constructed, might prove a strong, emotive relying cry playing on the entire range of peoples' emotions. That is the reason why all the opponents of the 'Wahhabis' try to crush them and to prevent their narrative from being constructed.

Each of the above narratives, even the first three, which appear at the moment of writing to be dominant, is at the initial stages of its construction. Each may yet undergo a great many changes on its own and relative to the others as well as to new ones. Only the future will answer which narratives will disappear (or not materialise), which new ones will be constructed (if at all) and which (and how many) will become dominant. What can be said with some degree of certainty is that these future developments will depend heavily on internal political events both in Russia and in the different republics in the Caucasus as well as on the relations between them.

Notes

*Dr. Moshe Gammer, The Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University.

1. The USSR was officially a federation of dozens of units arranged in several levels of autonomy: At the top level were the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), which according to all Soviet constitutions were recognised as sovereign states, who had joined the USSR voluntarily and had the right to secede. These became automatically independent, sovereign states once the Soviet Union ceased to exist. (The Soviet definition of sovereignty is different from the Western one, which created a great deal of confusion in the wake of the dissolution of the USSR.) The four other levels -- Autonomous SSRs, provinces (oblasti), districts and sub-districts -- enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy within a specific SSR, of which they formed an integral part without the right to secession. These in some cases have felt 'trapped' within the Russian Federation, and have either indicated that they wanted independence -- like Tatarstan and the Khakass Republic -- or unilaterally proclaimed it, like the Chechen republic.
2. For which see, Moshe Gammer. *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar. Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*. London: Frank Cass, 1994 (Second edition forthcoming). Sufism is Islamic mysticism. Its adherents are organised in tariqas (orders), each having its own structure, hierarchy, rules, beliefs and rituals. The Naqshbandiyya is one of the most widespread and important Sufi orders. Originating in Central Asia it has spread to other parts of the Muslim world. (For a general survey of the order's history, see Hamid Algar, 'A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order', in: Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.). *Naqshbandis. Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990, pp. 3 - 44.) From the very beginning the Naqshbandiyya was strictly 'orthodox'; that is, it insisted on the full and scrupulous adherence to the shari'a in all spheres of life -- private as well as public. It was in 17th century India, however, that it was transformed 'into the vanguard of renascent Islamic orthodoxy' -- Bernard Lewis. *The Middle East and the West*. New York: ,1966, p. 66. In the 18th and 19th centuries it either led or inspired a great number of resistance movements to foreign conquest all over the Muslim world, from China to Western Africa. The Khalidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya is named after its founder Shaykh Khalid al-Shahrazuri (1776 - 1827). It spread into the Caucasus in the 1810s and 1820s. The Khalidiyya was more than strictly 'orthodox': It was virulently hostile to all non-Sunnis. (For Shaykh Khalid and the Khalidiyya, see Albert Hourani, 'Sufism and Modern Islam: Maulana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order,' in: idem. *The Emergence of the Middle East* ((London, 1981)), pp. 75 - 89; Butrus Abu Manneh, 'The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the early 19th Century,' *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 12 ((1982)), pp. 1 - 12. For the Khalidiyya's spread into the Caucasus, see Moshe Gammer, 'The Beginnings of the Naqshbandiyya in Daghestan and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus,' *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 34 ((1994)), pp. 204 - 217.)
3. 'Alim (pl. 'Ulama) is an expert on, and a qualified interpreter of the Muslim religious law -- the Shari'a -- and thus a religious leader.

4. Following Shamil's surrender another major Sufi order – the Qadiriyya – spread in the Caucasus and became dominant among the Chechens and Ingush, for which see, Moshe Gammer, 'The Qadiriyya in the Northern Caucasus,' *Journal of the History of Sufism*, Vol. I, No. 1 (forthcoming). For the importance of the Sufi orders see, Anna Zelkina. *In Quest of God and Freedom. The Sufi response to the Russian Advances in the North Caucasus (Chechnya and Daghestan)*. London: C. Hurst, Forthcoming.
5. In future uprisings the Chechens and Daghestanis tried to re-establish Shamil's Imamate and even invited his descendants to lead them: In 1877-8 it was his son Ghazi Muhammad, and in 1920 -- his grandson Sait (Sa'id). Russian historiography was mainly interested in who should be given most -- if not all -- of the credit for the final victory. Nevertheless it made a point of praising Shamil as a 'genial military and political leader' and a great personality. It seems that the Russian establishment than has understood what many present day leaders and PR experts have yet to learn, namely that the greater one's opponent -- the greater one's victory.
6. Uzun Hajji (1818 – 1920) and Najm al-Din of Hotso (1920 – 1921) specifically led a rebellions aimed at re-establishing Shamil's Imamate.
7. See, Moshe Gammer, "Shamil in Soviet Historiography," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (October 1992), pp. 729-777.
8. This is the literal translation of the name 'Daghestan' (Dagh mens 'mountain' in Turkish and stan is the Persian suffix for names of territories). Only the southern, mountainous half of the present day Republic of Daghestan constitutes the historical 'Mountainland.'
9. Thirteen additional ethnic groups have been officially registered as Avars: Akhvaks, Andis, Archis, Bakgulals, Botlykhs, Chamals, Didois, Godubers, Kapuchins, Karatais, Khunzalis, Khvarshis and Tindis.
10. Two additional ethnic groups have been officially designated as Dargins: Kaitaks and Kubachis.
11. Only less than half of the Lezgins live in Daghestan. A great part of them live in adjacent areas in northern Azerbaijan.
12. Only about 42% of the Nogais live in Daghestan. An equal number live in the Stavropol krai, and almost all of the rest -- in the Chechen Republic.
13. Only about 33% of the Tats live in Daghestan. An additional 39% live in adjacent areas in northern Azerbaijan. Caucasian (Mountain) Jews (gorskie evrei) are sometimes counted as Tats, which makes statistics of both groups inconsistent. (Cf. Note 50 below.)
14. Only about 34% of the Tsakhurs live in Daghestan. About 63% of them live in adjacent areas in northern Azerbaijan,
15. The statistics of Jews include sometimes only East European (ashkenazi) Jews and at others -- also Caucasian ones. (See note 48 above.)
16. See note 22 below.
17. For the Situation in Daghestan see, Egbert Wesselink. *The Russian Federation: Daghestan*. London: Writenet (UK), November 1995; Clem McCartney. *Daghestan: A Situation Assessment Report*. London: International Alert, 1996.
18. Robert Chenciner, *Daghestan. Tradition and Survival* (London and New York, 1997), p. 17.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
20. As it seems, the renaming was aimed inter alia to counter the demand to rename the Capital, Makhachkala, after Shamil.
21. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Avar national front, established in reaction to other fronts, has been named after Shamil.
22. Rasul Hamzatov. *Moi Dagestan* (Moscow, 1972), p. 298.
23. This is especially true of the extreme wings of the Kumyk and Lezgin national movements.
24. Thus, in the first conference aimed at 'rehabilitating' Shamil, in June 1989 in Makhachkala, 23 out of 103 papers dealt with the participation of specific nationalities in Shamil's movement or with its reflection in folklore – Institut Istorii SSSR, AN SSSR; Institut Istorii, Iazyka i Literatury im. G. Tsadassy dagestanskogo Filiiala AN SSSR; Dagestanskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet im. V. I. Lenina. *Narodno-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie gortsev Dagestana i Chechni v 20 – 50kh godakh XIX v. Vsesoiuznaia nauchnaia konferentsiia, 20 – 22 iyunia 1989 g. Tezisy dokladov i soobshchenii Makhachkala, 1989*). In the most recent conference, held in October 1998 in Makhachkala, three out of 51 papers dealt with the participation of specific nationalities in Shamil's movement and a keynote

- delivered by the head of the academic establishment in Daghestan dealt with 'The Renewal of the Mountaineers' Personality and the Entry of Daghestan into the Modern Era as the Most Important Consequence of the National Liberation War' – Institut Istorii, Arkheologii i Etnografii DNTs RAN; Institut Rossiiskoi Istorii RAN. Kavkazskaia voina. Spornye voprosy i novye podkhody. Tezisy dokladov mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii (Makhachkala, 1998).
25. In a reaction reminiscent of the period between 1944 (the 'deportation' of the Chechens) and 1950 (the announcement of a new official stand on Shamil) Russian historians refused to have anything to do with the subject. In 1995 a committee could not be manned in Moscow to examine a dissertation on 'Chechnya during the Caucasian War,' because almost all of those approached had declined to sit in it. The supervisor had to appeal to historians in the West to write their judgements of the dissertation in order to prompt its approval by the proper university authorities in Moscow.
 26. Shapi Kaziev. Shamil v Kaluge [Shamil in Kaluga].
 27. The most high-ranking Daghestani, Minister for Nationality Affairs of the Russian Federation Ramazan Abdullatipov, being a central figure in shaping Russian policies in the Caucasus, must have been a prime agent in developing and promoting the new approach.
 28. How dramatic the change of attitude of the establishment was can be seen by comparing the Shamil bicentennial to that of the first Imam, Ghazi Muhammad (1829 - 1832), in 1993. Ghazi Muhammad's bicentennial in Makhachkala was organised by the Shamil Foundation. The authorities, who could not prevent the event, preferred to completely ignore it.
 29. The Ingush are very close to the Chechens. In fact most Chechens consider them to be part of their own people. However, different historical backgrounds – 'the Ingush did not participate either in the Shamil movement in the nineteenth century or in the great rebellion of 1920-22' – strongly cultivated by Russian and Soviet authorities created among them a separate identity (Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush. Muslims of the Soviet Empire. A Guide. London: C. Hurst, 1985, p. 189).
 30. According to the 1989 census the Chechens were 57.82% of the population of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR.
 31. The republic and its indigenous population were strictly controlled by Moscow. This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that until 1990 a Russian had always been the first party secretary of the republic. (Such a policy was in sharp contrast to the usual Soviet practice of having a member of the titular nationality to head the local party, while real power was retained by his Russian deputy, who was usually also the chief of the KGB in the area.) In addition the republican authorities invested enormous efforts to keep the ratio of Russians at between 20% and 25%. For that purpose preference was given to Russian immigrants to the republic over the Chechens and Ingush in allocating jobs, salaries, accommodation etc. The resulting unemployment among Chechens and Ingush pushed many of them to look for work – at least seasonal – in other parts of the USSR, which was not to the dislike of the authorities.
 32. On Soviet Army Day 1944, that is 23 February, all Chechens (and Ingush) all over the USSR were rounded up and 'deported' to Central Asia and the Checheno-Ingush ASSR -- abolished. The official reason for this was given as mass collaboration with the Germans (who never set foot on the territory of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR). Rehabilitated in 1956, the Chechens were allowed to return to their homeland but not to settle back in many of the mountain villages where it was extremely difficult to keep them under supervision. The Chechens of Daghestan, deported together with their brethren, were not allowed to return to their original villages. Their problem has been the reason for one of the major inter-ethnic conflicts in Daghestan involving several nationalities – Avars, Dargins, Laks, Kumyks and, of course, the Chechens. The standard works on Stalin's deportations in English are, Robert Conquest. The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities (London, 1970) and Alexandre Nekrich. The Punished Peoples (New York, 1978).
 33. For the situation in the Chechen Republic before the Russian invasion of 1994, see International Alert. Preliminary Summary Observations of the Fact-Finding Mission to Chechnia (24 September – 3 October 1992) (London, October 1992); International Alert. Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Chechnia (24 September – 3 October 1992) (London, nd).
 34. The other two -- both Chechens -- were Imam Mansur, the first leader of resistance

- to Russia in the Caucasus between 1785 and 1791 (see immediately below), and General Dudaev, then the president of the republic and its leader in the struggle for independence.
35. Madrasa is a traditional Muslim institution of higher education, where 'ulama are trained and given a certificate.
 36. Russkoe Informatsionnoe Agentstvo – Novosti, 21 July 1997. The fortress referred to is probably the one popularly known as 'Shamil's Fortress' which was damaged in Russian bombardments during the recent war. In fact it is a fort built by the Russian forces after the capture of Vedeno in 1859. Shamil's original 'Capital' – New Dargo – was destroyed completely after its capture. The ruins of 'New Dargo' are now covered by a mound several kms south of the present fort.
 37. The best study on Imam Mansur is still Alexandre Bennigsen, 'Un mouvement populaire au Caucase au XVIII^e siècle. La "Guerre Saint" du Shaykh Mansur (1785 – 1791). Page mal connue et controversée des relations russo-turques,' *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, Vol. V, No. 2 (April – June 1964), pp. 159 – 205. For a review of the latest book on the subject see, Moshe Gammer, 'A Preliminary to Decolonizing the Historiography of Shaykh Mansur,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (June 1996), pp. 191 – 202.
 38. Thus a review by Aslanbek Kadiev of several books on the recent war in Chechnya sent over several e-mail discussion lists.
 39. Eiman Jafar's (ejafar@csd.uwm.edu) message on the Discussion List about Chechnya (chechnya@plearn.bitnet) of 24 January 1995.
 40. Lately Chechen figures were interested in commissioning a biography of Baysungur.
 41. It was established in August 1989 as the 'Assembly of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus' and renamed 'Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus' in October 1991.
 42. For the CMCP see, Moshe Gammer, 'Unity, Diversity and Conflict in the Northern Caucasus,' in: Yaacov Ro'i (ed.). *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London, 1995), pp. 173 – 4 and Appendix, pp. 183 – 186.
 43. Shamil Basayev, the present Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic commanded the battalion of Chechen volunteers in Abkhazia.
 44. Thus in the above ceremony (note 29 above) Maskhadov raised Shamil's contribution 'to the liberation struggle of the Caucasian peoples' and called upon his listeners to remember 'at all times' that 'all the people living in the Caucasus constitute one "Caucasian" nation' – *ibid.*, loc. cit.
 45. See, for example, interview with the leader of the Avar National Front, *Izvestia*, 20 January 1996. In fact, they supported the Chechen struggle for independence from its beginning in 1991. In May 1992, for example, a prominent Avar journalist told this author: 'All of Dagestan envies the Chechens, because while we are still dreaming the past, they are building the future.'
 46. See note 4 above.
 47. For example, on 22 October 1997 a ceremony took place marking the re-opening of the mazar of Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman Hajji al-Sughuri – one of the most prominent Naqshbandi-Khalidi Shaykhs in the post-Shamil era. The ceremony was attended by scores of thousands of men and women from all over Dagestan as well as from Chechnya. One could see tears in the eyes of many men in the audience, especially when the mufti led the public prayer. The authorities made the ceremony official by sending their representatives to sit on the podium and deliver their greetings.
 48. For such clashes, see for example, *Informatsionnoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Rossii – TASS*, 23, 24 May (Dagestan) and 14 April, 16 July; *Agence France Press*, 16 July; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 16 July 1998 (Chechnya).
 49. In fact, he was used as such a symbol by one of the mujahedeen groups in Afghanistan – 'Ghazi Imam Shamil, Rahmat Allah 'alyhi, Avvalen Rahbar-e Jangeha-ye Gorila-ye Islam,' *Vatan* (Organ of the Islamic Union of the Provinces of Northern Afghanistan), 20 Jumadi II 1402 / 4 April 1983, front page. According to Joyce Blaou of the Sorbonne, Khomeini called Shamil in one of his speeches on the radio 'a hero of Islam [rahbar-e Islam].' This author has been unable to substantiate it by going through the appropriate numbers of *Summery of World Broadcasts* published by the BBC Monitoring Service.
 50. Shamil's teacher and the most famous 'alim in Dagestan, Sa'id al-Harakani interpreted the Qur'anic ban on wine as meaning only alcoholic drinks made of grapes. In 1837, when Shamil entered Harakan and took control of it he ordered to

spill all the drinks in the cellar of his previous teacher.

Back to [index](#)