

giorgi anCabaZe
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Tbilisi
2009

George Anchabadze

THE VAINAKHS (The Chechen and Ingush)



“Caucasian House”

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(THE CHECHEN AND INGUSH)**



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The first edition of the book «Vainakhs» in the English language, published in 2001 was sold out in a short period of time. Many readers highly appreciated the work and there were requests to publish the second edition. This book is the repetition of the text of the first edition and it covers the history of Vainakh people – the Chechens and the Ingush – from the ancient times to 2001. We once again thank Mr. Friedrich Höffer who supported the publishing of the first edition of «Vainakhs».

Editor N. Gelashvili

Translated into English by T. Paichadze

On the cover is used the photograph of N. Samsonenko taken from the book “The stone chronicles of the lands of vainakhs” (compilers M. Aziev and D. Chakhiev)

FOREWORD

This book is about the Chechens and Ingush – the kindred nations of the North Caucasus. The Chechens and Ingush have common origin and similar language and culture, but owing to the force of historical coincidence of circumstances they have developed into the separate nations who, nevertheless, are fully aware of their unity, and apart from their national self-names – *Nokhchi* (Chechens) and *Galgai* (Ingush), have their common name - Vainakhs, i.e., “our people”.

In recent years, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, having been under the shade of vast Russia for a long time, a small country of the Vainakhs, Checheno-Ingushetia, has become world-famed thanks to the dramatic events taking place there. Information sources, commenting on the full-scale military actions, humanitarian disaster and mass violation of human rights in the North Caucasus, can not pass by mentioning the names of Vainakh peoples, especially that of the Chechens. These regrettable moments of present situation have undoubtedly excited certain interest of many people for the Vainakhs, their history, culture and current reality, and especially under existing conditions of relative scarcity of the generalized literature popularly dealing with the rich and colourful history of Vainakhs since olden times to our days. Only after having learnt moments from the history of the Chechen and Ingush peoples, and from their recent past in particular, one can comprehend the reasons of political radicalism of the Chechens, as well as the motive of resolute and unprecedented steadfastness they are manifesting when subjected to severe trials.

The present book does not have a claim on wide coverage of the subject, but sets itself a more modest task. It is a scientific-popular work which gives a characteristic of the land of Vainakhs and in a condensed form describes the past and present of the Chechens and Ingush, the history of their culture and the nature of their relationship with Russia. The work also contains an introduction presenting a brief historical-geographical description of the Caucasus and the peoples inhabiting this land. The author considers it necessary to give the reader a general idea of the Caucasus in order to facilitate the comprehension of the history and current situation of one of its regions.

The book is intended for the general public taking an interest in Chechnya and Ingushetia.

INTRODUCTION

THE CAUCASUS

1. LAND AND PEOPLE

The Caucasus is one of the largest geographical and historical-cultural regions of Front Asia. The Caucasus is washed by the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof in the west and by the Caspian Sea in the east that makes it the isthmus between Europe and Asia. The northern geographical boundary of the region - the *Kuma-Manych* depression, starts out of the Lower Don and descends into the lower reaches of the river Kuma. The southern frontier is drawn by the boundary line of the former Soviet Union, and today it passes between the independent States of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey and Iran. The southern boundary of the Caucasus, however, is very relative, as neither of its sides has any natural distinction. This boundary does not correspond to the historical and ethnographical realities either. The southern boundary in the present sense appeared only in 1921. Within the aforementioned bounds the Caucasus covers an area of close to 450,000 sq km.

Although there are several hypotheses, the origin of the term “Caucasus” can not be considered finally established. However, the ethnicon is very old. It is mentioned in historical sources of the 6th - 5th centuries B.C. that have come down to us, namely, in writings of Aeschylus and Herodotus. It is worthy of remark that ancient Greeks named *Caucasus* not only the mountain ridge, where Prometheus was chained to a solitary rock, but also the area of lower front ranges, lofty spurs and intermontane plains. As to the tribes inhabiting this land, they were collectively referred to as “Caucasians”. Hence it appears that the notion of the Caucasus in the sense of a definite geographical region with the polylingual population, but close by culture and origin, came into existence as early as the ancient epoch.

The central part of the Caucasus is occupied by the mountain system of the *Great Caucasus*. Its constituents are the *Main*, or *Watershed*, and *Lateral* ranges with peaks rising more than 5000 m above sea level. The highest peak of the Caucasus is Mt. Elbrus (5642 m). The Main Watershed divides the region into two parts: the *Northern Caucasus* and the *Southern Cauca-*

sus, or *Transcaucasia*.¹ North and south of the Main and Lateral Ridges stretch lower front mountain chains. The parallel ranges of the *Great Caucasus* are connected with the transversal mountain ridges, forming a number of more or less spacious intermontane hollows.

Longwise (up to 1100 km) the *Great Caucasus* is divided into three parts: The Western, Eastern and Central Caucasus. The sections running through the mountains *Elbrus* and *Kazbek* fix the boundaries between them. The highest peaks of this mountainous country are in the Central Caucasus, including the *Elbrus*, *Dikhtau* (5203 m), *Kashtantau* (5145 m), *Shkhara* (5058 m), *Tangitau* (5051 m), *Kazbek* (5047 m).

Most of the peaks of the Main, Lateral and other ranges of the *Great Caucasus* are covered with eternal snow and glaciers. The lower border of eternal snow cover (a snow line) raises here owing to extending of dry climate from west to east. On the slopes of the Western Caucasus the snow line reaches 2900 - 3000 m, within the limits of the Central Caucasus it raises to 3200 m; as to the Eastern Caucasus, the snow - covered region here is at a height of 3700 - 3800 m.

In the south of Transcaucasia rises mountainous region of the *Transcaucasian Upland* reaching a height of 4090 m (the town of *Aragats*). In the north and north - west it is fringed by the Lesser Caucasus Range (nearly 3724 m, town of *Gamish*). The northern border of the *Lesser Caucasus* is formed of the valleys of the *Rioni* and *Mtkvari* rivers, in the south it borders on the river *Araxes*, between the mountain massifs of the Great and Lesser Caucasus, on the territory of Georgia, lies the *Likhi Range* dividing the country into the western and eastern parts.

In the Caucasus there are also a number of vast lowlands and foothill regions, including the *Colchis Lowland*, the *Kartli Plain*, the *Mtkvari-Araxes Lowland*, etc. As regards the North Caucasus, a considerable part of the area is covered with the steppes, forming the threshold of vast European plains.

Main rivers of the Caucasus (from west to east) are the *Kuma*, *Terek*, *Sulak*, *Samur*, *Mtkvari* and *Araxes* rivers falling into the Caspian Sea, and the *Eya*, *Kuban*, *Inguri*, *Rioni*, *Chorokhi* rivers, draining into the Black Sea and Azof basin. The largest of them, the *Mtkvari* (*Kura*) takes its source in Turkey, but mainly flows on the territories of Georgia and Azerbaijan. The *Mtkvari* is 1364 km long, the basin area is 188,000 sq km. The largest rivers

¹ In Geographical literature the Caucasus sometimes is divided into three main regions: the Front Caucasus, the Great Caucasus and Transcaucasia.

of the North Caucasus are the Kuban (870 km long) and Terek (623 km long).

The largest lake in the Caucasus is Lake *Sevan* (in Armenia), of course, not counting the Caspian Sea - the largest reservoir on the Earth, surrounding the isthmus in the east.

As regards the climate of the region, the Caucasus is located at the junction of temperate and subtropical zones. The climate in the North Caucasus, viewed as a whole, is assumed to be temperate, whereas the South Caucasus is attributed to the subtropical zone. The Caucasus Range serves as a border between them forming an obstacle to the cold arctic masses of air to move to the south and, vice versa, detaining the streams of warm air to extend from the south to the north. However, it is impossible to reflect the whole of the diversity of climatic peculiarities characteristic to separate regions of the Caucasus. In Transcaucasia, for example, the damp subtropical climate of Colchis and the territory adjacent to the Caspian Sea in the southwest is combined with the continental-cold and mountainous-cold climate of highlands.

Hence it appears that diversity of the nature makes the Caucasus a region of striking contrasts, where the high-mountain glaciers and steppe plains, dense forests and bare rocks, the subtropics suffused with moisture, and semi-deserts dried up in the blazing sun are in the immediate vicinity.

Taking into consideration the economic activities of the population, lowlands and foothills are of much more significance than mountains: they are densely populated, well-developed for growing crops and have advantageous transport locations. Gas and oil, the major natural resources of the Caucasus, are extracted in the lowlands and foothills of the region. Besides, the entrails of the earth in this region are rich of deposits of polymetallic and manganese ores, building materials, coal - fields, and medicinal mineral springs.

* * *

The Caucasus is notable for diversity of nationalities and multiplicity of languages, that is conditioned by the peculiarities of the historical development and natural conditions of the region. Not without reason was it called “a Mountain of Languages” by the medieval Arabs: the representatives of about 50 nationalities, speaking independent languages, are the inhabitants of this land. From the linguistic point of view these languages mainly belong to three lingual families: Caucasian proper, or Paleocaucasian, Indo-European and Altaian.

The Caucasian family is divided into three groups: Western, i.e., Adige - Abkhazian, Eastern, i.e., Vainakh-Daghestani and Southern, i.e., Kartvelian. The representatives of the Caucasian family are the ancient inhabitants of the Caucasus (this accounts for the term "paleocaucasian"), related to each other by common origin.² The western group consists of two subgroups: the Adige and Abkhaz – Abazian branches. The Adigeys, or Circassians, one of the most numerous and far – famed peoples of the Caucasus, still densely populated a vast territory from the Black Sea coast to the Middle Terek as far back as the first half of the 19th century. At present they settle this area, scattered about in groups. In Soviet ethnicon nomenclature the Adige ethnic group is represented as the Kabardians (391,000)³, inhabiting the territory of the Terek River basin, the Circassians (52,000), living in the area of the Upper Kuban, and the Adigeans (125,000) populating that of the Lower Kuban and the territory adjacent to the Black Sea. However, the Adige peoples clearly realize their ethnic unity and call themselves their common name – *Adigey*.

The area of settling of the Abkhazians (105,000) and Abazas (34,000) is also cut off against last century. The reduction of the ethnic territory of the Adige – Abkhazians in the 19th century was caused by mass migration of these peoples to the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of the Caucasus by Russia. It resulted in devastation of a good deal of territory formerly settled by the tribes of the West-Caucasian group. Later the region was occupied by the other peoples. The descendants of the Caucasian migrants live in the countries of the Near East (Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and others). According to different data the Adige-Abkhazian diaspora in the Near East numbers from one to several million people.

The eastern branch of the Caucasian languages also divides into two subgroups: the Vainakh and Daghestani branches. The Vainakhs, as is generally known, is a collective name of the Chechens and Ingush. This linguistic community also includes the Batsbi, i.e., Tsova-Tushetians, a not numer-

² Some scientists consider that only the Adige-Abkhazian and Vainakh-Daghestani languages are genetically related languages and unite them in so-called North-Caucasian family, whereas the Kartvelian group is attributed to the special system. The similarity of the North-Caucasian and Kartvelian languages is a result of the contacts established in ancient times. Thus, according to these scientists, in the Caucasus there are two native, but not related families of languages: the North-Caucasian and the Kartvelian languages.

³ Here and further in brackets is given the number of the mentioned nation in the USSR according to the 1989 census.

ous ethnic group living in the north-west of Georgia. The Batsbi consider themselves to be Georgians, though they speak their native language, similar to the dialects of the highlanders of Chechnya and Ingushetia. According to the general census of the population, they are not referred to as a separate nation.

The languages of the Daghestani subgroup are spoken by numerous peoples of the Daghestani Upland and, partly, that of the provinces contiguous to Azerbaijan. The most numerous of them are the Avars (601,000), Lezghins (466,000), Darghins (365,000), Laks (118,000), Tabasarans (98,000), as well as Rutuls (20,000), Tsakhurs (20,000) and Aghuls (19,000). Some of the Daghestani ethnographic groups having their own local spoken dialects, different from that of their neighbours, number several hundred to several thousand people and are the inhabitants of only one or a few villages. Today they mainly consolidate with the more numerous Daghestani peoples and according to the general census are not marked as separate nationalities, though in a large measure preserve their identity. Thus, for example, are the Andians, Botliks, Godoberins, Chamalals, Baghulals, Tindals, Karatinians, Akhvakhs, Tsezes, Ghinukhians, Khvarshins, Bezhtins, Gunzibs, Archins associated with the Avars, the most numerous Daghestani people. The Kaytags and Kubachins are consolidated with the Darghins.

Some of the Daghestani peoples partly live on the territory of Azerbaijan as well, including the Lezghins, Avars and Tsakhurs. Besides them, the Udins (8,000) and not numerous peoples of the so-called "Shakhdag group"⁴ - the Budughes, Kriz, Khinalughes live in Azerbaijan. They are the descendants of the ancient population of Eastern Transcaucasia, speaking the languages of Daghestani subgroup of the Vainakh-Daghestani group of peoples.

The southern (Kartvelian) branch of the Caucasian family is represented by the Georgians (3,981,000) - the main population of the Republic of Georgia. The Georgians are divided into a number of subethnic groups, some of which (Megrelians, Svans) have retained their own spoken dialects, closely related to the Georgian language. The Kartvelian languages are partly spoken in the north-eastern part of Turkey, where the people speaking this language inhabited quite a sizeable part of its territory in the past. Georgian is the only ancient written language of all the living Caucasian languages (literary monuments of the 5th century A.D.).

It should be noted that the area of spread of the Palaeocaucasian lan-

⁴ The settlements of this group are in the environs of MT. Shakhdag, hence the name "shakhdag group".

guages gradually grew narrower for the space of epochs. Several millenia ago the tribes speaking the Caucasian languages apparently inhabited not only the whole Caucasus (or the most of its part), but also the areas far out of its limits. According to some scientists, certain nations of the Ancient East, including the Goths, Hattians (proto-Hattians), Kaskians, Hurrits, Urarts and others, were ethnically close to different branches of the Palaeo-caucasian family. Proceed from this, the Palaeocaucasians, i.e., aborigenes of the places of settlement of alien tribes, took part in ethnogeny of the majority of peoples inhabiting the Caucasus today and speaking the languages of Indo - European and Turkic system. This is also confirmed by anthropological data.

It is interesting to note that an opinion of the Caucasian unity, based on the community of origin, came into existence in the Caucasus very long ago. Leonti Mroveli, a prominent Georgian author of the 11th century, begins his work on the history of ancient Georgia with the mythical times of the Caucasus and gives a genealogical "tree" of the Caucasus peoples, representing the Armenians, Georgians, Vainakhs, Daghestani tribes and others, as the descendents of legendary Targamos - their common ancestor. According to Mroveli, the descendents of Targamos, inhabiting all over the Caucasus, lived in friendship and came out together against the outer enemies to defend their native land.

Long before our era the first Indo – Europeans began to penetrate into the Caucasus. As a result of complicated assimilation processes, part of new comers mixed with the local tribes. As to the other part, having trasferred their language to the indigenou population, they became the constituent of the eventually formed Indo-European peoples of the Caucasus. Of them Armenians are the most numerous (4623,000). Ancient Armenia had stretched on a vast area of Front Asia, though in the 20th century only the territory of the Southern Caucasus (historical East Armenia) was left as a base of ethnical development and statehood of the Armenian people. There is also a numerous Armenian diaspora scattered over the world.

Some of the Caucasian peoples belong to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. The ancient Iranians came to the Caucasus both from the Euro-Asian steppes, in the north, and the Iranian Upland, in the south. Their descendents in the North Caucasus are the Ossetes (598,000), partly living in Georgia as well, and the Tattis (31,000) and Talishes (22,000) in Azerbaijan. A part of the inhabitants in the South Caucasus also consists of the Kurds who speak Iranian, though the bulk of this nation live in their historical homeland outside the Caucasus.

The same can be said about the Greeks who came to the Caucasus mainly in the 18th – 19th centuries and are not directly related with the ancient Greek colonists of the Eastern Black Sea area.

And lastly, the most numerous group of Indo-Europeans in the Caucasus today are the Slavs, mainly Russians (first Cossack settlements, 14th century), as well as the Ukrainians (end of the 18th century).⁵ They inhabit almost all regions of the Caucasus, but more compactly they are settled in Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories of the Russian Federation, making up 90 per cent of the total population.

The Altaian family in the Caucasus is mainly represented by the Turkic branch. The first Turks appeared in the Caucasus during the invasion of the Huns (4th century). Afterwards the nomad Turkic tribes repeatedly invaded the Caucasus, both from the northern steppes and from the south, and settled in different parts of the region. As far back as the early Middle Ages substantial groups of Turkic population had been formed in the North Caucasus, who, as a result of ethnogenetic processes with the participation of local tribes as well as new Turkic tribal unions, appearing in the Front Caucasus (particularly the Kipchaks from the 11th century), formed a Kumyik and Karachai-Balkarian community. The Kumyiks (282,000) inhabit the plains of Daghestan, as for the Karachais (156,000) and Balkarians (85,000), they are settled in the area of the Great Caucasus, in the vicinity of the Mt.Elbrus.

The Nogais (75,000) are the only Turkic – speaking people of the Caucasus formed as ethnopolitical community (union of tribes) outside its borders. They are the descendents of Turkic-Mongolian nomadic tribes, settled on the territory between the Caspian and Azof Seas in the 15th century. Here the Nogais have developed into the nation living at present as separate enclaves from Kuban to the Caspian Sea.

The most numerous Turkic-speaking people of the Caucasus are the Azerbaijanis (6,770,000). Nearly 15 million representatives of this nation live in Iran, and in so-called Iranian, or South Azerbaijan. In ethnogeny of the Azerbaijanis a definitive importance is attached to the ancient local tribes of the East Caucasus and North-Western Iran, who later mixed with the Turkic newcomers having transferred to the latter their native tongue (especially from the 11th -13th centuries).

⁵ The first penetration of the Eastern Slavs in the North Caucasus dates back to the 10th-11th centuries when a small Russian principality existed in the area adjacent to the Kerch Strait, separating the Caucasus from the Crimea. However, towards the beginning of the 12th century it was annihilated leaving no notice-able trace in the ethnopolitical and cultural development of the Caucasus.

The so-called “Meskhetian Turks” is also considered a Turkic-speaking ethnic group. Great bulks of them are the descendents of one part of the Meskhis, a Georgian tribe, Islamized and Turkized during the Turkish rule in the 18th–19th centuries. The Meskhis, deported from Meskheta (Southern Georgia) in 1944, inhabit in separate groups in the states of Central Asia, Russia and Azerbaijan. A small number of these people live in Georgia as well, though the problem of repatriation of the Meskhis to their native land has not been settled so far.

In the outlying districts northward of the North Caucasus inhabit the Turkic - speaking Trukhmens, part of Central Asian Turkmens who moved over the North Caucasus in the 17th or 18th centuries, as well as a small group of the Kalmyks (17th century), a nation of Mongolian origin, though the Kalmyks mainly populate the area from the steppe districts in the North of the Caucasus to the river Volga.

In addition to the afore-named nations several groups of Semitic origin have been living in the Caucasus since olden times. Particular attention should be given to the local Jews who, for centuries of their residence in the Caucasus, have forgotten their own tongue and use the language of the local population as their native language: In Georgia they speak Georgian, in Dagestan and Azerbaijan they speak Tattish, etc...

* * *

Anthropologically the natives of the Caucasus, with the exception of the Nogais who have the characteristic Mongoloid features, belong to the southern branch of the European race, out of which the following are the four principal types:

The *Caucasian type* is spread in the regions of the Great Caucasus, on both sides of the range. People of this type are of large stature, broad-faced, the colour of eyes and hair with a considerable touch of light tints (though prevail the dark-haired), round-headed.

The Caucasian type is prevalent with the Karachais, Balkarians, Ossetes, Vainakhs, Western Dagestanis and the mountaineer Georgians (Svans, Mokhevis, Khevsurs and others).

The *Pontian type* is on the whole similar to the Caucasian one, though the former is characterized by less broad face and other distinctive features. The Pontian type is prevalent with the Adigeys; there is an evidence of its influence with the Abkhazs and Western Georgians (inhabitants of the Colchis Lowland). As for the Kabardians, Circassians and Abazas, they are considered to be intermediate of the characteristic representatives of the Caucasian and Pontian Types.

The *Caspian type* is characterized by the darkest pigmentation of hair, eyes, and skin. People of this type are of medium height and narrow-faced. The Caspian type is spread with the Azerbaijanians, Tatts, Talishes, and Kurds. In Daghestan it is prevalent with the Kumyiks.

The *Front Asiatic type* is characteristic to the Armenians, and to some extent to the eastern and southern Georgians (the Kartlis, Meskhis, Javakhis). Owing to a number of distinctions this type is regarded as intermediate of the Caucasian and Caspian types. The analogues of the last three types are found among the inhabitants of the Mediterranean area and Front Asia. As regards the Caucasian type, it is met nowhere but in the Caucasus. As a matter of fact, there are no sharp distinctions among the mentioned anthropological types.

* * *

Due to its location at the junction of the East and West, the Caucasus always was under the political and cultural influence of both of these worlds. It is also evinced in religious composition of the population. Christianity (from the very first centuries of our era) and Islam (7th - 8th centuries) have been introduced here on a large scale. Besides the representatives of the Eastern Slav peoples the great bulk of Georgians, majority of Ossetes, almost half of Abkhazs and a small group of Kabardians are Orthodox Christians. The overwhelming majority of the Armenians are Christian-monophysites, the followers of the Armenian-Gregorian Church. There are also not great communities of Georgian and Armenian Catholics.

Islam of Sunnite orientation is confessed by the majority of native peoples of the North Caucasus, the Muslim Georgians (the Ajars and others), as well as part of Abkhazs, Ossetes and Azerbaijanians. The bulk of Azerbaijanians and a small part of the Lezghins are Shia Muslims. The Caucasian Jews confess Judaism, as to the Kalmyks, they are Buddhists.

At the same time, a certain part of the indigenous population of the Caucasus, including the Abkhazs, Ossetes, Ingush, the mountaineer Georgians, etc., has retained the survivals of paganism, which turned out to be irreplaceable either by Christianity or Islam, but adopted, having been slightly modified.

Despite such diversity of confessions (or perhaps, partly, thanks to this fact), religious fanaticism and intolerance are alien to the Caucasus. Dissensions between the nations, unfortunately, taking place in certain parts of the region, bear no relation to religious factor but are caused by social and political reasons, arisen as recently as the 19th-20th centuries.

2. HISTORICAL SURVEY

A man emerged in the Caucasus at the very outset of his history; this is evidenced by a unique discovery made in Georgia, near the town of Dmanisi (in the southwest of Tbilisi). The remains of a primitive man found on the territory of Georgia are nearly 1,8 million years old and are regarded as the earliest of the kind beyond Africa, the cradle of mankind.

Traces of paleolithic habitation, going back to the period 400 thousand years ago, have been found in the Transcaucasus region, though the whole of the Caucasus territory was settled by men nearly 150 - 180 thousand years ago.

As early as the 4th to the 1st centuries B.C. the Caucasus was one of the centres of highly developed bronze metallurgy. In the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia are found the burials of tribal nobility (3rd - 2nd centuries B.C.), containing the richest jewelry, gold-plate, silverware, weapons. Archaeological data show sufficiently high level of social and cultural development in the Caucasus between the 3rd to the 1st centuries B.C. The influence of ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Anatolia on culture of the Caucasian tribes of the Bronze Age is evident. On the other hand, one can observe the cultural influence of the Caucasus on vast regions of Western Europe.

Urartu was an ancient state in the Caucasus (9th to the 4th centuries B.C.), comprising a vast region of southern Transcaucasia. The native tongue of the ethnic kernel of this state apparently was close to the Vainakh-Daghestani linguistic group.

The kings of Urartu fought with the tribal unions, formed as the earliest states on the territory of Transcaucasia. Among them were the Georgian tribal confederations, the basis for the first Georgian states, Colchis (6th century B.C.) in Western Georgia and Iberia (4th century B.C.) in the east. It was namely Iberia that played the leading role subsequently for the unification of the Georgian tribes and the formation of a Georgian national culture.

Later, after the fall of Urartu, the ancient Armenian tribes gradually began to spread on the territory of Southern Transcaucasia, though the process of formation of the independent Armenian State protracted for the reason that the country was subject to the rule of the Persian, as well as Greek and Macedonian conquerors. It was only in 189 B.C. when the kingdom of Great Armenia came into being. The state reached the peak of its power in the first half of the 1st century B.C., when the Armenian Kingdom comprised a vast territory from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean.

In the 2nd century B.C. the Albanian Kingdom, inhabited mainly by the tribes kindred with the peoples of the Daghestan Highland, formed on

the territory of present - day Azerbaijan. Later the ancient Albanians incorporated with the Azeris in the main as well as with the Georgian and Armenian peoples. Direct descendents of the Caucasian-language population of Albania are primarily the Udins (Uthes), who were several times referred to as one of the greatest Albanian tribes by the ancient authors beginning with Herodotus (5th century B.C.), as well as the “Shakhdogs” and peoples of Southern Daghestan (Lezghins and others).

The states of Transcaucasia entertained close cultural-economic and political relations with ancient Greece, Asia Minor, Iran and tribal unions of the North Caucasus. The interrelation of the Caucasus and ancient Greece is evidenced by the myths about Prometheus who was chained to a rock in the Caucasus⁶, and the Argonauts who sailed to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece. Towards the 5th century B.C. first towns of Greek colonists emerge on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus. At the same time, as a result of internal historical development of Colcha, several town centres came into existence along the Rioni Valley.

In the 1st century A.D. Transcaucasia fell under the political influence of Rome. Towards the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., Lazica, a principality of the Western Georgian tribe, had been formed on the ruins of the Colchis Kingdom. Somewhat north of Lazica emerged the ancient Abkhazian tribal principalities.

Sindika (5th to the 4th centuries B.C.) is considered to be the earliest state formation in the North Caucasus, though, possibly it was only a tribal (apparently the Adigey) union with the embryos of a state. As for the greater part of the North Caucasus, in the second half of the 1st millennium B.C. there still was the supremacy of a communal-tribal system.

Two forms of social and economic system, the steppe and mountainous ones, existed in the region for the centuries. The steppe tribes were engaged in nomad and semi - nomad cattle-breeding. As regards the origin and level of the social and economic development they, as a rule, did not differ from their contemporary nomadic people of the Eastern European steppes. As for the mountaineers, they led a settled mode of life and along cattle-breeding were engaged in farming. The immediate analogues of the culture and mode of life of the peoples inhabiting the North Caucasus can be found with their neighbours on the southern slopes of the Great Caucasus.

⁶ The legend about titan who was chained to a rock, apparently came into existence in the Caucasus. Later it was mentioned by the Creeks. This image is met in legends of the Georgians, Abkhazians, Adigeys, Ossetes, Armenians.

In the middle of the 1st millennium A.D. feudal relations as well as Christianity, adopted as the official religion in Armenia, Georgia and Albania in the first half of the 4th century, became firmly established in the states of the Caucasus. The 5th century is marked in the cultural history of the region by the appearance of the Georgian, Armenian and Albanian written languages.

During the 5th and 6th centuries the peoples of Transcaucasia had to fight against the Iranian and Byzantine invaders, and in the 7th century - against the Arab conquerors who brought a new religion, Islam, to the Caucasus. As a result of the national liberation movement and internal break up of the Arab Caliphate, the Arab dominion fell once and for all in the beginning of the 10th century. A number of feudal states arose in Transcaucasia, among which the unified Georgian Kingdom became the most distinguished towards the beginning of the 11th century.

Part of the population of the Northern Caucasus in the early Middle Ages (5th - 10th centuries) lived under the conditions of military democracy, but in Daghestan state formations had been existing since 5th - 6th centuries. The Turkic tribes of the north - western area adjacent to the Caspian Sea formed a powerful Khazars State in the 7th century. Towards the 10th century the Alanian (ancient Ossetian) Kingdom, embracing a vast territory of the central part of the Front Caucasus, also came into existence.

In the middle of the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks began a devastating campaign against the Transcaucasus. The Georgian Kingdom appeared in the lead of the struggle against the Seljuks, and with the support of the peoples of Armenia and Shirvan (Northern Azerbaijan) freed the greater part of the Caucasus from the Seljuk Turks. In the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century, feudal Georgia reached the summit of its development. During the reign of Queen Tamar (1184 - 1213) the Georgian Kingdom unified almost all of the Southern Caucasus. Queen Tamar's influence spread to the definite parts of the North Caucasus and Asia Minor.

The political and economic development fostered the flourishing of spiritual life. In the 12th to first half of the 13th century, the masterpieces of art and wonderful architectural monuments were created in Transcaucasia. The most perfect model of classical Georgian literature, Shota Rustaveli's epic "The Knight in a Tiger's Skin" and the poetry of the Azerbaijanian poet Nizami are the masterpieces of world fiction.

In the 13th century, Transcaucasia and the lowlands of the North Caucasus were conquered by the Mongols. After throwing off the Mongol yoke in the 14th to the 15th centuries several independent states formed in Georgia and Azerbaijan. As regards Armenia, its feudal statehood was abolished

by the conquerors and the territory was incorporated with the adjacent states.

The independent state formations also were in Daghestan, though along with the feudal principalities free communities of the mountaineer peasants, the so-called “free highland communities”, existed there for centuries. As for the numerous Adigey (Circassian) tribes, headed by the martial feudal nobility, they expanded their territory and occupied the area from the Black Sea, in the west, to the lower reaches of the river Terek, in the east. The Ossetes and ancestors of the Karachai - Balkarian ethnic group found themselves driven away in the mountains. In the north the Adigeys controlled a significant part of the Caucasian lowland to the outfall of the river Don. However, the advance of the Adigeys to the east was held back by the Daghestani feudals. The steppes lying between the rivers Kuban and Don were submitted to the Crimea-Tatar Khanate, which had recognized the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire and actively championed the Osman policy in the North Caucasus.

In the 16th to the 18th centuries Transcaucasia suffered from intestine strives and devastating invasions of the Iranian and Turkic conquerors. An outstanding role in the struggle against the conquerors was played by Georgia, succeeding in upholding the national statehood in the most part of the country. However, under the conditions of feudal break-up it was impossible to resist the oppressors. The Georgian politicians who had failed to gain the assistance of Western Europe, began to seek the support of coreligious Russia, comprising part of the North-Caucasian Lowland up to the Terek river from the middle of the 16th century.

The acceding of the Caucasus to Russia was not a peaceful process. It was Peter I, Emperor of Russia, who began (first quarter of the 18th century) to conquer the lands of the Caucasus, southward of the river Terek along the Caspian Sea coast. But the Russians were not able to hold out on the joined territories for a long time. The offensive against the Northern Caucasus was recommenced in the 60s of the 18th century during the reign of Catharine II. The skirmishes between the Russian troops and detached forces of the mountaineers grew into the systematic military operations in the 70s - 80s. It was the beginning of the Caucasian war, which lasted scores of years and cost much blood both of the parties. Simultaneously the political influence of the Russian Empire spreads to the south of the Caucasus Range. In 1783 the Kingdom of Western Georgia, weakened as a result of incessant wars against the Turkish and Iranian oppressors and devastated by the invasions of the Daghestani feudal lords, joined the Russian Empire on condition that internal independence would be retained.

In 1801, under the pretence of defending the Georgian people from the foreign invaders, the Russian tsarism annexed the kingdom of Eastern Georgia. Soon the political formations of Western Georgia were also conquered, and as a result of successful wars waged against Iran and Turkey, part of Southern Georgia, Northern Azerbaijan and Eastern Armenia were incorporated into the Russian Empire.

After acceding of Transcaucasia to Russia the peoples of the highlands found themselves encircled by the territories of the Russian Empire, though this fact did not break the mountaineers, quite on the contrary, it made them fight for the independence of their native land more persistently.

The Chechens, Adigeys, Ubikhs, the peoples of mountainous Daghestan and the tribes of the Abkhazian Highland took an active part in the Caucasian war and kept on fighting to 1859 - 1864. This protracted war of liberation is at present still a symbol of the anti-colonial struggle, the experience of which was studied even by the European and North-American revolutionaries of the 19th century. Tsarist Russia managed to crush the opposition of the Caucasian mountaineers owing to the numerical superiority of the forces, though this victory had cost the Russians serious losses in manpower. Shamil, a far-famed leader of the liberation movement of the Daghestani and Chechen peoples, sustained a defeat and surrendered in 1859, yet the peoples of these countries as well as other natives of the Caucasus still have a profound respect to this person.

In 1864, the opposition of the mountaineers in the West Caucasus was suppressed. May 21, 1864, the day when the tsarist troops captured the last strong point of the Western Abkhazian tribes in one of the gorges not far from the Black Sea, is considered to be the date of final subjugation of the Caucasus and termination of the Caucasian War. But after this the peoples of the Northern Caucasus several times rose in rebellion against the tsarism. Of particular significance was the armed revolt in Chechnya and Daghestan in 1877.

The severe colonial oppression, established by the tsarism, caused several armed actions in the Southern Caucasus as well, and namely, the uprisings of the Georgians (1804, 1810, 1812-1813, 1819-1820, 1841), Abkhazs (1821, 1824, 1840-1842, 1866, 1877), Transcaucasian Avars (1830), Talishes (1831), Lezghes and Azeris (1837).

The most irreconcilable elements of the Muslim population abandoned their native land and migrated to Osman Turkey. Among them were the Muslim Georgians and some groups of the Azeri nomads.⁷ A significant number of mountain peoples emigrated after the failure in the Caucasian

⁷ The Azeri tribes emigrated to Turkey as well as to Iran.

War. Especially the Adigey-Abkhaz peoples suffered from the mass migration of the last century, as the number of those who fled from the country (about 60,000 people) is much higher than that of a total remaining population. As a result, the Ubikhs, people who inhabited the locality of the present-day town of Sochi, have disappeared from the ethnical map of the Caucasus. The territory of settlement of the Adigey, Abkhaz and Abaza peoples has been sharply reduced. Tens of thousands of the Chechens and Dagestanis have emigrated to Turkey. Among the emigrants are the Nogais, who had been the citizens of Russia for a long time.

This tragedy of the Caucasian people was furthered in every possible way by the government of tsarist Russia aiming at clearing out of the newly annexed territories from the freedom-loving inhabitants who caused inconvenience to them, as well as by sultanic Turkey which reckoned on reinforcing the armed forces of the country with the martial mountaineers.

The accession to Russia, at the same time, had certain positive consequences for the peoples of the Caucasus, and namely, the abolition of feudal disintegration, the economic upsurge, as well as the accession to the Russian and European civilization had a wholesome effect on the development of the native peoples of the Caucasus.

After the wreck of tsarism in 1917, the Caucasian peoples lived in a hope of restoration of the national sovereignty. In May Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan became the independent republics. In the Northern Caucasus also appeared the national governments. However, in 1920 - 1921 the armed forces of Soviet Russia resolutely suppressed the arisen independence of the Caucasus. The republics and autonomies, formed in the framework of the USSR, practically enjoyed the rights of rather limited self-government. As a result of the total political repressions, carried out in the Soviet Union in the 1920-1930s, several hundreds of thousands of representatives of the Caucasian peoples were put to death or exiled to the concentration camps by the punitive bodies. Particular suffering was inflicted on the former noblemen, intellectuals, and the representatives of the clergy and working peasantry.

During the Soviet-German war (1941 - 1945), the peoples of the Caucasus made a ponderable contribution to the victory of the Soviet Union. Yet by the end of 1943 and in 1944, quite a number of peoples, blamed for complicity with the enemy, were deported to Central Asia and Siberia. The deported also included the Karachais, Balkarians, Chechens, Ingush and "Meskhetians" from the Caucasus. At the same time, the sons of these peoples were at the front fighting against fascism. In the second half of the 1950s, when the deported peoples of the Northern Caucasus were recognized politically rehabilitated and were allowed to return to their homeland, tens of thousands of the deported were dead.

However, when speaking about the offenses of the Soviet regime, it would be unfair to hold back the truth that during the Soviet period a great deal had been done for the economic and cultural development of the Caucasus. It concerns the not numerous nations in particular, who got a written language and, consequently, the literature in their native language, owing to which favourable conditions have been provided for creation of the national scientific and technical as well as creative intelligentsia.

The “Perestroika” and disintegration of the USSR have revealed a great deal political and social-economic problems gnawing the Soviet society. It is a regrettable fact, but the Caucasus has turned out to be that “point” in the post-Soviet area where breaking of the former social and political system proceeds most painfully. This fact has its explanation but it is a special subject. It may be only added that the century - old traditions of good-neighbour relations and popular wisdom will favour the establishment of just peace and prosperity in the Caucasus.

PART ONE

GEOGRAPHY OF THE LAND OF VAINAKHS

The land of Vainakhs, or Checheno-Ingushetia, as it was referred to in the Soviet period when Chechnya and Ingushetia formed one autonomous republic as part of Soviet Russia, is located in the North-Eastern Caucasus. Two closely related nations, the Chechens, or *Nokhch*, and the Ingush, or *Galga*,⁸ as they call themselves, are the ancient inhabitants of this land. In order to emphasize their unity they bear a common name “Vainakh”, i.e., “our people”. The Vainakhs are the most numerous group of the mountaineers inhabiting the Northern Caucasus. As to the Chechens, they are the most numerous North - Caucasian people. According to the 1989 census, 957,000 Chechens and 237,000 Ingush lived in the Soviet Union. Besides that several tens of thousands of Vainakhs (mainly Chechens) live in the countries of the Near East, on the whole the descendents of the migrated in the 60s of the 19th century.

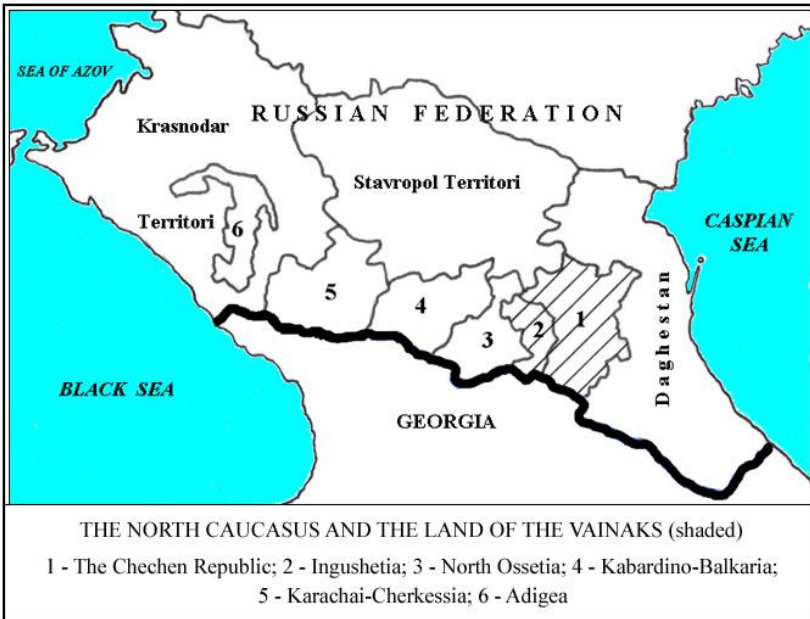
Chechnya and Ingushetia taken together (within the limits of ASSR) cover an area of 19,3 thousand sq km. According to the 1989 census the population of Chechnya and Ingushetia numbered 1,270,429. Representatives of more than 80 nationalities lived on the territory of the autonomous republic, including the Chechens - 734,501; Ingush - 163,762; Russians - 393,771; Armenians - 14,824; Ukrainians - 12,637; Kumyiks - 9,853; Nogais - 6,884; Avars - 6,276; Tatars - 5,102, and others. The mean density of the population was 61 per 1 sq km.

Chechen-Ingushetia with Grozny as its administrative and political center comprised the following administrative areas: Akhch-Martan, Vedeno, Grozny, Gudermes, Malgobek, Nadterechnyi, Nazran, Naur, Nozhai-Urt, Sunzha, Urus-Martan, Shali, Shatoy and Shelkovskaia.

In 1991 Ingushetia left the Chechen-Ingush union and with the status of a republic incorporated into Russia. The Ingush Republic includes the western districts of former Checheno-Ingushetia: Malgobek, Nazran and Sunzha districts. However, part of the territories of Malgobek and Sunzha districts is a debatable land with Chechnya, but the parties put off the final

⁸ The ethnonyms “Chechen” and “Ingush” appeared before the 18th century and come from the names of the villages-Creat Chechen and Angusht, located near present-day Grozny and Vladikavkaz.

decision for the future. The city of Nazran is considered the capital of Ingushetia, though temporarily, as Magas, a new capital of the republic is laid not far from the city.



The land of Vainakhs is bordered by Northern Ossetia in the West, the Stavropol Region in the North and Daghestan in the East (all three are held subject to the Russian Federation). The southern neighbour of Chechnya and Ingushetia is Georgia, the former Soviet republic, but an independent state now. The total length of the country's borders is above 850 km. From the North to the East the boundary line stretches up to 170 km, from the West to the East it is 150 km long.

Judging by the area occupied within the limits of the North Caucasus, the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia taken together is considerably inferior to Krasnodar Region covering an area of 76,000 sq km, Stavropol Region (66,500 sq km), and Daghestan (50,300sq km), but it significantly exceeds the territories of Karachai - Cherkessia (14,000sq km), Kabardino - Balkaria (12,500 sq km), Northern Ossetia (8,000 sq km) and Adigea (7,600 sq km).

The land of Vainakhs, though comparatively small by area, is distinguished for the diversity of natural conditions. By going from north to east one can observe a succession of landscape zones from semi-desert to steppe which at the foothills turns to forest- steppe. In the south are the mountain forests, higher up there are blossoming subalpine and alpine meadows, and above the alpine zone are seen the peaks of the Lateral Range covered with eternal snow and glaciers rising to the clouds.

The exceptional variety of natural conditions of the country can be explained mainly by the diverse structure of the surface. Nearly half of the area of Chechnya and Ingushetia is covered with lowlands and plains, as to the rest of the territory, its constituent parts are the mountains and hills.

From the northern boundary of Chechnya to the reaches of the Terek river stretches a Chechen part of the vast Terek-Kuma Lowland. Its plane surface gradually falls down to the Caspian Sea, lowering below the level of sea in the north - eastern part of the republic.

Southward of the Terek stretches the *Terek-Sunzha Upland*. Its constituent parts are two not high mountainous structures of the *Terek* and *Sunzha* ranges with soft and roundish outlines, stretching in a latitudinal direction. Between these two mountains lies the *Alkhanchurt Valley*. The *Terek-Sunzha Upland* is separated from the front ridges of the Great Caucasus by the vast and fertile *Chechen Plain*, the most densely populated part of the country.

As recently as the first half of the 19th century the Chechen Plain, like most of the flat land⁹ of Ingushetia, was covered with dense forests, the significant part of which has already been cut down. At present the tracts of forest cover nearly 17 per cent of the country's territory. The forests are abundant in the mountainous area. As to the plains, the forests here mainly grow in the valleys of the rivers.

The whole southern part of the land of Vainakhs is located on the northern slope of the Great Caucasus Range. Four parallel ridges rise here one above another, cut by the deep gorges at the bottom of which rapid mountain rivers flow rumblingly.

The Black Mountains constitute the most northern and the lowest ridge which is completely covered with dense forests giving it a dark green, almost black coloration from a distance.

⁹ Foothill plains are called "flat land" in the Northern Caucasus. As to the Southern Caucasus, this term is not applied there.

To the south of the Black Mountains stretches the *Pastbishny* (“Past-bishny” means “pasture” in Russian) ridge. The name is given owing to the fine mountainous pastures spread over the slopes of the ridge.

Behind the Pastbishny Range rise the rocky slopes of a taller and more stern Skalisty (or Rocky) Range, and farther, along the borders with Georgia, stretches a chain of snowy mountains of the Lateral Range with *Tebulosmta* Peak (Tuloy - Lam) reaching a height of 4,494 m above sea level. This is the highest point not only of Chechnya, but also of the whole Eastern Caucasus.

The foot of the northern slopes of the Pastbishny, Skalisty and Lateral Ranges, as well as the whole region of the Black Mountains, is covered with forests. The upper border of the forest zone is at elevations of 1800 - 2200 m above sea level.

According to the character of relief, the territory of the land of Vainakhs is divided into four parts: the Terek-Kuma Lowland, the Terek-Sunzha Upland, the Chechen Plain and the mountainous region. They differ from each other not only in the structure of surface, but also in the peculiarities of climate, waters, soils, flora and fauna. Owing to the essential natural differences the mode of life of the natives of these regions also differ.

The rivers form an uneven network on the territory of the land of Vainakhs. The mountainous part and the adjacent Chechen Plain are characterized by an abundance of rivers, whereas in the Terek-Sunzha Upland and in the area northward of the river Terek there are no rivers. This is caused by the peculiarities of the relief and climatic conditions, and, in the first place, by the distribution of rainfalls.

The main river of the country, the Terek, takes its source in large glaciers of the Great Caucasus. In the upper reaches the Terek is a typical rapid mountain river running down rumblingly, its turbulent stream, squeezed in the walls of rocky banks, turning the cumbroze stones and throwing the silver splashes about the air. The Ingush Republic egresses only to the small area of the gorge in the upper reaches of the river. On breaking out of the gorge, the Terek, replenished by numerous tributaries on the left side and then abruptly turning to the east, reaches the borders of Chechnya. Here the Terek is a water-abundant flat land river, working her way in a broad fertile valley. Upon reaching the territory of Daghestan, the Terek forks in a vast delta and drains into the Caspian Sea.

Almost all other rivers of Chechnya and Ingushetia, the largest of them - the *Sunzha*, *Argun*, *Assa* - taking their sources on the slopes of the Great Caucasus, retain all the features of typical mountain rivers in their upper reaches, though at the egress to the wide and open spaces these rapid

streams change into flat land rivers and slowly carry their waters to the Terek.

Lakes are found in the plains, as well as in the mountainous region of the land of Vainakhs. Although the lakes here are not numerous, they differ in origin and the character of water regime. Mention should be made of Lake *Kazenoy-Am* which is located in Chechnya at the border of Daghestan at 1870 m above sea level. This is the largest mountain lake of the North Caucasus, being 72m deep and covering an area of close to 2 sq km. The lake has been formed as a result of a landslide damming up the vast river valley. This picturesque lake is rightfully considered one of the remarkable natural sights of the whole North Caucasus.

In the highlands of southern Chechnya there is another lake called *Galanchozh - Ami*. The lake is lifeless due to the hydrogen sulphide composition of the waters, giving rise to the consideration among the native people that the lake is sacred. Not long ago the Chechens swore on the pure waters of the lake.

The climate of the country is formed by its geographical location in the North - Eastern Caucasus, i.e., in the southern part of the temperate climatic zone, as well as by the local factors, i.e., proximity to the Caspian Sea, a complex and rugged terrain, lack of high barriers in the North and mountain ranges in the south shutting Chechnya and Ingushetia off from the subtropical climate of the Southern Caucasus.

The Northern part of the land of Vainakhs is a region of continental climate: in the Terek-Kuma Lowland the mean January temperature is -3°C and that of July is 25°C . In the Chechnya Plain the mean January temperature is -4°C , that of July is $22 - 24^{\circ}\text{C}$. In the mountains the mean temperature of January ranges from -5°C in the foothill zone to 12°C and lower in the upland zone, that of January is 21°C and 5°C , respectively.

The atmospheric precipitation is distributed unevenly. There is the least rainfall in the Terek-Kuma Lowland. The annual rainfall here amounts to 300-400 mm. Southward the humidity gradually increases, the annual rainfall averaging 400-600 mm in the Chechnya Plain and 600-1200 mm - in the mountains. The northern slopes of the Great Caucasus receive more rainfall owing to the moist winds prevailing in this zone. In the upland, where the moist western air currents are particularly strong, the western slopes receive more rainfall than the eastern slopes. In the deep valleys there is comparatively less rainfall than on the surrounding slopes. The Alkhanchurt Valley is notable for particular aridness.

Owing to the long summer and heat obtained from the plants, the climate conditions of the plains of Chechnya and Ingushetia are favourable for agriculture, and especially for growing grapes, fruit and rice.

Oil and gas is the main mineral wealth of the land of Vainakhs. The deposits are chiefly exploited near Grozny and in the Terek-Sunzha Upland. Since olden times oil has been used for everyday necessities of life by the inhabitants of the region. The extraction of oil was carried out primitively in the places of its natural outlet. The oil was scooped out of special wells dug in the oil-fields. For this purpose people used leather pails. As far back as 1823 the Russians built an oil refinery in the town of Mozdok (on the territory of North Ossetia), working on the raw material extracted from the oil deposits of Chechnya. The first oil well (133m deep), from which a gusher of oil sprang out, was sunk near the city of Grozny in 1893. In that way started the development of the Grozny oil-industry, being the oldest after Baku in the post-Soviet area. In Soviet time the powerful oil refining and chemical industry, working not only on the local raw material, but also on the oil supplied from the different regions of the USSR, was founded in Checheno-Ingushetia. At present the oil industry of Chechnya is completely destroyed as a result of the Russian-Chechen war.

In addition to oil and gas the land of Vainakhs is also rich in building materials and raw materials for the engineering industry. The mineral springs and thermal waters come to the surface in many areas of the country.

PART TWO

AN ESSAY ON THE HISTORY OF THE VAINAKH PEOPLE

1. ON THE ORIGIN OF THE VAINAKHS

The Vainakhs, as it is already known to the reader, are the ancient natives of the Caucasus. It is noteworthy, that according to the genealogical table drawn up by Leonti Mroveli¹⁰, the legendary forefather of the Vainakhs was “Kavkas”, hence the name *Kavkasians*, one of the ethnicons met in the ancient Georgian written sources, signifying the ancestors of the Chechens and Ingush. As appears from the above, the Vainakhs, at least by name, are presented as the most “Caucasian” people of all the Caucasians (Caucasus - Kavkas - Kavkasians) in the Georgian historical tradition. According to the version of Leonti Mroveli, Kavkas and his brother Lek (ethnarch of the Leks – common name of the mountain peoples of Daghestan) migrated from Transcaucasia to the uninhabited Northern Caucasus and occupied the territory from the mountains to the mouth of the Volga. According to archaeological data, in the Bronze Age the ancient Caucasian tribes inhabited not only the mountains of the Northern Caucasus but also the lowland going far into the steppe.

As to the Chechens and Ingush proper, they have various legends concerning their origin, two of which are most widespread that have come down to us in different versions. According to one of these legends, the ancestor of the Vainakhs was a stranger who had to flee from Shama (Syria) to avoid a blood feud. As the saying goes, the stranger at first lived in Georgia and then settled in the Chechen Upland, in the locality of Nashkh. This legend is also interesting for containing the consideration that the Vainakhs come from the South. As regards the Syrian origin, it is evidently a late detail and is bound up with the spread of Islam. Ethnogenetic legends of other Caucasian peoples professing Islam also contain the versions considering them to be of Arabian extraction.

¹⁰ The work of leonti Mroveli: “The history of the Georgian Kings”, dealing with the history of Georgia and the Caucasus since ancient times to the 5th century A. D., is included in medieval code of Georgian annals “Kartlis Tskhovreba”.

According to another Chechen story, all Chechens come from the locality of Nashkh; hence the name “*Nakhcho*” the Chechens gave themselves. All “pure” Chechen kins (*taipes*) assert that they have come from Nashkh. It is also said that in the village of Nashkh there was a huge copper kettle riveted of separate copper plates, on which the names of all Chechen *taipes* and *tukhums* (allied tribes) were engraved. If anybody started an argument about the “purity” of any Chechen tribe, people could go to Nashkh and prove the correctness or incorrectness of the consideration.

When discussing the matter of the origin of Vainakhs it is also very important to take into consideration their genetic affiliation to the eastern branch of the Caucasian ethnolinguistic family. According to some scientists the tribes speaking the eastern-Caucasian (Vainakh-Daghestani) and the languages cognate to them, inhabited not only the eastern part of the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia but also the territory of Front Asia, right up to Zagros, Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor, quite possibly, penetrating into certain islands of the Mediterranean¹¹. In particular, the thesis of kinship of ancestors of the Vainakh-Daghestani peoples with the Hurrits and Urarts, the cultural nations of ancient times who formed the powerful states of the Ancient East in the 2nd - 1st millennia B.C., carries more conviction. As it is supposed the proto-Hurrit-Urartian and other eastern-Caucasian languages are related to each other nearly the same way as the ancient written languages of the Indo-European family.

Eventually the Vainakh-Daghestani tribes, living in the south of the Caucasus Range, almost completely merged with the other nations. The people who lived mainly in the north-western part of the Caucasus retained their ethnic identity. It was here that the Vainakh ethnic group had been formed, which much later was divided into the Chechen and Ingush peoples. In different historical periods the Iranian-speaking tribes, as well as those who came from Daghestan, Georgia and Turkic peoples, assimilated here with the Vainakhs.

2. THE VAINAKH TRIBES IN ANCIENT TIMES

The territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia has been inhabited by man since time immemorial that is evidenced by findings of archaic stone implements going back to the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic Age (more than 40 thousand years ago). Besides that the traces of palaeolithic habita-

¹¹ It is understood that nations and tribes of other languages system also lived within the mentioned limits at that time.

tion have been found not only in the lowlands but also in the highland of Ingushetia and Chechnya. With the coming of copper metallurgy (in the Caucasus copper wares were produced in the 5th - 6th millennia B.C.) and cattle-breeding into existence, the territory of the Northern Caucasus, and particularly its mountainous region, became developed more widely by man. As it is supposed, the advancement of the population further in the mountains is caused first of all by economic reasons, namely, the search for pasture-lands and demand for metal. In the Bronze Age and in the period of Early Iron (the end of the 4th - 1st millennia B.C.), farming and cattle-breeding were the basis of economy, of significant importance was hunting and gathering of wild honey as well. The social system was patriarchal-tribal.

Towards the end of the 2nd and in the first half of the 1st millennia B.C., the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia was inhabited by two groups of the native Caucasian tribes, conventionally referred to as "the tribes of Koban and Kayakent-Khorochoy cultures" by the scientists. The former inhabited Western Chechnya, Ingushetia and the area further in the west up to the upper reaches of the Kuban; as for the latter, they were the natives of Eastern Chechnya and Dagestan. The relation of these tribes to the population of other regions of the Caucasus is also traced.

The land of Vainakhs is located in that part of the Caucasus through which the peoples of Europe and Asia paved the ways of trade and military-political relations since ancient times. Therefore, the entrails of the country conceal diverse monuments of material culture, the relics not only of the local autochthonal tribes, i.e., the direct ancestors of the Chechens and Ingush, but also of the newcomer tribes who inhabited the territory for more or less long period.

Most ruinous were the invasions of the nomadic tribes from the northern steppes. The invaders not infrequently managed to seize the foothill plains of the Caucasus, pressing the native population back to the mountains.

The earliest incursion of the nomadic tribes into the Northern Caucasus evidenced by written historical sources is the invasion of the Scythians and their marches to front Asia via the Caucasus (7th century B.C.). The Iranian-speaking Scythian tribes, who came from the steppes of the Lower Volga and present Kazakhstan, first pounced on the population of the Northern Caucasus and, having overcome their resistance, penetrated through the Southern Caucasus and set off the plundering raids on the states of Front Asia. Assyrian cuneiforms and the ancient Greek historian Herodotus describe the actions of the Scythian military detachments in the countries of the Ancient East. As for the Georgian author, Leonti Mroveli, he deals with

the struggle against the nomads in the Caucasus and a great deal of his information is evidenced by the results of archaeological excavations¹².

So, it turned out that many of the formerly densely populated settlements of the North Caucasus foothill belt stopped existing abruptly in the 7th century B.C. Archaeological investigations of the Serzhen-Urta hill in Chechnya, for example, have revealed a picture of destruction of a shelter of the local (Koban) tribes as a result of the brutal assault carried by the hostile tribes from the steppes.

According to Leonti Mroveli, the Caucasians were defeated in the skirmish against the hostile strangers and retreated to the mountains where they consolidated the positions in the almost inaccessible ravines. Another ethnic term, *durdzuks*, standing for the ancestors of the Vainakhs, appears in the light of the afore-mentioned event in the Georgian chronicles. The term arises from the name of another legendary hero, “the most distinguished among the descendants of Kavkas”, Durdzuk who, as suggested by Mroveli, led the Vainakhs in the mountains¹³.

The border between the nomadic tribes and the highlanders ran mainly along the northern foot of the Black Mountains. But that was an uneasy border, as both the strangers and the settled mountaineers often made plundering raids accompanied by armed skirmishes.

Eventually, having recovered from a defeat the Vainakhs little by little began ousting of the strangers from the fertile foothill plains, but new strong units of nomads (Sarmatians, Alans and others) would emerge from time to time in the Northern Caucasus and threw them back to the mountains.

Several toponymic names of the land of Vainakhs have come down to us owing to the vague recollections of this epoch. In the Chechen Plain, for example, two rivers, the Valerik and Martan, tributaries of the Sunzha River, run not far from each other. The name “Valerik” (or Valarg) means “the river of men’s death” in Chechen. As for the “Martan” (or Mard-tan), this word can be translated from the Sarmat-Alanian language as “the river of murders”, or “the river of death (or “the dead”)”. It appears that two neighbour rivers in the foothills southward of the Sunzha are given the same sombre names, though in the different languages. The historian V.Vino-

¹² Leonti Mroveli anachronistically calls the alien steppesmen “Khazars”, by the name of the people inhabiting the steppe area north of the Caucasus. So, as it is considered to be established by the scientists the term “Khazars” in the given case stands for the Scythians.

¹³ This information of the Georgian historian about the retreat of the Vainakh plainsmen to the mountains should not be understood as if the Vainakh tribes had not lived before in the mountainous regions.

gradov, having compared these facts with the historical situation of the last centuries B.C., came to the conclusion that the area of two rivers was a borderland between the Vainakh and Iranian-speaking tribes and, at the same time, the arena of armed skirmishes, taking away the lives of lots of warriors of both sides. Those were the tragical events that caused the emergence of such specific hydronyms in the foothill zone of the North-Eastern Caucasus.

However, the relations between the nomadic tribes and highlanders consisted not only in mutual aggression. The nomads, having taken hold of the Caucasus foothill zone, gradually began to establish mutually beneficial and compliant economic and political relations with the inhabitants of the mountain gorges. Part of the nomads turned to the settled way of life and became engaged in farming, setting up the fortified settlements, the remains of which have been revealed on the territory of the Lowland of Chechnya. The chiefs of the Alan-Sarmatian and Vainakh-Daghestani tribes entered into inter-allied relations in order to carry on joint military campaigns in the rich countries located in the south of the Great Caucasus.

The rulers of ancient Iberia who controlled the main trade routes of the Central Caucasus did not fail to see in proper perspective the alliance with the martially disposed units of the North-Caucasian peoples. In the end of the 4th century B.C., Parnavaz, an Iberian of noble family rose in rebellion against the placeman of the Macedonian conquerors and called to the Sarmatians and highlanders for help. Having gained a victory over the enemies and proclaimed himself King of Iberia, Parnavaz concluded a long-term military and political alliance with the tribes of the Northern Caucasus. According to custom of those times the alliance was strengthened with dynastic marriages; so, Parnavaz married his sister to one of the Sarmatian chiefs and he got married himself to the Durdzuk woman.

A good deal of interesting information on the military and political relations between the Vainakh tribes and ancient Georgia is contained in the "Kartlis Tskhovreba" (Georgian Chronicles). For example, it tells us about the rebellion of the Georgian feudal lords or "*eristavi*" (the rulers of the military and administrative districts of Iberia) against King Saurmag, son of Parnavaz. Saurmag secretly fled to the land of Durdzuks and applied to his mother's brothers for help. Having enlisted the support of the Vainakhs and Sarmatians, together with the representatives of the Iberian nobility, still faithful to him, Saurmag launched an all-out offensive and suppressed the revolt (3rd century B.C.).

However, the relations between the neighbours were not always peaceful and inter-allied. During the reign of Mirvan, from the end of the 3rd to the early 2nd centuries B.C., the Durdzuks attacked Iberia, though suffered a defeat and took to flight. After that the Iberian kings tried to be more con-

siderate towards the northern borders and began fortifying of the boundary area. The towers and strongholds blocking up the way to the enemies appeared in the mountain gorges through which ran the paths from the Northern Caucasus to Iberia. The garrison was complemented mainly by the native mountaineers.

In ancient times those passes were called “gates” by the people. And actually, those were the “gates” through which the hostile hordes of the northern tribes broke to Transcaucasia. Of particular importance in the Central Caucasus was the Daryali pass, in the upper reaches of the Terek river (Dar-i-alan means “the Gate of Alans” in Persian). But in the mountains there were other passages of international significance not only in ancient times but also in the early Middle Ages. Thus the Georgian sources make a mention of the “Gate of Durdzüks”, a gorge partitioned off with a stone wall, on the territory of Chechnya. Apparently the Durdzuk Gate was in the Assa gorge (Ingushetia) through which lies one of the paths connecting the Northern Caucasus Lowland with Georgia.

Despite the sporadic skirmishes between the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and Georgians, the military and political alliance concluded under King Parnavaz remained valid on the whole in the first centuries of our era. Having become a strong state by that period, Iberia pursued an active foreign policy, enjoying a wide support of the northerners. Let in the territory of Iberia, the horse cavalry of the Alan-Sarmatian and Vainakh-Daghestani tribes threatened not only neighbouring Armenia and Albania but also the Parthian Kingdom and eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

The Georgian historian Leonti Mroveli, author of the 11th century, deals with the ancient history of the Vainakh people. In his writings Leonti Mroveli describes the events that had taken place long before his times according to some ancient sources that have not come down to us, partially probably, dating back to the early Iberian period. Some information about the ancestors of the Chechens and Ingush however can be found in the writings of the ancient epoch as well. Thus it is worthy of note that the name of the *Gargar* people is mentioned in the “Geography” by Strabo, as well as by Pliny Senior and Plutarch (1st - 2nd centuries A.D.). The Gargars became localized in the North-Eastern Caucasus, in the neighbourhood of the Ghels and Leghs (Daghestani tribes), as well as of the Siraks, a Sarmatian tribe. It is to be supposed that in Gargars is retraced the ethnical community with the Vainakhs as this term (“*gargar*“ in Ingush, and “*gergera*” in Chechen) exists today and means “relatives”, “kinsfolk”. According to some scientists even the name “Galgay”, the present Ingush gave themselves, is associated with the ethnic name of the Gargars.

Among the farmer tribes inhabiting the northern slopes of the Caucasus, the ethnicon “*Isadiks*” and “*Khamekits*” are met with further in the description of Strabo. Some scientists compare these terms with the names of tribal subdivisions of the Vainakh people - *Sadoy* (in Chechnya) and *Khamkhi* (in Ingushetia).

3. ...AND IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The written evidences of the Vainakh tribes in the early Middle Ages (5th – 10th centuries) are scant and fragmentary. At that period the Vainakhs inhabited on the whole the same territory as in the beginning of our era, i.e., the upland of Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as some regions adjacent to present-day Northern Ossetia and Georgia. The plain area of the Caucasus foothill up to the river Don and lower reaches of the Volga River was settled by the tribes of the Iranian-speaking Alans. The invasion of the Huns from Central Asia in the 70s of the 4th century had grave consequences in the Northern Caucasus. The Alans were crushed and partly led away with the Huns moving to the west, partly thrown back to the Caucasus mountains. According to archeological data, large groups of Alans having occupied the fertile foothill areas, gradually streamed into the depths of several mountainous regions, to the places of habitation of the autochthonal Caucasian tribes. In the central part of the Northern Caucasus this process brought to the language assimilation of the aborigenes to the strangers, resulting in the formation of the Iranian-speaking Ossetian people.

A great deal of archaeological monuments left by the Alans on the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia, both in the lowland and in the mountains, evidence the fact of penetration of the Iranian-speaking elements deep in the region. This however did not cause the ethnical change of the population for the Alan ethnic element, having lost the distinctive peculiarities, gradually mixed with the Vainakhs who had retained their culture and native language.

The Alans managed to establish themselves for a longer time in the lowland area of Chechnya and Ingushetia where they constituted the majority of the population. A number of large settlements have been revealed on this territory along the banks of the Terek and Sunzha rivers. Of particular significance of them is a small town of Alkhan-Kala, a stronghold located 16 km west of Grozny. The typical Alan ceramics dating back to the 5th – 12th centuries have been found in its environs. Alkhan - Kala apparently was the political and economic centre of the native Alan tribes.

In the environs of the town of Alkhan-Kala and in a number of settlements of the plain the archaeologists have revealed a good deal of cata-

combs - a burial-ground characteristic of the Alans. As for the tribes living in the highlands of the Caucasus, they did not build the catacombs. For centuries they steadily kept to the tradition of burying the dead in stone tombs or in the burial vaults.

At first the highlanders were hostile to the Alans who tried to press the native tribes to the south. Apparently for this reason the Georgian King Vakhtang Gorgasali received a powerful backing from the “Kings of the “Kavkasians” in his campaign in 458 in the Northern Caucasus against the Alans for their plundering raids on Georgia. However, the relations between the neighbors eventually normalized. Part of Vainakhs, quite possibly, joined the tribal confederation formed by the Alans.

“The Geography of Armenia”, dating back to the 7th century of our era, is another historical source of the early Middle Ages in which a mention of the Vainakh tribes is made. This outstanding written monument is notable for providing a good deal of interesting information on the tribes and peoples of the Caucasus highland. In enumerating the tribes of the Caucasus foothill and the Great Caucasus, the author of “The Geography of Armenia” refers to the ethnicons that are evidently related to the Vainakhs, namely, *Nakhchmatians*, *Kusts* and *Dourts*. According to data of the linguistic studies the “Nakhchmatians” are referred to the Chechen-speaking ethnic group (*nakhchi mott* - “the Chechen language”). As to the ethnicon “Kusts”, one can easily catch the term “Kists” (“Kistins” in Russian) – a collective name the Georgians call the mountaineer Vainakhs up till now, both the Chechens and the Ingush¹⁴. As regards the tribe of “Dourts”, it is evident that they are Durdzuks, the people who are often mentioned in Georgian historical sources of later period. In describing the Caucasian mountaineers the author of “The Geography of Armenia”, apparently, to a considerable degree took advantage of the information that had come down from the Georgians, and it is small wonder, for Georgians, being direct neighbours of the Vainakhs, could tell the Armenians as well as other more distant peoples about them. As for the simultaneous mentioning of several Vainakh ethnicons in the “Geography of Armenia”, it can be explained by the ethnopolitical division of the Chechens’ and Ingush’s ancestors into a number of tribes who were known to the neighbours under different names.

It is to be supposed that Nakhchmatians lived in South-Eastern Chechnya (historical Ichkeria or present-day Nozhai-Yurtov and Veden districts),

¹⁴ At present, under the name “Kists” mainly go the Chechens and Ingush inhabiting the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia. Their ancestors migrated To Georgia in the middle of the 19th century.

called “*Nokhchi-mokhk*”, i.e.,”land of the Nokhchi (Chechens)”. Later, in the process of ethnical consolidation of the Chechen tribes, the natives of this region extended their tribal name - “*nokhchi*” - to all other tribes speaking the Chechen language. The leading role of the inhabitants of Nokhchi-mokh in forming the Chechen ethnical group may well be explained by the fact that their land always was economically strong and far-famed as a fertile agricultural region, a granary of the native tribes and peoples.

In the 7th – 9th centuries the Khazars’ State was the main political power in the North Caucasus. The Khazars, a semi-nomadic Iranian-speaking nation inhabiting the North-Western Caspian Region, had formed a state, incorporating almost all steppe and forest-steppe provinces of Eastern Europe. In the south the Khazars dominated over the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and in the north under their political domination were the East-Slavic and Finno-Ugric tribes.

The Khazars persistently fought against the Arabs having dominion over Transcaucasia. The peoples of the North Caucasus found themselves involved in this struggle in some way or other, coming out mainly on the side of the Khazars and owing to this not infrequently were attacked by the Arab troops. Apart from other considerations in organizing the campaigns against the mountaineers, the Arabs had for an object to hold the mountain passes of the Caucasus, including those ones which were located on the paths lying through the land of Vainakhs.

In the 8th – 9th centuries, the development of productive forces is to be observed in the Northern Caucasus. In the lowlands of present-day Chechnya and Ingushetia in particular most part of the population, as in former times, was engaged in farming. It is obvious that people already used the ploughs by that time. The excavations of the culture strata of settlements have revealed a good deal of household pits for grain, granaries and mill-stones, the remains of cultured plants.

Animal husbandry, since olden times based on the system of driving cattle away to the distant pastures, was the most important branch of farming, which included breeding of horned cattle, sheep breeding and goat breeding.

In the 1st millenium A.D., an important role in production activity of the Vainakhs was also played by handicraft production, namely, pottery and metal - working. Quite a number of earthenware crockery has been found among the household necessities in burial places. Some potter’s stoves of that period have also come down to us. By form and technology the Vainakh ceramics bears analogy with that of the Northern Caucasus and Khazaria State.

Of particular importance was metal-working. Arms, implements of production as well as articles of adornment were made of metal. The local handicraftsmen were masters of such technique of metal-working as moulding, smithing, coinage, carving, stamping, incrustation, wire-drawing.

In the period under review the Vainakhs established trade and economic as well as political relations with the near and distant neighbours. It is natural that the closest links had they with the direct neighbours, namely, the Alans (Ossetes) in the west, the Georgian mountaineer tribes (Mtiuls, Pkhovs, and Tushis) in the south, the Daghestani tribes in the east and the Khazars in the north. The articles of blacksmith's work and jewelry, as well as other handicraft wares were brought to the land of Vainakhs from the centres of trade and handicraft of Daghestan and Khazaria, such as Derbent, Ziriheran (Kubachi), and Semender, far-famed all over the Eastern world.

The excavations have revealed a great number of coins and other objects made beyond the limits of the Caucasus, evidencing the trade and economic relations with the distant countries. Thus a bronze censer in the form of an eagle casted in Bars (Iraq) in the 8th century, which was found in Ingushetia, or a buried treasure containing 200 silver Arabian Dirhams of the 8th – 9th centuries which was found in the vicinity of the stanitsa of Sunzhensk, is the evidence of the aforesaid.

The fall of the Khazars State (10th century) cleared the way to the west for a new wave of the Turkic nomadic tribes. Thus, in the 11th century numerous Kipchak tribes appeared in the East-European and North-Caucasus steppes. They, apparently, pressed the Alans ruling over the lowland regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia and seized part of their lands. It is known that in the end of the 12th century the headquarters of one of the Kipchak khans was located on the bank of the Sunzha river.

The social system of the Vainakh tribes in the end of the 1st to the beginning of the 2nd millenia can be qualified as a transitional period from the primitive communal to the class system. The archaeological monuments evidence that stratification of the Vainakh population according to property, leading to the emergence of social inequality of unequal status in society, had been accomplished. The excavations show that a certain tribal cemetery, as a rule, is a burial-ground for the very poor and, at the same time, the place where tens of luxurious and rich belongings are found. In describing the events of the year 458 the Georgian historian Juansher (8th century) mentions "the kings of the Kavkasians" and, undoubtedly, among them are implied the leaders of the Vainakh tribes. For the present instance, although the term "king" ("mepe" in Georgian) is rather polysemantic, the representative of a feudal country most likely would have called by this word the leaders of

considerably higher rank than mere tribal elders or military leaders of socially free communities.

The ancestors of the Vainakh people were pagans. They believed that all around was settled by the gods and spirits. *Dela* - the supreme god of the sky was considered to be the main deity. Their pagan gods also were: *Sela* - god of Thunder and Lightning, *Furki* - goddess of Wind, *Aza* - goddess of the Sun, *Elta* - god of Hunting and Cereals, *Khagaerda* - god of Rocks, *Molyiz-Erdyi* - god of War, *Khinana* - "Mother of Water" and other deities and spirits. The Vainakhs especially worshiped *Tusholi* - goddess of Fertility, with the cult of which many of the rites and superstitions were related. Although the points (sanctuaries, monuments, sacred places) related to the name of Tusholi are scattered about the whole mountainous part of the land of Vainakhs, the centre of its cult apparently was the Assa Hollow in Ingushetia where a wooden image of the goddess in an iron mask, figuring a woman with a severe look, was kept. (Tusholi is the only Vainakh deity having an anthropomorphous image). When in spring the priest (*tsyeni stag*, i.e., "a pure man") carried the idol out of the sanctuary, the horrified people kissed the ground not daring to look at the Goddess. It is said that according to a popular belief even childless women could find prosperity if they touched this figure.

The pagan sanctuaries built of stone on the crests of the mountains, were also dedicated to the gods and spirits. Those, as a rule, were either pillared columns with niches turned to the south or small houses with one or two entries.

In the 12th to the early 13th centuries, the Vainakh tribes were under the political influence of the feudal Georgian Kingdom which had reached the peak of its power by that period. The main instrument of this influence was Christian religion arduously propagated by the Georgian missionaries in the mountains of the North Caucasus. From the Kuban basin to Daghestan inclusively, one cannot fail to see the remains of the churches and sanctuaries built by them, at one time the centres of spreading of the Orthodox Church, the Georgian written language and culture.

It was the vital interest of the Georgian rulers to gain the fidelity and inter - alliance of the mountaineer tribes who stood guard over the Caucasus passes and provided the Georgian army with auxiliary detachments. To all appearance, at the period under review all principal mountain passes of the Great Caucasus were under the control of the Georgian Kingdom, but it would have been difficult to retain the dominating position without loyalty of the leaders of local tribes. As centuries before, the Daryali Canyon as well as other adjacent roads connecting the Northern Caucasus with Central Transcaucasia, roused particular interest of the Georgian Court. Owing to

the fact that the territory of present-day Ingushetia is exactly in this area, it must have been the object of particular consideration. This seems to account for the concentration of quite a number of Christian antiquities in Ingushetia, especially in the hollow of the Assa river which is considered the hearth of medieval Christianity of the Vainakh tribes. The temple of the 12th century *Tkhaba-Erdyi* is noteworthy for illustration of the above-said. According to the size (16,20 m x 7,60 m) and artistic finish the temple is the most significant Christian monument in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Especially graceful is the bas-relief frieze on the western facade of the temple, above the main entrance, where, in the centre of the three-cornered composition framed by a convex cylinder, there is a figure of the founder of the temple in sitting posture. Above his head there is a model of the church. On both sides there are two standing figures. One of them is in the garments of a priest and has two bunches of grapes on his shoulders. The other figure holds a cross and a sword. In the upper part, next to the model of the church is carved a hand with a construction angle bar and inscriptions in Georgian. Above the frieze there also were three bas-reliefs with the angels. Regrettably, only part of the stones with carving has come down to our time.

The parishioners of the Christian temple were the local highlanders - Vainakhs. Even later, when feudal Georgia fell into decay and was unable to uphold the influence in the mountains of the Northern Caucasus, the natives of the region took care of the temple, cherished the church utensils, Georgian books, etc.

The Christian monument *Tkhaba-Erdyi* is not the only one in the land of Vainakhs. *Alby-Erdyi*, *Targhim* and some others are the temples of the same period constructed in Ingushetia and on the territory adjacent to Chechnya. Yet the religion brought from Georgia had not taken roots among the highlanders as it fell short of the level of their social and economic development. Moreover, being Christians formally, the Vainakhs still held sacred their ancient pagan gods.

Thus, with the help of Christianity the ruling cliques of Georgia sought to draw the highlanders of the North Caucasus within the orbit of their influence and make them their vassals. The feudal-tribal clique of the North-Caucasian peoples seemingly made no resistance to the rapprochement with Georgia. The participation in triumphant campaigns of the Georgian troops against the wealthy cities of the Near East brought them the spoils and glory.

The rulers of Georgia recruited their armies from the detachments of the North-Caucasian peoples even when they fought defence wars. For example, it is mentioned in "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("The Georgian Chronicles") that the Durdzuks took part in the struggle waged against the troops of Jalal-

ad-Din of Khoresm when he assaulted Tbilisi in 1226. The Vainakhs as well as some other peoples of the Northern Caucasus apparently participated in most of large-scale wars of feudal Georgia in the 11th – 15th centuries, but the annals of that period, known for conciseness of the statements, not always fix the attention on the fact that was in the usual run of things at that time. Sometimes the auxiliary detachments of the northerners are referred to as “all the mountaineers” in Georgian annals.

The Caucasus many times was subjected to the invasions of the foreign conquerors, but one of the most devastating was the invasion of the Mongols. For the first time the reconnaissance detachments of the Mongols appeared in the Caucasus in 1220-1222, though they occupied the steppes and foothill regions of the Northern Caucasus as a result of multiple large-scale campaigns in 1237-1240. With fire and sword marched the Mongol hordes all over the front Caucasus region and routed the Kipchaks, Adigeys and Alans. The Alan settlements in the plains of Chechnya and Ingushetia were razed to the ground.

The Mongols made an attempt to penetrate into the mountains settled by the Vainakh tribes, but the invaders were met with stubborn resistance which they were unable to break down. Tactical characteristics of the wooded country turned to be advantageous for the mountaineers to hold against the enemy attacks and offered insuperable obstacles to the Mongol warriors who had been grown up in the spacious steppes. Owing to this the highlanders of Daghestan, as well as quite a number of the Alans and Adigeys who had moved back to the mountains, managed to maintain their independence of the Mongols.

The Mongols however were long in abandoning their attempt to subjugate the inhabitants of the mountainous gorges. According to historical chronicles, in the 50s - 70s of the 18th century the passages of arms between the native Caucasian mountaineers and the Mongol invaders still took place in the Northern Caucasus. However, the easily accessible steppes and foothills were solidly incorporated in a world empire of the descendants of Jenghiz Khan. After its division into several Mongol states (uluses) the North-Caucasus plains were attributed to the Ulus of Djuchi, i.e., the Golden Horde. The Khans of Djuchi Ulus dominating over the vast territory from Hungary and the Gulf of Finland to the great Siberian River Ob, and from the northern taiga up to the mountains of the Caucasus and the Central Asian steppes, time and again set up their camps of nomads on the banks of the Terek and Sunzha rivers.

People’s memory of the Vainakhs has brought down to our time quite a number of legends about the struggle waged by the ancestors of the Chechens and Ingush against the numerous regiments of the foreign invaders

living in the yurtas (portable dwellings of the Turkic-Mongol nomads), containing a good deal of episodes of the heroic battles fought against the insidious enemy. Of particular interest is the legend about a twelve-year defence of the mountain Tebulosmta, on the slopes of which the inhabitants of the Arghun Gorge took shelter. The names of historically well-known Mongol khans and military leaders are sometimes mentioned in such legends.

In the second half of the 14th century the weakening of powerful Golden Horde begins. In the end of the century, ruthless conqueror Tamerlane, the ruler of Central Asian Jenghizides, stroke such a crushing blow at the Horde that it could never recover from the defeat. In 1395 - 1396 Tamerlane with his regiments was in the Northern Caucasus sowing everywhere death and destruction. Part of the population of the Front Caucasus was annihilated. The hordes of Tamerlane invaded the land of Vainakhs too, the invasion being accompanied by extermination of large number of the population and destruction of fortresses, churches and pagan sanctuaries.

Constantly being under the threat of inevitable invasions of the conquerors from steppes, the Vainakhs, blocked up in the mountains, fortified their settlements and dwelling buildings. It was in the 13th – 14th centuries, when the first defence towers came into existence in the mountains of the North Caucasus. Such towers eventually have become an usual attribute of the Vainakh settlements, lending them a distinctive and unique appearance.

In ancient times the dwellings of the Vainakhs were small wattle houses coated with clay and covered with flat clay roofs. The strongholds built long before the Christian Era were somewhat of so-called “Cyclopean” buildings, i.e., rough structures of big stones. The fortresses of Cyclopean type were built in many regions of the Caucasus in the Bronze Age. According to supposition of certain scientists, this kind of towers were used in the land of the Vainakhs sometimes right up to the middle of the Christian Era. It is also believed that exactly Cyclopean structures laid the foundation of tower buildings of the later period.

The first watch towers, erected at the entries of the main gorge, as well as those scattered about the foothill area, apparently came into being in the 13th – 14th centuries, i.e., during the epoch of struggle against the Mongols. It was the duty of the highlanders’ garrisons to keep a watch over the movement of the nomadic hordes and military detachments of the Tatar - Mongols and notify the population about the threat of war.

However, in the struggle with such a numerous and well - organized enemy as the Mongols were in the period under review, that kind of tower structures could have been used only for limited purposes. In the period of mass construction of the battle towers, that took place already in the 15th-17th centuries, they were built for the urgent purpose of defending the popu-

lation from the armed attacks, as well as from the raids of not numerous detachments of the hostile communities. The analogous towers built with the same purpose are also met with in other mountainous regions of the Caucasus (from Western Georgia up to Daghestan), as well as beyond its limits. However, one cannot fail to notice the peculiarity of the tower villages of the Vainakhs in comparison with the fortified settlements of other peoples.

There are two types of towers in Chechnya and Ingushetia - the dwelling (*gala*) and military (*vou*) ones. Not infrequently are found in this region such structures which combine the peculiarities of both types. The dwelling towers are considered to be more archaic. By outward appearance those are squat right-angled buildings, slightly narrowed in the upper part for more firmness. They are met with in many mountain settlements and sometimes were used as dwelling buildings yet in the first half of the 20th century. The *galas*, as it was customary, were two- or three-storey houses of approximately 12 m height. Most commonly they stand on convenient places, not far from a river, melting into the surrounding landscape. The walls are of well adjusted stones strengthened with clay-lime mortar. In the centre of a dwelling tower, as a rule, was arranged a pillar, the foundation of which was massive enough to bear the floor beams. The floor was made of wooden girders boarded with the slate and brushwood plates covered with felt. The dwelling towers had flat roofs laid of log and brushwood layers covered with earth and rammed by means of special rollers. The walls of a tower raised above the roofing forming a parapet which made the roof more convenient for watching around.

Each floor of the dwelling tower had a separate door. One could not get to the second or third floor from the outside without a ladder. The first floor served as a cattle-shed. The upper storeys were residential and at the same time people kept the supplies there. Between the storeys of the tower special hatchways were arranged for inner communication.

There are also found loop-holes and other defensive devices in a dwelling tower, allowing us on the whole to characterize it as a house-fortress.

The interior of a dwelling tower was rather spacious. The walls most likely were decorated with carpets and arms. There were numerous niches in the walls for keeping of kitchen utensils. Part of the dwelling was occupied by wide plank-beds where people slept and piled the bedding.

Watch towers, built for purely defensive purposes, are considered to be the peak of Vainakh architecture. The height of the towers reach 25 – 20 m, the walls are 6 metres wide at the foot of the building. The towers, as a rule, have square foundations, though there are some with the rectangular beds.

The upper part of the tower is noticeably narrow (at the height of the last storey the walls are twice as narrow than at the foot of the building) and is completed with a pyramidal-stepped roofing crowned with a light-coloured conoid stone - *Tsiogal*. Without this stone a tower could not be considered to be completed and the householder granted the builder a horse or a bull in addition to the extra pay.

Rather seldom are also met the towers of another kind, which have flat roofs either with projections at the corners or ringed with the entire parapet.

Vou, as a rule, is a tower of four or five storeys. The doorway is arranged on the second floor, rather seldom - on the third floor as well, making the tower a defensive installment. In case of danger people could quickly take away the ladder - a girder with notches - and shelter themselves in the tower. The loop-holes on the upper floors, narrow on the outside and widened in the inside, are convenient for shooting with a gun or even from a bow and arbalest. At the same time such loop-holes made a good cover for the shots from the enemy laying siege to the tower. At the very top of the tower on its four sides overhang a special equipment (*Mashikuli*) out of which stones and boiling water was brought down upon the enemies approaching the foot of the tower. In the same place, on top of the tower, there are four rather wide window openings through which one can view the environs at a great distance away from the tower. It was often done that dwelling and defensive towers with auxiliary outbuildings were built in immediate proximity, enclosed with a stone wall, thus forming castle complexes.

The dwelling as well as military towers in particular were decorated with intricate petroglyphic drawings of crosses, snakes, stylized figures of people and animals. Here one can also see a stone-carved picture of a man's hand. It is a palm of the master who has carved it as if guaranteeing the firmness of the building.

In constructing the towers not infrequently were engaged the whole families and the art of stonemason was passed on from one generation to another. The Vainakh masters were far-famed beyond the limits of their country. This is evidenced by the fact that many towers in Ossetia and neighbouring regions of Georgia have been built by the Vainakh masters.

The weakening and fall of the Golden Horde allowed the Kabardians (the eastern branch of the Adigeys) to settle broadly in the flat zone of the Front Caucasus. In the northern part of the present-day territories of Chechnya and Ingushetia the lands up to the Black Mountains turned to be under their control. On the banks of the Terek, Sunzha and other rivers the archaeologists have revealed not great burial mounds of the Kabardians. It is interesting to note that the deceased are buried lying on the back with their heads directed to the west. In such burials often are found small arms (sabres, dag-

gers, arrows), adornments, flints for striking fire, dice and other household things.

Besides the Kabardians the flat country of the Middle Terek was also inhabited by the descendants of horde nomads (Nogais and others). Of all the monuments left by them the *Borga-Kash* mausoleum, located on one of the spurs of the Sunzha Range in Ingushetia, is worthy of note. The mausoleum is a graceful structure built according to the traditions of Moslem sepulchral architecture, and at the same time it is the only historical monument of that kind in the Front Caucasus which has come down to our time.

The Vainakhs, inhabiting the foothill zones of the Caucasus in ancient times but forced to move back to the mountains as a result of repeated invasions of the nomads, have never broken off with the flat country completely, retaining the economic, political and military relations with the inhabitants of the steppes. For example, traditional driving away of cattle, widespread in the Caucasus implies the driving of cattle to the pastures of the flat country in winter and, usually, once the state of war faded, the highlanders made arrangements with the masters of the steppes about apportioning of part of the winter pasturable lands for them.

During the period of peaceful co-existence the mountaineers and inhabitants of the steppes exchanged the products of their labour, the leaders of the tribes entered into the alliances and agreements with each other. Besides that people living in the mountains, as well as in the plain, were also bound up with each other by trade and handicraft centres of the Front Caucasus that always had mutual close economic relations with the upland regions.

Owing to this the Vainakhs, even when they found themselves practically forced out of the low places, never lost live contacts with the lowland. It can be said especially in connection with the part of flat area from the Black Mountains to the river Terek. It is no coincidence that the Chechens call this territory a "visible plain" and with that they mark not only the possibility of visual observation of the territory from the slopes of the mountains, but also a good acquaintance with it.

Thus, the plain had always been familiar to the Vainakhs and, when at last relatively favourable conditions for migration to the lowland zone were created as a result of the collapse of Golden Horde, first the Chechen and then the Ingush tribes came down to the foothills and occupied the lands which their ancestors had abandoned under pressure of the steppe nomads in olden times. A great number of the Vainakh settlements came into existence on the banks of the rivers Terek and Sunzha and their tributaries (up to the Aktash River in Northern Dagestan) as a result of the migration of Vainakhs to the lowland zone, which started in the 15th century and lasted over a long period of time (16th – 18th centuries), it being known that in

certain places the Vainakhs lived alternately with the Kabardians, Kumyiks and Nogais.

When settling in the North-Caucasian Lowland the Vainakhs clashed with the Kabardian and Kumyik feudal lords who sought to rule over the plain. In the result the feudal lords subjected several Vainakh communities to their rule and the latter were forced to pay them duty in kind, i.e., by sheep or other kind of live-stock. In other respects the Chechen-Ingush tribes enjoyed the complete independence. The feudal lords did not interfere in their domestic affairs.

The struggle of the Vainakh tribes is glorified in folk songs of the Chechens and Ingush. They sing of the heroes of this long fight resulting in liberation of the Vainakhs from being subject to the rule of lords of the neighbouring nations.

During the period under review the feudal lords appeared among the Vainakhs too. The development of feudalization of the tribal leaders of the Vainakh people's ancestors was in progress for a long time, though the process was slow because of the living conditions in the mountains - the lack of limited economic base contributed to preservation of the institute of tribal system over a long period of time. Migration of the mountain tribes to the plain speeded up the formation of feudal relations, and the Vainakhs inhabiting in the lowland zone outstripped in social development their kinsmen remaining in the mountains. Parallel with the elders (*tkhamada* - head of a territorial-tribal community, whose position gradually became hereditary) the military leaders (*byachi*) began to rise socially. The *byachi*, at the head of the armed detachments (*gheri*), made plundering raids on the neighbours, captured cattle and other property, took people in captivity and turned them into their slaves (*layi*).

The Chechen and Ingush legends give a vivid description of the nobility of olden times. According to the legends the "noblemen" or "glorious" people were famed for their wealth. They possessed the towers and castles, they were surrounded with body guards, entered into friendly alliances with the Georgian, Kabardian, Daghestani, Ossetian, Nogai and Kalmyk feudal lords. The weak social elements were forced to subject themselves to the patronage of the noblemen and in return for protection and security to pay them feudal homage.

In the first half of the 17th century the Chechen Plain was settled by the Turlovs, feudal lords who had moved from Avaria (the Daghestan Upland). Being in the forefront of the struggle waged by the Chechens against the Kabardian and Kulmyik feudal lords, they united part of Chechen communities. In several historical documents the Turlovs are referred as the owners of the "land of the Chachan". The feudal relations of the Vainakhs

however did not have a subsequent development. Thus, having made themselves free from the rule of the Kabardian and Kumyk lords, the Chechens banished their own feudal lords as well and began to live again united in free communities (societies). The Vainakhs have a saying: "When one is voted a prince (*ela*) the others become their slaves", which apparently dates back to that time.

Thus, as a result of the struggle against the feudalistic nobility the Vainakh tribal and territorial communities managed to a great extent to uphold the liberty and their social order. As distinct from most of the regions of the North Caucasus, Chechnya and Ingushetia failed to create basis for formation of the legally official aristocracy. "We all are free" - proudly declared the Chechens. Yet, it goes without saying that we cannot speak about the complete equality of rights among the Vainakhs. The elders and military leaders stored up the riches as before, they held power and had great influence, they owned slaves and had dependent people. The society consisted of rich and poor, as well as of mighty and powerless families. For example, if we glance at the relations of the Russians and Ingush in the 18th and early 19th centuries, it is noticeable that usually the "best" and "honorable" families spoke in the name of the nation and made agreements on behalf of all the Ingush.

Social mode of life of the Vainakhs was regulated by the customary (unwritten) law.

The right of a master of the house was held sacred. Any infringer bore significantly more responsibility for the insult or violence committed in the house than for the same delinquencies in the street.

Blood feud is one of the most substantial institutes of the tribal system that Vainakhs have retained up to now. According to custom, any insult, mutilation or murder should have been revenged accordingly (if there had not taken place any action of reconciliation according to the intricate standards of customary law). In the case of a murder the relatives of a dead man announced themselves to be the deadly enemies to the murderer and his relatives (with the exception of children, women and old people), i.e. they sought to kill them in their turn. If it was found that a murderer had escaped from the avengers or died of some other reason, the hostility continued and the vengeance could be inflicted on his father, brother or an elderly son who had to pay for somebody else's fault with his life. Not infrequently the vengeance was passed on from one generation to another, till one of the hostile families moved to another place or was annihilated.

For a murder committed inside the family quite different standards of customary law were in force and very seldom came it to the retaliatory murders.

The custom of hospitality was also considered to be sacred. Every house was open for a guest. Any traveller, despite his nationality or faith, seeking shelter for the night or in bad weather, could ask any host to stay at his house and he would be welcomed. In Vainakh family the host did his best to please the guest and even if the latter was his enemy, the Vainakh did not have the right to take vengeance on him, quite the reverse, he was obliged to protect him even at the cost of his life. In the legends of all the Caucasian highlanders, from the Abkhazians in the west to the Daghestani peoples in the east, the custom of hospitality is superior to the law of blood feud.

To manifest the priority of hospitality over other obligations among the Vainakhs we can refer to the Ingush song about a boy by name Gazi.

“A certain Ingush by name Oldan had a son Gazi. The boy had been proposed to a young Kabardian girl as a husband since his childhood. It was Oldan who had arranged this match-making but soon somebody killed him. One day when Gazi was sitting by the door of his house and sorrowfully thinking about his father, a rider approached his house and told him that his father’s friends were coming to visit him in the evening. This message was soon followed by another one and Gazi got to know that his father’s murderer had been seen in their parts and he would slip away soon. So, Gazi had to intercept him that night on a bridge in the gorge. The second messenger had no sooner gone than the third visitor came to Gazi and told him that they were going to give his bride to another man that night.

Gazi went into the house, threw himself on the bed and began to cry. His mother asked him: “Why are you crying, my son?” Gazi told her about the three messages and said: “I am crying because I don’t know what to do first - shall I receive the guests and play host, shall I take vengeance on my enemy or win back my bride?” And his mother answered him: “Let your enemy go, for there is time for everything and you will revenge for your father; as to your bride, she won’t go from you if you are fated to be his husband. So, you must receive the guests as your father did; it is the first and most important thing to do”.

Gazi followed her advice and welcomed the guests. At night when all were asleep he went to the bridge and killed his deadly enemy. Then he darted to the village of his promised wife, abducted the girl and before day-break returned home together with his bride, and brought the cut-off head of his father’s murderer. In the morning when the pursuers of the bride arrived, his father’s friends went out of the house and settled the discord peacefully. That is the way Gazi was rewarded for adherence to his duty of hospitality”.

It should be mentioned that the Chechens and Kumyiks as well have their own versions of this song.

The poem “A Guest and A Host”, one of the best works of Vazha Pshavela, classic of Georgian literature, is also dedicated to the custom of hospitality and blood feud among the Vainakhs. According to the plot the main character of the poem Jokola, Kist by birth, was on a visit at the house of Zviadauri, who was Khevsur by birth¹⁵. The countrymen of the host recognized their enemy who had killed many of their tribesmen; one of them was Jokola’s brother too. In spite of this Jokola took up arms to protect his guest and fought a battle against his neighbours and relatives who had come to capture Zviadauri. This is the answer, Jokola gave his countrymen : - “Today he is my guest/ And even if he owes me blood of my brother and my relatives/ I will not betray him/ I swear by the Creator, our Lord”. His words point out, as postulated by the tradition of the highlanders, the superiority of the law of hospitality to the law of vengeance.

The Vainakhs living in the mountains were settled in groups allied by blood relationship. Each village, as a rule, was inhabited by representatives of one family (taip). Several allied families formed a *tukhum*, the members of which were bound by obligation to settle the intensive conflicts peacefully and help each other in the war. The tukhums also differed from each other in the peculiarities of their own vernaculars. In Chechnya, for example, several tukhums are known - *Nokchmakhoy (Ichkerian)*, *Akchyi (Akian)*, *Chebarloy*, *Malkhyi*, *Shoutoy*, etc.

The Ingush were also divided into a number of territorial-tribal groups. The *Galgais* in particular (according to this name, as we know, the Ingush people have determined the name of their nation) lived in the upper reaches of the Assa river, to the east of them the *Isorins* were settled, and to the west - the *Terakhs*; along the rivers Assa and Sunzha lived the *Galashians*, the lower reaches of the rivers Terek and Sunzha were occupied by the *Nazrans*, etc.

Along the middle reaches of the Sunzha River and its tributaries lived the *Arshtins*, known in literature by the Kumyik name - *Karabulaks*. They bordered on the Ingush community on one side; on the other side their neighbours were the Chechens. In historical sources some refer them to the Ingush tribe, others to the Chechen one; in some cases they are referred to as an independent branch of the Vainakh root. The Arshtin dialect apparently was somewhat of an intermediate one between the dialects of the Chechen and Ingush languages. Today it is a matter of some difficulty to verify the

¹⁵ Khevsurs – Georgian mountaineer tribe. The Vainakhs and Khevsurs live side by side on the both slopes of the Main Caucasus Range.

above-said, as in May and July 1865 the Arshtins almost with its full complement (1366 families) migrated to the Ottoman Empire. As regards the 75 families that remained in the Caucasus, they have mixed with the other Vainakhs.

Owing to the propinquity between the Chechen and Ingush tribes displayed in language and many other elements of material and spiritual culture, in historical sources they are often presented as a single whole ethnographic community. Even the authors of the 19th century not infrequently call them by their common name “Chechens”, i.e., by the name of more numerous people. (For example, “The Ingush are the people of Chechen tribe”). Sometimes the Chechens, Ingush and Karabulaks (or Arshtins) are referred to as independent ethnic units.

The ancient Vainakh tribes settled separately on a vast territory of the Caucasus Plain to a great extent lost their blood ties. Big villages inhabited by the representatives of different tribes and numbering nearly 200 and more farm steads began to come into existence all over the region. Each of such villages or several villages together formed a separate independent society headed by an elder (a foreman) who bore the responsibility for any decision taken concerning the domestic affairs of the community. The elders settled the quarrels and arguments arisen among the representatives of separate taipes, discussed the matters concerning the whole community.

A council of the elders - *Mekh-khel*, i.e., a “council of the country” was formed in order to settle the internal and external problems, regulate the prices and units of measure in trading, and co-ordinate other difficult questions. The Council, a kind of supreme legislative body of Chechnya, assembled on the sacred mountains and hills where in former times the pagan priests offered prayers to the gods. For disobedience and non-fulfilment of the decisions taken by the Council the guilty people were punished severely, - there were even cases of burning of the whole villages. However, the authority of the *Mekh-khel* sometimes gained strength and sometimes grew weak in accordance with certain internal and external reasons, and even those Vainakhs who recognized this body, occasionally refused to obey.

The economic life of the Vainakhs to a great extent depended on the natural environment of their habitation. For example, in the mountainous districts of Southern Chechnya, known for the lack of arable lands, the highlanders primarily were engaged in cattle-breeding. It was required to make every effort in order to develop farming in this region and the Vainakhs had to make maximum use of even the smallest patches of land on the sloping banks of the rivers or arrange the artificial terraces on the bare rocks by lifting the earth in baskets. In the vicinity of Lake Kazenoy-Am, for example, the traces of terraces have been preserved on the almost inaccessible slopes.

After migration to the fertile lands of the plain that had not been ploughed for ages the interest of the Vainakhs for farming began to grow. They sowed wheat, barley, millet, and maize, cultivated vegetable crops, and laid out orchards. Cattle breeding, as before, remained to be of great importance. The Vainakhs bred neat cattle as well as small cattle, sheep and goats. They were engaged in horse-breeding too. Some Vainakh farm steads were set aside for bee-keeping. Hunting was a general occupation of the Vainakhs everywhere.

The Vainakhs had well-developed crafts and trades. They made felt cloaks, broad cloth, earthenware, weaved rugs. In many auls lived the gunsmiths and silversmiths. The gunsmiths produced fire-arms (guns, pistols) and cold steel (sabers, daggers, knives). Particularly far-famed were the damask steel swords made in the aul of Atagi in Chechnya. The villages of Shatoy, Vedeno, Dargo, Shali and others also were the popular centres of metal-working. The silversmiths made set belts for women as well as for men, the beautiful adornments for women, silver sets on the arms, breast collars, etc.

Besides the adornments and arms the Vainakhs produced agricultural implements and the articles of domestic utility.

4. THE OUTSET OF THE RUSSIAN-VAINAKH RELATIONS

The penetration of the Russian state into the North-Eastern Caucasus began in the 16th century when the first Cossack settlements and fortresses of tsarist Russia appeared in the Terek belt of the present-day territory of Chechnya and Daghestan. The Cossacks, i.e., “free-thinking people”, were the peasants and dwellers of town suburbs who had escaped feudal bondage in Russia. They settled on the banks of the Don, Volga, Terek, Yayka (the Urals) and other rivers which ran on the territories that had not been incorporated into the Russian state by that period. The Cossacks were engaged in hunting, gathering of wild honey, later they set to agriculture, not infrequently they supported themselves by plundering, but more often they established peaceful relations with the native population, separate representatives of which joined the Cossacks for some reason or other and became the members of their community.

The Moscow tsars made the best use of the militarized Cossack communities for their benefit in expending the territories of Russia. Providing them with ammunition, money, bread and granting them certain privileges the Russian rulers attached the Cossacks and gradually turned them into the advance-guard of Russia’s military-political expansion. So, the Cossack settlements were the places where the tsar’s troops and officials would even-

tually appear and set up building of strongholds, thereby bringing the new lands under the wardship of Russia's centralized state.

The same fate overtook the Terek region where, apparently in the 16th century, the groups of Cossacks began to settle mainly in the middle reaches of the river near the outfall of the Sunzha. It was here that the first stronghold of tsarist Russia with regular garrison and artillery came into being in the year 1567. On the base of this stronghold was formed the first Cossack military community known under the name "Terek Cossack Troops". Soon the centre of Russia's domains in the North - Eastern Caucasus was transferred to Terky, a town built in 1588 in the outfall of the Terek, and the north bank of the river officially became part of the Russian state.

Soon the tsar's voivodes made a number of drastic efforts to gain ground southward of the Terek, in Daghestan. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries the Russian troops several times broke into this country, but they were utterly defeated in the total and had to retreat. For a long time remained the Terek a southern boundary of Russia.

The Vainakhs at first established quite peaceful relations with the Russians. People were trading, many of the mountaineers served in the town of Terky and took up their residences near it. The elders (headmen) of some Chechen and Ingush villages even swore allegiance to the Russian sovereign, though this dependence was of a pure nominal character.

The Vainakhs were in good neighbourly relations with the Terek Cossacks too. The Cossacks, known as fugitive and "idle" people in recent past, learnt to manage their household in a new natural environment like the native tribes, they began to dress and keep their dwellings the same way as the mountaineers did. The Chechens and Ingush on their part also learnt much from the Cossacks. Many of the Vainakhs, escaping from blood feud, found shelter in Cossack settlements (since the early 18th century these settlements have been called the "stanitsas"). The Vainakhs settled in stanitsas, got married to the Cossack women and adopted Christianity, thereby marking the beginning of the Cossack families of Vainakh origin.

Quite a number of Russians, on the other hand, deserted to the Vainakhs. The highlanders always gave them refuge and treated them with hospitality.

In the beginning of the 17th century, Russia recommenced the offensive upon the Caucasus. The Russian state, having become stronger and changed a great deal by that time as a result of the reformatory activities of Tsar (Emperor since 1721) Peter I, can no more be satisfied merely with the formal recognition of the Russian protectorate by the separate mountaineer tribes and gets ready for a large-scale attack to subjugate the North Caucasus. A well-known Russian historian, expert of the Caucasian people's his-

tory, M. Pokrovsky noted that tsarism aimed to seize new lands and, at the same time, conquer the trade routes in the East.

The main obstacle in attaining the strategic objective of Russia in the Caucasus might have been the resistance of the highlanders who were politically disunited but notable for their courage, love of freedom and brilliant military abilities. Owing to these chief traits they had succeeded in saving themselves from being enslaved by the Persian Shah and sultanic Turkey having the claims on the lands in the Caucasus.

Preparing to wage an attack upon the Caucasus, Tsar Peter I yet in 1714 consulted with the Senate, the supreme government body of the Russian Empire, "how to make the Caucasus highlanders come over to our side". At the same time the first cordon line was laid in the Caucasus, the Cossacks were finally included into the state military structure of Russia and recruited by the migrants from the reaches of the Don. A line of Cossack stanitsas side by side with the fortresses and strongholds, occupied by the garrisons of Russia's regular troops, formed a basis of the Terek cordon line. It should be said in all fairness that these arrangements were made not only to defend the locality but also to wage an offensive war.

In 1722, Peter I organized his well-known Persian Campaign to establish the rule of Russia in the Western Caspian Region. The expedition officially aimed to punish the Lezghins who had killed the Russian merchants during a ravage of the town of Shemakhy in Azerbaijan, though virtually the tsar seized the opportunity to set about the subjugation of the Caucasus lands from the Terek, that had already become the border of Russia by that time. Moreover, separate detachments were also pushed forward further to the west of the main forces up to the borders of Chechnya. During this campaign took place the first skirmish between the Chechens and the regular army of Russia. The mounted detachment under Brigadier Veterani (2000 dragoons and 400 Cossacks), sent to seize the Kumyik village of Endery, was attacked by the Chechens, who had come to help the Kumyiks. The Russians suffered serious losses. In revenge, the incensed Emperor sent the horde of his vassal - Kalmyk Khan Ayuky to make a plundering raid on Chechnya.

After the death of Peter I, the ruling cliques of Russia stopped to be on a large - scale offensive against the mountaineers for several years, though they continued building of new fortresses and strongholds thereby fortifying the Terek cordon line. Separate skirmishes between the Russians and mountain peoples, including the Chechens, still took place. According to M. Pokrovsky, the struggle against the Chechens for the Chechen Plain be-

gan in 1739, when an entire fortified line¹⁶ was formed of the Lower Terek stanitsas with its center in the fortress - town of Kizlyar¹⁷. In 1758, General Frauendorf, Commandant of Kizlyar, headed the campaign carried on against the Chechens who “totally turned out to be in antagonism with the Russians”. Unequality of forces forced the separate communities of Vainakhs to express their submissiveness to the Empire and deliver up the “amanates” (hostages) as a token of loyalty, yet this kind of dependence was of a superficial character and did not lead to practical subordination of the mountaineers.

New activation of Russia’s offensive policy in the Caucasus is connected with the accession of Catherine II (1762-1796) to the throne of the Russian Empire. Laying of the Mozdok fortress in 1763 caused a series of skirmishes with the Kabardians, resulting in the victory over the Turks in the war of 1768-1774. The Russian Empire had already taken a stable possession of the area between the Azof and Caspian Seas by that time and launched an all-out attack upon the highlanders living northward of the Caucasus. In 1770 in particular, three campaigns were carried on against the Chechens in order “to subject them to obedience”. The armed collision which turned into the struggle of many years, is known in history as the Caucasian or Russian-Caucasian War. It was a just war on the part of the mountaineers and the struggle against the Russians was waged mainly by the Chechens, peoples of mountain Daghestan and separate groups of Adige-Abkhazians. As regards the others, including the Ingush, they on the whole abstained from taking part in this war. Not numerous groups and individuals only, representing other nations of the Caucasus, participated in military operations waged against the Russians. As to the armed resistance on a mass scale, even if such took place, it was of episodic character.

5. THE CHECHENS AND INGUSH IN THE CAUCASIAN WAR

The beginning of the Caucasian (Russian-Caucasian) War is dated in different ways, mainly within the first quarter of the 19th century, though according to our consideration the warfare broke out in the 80s of the 18th

¹⁶ Fortified or Cordon lines arranged by the Russian troops during the war in the Caucasus (18th-19th centuries) were systems of strongholds consisting of the fortresses and Cossack stanitsas with separate forts or redoubts located at 25 -30km distances; at regular intervals (3-5km) were placed observation posts (pickets).

¹⁷ Kizlyar, a town located in the Terek delta was the main military-administrative and economic centre of Russia’s domains in the North-Western Caucasus at that time.

century, when uncoordinated resistance to the tsarism exceeded the bounds of separate regions (the Kuban Region, Kabarda, Chechnya, Daghestan) and turned into an all-North Caucasian movement advancing the precise religious-political slogans.

So, in spring of 1785 a Moslem preacher, Sheikh Mansur, or Ushurma, appeared in Chechnya, who, striving for unification of the highlanders to fight against the tsarist colonialists, called upon them for “hazavat”, i.e., “sacred war” against the “unfaithful” enemy. Thus through Islam taken as an ideological basis, politically separated Caucasians of different tribes partially consolidated in the struggle against the colonial power.

In the Northern Caucasus (in Daghestan) Islam began to spread yet in times of the Arab Caliphate, though for the majority of the native peoples it was established as an official religion considerably later. Thus the Vainakhs inhabiting in the plain and foothill zones of the Caucasus apparently came into contact with this teaching not earlier than in the 15th - 16th centuries; as to the inhabitants of the mountainous part of Chechnya and Ingushetia, the influence of Mohammedanism on the highlanders was rather weak even in the 17th - 18th centuries. As is generally known, in the 18th to the early 19th century the Ingush elders swore not to the Koran but to their pagan gods despite the fact that Islam had already existed among a certain part of the Ingush.

A striking and mysterious person of Sheikh Mansur gave rise to a number of fabulous versions about his non - Caucasian origin as far back as the end of the 18th century. He was believed to be an Italian adventurer (soldier or monk) who had adopted Islam. Some considered him a descendent of Shah Nadir, the ruler of Persia, others attributed him to the Poles. It was also rumoured that he had come from the Orenburg steppes. However, these considerations have been rejected scientifically as having nothing in common with the historical truth. It is proved scientifically that Mansur was Chechen by birth.

Ushurma was born in 1760, in a poor family, in the village of Aldyi (the Chechen Plain). In his youth he pastured cattle and tilled the soil. He got married at the age of 22 and had three children. Owing to his mode of life of high moral standards, wit and strong character, Ushurma was held in high respect by the countrymen even when he was young in years. Although Ushurma was illiterate, he was a brilliant orator and subtle psychologist.

In 1785 Ushurma began an active religious and political activity. Due to his preachings Ushurma became far-famed and enjoyed the support of the influential mullahes and theologians of Chechnya, who declared him sheikh and gave him the name “mansur” which means “victor” in Arabian.

The highlanders, not only peasants and ordinary people but also the representatives of feudal nobility, came from everywhere to listen to Mansur. Apart from the Chechens, among his numerous followers were the Kumyiks, inhabitants of mountainous Daghestan, Adigeys, Ingush, Ossetes, Nogais... The Russian command kept vigilant watch of the processes taking place over the river Terek and in summer of 1785 sent a military unit three thousand strong under the command of Colonel Pierry against the village of Aldyi, where the Imam had his seat, to capture the "false prophet and restore calm and order violated by him in that region". Having left part of the troops for guarding the crossing across the Sunzha, Pierry and his main armed forces (three infantry battalions and a Cossack *sotnia* (squadron) with two guns) burst into the aul abandoned by the inhabitants and committed it to the flames. The chastisers failed to find Mansur, but on their way back when moving through the forest, they fell into the ambush laid by the Chechens. Pierry was killed in the battle and it ended in an utter rout of the Russian detachment. According to official data, 8 officers and 414 soldiers were killed, 162 of the enemy were made prisoners and an overwhelming majority of the survived were wounded. The highlanders captured both of the guns.

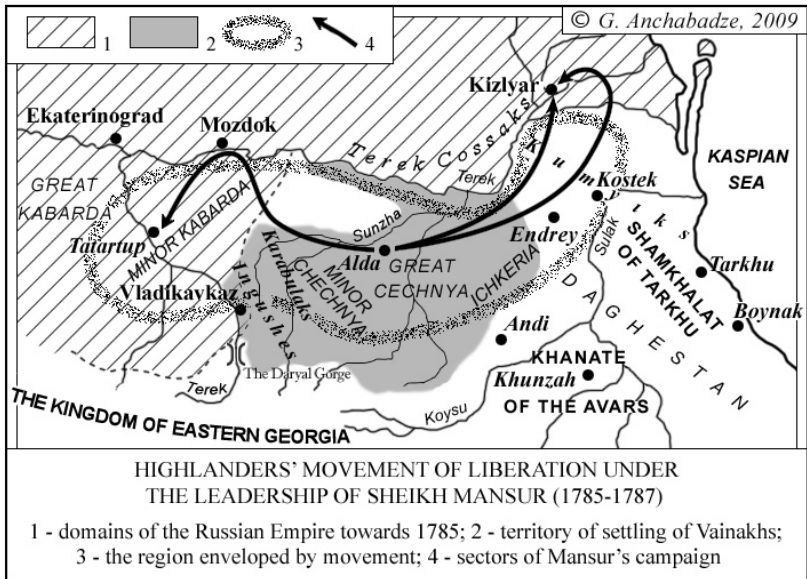
This victory has brought a great fame to Mansur. The Russians had not been defeated in the Caucasus since their unsuccessful campaign organized against Daghestan in the early 18th century, therefore, the fellow-fighters of the Sheikh did not fail to proclaim the results of the battle to be the fulfilment of his prophecy. The number of Mansur's supporters and followers was increasing at still faster rates. That was the period of the utmost general enthusiasm.

Striving for exploitation of his success, Mansur assaulted the centre of the Russian domain in the North-Eastern Caucasus, Kizlyar, but the storm was repelled. The highlanders managed to capture one stronghold only, which covered the Terek crossing in the environs of the city. At night the army of the Sheikh got lost in the marshland when, all at once, was attacked by the Cossacks. So, the mountaineers, having suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded, had to retreat.

The same fate befell the mountaineers when taking Kizlyar by storm for the second time and when they were breaking through Kabarda to join the local rebels. In the battle which took place in the vicinity of ancient ruins of Tatartup, the Russian forces defeated the detachments of the highlanders (Chechens, Kabardians, Kumyiks and others) and threw them back. In 1787, Mansur was impelled to flee to the Kuban Region where, at the head of the Adigey detachments he, in alliance with the Turks (the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-1791 was in progress), continued to fight against the Russians,

though in 1791 in the battle for Anapa Mansur was captured by the Russians and died in casemate of the Schlusserburg Fortress. (According to another information Mansur died on the Solovetski Islands).

Proceed from the afore-said Sheikh Mansur, or Ushurma, a Chechen from the village of Aldyi, was the first great organizer of the liberation movement of highlanders against tsarist Russia in the Northern Caucasus. The activity carried out under his command, though religious but anticolonial in its essence can be in fact regarded as the beginning of the Caucasian War.



During the first ten years of the 19th century tsarist Russia annexed part of the territories of Georgia and Northern Azerbaijan. The newly formed provinces were connected with the parent state by the only existed road running through the Daryali Pass which is rightfully called the Georgian Military Road. The Ossetes, inhabiting to the west of this strategic highway, had been considered to be subject to the rule of the Russian Empire since 1774, but the Ingush, living to the east of this road, maintained their independence. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the safety of communication with Tiflis (Tbilisi), the centre of Russia's domains in the south, it was necessary to bring the tsarist troops into Ingushetia and subordinate the country to the Russian control.

Acting according to the principle “divide et impera”¹⁸ the Russian authorities succeeded in provoking the armed skirmish between the Chechens and Ingush (June 5, 1810) just with a view to display a “care” for the Ingush and naturalize them in Russia. Commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, General Tormasov charged the commandant of the Vladikavkaz fortress with a mission to take the opportunity and submit the Ingush to the Russian Empire. And really, an official Act of voluntary rapprochement of Ingushetia with Russia was signed between the representatives of the Ingush people and Russian military administration on August 22, 1810 in Vladikavkaz. According to the terms of the treaty the Ingush were under the obligation to assist the Russians in defending the Georgian Military Road from the attacks of the hostile tribes, and accommodate the Russian armed forces in Nazran, a newly built stronghold in the upper reaches of the Sunzha. In return for this, on behalf of the Russian government the Ingush were promised to obtain “justice”, “profit”, “advantages” and protection from the enemies.

Besides that the Ingush were given a promise that the lands occupied by them in the plain as well as on the right bank of the Terek would be in their possession for ever¹⁹.

According to the Act of 1810, however, only the flat land of Ingushetia was taken under the control of Russian administration. As regards the communities of mountaineer Ingush, in the middle of the 19th century they were still considered to be “semi-submissive”. The government of Russia several times sent punitive expeditions against them.

* * *

After the defeat of Mansur, the Chechen Plain, stretching on the area from the Terek River to the Black Mountains, was regarded by the Russian administration as a country, dependent on the Russian Empire, though the Chechens did not consider themselves to be the vassals of Russia. As to the

¹⁸ General-fieldmarshal Paskevich, Vicegerent of the Caucasus in the 20s of the 19th century briefly formulated the main point of this policy, pointing out that “it is necessary to favour the emergence of dissent between the mountaineer tribes and help the weakest of them”.

¹⁹ It should be noted that after the end of the Caucasian War, when obedience of the Ingush had lost its urgency for tsarist Russia, a considerable part of fertile lands was taken away from the Ingush by force. Since then up to the 20s of the 20th century an acute lack of the arable lands had been characteristic of the Ingush.

mountainous part of Chechnya, it was practically inaccessible for the Russian guns.

General Ermolov, allotted with unlimited military, civil and diplomatic power, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus in 1816. Under his command military operations against the mounati-neers were activized in order to change the course of events in favour of the Russian Empire.

Of particular importance in the extensive plan of activities, drawn up by Ermolov, was Chechnya. He intended to drive out the Chechens from the plain, press them to the mountains and bereaving them of the fertile fields and pastures impell them to submit to Russia once and for all.

In the late 10s of the 19th century, Russia launched a great campaign against the Chechens inhabiting the plain region. Wide openings were cut down in the forests towards the main fortifications in their struggle against the Russian colonists. At the end of the cuttings were laid strongholds connected to each other, as well as to the already existed strong points, by a chain of fortifications. The fortress laid in the lower reaches of the Sunzha was named "Groznyaya" (the present-day city of Grozny). The conquerors were of the opinion that even the name of the stronghold should be frightening to the recalcitrants (the word "grozny" means "menacing" in Russian). In 1817 - 1823 was formed a Sunzha fortified line, dividing the Chechen Plain into two parts. The territory between the Terek and Sunzha rivers was seized by the Russians; as to the Chechens, they were banished from the places of their habitation and driven away to the foothill zone on the other bank of the Sunzha. Those highlanders only who resigned to the colonial administration, were allowed to stay on their native lands. The Russians called them the "peaceful" highlanders as distinct from the unsubdued, i.e., hostile part of the native population, who were known as "brigands", "scoundrels" and "plunderers" among the Russians.

All this would have influenced to a certain extent the native population. The discontent of the Chechens was gaining ground and getting ready to grow into the armed action which would involve the masses. In order to avoid such outcome of the affair, the Russian command resorted to the well-tried method. As a result of the punitive expeditions sent to Chechnya by the Russian command, some unsubdued auls were reduced to ashes. Sometimes the operations were accompanied by extermination of the whole population, regardless of women, children and the old.

A great misfortune befell the aul of Dadi-Yurt, located on the right bank of the Terek. In September 1819, Ermolov ordered to surround the aul and "punish everybody giving no quarter to anybody".

Having learnt about the forthcoming punitive operation, a certain Cossack who was in friendly terms with the highlanders, stole up to the bank of the Terek and cried loudly in Chechen: "Hey, the Dadiyurtians! Your aul will be surrounded and destroyed in three days! Go away!" People in the aul heard this warning but did not attach great importance to it. On September, 14, Dadi-Yurt was attacked by the chastisers (six infantry companies and seven hundred Cossacks with 5 guns). In an unequal battle the Chechens defended themselves desperately, women and children helped the warriors who had to take each saklia (dwelling of Caucasian peoples) by storm. The aul was razed to the ground and nearly 400 people, i.e., more than half of its population, were killed. The chastisers lost in killed and wounded 230 soldiers and officers.

This kind of measures, however, only poured oil on the flame. In response to devastation of the auls, the inroads on the cordon line became more frequent. The Chechens more frequently co-ordinated their activities with the Avars and other peoples of the Caucasus. On the night of July 25, 1825, they captured by storm and destroyed one of the Russian strongholds on the Terek. 98 were killed and 13 were captured out of 181 soldiers in garrison of the fort.

A Chechen leader Beibulat Taymiev (Taym Bibolt) gave much trouble to the Russian command. Beibulat had great influence on his compatriots, as well as on the neighbour peoples of the Northern Caucasus; he was elected chairman of the "Mekh-khel", i.e., Council of the country. For many years this "main Chechen horseman", as Beibulat is called in official reports, gave no rest to the tsar's generals (his first raid on the other bank of the Terek Beibulat made in 1802), until he was killed treacherously in 1831.

Yielding to the Russian regular army in organization and military might, the Chechens worked out the tactics of partisan warfare enabling them to fight against the enemies for years. V.Potto, Russian military historian, describes the character of military operations in Chechnya:

"When marching in Chechnya the Russian troops, as rule, were not showed any kind of resistance in open localities. But once a forest came in sight, a heavy skirmish would broke out, seldom in the vanguard, more frequently - in the lateral chains and almost always - in the rear-guard. And the denser the forest was the heavier the skirmish was... This is how things stood until the soldiers steadily kept the order. But the trouble was if the chain became weaker or fell apart in any place; hundreds of sabres and daggers would arise in front of it as if from under the ground at once, and a slaughter would begin, as the Chechens are as agile and ruthless as tigers".

Towards the beginning of the 19th century the Chechens had a reputation of militant and unsubdued people. From a position of the tsar's military

leader, General Ermolov called them “the most dangerous villains”. Ermolov directed his subordinates “to trouble the Chechens more frequently... catch the people, cattle, horses, burn the bread, lay, in other words, damage them as much as possible”. His directions were executed diligently. The Russian servicemen believed that with the “Aziats” should be used only force.

In taking the punitive measures the tsar’s authorities followed the principle of mutual guarantee. For the fault of separate persons the whole communities and tribes were punished. For example, it happened in 1825 in the stronghold of Gherzel-Aul. The Russians gathered there 318 peaceful Chechen and Kumyik elders. Two generals made their speeches at the meeting, heaping insults and threats on the highlanders as they were suspected of having connections with those people who participated in raids. All of a sudden one of the highlanders snatched out a dagger and stabbed the generals with it. One of them was killed on the spot and the other was mortally wounded. In response to this, the soldiers standing on the watch slaughtered all the elders who were at the meeting.

This incident caused a storm of resentment in Chechnya and Ingushetia. The inhabitants of those Kumyik auls, which had been subjugated long before, sent a messenger to Beibulat and begged him for help. The precarious situation impelled Ermolov to lead the punitive expedition personally. In a fierce battle waged on the river Arghun on January 30, 1826, the Russian troops gained the victory.

In 1832 General Rosen, one of the successors of Ermolov on the post of a commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, having devastated 60 auls, destroyed Chechnya and mountainous Ingushetia.

The atrocity of the conquerors, however, only strengthened the resistance of the highlanders. In the 20s of the 19th century in the North-Western Caucasus a new uniting movement begins setting up under the name of “muridism”²⁰ – a certain variety of Islam, as a consequence of which a theocratic state – Imamate was formed in the highlands of Daghestan and

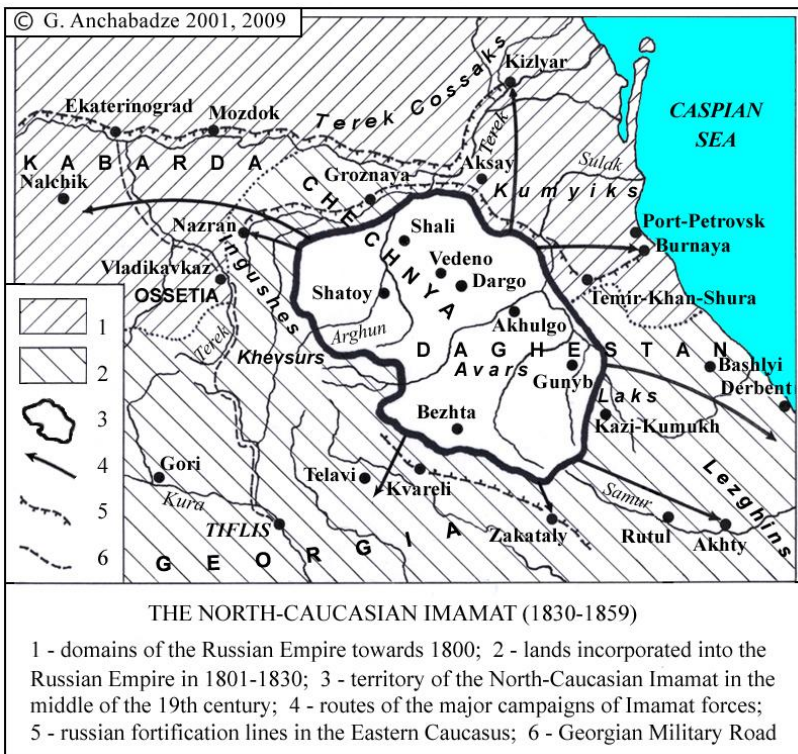
²⁰ Muridism – a mystical religious trend in Islam risen in the Middle Ages on the basis of Sufism philosophy. The aim of its followers is to come closer to the God, to “mix in Him” by means of religious and moral perfection (absoluteness). Muridists are obliged to subordinate to their mentors without demur. In the Northern Caucasus Muridism as an ideology against the tsarist policy started developing in the 1920s. Though yet Sheikh Mansur preached some of its features. The theoreticians of highland resistance used this religious teaching for political purposes by boosting the idea about Muslims’ disobedience to oppression and power of the “unfaithful” (in this case, to Russian Christians). A theocratic leader of the Muridists was titled as Imam.

Chechnya. In 1834 its leader becomes Shamil (1797-1871), a talented statesman and commander. Under his leadership the Chechens and Daghestanis retained their independence yet for 25 years in the fight against the Russian Empire.

In a permanent military resistance against a powerful empire the Chechen-Daghestani Imamate needed battleworthy armed forces. So every male inhabitant, able to carry arms, was considered to be responsible for military service. Only the inhabitants of several villages, producing firearms, cold-steal²¹, gunpowder, etc., were free from military service. According to the 1841 census, in Imamate battleworthy male inhabitants totalled 65 thousand. As for Russian sources, they say that in his disposal Shamil had permanent army of 5 thousand and people's volunteer corps of 48 thousand. Additionally, Imam had private Guards consisting of about a thousand most selected soldiers. There were a lot of Chechens among the guardians (*murtazeks*). Yet it was impossible to concentrate all forces on one operating direction. During the war the biggest army Shamil could deploy simultaneously was 12 thousand strong (march to Georgia, 1854).

Imamate was divided into the military administrative units – *naibats*, the quantity and size of which changed frequently. The *naibats* were headed by *naibs* appointed by Shamil. They were entrusted administrative, military and judicial power. Every *naib* had a staff of officials and permanent detachment of Murid warriors. Besides, *naibs* collected the people's volunteer corps in the whole country and commanded them during the military operations. As a rule, a family had to send one armed warrior (any fully armed highlander had a flintlock, one or two pistols, a saber and a dagger), but sometimes *naib* declared general military service. Frequently women volunteered in defending the auls. They not only assisted the warriors but also fought together with men.

²¹ Coldsteal (sabers, daggers) as well as flintlocks and pistols made by the Caucasian highlanders. Military Quality and artistic decoration of such weapons were far more excellent than their analogues in Russian army. That's why the Russian officers tried to acquire the Caucasian produced weapons when serving in this region. The Cossacks too preferred local weapons, though, gunpowder made in household conditions were not as qualitative as gunpowder produced in Russian factories. But the Russians' true superiority over the highlanders showed itself in an artillery. Imamate produced sub-machine guns but not of a good quality. Many of them became useless after several shots. An artillery park Shamil possessed was made up of tens of weapons – booties and those of local production as well. The artillery service was mainly carried out by Russian deserters.



In 1839, the tsarist command made a decision to put an end to Imamate by a double attack on Daghestan where there was a center of Murid movement for that time. A culmination moment of this bloody drama became an attack on a mountainous aul of Ahulgo, the main residence of Imam. 3 thousand Russian soldiers and officers besieged it. Ahulgo fell. Wounded Shamil together with his few survived comrade-in-arms hid himself in Chechnya.

Triumphant news flew to Petersburg about the “suppression” of Daghestan but the rejoice soon revealed to be premature. Shamil, supported by the Chechens, counterattacked the Russians and banished them from a considerable part of the Daghestan highlands in a short time.

A period of Shamil’s most successes comes for the early 1840s. The Chechens took a great contribution to that. Most of them joined the movement. After destruction of Ahulgo, the political center of the Imamate was shifted to Chechnya. Dargo and Veden became the following residences of Shamil. In response, the Russian command strengthened the military pres-

sure on Chechnya. In 1840, General Galafeev passed through the country reducing everything to rubbles and ashes. On July 11, on the river Valerik the Chechens attacked a detachment of Galafeev who hardly broke off, losing 29 officers and 316 soldiers. M.Lermontov, a great Russian poet witnessed the battle. He described it in his poem "The Valerik".

Neither a repeated expedition undertaken in autumn of the same year, nor punitive marches in 1841 had tangible results. In the beginning of the 1840s, as a result of permanent offenses of Russian army, a half of auls of the Chechen Lowland had already been burned, though the Russians could not subdue the Chechens, and no sooner had the army returned to its base than the highlanders came upon the cordon line again, reaching Mozdok and Kizlyar at times.

In the spring of 1842, General Grebbe, the conqueror of Ahulgo, invaded Chechnya with great forces but he suffered a hard defeat in the Ichkerian forests, losing in killed and wounded nearly 2000 soldiers.

In 1843, Shamil attacked the royal forces and put them to rout in Daghestan. The highlanders seized 13 fortified points and booty: tens of sub-machine guns, great number of ammunitions and provisions.

In 1844, Emperor Nicholas I, dissatisfied with the activities of his army in the Caucasus, appointed Prince Vorontsov Vicegerent and Commander-in-Chief there, entrusting him extreme power. In may 1845, Vorontsov, with an army of 25 thousand soldiers, 46 guns and cavalry 2 thousand strong, intruded far in the mountains and seized aul Dargo, the residence of Shamil. In the whole, though, Vorontsov's expedition was not successful. His army was besieged and survived only thanks to a reinforcement with General Freigat in head who arrived there to rescue them. According to official data, in this expedition Russian casualties totalled 3,967 people, with 3 generals among the dead. According to unofficial sources, the figure of Russian casualties is considerably high.

In April 1846, Shamil with Checheni-Daghestain volunteer corps 10 thousand strong, intruded into Kabarda in order to unite with the Adigeys and form a solid anti-Russian front from Daghestan to the Black Sea. But the plan turned to be unrealizable, in the main, due to the passiveness of the Kabardians who took a temporizing position. The Russian command, mobilizing all forces, asked for reinforcement from Tbilisi through the Georgian Military Road. Shamil sent part of his army to the Daryali Passage in order to cut off communication with Georgia. But the Ingush and Ossetes destroyed Imam's plans. They did not allow his detachments to cross their territories. Shamil had to return to Chechnya. He was followed by a small group of Kabardians who joined his army.

From 1846 Vorontsov renewed Ermolov's tactics: the Russian army slowly advanced deep in the mountains by contracting the Imamate with a circle of reinforcement and methodically destroying the recalcitrant auls. Shamil tried several times to break through the blockade but the highlanders' forces were fading out. As to the Russians, they unceasingly sent new units and formations to the Caucasus. In the second part of the 50s, the empire had already an army 350 thousand strong in the Caucasus, the main forces of which (about 2,000,000 soldiers and officers) acted against Chechnya and mountainous Daghestan, surrounded by the Russian domains. Thanks to overwhelming numerical superiority and at the price of heavy casualties, the Russian army could break the resistance of Shamil's main forces. Vedeno, a fortified aul and the capital of Imamate since 1845, was taken by storm (in February, 1859). It should be noted that among the defenders of Vedeno were quite a number of Russian deserters (turncoats) – soldiers and Cossacks – living in one of the quarters of the aul. Shamil retreated to Daghestan. Besieged on the Mt. Gunib, after hopeless fights on August 26, 1859, he surrendered to Prince Baratinsky, Commander-in-Chief and Vicegerent in the Caucasus.

When the Caucasian War ended (in 1864), hundreds of thousand highlanders left their motherland and deported to the Ottoman Empire, never wishing to reconcile to the supremacy of Russians. There were more than 20 thousand Vainakhs among the emigrants.

In 1858, the Ingush rose in rebellion provoked by the arbitrary of tsarist administration resettling the local inhabitants from small settlements to large auls by force in order to make easier the police control over the population and use the cleared territories for colonial needs. Nearly 5 thousand rebels attacked the fortified aul of Nazran but they were defeated. Shamil's attempt to help the Ingush did not succeed. The Ingush rebellion was subdued. Its leaders were executed; several thousands of activists were exiled from the Caucasus. Utter suppression of the Ingush highland societies by Russia belongs to the same time.

6. CHECHNYA AND INGUSHETIA WITHIN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

In the end of the Caucasian War, the number of Vainakhs decreased due to military actions and departure to the Ottoman Empire. So, if in 1840 the total number of Chechens and Ingush fluctuated between 170-290 thousand, in 1867 it fell to 143 thousand. Then the number of Vainakhs began increasing rapidly again. It was caused by a high index of natural multiplication. According to the 1897 census, they numbered 229,782 people, includ-

ing 187,635 Chechens and 42,147 Ingush. At the end of the period under review, in 1912, the total number of Vainakhs overran 300,000 (245,5 thousand Chechens and 56,4 Ingush).

To keep the Vainakhs under obedience, the Russian government populated the lowland with Cossacks. In the mountains, at strategically important points, the Russians built fortresses and placed military garrisons. The age of colonial yoke began. Administration was of a military-police character. Though it could not break the spirit of national resistance: guerrilla detachments such as Baysungur, Atabaya, Soltamurad, Umi Duev and others that had been fighting yet under the flag of Shamil and had not laid arms after Gunib, acted in Chechnya in 1860-1861. A lot of local uprisings, taking place time to time, were severely subdued by the authorities. "Unreliable" auls were resettled by force in the lowland surrounded by Cossack villages. Folklore memorials, created after the conquest of the Caucasus by Russians, express the emotions of freedom-loving nation that appeared under the oppression of autocracy. One Chechen song sings:

*Belt on a thin figure
Change with
A sash –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*Well preserved
Chechen clothes
With rags replace –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*A tall fur cap of yours
Made of scribble
With a hood replace –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*A steel arm
Of your fathers
With a stick replace –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*Climb down of your horse,
Brought up with you,
Pedestrian become –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*Be calm and become a slave of
Murderers of your brothers,
Not believing in God –
Orders a tsar to you.*

*Lie down to sleep with them,
On a common stand,
Eat with them from the same plate –
Orders a tsar to you...*

Apart from the open military resistance, a mystical religious movement, Zikrism (Zikrullakh in Arabian, i.e., prayer-loving), sprang up in Chechnya in the beginning of the 60s. Sheikh Kunta Khadji, a preacher who was known for his honest lifestyle, perfect moral and diligence, called for peace and love of a neighbour. Kunta demanded from his followers (Muridists) to keep Shariat. A way-out of all misfortunes he saw in the God's kindness only. Zikrists danced and sang noisily at their group meetings.

In the beginning, the royal administration was loyal towards a peaceful movement of Zakrists, but a rapid increase in the number of Kunta's followers frightened it. In 1864, Kunta Khadji and his brother were arrested and taken out from Chechnya immediately. Several days later, nearly 3 thousand Zikrists gathered near the village of Shalli and demanded from the government to free their leaders. But the government refused. The authority used an army and artillery to disperse the crowd. But the believers with only sabers and daggers in hands attacked the army that was deployed in a military order. Bullets and case shots killed 164 Zikrists, among them were 6 women disguised as men. (Later Chechens called the tragedy "a fight with daggers"). Kunta Khadji was exiled to the Novgorod Province where he died from hunger and exhaustion in 1867.

After the Shalli manslaughter, the tsarist administration banned Zikrism and threatened its followers by immediate exile from Chechnya. Though the movement went underground, some of its followers chose more radical forms of resistance. In 1865, Zikrist Taza Ekmirzaev declared himself being Imam and tried to arrange an armed revolt. Appeals, he distributed in whole Chechnya and Daghestan, said: "Be ready for a holy war against the unfaithful, for their banishment from our country". But the movement did not spread and was subdued with the help of Chechen secular and ecclesiastic officials. Taza was caught and sent first to penal servitude and then to Siberia for permanent exile. Other activists and auls supporting them were also punished.

Popular uprising of 1877 was more numerous. It spread on greater parts of Chechnya and Daghestan. The tsarist administration, afraid of the recommence of the Caucasian War, used whole power to subdue the uprising. More than 30 thousand chastisers with an artillery holding 100 trunks acted in Chechnya only. The poorly armed rebels were broken. They retreated to almost inaccessible highland regions. As a rule, suppression of an uprising was followed by the extermination of auls. Punitive groups scoured about the roads killing everyone met. Such action aimed to evade by means of total terror even a thought of resistance. As a result of following reprisals, Alibeg Khadji, Uma Duev and his son – Duda Umaev, Dada Zalmaev and other leaders of the uprising (11 people in the whole) were hung in Grozny. Over 500 people were exiled to Siberia and other northern provinces of Russia. (Total number of the rebels, together with Daghestanis, exiled from the Caucasus for taking part in the uprising of 1877, overran 5 thousand).

Since then national resistance of the highlanders has been sharply showing itself in brigandage. Brigandage is an old phenomenon in the Caucasus. But it acquired a different shape after establishing of Russian domination there. Tsarist authority considered brigands to be robbers. But they should not be mixed with the common criminals. Those were the rebels who somehow came into collision with a state machine and not wishing to obey, they took arms. Acting alone or by small groupings, the brigands avenged authority for themselves and for their people: they killed hated officials, robbed banks, treasury establishments and rich exploiters. Frequently, brigands distributed the robbed money and jewelry among the poor peasants. Brigandage had a wide social support and, undoubtedly, reflected people's dissatisfaction caused by national and colonial oppression. People considered brigands to be their protectors and they also defended them by helping them hide from a tsarist themis. Therefore, brigands remained "elusive" for years.

During the tsarist domination the most famous Chechen brigand was Vara who was killed in a battle waged against the dragoon regiment in 1865. There were many famous outlaws (Geha, Mekhti, Uspan, Eska, Aub, Salambek and others), but in Chechnya and in the whole Caucasus the most famous of them was Zelimkhan from Karachoya. His epic lasted from 1901 to 1913 and was marked by really grand affairs. Rumors over Zelimkhan were highly spread in Russia. The authority fixed a large amount of money for his capture. Numerous punitive groups persecuted Zelimkhan. Tens of families and individuals, suspected in helping and harboring him, were exiled to Siberia; the whole societies were fined; quite a number of ex-

ecution²² groups were sent to the villages, but people did not betray him. Many even hoped that Zelimkhan would declare himself being Imam and banish the Russians. Only in September 1913 the chastisers could eventually find seriously ill Zelimkhan and killed him.

Tsarist authority seemed to be afraid of mass uprisings under the leadership of religious leaders and outlaws like Zelimkhan. Therefore, about tens of the most famous sheikhs were exiled from Chechnya and Ingushetia to Russia in 1912.

* * *

After the war between the Russians and highlanders, tsarist authority reorganized the region's administrative order, thereby trying to strengthen its domination over the conquered North Caucasus. Chechnya and Ingushetia entered the Terski Region formed in 1860. Besides the Vainakhs there also lived Kabardians, Ossetes, Balkans, Nogais, part of Kumyk, etc. In addition, masses of indigent peasants who had been liberated from the serf necessity in 1861, moved to the North Caucasus from central parts of Russia. These Russian new settlers created a category of "strangers" (i.e. those who arrived from another town). They did not enjoy the rights of the Cossacks and depended on them in regard of land and economic dependence.

The civil, Cossack and highland populations of the North Caucasus were governed differently. All highland nations were under authority of so-called "military national" administration. It differed from the Cossack and general civil administration of the Russian Empire. The generals and officers who were entrusted complete powers ran the Terski Region, as well as its parts and counties. This system of administration, designed for nations' oppression, hampered the economic and cultural development of the region.

Land problem was especially acute. Over 90% of the population were engaged in agriculture until the beginning of the 19th century. Meanwhile, the Chechens and Ingush, whose huge territories had been confiscated in favor of the fisc and Cossacks, lived in poverty because of lack of land.

²² Execution was called a billet of a military detachment in a village at the expense of the population. Execution, being a hard burden for the peasants, was aimed at punishing the inhabitants. Thus, in May 1884 a detachment of two companies was billeted in Surkhokhi to act as an "example for all Ingush villages". For 5 months when the detachment lived there the villagers expensed about 11,500 rubles to keep the soldiers. It was a large amount if we take into account that cows cost 15-20 rubles and sheep cost 3-5 rubles at that time.

Situation was particularly hard in the mountainous regions where nearly 40% of households had neither arable nor hay fields. According to statistic data, in average 1,2 dessiatinas of arable land was apportioned per 1 male inhabitant of Chechnya and 0,2 dessiatinas – per 1 male inhabitant of Ingushetia, that came to average 0,7 dessiatinas in mountainous Chechnya and Ingushetia in whole. The contemporaries wrote that the harvest gathered by the mountaineer Ingush was enough only just not to die from hunger. As to the Cossacks, they were well – provided with the arable lands in Sunzhenski section of the Terski Region and Kizlyar (10,7 and 27,5 dessiatinas per Cossack, respectively).

Lack of land made the highlander peasants rent hundreds of thousand dessiatinas from the Cossacks, paymasters and private owners. In summers they had to leave for the Cossack towns and villages in order to earn money.

Impoverishment of the main part of Chechen and Ingush population was also a consequence of high state taxes imposed on people. Taxes increased from year to year. It is interesting that in 1866 the neighbouring Ossetes, mainly confessing Christianity and twice outnumbering the Ingush, paid only 10,000 rubles, while the latter paid 13,000 rubles. By 1889 taxes had increased and the Ossetes as well as Ingush paid already 17,000 rubles each. Obviously, it aimed at dividing the neighbours and bribing the coreligionist Ossetes.

It goes without saying that the fact of existing of the prosperous and rich highlanders having in their possession enough lands, cattle, flocks of sheep and herds of horses, do not contradict the above mentioned. Wealthy highlanders invested their capital in productions, set up stock companies, such as “Novoaldinskaya”, “Staroutrovskaya”, etc. The Chechen oil manufacturers, owners of factories and stores stood out too. But such people were few, of course.

It was impossible to live on agriculture only. Therefore, Vainakhs had to carry on cottage industries. In Chechnya and Ingushetia such industries as processing of metal, wool, silk, etc., remained to be pursuit of the mountaineers until the end of the 19th century. Their production satisfied not only local needs but was sold in other regions too. Felt boots, clothes and coldsteal of Chechen production was especially in great demand.

The Terski Region may be taken as an example of how tsarism realized its colonial policy in the Caucasus, turning the territory into an appendage of Russian economy.

Since the end of the 19th century oil and petroleum became main articles of export. First bore with a great oil fountain was drilled near Grozny on October 6, 1893. Soon in the surroundings of the town an oil region was established. Nowadays it is called “Staroprovislov”.

In the industrial region of Grozny the working class rapidly increased. Mainly these were Russian workers and impoverished peasants who arrived there from the central parts of Russia. The Grozny proletariat included also the Chechen, Ingush, Dagestani and Cossack poor who had lost their lands.

The highlanders made particularly “hard labor” in cottage industries, factories and construction sites. Tsarism consciously kept barriers between the Russian and Caucasian workers. Ethnic discrimination deepened so that in 1891 General Kohanov, head of the Terski Region, passed a resolution according to which everyone of Chechen and Ingush nationality, not working in a public sector, was deprived of a right to live in the town. The Vainakhs were banished from Grozny. Only many years later they were allowed to settle in the town.

Artificially roused social and economic tension and ethnic contradiction frequently led to armed skirmishes between the Vainakhs and Cossacks. In 1905-1907, during the Russian revolution, the region apparently faced a mass collision. One secret report of a head of the Terski Region said that skirmishes of Cossacks with the Chechens and Ingush resulted in heavy material and human losses. It is interesting that Emperor Nicholas II wrote on the report the following: “In my mind, precisely this keeps in Cossacks the braveness of their grandfathers. Therefore, there is no need to mild the situation”.

* * *

Despite the tsarist policy, which was directed to the oppression of national originality of the “natives”, acceding to a state of the European type gave the Vainakhs a chance to come closer to the advanced European culture. The empire was obliged to allocate funds for the education of the local population in order to master over the Caucasus. Therefore, Russian scholars contributed greatly to the development of Caucasian studies, namely, in the studies of the history, language and culture of Vainakhs. Visiting the Caucasus, including Chechnya and Ingushetia, many famous Russian scholars and scientists left their traces in the relations and cultural links between the Russians and local nations.

First ethnographic searches written by the Vainakh authors appeared in the 70s of the 19th century. In 1872 Umalat Laundaev (1827-?), a former royal officer of Chechen nationality, published a book of historical and ethnographic character. The title of the book is “The Chechen Tribe”.

Ingush Shakh Ahriev (1850-1914), a famous scholar of Vainakh culture, published his researches in the same period. 7-year-old Ahriev was taken into hostage (amanat) in the Vladikavkaz fortress. Then he was edu-

cated in Russia. He is the author of a number of essays and articles on culture, life and folklore of the Vainakh nations.

The activity of Aslambek Bazorkin (1852-1890), another Ingush enlightener, is also very interesting. Bazorkin knew well his homeland and wrote a lot about his people. His fictional essay – “The Highland Pilgrimage” (1873) – tells about the ancient Ingush customs and ceremonies. In the center of the narration there is a tale about pilgrimage on the holly mountain of Miartseli and a prayer to the deity Sun, the author being witness and participant of it.

Attention should be paid to the activities of Albast Tutaev. In 1881 he composed a “Galgaev Calendar” which includes the names of all 12 months in the Ingush language.

First Chechen professional artist was P.Zaharov (1816-1846), an academician of painting, or “Chechen from Dadi-Urt”, as he signed up his works. Zaharov was really from this aul destroyed by a punitive expedition in 1819. A tenderhearted Russian soldier picked him up from the body of his killed mother. He was educated in Russia and graduated from the Academy of Arts in Petersburg. His portraits were a success, though he lived in poverty and died early from tuberculosis.

Original musical and theatrical culture of the Vainakh people is connected with the names of Mahomet Mahomaev (1881-1917), Muslim Mahomaev (1885-1937) and Nazarbek Sheripov (1883-1920). In the end of the 19th and in the early 20th centuries first Vainakh journalists stood out. They defended the interests of highland peasants in their articles.

The Vainakhs had no alphabet until the 19th century if not taking into consideration its rudiments in the sphere of elements of ideographic and pictographic scriptures preserved on ancient monuments, towers and vaults. The meanings of this numerous pictures and signs were lost long ago. First attempts to create the Vainakh alphabet goes back to the existence of the Chechen-Daghestan Imamate. Lachinilau, one of Shamil’s naibs, was a pioneer in this. He tried to adjust the Arabic alphabet to the Chechen language. Further, attempts to create national written language on the basis of the Arabic graphics took place in the end of the 19th and in the early 20th centuries. Since 1900 books are being published in native written language created on the basis of Arabic. Practically, in Chechnya the reformed Arabic graphic symbols were in use until 1925.

In the second part of the 19th century, Russian-European academic science also tried to create a Chechen written language. So, in 1856 Academician A.Shifner composed the Chechen alphabet on the basis of Latin. In 1861 the Russian scholar – Bartolomeo edited the ABC book of the Chechen language. In 1862 the famous Russian linguist, P.Uslar, composed the

Chechen alphabet on the basis of the Russian graphic symbols. He borrowed inadequate letters from the Latin and Georgian alphabets.

Largely due to a sharp lack of elite schools, a greater part of the population remained illiterate. Therefore, the Chechen alphabets existing before Soviet time did not spread widely among the people. It was Soviet authority that achieved the elimination of mass illiteracy of the population.

In the end of the topic, we would like to add that after establishing of Soviet power the written language of the Vainakh people started developing on the basis of the Latin alphabet (the Ingush alphabet was composed in 1920 by a famous Ingush scholar of the Vainakh languages – Z.Malsagov). In 1934 the Chechen and Ingush alphabets were standardized. Several years later, Russian graphics became the basis of the standardized Vainakh alphabet (alike the most of other Soviet peoples' alphabets).

Thus, in the beginning of the 20th century the Vainakh intellectuals began appearing; the written language and culture based on original Chechen and Ingush culture started developing.

* * *

In early August 1914, the leading European states unleashed the First World War, aiming to alter the world and redistribute the spheres of influences. In this war Russia and its allies fought against the states of central block with Germany in the head.

In the Russian Empire the Muslim highlanders were not responsible for general military service, though they had to pay a special tax instead. But in the Russian army there were a lot of officers who came out of social elite of the highland nations. In addition, the tsarist government kept a cavalry recruited from the volunteer Caucasian highlanders. Thus national units of Caucasian highlanders took part in the wars of Russia waged against Turkey (1877-1878) and Japan (1904-1905).

The highland nations sent a number of volunteer units and formations to the World War I. Local Caucasian irregular equestrian division should be particularly marked among them. It was more known under the name of a "Wild Division". It consisted of six equestrian regiments: Kabardian, the 2nd Daghestani, Tatar, Chechen, Ingush and Circassian; in addition, the Ossetes pedestrian brigade and a number of other subdivisions. The complement of officers of the divisions was mainly made of the representatives of Caucasian and Russian elites. Unlike other formations of the Russian army, the pedestrians were called not "low ranks" but "riders". These "riders" received quite high salaries and could speak to officers just like their

equals. The “Wild Division” distinguished itself in the East Front in the World War (West Front for Russia). In 1917 it turned into the local Caucasian Mounted Corps and some new national regiments were added to it.

7. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE VAINAKHS

Among the warring nations, Russia underwent the greatest economic and social shock during World War I. Eroding economy, defeat in fronts and extremely strained internal political situation led to a collapse of the tsarist regime in 1917. The bourgeois-centric and moderate-socialist parties came to power in Russia. Though, on the background of the population’s low political culture, weakness and uncoordination of liberal-democratic forces prevented the Russian society from stabilizing on the base of democracy. The left-winger Bolsheviks (Communists) under the leadership of Lenin seized power by force in main Russian centers in October-November 1917. Thus, a new era began. The era that has changed the economic, political and cultural basis of Russia for a long time and that has shaken the whole world.

An armed seizure of power by the Bolshevik Party and the terror carried out by its leaders against the wealthy layers of the population resulted in consolidation of “counter-revolutionary”²³ forces of Russia and a civil war of great scales, unknown in the world history before. It took millions of human lives. However, the Mensheviks (“the white”) could offer no ideology against a populist propaganda of the Bolsheviks (“the red”). They did not proclaim in advance their position towards the future forms of political, social and economic structure of Russia, postponing the solution of such key questions to post-war time. Practically, the Government of the Mensheviks carried out a policy convenient for the bourgeois and landlord sections of the population only. Their policy towards national minorities of the former Russian Empire, partially, towards the nations of the North Caucasus, did not differ from the tsarist policy. Therefore, the Mensheviks not only pushed away many potential allies but also furthered their alliance with the Bolsheviks.

As a result of such an internal policy, overwhelming majority of the population appeared in their opposition, active or passive. In addition, the newly come in power forces of some national regions examined their rights

²³ Among the counter-revolutionarists the Bolsheviks considered even their former allies – representatives of other left-wing socialists who, from a political point of view, had little in common with the Mensheviks – representatives of bourgeois landowners and Cossack circles, greater part of which were staunch monarchists.

of self-determination entitled by the revolution of 1917 and called for a full independence.

Thus, in March 1917, the First Highland Congress was held in Vladikavkaz and a multinational organization – “The Union of United Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus” was founded. Its central committee was elected by the Temporal Government of Autonomous North Caucasian Independent State or the Soviet Mountain Republic, declared in November of the same year. When civil war burst out in Russia, the Soviet Mountain Republic declared its full independence and secession from Russia (May 11, 1918).

Famous figures of the Soviet Mountain Republic were Chechen Tapa Chermoev²⁴, Head of the Government for some time; Ingush Vasan Girey Dzhabaggi, Head of Parliament; KumuiK Nukhber Tarkovski, military minister; Kabardian Pshemakho Kotsev, Minister of Internal Affairs; KumuiK Heidar Bammat, Minister of External Affairs, etc. The Soviet Mountain Republic declaratively embraced the whole territory of the North Caucasus. Vladikavkaz became its capital. Though, practically, its state structures functioned only in Daghestan and soon fell as a result of the onslaught of the Denikin Volunteers Army who came with the slogan: “For united and undivided Russia”.

In the beginning of February 1919, the Denikinians crossed the borders of the Terski Region and attacked its center, the town of Vladikavkaz that was under the control of Soviet forces. Part of their army (three equestrian divisions, pedestrian (Plastun) brigade and other parts) with General Liahov in the head reached the Ingush villages – Kantishevo and Dolakovo, located in the north-east of Vladikavkaz. The Mensheviks in an ultimatum form demanded from the Ingush to let them enter the town, also, to compensate for losses inflicted to the Cossacks in 1917-1918 when armed skirmishes took place between the Ingush and Cossacks, to extradite the red being on the territory of Ingushetia and to form 2 equestrian regiments and 2 equestrian batteries for the service in the Denikin army. Otherwise, General Liahov threatened with complete destroy of Kantishevo, Dolakovo and other villages.

²⁴ Chermoev Abdul-Medjid (Tapa) Ortsuevich (1882-1936) – North Caucasian politician, oil manufacturer. He graduated from a Cavalry School (1901), serviced in Russian cavalry (also in private convoy of the Emperor Nicholas II). He was an officer of the “Wild Division” during World War I. He was one of the organizers of “The Union of united Highlanders of the Caucasus”, Head of the Highland Government. He carried immense authority with the Chechens. Since 1919 he has been in emigration.

The Ingush refused. The Mensheviks surpassing the Ingush in military might, waged an attack. In the region of large Ingush villages such as Dolakovo, Kantishero, Bazorkino, Keskem, Psedakh and Sagopshi bloody battles expanded. This was the beginning of the Ingush's fighting against the Denikin army.

Alike the Chechens, Ingush were also well armed for that time. Highlanders always thought that a man should have private arms. They often refused themselves in essentials and bought a prestigious gun or a pistol with ammunition instead. The tsarist administration tried repeatedly to disarm the Vainakhs and all Caucasus highlanders, but in vain. The World War gave highlanders an easier chance to purchase modern firearms illegally. In the beginning of the revolution they also captured certain part of arms, including the artillery belonging to the former Caucasian army, from the tsarist fortresses located on the territories of Chechnya and Ingushetia.

However, the Ingush and their not numerous supporters, the units of the Bolsheviks, could not resist the Denikin army completed with skillful military staff and obviously having technical and numerous superiority. Despite the fierce resistance, the artillery swept off the Ingush villages and the defenders had to retreat with great casualties.

The Denikinians also suffered heavy losses. General Liahov acknowledged that the Mensheviks lost 2500 soldiers at Kantishevo, Dolakovo and Bazorkino.

One reason of the Ingush defeat in the fight against the Mensheviks was lack of self-discipline. Their failure was also caused for lack of a common authoritative command.

The Denikinians crossed Ingushetia and Ossetian auls located on the left bank of the river Terek. On February 11, 1919, they attacked Vladikavkaz and took it. The detachments of the Bolsheviks being in the town retreated in great disorder to the Georgian Military Road and appearing in Georgia surrendered to the local authorities.

But the Ingush kept on fighting against the Mensheviks. Thus, in March 1919, the united forces of the Ingush and Kabardian guerrillas defeated 2 battalions of Denikin at the village of Kurp. In July of the same year bloody battles took place in the vicinity of the villages Surkhokhi and Ekazhevo, etc., though, since spring of 1919 the center of Vainakh resistance moved to Chechnya.

Before October coup in Russia, the Chechens, like the Ingush, had a national council with a center in the village of Old Ataggi. The Ataggi Council did not support the Bolsheviks. Therefore, it was considered as "reactionist" in Soviet historiography. But on the other hand, the Bolsheviks had their stronghold in Chechnya. It was the town of Grozny with its

Russian proletariat and Bolshevik military garrison. In the beginning of November 1917, the Grozny Bolsheviks supported by the 111 infantry regiment, practically seized power. The town and industrial workers formed a red army that got arms from military ammunitions and supplies kept in the town garrison.

The Cossack and mountain leaders reacted sharply to the formation of the armed Bolshevik Center in Grozny. At the end of November 1917, the military ataman of the Terek Cossacks M.Karaulov demanded that 111 Infantry Regiment be disbanded. The regiment did not obey his order. The Central Executive Committee of "The Union of Highlanders in North Caucasus" at that time, using the support of the "Wild Division" units that had just come back from the front, as well as the Chechens volunteer corps that was organized by Chermoev, lay ultimatum to the 111 regiment to drop guns and leave the Terek Region. Taking into consideration the fact that in case of non-fulfillment of the ultimatum the city would be shelled and assaulted by the Chechen formations, and the fact that the Cossacks declared neutrality, the 111 regiment and the Red Army left Grozny and moved to Sevastopol. The leaders of Grozny Bolsheviks and several thousands of civilian families followed them, too. The subdivisions of the Chechen regiment of the "Wild Division" occupied the city.

However, the Chechen-Cossack relations were strained again. In December 1917, after the extermination of a group of Chechens by the Cossacks, there began collisions between Cossacks and the lower strata of the Grozny population, on the one hand, and the Chechens, on the other hand. As a result of these clashes, several auls and stanitsas were destroyed. On the I Convention of the Terek Region held in Mozdok in January 1918, to which the Vainakhs were not invited, the Cossack representatives demanded to declare against the Chechens and Ingush. The Convention did not approve this demand.

Under existing conditions of international crisis in the Terek Region the Bolsheviks declared the establishment of Soviet regime in this territory (March 1918), though they did not control the major part of it. Many of the highlanders took sides with the Bolsheviks. They believed their slogans and promises according to which the peoples of the former Russian Empire would be given the possibility of national self-determination.

The declaration of Soviet regime in the Terek Region brought about a sharp activation of the opposition. In June 1918, the rebellion of Cossacks started. They drove the Bolsheviks away from a number of inhabited localities. But the attempt to occupy the main cities of the region, Vladikavkaz and Grozny, was not successful. The fighting around Grozny that was besieged by the Cossacks was rather protracted.

However, on this stage, the Soviet regime in the Terek region fell. It was related to the intrusion of the above-mentioned voluntary army.

Denikin's troops took over Grozny on February 4, 1919. They drove Bolsheviks from the city and approached the Chechen auls. As was usual in all the area of the former Russian Empire, the society in Chechnya was politically split. Apart from the nationalists and Islamists there were also the followers of Bolsheviks and adherents of the White party. However, in the face of Denikin's intrusion the major part of the political forces in Chechnya unified. The Russian Bolsheviks temporarily supported them. In March and April 1919, fierce battles between the Chechens and Denikin's army took place in the surroundings of the villages Goiti, Berdikel, Alkhan-Urt, Tsatsan-Urt and others. There were great losses in both sides. More than 200 Chechens, defenders of Goiti, and 20 Red Army men were killed in the battle. More than 400 Chechens and 700 White Army men were killed in the environs of Alkhan-Urt. Denikin's troops were temporarily concentrated in the Chechen Plain. As far as the mountainous regions are concerned, to which their opponents have retreated, the Muslim Emirate with the capital in Vedeno was formed there and it was headed by Sheik Uzun Khadji. In view of the fact that Uzun Khadji, the religious figure in Daghestan, enjoyed the support of the significant part of Chechens (particularly in the eastern part of the country), he was able to organize a small, but battle-worthy army that entered into the battle with Denikin.

The Bolsheviks, who recognized Uzun Khadji's government de facto, promised to grant the highlanders self-determination. The separate subdivisions of the Red Army that were driven to the mountains by the White Army were fighting under the banners of the Emirate. This unnatural union between the Bolsheviks and theocratic state formation that was represented by the North-Caucasian Emirate was justified by the tasks of struggle against the common enemy – the Denikin's army.

During 1919 the battles of Uzun-Khadji's troops against the White Army took place in the regions of Shali, Serjen-Urta, Gudermes auls, Vozdvijensky sloboda, Petropavlovsk stanitsa and others. The units of the so-called Chechen Red Army under the command of Aslanbek Sheripov (1897-1919), who was killed at Vozdvijensky, took part in them. The inhabited localities of plane Chechnya passed from one side to another, 26 auls were burned by the punitive troops. Denikin was compelled to transfer the troops to the Caucasus, weakening his principal forces that advanced in the direction of Moscow.

The turning point in favour of the Soviet regime in the North Caucasus took place in 1920. It was the time when the Northern Caucasian Emirate broke up and Uzun Khadji died of typhus. The former head of his

Government (“the Great Vesir”), Inaluk Arsankuev-Dishninsky, was killed by the Bolsheviks in one of the streets of Grozny in 1921. The Bolsheviks put the blame on bandits then.

8. SOVIET CHECHENO-INGUSHETIA

Soon after the establishment of the Soviet regime in the North Caucasus, Gorsky ASSR was formed within the part of the USSR (November 17, 1920). The autonomous territory comprised principally the former Terek Region and a part of Kuban region (Karachai) with the area of over 73 thousand square kilometers and the population of 786 thousand people (Chechens, Ingush, Ossetes, Cabardians, Balcars, Karachais, Russians-Cossacks). The Republic was divided into 6 administrative regions that related to the six mountain nationalities. Chechnya and Ingushetia formed part of the Gorsky Republic as Chechen and Nazran Regions. The capital of the autonomy became Vladikavkaz.

During the further national-territorial demarcation process in the North Caucasus in 1921-1922, the Cabardine, Karachaev, Chechen and Balcar regions that were transformed into the autonomous regions of the RSFSR, disintegrated from the Gorsky ASSR. In the long run, the Gorsky ASSR itself was abolished by the Decree of the Soviet Government of July 7, 1924. The Autonomous Regions of North Ossetia and Ingushetia, as well as the Sunzhen Region populated by the Cossacks, were formed on this territory. Vladikavkaz became an independent administrative unit.

Apart from the present-day territory of Ingushetia, adjacent lands of the modern Republic of North Ossetia formed part of the Autonomous Republic of Ingushetia. At that time the borders of Ingushetia adjoined Vladikavkaz from the east, south and, partly, from the north. As has already been mentioned, Vladikavkaz that was situated on the both banks of the Terek, was a special territorial unit, but the administrative bodies of the both autonomies – Ingush and North Ossetic – were located in this city. To be more exact, the Ingush administration was located on the right (east) bank and the North Ossetic administration was located on the left (western) bank. Industrial enterprises were located in the same order in the city. This provision was preserved till January 15, 1934, when Chechnya and Ingushetia were united into the integral Autonomous Region of Checheno-Ingushetia with Grozny as its capital. After this, Vladikavkaz belonged completely to Ossetia in the administrative sense, but the lands that adjoined it on three sides and Ingushetia formed part of the new autonomous formation, Checheno-Ingushetia, that has soon received the status of an autonomous republic.

It should be noted that during the period of the Soviet regime a great contribution was made to the cultural and economic development of Checheno-Ingushetia. Illiteracy among the major part of the population was liquidated during the first two decades of the Soviet regime, effective industry was built, a significant part of lands was returned to the Vainakh villages, a network of scientific educational establishments was created, new cadres of national intelligentsia were trained, literature in the Chechen and Ingush languages came into being, different kinds of science and art were developed. Yet, the Vainakhs experienced all the inhumanity of the Bolshevik regime. From the first years of Sovietization, officials of Cheka (Special Committee) started to methodically exterminate the old intelligentsia and priesthood, and all others who seemed to be unreliable to the government. The party cadres from the Center, who knew little about the Caucasus, gradually substituted the leaders of the Vainakh communists. Military raids were organized with the purpose of disarmament of the population²⁵. As a result, the partisan-brigand movement was strengthening and several times grew into the local rebellion. Punitive expeditions of the Red Army against the Chechen mutineers turned into the large-scale military operations carried on using the airplanes and armoured material (1822-1924, 1925).

The situation especially aggravated in the 20s when the authorities compelled the peasants join collective farms and when they began to exile several groups of citizens to Siberia with their families. More significant uprisings took place in Goiti, Shali, Benos, Autura. The mutineers captured the administrative buildings, set fire to the state archives, arrested the local authorities, SPA (State Political Administration) chiefs inclusively. The following claims were laid to the Soviet Government on behalf of the folk: to put an end to the forced collectivization, exiles and other unlawful actions, to dismiss the authorities of the local SPA and substitute them by the civilians from the ranks of Chechens²⁶ with the right to persecute criminal

²⁵ The Chechen political scientist, L. Usmanov, indicates at the archives document entitled "The Instruction on Disarmament of the Chechen autonomous Region" dated March 1925, where the following recommendations are given: At the meetings of aul inhabitants a demand was made about dropping guns, for which a special term was appointed... "If the inhabitants of auls do not obey, then gun-fire will be shot at the city or, in case of the shortage of artillery machine-gun will be fired at the city within 10 minutes".

²⁶ The Vainakhs constituted only a small part of the staff of state security services in Checheno-Ingushetia.

elements only, to restore Shariat Courts, to prevent the Center from interfering into the internal affairs of Chechnya as it was agreed in the status of autonomy.

High-rank commission arrived from Moscow and entered into negotiations with the Chechen mutineers. On behalf of the Soviet Government the mutineers were told that all the blame in the events lay exclusively on the local workers that passed decisions irrespective of the regulations from Moscow. It was promised that they would be punished severely as soon as the mutineers gave up the struggle. The mutineers believed this explanation and agreed to go back to their houses expecting the fulfillment of these promises. However, this turned out to be only a trick of the authorities, the purpose of which was to disorganize the mutineers and to weaken their vigilance.

At midnight, an army of Cheka members attacked the house of the leader of Shali mutineers, Shita Istamulov, but they were met with a rebuff. Shita and his brother Khasan defended themselves till dawn; by this time the mutineers came to their aid, the armed Chechens surrounded the members of Cheka and defeated them all. Shita Istamulov who managed to break free from the battle, called Chechens for the “Sacred War”, restoration of Imamate and exile of the infidels from the Caucasus (1929).

Well-trained military alignment of the Red Army consisting of several infantry divisions and artillery was sent to Chechnya. Besides that two regiments of the mountain riflemen from the frontier guards that were transferred from the Caucasus and SPA troops were involved in the operation. The military alignment was headed by I.Belov, Commander of the North Caucasus Military District.

As a result of fierce, bloody battles in April 1930, Belov took over the principal centers of the mutiny-Goiti, Shali, Benoi. Both parties suffered heavy losses, but the Chechen mutineers still did not drop guns. They retreated to the mountainous overgrown places that were difficult to be accessed. They were getting ready for the long-lasting partisan war.

Again the Bolsheviks changed their tactics. Parliamentarians were sent to the mutineers to offer them an honorable peace. They promised to amnesty all those who would drop guns, including the mutiny chiefs. The Chechens answered that they would turn back to peaceful life only on condition that Moscow will recall Belov’s troops. Besides, by the special decree of the CC (Central Committee), the left-winger “deviators” from collective-farm movement were found guilty and condemned. In some national districts the collective farms were abolished. The leadership of the Chechen AR (autonomous region) was abolished, too.

The mutineers believed the Soviet Government once again and went back to their auls, but were deceived again. The members of Cheka killed Shita Istamulov when in the autumn of 1931 he came voluntarily to the regional administration of SPA to receive the certificate – an amnesty document that was promised to him by Moscow. After this his brother Khasan Istamulov organized a new rebel group which functioned till 1935.

After Shita was murdered, a large-scale repression raged against the “Kulak–counterrevolution elements and Mullah–nationalistic ideologists”. Thousands of people were shot or thrown into prisons. Mass repression gave rise to the new mutinies in the Nojai-Urta and Shali regions. Punitive operations against the Chechen mutineers that were joined by the troops of the North Caucasus Military District recurred in 1932, 1933-1934, 1937-1939.

Besides the Istamulov brothers, among the leaders of the Chechen Opposition were Akhmet Mula, Kuriev, Iarocha, Khodjasa, Makala Gazgireev, Saadul Magamaev, Imama Saaduev, Ibragim Geldegenov and others.

The struggle of the Ingush with the Soviet order was noteworthy, too. At the end of the 20s the repression in Ingushetia increased considerably. Muslim priesthood and the followers of Kunta Khadji movement were hunted down. The resistance of the Ingush was fierce, too. They killed Chernoglaz, Secretary of Ingushetia Regional Committee of all Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks and Ivanov, Chief of the Nazran regional SPA (State Political Administration). Each terrorist action against the high-rank representatives of the authorities was followed by a new repression against the terrorists and other persons who were listed by SPA as “vicious elements”. In these lists there were also the names of not only former but also of future banditti.

In order to gain favour with the Government, the members of the Cheka (Special Committee) organized imaginary conspiracies of Chechens and Ingush: they sent provocateurs to them in order to urge the ingenuous mountain peasants on unlawful actions. Then, after making away with the sworn enemies of the Soviet Union, they reported to Moscow about the defeat of the next “counterrevolutionary nationalistic Center” or organization, of spies. The well-known Chechen politologist and historian Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, describes the fact of discovery of the anti-Soviet conspiracy in Ingushetia.

In the autumn of 1930, a certain mysterious stranger arrived in Chechnya. He passed himself off as a representative of Japan. He visited auls, made contacts with the authoritative people, and held illegal meetings with them. The headquarters of the visitor were located in Dolakov village, in the house of the former tsarist officer, R.Evloev, who was a non-Soviet person and enjoyed confidence among the Ingush people. In the long run, the

“Japanese” gathered his new acquaintances in Evloev’s house and having taken a vow from them to keep all in secret, he set forth the crux of the matter. He said that Japan and other great powers would soon make war with the Soviet Union. In this future war against the Bolsheviks, the peoples oppressed by them, including those of the Caucasus, will rise against the Bolsheviks. He said he was authorized by his government to provide the mutineers with money and guns. The visitor spoke for quite a long time, and there was a great logic in his speech. His Mongoloid features testified to the truthfulness of his words. The Ingush believed him and promised to stir up a rebellion at the start of the war. After that “the Japanese” appointed each of those present as “chiefs of hundred people” and distributed several guns and shoulder straps of Japanese pattern as a mark of distinction. As he promised, money would be supplied in the course of the “military-underground work”. The “Japanese representative” who, in reality, turned out to be a member of Central Asian SPA, left feeling very glad with the achieved success. The Ingush buried weapons and shoulder straps in the ground and waited for the war to start. But the war did not start and Ingushetia was inundated with SPA troops. Mass arrests in all large auls were held on one and the same day. The whole “Japanese headquarters” of conspirators were arrested and their “material evidence”- the Japanese weapons and shoulder straps were easily discovered. Only the assistant of the “Japanese representative”, Evloev, was not arrested. This typical provocation cost the Ingush 21 executed and 400 exiled people. Instead, the authoritative membership of the Vladikavkaz Department of SPA received rewards for the fulfillment of the special task of the Soviet Government. One of the Ingush SPA agents was among the rewarded.

Since the end of 1935 to 1937, Checheno-Ingushetia was comparatively at peace, there was no large provocation from Cheka and, consequently, there were no uprisings. Even the partisan movement in the mountains considerably abated. But general repression of 1937 did not fail to rain down on the Vainakh autonomy, too. For half a year Checheno-Ingushetia was, in fact, beheaded: almost all the local authorities, ranging from the workers of Republican scale to the chairmen of agricultural councils, workers of collective farms and ordinary party functionaries were arrested. The newcomers who did not know the language, history and culture of this nation substituted the liquidated workers. According to A. Avtorkhanov, “the extermination of intelligentsia in Checheno-Ingushetia was followed by the destruction of the ties that had existed between the people and the authorities”.

During the repression of the 1937-1938, a major part of the USSR citizens ruled out all ideas of opposing the communist regime. Yet, the Vai-

nakhs behaved in a different way. The partisan rebel movement in Checheno-Ingushetia grew stronger. Hundreds of people joined the brigands.

During 20 years the Vainakh resistance against the Soviet regime was headed by the religious authorities (mullahs, sheikhs) and mountain peasants, but at the end of the 30s and 40s representatives of intelligentsia became the leaders of the partisan movement (writer Khatsan Israilov, lawyer Miorbek Sheripov). This, however, did not have a great effect on the methods and tactics of the struggle.

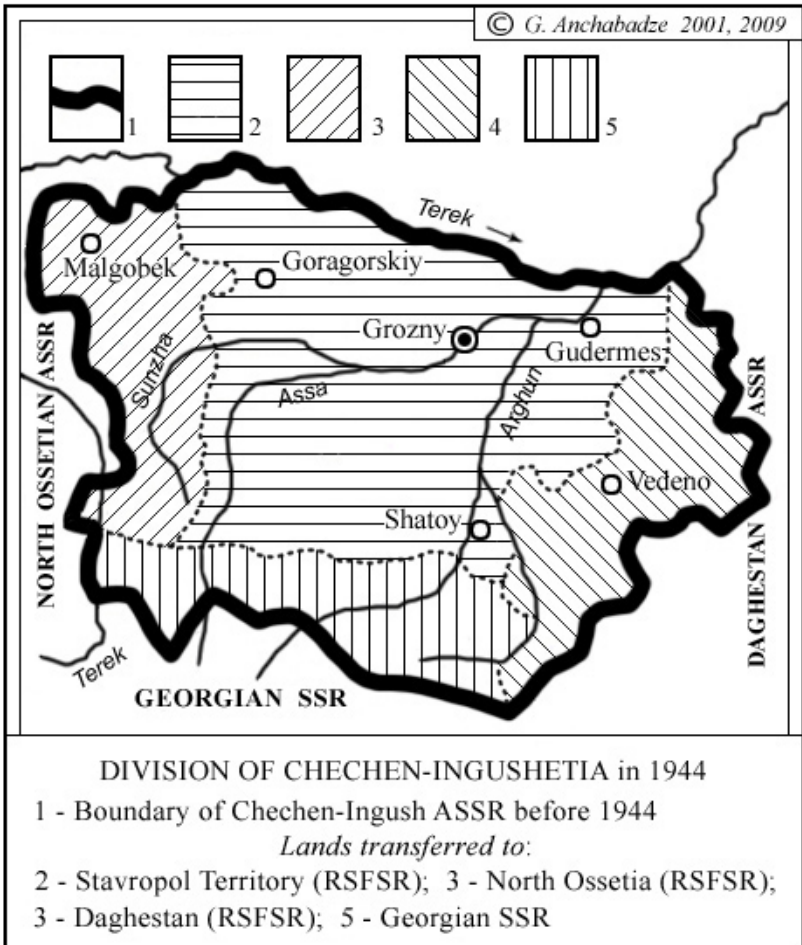
Israilov (1910-1042) was born in Nashkh where, according to the tales, “pure-blooded” Chechen taipes come from. He was a member of Komsomol and of all Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks (RCPB), but he did not take part in the active political life. He wrote poems and plays. Israilov contributed to one of Moscow newspapers by publishing articles in which he sharply criticized the authorities of Chechnya for the abuse and oppression of the working people. He was arrested twice and spent some years in prison where he wrote several literary works.

Feeling completely disappointed in the Soviet regime, K.Israilov, after his release from prison in 1939, refused to join the Communist Party again and went over to the Opposition camp. Thinking that the Soviet-Finnish War was a suitable period for anticommunist revolt that would be joined by other peoples of the Caucasus too, he stirred up a rebellion in South Chechnya at the beginning of 1940 and proclaimed the establishment of the Provisional National-Revolution Government of Checheno-Ingushetia.

The Soviet leadership sent troops to Chechnya and defeated the mutineers. Yet, they could manage to hold their positions.

The intrusion of German troops to the USSR in 1941 gave rise to the rebel movement in Checheno-Ingushetia. Israilov’s detachment was joined by the former prosecutor, Mireback Sheripov (d.in 1942), the brother of the above-mentioned Nazarbek and Aslanbek Sheripovs. The unified military headquarters were formed and the Rebel Government was reorganized. The Vainakh mutineers who fought in the mountains in small groups could not be captured by the punitive troops. In June 1942 they addressed the Chechen and Ingush people saying that Caucasian peoples are awaiting the Germans as guests and they will offer them hospitality on condition that the Germans recognize the complete independence of the Caucasus. The Soviet leadership was unable to suppress the rebel movement and struck air bombs on the mountain population.

The advancement of the German army in the North Caucasus in 1942 was stopped by the Soviet troops near the north-western borders of Checheno-Ingushetia. Next year the Germans were completely driven away from the Caucasus. At that time the Vainakhs struggled bravely against the



Hitler troops in the fronts of the Soviet-German war. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government accused all Chechens and Ingushes of treason and in February 1944, organized a mass deportation of the Chechens and Ingushes to Central Asia (mostly to Kazakhstan and Kirghizia, partly to Uzbekistan and Altai). 500 thousand people were exiled all in all (more than 400,000 Chechens and 90,000 Ingush). Among the deported were not only “vicious elements” and ordinary citizens, but also the workers of the party and Soviet machinery, former Red Army partisans, honoured front-line soldiers and

members of their families. The deportation order concerned everybody who was Chechen or Ingush by nationality²⁷.

The operation of evicting the Vainakhs, known under the code name “Mountains”, took three days only and was performed as follows: Troops were transferred to the Republic supposedly with the purpose of mountain maneuvers and they were located around the Chechen-Ingush villages. On February 23, 1944, all the inhabitants were unexpectedly arrested. Those who put up resistance, were killed on the spot. People were driven into the lorries and taken to the railway station where they were forced into the trains, ready for departure. Each family was allowed to have only 20 kg of luggage. The barbarian terms of transportation (the deportees were transported in the cattle wagons for several days without any food or drink) caused death of thousands of people, especially of old people and children. Many thousands of people died of hunger and poverty in the places of exile. They were thrown into the steppes without any lodgings or food. The inhabitants of villages, who could not be exiled from Checheno-Ingushetia for a number of reasons, were exterminated. So, on February 27, 1944, 147 inhabitants of the mountainous Chechen village of Khaibakh were burned alive. It is noteworthy that there were no battle-worthy men in the village. The killed were disabled people, women and children. The oldest of them was 110 years old, the youngest-less than 1 day old. The tragic fate of Khai-

²⁷ The violent eviction of some peoples of the Soviet Union (Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, Balcars, Kalmyks, Crimean Tatars, Soviet Germans, “Meskhis” and others) during the years of World War II was one of the most ominous crimes of Stalin period. In order to justify this evil deed, the Kremlin authorities accused the deportees of treason, banditism and evasion from productive labour without adducing any proof. So, the Decree of the Supreme Council of the USSR of March, 7, 1944 says that “many Chechens and Ingush betrayed their motherlands by going over to fascist occupants, they joined armies of saboteurs and scouts that were sent by the Germans to the rears of the Red Army, they formed armed bands to fight against the Soviet regime, many Chechens and Ingush took part in rebels against the Soviet order, they made raids upon the collective farms of adjacent regions, they rob and kill Soviet people...” But, in reality, the major part of Vainakh fighters did their duty well, the Republic supplied food products and its oil producing industry worked much in order to make provisions to the front. True, there were some people among the Chechens and Ingush who, for one reason or another, went over to the enemy’s camp, but there were such people among other peoples of the Soviet Union, too. The whole army of Russians headed by General Vlasov joined the Germans. There were also armies of Ukraine, Baltic people and others. As for the vainakh uprisings of the 20s-30s concerned, they were caused by the antinational and provocative policy of the Soviet administration and punitive organs.

bakh was shared by the Chechen villages of Magzar and Matskhar, the Ingush villages of Targim, Guli and Tsori.

In the exile “the special settlers” (an official name of the deported people, this word, being known that from the viewpoint of the authorities, equalled to bandit in meaning) were in the conditions of barrack regime. Free movement was allowed only within the region in the distance of 3 km. A special permission was required for longer trips. The armed posts of NCIA (National Committee of Internal Affairs) were located between the inhabited areas, barriers were installed in this region. Personal file was kept for each special settler. The adults were obliged to register in the Commandant’s Office once a month.

On March 7, 1944, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed a Decree on the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and about the administrative arrangement of the territory. So, by exiling the Vainakhs to Central Asia, the Soviet Government tried to wipe Checheno-Ingushetia off the Caucasus map as such. The territory of the country was divided into four unequal parts. Almost all Ingushetia was handed over to North-Ossetian ASSR, the lands of Eastern Chechnya formed part of the Daghestan ASSR, the southern mountain region formed part of the Georgian SSR, the northern and central regions of the former autonomy (the Grozny Region) were included in the Stavropol Territory of RSFSR. The Vainakh names of inhabited localities were quickly changed, monuments of material culture were destroyed. Much was done to bury the Chechens and Ingush in oblivion.

However, even the members of Stalin Cheka (Special Committee) were unable to wipe the country of Vainakhs from its inhabitants. The mutineers and those who managed to join them (about 2000 people) stayed in their motherland and took cover in the woods. They waged unequal struggle against their enemy, attacked the administrative representatives and colonists from their positions in the mountains.

Several divisions of NCIA (National Committee of Internal Affairs) were sent to Checheno-Ingushetia with the purpose of liquidating the partisan-brigand movement. Moscow tried to involve the representatives of the North Caucasian peoples – Georgians, Ossetians, Daghestanis - into the struggle, too, but they could only use the assistance of military forces in the neighbouring republics²⁸. As for ordinary people, they sympathized for Vainakhs. For example, there were some cases when Georgian herdsmen gave shelter to the fugitives.

²⁸ e.g. in 1955 members of Georgian Cheka arrested famous abrek Akhmed Khuchabarov who fought against the Soviet Union since 1929.

In the mid-50s, the main partisan groups in the territory of Checheno-Ingushetia were destroyed. But there came other times already. By the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in January 1917, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was restored and the Vainakhs started to go back to their motherland²⁹. The brigands still concealed themselves in the woods. They did not trust the Soviet authorities and continued to revenge the members of Cheka (Special Committee). They were gradually killed. The last famous brigand, Khasukha Magamadov, a mutineer of 1939, was killed in 1976 when, old and ill, he came to the village cemetery to bid farewell with the graves of his kin.

The borders of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR were changed after restoration. The Ingush territory around Vladikavkaz (the so-called Suburban Region) and the region in the West of Malgobek formed part of North Ossetia. Instead, the Republic regained part of the Terek-Kuma Lowland on the left bank of the Terek with its stanitsas.

The epoch of the so-called stagnation was, on the whole, the most peaceful in the history of Checheno-Ingushetia notwithstanding the abatement of the brigand movement, demolition of the monument to Ermolov in Grozny and periodical strikes of the Ingush for the restoration of autonomy and Suburban Regions. Still, Moscow treated the Vainakhs with distrust. As a rule, they were not appointed as first persons of nomenclature in the Autonomous Republic (First Secretary of Chechen-Ingush CPSS). This post was principally occupied by ethnical Russian. Only during the period of "Perestroika", in 1989, the first Chechen was appointed on this post. It was Zavgaev. During the Russian-Chechen war in 1994-1996 he headed the pro-Russian administration in the Republic. There were few Vainakhs among

²⁹ It should be noted that even after the partial exposure of crimes during the period of Stalinism on XX conference of CPSS (February 1956), and in the process of rehabilitation of the repressed peoples, there was a talk in the higher echelons about the expediency of sending the Vainakhs back to the Caucasus and forming a new "motherlands" for them in the places of exile. Here is an extract from a certificate issued on June 1956 by Didurov, Minister of Internal Affairs of USSR: "The Chechens and Ingush are settled principally in the Kazakh SSR (335 thousand people) and in the Kirghiz SSR (76 986 people). Their former territory is populated. The restoration of autonomy for the Chechens and Ingush within the former territory is a difficult and hardly realizable matter, as the return of the Chechens and Ingush to their former motherland will have unpleasant subsequences. So the matter of forming a new regional autonomy for the Chechens and Ingush in the Kazakh and Kirghiz SSR could be reviewed".

the leaders of municipal and regional administrations, as well as of the industrial enterprises.



The policy of Russification acquired a new impulse in this period. Mosques and national schools were closed down; the activity of the Chechen and Ingush cultural establishments was sharply decreased. Right up to the second half of the 80s, the ideologists of the Regional Committee of CPSS in Checheno-Ingushetia tried hard to inculcate the conception of free-will integration of Checheno-Ingushetia with Russia. The contradictory point of view was viewed by the authorities as “anti-Soviet” and “undermining”.

9. “THE CHECHEN REVOLUTION”

On the background of “Perestroika” (reform) and weakened total Soviet system in the second half of 1980 in Chechen-Ingush region started a movement against the existing policy. At the beginning the intelligent people came out against the distortion of the history and for environment protection. But soon the demonstrations of protest turned into demonstrations of masses with political demands first of all.

At the first Chechen National Meeting, held in November 1990 in Grozny, was declared the sovereignty of the Chechen Republic (at the same time the Ingush were demanding the reconstitution of the separate Ingush national-territory autonomy). The participants in the meeting elected a leading body - Executive Committee. Later it was named the Executive Committee of All-National Congress of Chechen People (ANCCP), the leader of which became Johar Dudaev³⁰.

Soon rose a conflict between the Executive Committee of the ANCCP and the official Government of the Chechen-Ingush Region headed by Zavgayev, who did not consider the leaders of the public movement as the partners having the equal rights. The main subject of their political disagreement was the different point of view about the future status of the country: Zavgayev was voting for deepening of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomy within the limits of the Russian Federation, while the leaders of the ANCCP were for its complete independence of Russia.

The Russian-speaking population of the republic was frightened of the Vainakhs’s activity. Among the Cossacks started a movement for creation of the Cossack Organizations headed by Atamans and for drawing the “Cossack” regions from the Chechen-Ingush Republic. This, naturally, compli-

³⁰ J. Dudaev was born in 1944. His childhood he spent in Kazakhstan, where his family was deported, but in 1957 he came back to the Chechen-Ingush Region. In 1966 he graduated from the Tambov High Aviation College by the specialty of “Pilot-Engineer”. In 1974 he graduated from the Air-Force Academy named after I. U. Gagarin. He served in different parts of the USSR. Right before his retire he had commanded the strategy bombardiers division that was located in Baltic Republics. At this time J. Dudaev was Major-General. In the early 1991 he retired and very soon became the leader of the Chechen national movement. On October 27, 1991 Dudaev was elected the first President of the Chechen Republic. At the same time he was the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Government. After the open attacks delivered by the federal army on the Chechen Republic in December 1994 he became the leader of the armed opposition. He was killed on April 22, 1996 when the rocket launched from the Russian aircraft exploded.

cated the relations with the Vainakhs, as the population of the mentioned region was rather mixed from the ethnic point of view. The situation in the Sunzhen Region was mostly acute. On April 7, 1991 was killed the Cossack Ataman A. Podkolzin and on April 28 an armed conflict between the Ingush and Cossacks took place. 5 Cossacks and 3 Ingush were killed in the battle. After that was intensified the withdrawal of the Russian-speaking population from the Chechen-Ingush Region (especially from the Sunzhen Region).

The attempt of the coup d'état in the USSR on August 19-21, 1991 became the catalyst of the political outburst. The official Grozny was hesitating to make choice concerning Moscow, meanwhile the Opposition was calling up the conspirators to insubordination and was strongly criticizing the authorities of the Republic unable to take the principle position in such a critical moment. On August 22, the supporters of the ANCCP after a small skirmish with militia seized the TV center. General Dudaev explained the demands of the Opposition in his speech on television. It was the breach of the information blockade, the Government of Zavgaev was trying to keep the Opposition in. Early in September the divisions of the National Guard, formed by the Executive Committee of the ANCCP after the Moscow putsch, were controlling the most part of Grozny. Having got no support from the Center the Soviet-Party leadership of the Chechen-Ingush Republic was completely demoralized. The leaders of the Opposition caught Zavgaev in September 6, 1991 and made him sign the Act of his retire that was followed by dissolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush Republic on September 15. The leaders of the ANCCP declared about taking in hand the supreme power and started preparing for Presidential and Parliamentary elections of the Chechen Republic. They have also abolished the legislation of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Chechen Republic (October 9, 1991).

The elections in the Chechen Republic took place on October 27, 1991. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the MANCCP, Johar Dudaev became the President. Soon were declared the members of the Parliament.

President of the RSFSR Boris Yeltsin considered the centrifuge processes very serious in Chechnya and issued a Decree on establishment of the state of emergency on the territory of the Chechen Republic (November 8, 1991). An immediate declaration of martial law and the order on forming the divisions of self-defense was the reply of J. Dudaev on the mentioned decision of the Government.

The Russian military aircrafts with soldiers landed at the Khankala Airport, near Grozny, on the night of November 9, but the National Guard and the Chechen militia had blocked the airport. The Chechen people

guarded all the approaches to the capital and all junction railway stations. At the same time, thousands of people, ready to defend the sovereign Chechen Republic, gathered in the center of Grozny. In the afternoon of November 9, President Dudaev swore in the Parliament. At the same time the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples which had been founded little earlier before the above-said affairs and had united the most of public movements in the Region, declared about the desire to support the Chechens in case of aggression from the Federal Center.

Thus the attempt of Yeltsin to control the situation in the rebellious republic drove to the opposite results. Dudaev's Opposition in the Chechen Republic was demoralized and, in order to prevent the accusation of "national betrayal" during the foreign threat, declared about its loyalty towards the new elected president.

The Kremlin had to step back. In the same evening was known about the agreement with the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Russia, General Komissarov, who specially arrived in the Chechen Republic, about the withdrawal of the divisions blocked in Khankala from the Chechen Republic.

At the press conference held on November 10, 1991, President Dudaev announced about the Chechen people's desire to establish the independent Government; he also warned Russia that in case of aggression the empire forces would suffer a decisive repulse.

So, the "Chechen Revolution" of 1991 gained victory. The attempt of the Federal Center to stop the evolution of the "Chechen Revolution" by armed interfare also failed. It resulted in legitimization of the new head of the Chechen Republic and consolidation of the most part of the Chechen people.

It is not accidental that the centrifuge processes going on in the Russian Federation were mostly intensified in the Chechen Republic. From a number of reasons that caused such development of the processes there should be pointed out two factors: social-economic and political-historical.

The researchers of the modern political processes in the North Caucasus, O.Vasileva and T.Muzaev, consider the social-economical factor the main reason of the "Chechen Revolution". They particularly distinguish the pauperization of the most part of the Chechen-Ingush village population, that was the result of disproportionate development of the Autonomous Republic's economic infrastructure during the Soviet period.

During the several ten years, the agricultural regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia served as the agrarian appendage of the giant oil producing and petrochemical industry of Grozny. The manpower policy of the Soviet Administration encouraged the afflux of qualified workers from the central part of Russia into oil producing region of Grozny, thereby impeding the Chechen and Ingush people to work in this branch of economics. Thousands of

people in rural regions of Chechnya, and Ingushetia distinguished by natural increase of the population, became unemployed due to these factors. This led to aggravation of the social situation in the Republic. In 1991 the number of “the excess rural population” in the Chechen-Ingush region was more than 100 thousand (but according to the unofficial data, the unemployed numbered about 200 thousand) that made approximately 20% (according to the unofficial data about 30%) of the able-bodied citizens. Those people became the principle force of the public movement. It is out of doubt that besides the national feeling they were also encouraged by the hope of social renovation.

Yet, we can hardly exclude the historical factor that had the most important role. In historical memory of 6-7 generations of the Chechen people the Russian Government is fixed firstly as the Tsarist Empire and then – as the Soviet Union. Both of them unceasingly fought against the native people, carried on mass deportations of the population and many other illegal actions which can be qualified today as genocide of the nation. The Chechen people resisted them as they could. This infinite and uncompromising struggle had a considerable influence on the formation of modern Chechen mentality. The above-said, of course, does not mean that between the certain representatives of the Chechen and Russian peoples there was no peaceful and friendly relationship. Owing to the century-old close mutual relations the Russian language has become the second native tongue of the Chechen people like many other peoples of the former Soviet Union and Russian culture in a certain sense contributed to the development of the national culture. But the negative experience of political relations with the Government on the background of dissolution of the USSR and “the parade of sovereignties”³¹ engendered the aspiration for independence in the Chechen society in order to be protected from the further voluntary behavior of Russia.

³¹ During the period under review, the leadership of the RSFSR with B. Yeltsin at the head of the Government, by the confronting struggle with the All-Union Center (in the person of M. Gorbachov) in every possible ways was shaking the foundations of the Soviet Union. At the end of the mentioned struggle, on December 8, 1991 the East-Slavonic leaders signed the Act, which denounced the agreement on forming the USSR. But before that B. Yeltsin had offered the subjects of the Russian Federation to determine the grade of the sovereignty by themselves. His word are notable: “Take the sovereignty as much as you will be able to swallow” (1991). At that time the legislative organs of the national-territorial autonomous units incorporated into the Russian Federation one by one were adopting the Acts of State Sovereignty but mostly they were only the declarative announcements. This process was called “the parade of sovereignties” Only the Chechen Republic ventured to enjoy the right of sovereignty and self-determination completely.

PART THREE

THE VAINAKHS ON THE VERGE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

1. THE OSSETIAN-INGUSH CONFLICT

The Ingush people could not accept the fact of losing the part of their land which had been under the jurisdiction of North Ossetia since 1957. Before the deportation there lived the most part of the Ingush people. Many important historical facts of the Ingush people are related with this territory. Besides that during the 1924-1934³² period the administration center of the Ingush Autonomy was located on this territory.

After returning back from the places of deportation, many Ingush settled in the Suburban Region and in the city of Orjonikidze. According to the 1970 census, in the North Ossetian ASSR lived 18 387 Ingush that made 11,7% of all Ingush living in the USSR. At that time starts the Ingush movement for restoration of the Ingush Autonomy within the former borders. At the beginning there were collective letters to the Central Committee of the CPSU and in January 1973 took place a three day political mass meeting. The people put in the claims for restoration of the autonomy and the Suburban Region.

To counterbalance the demands of the Ingush people the Ossetes also started the national movement and in October 1981, mass political demonstrations took place in Orjonikidze.

Though, in the so-called “stagnation period” changing of the existing borders was not impossible at all. In order to limit the yearning of Ingush people for the Suburban Region the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted the Resolution No 183, dated March 6, 1982, concerning the special regime of registration permit and selling and purchasing of houses and plots in the mentioned region.

By starting the “perestroika” (reorganization) in the USSR the Ingush people hoped to settle the territory problem successfully. In 1988, a political-public organization “Niiskho” (Justice) was founded. Its aim was resto-

³² Generally, since 1957 North Ossetia has been controlling one third of the Ingush territory, it being known as the most developed part of it. Before the deportation there lived 34 thousand people; 31 thousand of them were the Ingush.

ration of the Ingush Autonomy within the historical borders. In case of settling this question positively the future revival of the Ingush people and restoration of its Government (Autonomous Republic within the limits of the RSFSR) seemed to be possible.

The Law “On Rehabilitation of the Repressed People” soon strengthened the position of the Ingush people. According to the Law adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on April 26, 1991, all repressive acts are considered illegal and criminal and complete rehabilitation of the repressive people, including their territorial rehabilitation, is foreseen. According to Article 3 of the mentioned Law, “Rehabilitation of the repressed people means acknowledgment and realization of their rights on restoration of their territorial unity that had existed before the anti-constitutional policy of forcible remaking of the borders”.

The Supreme Soviet of the North Ossetian ASSR in 1990 accepted a declaration on governmental sovereignty concerning the disputable lands. It said that the territory of North Ossetia could not be changed without expressing the will of all-capable population of the Republic by referendum. Upon issuing the Law of the RSFSR “On Rehabilitation of the Repressed People”, the Supreme Soviet of the North Ossetian ASSR addressed the leaders of the Soviet Union several times and requested to suspend the action of the mentioned Law with respect to the territorial rehabilitation of North Ossetia³³.

Together with the attempts of securing the disputable lands legally both sides started training of military formations, laying in the reserves of arms being abundant in the “hot points” of the country at that period.

The processes taking place in the Chechen Region played the role of a catalyst in the Ossetian-Ingush conflict. It is natural that striving of the Chechen people for independence and the decision of the Ingush people to stay with Russia caused splitting of the Chechen-Ingush region, though among the Vainakhs still were many supporters of its unity. On September 15, 1991, on the day of self-dissolution of the last Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, a special meeting of public delegates of the Ingush region was held in the town of Nazran. At the meeting the Ingush Republic with its historical territory and administration center in Vladikavkaz was

³³ It should be mentioned that after 1944 thousands of Ossetin families settled in the Suburban Region. On the left bank part of Vladikavkaz are located the leading organs of North Ossetia, ministries and departments, higher educational institutions, culture objects, as well as large industrial enterprises producing the most part of products in North Ossetia in the end of the 19980 s.

declared. On June 4, 1992, The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation adopted the Law "On Forming the Ingush Republic Within the Limits of the Russian Federation", though it did not determine the borders of the new republic. As for the Russian Government, it was not in a hurry to realize the law about the repressed people. Unlike the Ingush people, belonging to the "rebellious" ethnos of Vainakhs, Moscow took the side of the Ossetes who were considered the most loyal to Russia among the peoples of the North Caucasus. It is quite obvious that shuffling the Ossetian-Ingush "cards" certain forces in the center were planning to change the situation in the Chechen Republic.

In the early 90s more than 33 thousand Ingush lived in North Ossetia, predominantly in Vladikavkaz and on the territory of the Suburban Region. But the real number of the Ingush in the Republic was much higher, as most of the Ingush were not registered in the Republic. Strains of passion caused by the territorial problem resulted in the separate collisions between the Osset and Ingush inhabitants of the Suburban Region. The situation aggravated because of the refugees moving from South Ossetia and other parts of Georgia to North Ossetia during the Georgian-Ossetian conflict in 1990. The republican leaders settled most of them, being on favourable terms, in the Suburban Region. At the same time, the Ingush people, trying to settle on the disputable territories, were rather discriminated: they were refused to be registered there and get the plots, they also had problems with the police, etc.

On June 12, 1992 North Ossetia offered the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation to establish the state of emergency in the Ossetian regions bordering with the Ingush and the Chechen regions. In order to realize this resolution the armed formations, including about 12,5 thousand armed people and heavy military equipment, were transferred into the Republic. At the same time, in order to prevent the "Ingush expansion", the anti-constitutional armed structures, the National Guard and people's volunteer corps started forming in North Ossetia with the assistance of Moscow. The Russian leadership transferred at their disposal a large amount of arms, military equipment, including 11 anti-aircraft aims, 57 tanks, 53 armoured transports and 4 armoured cars. Besides that various requisites (sub-machine guns, grenade cup discharges, explosion instruments, night vision instruments, etc.) were produced at the munitions factories of Vladikavkaz. It is noted in the book "Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts in the Second Half of 20th Century", edited by the Institute of Military History of the Russian Ministry of Defense, that "The position of the Russian leadership has been formed under the influence of the events taking place in the Chechen Region and is formulated as follows: providing of people's secu-



CHANGES OF BOUNDARIES OF INGUSHETIA

- 1- territory of Ingush Autonomous Oblast in 1924-1934;
- 2 - approximate boundary of the Republic of Ingushetia in 1992 (boundary with Chechnya is not established)

rity is not the main principle, the main principle is providing of integrity and security of Russia". Thus, an official sanction was practically given to Vladikavkaz to organize a large-scale ethnical cleaning in the Republic.

On October 31, 1992, a mass armed action with the supporting of the Russian army started against the Ingush villages defended by the native inhabitants. As a result of the murders, capturing the hostages, setting fires and robberies, raging in the region for several days, the Ingush were driven out of the Suburban Region and Vladikavkaz. Several tens of thousands of people were deported (according to some data, 60,000 Ingush were driven away). According to official data, 583 people were killed, with 407 Ingush, 105 Ossetes and 17 military men among them. More than 200 men were captured as hostages or were missing. According to eyewitnesses, the hired soldiers from South Ossetia, who had the experience of war under the circumstances of ethnic confrontation, were distinguished by their cruelty³⁴, when driving the Ingush people out of their lands.

On November 2, 1992, in the territories of Ingushetia and North Ossetia Moscow established the regime of state of emergency. Additional federal forces were transferred to the region but killing and terror of the Ingush people were going on. It was only after November 4, when the intensive armed clashes ended.

The bulk of the refugees gathered in the Ingush region. Part of them found shelter in their relatives' houses, the others were placed in old hostels, school-buildings, boarding schools and in the kindergartens. Later they were granted the carriages (9 sq. m. each), where in small rooms were huddled the whole families. Since 1993 the Ingush region has been the most populated with the refugees place in Russia. Though since starting the Russian-Chechen war the small republic gave accommodation to more than two hundred thousand internally displaced persons from the Chechen region. The Ingush Republic is supposed to be on the first place in the world according to the ratio of refugees to the native population.

Under such conditions was the Ingush Republic in the making within the limits of the Russian Federation. On December 10, 1992 the VII Meeting of the Public Delegates of Russia adopted the Law "On Formation of the Ingush Republic", and soon presidential elections were called. The president

³⁴ According to the data of the Ingush information sources the ethnical cleaning was carried out by following official and "non-constitutional" armed formations: the division "Don", two regiments of Russian divisions, two military colleges, the special arms of north Ossetia, the Ossetian National Guard and People's volunteer corps, two Cossack regiments and South Ossetian battalion.

was considered to be the head of the executive body of the Ingush Republic within the limits of the Russian Federation. The election was held on February 28, 1993. The first President of the Ingush Republic was Ruslan Aushev.

Despite the resolutions passed repeatedly by the federal and local authorities, during the years after the bloody incidents of October-November 1992, little has been done for returning of the Ingush refugees to their native lands. One of their number is an edict issued by President B.Yeltsin in December 1993, "On the order of returning the refugees and displaced people to the places of their habitation on the territories of the Republic of North Ossetia and Ingush Republic". The Ossetes, objecting to the restoration of the demographic situation that had existed before the autumn of 1992, met the Ingush with animosity. The Supreme Soviet of North Ossetia appraised the events of October-November as an aggression on the part of the Ingush people. The Second Congress of the Ossetian people, held in May 1993, passed a Resolution "On Aggression of the Ingush and Measures for Regulation of the Ossetian-Ingush Conflict". The Resolution, in particular, says: "Owing to the social and political situation the peoples of North Ossetia and Ingushetia are deprived of the possibility to live together". The Osset officials often refer to the mentioned Resolution. That is why the Ingush (6 thousand people) have resettled only four settlements in the Suburban Region instead of 20, as it had been before the conflict.

Despite the fact that tension has been brought down to a certain extent and there are lots of Russian military men in the conflict zone, the situation still remains strained. There still are murders and the killed are not only the Ossetes and Ingush. On August 1, 1993, Head of the Provisional Administration on the Territories of North Ossetia and Ingushetia, V.Polyanishko and some servicemen of the Vladikavkaz garrison, accompanying him, fell the victims to the act of terrorism.

2. THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC OF ICHKERIA

At the end of 1991, the Chechen Republic *de facto* became an independent State and its territory was free from the jurisdiction of Russia. The official Moscow constantly points out that independence of the Chechen Republic has been declared in violating the political and legislative Acts of the Russian Federation. Though, it should be mentioned that by the time of dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Chechen Republic had already been out of Russian jurisdiction and all political Acts and Federal Laws of post-Soviet period were adopted without participation of Chechnya. Besides that the referendum held in the Chechen Republic was not in compliance with the Constitution of Russia of 1993. As for the federal agreement, the

Chechen Republic did not sign it either. In addition, from the ethical point of view, we should remember that Russia conquered the Chechen region as a result of a long and bloody war and practically kept it within the limits of Russia by force.

The changes were also made in the whole foreign and internal policy. Johar Dudaev stated several times that the status of the Republic Ichkeria could be no lower than the status of any other country of Independent Community. On March 12, 1992 the Constitution of Independent Chechen Republic was adopted.

The State symbolics of the Chechen Republic are based on the idea of struggle for freedom running through all the history of the Chechen people. Thus the National anthem is the monument of the Chechen folk and it expresses the moral mood that supported indomitable and proud spirit of the Chechen people in the hardest periods of life.

*We were born when the she-wolf was delivering,
And were given the names when the lion was roaring.
In eagles' nests we were fed,
And on the clouds we were taught to horse breaking.*

*We were born for people and fatherland,
And were brave by their first call,
We were free as the mountain eagles,
And were proud in troubles and obstacles.*

*The granite rocks would melt soon as lead,
But the enemy would not make us bend!
The Earth would be set on fire,
But we would not sink dishonestly into the grave!*

*We would never be resigned to anybody,
The death or freedom is forever to our body.
Our sisters treat our wounds with their songs,
And sweet girls' eyes call us to fight.*

*And if we were very hungry – we would crack the roots,
And if we were very thirsty – we would drink the dew from grass!
We were born when the she-wolf was delivering;
And we serve only for God, People and Fatherland³⁵.*

³⁵ Translation from the Chechen language was made by Lem Usmanov.

Three colours on the flag of the Chechen Republic – green, white and red, are the symbols of life, freedom and fight. The government emblem of the Republic is based on illustration of a wolf, the most respected and popular beast among the Chechen and other mountain peoples of the Caucasus³⁶. Respectful attitude to the mentioned beast is explained in such way: “A lion and an eagle is the embodiment of force but they attack only the weak. As for the wolf, it attacks only the beasts that are much stronger than itself. The lack of force is changed by unlimited impudence, courage and smartness. In case of losing the fight it dies in silence without any sign of fear and pain. He always dies facing the enemy”.

* * *

As far back as early in 1992, J. Dudaev demanded moving out of the Russian troops from the Chechen Republic without arms and military equipment. In spite of refusal the Chechen armed formations captured most part of arms of the Russian forces. Further the process of transfer of weapons and military equipment was carried out in accordance with the instructions of Minister of Defense of Russian Federation, P.Grachev. Part of arms was purchased by the Chechens. As a result, quite a number of arms was found at the disposal of the Chechen leadership, giving Dudaev a chance to start forming of the regular Chechen army, as he always expected clashes with Russia. The Chechen Republic was the first country of the former Soviet Union and the socialist camp succeeding in driving out (though for some time) the Russian troops from its territory.

Moscow could not reconcile to the independence *de facto* of the Chechen Republic. Obviously, among the political-military leadership of Russia from the beginning there were two tendencies of relation development with the rebellious republic: 1) political resolution of the problem; and 2) the use of force.

Unfortunately, the encirclement of Yeltsin preferred the second way. That is why, instead of making a rational compromise with Dudaev, who suggested a confederative union that did not exclude the possibility of coming to the mutually acceptable way out, the supporters of force pressure insisted on immediate use of force. The Chechen Republic was subjected to financial, economical and information blockade, along the perimeter of its borders with the countries of the Federation (the Ingush region, North Ossetia, Stavropol Territory and Dagestan) began to mass up the Russian

³⁶ The term “the wolf with short ears” is the highest praise among the Avar people.

troops. Situation was particularly threatening in the zone of the Chechen-Ingush border (the Sunzhen and Malgobek Regions), used by the Federal troops to move into the Chechen territory. Though, an armed collision was prevented as a result of separation of the parties and thanks to the agreement concluded between the two Presidents – Aushev and Dudaev. According to the Agreement the borders between two Vainakh republics would not be demarked.

At the end of July 1993, Moscow offered the Chechen Republic to be the member of the Federation with special status that meant having more authorities than the Tatar Republic. Although the offer was rather interesting, it was not supported by the Chechen Parliament.

On December 12, 1993, new Parliament elections were held in the Russian Federation. The Chechen Republic did not take part in these elections and did not send their delegates either. On February 25, 1994, the Russian State Duma (Council) passed a resolution about political regulation of the relations with the Chechen Republic, but the negotiations were of no effect. Unsuccessful were the attempts to arrange a meeting between Yeltsin and Dudaev. Apparently the supporters of the “strict course” took a hand in the rearrangement of this important meeting.

In August 1994, Moscow made the final decision to cut the “Chechen knot”. At the beginning they planned to organize this by an inter-Chechen conflict which would result in overthrowing of Dudaev and passing the power to the “puppet state” that would be obedient to the Federal Center.

Some authorized persons who were not satisfied by Dudaev, started to form the Opposition in the Chechen Republic. Russia assisted them with money and arms from the depot of the Russian Army and Ministry of Internal Affairs. The commander of the anti-Dudaev forces was the former policeman U. Avturkhanov. He was also the chairman of the “Temporary Council” of the Opposition. Avturkhanov’s headquarters was located in the settlement of Znamenskoe, in the north-west of the Chechen territory, not far from the North Ossetian town of Mozdok. That was one of the main military bases of Russia in the North Caucasus.

The leaders of the Opposition were making warlike declarations. They threatened to conquer Grozny and overthrow Dudaev till the end of the year 1994. But practically they hoped to get military assistance from Russia. The Federals granted the irregular groups of Avturkhanov dozens of tanks, anti-aircraft plants, mortars, cars, shooting arms, tons of ammunition and fuel. It should be mentioned that only 12 tanks of the opposition were completed by the Chechens. The others were Russian military men. The Russian generals and officers took part in elaboration of the plan for seizure of Grozny. Air support was promised by the Russian air forces.

In the morning of November 26, 1994, the armoured carriers and the foot under the flag of Opposition attacked Grozny from three sides. But soon the attack was stopped by fire of the guardian army of the capital of Chechen Republic. As a result of a six-hours fight the assaulter army suffering heavy losses was completely broken and scattered. As for Avturkhanov, he ran away. Many of Russian officers were taken prisoners. The mentioned fact cleared up the role of Moscow.

Besides that the “War Party” under the leadership of Russia decided to drive the action to the end. For this purpose the leadership made a decision to use the regular army. The Moscow high-ranking politicians and military men were absolutely sure in the victory of the regular army over the “Chechen boeviks” (irregular soldiers).

On November 29, in his address to the participants of the armed conflict, Yeltsin demanded to stop fire within 48 hours, to lay down the arms and disband all armed formations.

If the President of Russia had issued such an edict while the oppositionists were preparing for an assault on Grozny, there could have been a slight suspicion of his willingness to prevent a bloodshed. But after complete defeat of the oppositional army the Government of Dudaev was the only addressee of the President’s edict.

As the case stood, even if one was not aware of the Chechen mentality, one could most likely expect the rejection of the ultimatum. Thus, Yeltsin’s appeal of November 29, 1994 was qualified as a cause for the new military interference.

On December 1, 1994, the President of Russia issued an edict, according to which all illegally armed persons should have laid down the arms and pass them to law-enforcement bodies within 15 days. But the instruction was not executed.

December 7, 1994 – the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. The Council members passed a resolution to return the Chechen Republic under the jurisdiction of Russia by the use of force. This action officially was regarded as “restoration of the constitutional order” in the Chechen Republic, though, it should be noted that the Russian Constitution of 1993 had never been in force before.

On December 11, 1994, the Russian army started a large-scale military operation against the Chechen Republic. It was the beginning of the war known as the First Chechen War (not counting the Russian-Chechen wars and armed conflicts taking place in the 18th and early 20th centuries).

What forces and means were used by the opposing sides in the beginning of the first Chechen Campaign?

According to the Russian military sources, the Chechen military formations by December 11, 1994 were thirteen thousand strong with 40 tanks, 50 armoured cars and fighting vehicles, about 100 guns of field artillery and mortars, etc. It was not a numerous but well-organized and battle-worthy army.

23,8 thousand strong armed grouping of Russia included the troops of the Ministries of Defense and Internal Affairs before the attack. It also possessed 80 tanks, 182 guns and mortars, 208 military armoured cars. By the end of December the forces of the armed grouping had been increased to 38 thousand people, 230 tanks, 454 armoured cars, 388 guns and mortars. Besides that a strong aviation armada, including the bombardiers, fighters, attack planes, reconnaissance aircrafts, also the percussion and military helicopters, supported the land forces from the air. The Chechen groups also had a number of training aircrafts, produced in Czechoslovakia. But almost all of them were destroyed by the Russian aviation on the airports in the first days of the warfare.

As we can see, from the beginning of the war actions the odds were in Russia's favor concerning the forces and it is quite natural if we compare the military potential of Russia to that of the Chechen Republic. Owing to this a confidence arose in Moscow that the organized opposition would have been broken down by the end of 1994. But the supporters of military actions failed to foresee the great historical experience of the Russian-Chechen relations. The significance of this experience lies in the fact that "suppression" of the Chechens by force is a long and bloody case. As for the Chechen people, they remember everything: the cruelties of the Russian generals, the red chastisers and, of course, the dangerous Stalin's deportation. Periodically repeated genocide made harder their character and taught them to repulse the enemy even when they are at a disadvantage. When the Russian armoured forces moved to Grozny to restore the "constitutional order" and the air forces started to smash the peaceful settlements, people who were very far from politics took up arms.

The first actions of battle showed that military qualities of the Chechen people have not changed through the half a century of peaceful life. The Chechen irregulars skillfully combined the methods of military actions of the regular troops and partisan groups. The further war actions showed that it was impossible for the Russian army to adapt completely to such combined forms of action.

On December 20, the Russian troops approached Grozny at 10 kilometers' distance and on December 31, started the first storm of the capital of Chechnya that was repulsed by the defenders of the city. The assaulters lost many tanks that appeared to be rather vulnerable in the streets of the city.

On January 18, Prime-Minister of Russia, Chernomirdin, met the representatives of Dudaev. But the achieved agreement between them to stop the fire was not realized. Meanwhile in the streets of Grozny fierce battles were waged. On January 19, the palace of the President fell. Only on March 11, 1995, the “federalists”, having suffered heavy losses, managed to take almost the whole city under their control. The city was completely turned into ruins. By June were also occupied other important settlements and centers of the Chechen Republic. The Chechen armed formations retreated to the mountains and passed on to a partisan struggle. At the same time in the rear of the Federal troops started a mortar war. In Grozny and other towns acted the reconnaissance-diversionary partisan groups. The Russians landed a number of helicopters in the mountains that were in the rear of the Chechen formations. That is why it is difficult to speak about more or less clear lines of the armed opposition or the fronts in the Russian-Chechen War. On the territory of the Chechen Republic the warfare was conducted everywhere.

The observers pointed out the cruelest actions of the “federalists” towards the native people. The aviation and the artillery were making devastating strokes on the populated areas. That is why there were too many killed among the peaceful population in this war, making up 95% of all the killed. (In World War II, for example, the losses among the peaceful population made up 50% of all killed people). Nobody has counted how many people became the victims of the infinite police inspections (“combing-out”), and concentration camps (“filtration camps”), etc.³⁷

Till the summer 1995 the armed actions were conducted only on the territory of the Chechen Republic. But on June 14, 1995, the international media sources spread information about a cruel raid of the Chechen irregulars under the leadership of Shamil Basaev. They burst into the town of Budionovsk (Stavropol Territory) and captured a hospital with its patients and personnel (more than 500 people). Basaev explained that by his behaviour he wanted to attract the attention of the world publicity to the actions taking place in the Chechen Republic. During those hard days Premier Chernomirdin took upon himself the responsibility for negotiations with

³⁷ According to the estimations of the Russian military historiography, the Chechens lost nearly 2,700 “boevics” (fighting men) and more than 39,000 peaceful people in the First Chechen War. According to the same sources, the losses in manpower (Killed, dead as a result of injuries and accidents) made up 5,551 people; as for the medical losses (the wounded, contused, burnt, ill and others), 51,304 people died during this war. The figures given by the alternative sources are considerably higher.

Basaev and opened him the way back to the Chechen Republic. By that action Chernomirdin saved the lives of hundreds of people who could have been killed if the federal troops encircling the hospital had not stopped the fire. Despite everything 28 people were killed and 65 were wounded in Budionovsk.

The raid of Basaev, demonstrating the possibility of spreading the warfare in the internal regions of Russia, undoubtedly, promoted the beginning of a new round of the Russian-Chechen negotiations on cessation of hostilities (from June 25, 1995).

The negotiations were participated by Head of the General Headquarters of the Chechen Republic, Aslan Maskhadov, and Commander of the Russian troops, General Anatoli Romanov. On September 10, 1995, in accordance with the agreement concluded as a result of the negotiations, part of the Russian troops began to withdraw from the territory of the Chechen Republic.

Though the peaceful initiative apparently had serious opponents. On October 6, 1995, General Romanov was seriously wounded in Grozny. Because of this fact the further negotiations and driving out of the troops were suspended. The warfare was recommenced.

Firm resistance of the Chechen people made the Russian command increase the forces in the zone of military actions. At the end of 1995, according to the statement of the Head of after-Russian administration in the Republic, D. Zavgaev, there were 462 thousand federal soldiers on the territory of the Chechen Republic. The grade of providing the Russian groups with the means of far fire hitting was also rather high. Thus at the end of 1995 one means of far fire hitting in the federal troops was falling at 63 men. It is considered to be an excellent technological equipment of the troops. For example, during the war in the Persian Gulf the index for the multinational forces of UN was 1:110.

On April 22, 1996, the terror act against Johar Duadaev was performed with success. The President of the Chechen Republic was killed as a result of the direct rocket attack. Though the death of Dudaev has not disorganized the Chechens' resistance. Vice-President Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, a writer by profession, became President of the Chechen Republic. The military direction was commanded by Aslan Maskhadov, the former colonel of the Soviet Army. It was he, who worked out the plan of taking Grozny in summer of 1996. Early in August when the Russian troops were on the offensive against the partisans in the mountains in the south of the republic, part of the Chechen formations, having passed through the blockade zone of the "federalists", entered the city and took it under their control (August 5-6, 1996).

Separate parts of the Grozny garrison of Russia were blockaded by the Chechens.

Apparently such a turn of the affair was a great surprise for the Russian Command. They started to transfer the forces to Grozny and the struggle started. In spite of the generals' reports about breaking the forces in favour of the federal army, the situation in the city remained unchangeable. Air or artillery attack of ruined Grozny meant killing of the blockaded Russian troops too.

On August 12, 1996, in the town of Khasavurta (Daghestan) started peaceful negotiations between the special representative of the Russian Federation, General Alexander Lebed and Aslan Maskhadov who presented the Chechen side. The negotiations ended on August 31, 1996. The parties succeeded in declaring the principles of the relations between Russia and Chechnya. Later this agreement was made official at the meeting of Chernomirdin and Maskhadov, when on November 23, 1996, they signed the "Provisional Agreement on the Principles of Relationship Between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic". The Agreement had a compromise character. Russia did not acknowledge the independence of the Chechen Republic *de jure* but practically agreed with its independent existence. The final status of the Chechen Republic should be determined in five years, i.e. in 2001. Before signing the Agreement the Russian troops had left the territory of the Chechen Republic (for the second time after disintegration of the USSR).

In January 1997, the presidential elections were held in the Chechen Republic. Aslan Maskhadov was elected President. His meeting with the President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin in Moscow was an important event of the further period. At that meeting was concluded an Agreement about peace and principles of relationship between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic – Ichkeria (May 12, 1997). The sides officially declared about the refusal to use force in resolution of conflicts. They also expressed their desire to build their relations in compliance with the principles of International Law. It was also pointed out in the document that the agreement would be a base for the further agreements and treaties concerning the relationships between the mentioned nations.

The Chechen people were celebrating the end of the war. They thought that a long-awaited peace had come. But soon appeared that it was too early to set at ease. Hardly passed three years and the country was put to a more severe test again.

After gaining the independence, but having failed to be recognized as an independent country, the Chechen Republic was found in a rather difficult situation after the war of 1994-1994. The economics of the country was destroyed, the main sources of budget increase were also broken down and the life standard became rather lower. The number of unemployed people in such a small republic was 400 thousand; most of them were young people. Besides that there were thousands of ill and invalid people who needed a long-term medical rehabilitation. Activation of the criminal groups – robberies, kidnappings and drugs complicated the mentioned social-economical picture of the country. The illegal oil business was prospering with all might. The provocations directed toward the Chechen Government before the world community were constantly going on. From this point of view we should point out the fact of killing of the representatives of the organization “Doctors Without Borders” that stopped their activities in the Chechen Republic. Also were killed four English citizens who were busy with installation of the satellite communication. The Russian mass media were widely broadcasting those events, commenting them as the criminal anarchy, existing in the rebellious republic. It was really difficult for the law-enforcement bodies of the Chechen Republic to fight with raging of criminal elements. The existing situation and lack of the experienced personnel was rather suitable for all kinds of criminals. During an attempt on October 25, 1998, was killed Head of the Department Fighting Against the Kidnapping of People, Sh. Bargishev. On that day the Government was planning a large-scale operation against the criminals who kidnapped people for ransom.

The oppositionists of Maskhadov were making seriously dangerous situation for establishing stabilization in the Chechen Republic. Thus after electing him President of the Republic, Z.Iandarbiev and his supporters who had lost power, blamed Maskhadov in pliancy to Moscow. The second part of the opposition was presented by so-called Vakhabits. Vakhabism is a variety of Islam and came into the Chechen territory in the first half of the 90s of the 20th century. It is different from the traditional Sufism. The supporters of Vakhabism call themselves the “monotheists” or Salafs, the followers of the “pure” Islam that existed at the time of the prophet Mohammed and the first four caliphs (or “righteous caliphs”). Their organizations they call Jamaat (community).

“The Vakhabits” were brave fighting against the Russians in 1994-1996 and gained the respect of the Chechen people, but on the other hand, people did not agree with their radical political and religious views. People were also against their methods by which the “Vakhabits” were trying to

thrust their ideology on the Chechen people. The supporters of the Sufis Islam that is traditional in the territories of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, blame the “Vakhabits” in sectarianism. It means that they consider Sufism to be a mistake, deviation from the right belief. The “Vakhabits” blame the temperate political and spiritual leaders of the North Caucasus in cooperation with the Russian Government and in betrayal of the national and religious interests of the North Caucasian people. The top of confrontation between the supporters and opponents of the Vakhabism in the Chechen Republic was on July 14, 1998, when the conflict in the town of Gudermes that started because of domestic reasons, turned into a real struggle during which from the both sides were killed more than 50 people, mainly the young men. That was one of the most important struggles that has ever been in the Chechen territory. The “Vakhabits” suffered heavy losses.

After the bloody events of Gudermes, Maskhadov declared Vakhabism illegal and called upon the Imams of the Mosques, the leaders of the local Administration Bodies, to drive out its supporters from the territory. Though the “Vakhabits” were defended by the Vice-president of the Chechen Republic Vakha Arsanov and Shamil Basaev who managed to persuade Maskhadov not to aggravate the situation. Having evaded the rout, the “Vakhabits” soon became stronger and started to increase their forces.

It was interesting that Moscow appeared as a defender of Vakhabism in that situation. On July 22, 1998, a special Commission against the political extremism under the President of Russia and with the participation of Minister of Justice, Krashennikov, Director of FF, Kovalev, Minister of Internal Affairs, Stepashin and Minister of the Nationalities, Sapiro, made a decision that Vakhabism was not an extremist tendency.

According to politologist V. Akaev, ”The fact that Vakhabism is officially forbidden in Chechnya and Ingushetia and is determined as Islam Fundamentalism in Dagestan, but at the same time, the Russian ministers of forces recognize it as a peaceful and non-extremist tendency, proves that it is supported by certain political circles of Moscow, pursuing their mercenary objects”.

In the given case Vakhabism is supposed to be real force against the legally elected power in the Chechen Republic, supported by the Federal Center. Though, to be fair, we should point out that real Vakhabism, as a religious tendency, is rather far from the phenomenon, implied by this term, and not all the Muslim groups, regarded as Vakhabists, are the extremists. Today official leaders of the Government and the clergy can give the name “Vakhabit” to any Muslim person who is against the existing situation in policy and in the sphere of religion (M. Atkin).

In 1997-1998, repeated attempts were made for organization and structural consolidation of the Chechen and Daghestani "Vakhabits" and the political forces, being in sympathy with them. So, in April 1999, the Congress of the Peoples of Ichkeria and Daghestan, headed by Shamil Basaev, came into being in Grozny. An active part in the work of the Congress was also played by the Daghestani Islamists who had recently moved to Chechnya. Two of Basaev's three assistants were Daghestanis by birth. The Congress was entitled to conduct any kind of activity, including political, on behalf of the Chechen and Daghestani peoples.

It is noted in special literature that on the way of creation of the North Caucasus Confederation, the separation of Daghestan from Russia and its reunification with Chechnya with a view to form a unified state "Daghistan" was the immediate task of the "Islamists" and the national-radicals as well, for these two trends only slightly differ from each other due to the fact that Islam, as is generally known, for almost two centuries has been a unifying factor in political struggle of the region's population speaking different languages.

The influence of "Vakhabism" was rather perceptible in many districts of Daghestan. The idea of Islamic "Imamat" seemed to be very attractive for many people on the background of aggravated social-economical and ethno-political situation with the widespread unemployment, corruptibility of the authorities and lack of clear vital prospects. In May 1998, in Central Daghestan, in so called Kadar zone (the villages of Kadar, Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi), a peculiar "Vakhabit Republic" came into existence. The native peasants announced the independence of their villages and put themselves beyond the reach of control of the Russian and Daghestani authorities. However, according to certain data, it was not so much a religious-political as social riot resulting in banishment of the corrupt authorities and militia by the armed peasants. Stepashin, Prime-Minister of Russia, visited the Kadar zone and temporarily relieved the tension. Having met with the natives Stepashin pointed out that "quite normal people live in these villages and they should not be disturbed".

However, the activities of the "Vakhabits" on the whole was met dissimilarly by the population of Daghestan. There were cases when all ended in clashes with the followers of traditional Islam. All this on the background of the clan struggle for power in the republic, frequent acts of terrorism and attacks carried against the Russian troops dislocated in Daghestan, put in jeopardy the peaceful existence of the republic.

Such was the situation on August 2, 1999, when the Chechen-Daghestani armed detachments, having occupied border villages in the west of the republic penetrated in the territory of Chechnya and mountainous

Daghestan. These detachments were in command of Shamil Basaev, Bahaudin Mahomed, Mahomed Tagaev and Khattab, acting under the “flag” of the Congress of the Peoples of Ichkeria and Daghestan. The Russian information sources, commenting the events as an intrusion of Chechnya upon the territory of one of the subjects of Russian Federation, directed their attention to the participation of the Chechen commanders Basaev and Khattab³⁸ in this action. At the same time, no mention was made about the fact that main forces acting on the part of Chechnya were recruited from the oppositionists of President Maskhadov.

The military incursion into Daghestan gave a good occasion for the Kremlin to blame Ichkeria for breach of the treaties and aggression. Though there was no evidence of Aslan Maskhadov’s as well as other authorities’ participation in this action, still President of Chechnya failed to condemn the act of armed intrusion into the neighbour republic. The restraint of Maskhadov can be explained by his unwillingness to aggravate the discord with the opposition headed by the popular military leader Shamil Basaev. Apparently, President apprehended the split of the Chechen society under conditions of confrontation with Russia.

* * *

Thus a brief period of unstable peace lasting three years ended in the North Caucasus. Russian Government headed by V.Putin hastily transferred the troops to Daghestan and violent fightings started in the vicinity of the village of Botlikh. Regular forces with the participation of the Daghestani militia-men managed to dislodge the formations of “Islamists” back to the territory of Chechnya.

Having restored control over the border districts of Western Daghestan, Russian authorities delivered an ultimatum to the Jamaat of the Kadar zone to disarm and subdue to the “federals”. The ultimatum was met with denial and Russian troops besieged the disobedient villages of Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi, using the armored technical equipment, artillery and bombing aircrafts. The siege warfare lasted several days until the resistance of Daghestani rebels was suppressed. Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi were reduced to ruins.

³⁸ Khattab who comes from Saudi Arabia became far-famed after April 1996 when his fighting-men, lying in ambush in the Black Mountains, opened fire against a motorized column and killed 78 people of “federal” forces.

During this besiege the military formations of Shamil Basaev made one more attempt to break through Dagestan, this time trying to support those who were in the Kadar zone. A stroke was delivered to the Novolak district in the north-western part of the republic. Federal troops, having got reinforcement from the central regions of Russia, repulsed the attack of the enemy forces and threw them back to the initial position. These incursions from Chechnya caused a protest of the significant part of the Dagestani people.

These events were followed by terrible acts of terrorism in Moscow and Volgodonk. The terrorists blew up several blocks of flats, taking away lives of hundreds of innocent people. And again, Basaev and Khattab were accused of this crime. The Russians considered them to be the organizers of those acts of terrorism (though, no accusatory documents have been presented up to now). Soon Russian air and land forces waged an attack upon Chechnya. The Russian-Chechen agreements of the years 1996-1997 were denounced. On October 1, 1999, the Federal Army of Russia broke in Chechnya and the second Chechen war, or “anti-terrorist operations”, as official Russia called it this time, began³⁹.

It is obvious that this euphemism was used to conceal the secret of the fact that Russia made new attempts to beat the Chechens and hold the Chechen Republic incorporated into the Russian Federation. Russian authorities seemed to have no other solution of the problem by that time. That is why the second war turned out to be much more ruthless and devastating. The number of victims, according to the reviewers, as well as the brutality displayed by the “federal” troops towards the peaceful population, have exceeded by far that of the first campaign. In addition, the right of any state to safeguard the territorial integrity should not be understood as the right to wage practically unrestricted war against the whole nation, especially as this is not the guarantee of success at all. Judging from the experience of Russian-Chechen relations, as well as from the knowledge of world-history, it is either impossible to settle this kind of armed conflict by using force, or it will last for a long time.

In Chechnya the “federals” ran against the People’s war; they came across the psychology of militant resoluteness, from the very outset requiring the mobilization of spiritual forces of the resistance. Under the circum-

³⁹ After the recommencement of military actions, the campaign was called “counter-terrorist operations”. According to the authors of this correction, it was a response (“counter-terrorist”) and not a forestalling (“anti-terrorist”) blow, delivered against the Chechen “terrorists”.

stances military actions of low intensity can drag on during long years, for military and technical superiority of the enemy is brought to naught thanks to the factor of personal spiritual and psychological preparation. Besides, and that is especially important, despite the sufferings inflicted by the war, the population always sides with the guerrillas.

An attempt of “Chechenization” of the conflict (i.e., advancing of pro-Russian leaders) does not prove its value either. Anyway, if we consider the matter in the light of the history of Russian-Chechen relations, we can make sure that Russian authorities failed to succeed in finding a single person among the Chechens, who really would be able to counterbalance the leaders of national resistance.

Meantime, the war in Chechnya is going on, and there is no end to it. The war exterminates the population of Chechnya, though no less are the sufferings of Russia: the sons of the Russian people are killed, the budget is burdened with military expenses, the future of the country remains undecided, for by waging a war against the not numerous nation it is impossible to hold out on the way of democratic development.

MAY 25, 2001

CHRONOLOGY

- Around 1,8 million years ago** – Primary settlement of the Caucasus
- 150-80 thousand years ago** – people of Stone Age settle the Caucasus on a large scale
- Around 40 thousand years ago** – First traces of human habitation on the territory of land of Vainakhs. Establishment of a tribal system
- 6th millenium BC** – First appearance of agrarian settlements in the Caucasus
- 5th–4th millenia BC** – Appearance of copper-ware in the Caucasus
- End of 4th – early 1st millenia BC** – Bronze Age in the Caucasus
- 9th–6th centuries BC** – Urarty State
- 8th–7th centuries BC** – Exploitation of iron
- 7th century BC** – Invasion of Caucasus by Scythians
- 6th century BC** – First mention of toponym "Caucasus" in written sources
- End of 4th – early 3rd centuries BC** – Sarmatian tribes invade the Caucasus
- End of 4th–3rd centuries BC** – Appearance and heyday of Iberian Kingdom
Vainakh-Durdzuks participate in political life of ancient Georgia
- 1st century AD** – Joint campaigns of Sarmatian-Alan and Vainakh-Daghestani tribes, ofganized by rulers of Iberia
- 1st–2nd centuries** – Ancient authors make mention of Gargarians, Isadiks and Khamekits as supposedly attributed to tribes of Vainakh stock
- 4th century** – Huns invade the Caucasus
- 5th–6th centuries** – Beginning of flourishing of tribal confederation headed by Alans. Emergence of early state formations in Daghestan
- 7th century** – Vainakhs mentioned in "The Georgraphy of Armenia"
- 7th–9th centuries** – Khazars' State
- Mid 11th century** – Appearance of Kipchaks in the North Caucasia
- 11th century** – Leonti Mroveli describes ancient history of Vainakhs
- 12th – early 13th centuries** – Part of North Caucasus population fall under Georgian rule. Appearance of Christian churches
- 1220–1222** – First appearance of Mongols in Caucasus
- 1237–1240** – Mongols occupy steppes and foothills of North Caucasus
- 13th–14th centuries** – Vainakh tribes fight against Mongol invaders. First appearance of defence towers in the mountains
- 1395–1396** – Tamerlane invades North Caucasus
- 15th century** – Vainakhs begin to settle in flat country
- 15th–16th centuries** – Islam begins to spread among Vainakhs
- 15th–17th centuries** – Prime of "tower architecture" in the land of ainakhs
- Mid 16th century** – First Russian (Cossack) settlements appear on the river Terek

- 1567** – Russians build first fortress on the Terek
- 16th–18th centuries** – Vainakhs establish feudal relations
- 1722–1723** – Persian campaign of Peter I
- 1739** – Russians arrange Kizlyar Military Line. Start of struggle against Chechens to occupy the Chechen Plain
- 1758** – General Frauendorf carries on a campaign against Chechens
- 1760** – First organizer of North Caucasians liberation movement against tsarist colonialists Ushurma (Sheikh Mansur) was born (d. after 1791)
- 1768–1774** – Russian-Ottoman War. Tsarist forces attack the Chechens
- 1784** – laying of Vladikavkaz Fortress
- 1785** – Liberation movement of North Caucasian. Mountain peoples under Mansur against tsarist Russia. Caucasian War starts
- 1791** – mansur captured
- 1797** – Imam of Daghestan and Chechnya, leader of mountain peoples in the Caucasian War, Shamil was born (d. in 1871)
- 1801** – Eastern Georgia secedes to the Russian Empire
- 1810** – Treaty of Vladikavkaz: Ingushetia voluntarily joins Russia
- 1816** – P. Zakharov – Chechen (artist, member of Russian Academy of Arts) was born (d. in 1846)
- 1816–1827** – Activity of General Ermolov on post of Commander-in-Chief of Russian Forces in the Caucasus, civil Governor of Georgia and Astrakhan and Caucasian provinces
- 1817** – Russian troops attack the Chechens
- 1817–1823** – Conquest of the Chechen Plain and arrangement of the Sunzha Fortified Line
- 1818** – Foundation of Grozny Fortress
- 1822** – Riot in Chechnya
- 1825–1826** – Revolt of Chechens under Beibulat
- 1826** – Ermolov conducts campaign against Chechens. Battle on the Arghun
- 1827** – Chechen ethnographer Umalat Laudaev was born
- 1829** – North Caucasians start liberation war under the banner of Muridism
- 1831** – Beibulat Killed
- 1932** – General Rosen organizes a campaign against Chechnya and Ingushetia
- 1834–1859** – Imamate of Shamil
- 1839** – General Grabbe attacks Daghestan. Siege and capture of Ahulgo
- 1840** – Political centre of Imamate shifted to Chechnya
- 1840–1841** – Russian troops undertake punitive expeditions in Chechnya
- July 11, 1840** – Battle of Valerik
- 1842** – General Grabbe defeated in the forests of Ichkeria
- 1843** – Russia forced defeated in Daghestan
- 1845** – Failure of Vorontsov in the mountains of Daghestan and Chechnya

1846 – Shamil leads a forey in Kabarda

Mid 19th century – Lachinilau makes an attempt to create Chechen written language

1850 – Ingush writer and enlightener Chkh Akhriev was born (d. in 1914)

1852 – Ingush writer and enlightener Aslambek Bazorkin was born (d. in 1890)

1854 – Shamil organizes a campaign against Georgia

1858 – Uprising of Ingushes

February 1859 – Russians captured Vedeno, the capital of Imamate

Autust 26, 1859 – Seizure of Mt. Gunib by the Russians. Shamil captured

1860 – Terski Region formed

1860–1861 – partisan War in Chechnya

January 1864 – Appearance of Kunta Khadji's follwers. The Shalli manslaughter

May 21, 1864 – Resistence of highlanders in West Caucasus suppressed. Official date of the end of Caucasian War

1869 – Fortress Grozny becomes town of Grozny

1877 – Popular uprising in Daghestan and Chechnya against colonial oppression

1882 – A prominent Chechen political figure Abdul-Medjid (Tapa) Chermoev was born (d. in 1936)

1893 – Industrial exploitation of oil in Grozny district

1900 – Appear publications written in Chechen alphabet created on the basis of Arabic graphic symbols

1905–1907 – First Russian revolution

1910 – A prominent figure of Chechen national-liberation movement Khasan Israilov was born (d. in 1942)

1914–1918 – Warld War I

February 27, 1917 – February Revolution in Russia. Overthrow of autocracy

March 1917 – First Congress of Mountain Peoples held in Vladikavkaz. The Union of United Mountain Peopels of the Caucasus established

October 25 (November 7) 1917 – october Revolution in Russia. Seizure of power by the party of Bolsheviks

May 11, 1918 – Mountain Republic declares independence

1919–1920 – Military operations against the troops of General Denikin. North Caucasian emirate of Usun-Khadji

1920 – Ingush linguist Z. Malsagov creates Ingush alphabet based on Latin graphic symbols

march 1920 – The Red Detachments marched into Grozny. Soviet power proclaimed in Chechnya and Ingushetia

November 17, 1920 – Gorsky (Mountain) Autonomous Republic comprising Chechnya and Ingushetia formed within the part of Soviet Russia

1922 – Autonomous of Chechnya established

1922–1924, 1925, 1929–1930, 1933–1934, 1937–1939, 1940–1942 – Anti-Soviet revolts in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Punitive expeditions of the Red Army against Vainakh rebels

1924 – Ingush Autonomous Oblast established

1934 – Autonomous oblast of Chechen-Ingushetia formed. Common Chechen-Ingush alphabet on the basis of Latin graphic symbols approved

1936 – Autonomous Oblast of Chechen-Ingushetia elevated to autonomous republic status

1938 – Chechen-Ingush Pedagogical Institute opened. Chechen-Ingush written language altered, now based on Russian alphabet

1939–1945 – World War II

February 1940 – People's meeting in Galanchozh (South Chechnya) declares the establishment of insurrectional Provisional National – Revolutionary Government of Chechen-Ingushetia headed by H. Israilov

June 22, 1941 – German–Soviet War starts

February 1944 – Forced deportation of Chechen and Ingush peoples to Central Asia

March 7, 1944 – Supreme Soviet of the USSR abolishes ASSR of Chechen-Ingushetia

1944–1956 – Armed resistance of Vainakh groups sheltered in the mountains of Chechen-Ingushetia

January 9, 1957 – By Decree of Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet Chechen-Ingush ASSR restored. Vainakhs go back to their motherland

November 1990 – First Chechen National Congress: Executive Committee of All-National Congress of Chechen People (ANCCP) elected. Johar Dudaev became the leader of Committee

September 1991 – Power in Chechnya transfers to the Executive Committee ANCCP

September 15, 1991 – Extraordinary Congress of Ingush People's Deputies declares Republic of Ingushetia

October 27, 1991 – Johar Dudaev elected President

November 9, 1991 – Unsuccessful attempt of Federal Centre to control the situation in Chechnya by force

June 4, 1992 – Supreme Soviet of Russian Federation issues "On Formation of Ingush Republic within Russian Federation"

July 7, 1992 – Russian troops withdraw Chechnya

- October 31–November 4, 1992** – Bloody skirmish in Prigorodny District. Ingushes exiled from North Ossetia
- February 28, 1993** – Ruslan Aushev elected President of Ingushetia
- November 26, 1994** – Unsuccessful action of the Chechen opposition, inspired by Federal Centre
- November 29, 1994** – President Eltsin addresses the participants of armed conflict in Chechnya to seize fire and disband all armed formations
- December 11, 1994** – Invasion of Russian into Chechnya. "First Chechen War" starts
- December 31, 1994** – Assault on the capital of Chechnya
- March 1995** – Russian troops take the control of Grozny
- May 13, 1995** – large-scale attack of Federal Forces in southern districts of Chechnya
- June 14, 1995** – Shamil BAsaev's raid on Budyonovsk
- April 22, 1996** – Dudaev killed by a Russian rocket
- April 23, 1997** – Zelimkhan Yandarbiev becomes President of Chechen Republic
- August 5-6, 1996** – Chechen forces take the control of Grozny
- August 12, 1996** – Beginning of negotiations between Alexander Lebed, special representative of Russian Federation, and Aslan Maskhadov, Commander of Chechen Armed Forces Staff
- August 12, 1996** – End of negotiations between Alexander Lebed and Aslan Maskhadov: parties succeeded in declaring the principles of relations between Russian Federation and Republic of Chechnya
- November 22, 1996** – According to Yeltsin's Decree Russian forces leave Chechnya
- November 26, 1996** – Prime-Minister of Russian Federation V. Chernomyrdin and Head of Chechen Government A. Maskhadov sign "Temporal Treaty of Principal Relations between Russian Federation and Republic of Cechnya"
- January 1997** – Aslan Maskhadov elected President of Chechen Republic Ichkeria
- May 12, 1997** – Aslan Maskhadov meets President of Russia B. Yeltsin. They sign treaty of peace and principles of relations between Russian Federation and Chechen Republic Ichkeria
- August 2, 1999** – Detachments of Chechen-Daghestan opposition penetrate into Western Daghestan. Armed actions against the federal forces in Daghestan start
- October 1, 1999** – "Second Chechen War" starts

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