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The Wolf Attacks:
A History of the Russo-Chechen Conflict

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of History
East Tennessee State University
In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in History

by
Christina Elizabeth Baxter
December 2014

Dr. Henry Antkiewicz, Chair
Dr. Stephen Fritz
Dr. William Douglas Burgess

Keywords: Russia, Chechnya, Caucasus, Insurgency

ABSTRACT

The Wolf Attacks:
A History of the Russo-Chechen Conflict

by

Christina Baxter

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Chechens fought against the Russians for independence. The focus in the literature available has been on the wars and the atrocities caused by the wars. The literature then hypothesizes that the insurgency of today is just a continuation of the past. They do not focus on a major event in Chechen history: the Soviet liquidation of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1944. It is this author's assertion that the liquidation of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR forever changed the mindset of the people because it fractured a society that was once unified. This project will compare the Chechen insurgency from the beginnings until the deportation and after the deportation. This will allow me to show how the deportation changed the Chechen mindset and disprove the assertion that these two Chechen wars were just a continuation of the past.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When one reads the news of Chechens in Russia, he or she would tend to see a negative story. The story usually details gruesome events of attempted terrorists' plots, successful terrorists' plots, or the seizure of people suspected of being terrorists. As the Council on Foreign Relations reports, "Violence in the North Caucasus has escalated since 2008, and Moscow experienced its most serious attack in six years with the bombing of a metro station in March 2010."¹ What is left untold is the cause or explanation for these terrorist acts. Is it just the Chechen population perpetrating these acts? Why are the Chechens using this form of violence as resistance against the Russians? Is this terrorism just a new form of resistance by the Chechens against the Russians? Russian Nationalists and the current historical research would contend that it is the Chechen way to resist the Russians, but this author would argue otherwise. This author would argue that terrorism is something new for the Chechens and is the direct result of Stalin's deportation of the Chechens in 1944. Josef Stalin had the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) dismantled, deporting those that lived there to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. This deportation forever changed the future of the region because the suffering endured during the deportation forever changed Chechen mentality².

Since this thesis counters what others have said, it would be best to show what has been said by other authors. Chechen history was little known during the Soviet era, and it was not

¹ Preeti Bhattacharji, "Chechen Terrorism," *Council on Foreign Relations* (8 April 2010), <http://www.cfr.org/separatist-terrorism-russia-chechnya-separatist/p9181> (Accessed 1 October 2014).

² Whenever mentality is mentioned in this thesis it is meant to encompass norms, mores, and the ideas of identity. It is a collection of these ideas (norms, mores, and ideas of identity) that are the basis of society combined into one term.

until the two Chechen Wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2009) that the research about Chechens became popular in the West. There were few publications available from the West that detailed the pre-Soviet history, but most of what has been published about the Chechens comes after the late 1980s. These publications described the long struggle between the Chechens and Russians. What was written during the Soviet era was highly propagandized. For example, the Soviets wrote that the Chechens came into the Russian empire willingly. However, this was not the case, which will be seen later in this thesis. After Stalin deported the Chechens, talking about the deportation was forbidden. It would remain so until Gorbachev. Also, the Soviets suppressed the Chechens from talking about their history because it could have been seen as a sign of nationalism. During this era nationalism was an anathema to the Soviet Union. It was not until the 1980s that restrictions were lessened. This was through Gorbachev's policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. After the restrictions on public discourse were lessened, the Chechen intelligentsia was then able to offer a different view of their history. Reports of the deportation were now allowed to be published. From 1994-1996 and 1999-2009 there was fighting between the Chechens and Russians for independence. The First Chechen War was from 1994-1996, and the Second Chechen War was from 1999-2009. These two wars were widely covered in the media because of the gruesome nature of the wars. This also led to a boom in historians taking a look at the Chechens. A brief description of what has been written will focus on just a few authors: Anna Zelkina, Moshe Gammer, Amjad Jaimoukha, Emil Souleimanov, Robert Seely, Brian Glyn Williams, and James Hughes.

Anna Zelkina's work *In Quest for God and Freedom: Sufi Responses to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*³ detailed the early resistance in the North Caucasus against Russia. The period discussed in the book is 733 to 1871. Though the monograph does detail the resistance of other ethnicities in the North Caucasus region, the majority of this work was spent on Chechen resistance. The Chechens were able to resist Russian expansion through their network of Sufi orders. Zelkina's work started with the introduction of Islam in the region. She then detailed the movement from Sunni (Orthodox) Islam to Sufism (mystical). Zelkina's monograph is critical to understand the past of this region. This will help one to differentiate the present from the past.

Moshe Gammer wrote several monographs on the region. However, only two of his works will be focused on: *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*⁴ and *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance- A History*. This first work, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*⁵, is similar to Zelkina's work in that it detailed the early resistance to Russian domination. Gammer's monograph focused directly on Chechnya and Daghestan, whereas Zelkina added other resistance. Also, Gammer's work detailed more of the military aspects of the resistance, and Zelkina's work was not as detailed about the social aspects of the resistance. Gammer's second work, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance- A History*, looked at all of the conflict between the Chechens and the Russians. Gammer gave the perception that it is almost natural for the Chechens and Russians to fight against one another.

³ Anna Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

⁴ Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (Oxon, Oxford: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1994).

⁵ Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance- A History* (London: Hurst & Co., 2006).

However, that is not truly the case because there are long periods of peace between the two groups, as will be shown later. Also, the author failed to identify the 1944 deportation of the Chechens and the effects of the deportation on the Chechen population.

Amjad Jaimoukha provided a look at the earliest mention of the Chechens to present day events in his work *The Chechens: A Handbook*.⁶ Jaimoukha looked at Chechen culture, literature, and language to provide the reader with more information on who the Chechens are/were as a people. The premise of his monograph was to look into the people culturally more than historically. However, the first section of the book was focused on the history of these people. The history provided in his book was for background of where the people had come from and where they are today. Jaimoukha uses a wide range of books and articles by historians, journalists, and anthropologists in Russian, English, and French to provide the research he used to complete the monograph. Jaimoukha fails to provide a clear argument in his book. The cultural peculiarities are worthy to know, but he fails to tie these cultural norms to a greater picture. In particular, he did tie their current practices, or see if there is a move to use the cultural norms of the past would have been helpful for the reader to have known. Overall, the manuscript provides information for those wanting to know more about the Chechens as a people.

Emil Souleimanov and Robert Seely used a similar approach to the Chechen wars in their monographs. Souleimanov's work was titled *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective*⁷ and Seely's work was titled *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000: A Deadly Embrace*.⁸ The premise of both books was that the two Chechen wars of 1994-1996 and 1999-2009 were simply an extension of previous resistance movements by the Chechens. Souleimanov

⁶ Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Chechens: A Handbook* (London: Routledge Courzon, 2005).

⁷ Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Land, 2007).

⁸ Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000* (Portland, Oregon : Frank Cass, 2001).

wrote his monograph to supplement historical accounts provided by others on the Chechen wars. He believes that Western, Chechen, and Russian reports on the wars were biased, and he tries to put the reports in perspective of reality. The purpose of doing so was to show the reality to all sides in order to deescalate tensions based on the wars. As previously stated, Seely's argument is that the two Chechen wars are an extension of Chechen-Russian relations. Both authors use a wide array of resources for their monographs. They cite journalists and historians using both Russian and English sources. Souleimanov even cites Seely and Jaimoukha in his monograph. Souleimanov and Seely use the same approach when it comes to the Russo-Chechen wars. Souleimanov does go into detail about the struggle between the Chechens and imperial Russia before 1800. Seely starts his monograph from 1800 to present. Souleimanov wrote a little about Chechen culture, but Seely does not write about Chechen culture. Both authors approach the matter chronologically as well. Since Souleimanov wrote after Seely, he is able to see what holes there were in Seely's research. Both manuscripts, however, are important to the research in the area because both manuscripts use different sources. In addition, one can see the evolution of thought on the area from Seely to Souleimanov because Souleimanov fills in some of Seely's holes in research.

Brian Glyn Williams wrote an article titled, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-1996 and 1999-2000 Russo-Chechen Wars."⁹ The article by Williams discusses the importance of the deportation by Stalin on Chechen life. The argument is that the deportation is not only commemorated by statues but by the average person remembering what was told about the

⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-1996 and 1999-2000 Russo-Chechen Wars," *History and Memory* 12.1 (Spring/Summer 2000): 101-134.

deportation. Williams goes into detail about the deportation and life during exile. Williams does not say that this directly motivates the Chechens in a way so that they would fight against the Russians. In fact, Williams encourages the idea that the deportation causes the Chechens to stop resisting Russian rule. The thrust of his argument is that the Chechens are afraid that the Russians could deport them again. Williams uses both journals and books in English and Russian for research for his article. He also interviews some descendents of the deportation survivors in Kazakhstan. It would have been helpful if the author could have been able to interview descendents of the deportation survivors in Chechnya and compare the results. The article leaves the following question unanswered: do those living in Chechnya now remember the deportation differently than those Chechens who stayed in Kazakhstan? The article does answer questions that the previously mentioned books leave unanswered. The author goes into detail about the deportation and life in exile while Jaimoukha, Souleimanov, and Seely do not. Overall, this article does provide much needed insight into the deportation, but since it is only an article and not a larger work, the author could not showcase the history that the three other authors were able to put in their manuscripts.

James Hughes's work *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*¹⁰ detailed the *jihadist* movements in Chechnya. Hughes included in his monograph the beginnings of *jihadism* to present day networks. For those wanting to work on the actual movements, it was very informative. However, Hughes failed to provide a more in depth explanation about the idea of *jihad* other than it developed from the rise of nationalism.

While each author's approach is valid, there are some places that need to be researched. The research has been primarily focused on the two Chechen wars or early Chechen resistance,

¹⁰ James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

so there are gaps in historical research. The Chechen wars have been the primary focus for other authors, like Michael Reynolds, Michaela Pohl, Karl DeRouen, Ami Pedahzur, etc, whose work was not mentioned as well. There are a few authors who focus on pre-Soviet history, for example Moshe Gammer, which could provide more information for those who thought that Jaimoukha, Souleimanov, and Seely were lacking in that aspect of their research. Seely, Souleimanov, and Jaimoukha do provide a quick synopsis of that era. The main gap in the historiography of Chechen history, however, is the deportation. The reason given for the deportation is that Stalin said that the Chechens were traitors to the Soviet Union because they collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. Souleimanov, Seely, Jaimoukha, and Williams write briefly on the deportation. Except for Williams, the authors do not go into the validity of Stalin's accusations. Williams states that if the Chechens collaborated, it was few in number, and it was because they were forced. Yet Williams does not go deeper into what it meant to be a collaborator and why they were forced. The historical research from other authors, like Michael Reynolds, Michaela Pohl, Karl DeRouen, Ami Pedahzur, etc, is not clear on this subject either, so it is not just the previously mentioned authors with the problem of clarity. These other authors who have taken a stance on the subject of Chechen collaboration do not really go into the detail of what it meant to be a collaborator. They also do not agree as to the extent of the involvement or if the Chechens were forced or coerced into collaborating with the Nazis. So there are many questions that need to be researched more. Did the Chechens collaborate with the Nazis? If so, how much, and what did it mean to collaborate? Another missing point in the deportation is the forced move of the Chechens and their life in exile. Little is said in the three books about the deportation and life in exile. They all agree that the conditions were deplorable. Williams does go into more detail about what life was like for the Chechens during this time period. There are few sources on this

matter. Most of the insight provided on the life in Chechen exile is through Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. As those who experienced life in exile are getting older and passing away, the time to capture the oral history is needed now more than ever. The final gap about the deportation is the validity of Stalin's explanation for the deportation. Did Stalin have other motives to deport the Chechens? The authors seem to only put forth the idea that Stalin deported these people because of their supposed collaboration. However, Stalin did not deport other ethnic groups that were known to collaborate with the Nazis, in particular ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Cossacks. Was there another motive for moving the Chechens? In addition, the authors fail to provide an explanation for the *jihadist* movement in Chechnya. It is the hopes of this thesis to fill in the gaps of previous research and to provide an answer for the reason why *jihadist* movements are in Chechnya today. This will be accomplished by comparing the resistance movements before the deportation, the deportation and life in exile, and the aftermath. These subjects will be broken into smaller chapters, but this is the overarching structure.

CHAPTER 2

SUFIS AND RESISTANCE

During the pre-Tsarist era of 1780 to 1859, Chechen¹¹ resistance was centralized and led by Sufi imams.¹² The phrase “pre-Tsarist era” is used to indicate that the Caucasus region had not yet been taken under Russian control. These imams were able to band together across different ethnic lines to resist the Tsar. Figure one, “Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region,” located on the page sixteen, further demonstrates the many different ethnic groups of this region. This signified that resistance was not just in one ethnic group of the Caucasus Mountains¹³ and that these ethnic groups were able to rally together while ignoring variations among these different ethnic groups. The terrain of this mountain chain is demonstrated in Figure two, “The Caucasus Region,” located on page seventeen. This is significant because it shows that resistance is not just a Chechen phenomenon. It was a broader effect across the area. These imams were able to retain the multiethnic resistance movement by politicizing Sufism, a mystical form of Islam. Politicization of Sufism meant that these imams would manipulate different aspects of Sufism in order to attain their political goals. The politicization would take different forms, but the goals were all the same: to solidify their role in the resistance movement and to resist the approaching imperial Russian armies.¹⁴ This politicization was started by Sheik Mansur Usharma and it was further continued by Ghazi Mohamed, Hamza Bek, and Shamil.

¹¹ When Chechen is mentioned, the ethnic group is the one being discussed. This will be applied to all further mentions of this word unless otherwise noted.

¹² An imam is a leader in the Muslim community. The imam leads worship at the mosque. He may or may not have had formal training in Quranic studies, but he is generally understood to have extensive knowledge of the Quran.

¹³ To see the region being discussed, please see Figure 2. “The Caucasus Region,” located on page 17.

¹⁴ These imams might not have a complete consensus, but they had a majority to decide their role as leader. In Sufi tradition, which will be later detailed, once a majority has decided on some goal, all dissent is silenced.

Usharma began the politicization but the three later mentioned imams emphasized the politicization. A look into the spread of Islam and different Islamic movements in the region, the beginning of the push by Russia into the region and the politicization it causes, and the military exchange between imperial Russia and the Sufi imams, Ghazi Mohamed, Hamza Bek, and Shamil, will show how these imams were able to lead a multiethnic centralized resistance against imperial Russia.

Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



Figure 1. “Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region.”

Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region [map]. Scale not given. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas

<<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/ethnocaucasus.jpg>> (25 October 2014). (public domain)



Figure 2. “The Caucasus Region, 1994.”

The Caucasus Region [map]. 1994. Scale not given. Produced by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, US Department of State. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus_region_1994.jpg> (25 October 2014).

(public domain)

Different groups used different means to spread Islam throughout the North Caucasus. Dagestan had the first contact with Islam by the Arab conquests around 733 because of its general low-lying coastal areas in the east along the Caspian Sea. Figure three, “Caucasus Region ,” on page nineteen shows the topography of the region. This was crucial for the North Caucasus region because Dagestan later became the Muslim cultural center of the region because Dagestanis had knowledge of Islam before other groups.¹⁵ Dagestanis¹⁶ were exposed to Islam longer so they were available to develop and cultivate Islam for a longer period of time. This allowed religious leaders to build Islamic schools and mosques in this area before other areas were able to build them. Other ethnic groups in the region could then send their children to these religious schools in hopes of expanding their education. In addition, since the Dagestanis had exposure to Islam first, it showed, at least in an Islamic tradition, that they were the wisest of the Caucasian¹⁷ groups because they accepted the inevitable knowledge of Islam first.¹⁸

¹⁵ Robert Bruce Ware, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 3-5.

¹⁶ When Dagestani is mentioned, it is to denote the different ethnic groups that comprise the area of Dagestan. This will be applied to all other mentions of this word unless otherwise noted. The groups that live in Dagestan are as follows: Kumyk, Nogay, and Azeri (all of whom speak a Turkic dialect) Avar, Agul, Dargin, Lak, Lezgin, Rutul, and Tabasaran (who speak different Caucasian languages)

¹⁷ The term Caucasian is mentioned in the geographical sense.

¹⁸ Zelkina, Anna, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus* (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2000), 26-29.



Figure 3. “The Caucasus Region, 1994.”

The Caucasus Region [map]. 1994. Scale not given. Produced by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, US Department of State. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas
 <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus_region_1994.jpg> (25 October 2014).
 (public domain)

The Seljuk Turks spread Islam to other portions of this region. From 1038 to 1194, the Seljuk Turks spread Sunni Islam¹⁹ throughout the Northwestern Caucasus. They spread a specific religious *fiqh*,²⁰ jurisprudence, school known as *Shafi'i*. The Seljuk Turks believed in the *Shafi'i madhhab*, school of religious thought.²¹ *Fiqh* is derived from the *madhhab* and is important for law and order in the area.²² Other groups believed different Sunni schools of thought, though Shia Islam would later have small success in the region. The different political dimensions of the different Sunni religious schools were not pertinent to any major divisions in the region. It only further demonstrates that different ethnic and religious entities composed the area. It does mean that the Sufi imams had to band together against a wider difference than just ethnic lines. The Seljuk Turks succeeded in some central and eastern portions of the region, but they did not have as much success as the different ethnic groups from Dagestan in disseminating Islam. This was mainly due to the idea that the Seljuk Turks were outsiders, while Dagestanis, meaning the different ethnic groups in Dagestan, were of a kindred ethnic spirit because they were from the same mountainous region. This seems to be more momentous than it truly was. In reality, it was not particularly significant because the Seljuk Turks had better relations with different ethnic groups from Dagestan. The ideas from the Seljuk Turks could spread through the region by different Dagestani groups. Different local circumstances allowed the Seljuks to have their version of Islam spread and allowed the Dagestanis to proselytize Islam through trade

¹⁹ Sunni Islam is traditionally thought as the Orthodox version of Islam. It is then subdivided into four schools of thought: Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali. These are also called *madhabs*. Shafi'i is mostly practiced through the North Caucasus and other regions like Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and Malaysia. Hanafi is mostly practiced in Turkey, Balkans, Egypt, and other regions of the former Ottoman Empire. Maliki is mostly practiced in North and West Africa. Hanbali is practiced in the Arabian peninsula. These different schools of thought have different interpretations of *Sharia*.

²⁰ *Fiqh* is the jurisprudence which the basis of interpreting *Sharia*. It is based on the sayings of Muhammad (*Hadiths*) and previous interpretations.

²¹ Galina M. Yemeljanova, *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 47.

²² George Makdisi, "The Juridical Theology of Shâfi'î: Origins and Significance of Uşûl al-Fiqh." *Studia Islamica*, No. 59 (1984), 5 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1595294> (Accessed 15 August 2014).

routes. Once the Seljuk Turks lost power, the Persians tried to force their influence within the area. The push by the Persians mainly failed, but some portions of Dagestan converted to Shia Islam. The portions of Dagestan that are Shia versus Sunni, are demonstrated in figure four, “Muslim Distribution,” located on page twenty two. The division between the Sunni, the majority of the region, and this small portion of Shia, played a larger role later on, but for the time it meant little. The further spreading of Islamic ideas comes by missionary work.²³

²³ Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey*, 47; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 29-32.



Figure 4. “Muslim Distribution.”

Muslim Distribution [map]. 1: 40,000,000. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas < http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_maps/muslim_distribution.jpg > (25 October 2014). (public domain)

The Avars were an ethnic group living in Dagestan that at one time professed Christianity. They began to convert to Islam around the twelfth century. The entire ethnic group is not known to have converted, however, until the period of 1370 to 1405 AD, during the time of Tamerlane's reign. The reason the Avars had a long period of conversion is because of the mountainous territory they lived in. Some villages were isolated, so the spreading of ideas would come later and at different times. Even though they were later to convert, they ultimately were the most respected group in the region. The Avars held prestige in the region because of their missionary work and their knowledge of Islam. Their knowledge of Islam gave the Avars a better reputation over other ethnic groups. The Avars would later play a crucial role in the development of the region.²⁴ This will be due to their missionary work and religious centers.

It was harder to discern when Islam came into Chechnya and Ingushetia to the Vaynakhs, an ethnic group comprised of the Chechens and Ingush. Legends have Islam coming into the region with the same Arab conquests that Dagestan experienced. Historians like Galina Yemlianova and Moshe Gammer have noted that this tale was very unlikely to be true. These legends were widespread because if the groups knew of Islam when the Arab conquests occurred, then it gives prestige to the ethnic group. The ethnic group gained prestige because they converted to Islam first because, according to Islamic tradition, they were seen as being the wisest for accepting Islam first. What was more likely the case was that the Vaynakhs experienced Islam through missionaries from Dagestan. This probably occurred sometime between the 1500s and the 1700s. The Muslim missionaries probably visited the lowlands in the earlier mentioned period, while missionaries proselytized to the highlanders in the later mentioned period. The isolating effects of the steep mountain passes allowed for the

²⁴ Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 47; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom*, 29.

dissemination of Islam to come in different stages, and it formed a version of Islam that held *adat*,²⁵ pre-Islamic beliefs, and Islamic beliefs. Because the Dagestanis, and more than likely Avars, converted the Vaynakhs, the Vaynakhs thought exceedingly well of those Muslim scholars from Dagestan.²⁶ Chechen society did not change much because of the conversion to Islam. Most believed in a mixture of *adat* and Islam. Since there was no direct punishment for breaking *Sharia*, many Chechens were seen drinking and smoking. Concerning marriage, *adat* often placed more restrictions than those of *Sharia*. The only difference was the marriage of those that shared a wet nurse. This was forbidden in Islam, but many Chechens continued with this practice. *Fiqh* was more strict in *adat* so many principles of witnesses or oaths kept in line with tradition more than *Sharia*.²⁷

Sufism was another form of Islam that came into the region. Sufism is a mystical form of Islam. Traditionally it is pacifist, and there are strict guidelines if an imam, Muslim holy man, wishes to declare a *ghazavat* or *Jihad*. A *ghazavat* is traditionally seen as a war of liberation from oppression. A *jihad*,²⁸ however, can have several meanings. *Jihad* can pertain to non-warfare or warfare. When discussing non-warfare *Jihad*, it is known as the ultimate *Jihad* because one is declaring war on inner struggles. When discussing warfare, *jihad* can be defensive or offensive. A defensive *jihad* is when the holy war is declared against an oppressing force of non-believers, and involvement in this form of *jihad* is obligatory for Muslims. The offensive *jihad* is a pre-

²⁵ *Adat* is the pre-Islamic law of the land. Because each society is different, *Adat* will be different for each culture. However, the term *Adat* is applied to all existence of pre-Islamic laws.

²⁶ Anna Zelkina, "Islam and Society in Chechnia: From the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Islamic Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 2 (1996): 242-246 <http://jis.oxfordjournals.org/content/7/2/240.full.pdf> (accessed 12 September 2013).

²⁷ Joanna Swirszcz, "The Role of Islam in Chechen National Identity." *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (January 2009): 62-63; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 33-39.

²⁸ If any references to the greater *jihad* are made, it will be denoted by a capitalized J in *Jihad*. Whereas the lesser *jihad* will remain lower case.

emptive mode of war, and this form of *jihad* is announced by ruling classes and is only obligatory for those of the ruling class.

The Sufi orders are structured with Sheiks being the teachers and groups of students learning the mystical path. This is a hierarchical structure. The main point of this education system is to teach someone to let go of the physical world in order to focus on the relationship with God. The health of the soul was the focus of Sufism. If this focus was at odds with the law, then the one should place law below the soul.²⁹

Prayer and ritualistic meditation, *dhikr*, was the way to achieve the focus on God. A *dhikr* can be performed in many different ways. The style of the *dhikr* depends on the specific order that one belongs.³⁰ The structure of the Sufi orders also ensured majority rule. When deciding on idea like *jihad* and *ghazavat*, there must be a clear majority with the *ulama*, or religious elite. If there is not a clear majority, the *jihad* or *ghazavat* becomes invalid. If there is a clear majority, however, then all opposition is silenced on the matter.³¹ This mystical form of Islam came into Dagestan around the eleventh century. The Dagestanis were visited by Sufi sheiks from the Ottomans. From there, the ideas of Sufism spread throughout Dagestan with different orders, mainly Naqshbandi, being the majority of the Sufi Islamic community of Dagestan. Knowing that the Dagestanis were Naqshbandi does not mean that they contradicted

²⁹ A.J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1963), 74-92; Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), 31-33, 61-70, 127.

³⁰ A more famous dhikr would be the whirling dervishes from Turkey. The Chechen dhikr is different in that the Sufis do not whirl in a circle. They kneel on the ground and chant "la ilaha illa allah" (there is no God but God). They combine this with either clapping or slapping their legs. Some in the group will then stomp from one foot to another. All of this is done in reverence to and honor of God. For video context of this, please see Lucy Ash, *Stolen Brides, BBC Two: This World*.

³¹ Arberry, 74-92; Ansari, 31-33, 61-70, 127.

with other orders in the area. In practice it only means that the *dhikr* is performed differently. In the wider aspect, it adds another layer of differences among the people of the Caucasus.³²

Russia was starting to become imperialistic while the spread of Islam was happening in the region. Tsar Peter I believed that he could conquer the Northern Caucasus. Other conquerors, for example Tamerlane, had tried to conquer the region, but they were not successful. The mountainous highlands were hard to traverse, and many paths were only wide enough for a single person to pass. The previous attempts by other powers to conquer the Caucasus did not discourage the Tsar. In 1706 he tried to conquer, though unsuccessfully, the eastern portion of the Caucasus Mountains. Chechnya and Dagestan are in this portion of the Caucasus mountains. Even though he was unsuccessful in 1706, he decided to continue to press on into the region. In order to do so, the Tsar would have to change tactics. He would rely upon alliances with different ethnic groups in the region. In particular the Tsar would depend on the Cossacks and Kalmyks. Both ethnic groups had relations with the Vaynakhs and Dagestani groups. In fact, both of these groups had excellent relations with the Vaynakhs and Dagestanis. The Cossacks, in particular, looked up to the Chechens. They considered the Chechens to be excellent equestrians and warriors. There were examples where Cossacks would intermarry with Chechens. The Cossacks and Kalmyks aligned themselves with the Tsar in the hopes of acquiring more land. Once these two ethnic groups helped in pushing the Vaynakhs and other ethnic groups back or even incorporating them into the empire, the Cossacks and Kalmyks would have what they could claim as their territory expanded. This idea of owning land was foreign to the Chechens. Their

³² Enver F Kisriev and Robert Bruce Ware, "Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance: Ideology and Political Organization in Dagestan 1800-1930" *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 42, No. 3 (May, 2006) 493, 495 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284465> (Accessed 20 March 2014); Galina M. Yemelianova, "Sufism and Politics in the North Caucasus," *Association for the Study of Nationalities*. Vol. 29 No. 4 (2001), 661; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 47; Swirszcz, 64-64; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 47-51.

society was based on equality and owning land was something never heard of before. This belief came from the pre-Islamic religious values of the Chechens. Tsar Peter I hoped that when the Vaynakhs, and in particular the Chechens, would fight against these two groups, they would be distracted. The Tsar wanted the Chechens to be distracted because they were very tenacious fighters.³³

There is a story of the Chechens about spirit animals to show how tenacious fighters they were. Other groups were known as bears or lions, but Chechens were proud to be wolves. The Chechens took this animal as their insignia because a wolf is known to try to take down creatures larger than itself. For the Chechens it is a badge of honor to be described as a wolf, which the Russians often did. Distracting the Chechens was a tactic to keep the Chechens occupied and have their forces split. The alliance with Russia bolstered the Cossacks because of the promise of more land, so there were many skirmishes between the Cossacks and the Chechens. This did not mean that the Cossacks had any particular hatred for the Chechens. As mentioned previously, there was often intermarriage between the two groups. The Cossacks had a way of life that was similar to the Chechens, meaning that war and stealing was a part of life. However, the Cossacks betrayed the Chechens and aligned themselves with the Russians. Aligning themselves with the

³³ Michael Khordarkovsky, "The Indigenous Elites and the Construction of Ethnic Identities in the North Caucasus." *Russian History* Vol. 35, No. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2008): 130; Tiago Ferreira Lopes, "The Bear in the Mountain: Historical Analysis to the Role of Russian in Dagestan's Ethno-Complexity," *DAXIYAMGGUO: Revista Portuguesa de Estudos Asiaticos: Publicacao do Instituto do Oriente- Instituto Superior de Ciencias Sociais e Politicas*. Number 18 (2013): 55; Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Land, 2007), 43-46; Amjad Jaimoukha, *The Chechens: A Handbook* (London: Routledge Courzon, 2005), 36-39; Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000* (Portland, Oregon : Frank Cass, 2001), 22-38; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 45-49; Kisriev and Ware, 494; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 52-57; Ware, 14-18.

Tsar was a safer way to be able to satisfy their desire for war and acquiring more lands for themselves. It was safer for the Cossacks because the Russians supported them.³⁴

In order to have any sort of defense, the Chechens clans joined with one another, even if some clans were pro-Russian. The Chechens were bonding on a sense of common ethnic identity, even if their political goals were not similar. The mentality was to band together against foreigners, and if the Russians attacked one Chechen clan, the other clans would band together against the Russians. The Chechens would need this bond because the Russians would continue to try and push their dominance over the region. The Russians once again tried to reach into the Chechen region and again were unsuccessful in 1722. Putting the Caucasus under Russian rule was a major goal of the Russian monarchies. Part of the importance of the area was the proximity to both the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. The Black Sea had access to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, controlled by the Ottoman Empire. The Tsar did not need access to the Black Sea because he already controlled territory bordering it. The Caspian Sea could have provided a quicker route into parts of Central Asia than by traveling by land. The most important reason, however, was the land strait that held the Caucasus Mountains. It was a bridge to major trade routes, plus it could act as a natural barrier against the Ottoman and Persian empires. If Russia could control the Caucasus, then it could have the highpoint in the region. This would have been ideal for the Russians because they could spot troop movement, and those wanting to invade Russia would have to travel over rough terrain. Following in the line of her predecessors, Tsarina Catherine II wanted to have the Caucasus become part of the Russian Empire. Starting in 1777, the region was to be captured and taken under Russian control whenever Russia could

³⁴ Khordarkovsky, "The Indigenous Elites and the Construction of Ethnic Identities in the North Caucasus," 130; Lopes, 55; Souleimanov, 43-46; Jaimoukha, 36-39; Seely, 22-38; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 45-49; Kisriev and Ware, 494; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 52-57; Ware, 14-18.

push its frontline south. She would use the Cossacks to help her push the frontline south. Those areas behind the Russian frontline were now considered part of the Russian Empire.³⁵

The politicization of Islam, and Sufism in particular, started during this era. It occurred in direct response to Russian advancement. The movement was led by Sheik Mansur Usharma. The history of Usharma was imprecise. Part of the difficulty of Usharma's past was deciding what has been manipulated for the legends surrounding the man and what is decided as fact. Historians like Moshe Gammer and Anna Zelkina have noted that Usharma was born in Chechnya, and he came from a wealthy enough background for some education. Usharma knew how to read and write in Arabic, which was not something that a poor shepherd from Chechnya could do. Legend also claimed that Usharma was a Naqshbandi Sufi Sheik, but according to other historians, Zelkina, Gammer, Zübeyde Güne-Yadcy, and others, there was no credible evidence for this. Usharma did, however, believe in the Sufi path and actively worked to promote the ideas in the region. Those living during the era saw Usharma as a religious leader, so he was remembered as such. Usharma believed the only way to stop the progress of the Russians was to unite across the Northern Caucasus region against the Russians.³⁶

Usharma would politicize his position as imam and Sheik to garner support from the local population. He pleaded with the people of the mountains to fight or they would lose their freedom. This was said to a culture that had pride in its egalitarian society. The Chechen society

³⁵ Zübeyde Güne-Yadcy, "A Chechen National Hero of the Caucasus in the 18th Century: Sheik Mansur," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 22 No. 1 (2003), 104 <http://dx.doe.org/10.1080/0263493032000108658> (Accessed 25 October 2013); Souleimanov, 43-46; Jaimoukha, 36-39; Seely, 22-38; Zelkina, "Islam and Society in Chechnia: From the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 246-247.

³⁶ Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule* (London: Hurst & Co, 2006), 17-31; Alexander Knysh, "Sufism as an Explanatory Paradigm: The Issue of the Motivations of Sufi Resistance Movements in Western and Russian Scholarship." *Die Welt des Islams*. Vol. 42, No. 2 (2002), 141-142 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1571267> (Accessed 20 March, 2013); Souleimanov, 47-49; Jaimoukha, 40-41; Seely, 31-32; Lopes, 56; Yemelianova, "Sufism and Politics in the North Caucasus," 663; Güne-Yadcy, 106; Zelkina, "Islam and Society in Chechnia: From the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century.," 247- 249; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 58-68.

had either free men or slaves, and there was nothing in between. Usharma also preached that he had visions from the Prophet Mohammad, and the Prophet had told him that saving the Caucasus Mountains from Imperial Russia was a quest from God. Dreams were often seen as prophetic in the Islamic culture. If one says something was from a dream, the populous would accept it as divine intervention or at least be more willing to listen to someone with the prophetic dream. However Usharma still could not garner the support he needed. So, he decided to declare a *ghazavat* against the Russians. Usharma declaring the *ghazavat* was political in itself. As mentioned before, a *ghazavat* could only be called when *fiqh* claimed it could be called. Other Sufi Sheiks did not believe that conditions had been met to declare a *ghazavat*. Since opinion for the *ghazavat* was not in the majority, opposition was still voiced. Usharma achieved the goal that he set out for because the *ghazavat* attained him more support, although he still had visible opposition.³⁷

This popularity eventually backfired for Usharma. The Russians heard of Usharma, and they decided to get rid of Usharma before the resistance movement grew too large. They tried to discredit him by claiming he was a false prophet, but it was to no avail. They believed that if they captured Usharma, the resistance movement would collapse. In 1785, the Russians tried to seize Usharma and his followers at present-day Grozny. They did not find him in the village because Usharma and his forces were waiting outside of the village to ambush, capture, and kill the Russians. They accomplished this task when the Russians were leaving the village. This achievement gained Usharma some notoriety, and fighters from nearby regions joined him. The success and fame were essential for Usharma to gain much needed support, and a united

³⁷ Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule*, 17-31; Knysh, 141-142; Souleimanov, 47-49; Jaimoukha, 40-41; Seely, 31-32; Lopes, 56; Yemelianova, "Sufism and Politics in the North Caucasus," 663; Güne-Yadcy, 106; Zelkina, "Islam and Society in Chechnia: From the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century.," 247- 249; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 58-68.

resistance movement grew. Usharma's success would not last forever. He soon suffered setbacks in the form of Russian advancement and was on the run from Russian forces. Even with these setbacks, Usharma and his forces did not stop resisting the Russians. Usharma sought the assistance of the Ottomans. He did not receive a large amount of assistance. Some Ottoman governors wanted to support Usharma, so they sent troops or money to aid Usharma. However, main Ottoman leadership did not support his request. With this help, Usharma regrouped his forces against the Russians. Usharma and Russian forces met again in 1787. Usharma was unsuccessful because the Russians outnumbered Usharma, so he was forced into hiding again. He evaded capture for a while, but Russian forces finally caught up with Usharma in 1791. He died in Russian captivity in the Schlüsselburg Fortress in 1794. Even though Usharma was unsuccessful, he was idolized for his tenacity. This also garnered support for Sufism, though not as widespread as he had hoped. ³⁸

One of the greatest unifiers among the Chechens was a horrific policy of the Russians. In 1816 General Yermolov was encouraged by Tsar Alexander I to take control of the situation in the Caucasus. Yermolov gained his notoriety from his days of fighting against Napoleon. He was forty years old when he was forced to the position in the Caucasus. Yermolov despised the people of the Caucasus, and it was evident in the way he ruled the area. He used terror tactics to try and subdue the population. Yermolov would use policies that would have the Chechens flee from their homes and change their ordinary routines. For example, the Chechens would leave their flocks to graze in relatively safe places for the winter. Yermolov knew this, and he took advantage of this. The purpose of this policy was to rid the Chechens of their livelihoods and to

³⁸ Souleimanov, 47-49; Jaimoukha, 40-41; Seely, 31-32; Swirszcz, 66; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 58-68.

make them more complacent. Yermolov would destroy any crops that the Chechens would have cultivated, forcing them to starve. He would also lay siege to a village and make sure that every last inhabitant was killed. Yermolov would burn a village because he wanted the citizenry evacuated. He would deport any Chechens that he captured.³⁹

Another part of his campaign was to rename captured cities into names that would bring fear into the hearts of the Chechens. Examples of the names were Groznaya (terrifying), Vnezapnaya (surprise), and Burnaya (Stormy). These cities were then used as a launching pad against the Chechens. Yermolov would arrest and persecute any Chechen that he believed participated in a raid against the Russians. The punishment for them was to be deported to Siberia. Another factor of Yermolov's terror campaign was to kidnap women to be used as sex slaves. Making women sex slaves was especially humiliating and infuriating for a culture that would kill a man for only touching a woman. All of these tactics were used to subdue the population. Yermolov believed any kindness shown to the Caucasians would be a sign of weakness, and any sign of weakness would give the Caucasians the boost in moral support they desperately needed.⁴⁰ Yermolov was known for saying, "the terror of my name shall guard our frontiers."⁴¹ Even though he probably thought his policies would put fear into the hearts of

³⁹ Alexander Mikaberidze, "'The Terror of My Name Shall Guard our Frontiers:' General Alexey Yermolov and Russia's Entanglement in Chechnya," *Consortium on the Revolutionary Era* (2006): 190-197.

⁴⁰ Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), 66-81; Nicholas Griffin, *Caucasus: Mountain Men and Holy Wars*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 46-50; Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*. (Oxon, Oxford: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1994), 29-39; Alexander Mikaberidze, "'The Terror of My Name Shall Guard our Frontiers:' General Alexey Yermolov and Russia's Entanglement in Chechnya," *Consortium on the Revolutionary Era* (2006), 190-197; Souleimanov, 49-52; Jaimoukha, 41-42; Seely, 32-36; Lopes, 58; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 71-73, 123-124; Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule*. 34-40.

⁴¹ Mikaberidze, 198.

every Chechen, it turned out differently. It only strengthened the resistance movement for the Chechens because it gave proof that the Russians and Chechens could not co-exist.⁴²

The Chechen population had to think of a way to stop the Russians, especially if they were using the terror tactics of Yermolov. This became the next phase of politicization of Islam because the militia wanted to make Sufism a greater factor in the region. They retold the successes of Sheik Usharma, and they chose to remember the Sheikh as inspirational. They also saw the success of the structure of Sufism. The structure of Sufism is through the Sufi orders. These orders have specific teachers that instruct followers as students. This garnered a sense of unity, community, and discipline. It was this unity and sense of community that Chechen leaders wanted to capitalize upon. The hope was that through Sufism, the old lifestyle of blood feuds that were common during the era would disappear. They could be over any matter, but the most popular reason for a blood feud was women. A clan would call a blood feud if a man from one clan touched another clan's woman. Protecting the women was a sense of honor for a family, and if that honor was violated, then the men had to rectify it. Sufism was seen as a way to end interethnic strife. This internecine warfare was weakening the resistance effort against the Russians because not only did the Chechens have to fight the Russians; they had to fight amongst themselves to settle old clan rivalries. Sufism was seen as a way for the clans to unite for the good of every Chechen, not only their specific clan. They would fight together under the same banner against a common enemy. The strategy of politicizing Sufism worked for a while, but

⁴² Clemens P. Sidorko, "Die Eroberung Tschetscheniens und Dagestans als Fallsbeispiel kolonialer Expansion des Zarenreichs im 19. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. Vol. 47, No. 4 (1999): 507 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41018789> (Accessed 16 October 2013).

clan rivalries won in the end. The Russians seized the moment of weakness and resumed their quest for control of the Caucasus in 1830.⁴³

The next periods of resistance against the Russians were led by the great Sufi imams Ghazi Mohamed, Hamza Bek, and Shamil, the lesser known were Ghazi Mohamed and Hamza Bek. All of these imams were from the neighboring Avar community. These three imams would further politicize Sufism in hopes of stopping the Russian forces. They would spread the tenants of Sufism anticipating that the populous would widely accept Sufism. Moreover, they hoped to set up the structure of Sufism in the area. They also emphasized and helped to widely disseminate the idea that submission to God and his mediator (the Sheik or imam) were essential to overcome the Russian advancement. Each of these imams would declare a *ghazavat* without the *fiqh* to back up the declaration. Jamal al-Din, one of the foremost experts of Sufi *fiqh* at the time, was in opposition against these imams, in particular Ghazi Mohamed, declaring a *ghazavat*. Jamal al-Din believed that it was inevitable that the Caucasus would come under Russian control because of the sheer number of men the Russians forces could provide. Any attempt at resistance was against Sufi teachings because it would cause undue harm to the peoples of the Caucasus.⁴⁴

Jamal al-Din believed that Ghazi Mohamed was manipulating his religious beliefs in order to pursue his political beliefs of having the Caucasus united and independent of Russia. Mohamed was putting his belief in politics above his role as imam. Traditionally if there is such opposition, a *ghazavat* would be stopped until support for the *ghazavat* was in the majority. This

⁴³ Moshe Gammer, "The Beginnings of the Naqshbandiyya in Daghestan and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus," *Die Welt des Islams*. 34. 2 (November 1994), 205-207; Souleimanov, 49-51; Jaimoukha, 42-43; Seely, 36.

⁴⁴ Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus*, 92-97; Souleimanov, 51-52, Jaimoukha 43-44; Seely, 37-40; Lopes, 59; Knysh, 151; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 137-138, 141-159; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*, 49-60.

became Ghazi Mohamed's goal. He had decided to take matters into his own hands to garner support instead of the traditional Sufi route of letting the *'ulama*, religious elite, show the true path. Ghazi gained the support of another powerful sheikh, Muhammad al-Yaraghi. Al-Yaraghi was powerful and influential enough to gain a significant majority for the *ghazavat*. Ghazi Mohamed's gamble with aligning himself with al-Yaraghi paid off. Ghazi Mohamed was about to gain a clear majority with Yaraghi's support, and any opposition to the *ghazavat* was silenced. Ghazi Mohamed had some victories that were mainly in the form of pushing back the Russian forces. He was able to gain support of the Vaynakhs and different Dagestani ethnic groups because they heard of these victories. The Russian forces, however, were still able to destroy over fifty-five Chechen villages in two years. Ghazi's forces were simply outnumbered. Eventually the Russian forces killed Ghazi Mohamed on October 29, 1832. The Russians probably thought that their troubles were over because Ghazi Mohamed was dead. This, however, was not the case because of the legend of his death. His body was said to have looked like he died in peace and was in the position to pray. His finger was pointing toward heaven. This gave the forces the confidence to continue the fight against the Russians. Ghazi Mohamed's legacy was using the Sufi structure as a significant factor in the fight against the Russians. This was the start of gaining the support from different ethnic groups across the Caucasus Mountains. His deputy Hamza Bek quickly took over his place as imam and leader of the forces. He then continued the struggle against the Russians.⁴⁵

Hamza Bek's reign as imam was a tumultuous one. Not everyone accepted Bek's new role as imam. Bek had to fight for his authority to be recognized and, even through all of his

⁴⁵ Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus*, 92-97; Souleimanov, 51-52, Jaimoukha 43-44; Seely, 37-40; Lopes, 59; Knysh, 151; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 137-138, 141-159; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*, 49-60.

efforts, not everyone recognized his authority. He often stated that he had prophetic dreams, and Ghazi Mohamed frequented them. When the religious elite were trying to decide the next leader, Bek would often play up these dreams. This goes against Sufi thought. If one has these prophetic dreams, they are not to be used as a tool to rouse political support. Through these efforts, he gained enough support from the *'ulama*. He acquired enough authority to have a considerable force, but the struggle against the Russians was something he was incapable of winning. Bek did not have the military might of the Russians. Bek tried to make peace with the Russians in 1833 by offering to accept being part of Russia in exchange for *Sharia*, Islamic law, being the law in the region. The Russians dismissed the treaty offer, and they called for his capture through their allies, the Avar leaders. Even though Bek was Avar, the Russians had aligned themselves with a different family of the Avar nobility. This different family would plan the assassination of Bek. He heard of this, and he considered it a betrayal because the Avars were aligning themselves with the enemy, the Russians. He captured the capital city of Avaria, where the Avars reside. He executed the members of the Avar nobility for their betrayal in August 1834. When Bek killed the Avar nobility, it upset many in his ranks because they thought the enemy was Russia and its Tsar. It caused some to question his authority, and some believed he was hurting the cause of resisting the Russians. The next month Bek was assassinated in retaliation for killing the Avar nobility. The imam to replace Hamza Bek is probably the most recognizable, Shamil.⁴⁶

Shamil is probably the most recognizable because he had the most success out of the three Sufi imams. The success created many legends about him. Shamil was a military understudy of Ghazi Mohamed. Shamil was injured in the battle with Ghazi Mohamed when the

⁴⁶ Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus.*, 97-101; Souleimanov, 51-52; Jaimoukha, 44; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 40; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 163-168; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*. 60-67.

Russians tried to capture Mohamed. This did not mean that Shamil was unopposed when he was announced as imam. He had to show that he was fully capable of being imam and military leader. He was eventually able to win the support of one of his greatest critics, Haji Tasho. Haji Tasho had power in his own right because of his name Haji. Haji is a title given to a person who has performed *hajj*,⁴⁷ one of the five pillars of Islam. Someone who has completed the *hajj* is looked highly on because he or she has completed a major task that is required in Islam. Once Shamil had the support of Haji Tasho, he was about to organize his military support that stretched from Dagestan to Chechnya. He also introduced disciplinary codes for the militia. This was to establish a disciplinary code so the militia men would be loyal and disciplined. This disciplinary code was a mixture of military and religious values. His first goal was to unite the Caucasus against the Russians. He believed that with the entire Caucasus region united, he would have a force strong enough to finally be able to force the Russians from the area for good.⁴⁸

In order to unite the Caucasus, Shamil believed he had to get rid of *Adat* or pre-Islamic customs and mores. The main custom he wanted to abolish was the idea of a blood feud. Blood feuds between clans were disrupting order in his military, and it caused division among people. Blood feuds caused Chechens and others to fight against one another because of problems between opposing clans. It weakened the battle readiness of the Chechen forces. In essence Shamil transformed the idea of the blood feud into a tool against the Russians. Instead of Chechens fighting against themselves, they would turn the blood feud into something against the Russians. The Russians had killed their brethren, touched their women, and killed their families,

⁴⁷ *Hajj* is the pilgrimage to Mecca that is obligatory for all Muslims. They must complete this pilgrimage at least once in their life if they are financially capable.

⁴⁸ Souleimanov, 52-53, 357; Jaimoukha 44-45; Seely, 40-45; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 51; Lopes, 60; Knysh, 152; Swirszcz, 66-67; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 171,175-181; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*. 69-80.

so it would be permissible to declare a blood feud against the Russians. There were legends surrounding Shamil about how he escaped capture previously. The most popular legend was how he escaped death when Ghazi Mohamed was killed. These legends only helped to gain more men for his forces. He was also seen as being on a holy mission, and whatever he was doing was righteous in the eyes of God. This helped Shamil get the fame he needed to make certain his leadership was unopposed.⁴⁹

Shamil used politics to solidify his leadership and deciding whom to fight for. Shamil based his authority just on the title of imam. He did not feel the need to justify his military prowess. Those that opposed him or slandered him were often executed. Shamil also used fear tactics to solidify his leadership. He would destroy villages if they were loyal to the Russians. This caused any village that might have opposed Shamil's rule to be obedient. When deciding whether to save a village, Shamil had a system he would use. If the village did not have a mosque, then the village was deemed unworthy. Shamil ignored his role of imam in hopes of furthering his political goals.⁵⁰ As imam, Shamil was to be the religious leader for the community. He was to guide those who felt lost, and to provide help, either financially or spiritually, to the population. However, he was more focused on politics. When Shamil's men would become discouraged by the outcome of battle, Shamil would hold up a letter of support

⁴⁹ Souleimanov, 52-53, 357; Jaimoukha, 44-45; Seely, 40-45; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 51; Lopes, 60; Knysh, 152; Swirszcz, 66-67; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 171,175-181; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*. 69-80.

⁵⁰ Michael Kemper, "The Daghestani Legal Discourse on the Imamate," *Central Asian Survey*. Vol 21, No. 3 (September 2002): 269-270.

from Muhammad Ali, the Pasha of Egypt. This was to show that they were not alone in believing this fight was for the good. The letter was a morale booster for Shamil's men.⁵¹

Shamil had two factors that were working: the use of guerilla warfare and the Russians were distracted at this time. The Russians were fighting in the northwestern region of the Caucasus against the Abkhazians and Circassians. The Abkhazians and Circassians were fighting for their independence, with the help of the British that were pushing for tribal unity. The British were in the region trying to promote the idea of ethnic identity and unanimity. The goal of this was to cause this ethnically different region of Russia to never become Russian territory. The British were even in contact with Shamil to offer a gunrunning effort against the Russians. The British wanted to stop the expansion of the Russian empire because they feared it would hurt their colony in India. Their hopes were that Shamil could stop Russian expansion. Shamil wanted troops to support him, but the British would not send in reinforcements for him. This gunrunning effort and push for tribal unity was part of what was known as the Great Game. The Great Game was the name given to the political espionage that the British used to keep British India safe from Russian involvement.⁵²

This uprising did not benefit Shamil for long. The Russians transported troops from the northwestern region of the Caucasus to Chechnya and Dagestan. This movement of troops was detrimental to Chechen forces because they were soon slaughtered. Shamil tried to issue a peace deal that Hamza Bek had offered, but the Russians only counter offered with his unconditional

⁵¹ Moshe Gammer, "The Imam and the Pasha: A Note on Shamil and Muhammad Ali," *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 32, No. 4 (October 1996), 339. Accessed 29 October 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283831>.>

⁵² Anna Zelkina, "Jihad in the Name of God: Shaykh Shamil as the Religious Leader of the Caucasus," *Central Asian Survey*. Vol. 21, No. 3 (2002), 259; Michael Kemper, "The Library of Imam Shamil," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Vol. 63, No. 3. (March 2002): 132; Souleimanov, 52-53; Jaimoukha 45-46; Seely, 40-45; Lopes, 60; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 189-202.

surrender. Shamil would not consider this and refused to meet with Tsar Nicholas I. The Tsar was angered by this rebuff. In return Nicholas I raised an enormous force to obliterate Shamil and his forces. There were ten Russians for every one of Shamil's men. Russian forces fought Shamil's forces at his fortress for over two months before capturing it. Shamil escaped but one of his sons was taken captive by the Russians in 1839. Shamil's son was then taken to Saint Petersburg. The Tsar had him trained to be one of his guards. Shamil would eventually capture a Georgian princess in a hostage exchange. The hope was to exchange the princess for his son. Shamil's son returned in March 1855. Meanwhile, Shamil was on the run, fleeing from Dagestan, and he made his way into Ichkeria in Chechnya. Ichkeria is in the mountainous region of Chechnya. Please see figure five, "Chechnya, 2001" on page forty-one. During this time the Russians oppressed the Chechen lowlands and were making way into the highlands. Shamil was the uniting force that the highland Chechens needed. He built Islamic schools in the mosques and constituted moving to *Sharia* instead of *Adat*. Shamil used his role as imam to not only supervise over religious issues, but legal issues on the broader context. He would introduce Sufism as not only a religious tool but also a hierarchy for legal issues. It took him two years, but he had gained his power back and was ready to fight once more.⁵³

⁵³ Zelkina, "Jihad in the Name of God: Shaykh Shamil as the Religious Leader of the 259; Kemper, "The Library of Imam Shamil."132; Souleimanov, 52-53; Jaimoukha 45-46; Seely, 40-45; Lopes, 60; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, 189-202.

Chechnya



Figure 5. “Chechnya, 2001.”

Chechnya [map]. 2001. Scale not given. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas < http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/chechnya_re101.jpg > (25 October 2014). (public domain)

Russian policy towards conquered peoples hurt their efforts more than helped. For example, they would terrorize villages under their control, forcing the villagers to move to the isolating mountains. While in the mountains, they would join forces with Shamil. Another tragic policy of the Russians was not coming to the aid of the Northwest Caucasus when they went through a famine in 1840. The Circassians in the Northwest Caucasus were under Russian control. Thus, they were not allowed to deal in trade with other countries or regions as they had previously during famine periods. The Circassians did not receive help from the Russians and were starving. This caused the Circassians to revolt against the Russians. They were successful in destroying four Russian forts, but they did not press further. They gained territory lost, and they did not need to capture land that was not theirs. The Russians took advantage of this and gained the territory back from the Circassians. This temporary success of the Circassians gave the Chechens a boost of confidence to fight against the Russians again.⁵⁴

Shamil had most of the northeastern Caucasus under his control by close to the end of 1843. Shamil continued to try and unite the entire Caucasus region, but nothing ever came to fruition. Another blow to Shamil was the change in Russian policy. The Russians were cutting down forests so that the Chechens could not use guerilla tactics. Guerilla tactics were crucial to Shamil as it was his main fighting strategy. In addition, when Russians gained ground in the highlands, they evacuated the villages and moved the people to the lowland plains. This caused the Chechens to be in an almost permanent state of struggle. The only time the Chechens did not have to fight against the Russians was for the three-year period of the Crimean War. This was because the Russians were busy fighting other world powers. During the war, Shamil actively aided the Ottoman forces, who were fighting the Russian forces. After the Crimean War was

⁵⁴ Souleimanov, 57-68; Jaimoukha, 46-47

over in 1856, Russia continued to press into the Caucasus region. By this time the Chechens and other Caucasians were tired of fighting, and divisions between Shamil and the Chechens became evident. Shamil surrendered on September 6, 1859, after his stronghold was taken over. There were still pockets of resistance against the Russians, but that resistance came to an end when Chechnya was annexed in 1861. The consequence of these imams politicizing Sufism was that the Russians retaliated against Naqshbandi orders after the Caucasus were under Russian control.⁵⁵

The Chechen resistance to imperial Russia during 1800 to 1859 was centralized and led by Sufi imams. These imams politicized Sufism in order to garner support across different ethnic lines in the Caucasus region. All of these imams were able to politicize Sufism and their roles as imam to garner support across ethnic lines against the Russians. The politicization occurred when these imams manipulated Sufism in order to get their political goals accomplished. Without this effort, there probably would not have been as much support from different Caucasian ethnic groups against the Russians. Without this support, the Caucasus would have fallen under Russian control much sooner.

⁵⁵ Souleimanov 57-68; Jaimoukha, 47-49; Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 51-52; Lopes, 54.

CHAPTER 3

YEARS OF PEACE

The period of 1859 to 1944 was essentially peaceful between the Chechens and Russians, but when there was resistance, it was small in scale and centralized. In this period what resistance there was is similar to the previous period. A religious figure, an imam, would lead a resistance group against the Russians. Each would try to politicize Islam, as had previously been done, but they were not successful in establishing a large resistance movement. However, for the most part, there was peace and cooperation between the Russians and Chechens.

After the Russians captured Shamil, Sheikh Baisungur Beno became the figure for the resistance movement. Beno simply refused to surrender to the Russians, and he tried to keep the resistance movement going. However, he was not successful in gaining much support. The Russians were able to capture him, and they hanged him in 1861. After the Russians captured Beno and before he was hanged, another resistance movement was led by Atabay Ataev. Ataev had little success, and it was mainly in the Ichkeria region of Chechnya. As mentioned previously, Ichkeria is in the mountainous region of Chechnya. Please see the Figure six, "Chechnya,2001." on page forty-five. In response to this, the Russians burned down fifteen villages in Ichkeria. The Russians also murdered many civilians and deported others to Ottoman controlled territory.⁵⁶ However, this deportation was not as widespread as the future deportation under Stalin.

⁵⁶ Jaimoukha 49.

Chechnya



Figure 6. “Chechnya, 2001.”

Chechnya [map]. 2001. Scale not given. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas < http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/chechnya_re101.jpg > (25 October 2014). (public domain)

All resistance ended in 1861, as did all violence towards the Chechens. Chechnya was now part of the Terek District which also included Kabarda, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia. At the end of all of the violence of the resistance, the Chechen population was small. Before the war, there had been almost a million Chechens living in the region. At the end of the war in 1861, there were only 140,000 Chechens left. The economy was in shambles, but this did not fracture the society as would happen under Stalin's deportations.⁵⁷

There was essentially peace in the region under Tsarist control. The Russians allowed to Chechens to live their lives as they pleased. The Chechens were allowed to practice their religion freely and allowed to keep most if not all of their traditions. National schools were opened to educate the wider population, and religious schools remained open. This did not mean that there were not grievances. In particular, there was resentment between the Cossacks and the Chechens. The Cossacks were rewarded for their fight against the Chechens. The Tsar gave the Cossacks land in the northern portion of Chechnya. This land was possibly the most fertile of the region because the rest of Chechnya was rocky and mountainous. Chechens were forbidden to live in certain areas that were economically prospering. This was mainly due to the oil boom in the region during the 1880s. Oil had been discovered in the region, so the Tsar needed the economic and material gains from harvesting the oil in the region. Also, Chechens were treated differently legally. Ethnic Russians and Cossacks had civil courts while the Chechens were often sent to military courts.⁵⁸

This changed during the Bolshevik revolution. There was unrest again in the society. Muslim leaders in the region elected Uzun Haji as imam for Chechnya in August 1917. He was

⁵⁷ Jaimoukha, 50.

⁵⁸ Jaimoukha, 52.

to rally a force of 10,000 men to expel the Russians, White forces, from the area. During the chaos of the Bolshevik revolution and subsequent civil war, the Chechens declared themselves as independent on May 18, 1918. This caused the highlanders to go into the lowlands to reclaim their ancestral home from the Cossacks. The Chechens were under the leadership of Sheikh Arsanov. Clashes ensued over the territory.⁵⁹

Another factor in these clashes was the White Forces who were loyal to the past Tsarist regime. The Chechens believed they were independent and fiercely guarded their belongings when the White Forces came to confiscate horses and other materials deemed necessary to fight the Bolsheviks. Sheikh Arsanov was killed, Uzun Haji replaced him to fight against the White Forces. The Chechens united with the Bolsheviks because of Stalin's previous statements on *Sharia* and Islam.⁶⁰ Stalin stated, "The Soviet government deems *Sharia* law as a legitimate, normal legal system, as valid as that of any other nation that is a part of Russia."⁶¹ Also the Bolsheviks promised that the Chechens would have full autonomy with the Chechens deciding what governmental system they wanted. With the help of the Bolsheviks, the Chechens defeated the White forces. The Caucasus did not maintain their independence because the Bolsheviks occupied the area to defeat the Caucasians that were left to fight. The Bolsheviks also reneged on their promises of autonomy and suppressed the region until it became submissive. The area was completely under Bolshevik control in 1925.⁶²

Starting in 1929, the area was Russified. This means that Russians were introduced en masse to the area. So many Russians were incorporated into the region that the region was

⁵⁹ Jaimoukha, 53.

⁶⁰ Souleimanov, 70-72; Jaimoukha, 53-55.

⁶¹ Souleimanov, 73.

⁶² Jaimoukha, 51- 54; Jaimoukha 55-57.

predominately Russian.⁶³ The idea was that the Chechens would adopt Russian ways if they were in the minority. The Chechens still lagged behind the rest of the Soviet Union culturally and economically. The Soviet Union promoted the idea of equality for women, but Chechnya was reluctant to incorporate such ideas. Part of this was the culture. The majority of it was due to lack of funding to train women in the Caucasus region. However, the region was performing better in literacy rates, and up to half of the population was literate by the 1930s.⁶⁴ When it came to collectivization, the region resisted as elsewhere. Further explanation of the resistance to collectivization will be detailed in the following chapter.

Overall, the period of 1859-1944 in Russo-Chechen relations was relatively peaceful. When there was resistance, it was led by a single religious leader. The resistance was also small in scale, unlike in the previous era of resistance. The religious leaders who were in control of the resistance movements were not able to garner support like Shamil was. For the majority of the time, the area was peaceful.

⁶³ Jaimoukha, 54.

⁶⁴ Alex Marshall, *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 199-200.

CHAPTER 4

EXPULSION AND FRAGMENTATION

The 1944 deportation imposed by Stalin fragmented Chechen society. On February 23, 1944, the NKVD surrounded Chechen villages and drove the population onto cattle cars. Stalin deemed the Chechens as being collaborators with the Nazis, thus they were enemies of the state. They were transported to their new homes in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Those who resisted this move or those who were slow to move were shot and killed by the NKVD. Thousands would die on the journey due to the lack of nourishment, unhygienic conditions, and distress. They were seen as enemies of the Soviet Union, and they had to be punished for their crime. The Chechens were accused of aiding or collaborating with the Germans during World War II or, as it is known in Russia, the Great Patriotic War.⁶⁵

Historians still debate the idea of Chechen collaboration. It is probably best to define the term first since it usually has a negative connotation. Even though historian Timothy Brook was describing Chinese collaboration, the definition that he provided is applicable to any group accused of the term. Brook defined collaboration as having five themes.

The first theme I call appearances. Appearances are what all parties in the collaboration relationship must strive for, initially and quickly. Invasion suspends the normal functioning of things. The first task of any collaboration is to reverse the situation, to transform the occupier's aggression into the appearance of normalcy and to disguise the collaborators' sudden ascent to power as legitimate authority. Both sides of the bargain need to make a regime appear as quickly as possible, which often means falling into makeshifts and compromises that neither side wants....The second theme is costs....But invasions are expensive: armies have to be equipped and fed, the destruction they cause has to be repaired, and the taxation systems that normally support the state yield no revenue. The collaborator is in the position of having to restore the local economy,

⁶⁵ Brian Glyn Williams, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-1996 and 199-200 Russo-Chechen Wars" *History and Memory* 12.1 (Spring/Summer 2000): 104-106.

rebuild the tax systems, and meet the occupier's demands for materiel. The popular expectation is that the collaborator derives benefit for himself for doing this work, which thereby imposes another cost that the local economy has to bear....Complicities, the third theme of this book, addresses the complexity of ties that inevitably arose among all actors in the local setting. Collaborators by definition are obliged to work with the occupier, and vice versa, but non-collaborators end up working with both, however indirectly. The occupier needs material support and at least a willingness not to resist, which non-collaborators have to give to survive, and on which collaborators in turn must rely to function. Those who refuse collaboration are nonetheless obliged to work out some sort of accommodation to the occupier's presence, as they have to do as well with those who collaborate....The fourth theme, therefore, is rivalries. This theme is a way of getting at the question of how the politics of collaboration actually played out. Collaborators competed with the occupier, among themselves, and with non-collaborators in order to tap or control scarce political and economic resources....My fifth theme is resistance. Resistance was...a way to show there was an alternative to collaboration.⁶⁶

The definition was provided to show that the term collaborator really should be qualified since the majority of those who collaborated did so in order to survive. However, there is some truth of Chechens helping the Nazis during the war, but most of these were examples of Chechens being forced or coerced to fight for the Nazi army in what is known as *hilfswilliger* units or support units. These units were made up usually of those not ethnically German, and they would help the Nazis with different tasks. Some were part of military units that fought alongside of the Nazis. Others were in support roles.⁶⁷ As a captured *Hiwi*⁶⁸ recounted:

Russians in the German Army can be divided into three categories. Firstly, soldiers mobilized by German troops, so-called Cossack sections, which are attached to German divisions. Secondly, *Hilfswillige* made up of local people or Russian prisoners who volunteer, or those Red Army soldiers who desert to join the Germans. This category wears full German uniform, with their own ranks and badges. They eat like German soldiers and are attached to German regiments. Thirdly, there are Russian prisoners who do the dirty jobs, kitchens, stables, and so on. These three categories are treated in different ways, with the best treatment naturally reserved for the volunteers. The ordinary soldiers treated us well, but the worst treatment came from officers and NCOs in an Austrian division.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005) ,28-30.

⁶⁷ Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad*. (New York: Viking, 1998), 184-185.

⁶⁸ *Hiwi* is an abbreviation for *Hilfswilliger*.

⁶⁹ Beevor, 184-185.

There were a few groups of Chechens that actively participated with Germany. They looked to the Germans as a force that might help the Chechen nation gain an autonomous structure. However, when the Chechens saw that the Germans would be of no help for their ultimate goal, the Chechens cut ties with the Germans.⁷⁰ There is no historical consensus about the extent of Chechen collaboration, but there are known accounts of Chechens being saluted as heroes for their work for the Red Army.

Thousands of Chechens died on the field of battle, with many becoming war heroes. The long list of Chechen war heroes includes the first men to reach the fortifications of Brest, where over two hundred Chechens fought for their country. To name a few Chechen soldiers of note: Khanpasha Nuradilov died in Stalingrad having killed over 900 Germans; Movlad Bisaitov was the first to meet the Americans on the Elbe; Hakim Ismailov was one of the men who raised the Soviet flag over the Reichstag; and Alavadi Ustarkhanov fought with the French resistance.⁷¹

What is known is that other groups like the Cossacks, Belarusians, or Ukrainians had actively collaborated with the Nazis.⁷² In many instances in these places, the Nazis were seen as liberators from the Soviet oppression.⁷³ For example, the Kalmyks were another group that Stalin had deported. The Kalmyks were known to have raised over twenty thousand soldiers for the Red Army.⁷⁴ However, they also had some who actively supported the Nazis. Nazi propaganda even stated that the Kalmyk commanders stood side by side with German forces.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Aurelie, Campana. "The Massive Deportation of the Chechen People: How and Why Chechens were Deported." *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*. (5 November 2007): 2
http://www.massviolence.org/Article?id_article=55 (Accessed 7 July 2014).

⁷¹ Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Remembering the 1944 Deportation: Chechnya's Holocaust." *North Caucasus Analysis*. Vol:8, Issue:8 http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3467 (Accessed 10 August 2014).

⁷² Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East: A Critical Assessment* (New York: Berghen Books, 2002), 209-252.

⁷³ Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus: History and Aftermath*, Seventh Edition. (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 256.

⁷⁴ Zulfiya Lafi, "The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities: An Illustration of the Soviet Nationality Policy" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2002), 11.

⁷⁵ Joachim Hoffman, *Deutsche und Kalmyken 1942 bis 1945* (Freiburg, Germany: Rombach & Co. GmbH), 91.

The most notorious case of collaboration would possibly be General Vlasov.⁷⁶ Vlasov was a captured Russian officer who advocated for other Soviet citizens, in particular those in the military, to fight for the Nazis. What Vlasov did not know at the time was that Hitler saw all Slavs as sub-human, thus only fit for labor. Vlasov would not be able to fight with the Germans, as he had hoped, because the Germans did not believe he was their equal.⁷⁷

Therefore, Soviet leadership could easily extrapolate that the Chechens had been involved in collaborating as well. In Stalin's eyes, those who did not actively abandon the *hilfswilliger* had their loyalties questioned. The seeds of disloyalty were in the Chechen mindset, and it was further proven with previous uprisings and rebellions during the early Soviet and collectivization period. In order to garner support for the Bolshevik cause, Lenin and the Soviet government announced the "Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia." The overall premise of this declaration was that if a state did not wish to be part of the Soviet Union, it could break away. In fact, it was unlawful for the Soviet Union to keep a state that did not want to stay. Lenin also wanted to ensure the different ethnic states, especially the Muslim states, would stay with the Soviet Union. Therefore, he further declared that these states could express their cultural beliefs and mores freely and without interference.⁷⁸ The reality was brutal suppression of any group wanting to form an independent republic. For example, the Caucasus formed their own republic called "the Free and Sovereign Federated Republic of the Northern Caucasus" in May 1918. The Soviets originally recognized the independent republic during the period of the Civil War. By doing this, it ensured the Caucasus aligned themselves with the Red Forces. However,

⁷⁶ Hoffman, 154-157.

⁷⁷ Kort, 257; for more information about Vlasov, please see Peter Lyth, "Traitor or Patriot? Andrey Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement 1942-45." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 2. 230-238. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080.0142398908437374>

⁷⁸ *Collection of Decrees and Regulations of the Workers' and Peasants' Government*, No. 6 (19 December 1917), Appendix 2e.

once the Soviets defeated the White forces, the Soviet rushed into the republic to crush its independence. The Soviets needed the territory because it was a very lucrative area. The Caucasus had many minerals and energy sources that could be very useful to the Soviets.⁷⁹ Even though this was stated earlier than the era discussed⁸⁰, it is pertinent to why the Soviets desperately needed these resources.

One feature of the history of Old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol Khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her – because of her backwardness: because of her military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. They beat her because it was profitable and could be done with impunity...Such is the law of exploiters....You are backward, you are weak – therefore you are wrong; hence you can be beaten and enslaved. You are mighty – therefore you are right; hence we must be wary of you. This is why we must no longer lag behind.... We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us.

Joseph Stalin⁸¹

The Soviets brought the Caucasus region into line by oppressing religious and cultural norms and forcing the population into something more Soviet.⁸² This was difficult for the people of the Caucasus because they had held onto their religious and cultural identity strongly. Soviet officials saw these religious and cultural norms as backward, and in order for the Soviet Union to survive and expand, these backward ideas must be eliminated.⁸³

⁷⁹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinsim: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

⁸⁰ The quote is from 4 February 1931, however this chapter is dealing with the early 1940s.

⁸¹ Alexander Hill, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-45: A Documentary Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 9.

⁸² Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1970), 60.

⁸³ Fitzpatrick, 10.

The Caucasus, like other places in the Soviet Union, resisted collectivization. Perhaps the Caucasus resisted collectivization more than other places.⁸⁴ The problem with determining whether the Caucasus resisted more is in the way collectivization was carried out. There were really never any instructions as to how collectivization was to be accomplished. The only specifications on collectivization came from Stalin in a speech to the Communist Academy in December 1929. His instruction was to liquidate the kulaks. Stalin did rebuke those officials who seemed to push policy too far in separate cases, but he never put forward any instructions to remedy the situation.⁸⁵ As historian Sheila Fitzpatrick stated,

There are various ways of explaining this surprising reticence. In the first place, Stalin's regime was a great generator of mystification, consciously or unconsciously treating mystery as an enhancer and sanctifier of power. It was the aura of mystery and secrecy settling over the Kremlin in the 1930s that perhaps more than anything else set Stalin's style of rule apart from Lenin's. In the second place, the regime operated with a primitive administrative machinery that responded to only a few simple commands, such as 'stop,' 'go,' 'faster,' 'slow down,' which could adequately be conveyed by signals. Moreover, the regime itself has a low degree of legislative competence: on the occasions when the government did try to issue detailed policy instructions, its decrees and orders usually had to be repeatedly clarified and expanded before the message was satisfactorily communicated.⁸⁶

Thus, a sizeable majority of the Soviet population openly resisted collectivization. The Soviets took this as the citizens being backward and uneducated.⁸⁷ The NKVD⁸⁸ documented those who resisted and reported it to Moscow. This did not mean that there were not those who were passionate about collectivization and the new Soviet ideology. Those that actively supported the forced collectivization often benefited from the Soviet system.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Conquest, 60.

⁸⁵ Fitzpatrick, 26.

⁸⁶ Fitzpatrick, 26-27.

⁸⁷ Fitzpatrick, 15.

⁸⁸ Soviet Secret Police; It stands for *Народный комиссариат внутренних дел* (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del). It translates to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. This organization will later be known as the KGB.

⁸⁹ Fitzpatrick, 224.

It did not matter to Stalin that the previously mentioned instances of resistance by the Chechens were few. He deemed that all Chechens were enemies or enemy sympathizers and must be dealt with accordingly.⁹⁰ For this, Stalin issued a decree for the NKVD to have the Chechen-Ingush ASSR liquidated.⁹¹ It took massive manpower and ingenuity to liquidate the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. There were around 120,000 NKVD soldiers in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR for the liquidation. They were also accompanied by the NKVD commander Lavrenti Beria, who made regular reports to Stalin on the process of the situation.⁹² The Chechens were ordered to take part in a holiday celebration on February 23, 1944. This was a trick by the NKVD to get the Chechens into one place so it would be easier to move the population. While collected for this holiday (Red Army Day) celebration, they were read a document announcing them as traitors. They had been announced as collaborators who willingly took up arms against the Soviet Union. The NKVD soldiers were waiting on the outskirts of town armed with guns, and often machine guns. Other officers of the NKVD would then search houses one by one to ensure that everyone was accounted for. The NKVD officers gave the orders for the deportation of the Chechens in the Russian language. Sometimes this caused confusion among the Chechens because not all could speak Russian. Anyone caught being slow to respond, trying to escape, or resisted deportation was shot.⁹³

Firsthand accounts correspond with the provided synopsis. This is demonstrated by Former Lieutenant-Colonel Grigori Burlitsky and his description of his effort in the deportation.

⁹⁰ Brian Glyn Williams, "Commemorating the Deportation in Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-1996 and 1999-2000 Russo-Chechen Wars." *History & Memory*, Vol.12, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2000), 49-51. Accessed 9 September 2013.

<<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ham/summary/v012/12.1williams.html>>

⁹¹ ASSR is an abbreviation for Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

⁹² Aurelie Campana, "The Massive Deportation of the Chechen People: How and Why Chechens were Deported." *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*. (5 November 2007), 3 http://www.massviolence.org/Article?id_article=55 (Accessed 15 August 2014).

⁹³ Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 316-321.

I was then a junior officer in the NKVD. In October 1943, my unit, which was part of a group of forces for defending the rear of the North Caucasian front, was ordered to move from Kuban-Cherkessk for the purpose of carrying out a particularly important government task. We arrived in the Karachay Autonomous Region. ... Like all my other colleagues, I proceeded to carry out the order for the forcible resettlement of the Karachay population.

My duty was to guard the settlement from which all its inhabitants were being forcibly expelled. Being in command of the ring encircling the settlement, I saw, as I rode around inspecting the outposts, how the expulsion of the people was carried out.

At a stated hour on a given day, armed with previously drawn up lists, NKVD and NKGB⁹⁴ officials, accompanied by armed soldiers, descended on the house assigned to them, surrounded it with sentries, and read out to the family the sentence of the Soviet government resettling them in an unnamed remote region. The family was given one house to collect their belongings, of which they were allowed to take only 100 kgs. They were told that any resistance or failure to comply with this order was useless. In this way, within an hour, despite their wailing, weeping, and supplication, family after family was forcibly placed in trucks, to be taken to a point of assembly. From there they were sent under escort again in trucks, to the railroad station, where they were embarked in cattle trucks.⁹⁵

Brulitski further elaborated on his experience specifically with the Chechen deportation:

Everyone is aware of the traditional course of the Caucasian peoples.... Their courage was no secret to the Soviet government either. The Soviet government feared the resistance and revenge of the Caucasians and therefore decided to entangle them in Communist deception and to remove them once and for all. It is noteworthy that the Soviet government attached particular importance to this operation. It is not fortuitous therefore that an operational headquarters was set up in the town of Grozny, headed by the deputy-commissar for internal affairs of the USSR, Colonel-General Serov, with a whole staff of generals....

It was a fine, clear day in the town of Grozny and elsewhere in the inhabited points of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. In the regional center, where my unit was stationed, this fatal day began with a celebration in honor of the 26th anniversary of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. Columns of demonstrators, with Party members and government leaders, bearing slogans, kept arriving in the square. The inhabitants, not suspecting anything, sang their national songs. Our unit band greet the demonstrators with ceremonial melodies....

⁹⁴ NKGB refers to *Народный комиссариат государственной безопасности* (Narodnyy Komissariat Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti). It is another branch of the secret police that is separate from the NKVD. Their main expertise is intelligence and counter-intelligence.

⁹⁵ Lafi, 36.

At the height of all these celebrations the deputy commander of the regiment appeared on the tribune. In a brief and dry speech he announced to the inhabitants the sentence of the Communist and Soviet government ... “to carry out the 100% resettlement of the Chechens and Ingushes ... to remote parts of the Soviet Union.” The deputy commander continued:

“Any resistance or failure to comply with our demands will be regarded as insubordination to a Party and government decision and the forces will use arms without any further warning. Besides, your resistance is futile, as the regional center is surrounded by armed forces and the square in which you are is also surrounded by troops.” He pointed and everyone saw that all the heights near the settlement and the square were indeed occupied by troops. Heavy and light machine guns, rifles and automatic weapons were trained on a live target – the Chechen-Ingush demonstrators in the square. On his orders an armed detachment came to the tribune and formed two ranks facing each other at one meter’s distance.⁹⁶

There is a contested instance of a village being liquidated in order to keep on schedule.

According to Chechen sources, there was a massacre at the village of Khaibakh in the Galanchozh district. It was snowing, and the mountainous roads were hard to travel. The NKVD realized that it would take longer than wanted to move those deemed unsuited for travel. The elderly, women, children, sick, and stragglers were taken into the stable where they were subsequently shot. In order to cover up the crime, the bodies were then burned.⁹⁷ The story of the Khaibakh massacre did reach to other villages because one deportee remembered as they faced the deportation, “They told how in the village of Khaibakh the sick, among them women and children, were burned alive.”⁹⁸ Russian officials to this day deny this claim, saying that there is no evidence of this event ever occurring. A current example of Russian officials denying this claim is of a documentary of the Chechen deportation. The documentary is entitled “Ordered to Forget.” It included this account, but the Russian Culture Ministry banned the film from being

⁹⁶ Lafi, 37-38.

⁹⁷ Salamat Guys, “Khaibakh. Rasskaz Svidetelya (Khaibakh. The Story of the Witness)” *Chechen Republic Today*. 19 February 2013 <http://chechnyatoday.com/content/view/24313> (Accessed 15 July 2014).

⁹⁸ Brian Glyn Williams, “The Ethnic Cleansing of the Chechens. An Analysis of the 1944 Deportation of the Chechens and the Role of the Communal Trauma in the Post-Soviet Russo-Chechen Wars,” *Turkestan Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 45, (2001).

shown. The Culture Ministry stated that there is no record of this account. Thus, they could not approve of the documentary.⁹⁹

Other horrific events tell of the NKVD soldiers killing nearly six thousand Chechens because they could not be transported because of snowfall and harsh road conditions. They were either shot, burned to death, or drowned in the Galanchozh Lake vicinity.¹⁰⁰ Chechens living in other republics were not safe from this process. The NKVD then picked up the Chechens living in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, and neighboring Dagestan and then deported them to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Even those Chechens who fought bravely in the warfront found themselves in the same light. Once they were dismissed from duty, they were sent straight away to exile. However, there were some efforts taken to try and save some of these Chechen soldiers. Some commanding officers changed the Chechen soldiers' identity cards in hopes of changing their identity and saving them. This worked for some, but those that were caught were executed.¹⁰¹

Beria reported the following to Stalin:

Attn: Comrade Stalin, State Defense Committee

February 23 to February 29, 478,479 people, including 91,250 Ingush, were evicted and loaded into railway trains. 177 trains were loaded, 157 of which were already sent to the site of a new settlement...6,000 Chechens from some settlements of Galanchozh mountainous district remained unsettled because of a huge snowfall and bad roads, their removal and loading will be completed in 2 days.... During the operation, 1,016 anti-Soviet elements from amount the Chechens and Ingush were arrested.

⁹⁹ Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Controversy Emerges Insides Russia Over Chechen Film Depicting 1944 Deportations," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. Vol.11, No. 112
http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42531&no_cache=1#.VBm6FJRdWSo (Accessed 30 August 2014)

¹⁰⁰ Akhmed Sardali, "Genocide: On February 23, 1944, Chechens and Ingush Were Deported to Siberia and Central Asia." *Kavkaz Center* (23 February 2011) <http://kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2011/02/23/13628.shtml> . (Accessed 15 August 2014).

¹⁰¹ Williams, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya," 109-110.

Beria 01.03.1944

Attn: Comrade Stalin, State Defense Committee

In the operation, 19,000 officers and soldiers of the NKVD (not counting of more than 100 thousand soldiers, taken from the front) were involved. They were brought from different provinces, many of them previously participated in operations of evicting the Karachaivans and Kalmyks, and besides, they will participate in a forthcoming operation of evicting the Balkars... As a result of the three operations, 650,000¹⁰² Chechens, Ingushs, Kalmyks, and Karachaivans were evicted to the eastern part of the USSR.

Beria 01.03.1944¹⁰³

The trip to their new home in exile was frightening in itself. Ex-Soviet Army Colonel Tokaev detailed the point at which the Russians drove the Chechens into the cars.

The freight trains with cattle cars stood motionless on the rails. Motor trucks kept bringing people. Guards kept driving the sobbing crowd on. The Red guards had very severe rules. A few steps to one side was considered an attempt to escape, and in such cases the guards would usually shoot without warning. No one can say exactly how many such fatal steps were taken. All that is known is that the victims numbered many thousands...

The heads of the trains accepted the crowds like cattle, without any lists of names, by counting the number of "head," and then driving people into cars indiscriminately. A mother would be sent to one place; her child to another. A husband to one train; his wife to another. More insults, humiliation and cruelty were influenced. Women were beaten just like the men. The butchers had no respect for feminine modesty. The cursing and foul language did not stop for a minute, but drowned the wailing of the unfortunate victims of the Red terror...¹⁰⁴

The deportees were stacked on top of one another in unsanitary conditions in freight cars. The only sanitation facility was a pipe in the middle of the floor. That is if they could move to the pipe, otherwise they had to defecate on themselves.¹⁰⁵ Women and children often had a more difficult time in these freight cars. Women in particular because relieving oneself in front of non-

¹⁰² Even though Beria claims 650,000 were deported, this number does not include those killed or who died before reaching the train.

¹⁰³ Sardali.

¹⁰⁴ Lafi, 43.

¹⁰⁵ Williams, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya," 110.

related men. They would then easily die of an infection or another related death caused by the situation.¹⁰⁶ The passengers could tell that the NKVD did not wash out the cars between trips because one could see excrement leftover from the previous trips in the cars. This did lead to diseases like typhus. Again, eyewitness accounts detail the exact conditions of the train.

Several families – the elderly, children and women all together – were literally stuffed into each draughty freight car. A huge latrine box was placed in the middle of the car, the enormous doors were slid shut on their iron runners and great locks were hung outside. Thus were the people transported for 14 days, since, during the war, the railroads were overworked, and the echelons of the Karachai were unscheduled, so they were forced to wait long hours on railroad sidings in order to allow other trainloads of personnel to pass.

The overcrowded, stench-ridden, lice-filled freight cars had evidently been used to transport prisoners and laborers for the front. The Karachai became lice-ridden themselves, there being no sanitation at all. They were given water only for drinking, with no opportunity to even clean up, wash their faces, much less wash or bathe properly. There weren't even sleeping planks in the cars, people lay on the hole-filled, bare floors. A typhoid epidemic broke out on the train, and the dead were removed during stopovers at unpopulated areas. After 14 days of this torture, they were brought at last to the places of their exile.¹⁰⁷

They were to stay in the cattle cars for the entire trip. There were occasional stops throughout the deportation, but it was only to throw out those who had died during the journey.¹⁰⁸ For an illustration of the journey taken, please see the map detailing the rail lines of Russia on page sixty-one.

¹⁰⁶ Compana, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Lafi, 43.

¹⁰⁸ Williams, "Commemorating 'The Deportation' In Post-Soviet Chechnya," 110.



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Figure 7. "Russia."

Russia [map]. Scale not given. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/russia_re194.jpg> (25 October 2014). (public domain)

An eyewitness account corroborates this:

“Somewhere, the wagons stopped and the soldiers came round and asked: ‘Are there any dead in there?’ We said no, but they came in and checked. I remember very clearly how one sick woman in our wagon was asking for water. She was saying, ‘Water, water, water,’ and her son ran to get her some.

Just as he came back to the wagon, a soldier shot him dead. He fell to the ground, and the water container lay there beside him. He was just left there.”¹⁰⁹

As Solzhenitsyn states:

The system had been proven and perfected, and henceforward would fasten its pitiless talons on any nation pointed out to it, designated and doomed as treacherous – and more adroitly every time: the Chechens; the Ingush; the Karachai; the Balkars; the Kalmyks; the Kurds; the Crimean Tatars; and finally, the Caucasian Greeks. What made the system particularly effective was that the decision taken by the Father of the Peoples was made known to a particular people not in the form of verbose legal proceedings, but by means of a military operation carried out by modern motorized infantry.

Neatness and uniformity! That is the advantage of exiling whole nations at once! No special cases! No exceptions, no individual protests! They all go quietly, because ... they’re all in it together. All ages and both sexes go, and that still leaves something to be said. Those still in the womb go, too, and are exiled unborn, by the same decree. Yes, children not yet conceived go into exile, for it is their lot to be conceived under the high hand of the same decree; and from the very day of their birth, whatever that obstacle and tiresome Article 35 of the Criminal Code may say (“Sentence of exile cannot be passed on persons under 16 years of age”) from the moment they thrust their heads out into the light, they will be special settlers, exiles in perpetuity. Their coming of age, their sixteenth birthdays, will be marked only by the first of their regular outings to report at the MVD¹¹⁰ post.¹¹¹

The deportations were carried out through a subdivision of the NKVD, and they were known for their brutality. It is estimated that deaths during the journey could be as much as fifty

¹⁰⁹ Sapiet Dakhshukaeva, “Remembering Stalin’s Deportations.” *BBC News*. 23 February 2004. Accessed 8 August 2014. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3509933.stm>>

¹¹⁰ MVD is the abbreviation for *Министерство внутренних дел*, МВД, Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del. This would be the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

¹¹¹ Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary investigation V-VII*. Translated by Hary Willetts. (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) 388-389.

percent.¹¹² The harsh treatment for the Chechens did not end there. The living conditions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Siberia were deplorable.

They were brought to the various kolkhozes and sovkhoses, with absolutely nothing: without bed, food, utensils or a single penny. They were forced to work on the kolkhoz from dawn to dusk, and weren't given even a single gram of bread, a single penny in wages. On the sovkhoses they were at least given 200 or 300 grams of bread per person, whereas on the kolkhozes they received nothing. People attempted to trade the pitiful possessions they had managed to bring with them for some food, and in this manner managed to hang on, half-starving, for a month or two. Then the starvation began: people withered away to skeletons, and began to fall.

Entire families perished together. The death rate was so high, that there wasn't enough time to bury the dead. The mortality rate was exceptionally high in the southern-Kazakhstan region, on kolkhozes in the areas surround the sovkhos "Pakhta-Aral," and in the "Third Tugai" area for that region. Here, around eighty percent of the population perished. It was a bit easier for those who landed in Kirghizia, or in the livestock-raising or grain producing areas of Kazakhstan, where the workers could at least obtain a bit of grain or milk at their work places. Here, the mortality rate was less.¹¹³

There were food shortages, lack of clothing, and lack of medical attention. This caused many more to die while living in exile. They could not leave their circumstances, nor could they search for family members. Their lives were walking a thin line, just one step could lead to a more harsh punishment of work camps. They were abused by those in power. They had no rights and were not protected under the law because they were deportees. Ismail Baichorov tells of two horrific accounts.

In the summer of 1944 the guard of the kolkhoz garden in our village shot and killed a four-year old girl for climbing into the garden and taking one apple. When he heard about that, her father, Batdiev Khasanbi came running. The guard shot him as well. People wanted to take the critically wounded Khasanbi to the hospital, but the commandant did not give them permission to leave the village. And Khasanbi ... having been denied medical assistance, died 16 days later.... When Batdiev's relatives came to the special commandant, whose job it was to

¹¹² Lafi, 34.

¹¹³ Lafi, 44.

protect the interests of the specially-relocated, and told him about the incident, he replied cynically: “Too bad he did not shoot all of you!”

A similar incident occurred in 1945. A guard of another garden, Vladimir Sviridovich Shevstov, shot and seriously wounded a three-year old boy, Hassan Batchaev, for taking three apples from the garden. Three of the boy’s uncles, including Intelligence Commander officer Batchaev Mudalif, were fighting at the front, while their defenseless nephew suffered criminal abuse... Neither one of the culprits were prosecuted, because such lawlessness was committed with the knowledge and the approval of the authorities.¹¹⁴

“In November of 1948....The new decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued at that time evidently intended to permanently ‘legitimize’ the results of the deportations. It ran as follows:”¹¹⁵

DECREE OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR

On establishing criminal offense for escaping locations of obligatory and permanent settlement of the persons belonging to _____ nationality.

In order to strengthen the regime of settlement for the deported by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR during the Patriotic War Chechens, Karachai, Ingush, Balkars, Kalmyk, Germans, Crimean Tatars and others, and also due to the fact that at the time of their deportation the time limits of their exile were not defined, to hereby confirm that resettlement to the certain regions of the Soviet Union of the aforementioned persons has been made forever¹¹⁶, with no right to return to their former place of inhabitation.

For the unsanctioned departure (escape) from the locals of the obligatory settlement of these deportees the guilty will be criminally prosecuted. To hereby determine the degree of punishment for this offense as twenty years of hard labor. Cases of deportee escapes will be tried by the Special Commission of the MVD of the USSR.

Persons guilty of concealing deportees escaping from the locals of the permanent settlement, or assisting them in their escape, persons guilty of giving them permission to return to their former places of inhabitation will be criminally prosecuted. To hereby determine the punishment for these crimes as five years of imprisonment.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

¹¹⁴ Lafi, 46-47.

¹¹⁵ Lafi, 47.

¹¹⁶ It should be noted that Lafi, the translator of this decree, noted the following: “It is curious to note that, rather than using a standard bureaucratic term ‘permanently’ for this official document, the authorities had chosen a rather dramatic word ‘navechno,’ which translated from Russian as ‘eternally,’ or ‘for all eternity.’”

N. Shevchuk

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

A. Gorkin

Moscow, Kremlin, 26 November, 1948¹¹⁷

This decree made it official to any deported people that they were not welcome back to their homeland. For further humiliation, the Soviets then forced the deported people to sign that they had heard this decree of permanent exile.¹¹⁸ Some other ethnic groups accepted their fate as a deported people, but the Chechens did not. Solzhenitsyn elaborated on this concept.

But there was one nation which would not give in, would not acquire the mental habits of submission – and not just individual rebels among them, but the whole nation to a man. These were the Chechens....

...I would say that of all the special settlers, the Chechens alone showed themselves zeks¹¹⁹ in spirit. They had been treacherously snatched from their home, and from that day they believed in nothing. They built themselves sakli – low, dark, miserable huts that looked as if you could kick them over. Their husbandry in exile was all of this sort – all just for a day, a month, a year, with nothing put by, no reserves, no thought for the future. They ate and drank, and the young people even dressed up. The years went by – and they owned just as little as they had to begin with. The Chechens never sought to please, to ingratiate themselves with the bosses; their attitude was always haughty and indeed openly hostile. They treated the laws on universal education and the state curriculum with contempt, and to save them from corruption would not send their little girls to school, nor indeed all of their boys. They would not allow their women to work in the Kolkhoz. They tried whenever possible to find themselves jobs as drivers: looking after an engine was not degrading, their passion for rough riding found an outlet in the constant movement of a motor vehicle, and their passion for thieving in the opportunities drivers enjoy. This last passion, however, they also gratified directly. “We’ve been robbed.” “We’ve been cleaned out,” were concepts which they introduced to the peaceful, honest, sleepy Kazakhstan. They were capable of rustling cattle, robbing a house, or sometimes simply taking what they wanted by force. As far as they were concerned, the local inhabitants, and those exiles who submitted so readily, belonged more or less to the same breed as the bosses. They respected only rebels.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Lafi, 47-48.

¹¹⁸ Lafi, 48.

¹¹⁹ Zek is the abbreviation for заключённый (zakliuchyonnyi). This term means inmate and is often shortened to Zek.

¹²⁰ Solzhenitsyn, 401-402.

There are few accounts of what living with the Chechens was like. Most of the accounts come from Solzhenitsyn. He detailed several different scenarios in the following:

At night they would raid the village nearby, filch a pot or break into a pantry for flour, salt, an ax, some crockery. (Inevitably the escaper, like the partisan, soon becomes a thief, preying on the peaceful folk around him.) Another time they took a cow from the village and slaughtered it in the forest. But then the first snow came, and to avoid leaving tracks, they had to sit tight in their dugout. Kudla went out just once for brushwood and the forester immediately opened fire on him. “So you’re the thieves are you.” “You’re the ones who stole the cow.” Sure enough, traces of blood were found around the dugout. They were taken to the village and locked up. The people shouted that they should be shot out of hand and no mercy should be shown to them. But an investigating officer arrived from the district center with the picture sent around to assist the nationwide search, and addressed the villagers. “Well done!” he said. “These aren’t thieves you’ve caught, but dangerous political criminals.”

Suddenly there was a change in attitude. The owner of the cow, a Chechen as it turned out, brought the prisoners mutton, and even some money, collected by the Chechens. “What a pity,” he said. “You should have come and told me who you were and I’d have given you everything you wanted!” (There is no reason to doubt it; that’s how the Chechens are.)¹²¹

There were Chechen exiles in the settlement.... You cannot accuse the Chechens of ever having served oppression. They understood perfectly the meaning of the Kengir revolt, and on one occasion brought a bakery van up to the gates. Needless to say, the soldiers drove them away.

(There’s more than one side to the Chechens. People among whom they live – I speak from my experience in Kazakhstan – find them hard to get along with; they are rough and arrogant, and they do not conceal their dislike of the Russians. But the men of Kengir only had to display independence and courage – and they immediately won the good will of the Chechens! When we feel that we are not sufficiently respected, we should ask ourselves whether we are living as we should.)¹²²

¹²¹ Solzhenitsyn, 196.

¹²² Solzhenitsyn, 320.

Solzhenitsyn continued, “And here is the extraordinary thing – everyone was afraid of them. No one could stop them from living as they did. The regime which had ruled the land for thirty years could not force them to respect its laws.”¹²³

It was not enough for Stalin to liquidate the people from the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. While the Chechens were in exile, Stalin had to change the whole identity of the region. The name for the region was changed to the Grozny Oblast. He moved tens of thousands of settlers into the area. These settlers were mainly ethnic Russians. However, there were also Ossetians and Georgians.¹²⁴ These settlers moved into what buildings were left. Mosques, graveyards, and literature were destroyed. Everything that was once Chechen had to be destroyed. Names were changed to something more identifiably Russian. It was as if the goal was to erase any evidence of the Chechen existence in the Caucasus Mountains.¹²⁵ First-hand accounts detail the Sovietification of Chechnya.

The mosques were turned into stables, wooden monuments in the cemetery were carted away as firewood...; libraries, museums, archives, and everything that was in any way a reminder of the history of those subjected to genocide was burned in street bonfires in the Facist way.

Settlers from the Kursk, Orlov and other oblasts began to arrive. The best residences were, of course, given to generals and officers in retirement and to the Party oligarchy....¹²⁶

As Chechens left valuables, they were confiscated by the NKVD. All valuables, such as household items, farming equipment and more, were seen as valuable assets for the NKVD.¹²⁷

¹²³ Solzhenitsyn, 402.

¹²⁴ Lafi, 49.

¹²⁵ Williams, “Commemorating ‘The Deportation’ In Post-Soviet Chechnya,” 112.

¹²⁶ Lafi, 49.

¹²⁷ Lafi, 41.

In the orphaned mountains of the Chechno-Ingushetiia, the very memory of the people who had lived here for centuries was destroyed. All during the days of the deportation ... a constant stream of military vehicles kept moving toward Grozny, loaded up with material possessions looted from the deserted homes of the Chechens and the Ingush. The most valuable (in the opinion of the guards) items: rugs, traditional Caucasian coats and belts, gold and silver- encrusted antique sabers and daggers (hand-made by Chechen artisans of the past century), jewelry, were being taken away in the covered auto-wagons; open trucks carried the “less valuable” but more “explosive” cargo: ancient manuscripts, theological and philosophical treatises, historical records, ancient legends of the Chechens and the Ingushes, national literature of the Soviet period. All these books and manuscripts were dumped in Grozny right into the snow, next to the public toilets outside the Palace of Young Pioneers.¹²⁸

All ideas of the Chechens as being treasonous from the government perspective were abandoned in 1956. Nikita Khrushchev made his famous speech where he denounced Stalin. The New York times reported the following pertaining to the matter:

Stalin is being castigated as a cynical violator of the nationality statute supposedly guaranteeing rights of each people within the Union. Khrushchev charges him with the genocide against the Karachai, the Kalmucks (Kalmyks), the Chechens, the Ingushes, the Balkars, the Mingrelians. These are all people of the Caucasus and Central Asia, Moslem or dwelling in largely Islamic areas.... Khrushchev has so far said nothing about bringing back to their homelands the millions of displaced persons within the U.S.S.R. itself. The lack of free press or free discussion, the lack of democratic political methods which permitted the Stalinist dictatorship, are unlikely to be stressed in new literature decreed by fiat.¹²⁹

In essence, Khrushchev pardoned those who were in exile. The Soviets did not emphasize the decree, so the Soviet population at large did not know of the “traitors” being pardoned. This pardon never explicitly allowed those Chechens who wanted to return to their ancestral home to do so. However, the Chechens came back to their homeland with or without permission. Those living in the Grozny oblast did not want the Chechens to return because they still deemed the Chechens as traitors. When the Chechens came back, tensions rose in the region. The Chechens

¹²⁸ Lafi, 50-51.

¹²⁹ C. L. Sulzberger, “Khrushchev’s Stalin: III – Autocrat and Autocracy,” *New York Times* June 9, 1956.

were still being discriminated against for the mistaken idea of the Chechens being traitors.

However, there is another factor to this return, shock. The Chechens were shocked at what had happened to their region in their absence. An eyewitness recounted the following:

When we came back in 1958, all the villages were empty or Russian occupied. The village here used to be on a hill, with a hot spring. When the Chechens were deported, they put Russians, or rather Ukrainians there... In the old cemetery, there was a small shrine, the mausoleum of a saint. The new settlers destroyed it, and dug two meters into the ground underneath it looking for treasure. They destroyed all the graves.¹³⁰

This deportation forever changed the Chechen mentality. As previously noted, they seemed to just exist in the Gulag system. They did not thrive in the system. They did not prepare for anything. It was as if their spirit was broken. It would perhaps be impossible for the identity not to change since estimates of mortality range from anywhere from twenty-three percent to fifty-four percent.¹³¹ Perhaps Zulfiya Lafi described it best:

The deportation left deep wounds, not only in the deportee survivors, but on their descendants as well. The tremendous physical and psychological suffering endured by the entire people, the staggering loss of life, and perhaps the equally traffic loss of cultural and historical heritage is a loss than can never be restored. As stated in a recent report by an English journalist, “The scar is deep, not only on the generation which survived the train journey and the generation born in exile, but on their descendants. Because this was punishment based on race, the deportations have become part of the national identity of the Chechens, Ingush, Karachai and Balkars.”¹³²

They changed their clan-based society and a society based on Chechen identity as a whole into something that was no longer a collective existence for the Chechens.¹³³ Aurelie Campana explained the psychological factor of this deportation.

¹³⁰ Lafi, 50.

¹³¹ Campana, 4, 5.

¹³² Lafi, 53.

¹³³ Campana, 4.

Tragic recollections connected with individual and collective grievances were passed on through the family structures. The destruction of the main social frameworks of memory after the deportation and the loss of spatial and temporal markers during the forced exile transform intergenerational memories into one of the principal sources of the Chechen memory.

Individual memories linger on the physical, moral, and symbolic violence endured during the entire deportation. Beyond recalling starvation, cold, fear, death, and sufferings, they are embedded in incomprehension. An incomprehension felt by the deportees when they learn about the decision to deport the entire Chechen population. A decision based on the pretense of a massive collaboration with a German army that most Chechen never saw. Testimonies present the deportation as treason, a betrayal taking physical form in the brutality used by the NKVD soldiers. Testimonies recall the warm welcome that soldiers were given while taking a rest before returning to the front; soldiers were lodged in the local population's homes. Many victims' statements express their incredulity when they saw the very soldiers they housed previously enter by force to deport them.

The violence towards women and elders, the non-respect of beliefs, traditions and customs are strongly committed to memory. Survivors systematically point to the fact that men and women were put together in the same cars without any division. They also commonly evoke that they were not allowed to bury, as required by the Muslim tradition, persons who died in the convoys. When visiting the cars during the rare stops, the NKVD guards threw out the dead bodies.

While expressing uniqueness and telling about a particular experience, each testimony, whether oral or written, continually reinforces the Chechen community of destiny. Testimonies relate in similar terms the violence endured during the deportation and the forced exile, and speak uniformly about shared grievances and trauma. These testimonies describe the scattering of the national group (and sometimes a family throughout the whole Soviet territory), the very harsh living conditions, the ban on the Chechen culture and the widespread feeling of abandonment on all sides.... They [memories] are part of a collective memory, which describes the deportation as a tragedy and as breach in a group's life. It recalls outstanding facts and episodes that illustrate the violence and rough treatment that the deportees experienced during thirteen years.

The change in society included a resurgence in the importance of Sufism. Sufism and the *Zhikr*, a Sufi religious dance to bring oneself closer to God, were signs of defiance against the Soviet regime. Their existence was a defiance in itself. They were meant to be wiped out or at least forced into submission. The high birth rate was probably the only factor that saved Chechen identity because estimates show that anywhere from twenty to sixty percent of those deported

died during the time in exile.¹³⁴ The Chechens had grown more independent from the Soviet government because of the deportation. Their communities had grown insular yet fractured, but they were very untrusting of outsiders. The resentment still was in the Chechen mindset, and the deportation was remembered by telling the new generation the humiliation and atrocities they had gone through. This mindset of victimization continued in the Chechen mindset and will play a key role in later insurgency movements.

¹³⁴ Jaimoukha, *The Chechens: A Handbook* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 59-61.

CHAPTER 5

PERESTROIKA AND GLASNOST

The *perestroika* reforms introduced under Gorbachev allowed the Chechens to discuss the tragedy that had befallen them. In 1985, Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Communist Party. During his time in power, he introduced a number of reforms, but the most prevalent was known as *perestroika*.¹³⁵ Gorbachev stated the following regarding *perestroika*.

Perestroika is an urgent necessity arising from the profound processes of development in our socialist society. This society is ripe for change. It has long been yearning for it. Any delay in beginning *perestroika* could have led to an exacerbated internal situation in the near future, which, to put it bluntly, would have been fraught with serious social, economic and political crises.¹³⁶

Perestroika is to provide a “melting-pot” for society and, above all, the individual himself. It will be a renovated society.¹³⁷

The policy of restructuring puts everything in place.¹³⁸

The new atmosphere is, perhaps, most vividly manifest in *glasnost*. We want more openness about public affairs in every sphere of life.... People might be said to have developed a taste for *glasnost*. And not only because of their natural desire to know what is taking place, and who is working how. People are becoming increasingly convinced that *glasnost* is an effective form of public control over the activities of all government bodies, without exception, and a powerful lever in correcting shortcomings.¹³⁹

The term *perestroika* literally means restructuring. The term would mean several things over the time of Gorbachev’s rule. At first, the term would apply directly to the Soviet economy. Restructuring the economy was Gorbachev’s main priority. The Soviet Union knew they had to restructure their economy or the rest of the world would cease to see them as a superpower. The

¹³⁵ Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus: History and Aftermath* (Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 366.

¹³⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New thinking for our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987), 17.

¹³⁷ Gorbachev, 29.

¹³⁸ Gorbachev, 31.

¹³⁹ Gorbachev, 75-76.

Soviets had focused their attention on building up their military capability. This came at a cost of every other sector in the economy because the military drained capital reserves.¹⁴⁰

The Soviet's task then became to restructure said economy without removing their socialist principles. There was a fine balance between reforms and the central administration. The balance had to allow the central planning administration to still have some authority and the managers of the economy, ie. factories, farms, mines, etc., to open and increase productivity. After instituting these reforms, Soviet leadership knew that other reforms had to be instituted as well. This changed the meaning of *perestroika* from just meaning economic reforms to three other reform policies.¹⁴¹

The first of these other reforms was *glasnost*. *Glasnost* translates to openness. As Michael Kort described, “[*Glasnost*] was precisely that: the opening of the Soviet Union to an unprecedented range and variety of information, personal and artistic expression, and genuine public debate.”¹⁴² *Glasnost* will have a profound role for the Chechens, which will be discussed later. The second reform related to *perestroika* is *demokratizatsia*. The term translated to democratization, but it is not like democracy in the West.

To [Gorbachev] the democratization meant that the Soviet political system would be made more flexible: most notably, that in factory elections, in elections to government bodies, and even in party elections there would be a choice of candidates. The hope was that *glasnost* and democratization, even in their limited Soviet versions, would entice ordinary citizens to pitch in voluntarily to help the reform effort. This was crucial because Gorbachev understood that without active popular support no substantial reforms would be possible.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Kort, 366.

¹⁴¹ Kort, 366-367.

¹⁴² Kort, 367.

¹⁴³ Kort, 367-368.

The third and final reform was *novoe myshlenie*, new thinking. This new thinking was aimed at the Soviet relationship with the West. Gorbachev, in particular, wanted for all the nations to work together on the world's ever growing problems.¹⁴⁴

As previously stated, *glasnost* played a huge role in the memory of the deportation for the Chechens. Before the reform the Chechens never truly discussed the tragedy that they had suffered.

The deportation was hardly ever mentioned, only as an abstract point of reference: this or that happened before or after the *aardakh* (the Chechen word for "lead out"). Mother often used it in her stories. I never understood: where was this? I think they should have explained to us what it meant. I remember that when I was in the fifth form at school, we had a history lesson with a Russian teacher, and I asked her about it. She threw me such a glare and asked: where did you read about this? I said that I'd just heard it, that I could not have read about it anywhere. She told me to ask my father. I assailed my parents: You say you lived in Kazakhstan. Why? Didn't you want to live at home? The answer: we had to. What do you mean, you moved there of your own free will, didn't you? No, we were asked to, we were told to leave. And it was in the eighth form of school that I understood at last that we had been deported, all of us exiled!¹⁴⁵

After *glasnost* things changed for the Chechens. Political organizations were set up to deal with promoting Chechen identity and culture. The Chechen intelligentsia began to rewrite the history against what the Soviets had provided into something deemed more accurate. The Soviets had whitewashed history to exclude the resistance of the Chechens. The Soviets had written that Chechnya came into Russia willingly. This disinformation was pervasive. Perhaps the most important work by the intelligentsia was on the deportation in 1944.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Kort, 368.

¹⁴⁵ Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004), 26.

¹⁴⁶ Jaimoukha, 61-62.

However, the Chechens' memory of the deportation and time in exile had been distorted by the years of not discussing the issue. They tended to focus on the more horrific elements of the deportation, and that is what is focused on more than anything else. This did not mean that the Chechens did not suffer at the hands of the Soviets, but the Chechens focused on the bad experiences and possibly enhanced them. In addition, because the Chechens had a delayed mourning period, when they were finally able to discuss the deportation, it was like experiencing the deportation again.¹⁴⁷ The psychological impact of this is comparable to that of the Rwandan Genocide tribunals. In these tribunals those that had suffered the most were least likely to consider reconciliation.¹⁴⁸ "The desire for vengeance will remain unchecked, violent solutions to social and political conflict will seem more attractive...[leading] to an increased risk of continuing or renewed violent conflict."¹⁴⁹ The retelling of the deportation is also rumination.

Rumination is the incessant, repetitive thinking about past trauma, which is frequently reported in individuals with PTSD¹⁵⁰ and which have been found to be not only strategy to cope with intrusive memories of trauma but also a trigger of such memories, resulting in a cyclical process. Research suggests that instead of leading to successful emotional processing of the trauma, rumination becomes a type of avoidance strategy, prolonging PTSD and depression. In effect, rumination has been found to be the strongest predictors of persistent PTSD.¹⁵¹

Nonetheless, the Chechens turned their tragedy into poetry.

¹⁴⁷ Aurelie Amapana, "The Massive Deportation of the Chechen People: How and Why Chechens were Deported." *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*. (5 November 2007): 5-6 http://www.massviolence.org/Article?id_article=55 (Accessed 7 July 2014).

¹⁴⁸ Karen Brouneus. "The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 54, No. 3 (June 2010):409 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27820994> (Accessed 5 September 2014).

¹⁴⁹ Brouneus, 412.

¹⁵⁰ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. According to the Mayo Clinic, "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event." www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/basics/definition/con-2002254 (Accessed 10 September 2014).

¹⁵¹ Brouneus, 427.

I am an ache.
I am thousands,
Thousands of tears
Shed under the roar of the wheels in February 1994.
I am a sea.
I am hundreds,
Thousands of bodies collected in obscure stations.
I am a tombstone, a monument,
I am the despair of shattered mothers,
With frozen prayers.
I am the sky,
I am Khaibakh¹⁵², Katyn and the GULAG
The bloody throne of a dictator,
I am glasnost,
I am the heart of a poet, nature, song
Swelling illness in the throat,
I am a voice and I command you
“Remember!”¹⁵³
- Ismail Kermov

Other artistic works about the deportation became popular during this time as well. However, Kermov’s work was possibly the most notable. This constant reminder of the deportation led to the belief that the deportation should be considered genocide. Overall, anti-Russian sentiment rose and Chechen nationalism rose.

¹⁵² Khaibakh is further explained on pages 57-58.

¹⁵³ Ismail Kermov, “The Deportation.” *Chechen Republic Ichkeria*. 23 February 1994. Accessed 9 September 2014. <www.waynakh.com/eng/2009/05/the-deportation-by-ismail-kerimov/>.

I, for one, never liked Russians, for as long as I can remember. Many of our people told us how terribly they had treated Chechens in 1944, and even later, after their return from exile. My father and grandfather were both deported. My father, then a young boy, grew up in Kazakhstan. But he always remembered their village, their house in the mountains. When we returned to Chechnya, the exile was still not over. At first they allowed us to return to our village; some of our people even managed to restore their old houses. Then an order was issued for us to move down to the flatlands. They feared that bands might spring up in the mountains again, or that people would keep unregistered herds of cattle. Now our people are scattered in Samashki, in Yermolovka, and other places. My grandfather dreamed of returning to his native village, but only got back there in time to be buried in our cemetery.¹⁵⁴

The Soviets tried to control the rise of Chechen nationalism, first by heavy-handedness and then by appeasement. To appease the rise in Chechen nationalism, the Soviets appointed a Chechen, Doku Zavgaev to be the First Secretary of the Communist Party in June 1989. Previously, only ethnic Russians had held the position, but the hope was with appointing an ethnic Chechen, nationalism would simmer or decrease. However, this did not end the rise of Chechen nationalism as hoped. The Chechen National Congress was created in November 1990 with Dzhokhar Dudayev as Chairman. Dudayev demanded that the Chechen-Ingushetian Republic become a Soviet Republic that was similar to those in Central Asia, ie. Kazakhstan. At the time the Chechen-Ingushetian republic was an autonomous republic, which meant Moscow still controlled everything. They stated their independence on November 27, 1990.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Tishkov, 31.

¹⁵⁵ Jaimoukha, 61-62

CHAPTER 6

INDEPENDENCE, INSTABILITY, AND WAR

The early 1990s was a turbulent time for the Chechens. In December 1991, the Ingush voted to break away from their Chechen brethren to form their own republic. To see the newly developed Ingushetia, please see Figure eight, “Russia: Administrative Divisions,” on page seventy-nine. The Ingush decided to remain an autonomous republic of the Soviet Union, whereas the Chechens were now an independent republic. Everything was finalized in June 1992, and Ingushetia became part of the Russian Federation. Not everything was a smooth transition because territorial disputes broke out between the Ingush and North Ossetians. This resulted in the Ingush being pushed out of portions of North Ossetia because the Russians sided with the North Ossetians.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Jaimoukha, 62.



Figure 8. “Russia: Administrative Divisions.”

Russia: Administrative Divisions [map]. Scale not given. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection – University of Texas <<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/russia.gif>> (25 October 2014). (public domain)

Meanwhile, the Chechens were having trouble in their own republic. Another contender for power, Yanayev, tried to seize control from Dudayev on August 19-21, 1992. Yanayev was unsuccessful, and Dudayev seized the moment to promote his agenda. Dudayev accused Zavgaev,¹⁵⁷ who was in Moscow at the time, of supporting the attempted coup by Yanayev.¹⁵⁸ Someone involved in the coup called Dudayev “a scoundrel and a terrorist.”¹⁵⁹ When Zavgaev came back to Chechnya to get everything under control, he was unsuccessful because Dudayev had convinced the public at large of Zavgaev’s betrayal. The result was the Chechen parliament declined to sign Zavgaev’s proposal from Moscow that would preserve the Russian Federation’s borders.¹⁶⁰

The failed August 1991 coup in Chechnya split the Chechens into two factions, those with Doku Zavgaev (the First Secretary of the Communist Party) and Mikhail Gorbachev and those with Dzhokhar Dudayev and Boris Yeltsin. Chechens saw Zavgaev as an Old Communist and Dudayev was the new face of Chechen nationalism. All of this tension came to a head when militiamen stormed into the parliamentary building on September 6, 1991. Parliament was in session with Zavgaev that day, and the militiamen forced Zavgaev to step down. The government was dissolved, and elections were called for October. Dudayev ran for President, and he won with ninety percent of the vote. Chechen citizenship would start to be issued in October. Dudayev announced the secession of the Chechen Republic on November 1, 1991. However, the Russians did not accept this declaration.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Doku Zavgaev was the first Chechen who was appointed by the Soviet government.

¹⁵⁸ Jaimoukha, 63.

¹⁵⁹ Euan Craik. “Chechen President Says Russia Masterminded Coup Attempt.” *The Moscow Times*. 10 April 1992 <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/chechen-president-says-russia-masterminded-coup-attempt.htm> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

¹⁶⁰ Jaimoukha, 63.

¹⁶¹ Souleimanov, 84-86.

Yeltsin issued a decree of a state of emergency about Chechnya on November 8. Russia mobilized its military forces and flew them to Grozny early on November 9. However, the Chechens anticipated an attack by the Russians, and they had mobilized around Grozny. When they heard of the Russians landing, they surrounded the area so that the Russian forces could go no further.¹⁶² The Chechens chanted slogans of remembering the deportation. They would chant, “Nothing is forgotten! Nothing will be forgotten.”¹⁶³ The Russian forces withdrew from the area because the Russian Supreme Soviet voted not to extend the state of emergency. This only boosted Chechen confidence. On November 10, the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus publicized its support of the Chechen people in case of another Russian offensive.¹⁶⁴ At this time the Chechens created a monument that commemorated the deportation. It included gravestones that were found that belonged to graveyards destroyed during the years in exile.¹⁶⁵

The independence of Chechnya was not a smooth transition from Soviet power. Russia would once again send troops into Chechnya from February to June 1992. However, when the Russians evacuated in June, they left behind a large arsenal. The Russians still believed Chechnya was part of the Russian Federation. Thus, to get Chechnya under control, they imposed an economic blockade. The economy was run by those willing to abuse it. The oil and gas pipelines were controlled by gangs. This caused a rivalry among the clans to get a better stance with Dudayev. Dudayev had effectively disabled parliament at this time and established presidential rule. Being closer to Dudayev would ensure economic prosperity for any clan.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Jaimoukha, 64.

¹⁶³ Williams, 121.

¹⁶⁴ James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 56-62.

¹⁶⁵ Yagil Henkin, “From Tactical Terrorism to Holy War; the Evolution of Chechen Terrorism, 1995-2004,” *Central Asian Survey*. 25: ½ (March 2006): 195.

¹⁶⁶ Jaimoukha, 64.

The Chechens were suffering, especially those who relied on the state through work or pensions and were not getting paid. Starting in 1993 Dudayev was losing power and anti-presidential factions were growing in number and in power. Those in support of Husein Akhmadov, the speaker of the parliament, wanted the situation to improve. They believed this would happen if the Chechens could negotiate a peace deal with Moscow. In this deal, Chechnya would give up autonomy for peace in stability. However, Dudayev would not accept this. The Russians were trying to use this division to get Chechnya under its domain again. The Russians banded with Akhmadov's forces on November 26, 1994. Their goal was to capture the presidential palace and overthrow Dudayev. However, Dudayev's forces resisted strongly, and they defeated Akhmadov.¹⁶⁷

The Russian government saw this defeat as a clear sign that the Chechens were not going to be brought under control peacefully. Therefore, they decided to launch a military campaign to achieve their goal. The Russians entered Chechnya on December 11, 1994. However, not all Russians supported this move.

“We should have gone in and restored order there a long time ago,” said Vitaly L. Repyakh, 57, a surgeon and the head of the local [Podolsk] blood bank. The doctor's son-in-law is a medic for Interior Ministry troops and at risk of being sent to Chechnya.

“Yeltsin is three years too late,” Dr. Repyakh said. “He has to be careful not to go too far, now. If we get too involved, it will be a second Afghanistan and we'll be run out of there.”¹⁶⁸

Others would support the military move. ““They [the Chechens] didn't want to fulfill their responsibilities,” he [Gennadi V. Belkin] said quietly. ‘I think they should be punished.’”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Jaimoukha, 64-65.

¹⁶⁸ Alessandra Stanley, “In the Provinces, Russians Back Drive on Chechnya.” *The New York Times*. 29 December 1994 <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/19/world/in-the-provinces-russians-back-drive-on-chechnya.htm> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

As the Russians marched toward Grozny, they had little resistance from the Chechens. However, this would change on New Year's Eve. As the Russians attacked Grozny, the Chechens resisted fiercely. It was not until January 19, 1995, that the Russians broke through and captured the capital.¹⁷⁰ However, not only military forces suffered. Ordinary Chechens felt the pain of the war. Some escaped from the fighting. A journalist covering the conflict at the time reported what she saw. "I have seen them trudging along, dragging their little carts, their bundles, a few household goods. But the refugees from Grozny fled in their bedroom slippers, running blindly from the fiery inferno descending on them from the skies."¹⁷¹ She later interviewed a surgeon at a makeshift hospital. He stated, "When we fled from the hospital in Grozny, we managed to rescue some drugs. That was on the 2nd of January. They started bombing the hospital at daybreak, then switched to heavy artillery fire, but we managed to evacuate the entire hospital in one hour."¹⁷² The Russians had suffered enormous losses, but it seemed worthwhile since they were then able to install someone loyal to Moscow, Salambek Khadzhiev, as the head of the Chechen administration.¹⁷³

"Russia's Defense Minister, Gen. Pavel S. Grachev, said taking the presidential palace was 'a turning point' for Russia's armed forces. President Boris N. Yeltsin declared that the 'military stage of the restoration of the Russian Constitution is effectively over.'"¹⁷⁴ However, this did not mean that the Chechens would cease fighting. "'This doesn't mean that we have been defeated,' said one Chechen commander, Akhmed Baibatyrov. He said the evacuation of the

¹⁶⁹ Alessandra Stanley, "In the Provinces, Russians Back Drive on Chechnya."

¹⁷⁰ Jaimoukha, 65.

¹⁷¹ Anna Cataldi, "Chechnya: Dancing the Dhikr, Willing to Die." *New York Times*. 14 April 1995 <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/04/14/opinion/14iht-edanna.html> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

¹⁷² Anna Cataldi.

¹⁷³ Jaimoukha, 65.

¹⁷⁴ Alessandra Stanley, "Chechen Palace, Symbol to Rebels, Falls to Russians." *The New York Times*. 20 January 1995 <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/01/20/world/chechen-palace-symbol-to-rebels-falls-to-russians.htm> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

palace was ‘strategic,’ to allow Chechen forces to remobilize to other bases within the city.”¹⁷⁵

While the bombardment was occurring, the rest of the world was silent. “‘This is, after all, a civil war,’ President Bill Clinton said.”¹⁷⁶ Moscow would take this as a hint that they could continue the blood bath without international intrusion.¹⁷⁷

The battle for Chechnya would continue until 1996. The Chechens would use guerilla warfare against the Russians.

In March[1996], in what Mr. [Shamil] Basayev described as a “dress rehearsal” devised by their late¹⁷⁸ leader, Dudayev, the rebels rolled into Grozny on a train, killed scores of Russian soldiers, burned much of the city and then withdrew to the mountains.... “This is not a war,” said one Russian Army battalion commander, Oleg Chapayev, after being evacuated from Grozny for medical treatment this week. “This is a game of cat and mouse. It seems as if the rebels were guided to our positions. Their operation was a complete surprise for us. Lately we were told to avoid any actions that could derail the peace talks.”

The rebels always knew where the Russians were, because there are no secrets in Chechnya. A woman selling milk at a market happily opens her vest to show the green sticker of the lone wolf, the symbol of the Chechen fighter....All Russians are hated.¹⁷⁹

It seemed that Russia was going to be drawn into a quagmire in Chechnya. Both sides suffered large atrocities, and civilians were often killed in the crossfire. Both sides also abused the civilian population.¹⁸⁰ Elections were coming, and Yelstin’s poll numbers were poor. He was desperate for an end of the Chechen conflict, so that he would have peace and ensure his reelection. He sought support from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

¹⁷⁵ Alessandra Stanley, “Chechen Palace, Symbol to Rebels, Falls to Russians.”

¹⁷⁶ Anna Cataldi.

¹⁷⁷ Jaimoukha, 65.

¹⁷⁸ Dudayev was killed on 21 April 1996.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Specter, “How the Chechen Guerillas Shocked Their Russian Foes.” *The New York Times*. 18 August 1996 <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/18/world/how-the-chechen-guerillas-shocked-their-russian-foes.htm> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

¹⁸⁰ Gordon M. Hahn, *Russia’s Islamic Threat* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007), 32.

(OSCE) to help broker a peace deal. Two agreements to end the hostilities were signed in May and June of 1996. Elections were also held in June 1996, and Yeltsin won the bid for president. However, in July Russia resumed the attack on Chechnya. The Russian Duma wanted to negotiate for peace with the Chechens, but Yeltsin did not want to concede anything to the Chechens. He pushed for more military action. The Chechens also pushed back. Even though the Russians outnumbered the Chechens, they kept on fighting. They feared that if they lost, they could be deported for their secession. They also feared mass extermination could happen if they lost. They took Grozny back on August 6, 1996.¹⁸¹ The Russians needed this war to end, so they brokered again for peace. A peace deal was finally reached. The end of the war came with the signing of the Khasavyurt Peace Accords on August 31, 1996.¹⁸²

The details of the Peace Accords were the following:

1. To gradually withdraw the Federal Army from the “peaceful” regions to areas outside the administrative borders of Chechnya.
2. After preparations, to elect the parliament of the Chechen Republic.
3. To recommend that the country’s Duma declare an amnesty for the participants in the armed actions who had not committed serious crimes.
4. To give financial and material support only to those regions where stabilization of the situation was achieved.
5. To prepare and sign an agreement granting Chechnya exceptional status in its relationships between the federal government and the authorized representatives of the Chechens Republic.
6. To create a government commission led by Premier Chernomyrdin that would be given the control of the regulation of the situation in Chechnya.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Jaimoukha, 65-66.

¹⁸² Henkin, 195-197

¹⁸³ Stasys Knezys and Romanas Seclickas, *The War in Chechnya* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 264.

What was new in these documents was that it was agreed to put off the determination of the question of Chechnya's political status for five years, that is, until 2001. This meant that the Chechens won the right to decide for themselves whether or not to remain in the Russian Federation.¹⁸⁴

Using the guerilla warfare tactics is nothing new for Chechen fighters. Chechen fighters had used this type of fighting in the 1800s under Shamil's leadership.¹⁸⁵ However, what is new for the Chechen mindset is this fear of what could happen if they lost. During Shamil's leadership, the only thing the Chechens could have lost would be their sovereignty. The Chechens were afraid of being deported again during this war against the Russians. This is only the first glimpse of the aftereffects of the deportation under Stalin, and the full effect will be seen later during the second Chechen war.

¹⁸⁴ Knezys and Seclickas, 298.

¹⁸⁵ As previously shown in Chapter 2: Sufis and Resistance.

CHAPTER 7

END GAME: TERRORISM

Terrorism is the direct result of the 1944 deportations, and the full extent can be seen during the time of the second Chechen war to present day. Even though the Chechens have resisted Russian rule in the past, this new militancy in the form of *jihad* is something new for the Chechens. In addition, these militant groups are fractured, with no single leader, unlike in the days of Shamil. Each militant group, which will be discussed in greater detail later, has a single leader for its specific group, but not a single leader over all of the groups. Another new phenomenon for the Chechens is that these fighters are not in the majority, and the majority do not support these fighters. The following is a discussion on the rise of this new phenomenon of terrorism and the effects it has on the region.

Following the Khasavyurt Peace Accords¹⁸⁶ there was a new trend happening: Wahhabism or Salafism. The two terms are very similar in meaning so they are often interchanged within research or by politicians. There are political reasons to label different groups with a certain name. If a group is named, then it can be classified as “the other.” In summer 1998, then Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov labeled any gang or group that opposed him as “Wahhabis.”¹⁸⁷ This does muddle the situation of actually putting a name to separatist groups, but this thesis will define those with the idea of establishing a North Caucasus emirate as a *jihadi*. Salafism is a branch of Wahhabism, which is why the two branches are often hard to distinguish. Both claim to only want to purify Islam from un-Islamic ideas. The way that the two

¹⁸⁶ August 31, 1996.

¹⁸⁷ Miriam Lansky, “Daghestan and Chechnya: The Wahhabi Challenge to the State” *SAIS Review*. Vol. 22, No. 2. (Summer-Fall 2002), 168 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais/summary/v022/22.2lansky.html> (Accessed 2 October 2013).

factions try to achieve this is where the schism can be seen. Wahhabism is named after the scholar Abd al-Wahhab. Wahhab preached that the only way to purify Islam was not by the sword or violence but through missionary work. It is through showing your beliefs and spreading the word of Islam not through punishment of death that is the greatest way to spread Wahhabism. Wahhab also preached on the idea of *jihad*. *Jihad*, which will be discussed in greater detail later, can mean struggle or holy war; it depends on the context to determine the translation in English. For the idea of a holy war, Wahhab preached that *Jihad* was to be the work of the community not individuals.¹⁸⁸

Salafists, on the other hand, have broken with this idea of community and focused on a more individualistic approach. Salafists believe their way is the true way of Islam. Anyone who is not a Salafist is thus not Muslim. Those who are not true Muslims must be forced to change their ways. Salafists focus on the Salafist branch only. This is different from other sects of Islam which focus on the entire Muslim population. This belief allows for a more militant point of view in the cleansing of Islam.¹⁸⁹ Even though this view is more militant, it does not necessarily mean that a Salafi will be violent.

Wahhabism and Salafism came into Chechnya through Dagestan. Wahhabis and Salafis left Dagestan in 1998 because of unrest in the region.¹⁹⁰ Wahhabism and Salafism only survived because of unrest in the region from criminal organizations and political corruption. This group told that it could provide a way for the traditional Sufi region to have a peaceful nation where everyone could prosper. In reality, the Salafists were at odds with the native Sufi population. As Miriam Lansky stated, “While the Wahhabis have succeeded in defining the

¹⁸⁸ Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 200-205, 235, 246-256

¹⁸⁹ Delong-Bas, 200-205, 235, 246-256.

¹⁹⁰ Lansky, 167.

terms of political debate, their attempts to seize power by force have failed.”¹⁹¹ The Salafists brought forth the idea of *jihad* in the sense that most think of it today: terrorism and suicide bombings.¹⁹² Thus, Wahabbism/Salafism is not a unifying factor for the Chechens but a divisive one.¹⁹³ This would be the opposite of what Sufism was for the Chechens. Sufism brought the Chechens closer together.

Since the term *jihad* is mentioned, it would be best to define what is truly meant by the term. *Jihad* literally translates into struggle or to strive. The traditional idea of *jihad* was to struggle against evil.¹⁹⁴ So, if you had an addiction or were struggling in life, you would issue a *Jihad* against the negative entity. Most often you will see mention of a *Jihad* against someone’s passions. These passions will be something to take you from the path of God, so it is best to get rid of them through *Jihad*. This is what is known as the greater *Jihad*.¹⁹⁵ The lesser *jihad* is more associated with armed struggle. This is a newer phenomenon in Muslim history. The idea of this armed resistance comes from nine verses of the Quran that have been interpreted and used to advocate violence in the name of God.¹⁹⁶ They are as follows:

Sura 2:191

Kill them wherever you find them and turn them out from where they have turned you out, for *fitna*¹⁹⁷ is worse than killing, but do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there.¹⁹⁸

Sura 2:193

¹⁹¹ Lanskoj, 167.

¹⁹² Delong-Bas, 254-256.

¹⁹³ Lanskoj, 176.

¹⁹⁴ David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2005), 32-33.

¹⁹⁵ If any references to the greater jihad are made, it will be denoted by a capitalized J in Jihad. Whereas the lesser jihad will remain lower case.

¹⁹⁶ Reuvan Firestone, *Jihad: The Origins of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 85.

¹⁹⁷ Fitna is to purify oneself through tests and trials. (see Firestone page 85 for more information).

¹⁹⁸ Firestone, 84.

And fight them until there is no more *fitna* and religion becomes God's (*wayakun al-din lillah*). But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to the oppressors.¹⁹⁹

Sura 2: 217

They will ask you about fighting in the Sacred Month (*al-shahr al-haram*). Say: 'Fighting therein is a grave [offense], but driving [people] away from the path of God, unbelief in Him, and expelling His people from the Sacred Mosque is far more grave in God's sight.' *Fitna* is worse than killing. They will not stop fighting you until they turn you away from your religion, if they can. Those of you who are turned away from your religion and die as unbelievers, your acts will come to nothing in this world and in the world to come. You will be companions of the Fire and remain there forever.²⁰⁰

Sura 8:39

And fight them until there is no more *fitna*, and religion becomes God's in its entirety. But if they cease, God is aware of what they do.²⁰¹

Sura 9:5

When the sacred months are past, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them in every place of ambush; but if they repent, pray regularly, and give the alms tax, then let them go their way, for God is forgiving, merciful.²⁰²

Sura 9:29

Fight those who do not believe in God or the Last Day, and who do not forbid what has been forbidden by God and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth from among the People of the Book, until they pay the poll tax (*al-jizya*) out of hand (*'an yad*), having been brought low (*wahum saghirun*).²⁰³

Suras 9:73/66:9

O prophet! Strive (*jihad*) against the unbelievers and the dissenters (*al-munafiqin*), and be ruthless with them. Their refuge is Hell, a bad destination.²⁰⁴

Sura 9:123

O you who believe! Fight the unbelievers (*al-kuffar*) who are near to you and let them find ruthlessness in your, and know that God is with those who fear Him.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Firestone, 85

²⁰⁰ Firestone, 86.

²⁰¹ Firestone, 88.

²⁰² Firestone, 88.

²⁰³ Firestone, 89.

²⁰⁴ Firestone, 90.

²⁰⁵ Firestone, 90.

Sura 47:4-5

When you meet the unbelievers, then [let there be] slaughter (*fadarb al-riqab*) until, when you have routed them, bind [them] fast. Afterward, [free them by] grace or ransom until the war lay down its burdens. That is the rule?. If God has wished, He would have taken vengeance on them, but He is testing some of you with others. The deeds of those killed in the path of God are not in vain. [47:5] He will guide them and improve their situation.²⁰⁶

This last Sura is especially important for those who wish to become a martyr. Those who have died in this work of God are protected. “Any slave [of God] whose feet get covered with dust in the path of God, the Fire will not touch him.”²⁰⁷ This is how those that recruit people to fight in their cause gain new fighters. For example, Doku Umarov²⁰⁸, who was set to become Emir when the Islamic Emirate is proclaimed, stated, “For those who become martyrs in the jihad, for the Mujahideen, for the Muslims who experience difficulties, we make Dawat, or appeal, Insha'Allah, or God's willing. We endeavor and spare no effort and we will persevere to alleviate the burden they experience.”²⁰⁹

The *jihadist* efforts were not on a united front, which is why there are different terrorist organizations that start operating at this time. Some of the more famous groups are the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR), Black Widows, Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB), Riyad US-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade, Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat, and Ingush Jama'at Shariat.²¹⁰ Foreign fighters also came into Chechnya during this time. Most notable is probably

²⁰⁶ Firestone, 90.

²⁰⁷ Firestone, 100.

²⁰⁸ Also known as Dokku Abu Usman.

²⁰⁹ Editor, “Shamil asked me: “When you become Emir, are you going to proclaim the Emirate?” *Kavkaz Center*. 30 August 2011 <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2011/08/30/15062.shtml> (Accessed 20 September 2014).

²¹⁰ Robert W. Kurz and Charles K. Bartles, “Chechen Suicide Bombers,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 20 (2007), 536 <http://doi.10.1080/13518040701703070> (Accessed 18 December 2011).

Amir al-Khattab, a Saudi national, who arrived into Chechnya in 1995. He is one of the main actors in bringing in foreign fighters and money into the conflict.²¹¹

All of these groups claim to have the common goal of seeing Chechnya free from Russia. Others delve deeper into having a North Caucasus Islamic Emirate. These groups tended to use suicide bombings or car bombings.²¹² As Monte Palmer notes, there are six types of terror: random terror, political terror, economic-technological terror, cultural terror, revolutionary terror, and catastrophic terror.²¹³ “Random terror is the indiscriminate killing of civilian populations. Targets are less important than the number of casualties—the more the better.”²¹⁴ “Political terror focuses its wrath on the symbols of secular power. Innocents are spared, but political officials of every stripe and nationality are fair game.”²¹⁵ Economic-technological terror is the attack “on the economic foundations of secular states.” (ie. tourism)²¹⁶ “Cultural terror attacks the symbols of Western culture and all other cultural influences that violate the jihadist vision of Islamic purity.”²¹⁷ Revolutionary terror is using terror to change the powers that be.²¹⁸ Catastrophic terror is the use of weapons of mass destruction against a population.²¹⁹

The typical jihadist group is a unique hybrid that blends the organizational structure of a modern bureaucracy with the authority patterns of the priesthood, the opaqueness of an oriental secret society, the cell network of a communist underground, and the honor code

²¹¹ Jason Lyall, “Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 53:3 (June 2009), 332, 335 <http://jstor.org/stable/20684590> (Accessed 29 October 2013); John Russell, “Obstacles to Peace in Chechnya: What Scope for International Involvement?” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58. 6 (September 2006), 945 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451269> (Accessed 29 October 2013)

²¹² August Hammerli, Regula Gattiker, and Reto Weyerhan, “Conflict and Cooperation in an Actors’ Network of Chechnya Based on Event Date,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 50:2 (April 2006), 171 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27638482> (Accessed 20 September 2011).

²¹³ Monte Palmer, *Islamic Extremism: Causes, Diversity, and Challenges* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 157.

²¹⁴ Palmer, 157.

²¹⁵ Palmer, 159.

²¹⁶ Palmer, 160-161.

²¹⁷ Palmer, 162.

²¹⁸ Palmer, 163-164.

²¹⁹ Palmer, 164.

of the Mafia. All jihadist organizations are headed by an *emir* (prince of the believers) or *sheikh* (learned religious scholar). Titles are important because they symbolize the right to religious group. The emir heads a consultative council consisting of sub-emirs who, in turn, head the various administrative departments required to achieve the mission of the organization.²²⁰

An illustrating demonstrating these various administrative departments is shown through Figure nine, “Diagram of Terrorist Organizations, ” on page ninety-four.

²²⁰ Palmer, 172.

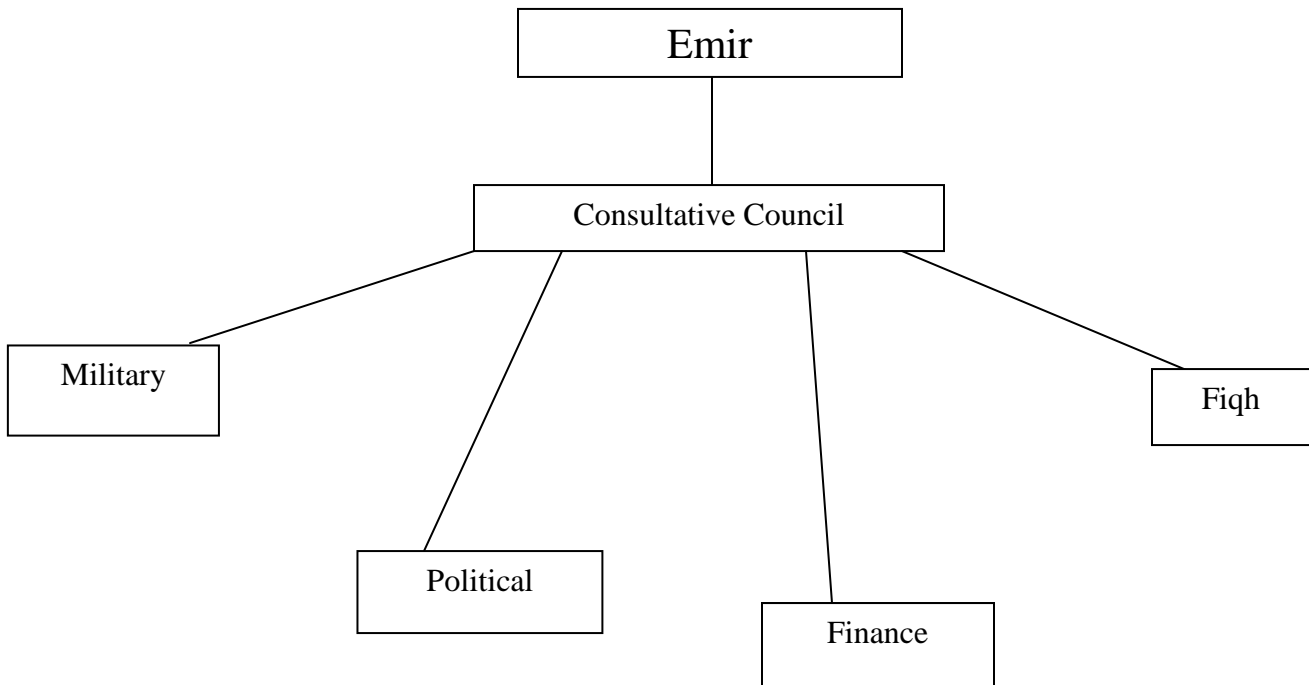


Figure 9: Diagram of Terrorist Organizations

This organization style is different from that under Shamil. Shamil had a religious council to direct him, but the emir directs the religious council.

These jihadist groups used suicide attacks that were normally against governmental or military operations. There were some bombings in residential areas, but the area also had government assets in the region. What caused the Russian nation to become aware of the bombings were instances of bombs going off in completely residential areas. On September 4, 1999 a bomb struck a building in Buynaksk, Dagestan. This was followed by a bomb going off in a residential building in Moscow killing ninety-four people. A third bomb killed seventeen in

Volgodonsk on September 16. All of these bombings brought the idea of the Chechen war closer to home for Russians, and it also brought the idea of revenge. The Russian government now had the popular support that it needed from the population on the idea to invade Chechnya again.²²¹

When Russia invaded Chechnya this time, the Chechen forces were not united. Some factions that had fought against Russia in the first war (1994-1996) saw that an independent Chechnya was not feasible. Others decided not to fight against Russia because of fear of repercussions. The Chechens had been deported before, and if they continued fighting, they feared that the Russians would do something similar or worse. Russia established a government that it considered legitimate with Chechen mufti²²² Akhmad Kadyrov. Kadyrov fought with the Chechens during the first war, but after a falling out with Maskadov, leader of the nationalist Chechen government, Kadyrov decided to support Russia. To distinguish that Russia was not in another war against Chechnya, the Russian government would make statements that embellished the idea of a counterinsurgency operation to eradicate all rebels. The reality of the situation was vast human rights violations which included targeting civilians, abducting civilians, rape, and more.²²³

Unsurprisingly, Russia's largely unreformed, unprofessional, and often criminalized military and security forces under the so-called *siloviki* (the power ministries or organs of coercion—MVD, military, FSB, and GRU) have more than played their part in this respect. Russian troops and allied Chechen forces have engaged in systematic abuses, including overly aggressive security sweeps (*zachistki*), summary executions, mass arrests, torture, and rape. Chechen separatists, for their part, have been involved in

²²¹ Souleimanov, 159-162; Jaimoukha, 67

²²² A mufti is someone with expertise on Islamic law. They have had more schooling than imams, but they are elected to the position as a Sheik is. They are understood to be dealing with Islamic law only, whereas a Sheik can encompass a wide array of duties.

²²³ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen wars will Russia go the way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 139-177; Ilyas Akhmadov, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 173-192; Svante E. Cornell, "The War Against Terrorism and the conflict in Chechnya: A Case for Distinction," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*. 27:2 (Summer/Fall 2003) Web. <http://ui04e.moit.tufts.edu/forum/archives/pdfs/27-2pdfs/Cornell.pdf> (Accessed 3 October 2013).; Souleimanov, 173-186.

kidnapping for ransom, preventing civilians from fleeing battle zones, deliberately locating military equipment and forces near civilian residences and hospitals, and more recently conducting mass terrorism and an expanded war throughout the North Caucasus.²²⁴

Fighting between the Russians and the rebels has caused many to have to abandon their homes. Chechens fled to safe zones which sometimes provided railway cars for people to sleep in. A refugee summed up his feelings by saying, “many of my family died in the railway transports in 1944. My parents survived but my father was killed in 1995 in the last war. And now we’re back in the railway.”²²⁵ Their fears of being deported again were not unfounded. Russian documents show those captured were either killed during interrogation or sent to Siberia to be reeducated. They also show interest in the southern portion of Chechnya. This southern region has no economic value so the Chechens “must be completely liquidated,” and for “the creation of conditions unsuitable for human habitation in the future and the resettlement of peaceful residents from that part of Chechnya either north of the Terek river [the northern flat country traditionally dominated by Russians] or their assimilation in other areas of Russia.”²²⁶

These human rights violations allowed for an influx of foreign money for fighters into Chechnya and a rise of suicide bombings. A new world phenomenon happened in Chechnya through the use of “Black Widows Brigade.” This brigade recruits females who have lost male relatives for suicide missions. Recruiters convince these females that they are a burden to what is left of their family and the only way to help is through a suicide mission. Foreign fighters were mainly brought in by al-Khattab from Afghanistan. They were mainly Arabs fighting under Osama bin Laden, uniting to expel a force that was oppressing fellow Muslims. When help was

²²⁴ Gordon M. Hahn. *Russia's Islamic Threat*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007), 33-34.

²²⁵ Williams, “Commemorating,” 128.

²²⁶ Williams, “Commemorating,” 129-130

needed in Chechnya, bin Laden provided men and money to help. These men were mainly under the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade.²²⁷

The full extent of the damage of the deportation can be seen during the Second Chechen war. The society is fractured, which meant that there was not a unified fighting force as in previous resistance movements. In addition, these different factions have different goals. This only further proves the fracturing of society. The structure of the fighting is different from before. Now the emir is the head with only a council to help him seek his goals, whereas previously, a council provided an imam with the goal of the religious community. Perhaps Chechen society would be different today if it were not for the 1944 deportation.

²²⁷ Emma Gilligan, *Terror in Chechnya: Russia and the Tragedy of Civilians in War*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 123-143.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Even though the situations throughout Second Chechen war (2000 to 2009) have many similarities with previous resistance, there are differences. In the past, historians have added the Second Chechen War and terrorism as a continuance of the past struggle. They had glanced over a momentous occasion in Chechen history, the 1944 deportation. This deportation caused Chechen society to become fragmented. This fragmentation allowed unsavory elements to flood into the region. Thus, historians need to study the Second Chechen War as something that is new with something different from the past. The major differences are the following: disunity of the fighters and structure of the resistance, the use of terrorism, foreign fighters, and foreign support for the fighting.

A major difference is the disunity among the fighters. A single leader led early Chechen resistance. Usually this would be a Sufi imam. The great Sufi imams of previous resistance had previously rallied troops under one banner. Shamil even decided to create a caliphate to combat Russian encroachment into the area. The fighters of today also use this term, or they have used the term emirate. The end game would be different from Shamil's time. Shamil wanted the caliphate to end Russian rule in the Caucasus. However, the emirate of today would bring the entire North Caucasus under the banner of Islam. This Islam would be under one sect of Islam²²⁸, which would be different from Shamil's vision of independence. Also, the fighters in Chechnya were very divided. There were different terrorist groups that fought separately, not under one leader. There were even secular groups that fought. The structure of the resistance was different.

²²⁸ The caliphate would be under the Salafi branch of Islam.

During the time of Shamil, there was a council that approved Shamil's edicts. However, the current situation is different. Each terrorist group has one leader who tells the council what is going to be done. The council will sometimes give recommendations, but they rarely if ever contradict the emir.

The whole idea of terrorism is something different for the Sufi Chechens; however, some Chechens became terrorists. Historically, the Chechens have been Sufis. Terrorism is something that is foreign to Sufism. As previously stated, Sufism is traditionally pacifist. If the Sufis would become violent, it was because the population was in danger. Never would a preemptive attack be allowed. The whole idea of hurting innocent civilians instead of military units goes against any Sufi doctrine. The idea of preemptively doing so is extremely foreign to the people of the and Chechnya in particular.

One difference concerning the previous resistance movement and the insurgency today is in the use of foreign fighters. The Chechens had used foreigners to help in their resistance previously. However, most of the previous foreign fighters were through other governments. The foreign fighters of the Second Chechen war and beyond were individuals. These individuals came to Chechnya to fight without government support.

Another major difference is that most of the Chechen population did not want to fight throughout the second war and today. Those who did not fight did not even support the fighters. Some Chechens were tired of fighting and were afraid of the repercussions. The most important difference was the fear caused from the deportation. The Chechens had barely survived the deportation in 1944, and they were afraid of what would happen if the Russians decided to

retaliate in a similar fashion. In summation, the 1944 deportation caused a fragmentation of Chechen society which allowed for today's insurgency movement.

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