

# A Revolt of Social Memory: The Chechens and Ingush against the Soviet Historians

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## History and Social Memory

Usually historians make a distinction between social memory as a collective intellectual activity whether of a society at large or a particular group, and professional history. The latter is based on reason and verification, whereas the former is based on emotions and interests. Accordingly, certain scholars suggest distinguishing between ‘the past’ and ‘history’.<sup>1</sup> Yet, more often than not, in practical terms history proves to be national history that neglect the distinct pasts of ethnic groups or minorities. It is here that social memory takes its place most of all.<sup>2</sup> Many experts agree that the core of social memory (‘the past’) is made up of the key events that are carefully selected to meet urgent demands: ‘In order to account for the present, to justify it, understand it, or criticise it, the past is used, selectively appropriated, remembered, forgotten, or invented’,<sup>3</sup> ‘it is clear that memory is profoundly influenced by discourses and experiences in the present’,<sup>4</sup> ‘we are constantly revising our memories to suit our

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Hardmondsworth, 1969); Bernard Lewis, *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton, NJ, 1975). For a somewhat different approach see: Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, PA, 1998), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Wieviorka, *La différence* (Paris, 2001), pp. 180–184. That is why social memory is often closely linked with a fragile identity. See: Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (Paris, 2000), pp. 98–99.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald and Malcolm Chapman, ‘Introduction’, in Tonkin, McDonald and Chapman (eds.), *History and Ethnicity* (London, 1989), pp. 1–21, at p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Collard, ‘Investigating “Social Memory” in a Greek Context’, in Tonkin, McDonald and Chapman (eds.), *History and Ethnicity*, pp. 89–103, at p. 101.

current identities [...]. Identities and memories are highly selective, inscriptive rather than descriptive, serving particular interests and ideological positions'.<sup>5</sup> Following Ernest Renan, the well-known French historian Pierre Nora argues that history and social memory are doomed to everlasting confrontation: 'At the heart of history is a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory. History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it'.<sup>6</sup> At the same time social memory is open to instrumentalisation, which encourages either deliberate or unconscious selection of historical facts to achieve a particular goal.<sup>7</sup> For instance, 'the use of history to repress historicity is a central ideological mechanism in the political culture of Northern Ireland'.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, forgetting is as functional as social memory itself which was pointed out by Ernest Renan more than a hundred years ago.<sup>9</sup>

Some authors distinguish between two kinds of social memory: first, an individual recollection based on one's own experience and, second, a memory imposed upon individuals by adults or society at large of what happened beyond individual experience.<sup>10</sup> I will discuss the latter case,

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<sup>5</sup> John R. Gillis, 'Introduction: Memory and Identity, The History of Relationship', in Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), pp. 3–24, at pp. 3–4. Also see: Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge, 1992); Liliane Weissberg, 'Introduction', in Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg (eds.), *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* (Detroit, MI, 1999), pp. 7–26.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', *Representations* 26 (1989), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Schudson, 'Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory', in Daniel L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), pp. 346–364, at pp. 351–354.

<sup>8</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago, 1991), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest Renan, 'What is a Nation', in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990), pp. 8–22, at p. 11. Also see: Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse, NY, 1986), pp. 69–90; David Middleton and Derek Edwards, 'Introduction', in Middleton and Edwards (eds.), *Collective Remembering* (London, 1990), pp. 1–22; James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992), p. 39; Ricœur, *La mémoire*, pp. 574–589; Wieviorka, *La différence*, pp. 165–166.

<sup>10</sup> Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London, 1985), p. 3; Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, 'Generations and Collective Memories', *American Sociological Review* 54:3 (1989), p. 378. This does not mean though that there is any sharp boundary between the recent and not so recent past. See: Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, p. 86.

which causes difficulties with respect to a clear distinction between ‘history’ and ‘social memory’. Indeed, a historical pattern reconstructed by professional scholars is often itself a product of a complex dialogue between internal (academic) and external (social) factors. Therefore, ‘scholars are neither above nor outside societies but integral agents within them, ensuring their perpetuity and at times, attempting to change them’.<sup>11</sup> Thus, historical reconstructions are less innocent and by no means value-free. In this respect, they should be included into a category of ‘social memory’ providing they focus on the socially valuable past beyond an individual experience or living people’s memory in general. In other words, an instrumental character of social memory is determined by the social value of information and images rather than by their sources (i.e. written documents versus oral history).<sup>12</sup>

## **Social Memory in the Soviet Environment**

My own experience is mostly based on the Soviet and post-Soviet environment which had its own character. In many countries, ‘history’ as a professional field is defined with a reference to its particular sources of information. To the extent that historians deal with written documents, their professional activities are restricted by a period of literacy whose upper limit depends on the rules concerning declassification of archives established by the state. For example, prior to the new law of 1979, this limit was as long as 60–100 years in France. That is why almost all history of the 20th century was beyond the scope of interest of French historians.<sup>13</sup> In all such cases the history of the 20th century is poorly represented at school, and students learn almost nothing of the few last decades, as in Japan, to give but one example. This provides social memory with a spare room, and its narratives are not challenged by professional historians.

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<sup>11</sup> George C. Bond and Angela Gilliam, ‘Introduction’, in Bond and Gilliam (eds.), *Social Construction of the Past: Representation as Power* (London, 1994), pp. 1–22, at p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon lets Paul Ricoeur talk of the production of values and ideologisation of memory. See: Ricoeur, *La mémoire*, pp. 102–103.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Nora, ‘General Introduction’, trans. Richard C. Holbrook, in Nora (ed.), *Rethinking France* (Chicago, 2001), p. ix.

There is a quite different situation in Russia inherited from the Soviet Union. In the late 1920s a struggle for ethnic equality put an end to the notion of ‘non-historic peoples’. The term ‘history’ was reinterpreted, and since then it has been used for any evolution regardless of the sources of information.<sup>14</sup> The term ‘prehistory’ lost its legitimacy, and archaeology became a branch of general history. The same was the case with ethnography, which, in the Soviet environment, focused on traditional folk cultures dying out as a result of modernisation.<sup>15</sup> It is in this way that human history lost its technical boundaries based on written documents. Now it began with the first human beings, while its upper limit coincided with the current political moment. The specific nature of information was of subsidiary importance: now all the data from a hand axe and folklore to newspaper articles and oral narratives became legitimate. Thus, the fragile boundary between history and social memory was broken down.

An unlimited dominance of the uniform party-state ideology (‘ideocracy’) was a second distinction of the Soviet system. The official view of history was totalitarian as well: regardless of its regular changes and re-interpretations,<sup>16</sup> a notion of a universal absolute truth was imposed on the general public, and in school a standard lecture course in history was taught which tolerated no major deviations. The key points of this history and their official interpretations were learned by people from early childhood and became the crucial basis of social memory. This was enforced and consolidated by celebrations of anniversaries of important Soviet events such as the Great October Socialist Revolution (7 November), the Red Army’s Birthday (23 February) and Victory Day (9 May).<sup>17</sup> The anniversaries were celebrated with military parades and mass

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<sup>14</sup> Victor A. Shnirelman, ‘The Myths of Descent: The Views of the Remote Past, and School Textbooks in Contemporary Russia’, *Public Archaeology* 3:1 (2003), p. 34.

<sup>15</sup> Tamara Dragadze, ‘Fieldwork at Home: the USSR’, in Anthony Jackson (ed.), *Anthropology at Home* (London, 1987), pp. 154–163.

<sup>16</sup> See: Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1969).

<sup>17</sup> For the role of the state, folklore and religious festivals in social memory see: George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), pp. 73–126; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 41–70. For the symbolic role of the Soviet festivals see: Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society: The Soviet Case* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 143–150, 153–188; Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, pp. 143–148.

public demonstrations (7 November and 9 May), or television showings of films with a clear ideological message (the film ‘Chapaev’ on 23 February), or shows of labor enthusiasm (the ‘Lenin subbotniks’ as a celebration of the anniversary of Lenin’s birthday on 22 April). It is in this way that past events turned into ‘living history’ which was highly meaningful for modern generations. Thus, an official state history invaded a social discourse and became an important part of social memory.

A deliberate politicisation of the past by Soviet ideology is a third characteristic which one has to bear in mind. First of all, taught history continued until the present and had to glorify the contemporary Soviet leaders. Second, while searching for its legitimacy in history, the Soviet state had to emphasise a radical break away from the Russian empire. This was approved by the authorities and met no objections until the mid-1930s. Later on, Stalin increasingly began to appeal to Russian nationalism for support, and the approach to the past became more sophisticated. Thereafter, in order to restore the Russian national self-awareness the Soviet state began to rehabilitate certain famous events of the pre-Soviet past, which were interpreted as progressive mass social movements. A single course of Russian history was divided into two hardly reconciled streams: the great events, which might contribute to the people’s honor, were interpreted as strictly connected with mass creative activity, and the dark pages of Russian history were heavily criticised as a result of the selfish nobility’s actions. Everything useful for the Russian state was glorified, and what harmed its growth and development was stigmatised. In particular, from the late Stalin period, Soviet ideology stirred up a suspicious attitude towards national-liberation movements, which either hampered the extension of Russian territorial borders or threatened the disintegration of the state. Hence, deviant views of history cultivated by some historians of non-Russian origins were persecuted.

As Michel Foucault argues, it is not only knowledge that provides power with a requested basis, but power itself defines what knowledge is and should be. Moreover, ‘power produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’.<sup>18</sup> Actually, this means that power provides a right both to define the contents of knowledge and its boundaries, and to claim as illegitimate those forms of knowledge, which it considers

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<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979), pp. 27–28, 194.

unacceptable. In respect to the historical field, this allows one to correct Marx's well-known phrase that history is written by the victors. An official history is written or controlled by those who are in power. Yet, this history is by no means beyond challenge. Pierre Bourdieu points to 'the struggle between the different specialists in symbolic production (full-time producers), a struggle over the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence, that is, of power to impose (or even to inculcate) the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression (taxonomies) of social reality'.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, discriminated-against groups develop their own views of the past, which are often called alternative histories (Foucault's 'counter-memory'). Usually, they are targets for persecution and, therefore, are carefully hidden from outsiders. As Ana Alonso points out, 'pasts that cannot be incorporated are privatised and particularised, consigned to the margins of the national and denied a fully public voice'.<sup>20</sup> Being related to a certain group, such pasts are kept in secret and wait for an appropriate time. Nowadays, when previously humiliated and discriminated groups have begun to speak loudly, they openly promote their views of the past, which have become known to a wider audience. Sometimes those alternative views supplement the standard historical schemes; yet, in other cases they strive to revise them radically.<sup>21</sup>

In this paper, I will discuss the complex relationships between history and social memory with reference to interpretations and re-interpretations of the Caucasian war and its leader Shamil both in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. The dramatic struggle of the Chechen and Ingush historians for their own view of the past against the dominant Soviet historiography ended in victory at the beginning of the 1990s. Yet, this was not the end of the story. The Chechens failed to celebrate their victory, and their unanimously positive attitude towards Shamil has been replaced by a sharp discussion in terms of *pro et contra* Shamil. The reasons for this will be analyzed. I will argue that a focus on values rather than facts is the

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<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. and introd. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Oxford, 1992), p. 168.

<sup>20</sup> Ana Maria Alonso, 'The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), p. 389.

<sup>21</sup> Carl Degler, 'Why Historians Change Their Minds', *Pacific Historical Review* 45:2 (1976); Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo, 'Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives', in Climo and Cattell (eds.), *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2002), pp. 1–36, at pp. 28–33.

most important character of social memory, which distinguishes it from history.<sup>22</sup>

## Shamil's Image and Its Adventures

In the 1960s the Soviet authorities took a decision to form a 'new historical community—the Soviet people' that was immediately interpreted by non-Russian intellectuals as a threat to their identity. Ever since, 'cultural wars', which were by no means unknown earlier, became more intense. They manifested the struggle for the past as an important symbolic resource used by particular ethnic groups for the legitimisation of their political, economic, territorial and cultural claims.

It is well established that contemporary states appropriate and integrate the pasts of their ethnic minorities who, in reverse, aspire to develop alternative views of history in order to secure their own distinction and identity.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes people manage to ignore controversies and to keep loyalty to both views of history despite their differences. For example, on the one hand, the inhabitants of the Greek settlement of Assiros, due to school training, shared an official view of history claiming a classical Greek descent, but on the other hand, their families maintained a memory of their Slavic descent that was denied by the national myth.<sup>24</sup> A sociological survey among immigrants' children in the United Kingdom revealed that they made a distinction between a 'national history' as a history of the state and 'our own past' as a notion of their roots.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> 'The struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present'. David Thelen, 'Memory and American History', *The Journal of American History* 75:4 (1989), p. 1127.

<sup>23</sup> Ana Maria Alonso, 'The Effect of Truth: Representations of the Past and the Imagining of Community', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1:1 (1988); Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 14; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 134; Wiewiorka, *La différence*, pp. 163–164.

<sup>24</sup> Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870–1990* (Chicago, 1997), pp. 231–232.

<sup>25</sup> Kathy Emmott, 'A Child's Perspective on the Past: Influences of Home, Media and School', in Robert Layton (ed.), *Who Needs the Past? Indigenous Values and Archaeology* (London, 1989), pp. 21–44, p. 27. For similar cases in the US, see: Thelen, 'Memory and

Yet, there are cases when an ethnic view of history being used intensively for a struggle against discrimination clashes with a national history. During the last Soviet decades, in the Northern Caucasus the local intellectuals were highly involved in the politics of the past to overcome negative stereotypes and prejudices imposed upon the general public by the authorities. In this paper I will focus on the ‘punished peoples’<sup>26</sup> struggle against the ugly consequences of their deportation. The Chechens and Ingush were among those people. They were deported to Kirgizia and Kazakhstan on 23 February 1944, and spent about fifteen years in exile. They were rehabilitated only in late 1956 and early 1957, after which their autonomy was once again re-established, and most of them came back to their homeland in the very late 1950s. However, the burden of deportation accompanied them for the next thirty years. Time and again they were reminded of their ‘guilt’ against the Soviet state; their recent and not so recent past was distorted; they were forced to disown their famous heroes whom they wanted to be proud of; public discussion of the deportation was blocked; and the authorities made great efforts to play down the Caucasian war of the early 19th century.

At the same time, the Caucasian war and the deportation served as crucial points in Chechen and Ingush social memory, the markers of their highest glory and biggest tragedy respectively. The heroic character of imam Shamil proved to be the most important symbol of the Caucasian war and his image experienced radical twists and turns in Soviet days.<sup>27</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, as a symbol of a stubborn struggle against the tsarist regime, Shamil took an honorable place among the great forerunners of the October revolution. According to A. Avtorkhanov,<sup>28</sup> at the time of the

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American History’, p. 1124.

<sup>26</sup> The term was coined by Aleksandr Nekrich. See: Aleksandr Nekrich, *Nakazannye narody* (New York, 1978).

<sup>27</sup> Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, pp. 133–147; Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London, 1970); Aleksandr Nekrich, *Otreshis’ ot strakha: vospominaniia istorika* (London, 1979), pp. 43, 83–84; Bülent Gökay, ‘The Longstanding Russian and Soviet Debate over Sheikh Shamil: Anti-Imperialist Hero or Counter-Revolutionary Cleric?’, in Ben Fowkes (ed.), *Russia and Chechnia: The Permanent Crisis: Essays on Russo-Chechen Relations* (New York, 1998); V.V. Degoev, *Bol’shaia igra na Kavkaze: istoriia i sovremennost’* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 246–250, 290–292.

<sup>28</sup> A.G. Avtorkhanov, *Ubiistvo chechenskogo naroda: Narodoubiistvo v SSSR* (Moscow, 1991), p. 18.



Mountaineers' Republic (1921–1924) the local authorities demanded the portraits of Shamil and his naibs should be hanged in all state departments and schools. Later on, in the 1930s the cult of Shamil was formed in the Northern Caucasus as of a great leader of the national-liberation movement,<sup>29</sup> and in 1936 the Moscow State Historical Museum arranged investigations of the Shamil's residence near Vedeno village in Chechnya.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, after the Chechens who played an outstanding role in his actions were deported, Shamil's image first became quite ambivalent and, then, entirely inappropriate for the Soviet authorities, especially because the Chechen rebels used it effectively in the early 1940s. That is why, in the very early 1950s a significant symbol of the persecuted people was persecuted itself: Shamil was re-interpreted as a traitor and Anglo-Turkish spy, and his name was banned. After Stalin's death and with the coming of the thaw, the Caucasian war was for some time rehabilitated as a legitimate national-liberation movement. Yet, Shamil's image retained some ambivalence: on the one hand, Soviet scholars praised him as a leader of the mass anti-tsarist movement, but on the other hand, emphasised his relatedness to the 'reactionary Muridism'.<sup>31</sup>

This did not last for long though. The doctrine of the 'new historical community—the Soviet people' did not need heroes who stood up against the Russian empire under the banner of *ghazavat*. Instead, it demanded a search for a durable basis of an unclouded 'peoples' friendship' in the past. However, the Chechens and Ingush were by no means willing to betray their own heroes. The Ingush businessman M. Gutsiriev, who grew up in Grozny, recollected that at the beginning of the 1970s local children used to sing in the pioneer camp of the legendary Shamil and his struggle against the tsarist troops and were re-interpreting this as a struggle against the Russians.<sup>32</sup> Somewhat earlier, Johar Dudaev was almost expelled from high school for an extended paper in which he represented Shamil as a

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<sup>29</sup> Degoev, *Bol'shaia igra na Kavkaze*, pp. 244–246. Also see: Gökay, 'The Longstanding Russian', pp. 35, 38.

<sup>30</sup> A.B. Zaks, 'V gostiakh u imama', *Rodina* 3–4 (1994), pp. 14–16.

<sup>31</sup> N.A. Smirnov et al. (eds.), *Ocherki istorii Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR: s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Grozny, 1967), T. 1, pp. 96–114. For that see: Gökay, 'The Longstanding Russian', pp. 44–46.

<sup>32</sup> V. Poegli, 'Chechenskii kalendar' na 1996 god', *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 17 October 1996, p. 3.

leader of the national-liberation movement.<sup>33</sup> Doubtfully, he was the only one who thought like that. Indeed, the highlanders demonstrated a persisting interest in both Shamil and the Caucasus war throughout the late Soviet decades.<sup>34</sup> This was stimulated in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR by a high natural growth among indigenous inhabitants and an increasing departure of the Russians, i.e. demographic changes in favor of the Chechens and Ingush in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>35</sup> Side by side with a rise in educational standards, this demographic factor encouraged the Chechens and Ingush to aspire to more active participation in the life of their republic and to demand for respect towards their past and its heroes. Already in the mid-1960s, some intellectuals manifested their dissatisfaction with the ‘colonial status’ of their republic, the ‘Russian dominance’ and the ‘exploitation’ by the Center.<sup>36</sup> In this context, Shamil’s image could not but serve as great inspiration.

### **‘Peoples’ Friendship’ and ‘Voluntary Joining’**

In the 1970s, to reduce the growing ethnic tensions and to indoctrinate natives with loyalty towards the Soviet state, the Chechen-Ingush authorities began to promote intensively a friendship between ethnic groups. In this context, the issue of a ‘progressive joining’ of Chechnya with Russia became crucial. For the first time, the Chechen-Ingush authorities demonstrated their interest in this topic at the scientific-theoretical conference held in Grozny in July 1973 in order to discuss ‘A sketch of the history of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR’ published in 1967. The main discussant was Kh.Kh. Bokov, then a secretary of ideology of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom of the CPSU.<sup>37</sup> He pointed out that the authors had to show more clearly the danger of the Turkish and Iranian

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<sup>33</sup> U. Umalatov, *Chechnia glazami chechentsa* (Moscow, 2001), p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Degoev, *Bol'shaia igra na Kavkaze*, p. 279 n. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Galina U. Soldatova, ‘The Former Checheno-Ingushetia: Interethnic Relations and Ethnic Conflicts’, in Marjory Balzer (ed.), *Culture Incarnate: Native Anthropology from Russia* (Armonk, NY, 1995), pp. 83–101, at pp. 96–97.

<sup>36</sup> V.A. Tishkov, *Obschestvo v voozuzhennom konflikte: Etnografiia chechenskoi voyny* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 118–119.

<sup>37</sup> Bokov occupied this position in 1965–1973 after which he was a head of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

expansion for certain Caucasian peoples. In his view, joining with Russia was for them a ‘rescue from physical extermination’. Therefore, they ‘were searching for Russian protection, and then put forward an issue of joining with her’. He proposed to treat the Caucasian war as a result of provocative actions by the Turkish and Iranian agents as well as the intrigues of England and France. Thus, Russian military activity was represented as a forced response to the hostile challenge. In fact, what was earlier called a national-liberation movement by the Soviet historians, was re-interpreted by Bokov as a plot woven by foreign agents. He found nothing national in such movements.<sup>38</sup> In a year, all those ideas were taken up by Bokov’s successor, another Party functionary M.O. Buzurtanov,<sup>39</sup> and approved by V.P. Sherstobitov,<sup>40</sup> a deputy director of the Institute of History of the USSR of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. A.M. Nekrich reasonably criticised this trend as an attempt to revive a chauvinist approach to the Caucasian war developed by certain Soviet historians, including local ones, in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, the local authorities began to manipulate historical documents in order to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Chechen-Ingush joining with Russia even more, as the neighboring North Ossetia celebrated a similar date in 1974, and Kabarda, Adygeia and Cherkessia even managed to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the joining with Russia in 1957. The Chechen-Ingush Obkom of the CPSU did not want to lose its chance not only to speak loudly of itself and its republic but also to be awarded and to enjoy the generous financial support usually accompanying these sorts of celebrations.<sup>42</sup> The coming jubilee was first mentioned at the All-Union Conference on historiography of the North Caucasian and Don peoples held in Grozny on 21–22 September 1978. The first secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom of the CPSU A.V.

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Sovetskii istorik—boets ideologicheskogo fronta’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 4 August 1973, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Povyshat’ deistvennost’ ideologicheskoi raboty’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 30 June 1974, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> V.P. Sherstobitov, ‘Problemy internatsionalizma v sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauke’, *Istoriia SSSR* 6 (1974), pp. 13–14.

<sup>41</sup> Nekrich, *Nakazannye narody*, p. 135. Also see: A. Aidamirov, ‘Liudi, sud’by, navy’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 10 December 1989, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> See: A.P. Novosel’tsev, ‘Kommentarii’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 19 October 1989, p. 2.

Vlasov<sup>43</sup> made an introductory speech. He told the scholars to search more carefully for the roots of the ‘close relationships between the Russian people and Caucasian peoples’, of their ‘indestructible friendship’ and, in particular, of a ‘progressive joining’ of the local North Caucasian peoples with Russia. He complained that there was still no scholarly consensus about the precise date of the Chechen-Ingush joining with Russia.<sup>44</sup>

The director of the Institute of History of the USSR of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, academician A.L. Narochnitskii, was the next orator. He pointed out the great political significance of the jubilees of ‘voluntary joining’ of various republics with Russia and claimed that ‘nowadays the issue of the coming jubilee of the 200th anniversary of the Chechen-Ingush joining with Russia was on the agenda’. He had no doubts that a celebration of such a jubilee ‘would be of great social importance’.<sup>45</sup> Yet, neither Vlasov, nor Narochnitskii took responsibility for saying precisely when the Chechens and Ingush joined Russia. The date was suggested by the Grozny historians V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov a few days before the conference. They maintained that the event had taken place in January 1781.<sup>46</sup> Certain historians testified that Vinogradov had been the main initiator of the campaign for a celebration of the 200th anniversary of ‘voluntary joining’.<sup>47</sup>

Vinogradov’s concept was approved and supported by Vlasov. Not only did Vlasov reproduce those ideas in his own speech at the Third Plenum of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom on 14 July 1979, to confirm a long collaboration of the Chechens and Ingush with the Russians, but he also ordered to popularise them extensively through the mass media and to

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<sup>43</sup> Vlasov occupied this position in 1975–1984.

<sup>44</sup> A.V. Vlasov, ‘Istoricheskie issledovaniia—na uroven’ sovremennykh trebovaniĭ’, in A.I. Tatsitov (ed.), *Istoki velikoi družby* (Grozny, 1978), pp. 5–15, at pp. 7–10.

<sup>45</sup> A.L. Narochnitskii, ‘Osnovnye problemy obobshchaiushchego truda po istorii narodov Severnogo Kavkaza s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei’, in Tatsitov (ed.), *Istoki velikoi družby*, pp. 16–39, at pp. 23–24.

<sup>46</sup> V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov, ‘Vekhi edinstva’, *Grozenskii rabochii*, 16 September 1978, p. 3. In 2001 the Chechen historian Ia.Z. Akhmadov treated this as a distortion of the academic knowledge because, in his view, a true integration of the highlanders to Russia became possible only after it incorporated East Georgia in 1799–1801. See: Ia.Z. Akhmadov, *Istoriia Chechni s drevneishikh vremen do kontsa 18 veka: posobie dlia izuchaiushchikh istoriiu rodnogo kraia* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 332–334.

<sup>47</sup> Novosel’ tsev, ‘Kommentarii’; E.N. Kusheva, ‘Vospominaniia’, *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 4 (1993), p. 149.

develop them at the academic conference ‘The progressive role of Russia in the historical destiny of the North Caucasian peoples’ held in Grozny on 2–3 October 1979.<sup>48</sup> Vlasov’s and Buzurtanov’s talks, as well as the participation of many republican officials demonstrated that the importance of the conference was far beyond a routine academic discussion. Indeed, with a reference to the Chechen-Ingush ASSR Vlasov argued that the ‘new historical entity—the Soviet people’ had deep historical roots; he talked of the centuries-old friendship between the North Caucasian peoples and the Russian people who provided them with invaluable support to repel foreign aggression. He praised Vinogradov for documentary confirmation of the idea of the Chechen-Ingush ‘voluntary joining’ with Russia, which let the Chechen-Ingush Obkom apply for a celebration of the 200th jubilee of the event. Interestingly, this brief speech mentioned the terms ‘friendship’ and ‘peoples’ friendship’ ten times, the ‘Russian people’ eight times, and the ‘Chechens-Ingush’ and ‘Motherland’ four times each. This certainly informs us of the ideological priorities of the Chechen-Ingush Communist leader.<sup>49</sup>

M.O. Buzurtanov delivered the key paper illuminating the main periods of the ‘voluntary joining’. The paper was written by a team of scholars including a deputy head of the Soviet of Ministers of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR N.K. Baibulatov<sup>50</sup> as well as leading North Caucasian historians like M.M. Bliev, V.B. Vinogradov and V.G. Gadzhiev.<sup>51</sup> This speech was first published in the ‘Groznskii rabochii’ daily,<sup>52</sup> but, later on, was re-written and re-published many times<sup>53</sup> and

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<sup>48</sup> ‘Vyshe uroven’ ideologicheskoi raboty’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 17 July 1979, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> A.V. Vlasov, ‘Net druzhby prochnee’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 4 October 1979, p. 2. Vlasov’s speech was published in full somewhat later. See: A.V. Vlasov, ‘V bratskoi sem’e’, in A.L. Narochnitskii (ed.), *Velikii Oktiabr’ i peredovaia Rossiia v istoricheskikh sud’bakh narodov Severnogo Kavkaza (XVI – 70-e gody XX v.)* (Grozny, 1982), pp. 11–12.

<sup>50</sup> Formerly he was the director of the Chechen-Ingush Research Institute of History, Language and Literature.

<sup>51</sup> V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov, *Vkhozhdenie Checheno-Ingushetii v sostav Rossii* (Grozny, 1979), pp. 13–14.

<sup>52</sup> M.O. Buzurtanov, ‘Osnovnye etapy i zakonomernosti vkhozhdeniia Checheno-Ingushetii v sostav Rossii’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 4 October 1979, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> N.K. Baibulatov et. al, ‘Vkhozhdenie Checheno-Ingushetii v sostav Rossii’, *Istoriia SSSR* 5 (1980), pp. 48–63; M.O. Buzurtanov et. al, ‘O dobrovol’nom vkhozhdanii Checheno-Ingushetii v sostav Rossii’, in Narochnitskii (ed.), *Velikii Oktiabr’*, pp. 47–61.

became the basis for a few book versions.<sup>54</sup> Academician A.L. Narochnitskii approved the concept of a ‘voluntary joining’ on behalf of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.<sup>55</sup> Then, a scholarly commission was established in Moscow based on the Institute of History of the USSR, which included the North Caucasian authors of the concept together with the Moscow historians. The commission approved the concept as well.<sup>56</sup> This was considered a sufficient scholarly foundation for a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Chechen-Ingush joining with Russia. Yet, bureaucratic reasons made the Chechen-Ingush authorities combine this jubilee with the 60th anniversary of the Republic, and both events were celebrated in 1982.<sup>57</sup> On this occasion the Republic was awarded with a prestigious Order of the Labor Red Banner. Its leaders were also given awards: in particular, Vlasov received the Lenin Order, and Vinogradov was awarded the title of Honored Scholar of the RSFSR in addition to the title of Honored Scholar of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR received in 1978.<sup>58</sup>

## Gaps in Soviet Memory

It is interesting that the lively discussion of the Chechen and Ingush recent past encouraged by the celebration in question ignored the Caucasian war almost completely. The authors of the concept went so far as to write of both the ‘invention of the term “Caucasian war”’,<sup>59</sup> and the ‘myth of the “Caucasian war”’, as the term had been coined by ‘reactionary’ tsarist historians and military generals.<sup>60</sup> Sometimes Vinogradov even used the

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<sup>54</sup> Vinogradov and Umarov, *Vkhozhdenie Checheno-Ingushetii*; M.O. Buzurtanov, V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov, *Naveki vmeste* (Grozny, 1980); M.O. Buzurtanov, V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov, ‘Na vechnye vremena’, in V.B. Vinogradov (ed.), *Vekhi edinstva* (Grozny, 1982), pp. 7–64.

<sup>55</sup> A.L. Narochnitskii, ‘V edinuiu sem’iu soediniavshis’...’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 4 October 1979, pp. 2–3.

<sup>56</sup> Buzurtanov, Vinogradov and Umarov, ‘Na vechnye vremena’, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> N.T. Benkevich, E.A. Kupriianova (eds.), *V bratskoi sem’ie sovetskikh narodov* (Grozny, 1982).

<sup>58</sup> I.Iu. Aliroev, M.P. Pavlov, *Checheno-Ingushskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni L.N. Tolstogo* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1985), p. 67; S.L. Dudarev, E.I. Narozhnyi and Iu.V. Priimak, *Vitalii Borisovich Vinogradov: bio-bibliograficheskie svedeniia* (Armavir, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Buzurtanov, Vinogradov and Umarov, ‘Na vechnye vremena’, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> V.B. Vinogradov (ed.), *Istoriia dobrovol’nogo vkhozhdeniia chechentsev i ingushei v*

expression ‘so-called “Caucasian war”’.<sup>61</sup> He argued that the idea of the forced incorporation of the Chechens and Ingush into Russia was invented by the bourgeois nationalists (he included A. Avtorkhanov into that category!—V.Sh.) ‘to stir up hatred towards the Russian people’.<sup>62</sup> The term ‘Caucasian war’ was completely omitted in the textbook edited by Vinogradov in 1988.<sup>63</sup> All this reflected a trend in the Soviet scholarship of the late 1960s to early 1980s to avoid such an unsafe topic as the Caucasian war. Indeed, this might make a historian a target for attacks both by Party officials and administrative penalties.<sup>64</sup>

Should one be surprised that those publications completely ignored the issue of deportation? As the Ingush writer testifies, in the 1970s and 1980s there was an unwritten prohibition on writing about the deportation, and publication of the Chechen and Ingush novels that focused on this topic were prevented.<sup>65</sup> Admittedly, in his monograph of the period of 1941–1945 the Chechen historian M.A. Abazatov not only discussed the Chechen and Ingush heroism on the battlefield but also mentioned a struggle against ‘bandits’ in the Chechen-Ingush’ mountains in 1942. Yet, in a chapter of the restoration from the ruins in 1944–1945 a reader was unable to realise that there were already neither Chechens nor Ingush left in the region.<sup>66</sup> The same was characteristic of the Grozny historian N. P. Gritsenko’s study of the history of the Vainakh-Russian relationships,<sup>67</sup> and, while introducing teenagers to Chechen and Ingush past heroic feats, the Ingush writer A.P. Mal’sagov paid much attention to heroes of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars and avoided discussing deportation at all.<sup>68</sup> Yet, it was not even easy to discuss the Chechen and Ingush heroic feats

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*sostav Rossii i ego progressivnye posledstviia (materialy k izucheniiu na urokakh istorii v srednikh shkolakh Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR)* (Grozny, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, ‘Rossiia i Severnyi Kavkaz (obzor literatury za 1976–1985 gg.: itogi i perspektivy izucheniia)’, *Istoriia SSSR* 3 (1987), p. 95.

<sup>62</sup> Vinogradov (ed.), *Istoriia dobrovol’nogo vkhozheniia*, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> A.B. Zaks, ‘Kak ia zashchishchala dissertatsiiu i pytalas’ ee opublikovat’’, *Voprosy istorii* 6 (1989), p. 168; A.M. Pikman, ‘Polemiki prosto ne bylo’, *Voprosy istorii* 2 (1990), pp. 187–189. For that see: Degoev, *Bol’shaia igra na Kavkaze*, pp. 252–255, 278, 293–294.

<sup>65</sup> S.I. Chakhkiev, *Idris Ziazikov: veroi i pravdoi* (Grozny, 1991), pp. 56–57.

<sup>66</sup> M.A. Abazatov, *Checheno-Ingushskaia ASSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soiuz*a (Grozny, 1973).

<sup>67</sup> N.P. Gritsenko, *Istoki druzhby* (Grozny, 1975), pp. 175–176.

<sup>68</sup> A.P. Mal’sagov, *Krai veinakhov—Checheno-Ingushetiia* (Moscow, 1969).

during the Great Patriotic War. When a well-known Chechen writer Kh.D. Oshaev found numerous Chechen and Ingush names among the famous defenders of the Brest fortress and tried to publish a book about it, publication was deliberately delayed, and, finally, the manuscript was stolen from the editor's table.<sup>69</sup> The aged Oshaev was expelled from the Party, had to write a letter of repentance, and his works were no longer published.<sup>70</sup> The well-known Moscow historian Iu.A. Poliakov recollected that even in the late 1980s when the volume 'History of the North Caucasian peoples' was in preparation, the authors were put under pressure by those who thought that it was of no use to 'stir up the past' and to write of the deportation.<sup>71</sup>

Vinogradov did not mention the deportation before 1989.<sup>72</sup> Before that, he avoided getting deeper into the Ingush issue<sup>73</sup> and, instead, actively struggled against both the 'claims for "one's own lands" with a reference to the past' and discussions of the territories as though they were annexed by Ingush neighbors (the Ossetians were meant).<sup>74</sup> At that time he accused the 'highlanders' expansion' of causing a deterioration of the Russian-Vainakh relationship (his code words for the Caucasian war). Being aware of the long struggle of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom against Islam, he enriched his reasoning with a reference to Islamic clerics' 'anti-Russian' actions and the 'wild outburst of the Murids' terror' on the eve of the Shamil's revolt. In order to erase the names of the national-liberation movement's leaders from the list of historical heroes he represented Sheikh Mansur as an 'agent of the Ottoman policy in the Northern Caucasus' and imam Shamil as a reactionary builder of a 'theocratic despotism'. At the same time he called for rejection of the terms 'colonialism' and 'colonial policy' in respect to tsarist

<sup>69</sup> A. Shaikhiev, 'Etot gor'kii ognennyi oreshkek', *Ichkeriia*, 19 January 1993, pp. 1–2. The book 'Brest—A Fire Nut' came out in 1991 when its author had been dead for years. <<http://www.chechnyafree.ru/index.php?section=fculteng&rowid=149&query=Oshaev>>.

<sup>70</sup> M.M. Saidullaev, *Chechenskomu rodu net perevodu* (Moscow, 2002), p. 44.

<sup>71</sup> G. Melikiants, 'Ne bylo gotovykh obraztsov v razvitii natsional'nykh otnoshenii', *Izvestiia*, 21 March 1988, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, *Narodnoi pamiati sledy* (Grozny, 1989), pp. 10–11.

<sup>73</sup> The Ingush issue was that after deportation of the Ingush in 1944 the Prigorodny district that made up a core of their historical territory was granted to North-Ossetian ASSR. After they returned, the Ingush persistently, yet unsuccessfully, demanded its reversion to them.

<sup>74</sup> V.B. Vinogradov and Kh.M. Mamaev, 'Kriterii istiny', *Groznenskii rabochii*, 26 May 1985, p. 3.



administrators' actions in the Northern Caucasus and invented some 'military cooperation' of the North Caucasians and Russians 'against imam Shamil's reactionary policy'. To be sure, he warned against one-sided interpretations and emphasised the just nature of the mountaineers' struggle against tsarist oppression.<sup>75</sup> Yet, this could not diminish an obvious relatedness of his concept with the worst pieces of the pre-revolutionary chauvinist historiography as well as ideological approaches of the late Stalin era. And the problem was not only with some doubtful ideas embedded into Vinogradov's concept but mostly with the chauvinist policy of local authorities who discriminated against the Chechens and Ingush as well as their Muslim religion<sup>76</sup> that was approved by this concept.

## Memory's Resistance

Many local intellectuals were well aware of what was discussed above. In particular, the Ingush could hardly agree with Vinogradov that the contemporary political-administrative borders served to 'provide North Caucasian peoples with the best conditions for progressive

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<sup>75</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, 'Vystuplenie na IX plenum Checheno-Ingushskogo Obkoma KPSS', *Groznenskii rabochii*, 13 October 1985, p. 3; Vinogradov, 'Rossiia i Severnyi Kavkaz', pp. 95–98; V.B. Vinogradov (ed.), *Istoriia dobrovol'nogo vkhozhdeniia*, pp. 34–37, 41–47; V.B. Vinogradov and S.Ts. Umarov, *Vmeste k velikoi tseli: O propagande nekotorykh voprosov istorii Checheno-Ingushetii v sviazi s posledstviiami dobrovol'nogo vkhozhdeniia v sostav Rossii* (Grozny, 1983). Meanwhile, contemporary scholars strongly demonstrate a colonial nature both of the tsarist policy and its methods in the Northern Caucasus in the 18th – 19th centuries. See: M. Khodarkovskii, 'V korolevstve krivykh zerkal: Osnovy rossiiskoi politiki na Severnom Kavkaze do zavoevatel'nykh voyn XIX veka', in D.E. Furman (ed.), *Chechnia i Rossiia: obshchestva i gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 19–39; Sh. Gapurov, 'Metody kolonial'noi politiki tsarizma v Chechne v pervoi polovine XIX v', in Furman (ed.), *Chechnia i Rossiia*, pp. 113–127.

<sup>76</sup> Fanny E. Bryan, 'Anti-Religious Activity in the Chechen-Ingush Republic of the USSR and the Survival of Islam', *Central Asian Survey* 3:2 (1984), pp. 99–116; Fanny E. Bryan, 'Internationalism, Nationalism and Islam', in Marie Bennigsen Broxup (ed.), *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World* (London, 1992), pp. 195–218, at pp. 211–212; Kalpana Sahni, *Crucifying the Orient: Russian Orientalism and the Colonization of Caucasus and Central Asia* (Bangkok, 1997), p. 217; Gökay, 'The Longstanding Russian', pp. 45–46.

development'.<sup>77</sup> Yet, from 1980 to 1988 Vinogradov's concept was protected by the Chechen-Ingush Obkom; it flooded the mass-media and propagandist literature; it was also widely disseminated by the All-Union 'Znanie' Society's local department headed by Vinogradov.<sup>78</sup> For example, of 37 recommended publications included in the jubilee volume's bibliography, 15 pieces were completed by Vinogradov himself or in collaboration with other authors, especially Umarov.<sup>79</sup> The concept was taught in secondary and high schools as well as in the Chechen-Ingush University and local colleges.<sup>80</sup> At that time Vinogradov became the main advisor of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom in ideology and humanities. This position made him an informal censor of the scholarly and publishing activity in the Republic and let him increasingly affect the composition of research and teaching staff.<sup>81</sup> According to a former employee of the 'Groznskii rabochii' daily, Vinogradov himself asked scholars to write articles, edited them and conveyed them to the editorial board.<sup>82</sup> By contrast, his opponents' access to the media was blocked; the most active of them were accused of nationalism, removed from academic studies, or lost their job completely. Such Chechen and Ingush historians as M.N. Muzaev, A.Z. Vatsuev, Ia.Z. Akhmadov, Kh. Akiev, Ia.S. Vagapov, and Kh.S. Akhmadov were persecuted.<sup>83</sup> One of these Chechen scholars

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<sup>77</sup> Vinogradov and Mamaev, 'Kriterii istiny'.

<sup>78</sup> Ia.Z. Akhmadov, 'Rossiiskoe povstancheskoe dvizhenie kontsa XVII – nachala XVIII vv. i narody Dagestana', in V.G. Gadzhiev (ed.), *Dagestan v sostave Rossii: istoricheskie korni družby narodov Rossii i Dagestana* (Makhachkala, 1990), pp. 79–83, at pp. 80–81.

<sup>79</sup> See: Vinogradov (ed.), *Vekhi edinstva*.

<sup>80</sup> Vinogradov (ed.), *Istoriia dobrovol'nogo vkhozhdeniia*.

<sup>81</sup> A. Andrusenko, 'Kak istoriia pisalas'...', *Groznskii rabochii*, 19 October 1989, p. 2; A.U. Kostoev (ed.), *Vtoroi s"ezd ingushskogo naroda* (Grozny, 1990), pp. 50, 130–131; T. Muzaev and Z. Todua, *Novaia Checheno-Ingushetiia* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 33–34; T. Muzaev, *Chechenskaia Respublika: organy vlasti i politicheskie sily* (Moscow, 1995), p. 156; F.P. Bokov, 'O metodologicheskikh osnovakh "kontseptsii dobrovol'nogo vkhozhdeniia" narodov Severo-vostochnogo Kavkaza v sostav Rossii', in V.G. Gadzhiev (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie gortsev Dagestana i Chechni v 20–50-kh godakh XIX veka* (Makhachkala, 1994), pp. 54–59, at p. 56; Ia.Z. Akhmadov, 'Problema prisoedineniia narodov Checheno-Ingushetii k Rossii', in I.D. Koval'chenko (ed.), *Istoriia i istoriki* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 56–59, at p. 57; Dzh.Dzh. Gakaev, *Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Chechni (XX vek)* (Moscow, 1997), p. 133.

<sup>82</sup> Saidullaev, *Chechenskomu rodu net perevodu*, p. 122.

<sup>83</sup> Muzaev, *Chechenskaia respublika*, p. 156; Saidullaev, *Chechenskomu rodu net perevodu*, pp. 120–121; S. Lorsanukaev, *Dozhdi meniaut tsvet: O burnykh dniakh Chechni, o sebe, o*

argues that a true ethnocide was arranged in the Republic under the banner of ‘peoples’ friendship’.<sup>84</sup> From the 1960s to 1980s, public protest expressed itself mostly in numerous attempts to blow up or to throw red paint on a monument of the tsarist general Ermolov erected in the central square of Grozny in 1949 on Beria’s order.<sup>85</sup> There were iron plates at the foot of the monument with Ermolov’s statement about the Chechens inscribed there: ‘There are no other people under the sun more perfidious and knave’.<sup>86</sup> Is it surprising that a forced obligation to tolerate for forty years this dubious symbol of tsarist imperialism supported by the Soviet authorities, stirred up anger and resentment among the Chechens?

Ideological pressure and persecutions not only roused the indignation of Chechen and Ingush intellectuals, but made them develop alternative views of the past.<sup>87</sup> In particular, their ideas were embedded into school textbooks in history published in the Chechen and Ingush languages. Yet, this initiative was met with irritation by the leaders of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom who treated it as ‘distortions of the close relationships between the fraternal peoples’ historical destinies’.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, resistance to the concept of ‘voluntary joining’ was so strong that even in 1988 Vinogradov complained that it was not easy to indoctrinate people with it. He was frustrated that the publications of ‘voluntary joining’ became a rarity in the late 1980s and recognised that a ‘history of voluntary joining’ was most intensively taught only in 1978–1982, i.e. on the eve of the jubilee.<sup>89</sup> It is difficult to imagine a more telling recognition of the instrumental nature of such ‘teaching’.

An open discussion of the concept of the ‘voluntary joining’ and ‘highlanders’ expansion’ became a critical test for *glasnost*’ and *perestroika*. Negative attitudes towards the idea of ‘highlanders’

*liudiakh moego pokoleniia* (Moscow, 2003), p. 181.

<sup>84</sup> Akhmadov, ‘Problema prisoedineniia narodov’, p. 57.

<sup>85</sup> M.Iu. Dzhurgaev and O.M. Dzhurgaev, *Krugi ada: o nasil'stvennom vyselenii chechentsv i ingushei v Kazahskuiu SSR i o repressiakh 1930–1950-kh gg. v SSSR* (Grozny, 1989), p. 55; Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, 1998), p. 307.

<sup>86</sup> M.Iu. Dzhurgaev and O.M. Dzhurgaev, *Krugi ada*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>87</sup> Dzh. Gakaev called this ‘ethnoegocentrism’. See: Dzh.Dzh. Gakaev, ‘Put’ k chechenskoi revoliutsii’, in Furman (ed.), *Chechnia i Rossiia*, pp. 150–176, at p. 150.

<sup>88</sup> V.K. Foteev, ‘Vospityvat’ patriotov, internatsionalistov’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 13 October 1985, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Vinogradov (ed.), *Istoriia dobrovol'nogo vkhozheniia*, pp. 5, 9.

expansion' developed by the Ossetian historian M.M. Bliev,<sup>90</sup> had already been expressed in 1983–1984. Critics pointed out that it undermined peoples' friendship<sup>91</sup> while presenting expansionism as an innate character of the highlanders.<sup>92</sup> Such irritated voices became increasingly loud both in Dagestan<sup>93</sup> and North Ossetia<sup>94</sup> in the late 1980s.<sup>95</sup>

A conference 'Dagestan within Russia: historical roots of the friendship between the peoples of Russia and Dagestan' held in Makhachkala on 26–27 November 1987, became an important turning point. At the conference the concepts of the 'voluntary joining' and 'highlanders' expansion' were viewed as the Party functionaries' attempt to revive chauvinist attitudes of the late 1940s to early 1950s. The authors of the concept were accused of a non-objective, unscientific and entirely instrumental approach, a falsification of the highlanders' national-liberation movement and a lack of academic ethics.<sup>96</sup> The Chechen historian Ia.Z. Akhmadov was alarmed with the large scope of the campaign aimed at the indoctrination of the general public with the concept of the 'voluntary joining'.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, even in 1988–1990 the Chechen-Ingush Ministry of Education recommended the study of this

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<sup>90</sup> M.M. Bliev, 'Kavkazskaia voina: sotsial'nye istoki, sushchnost', *Istoriia SSSR* 2 (1983), pp. 54–75.

<sup>91</sup> A.M. Khalilov, 'Razvitie natsional'nogo i internatsional'nogo soznaniia sovetskikh narodov v period razvitogo sotsializma', *Nauchnyi kommunizm* 2 (1984), pp. 67–68.

<sup>92</sup> M.A. Abdullaev, 'Otrazhenie antifeodal'noi bor'by krest'ianskikh mass Dagestana v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi mysli (XV–XIX vv.)', in V.G. Gadzhiev (ed.), *Klassovaia bor'ba v dorevoliutsionnom Dagestane* (Makhachkala, 1983), pp. 114–147, at pp. 117–118.

<sup>93</sup> G.G. Gamzatov, *Preodolenie, stanovlenie, obnovlenie: na putiakh formirovaniia dagestanskoi sovietskoi literatury* (Makhachkala, 1986), pp. 37–38 n. 49; A.M. Khalilov, 'Shamil' v istorii i pamiatii naroda', *Sovetskii Dagestan* 5 (1988), pp. 36–37.

<sup>94</sup> B.Kh. Ortabaev and F.V. Totoev, 'Eshcho raz o Kavkazskoi voine: o ee sotsial'nykh istokakh i sushchnosti', *Istoriia SSSR* 4 (1988), pp. 78–96.

<sup>95</sup> Bryan, 'Internationalism, Nationalism and Islam', p. 208; Gökay, 'The Longstanding Russian', p. 51.

<sup>96</sup> R.M. Magomedov, 'Prisoedinenie Dagestana k Rossii—zakonomernyi itog istoricheskogo protsesssa', in Gadzhiev (ed.), *Dagestan v sostave Rossii*, pp. 4–14; Kh.M. Ibragimbeili, 'Nekotorye voprosy istorii narodno-osvoboditel'noi bor'by gortsev Severo-vostochnogo Kavkaza protiv tsarizma (20–50-e gody XIX v.)', in Gadzhiev (ed.), *Dagestan v sostave Rossii*. Also see: Kh.M. Ibragimbeili, 'Narodno-osvoboditel'naia bor'ba gortsev Severnogo Kavkaza pod rukovodstvom Shamilia protiv tsarizma i mestnykh feodalov', *Voprosy istorii* 6 (1990), pp. 151–160.

<sup>97</sup> Akhmadov, 'Rossiiskoe povstancheskoe dvizhenie', pp. 80–81.

concept in schools where Muridism was represented as little more than a ‘reactionary ideology’.<sup>98</sup>

A large conference focused on the highlanders’ national-liberation movement of the early 19th century held once again in Makhachkala on 20–22 June 1989, became the next step.<sup>99</sup> Many of its participants openly expressed their negative attitude towards the main ideas of the concept in question as a justification of the aggressive tsarist policy in the Caucasus.<sup>100</sup> The Dagestani academician G.G. Gamzatov reasonably treated the concept as a favorable ideological basis for the highly questionable and dangerous reasoning of some ‘genetic incompatibility of the highlanders and the Russians’.<sup>101</sup> Another Dagestani historian R.M. Magomedov strongly demonstrated the close links between such ideas and an ideological campaign of the early 1950s initiated by Stalin and Bagirov.<sup>102</sup> The conference emphasised the anti-colonial and liberationist nature of the mountaineers’ struggle and, at the same time, pointed out that their struggle was aimed at the tsarist policy rather than the Russian people.<sup>103</sup> In response to unanimous public censure Vinogradov claimed that it was a ‘well-planned persecution’ of him and left conference before it was closed.

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<sup>98</sup> Ia.Z. Akhmadov, ‘Ne speshite s vyvodami: uchebnye posobiia po istorii Checheno-Ingushetii’, *Golos Checheno-Ingushetii*, 18 February 1993, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Bryan, ‘Internationalism, Nationalism and Islam’, p. 208.

<sup>100</sup> Kh.Kh. Ramazanov, M.Sh. Shigabudinov and A.R. Shikhsaidov, ‘Bor’ba gortsev Dagestana i Chechni za nezavisimost’’, in G.G. Gamzatov (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie gortsev Dagestana i Chechni v 20–50-kh godakh 19 v.* (Makhachkala, 1990), pp. 12–28; Gadzhiev (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*. Also see: T.Kh. Kumykov, *Iyselenie adygov v Turtsiiu—posledstvie Kavkazskoi voiny* (Nal’chik, 1994), pp. 4–5.

<sup>101</sup> G.G. Gamzatov, ‘Vosstanovit’ pravdu istorii’, *Dagestanskaia pravda*, 19 May 1989, pp. 2–3; G.G. Gamzatov, ‘Vossozdat’ pravdivuiu istoriiu Kavkazskoi voiny’, in Gamzatov (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*, pp. 53–54. Also see: V.Kh. Akaev and S. A. Khusainov, ‘K voprosu o metodologicheskoi nesostoiatel’nosti versii o “gorskomo ekspansionizme” i “tak nazyvaemoi Kavkazskoi voine”’, in Gadzhiev (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*, pp. 127–128.

<sup>102</sup> R.M. Magomedov, ‘Narodno-osvoboditel’naia bor’ba gortsev pod rukovodstvom Shamilia v sovietsskoi istoriografii’, in Gamzatov (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*; R.M. Magomedov, ‘Narodno-osvoboditel’naia bor’ba gortsev pod rukovodstvom Shamilia v sovietsskoi istoriografii’, in Gadzhiev (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*. Cf. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, p. 133–135.

<sup>103</sup> Gamzatov (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*, p. 7.

Yet, it is worth noting that in the early *perestroika* era a disagreement with the concept of the ‘voluntary joining’ was still treated in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR as an ‘anti-Soviet mood’, and its opponents had no access to the mass media. Indeed, as V.V. Degoev pointed out, many North Caucasian historians developed views which, on the one hand, favored the growth of national self-awareness among the local peoples, but on the other hand, were aimed ‘at forming a state-centric imperial doctrine on the Russian-Orthodox basis’.<sup>104</sup> In any event, the discussions of Shamil and the Caucasian war were overloaded with ideological messages.<sup>105</sup>

## The Struggle against the Soviet Heritage

At the same time, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR did not stay out of the political changes. One of the first signs was the removal of Ermolov’s monument from the central square to the grounds of the city’s museum in January 1989 by a decision of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom.<sup>106</sup> The ideological climate finally improved in June 1989 when, for the first time, the Chechen-born Doku Zavgaev was elected the first secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom, and Chechen liberals began to force former Party functionaries from key political positions. Although Vinogradov still enjoyed the support of the secretary of ideology of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom P.N. Gromov, his monopoly in the historical field was seriously undermined. By contrast, his opponents, formerly persecuted professors of the Chechen-Ingush State University (CISU) and the Chechen-Ingush Pedagogical Institute, got unlimited access to the mass media and began to attack fiercely former official concepts including that

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<sup>104</sup> Degoev, *Bol’shaia igra na Kavkaze*, p. 259.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 257–258.

<sup>106</sup> The hated monument was entirely destroyed in 1991. See: Lieven, *Chechnya*, p. 307; Umalatov, *Chechnia glazami chechentsa*, p. 51. For the controversial struggle against monuments in the post-Soviet environment see: Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, pp. 183–190, 194–196; L.A. Abramian, ‘Bor’ba s pamiatnikami i pamiat’iu v postsovetском prostranstve (na primere Armenii)’, *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 20 (2003). This is a new aspect of the old theme, which previously focused on the mobilising power of the monuments themselves. For example see: Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, pp. 47–72.

of Chechnya's 'voluntary joining' with Russia.<sup>107</sup> The experts testify that one of the main demands of the growing nationalist movement in 1988–1989 was the abolition of the concept of Chechnya's 'voluntary joining' and the halting of persecutions of historians.<sup>108</sup>

The Second Congress of the Ingush People was held in Grozny on 9–10 September 1989, where for the first time the Ingush stated publicly the discrimination that had been directed towards them for decades and demanded that local authorities take urgent and decisive steps to stop it. Some speakers treated Vinogradov's concept as both 'anti-scientific, and insulting for the Chechen, Ingush and other North Caucasian peoples' and demanded that the awards that he and Umarov had received be rescinded.<sup>109</sup> Later on, at the Congress of the Chechen people the radicals demanded that Vinogradov be deprived of citizenship. They were especially irritated with his efforts to represent the Greben' Cossacks as the 'aboriginals of the Chechen land', which provided the Cossacks with arguments for their demands to seize the Naursky and Shelkovskoy districts of the Chechen Republic.<sup>110</sup> Then the Chechen radicals arranged a rally in front of Vinogradov's house, and he was declared an 'enemy of the Chechen people'.<sup>111</sup>

A meeting of the Public Committee for the support for the Chechen-Ingush Local-Studies Museum was held in the fall 1989, where well known Chechen and Ingush scholars bitterly recollected the recent ideological winter in their republic and associated it mainly with a monopoly of the concept of the 'voluntary joining'. They talked of the persecutions of dissidents, moral decline and the growth of ethnic tensions.<sup>112</sup> The concept of the 'voluntary joining' was also discussed at

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<sup>107</sup> For example, see the speeches by V.P. Krikunov and A.M. Bugaev at a round table organised by the journal *Voprosy istorii*: 'Natsional'nyi vopros i mezhnatsional'nye otnosheniia v SSSR: istoriia i sovremennost': Materialy "kruglogo stola"', *Voprosy istorii* 5 (1989), pp. 41–42, 88. Also see: F.P. Bokov, *Po povodu kontseptsii dobrovol'nogo vkhozheniia Checheno-Ingushetii v sostav Rossii: teoretiko-metodologicheskii aspekt* (Grozny, 1990); Muzaev and Todua, *Novaia Checheno-Ingushetiia*, p. 35.

<sup>108</sup> Akhmadov, 'Problema prisoedineniia narodov', pp. 56–58; T. Muzaev, *Etnicheskii separatizm v Rossii* (Moscow, 1999), p. 34.

<sup>109</sup> Kostoev (ed.), *Vtoroi s'ezd ingushskogo naroda*, pp. 130–131, 184.

<sup>110</sup> M. Shamaev, 'Narod ustal: Otkrytoe pis'mo prezidentu Chechenskoii Respubliki Dzhokharu Dudaevu', *Respublika*, 11 January 1992, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> S.L. Dudarev, personal communication.

<sup>112</sup> P. Grishin, 'Kak istoriia delaetsia', *Grozniiskii rabochii*, 4 November 1989, p. 3.

the meeting of the CISU Party cell where all the participants expressed their negative attitude towards it.<sup>113</sup> This issue was treated in the same terms at the Eighth Congress of Journalists of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR held in Grozny on 19 December 1989.<sup>114</sup> The ‘Groznskii rabochii’ daily called Vinogradov’s concept an instrumental one that had been developed on the order of the Chechen-Ingush Obkom. The journalist maintained that the concept contained ‘the Stalin-epoch stereotypes with respect to history in pseudo-scientific dress’. While recognising Vinogradov’s good intentions, he claimed that a ‘lie for the sake of good can cause a disaster’.<sup>115</sup>

After that, the newspaper provided Vinogradov’s opponent, the philosopher Kh. Magomaev, with a podium. Magomaev rigidly criticised Vinogradov’s approach, yet still from the point of the ‘Marxist-Leninist methodology’. He extensively referred to an ‘idealisation and subjectivisation of history’, an expression that was formerly widely used by the Soviet Party ideologists. Yet now it was aimed at Vinogradov, who was also blamed with tactlessness. While maintaining that the inclusion of an ethnic group into another people meant its subordination, Magomaev argued that there were no people in history who had voluntarily agreed to that. Therefore, he continued, the concept of the ‘voluntary joining’ brought about more evil than good, for it stirred up negative emotions among people. In his view, ‘if scholars not only make errors but search for political benefits, this might cause a negative reaction’. That is why a concept that had been developed in favor of peoples’ friendship turned out to be an ‘ideological utopia broken away from historical truth’ and in fact produced an opposite effect to intended. Excessive praise of the concept by the republican mass media harmed the Chechen and Ingush national dignity. Indeed, they were forced to distance themselves from the glorious pages of their past and famous national heroes.<sup>116</sup>

Being a target of public irritation, the concept’s authors had to justify themselves. The first was Umarov who recognised that to develop the concept one had to select historical information thoroughly and to omit

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<sup>113</sup> V. Romanov, ‘Strasti i rassudok’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 2 December 1989, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Nakal publitsistiki—perestroike’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 22 December 1989, p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> Andrusenko, ‘Kak istoriia piasalas’...’.

<sup>116</sup> Kh. Magomaev, ‘Ne prosto v terminy igraia’, *Groznskii rabochii*, 29 November 1989, p. 3. Also see: A. Aidamirov, ‘Liudi, sud’by, nray’.



most inappropriate facts. Whereas earlier he and Vinogradov emphasised military collaboration between the Russians and Chechens, now he demonstrated that both in the very early and very late 18th century the Chechens had resisted the assaults of the tsarist troops and that acts of ‘voluntary joining’ masked the Russian authorities’ aspirations to seize foothill plains. From this point, contrary to the official concept, Sheikh Mansur’s movement of 1785–1787 was by no means a new phenomenon but a continuation of a persistent highlanders’ struggle for liberty and independence.<sup>117</sup>

Vinogradov presented his own version of what happened. In his view, pluralism dominated in historiography up to 1979 when the concept of the ‘voluntary joining’ gained the favor of the Republican authorities. The latter declared it to be the ‘only truth’ and used it for a celebration of the jubilee in 1982. As a result, it not only flooded the mass media, but was also promoted intensively in the educational sphere. By contrast, the Caucasian war was out of the authorities’ favor and became a marginal issue. Vinogradov explained that ‘some people were sincerely mistaken and believed the officials, but others roughly echoed the authorities and fawned upon the “official history” for their own selfish interests’. He stated that now, under *perestroika*, he was unsatisfied with the concept himself. He agreed that he himself was partly responsible for what happened: ‘I do rigidly want to rid myself of an unnecessary haste, monopolist stubbornness, partner deafness, vindictiveness and hysteria, which are alien to true science, and want to warn others against that [...]’. At the same time, Vinogradov evidently avoided taking full responsibility for his own decisive role in building up and promoting the ‘official concept’.<sup>118</sup> He made an attempt to revise his former concept publicly<sup>119</sup> but this could not help him to change his image among local historians.

It is worth noting how the textbook on Chechen and Ingush ethnography completed by Vinogradov in collaboration with his former students reflected recent political and ideological changes. There he not

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<sup>117</sup> S.Ts. Umarov, ‘Dolg pamiati narodnoi’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 28 October 1989, p. 2. Also see: S.Ts. Umarov, ‘O roli islamskogo faktora v osvoboditel’noi bor’be narodov Checheno-Ingushetii’, in Gadzhiev (ed.), *Narodno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie*.

<sup>118</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, ‘Istoriia s detektivnoi “istoriei”’, *Groznenskii rabochii*, 29 November 1989, p. 3.

<sup>119</sup> V.B. Vinogradov and S.L. Dudarev, ‘K voprosu o tipologii i periodizatsii russko-vainakhskikh otnoshenii’, in Koval’chenko (ed.), *Istoriia i istoriki*, pp. 129–134.

only failed to mention circumstances surrounding the incorporation of the Chechens and Ingush into Russia, but avoided any discussions of his favorite topic of early contacts of local inhabitants with the Russians. Moreover, he even failed to cover local history of the last 250 years.<sup>120</sup>

At the session of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR held in August 1990, the question of ‘Vinogradovism’ was raised and a special committee was formed ‘on the legitimacy of awarding Vinogradov with the titles of “Honored Scholar of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR” and “Honored Scholar of the RSFSR” and awarding Umarov the title “Honored Scholar of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR” and to evaluate the concept of 200th anniversary of the Chechen and Ingush voluntary joining to Russia’. The Committee recommended, in particular, to reinstate those well-known scholars who were fired from the Chechen-Ingush Research Institute and CISU in 1984–1985. It is worth mentioning that at that time even the Republican Party Conference protested against Vinogradov’s concept, and the Congress of the Chechen People supported this view in November 1990. Yet, the Supreme Soviet failed to consider the Committee’s suggestions.<sup>121</sup>

In 1989 the entire governing body of the CIGU together with its rector V.A. Kan-Kalik was sharply criticised by the public because, together with Vinogradov, they were also responsible for the concept of ‘voluntary joining’, its teaching in the University, and for a repressive employment policy and persecution of the dissidents, many Chechen and Ingush scholars being among them. All this was treated now as the abuse of power.<sup>122</sup> The governing body of the CIGU responded with a strong protest and emphasised the positive activity of the young rector who was appointed only three years earlier and who, therefore, had nothing to do with the former abuses of power.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, the Chechen radicals included him alongside Vinogradov on the list of the ‘people’s enemies’,

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<sup>120</sup> N.N. Velikaia et al., *Ocherki etnografii chechentssev i ingushei (dorevolutsionnyi period)* (Grozny, 1990), p. 19.

<sup>121</sup> Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhennom konflikte*, p. 208; Saidullaev, *Chechenskomu rodu net perevodu*, pp. 117–120. For a draft of the Committee’s decision see: *ibid.* pp. 130–133.

<sup>122</sup> Andrusenko, ‘Kak istoriia pisalas’...’; A.U. Kostoev, *Vtoroi s”ezd ingushskogo naroda*, pp. 48, 53–54; Saidullaev, *Chechenskomu rodu net perevodu*, p. 125.

<sup>123</sup> Grishin, ‘Kak istoriia delaetsia’; Romanov, ‘Strasti i rassudok’.

and he was kidnapped and murdered by unknown criminals early in 1992.<sup>124</sup>

After that, Vinogradov felt a threat to his life and fled to the city of Armavir<sup>125</sup> where he was employed as a professor in the Department of Russian History of the Armavir State Pedagogical Institute. After 1993 he was a chair of the Department of General History, and then he headed the Department of Regional Studies and Special Historical Disciplines. Some of his former students followed him, and nowadays they have continued to develop the concept of ‘imperial (*derzhavnoe*) Russian presence in the region as a guarantor of peaceful co-existence of various peoples and, their economic and cultural collaboration’.<sup>126</sup> Simultaneously, they support a revival of the territorial Cossack detachments to maintain public order and to guard the state frontier.<sup>127</sup> In order to provide the Cossacks with a ‘glorious past’ they praise the tsarist generals who distinguished themselves with a pathological cruelty during the Caucasian war.<sup>128</sup> They intend such booklets to be used as ‘patriotic propaganda’ in schools and universities of the Kuban’ region.

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<sup>124</sup> S.L. Dudarev, personal communication; Nickolai Butkevich (ed.), *Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions: 2001* (Washington, 2002), p. 23.

<sup>125</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, ‘Grozny-Armavir, 1986–1995: nekotorye itogi arkhelogicheskikh issledovaniĭ’, in G.E. Afanas’ev (ed.), *Aktual’nye problemy arkhologii Severnogo Kavkaza* (Moscow, 1996), pp. 35–38, at p. 37.

<sup>126</sup> Dudarev, Narozhnyi and Priimak, *Vitalii Borisovich Vinogradov*, p. 6.

<sup>127</sup> V.B. Vinogradov and N.N. Velikaia, ‘Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo i Terskie kazaki: problemy vzaimodeistviia’, in G.G. Lisitsyna and Ia.A. Gordin (eds.), *Rossiiia i Kavkaz skvoz’ dva stoletiiia* (St. Petersburg, 2001), pp. 150–153, at p. 153.

<sup>128</sup> V.B. Vinogradov, ‘General “Sipso”’, *Kavkaz*, 1992, pp. 10–11; V.B. Vinogradov, General G.Kh. Zass: ‘otstupleniia so mnoiu net i ne budet’ (Armavir, 2000); V.B. Vinogradov, “‘Ostuplenie so mnoi net, ne bylo i ne budet...’ (General G.Kh. Zass)”, *Sbornik Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* 2 (2000), pp. 150–157; V.B. Vinogradov, *N.P. Sleptsov— ‘khrabryi i umnyi general’* (Armavir, 2000); O.V. Matveev, “‘Khrabryi voin y nas Geiman’”, in V.B. Vinogradov (ed.), *Voprosy severokavkazskoi istorii*, vyp. 6, chast’ 2 (Armavir, 2001), pp. 37–51. For general Zass’s cruelty see, for example: V.N. Ratushniak (ed.), *Ocherki istorii Kubani s drevneishikh vremen po 1920 g.* (Krasnodar, 1996), p. 255. For Ermolov see: Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London, 1994), pp. 34–35.

## Shamil's Controversy in the Post-Soviet Chechnya

The Chechens and Ingush also keep alive the memory of the cruel actions of the tsarist generals whom they do not treat as heroes.<sup>129</sup> One of the first textbooks in regional history completed by Chechen historians themselves came out in 1991 and was intended for the 6th grade. Its authors emphasised that the 'aggressive tsarist policy resulted in a long and stubborn Caucasian war'.<sup>130</sup> The Chechens were represented not only as a vanguard of the North Caucasian peoples' liberation struggle but as agents that strongly undermined the power of imperial Russia: 'the heroic struggle of the Dagestani and Chechen highlanders shattered the basis of tsarist power, and made it shudder in the face of the warlike highlanders'. The authors had no doubts that the war was of a 'liberational, anti-feudal, anti-colonial nature'.<sup>131</sup> Nothing was said of any 'highlanders' expansion' or 'voluntary joining' in the textbook.

Meanwhile, Chechens' views of the past have changed tremendously over the last ten years or so, and nowadays they are far from any unanimously favorable attitude to Shamil by contrast to what have been observed earlier. To be sure, he is still highly respected by the Chechen rebels, and people compose songs about him in Chechnya. Fiction and textbooks are coming out in which Shamil is represented in all his glory.<sup>132</sup> The 200th anniversary of the Shamil's birthday was celebrated in the village of Vedeno on 21 July 1997.<sup>133</sup>

Yet, as Valery Tishkov pointed out, one could observe a growing coolness towards Shamil in Chechnya in the late 1990s.<sup>134</sup> The attacks on Shamil began already in the early 1990s, but in the late 1990s they

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<sup>129</sup> For example see: M. Katysheva and M. Oziev, 'Soznavat' meru otvetstvennosti', in Iu. Tangiev (ed.), *Tragediia ingushskogo naroda* (Grozny, 1991), pp. 3–35, at pp. 21–22; B.B. Bogatyrev and B.U. Kostoev, *Ingushskii vopros v 'Nezavisimoi gazete'* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 74–75.

<sup>130</sup> Sh.B. Akhmadov, M.Kh. Bagaev and G.A. Ereshchenko, *Rasskazy po istorii rodnogo kraia* (Grozny, 1991), p. 38.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>132</sup> N.D. Kodzoev, *Istoriia ingushskogo naroda: S drevneishikh vremen do kontsa XIX veka* (Magas, 2002); Sh.M. Kaziev, *Imam Shamil'* (Moscow, 2003).

<sup>133</sup> Moshe Gammer, 'Nationalism and History: Rewriting the Chechen National Past', in Bruno Coppieters and Michel Huysseune (eds.), *Secession, History and the Social Sciences* (Brussels, 2002), pp. 117–140, at p. 125.

<sup>134</sup> Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhennom konflikte*, pp. 153, 270.

became more regular. Books were published in which he was severely criticised. One of those books was written by a former Soviet instructor in scientific atheism (*nauchnyi ateizm*) and a secretary of the Party cell of the Chechen-Ingush State Pedagogical Institute, Salamu Dauev. Paradoxically, he included Chechen national heroes like Sheikh Mansur, Kazi Mula and Shamil in the list of the Chechen people's enemies—all of them were divorced from the Chechen people and accused of the attempts to restore Khazaria.<sup>135</sup> He went so far as to attribute to Shamil an aspiration to exterminate the Chechen people,<sup>136</sup> even the chauvinist propaganda of the late Stalin era failed to go that far.

The Vice-Premier in Zelimkhan Iandarbiev's government of late 1996, Khozh-Akhmet Nukhaev, openly manifests his hostility towards Shamil. Advocating neo-traditionalism, he maintains that the Chechens have never enjoyed their own state and it is senseless to impose it upon them—all such attempts either by the Russians or Shamil have failed. While severely criticising Shamil's imamate, Nukhaev himself promotes a model of a theocratic stateless nation led by a chief as though this was characteristic of the traditional Chechen society. He views cities as a symbol of the hated civilisation and calls for their destruction. Thus, paradoxical as it might be, he views positively the enormous devastation of Chechnya caused by the recent wars. He treats this as a 'purification', which moves Chechnya closer to the desired 'barbarism'.<sup>137</sup> Akhmet Zakaev shares this view as well.

The 'Chechen Committee for national salvation' based in Nazran (Ingush Republic) has its own reasons to attack Shamil. On 20 December 2001, the Committee declared that, 'first, while being by no means the true son of the Chechen people, Imam Shamil provided them with nothing good. Second, most Chechens do not regard Imam Shamil as a national hero by contrast to how the Russian and other mass media attempt to portray him. More often than not he is considered to be a man who

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<sup>135</sup> S.A. Dauev, *Chechnia: kovarnye tainstva istorii* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 65–135. For a place of Khazaria in the Russian nationalist mythology that was used by Dauev, see: Victor A. Shnirelman, *The Myth of the Khazars and Intellectual Antisemitism in Russia, 1970s–1990s* (Jerusalem, 2002).

<sup>136</sup> Dauev, *Chechnia*, p. 131.

<sup>137</sup> Kh.A. Nukhaev, 'David i Goliaf, ili Rossiisko-chechenskaia voina glazami "varvara"', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 December 2000, pp. 12–13; Kh.A. Nukhaev, 'Rossiia i Checheniia: mir po formule "pobeda—pobeda"', *Zvezda* 10 (2002), pp. 158–159.

betrayed the Chechen people in hard times and helped the Russian empire to exterminate the Chechens for 25 years'.<sup>138</sup>

Unexpectedly, Shamil was severely criticised also by an anonymous 'Wahhabi' who gave an interview to the Dagestan 'Dialog' newspaper in spring 1998. He accused him of despotism, cruelty towards his subjects and defeat in the war with Russia. Yet he was mostly irritated with the Shamil's Avar origin, which reminded him of the Avar domination in contemporary Dagestan.<sup>139</sup> That is why he viewed Shamil's image as a symbol of the hated Avar rule.<sup>140</sup>

## The Instrumental Role of Social Memory

Thus, social memory of the North Caucasian peoples saw several crucial turning points in the Soviet and post-Soviet times. It was on good terms with the official view of history in the 1920s–1930s. However, from the turn of the 1950s the views became estranged and began to compete intensively for 'symbolic power', to use the Bourdieu's term. 'The production of ideas about the social world is always in fact subordinated to the logic of the conquest of power, which is the logic of the mobilisation of the greatest number'.<sup>141</sup> The data analyzed so far confirm Bourdieu's conclusion that 'those who occupy dominated positions in the social space are also situated in dominated positions in the field of symbolic production'. The instruments for that are provided by the professionals engaged in the field and affected by the very logic of cultural production.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> 'Zaiavlenie Obshchestvennogo Dvizheniia "Chechenskii komitet natsional'nogo spaseniia" po povodu vyskazyvanii S. Iastrzhembskogo o roli imama Shamilia na Kavkaze' <<http://savechechnya.narod.ru/zajav/zajav23.htm>>, accessed 1 February 2006.

<sup>139</sup> In 1998 there were many Dargins among the Dagestan Wahhabis, while the Avars occupied most of the key positions in the Republic, both political and religious (within the traditional Islam led by the Avar-born Sheikh Said Efendi).

<sup>140</sup> 'My otkryty dlia diskussii, ili ispoved' vakhkhabita', *Dialog* 7 (April 1998), pp. 2–3. I am grateful to Professor Matsuzato for this reference. Also see: S. Maigov, 'Pomirites' te, kto v ssore', *Megapolis-Express*, 3 October 2001.

<sup>141</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 181.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* p. 244.

Yet, the logic of cultural production was far from simple in the USSR. Indeed, the social space there was filled up by the officially recognised ethnicities, which, according to the Soviet logic, had to refer to their authentic past. Therefore, Soviet officials had to coordinate those views of the past within a uniform historical scheme rather than to oppress them entirely in order to impose a single dogma upon the general public. The views of ethnic history might even deflect from the uniform historical scheme but they would not distort the Soviet values and symbols. Therefore, the totality of the Soviet view of history meant loyalty to the critical symbols and values but no more than that. At the same time, while providing ethnic views of history with legitimacy, the Soviet state was unable to destroy social memory entirely, which could only deviate from the Soviet system of values. Moreover, obvious gaps and distortions in the canonical Soviet historical narratives stirred up not only the irritation of local intellectuals but also an aspiration to restore the ‘historical truth’ as they understood it. In this context, the ‘logic of cultural production’ was determined by the ‘logic of anti-colonial struggle’ and demanded for an alternative history that could provide this struggle with legitimacy. The most important symbols of that history were highly romanticised heroes of the past who were represented as sincere fighters for their own people’s liberty. Indeed, ‘if the conflicts of the present seemed intractable, the past offered a screen on which desires for unity and continuity, that is, identity, could be projected’.<sup>143</sup>

For the Chechens, Shamil presented that very desired symbol of unity and resistance. Yet, for some time they used to forget deliberately that he was of Dagestani (Avar) origin; that he was building up the Muslim rather than merely the Chechen state and, in this respect, that he encroached upon traditional Chechen customary law (*adat*); and that by the end of his life he had entirely changed his attitude towards Russia. Until recently, all this seemed to be of subsidiary importance by contrast to Shamil’s courage that helped him to resist stubbornly the assault of the Russian empire for a quarter of a century. It was a Shamil’s persistence in achieving his goals that was mostly appreciated and maintained by social memory initially (under deportation) for the sake of resistance and, then, for a successful integration into Soviet society.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Gillis, ‘Introduction: Memory and Identity’, p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> Valery Tishkov argues reasonably that the Chechens were by no means radically anti-

Thus, when the Chechens focused on a struggle against discrimination, they unanimously viewed Imam Shamil as a symbol of resistance. This helped them to withstand the pressure of Soviet ideology and to gain the victory. After that, the situation changed, and the Soviet myth was severely persecuted alongside with its inventors and advocates. The victors began to promote intensively their own view of the past. Yet, that was a Pyrrhic victory. When in the 1990s the Chechens began to think of their own way to the future, the Shamil's image became a point of revision and its interpretation was highly affected by the various views and expectations concerning further Chechen development. The case in question makes it obvious that social memory is a highly flexible phenomenon rather than a constant. It changes together with changes in the given society's social dimensions. For example, there were neither refugees, nor rebels, nor Wahhabis in the late Soviet decades. But they emerged as distinct social groups in the 1990s together with their own social memories. Hence, new dimensions of the Shamil's image based on his features which were neglected in the former days.

Indeed, on the one hand, Shamil fought desperately with the tsarist troops, but on the other hand, while living in captivity in Kaluga after his defeat, he called on the highlanders to exist in peace and to maintain a union with Russia. The Caucasian war brought about numerous losses and terrible suffering to the mountaineers but provided them no benefits (a parallel with contemporary Chechen wars is obvious). Shamil made a great efforts to build up an independent state, but it was of a despotic nature and encroached upon Chechens' freedom. It was by no means a 'national state', and Chechen customs and values were persecuted in the name of Islam. Shamil was building up a theocratic state based on Sufi Islam, the latter being nowadays furiously challenged by the 'Wahhabis' (Salafis).<sup>145</sup> Besides, Shamil was of the Avar origin, which is negatively

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Soviet during the last decades of the Soviet era. See: Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhennoy konfliktke*. Their struggle was aimed at attaining the desired place in Soviet society rather than against the Soviet state in general. This explains a paradoxical nostalgia for the Soviet Union manifested by the late Dudaev and the Chechen rebels who are fighting with Russia nowadays.

<sup>145</sup> For the Salafis and their confrontation with the Sufi Islam see: D.V. Makarov, *Ofitsial'nyi i neofitsial'nyi islam v Dagestane* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 25–38. Also see: D.V. Makarov, 'Dagestan's Approach to the Islamic Mega-Area? The Potentials and Limits of Jihadism', in MATSUZATO Kimitaka (ed.), *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist*



perceived by contemporary Chechen ethnic nationalists. Therefore, nowadays it makes no sense to talk of any uniform Chechen view of Shamil or the Caucasian war. The complex social and religious composition of the new Chechen society provides a space for a variety of views, and each group chooses the image that fits its own interests better.<sup>146</sup>

Shamil still serves as a very important symbol of stubborn resistance to Russia for the Chechen rebels. The advocates of traditional Islamic statehood also refer to the Shamil's imamate as a confirmation of their project. By contrast, the 'Wahhabis' who promote 'pure Islam', view Shamil as a dubious historical character. Inclined to anarchism, Nukhaev and his followers treat Shamil's political activity as an attempt, intrinsically doomed to failure, to impose a state system upon the free-loving Chechens. For their part, the Chechen refugees, having experienced extremely harsh conditions and awful suffering, view Shamil as an evil genius responsible for all their misfortunes. There are some Chechen intellectuals who view the rebels as agents of some 'anti-national' plot and accuse Shamil of treachery. Some people recall the Shamil's Dagestani origin, which poorly meets the demands of ethnic nationalism.

At the same time, a Russian scholar from the Kuban' region reminded us that Shamil recommended the Caucasian Peoples to be loyal towards the Russian state.<sup>147</sup> This view was represented by President Vladimir Putin at the meeting of the Public Forum of the Caucasian peoples and Russian South held in late March 2004. This attitude is shared by the Dagestani officials. While giving an interview to journalist Ilia Maksakov in January 2000, the Vice-Premier of the Dagestani government Gadzhi Makhachev said that 'Imam Shamil advised us to go ahead together with Russia'.<sup>148</sup> Yet, as we know, the Shamil's Avar origin is treated with jealousy by some Dagestani people who are dissatisfied

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*Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?* (Sapporo, 2005). I am grateful to Professor Matsuzato for these references.

<sup>146</sup> Gammer, 'Nationalism and History', pp. 126–127.

<sup>147</sup> V. Ratushniak, 'Chto zaveschal Shamil?', *Kubanskije novosti*, 13 May 1994, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Il'ia Maksakov, "'Gruziny i azerbaidzhantsy pozhaleiut, chto priutili banditov'": Vitseprem'er pravitel'stva Dagestana Gadzhi Makhachev predosteregait Tbilisi, Baku i strany Zapada', *Nezavisimaia gazeta: Regiony, Internet*, 11 January 2000 <[http://regions.ng.ru/gubern/2000-01-11/1\\_sorrow.html](http://regions.ng.ru/gubern/2000-01-11/1_sorrow.html)>.

with the Avar's political dominance in Dagestan.<sup>149</sup> To put it briefly, there are many more images of Shamil in contemporary Russia in contrast to what some authors think nowadays.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, 'practices re-enact, modify, deny and conserve "pastness" as both lived experience and mode of understanding, differently for individual members of any community',<sup>151</sup> as well as for particular social groups, as we have seen. Years ago Maurice Halbwachs pointed out the instrumental nature of social memory, which radically reinterprets the meaning of past events depending on urgent contemporary demands and interests.<sup>152</sup> By contrast, Barry Schwartz argued that such revisions and re-interpretations do not reverse each other but accumulate and are able to co-exist with each other.<sup>153</sup> The data analyzed so far confirm Halbwachs' conclusion. Indeed, if a struggle of a discriminated-against group for its human rights violated by the authorities is the agenda, there can be no reconciliation between the competing views of the past used by both sides to legitimate their demands or actions. At the same time, positive or negative changes in the discriminated-against group's position or in the authorities' policy contribute to changes of the group's views of the past. Indeed, new challenges and demands encourage ongoing revisions of social memory of the past as we observed among the Chechens. In the 1990s Chechen society fell apart and its various groups began to develop their own views of Shamil whose function as a national symbol and 'epic hero' (Schwartz) declined. To paraphrase Barry Schwartz, this occurred because people 'had discovered new facts about themselves'.<sup>154</sup> Yet, the facts different people had discovered were quite different! Hence, opposite re-interpretations of Shamil exist, which demonstrates that

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<sup>149</sup> In July-August 2004 the Avars attempted even to upgrade their political status and demanded that the Chair of the State Soviet, the Dargin-born Magomedali Magomadov should be removed from his position.

<sup>150</sup> For example, see: Gökay, 'The Longstanding Russian', p. 57.

<sup>151</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, p. 111.

<sup>152</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (New edn., Paris, 1952); Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992).

<sup>153</sup> Barry Schwartz, 'The Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln', in Middleton and Edwards (eds.), *Collective Remembering*, pp. 81–107; Barry Schwartz, 'Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington', *American Sociological Review* 56:2 (1991), pp. 221–236.

<sup>154</sup> Schwartz, 'Social Change', p. 101.

similar to political rituals<sup>155</sup> the historical hero may polarise the group rather than unify it.

By contrast, if changes concern society at large and if they are not too radical to destroy social integrity as occurred in Chechnya, one may deal with a situation described by Schwartz when various interpretations of the past developed under different historical circumstances are able to co-exist peacefully with each other. Thus, a secret of social memory is that it focuses on values rather than any 'pure facts': the raw material is selected, re-interpreted and provided with meaning and is highly affected by the shared social values.

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<sup>155</sup> Steven Lukes, 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', *Sociology* 9 (1975), pp. 289–308, at pp. 299–301.