Otto Luchterhandt

The Chechen Attempt at National Independence and the Internal Reasons for Its Failure

Problems Posed

Chechen destiny since the dissolution of the Soviet Union has been full of tragedy: The world became witness to a people, who after having been dominated by a foreign power for centuries were not only able to gain state independence from Russia, but were able to defend their independence heroically in an unfair, cutthroat war; who then however were not able to summon the strength to unite, and who did not possess the discipline and the rationality, in short: the maturity, which would have given duration to their joyful victory through the peaceful construction of a functioning nation state. The second Chechen war abruptly stifled these hopes.[1] And another equally tragic event has been interwoven with this: In the last decade the Chechen people have become the victims of genocidal warfare twice, also through errors of their own, after having to pay for their craving for freedom since the nineteenth century in a series of similar experiences in battling Russia. Finally, it must also be seen as a tragic circumstance that the geographic situation and the political status of the Chechen people leave them no other choice, despite these terrible, traumatic experiences, but to come to terms with Moscow and to seek their future in the association of subjects of the Russian Federation. Thus, the Chechens will have to carry the economic, political and emotional burdens of these events almost alone.

The Chechens are not the first group of people in the Caucasus in which the battle with Russia ended this way: 150 years ago, the Cherkessians, who at the time were the most important group of people living in the Northern Caucasus, met a similar fate. By the time the Caucasus war against these mountain tribes was over in 1864, a large portion of the Cherkess people had become victims of the Russian campaign to destroy them and drive them out of their homelands. Over 300,000 Cherkessians emigrated to Asia Minor many dying along the way. According to the 1897 census, only about 45,000 Cher-

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[1] Even though it still continues in the form of guerrilla warfare and Chechnya is far from achieving even a superficial form of "pacification", i.e. the silencing of the weapons, another Russian politico-military defeat is practically out of the question. Samuel P. Huntington's opposite view, based on his well-known doctrinaire assumptions, is not tenable. Cf. idem: Der Grosny-Wahn. Russland kann nicht gewinnen [The Grozny Craze. Russia Cannot Win], in: Süddeutsche Zeitung of 21 December 1999, p. 17.

kessians remained in the Russian empire.[2] Cherkess aspirations for independence had been extinguished forever.

A sympathetic but removed contemporary who has witnessed the events from a distance will question why and under what circumstances the Chechen people have failed in their attempt to implement their right to self-determination in the form of an independent nation state. From the viewpoint of the research on comparative nation-building the events seem rather astonishing: One of the firm insights of the field is that wars of liberation as well as long-lasting experience with foreign domination, oppression, discrimination, and not least genocide work as powerful forces in the process of nation and nation-state building.[3] The fate of the Chechen people has been primarily determined by both these essential factors since the late 18th century. Compared with all other non-Slavic ethnic groups living in Russia today, the Chechen people have had a longer tradition of resistance and liberation movements than any other group. The most influential period remaining in their consciousness even today is the tightly organized Chechen state of Imam Shamil (approximately 1840-1859), which however did not have a national, but a religious Islamic foundation.[4]

Even more prominent in the consciousness of the average Chechen are the injustices that Russia and/or the Soviet Union have inflicted upon the people, especially the forced deportation of their entire ethnic group numbering approximately 400,000 people to Central Asia. This process was carried out within a very short time frame in February 1944 under indescribable conditions with extreme ruthlessness, and as a result, a large percentage of the population became the victims of hunger, cold, and sickness.[5]

If these and other socio-political factors, which are related to the many years in which there was a Chechen administrative area within the USSR, have not been sufficient to unite the Chechens internally since the dissolution of the USSR and as a result of their encounters with threats and death, they have not taken the steps to work in solidarity on the foundation of a functional state system, then the inference can be made that egotism, discord, interests creating dispute, passions, character traits and individuality have been the stronger forces. If one were to look for more profound reasons for this, then one might assume or come to the realization that Chechen concepts on socio-political order and Chechen conduct even today are so strongly determined by pre-na-

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2   For an overall perspective, see Andreas Kappeler, Rußland als Vielvölkerreich, Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall [Russia, an Empire of Many Peoples, Its Origins, Its History, Its Decay], Munich 1992, pp. 149ff.

3   Research on this topic may be found in Peter Alter, Nationalismus [Nationalism], Frankfurt/M. 1985, pp. 24ff.

4   Cf. Uwe Halbach, "Heiliger Krieg" gegen den Zarismus [The "Holy War" against Tsarism], in: Andreas Kappeler/Gerhard Simon/Georg Brunner (Eds.), Die Muslime in der Sowjetunion und Jugoslawien [The Muslims in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia], Cologne 1989, pp. 213-234.

5   Cf. Nikolai Bugai, Pravda o deportatsii chechenskogo i ingushskogo narodov, in: Voprosy istorii 7/1990, pp. 40ff.

tional traditions, values and norms that efforts towards the realization of national self-determination and state-building, which do exist in the Chechen Republic as well, did not lead to adequate results and could not be enforced. In more detail, three social phenomena and/or institutions come to mind:

First the *teip* division, i.e. the clan division of the people, which simultaneously shapes the structure of Chechen society; second the dominant orientation of the people towards codes of customary law (*adat*) and third the traditional belief in Islam. All three factors are tightly entwined, however in certain respects there is a tension in the relationships with regard to Islam.

From the viewpoint of the success of national state-building, the teip order is not simply "sub-national", but has a pre-national character. Its Chechen quality is far removed from the structures of political order under modern statehood. The same is true for the codes of customary law, and also for Islam, whether in the form of Sufism traditionally predominating in the Northern Caucasus or in the form of those radical, politicized "Islamistic" currents that pushed forward from the Middle East to Chechnya around the time the USSR was coming to an end.[6]

The partial, divisive and therefore disintegrating effects on the Chechen internal condition - which radiated and still radiate predominantly from the teip order and the phenomenon of regionally dominating clan structures so tightly bound to it - are of utmost interest for the problem that has been raised here.

Teip Divisions in Local (Regional) Clans und Clan Groups

In a retrospective view of the fate of the Northern Caucasus in the Russian-Soviet federation, Uwe Halbach, one of the most renowned German experts in this field, stated the following: "On the whole, the territorial unit of Chechen-Ingushetia is the least integrated into the Soviet system. Both peoples preserved their national and religious consciousness particularly during the period of their exile."[7]

The Chechen people have acquired the strength of their resistance primarily through the firmness of their traditionally rigid patriarchal order, which stayed alive through every stroke of fate they suffered. Its heart has always been the clan, in which families related to each other through the paternal line are grouped together (*nek-e*; *gar*). They derive their lineage from a progenitor living approximately twelve generations ago. The families and extended families assembled in the teip each cultivate between ten and 50 farms in compact communities with common utilization of pastures. Thus the teip is a

6   Cf. Alexander Iskanderjan, Der islamische Radikalismus im Nordkaukasus [Islamic Radicalism in the Northern Caucasus], in: Wostok 6/1998, pp. 20-22.
7   Roland Götz/Uwe Halbach, Politisches Lexikon Rußland. Die nationalen Republiken und Gebietseinheiten der Rußländischen Föderation [Political Dictionary of Russia. The National Republics and the Territorial Units of the Russian Federation], Munich 1994, pp. 330-350, here: p. 335 (translation).

smaller or larger association of village communities and simultaneously out-lines a specific territory where they live and rule.[8] Thus, in this social institution the original personal aspect so inherent in its nature is tightly bound with a territorial approach.

The teip is guided by the council of clan elders. It thus acts as a leadership organ legitimized through customary law, which deals with all important teip issues, provides solutions to problems within the clan, solves disputes and mediates between different teips when they are in disagreement.

Those teips who traditionally have been tightly linked together regionally have formed clan groups (*tukhumy*; *tukhkumy*), of which there are nine, and their leading men have formed the *mekhkel*, a central clan council of the Chechen people, which since the Soviet period - as far as can be discerned - no longer plays a major role even informally.[9] This structure reflects, so to speak, a clan-democratic order of the Chechen people, which differs from that of the Cherkessians of Kabardin in that they have no nobility and no feudal aristocracy. This is probably where the Chechens derive the fundamental roots of their extraordinary drive for freedom.

The approximately 180 teips that make up the Chechen people are divided into three relatively clearly different geographic zones. Recognizing these is very important to be able to understand domestic policy developments and the power structure in the country. These include "Greater Chechnya", the region ranging to the crest line of the Greater Caucasus mountains, in addition "Lesser Chechnya", the northern foothills and valley regions reaching to around the Sunzha River, and farther north, in particular north of the Terek river, the North Terek region, reaching up to the border of the administrative region of Stavropol, which is mainly former steppe country. These northern valley areas are inhabited by approximately 80 teips, but even these groups attribute their origins to certain mountain valleys[10] as the mountain region is the Chechen historical homeland. From there, they slowly extended their territory into the foothills and, since the seventeenth century, have also moved into the Terek region, where they have lived for centuries in a tight but also precarious relationship with their Terek-Cossack neighbours. The settlement of Chechens in the valley areas was partially implemented through force by the Russian military administration to be able to better control the Chechens

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8   A presentation of this can be found *inter alia* in. M.O. Kosven/L.J. Lavrov/G.A. Nerse-sov/Kh.O. Khashaev (Editorial Staff), Narody kavkaza I., Moscow 1960, pp. 345-390, here: pp. 365ff.; E.N. Kusheva, Narody severnogo kavkaza i ikh svyazy s Rossiei v XVI-XVII vv, Moscow 1963, pp. 60ff.; Igor' Rotar', Tajikskaya i chechenskaya smuty. Srav-nitel'nyi analiz dvukh konfliktov, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 15 May 1997, p. 5. Teip names typically end with the suffix "oi". The following are particularly common: Benoi, Zontaroi, Zurshaloi, Belgotoi, Arshenoi, Shatoi, Chankhoi.

9   Ilya Maksakov mentions this organ whose real importance in the Chechen history and current events has yet to be researched. Cf. Chechnya priblizhilas' k khaosu, in: Nezavisi-maya gazeta of 27 January 1999, p. 5.

10   Cf. Rotar', cited above (Note 8).

who were viewed as particularly rebellious.[11] After the October Revolution, the oil industry began to grow, particularly in the valley regions north and south of the Terek and especially in Grozny. Many Russians moved there, but there were also increasing numbers of Chechens. Their influx was facilitated by the fact that the Bolsheviks had (also) eliminated the Cossacks along the Terek river during the civil war[12] and granted the Chechens an autonomous administrative region (in 1922). Because the North Terek region has a more diverse ethnic mixture than the Chechen core areas and the teips there have lived with their Russian Orthodox neighbours for so long, teip relations with the Russians and the Moscow central government have been less harassed and less strained than in the rest of Chechnya. Thus it was the teips in the mountain region who ultimately instigated Chechen resistance to the creation of the Soviet system.

The greater the number of members of different teips living in one district, due to the extent of economic migration and urbanization that had occurred - and this was true in general for the valley regions and particularly for large cities, for instance Grozny -, the less the influence of the personal factor and the greater the territorial factor came to the forefront. This had effects on local clan building, i.e. on the personal network controlled by a specific economic boss. Although bosses rely primarily on the members of their own teip, they make efforts to extend and strengthen their backing by gaining the loyalty and support of other teips.

Informal Teip Structures and Formal Soviet Political Order

The deportation of the Chechen people to Central Asia was decisive for the further relationship between the traditional teip formation and Soviet power structures. The fact is, that during the diaspora, the reason the Chechen people survived this dreadful attack on their existence was because of their adherence to teip order. This also played an essential role when they returned to the "Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic" re-established in 1957. Chechens and Ingush strived to return to their old home towns and villages, less to relieve the injury to their sense of justice than because according to Chechen customs, the peoples' religion, teip order and codes of customary law, great significance was attached to their hereditary tribal grounds, ancestral burial grounds and grazing land. Resettlement was realized most easily in the historical core area, in the mountain region, because for the most part that area did not have many new settlers. The return to the valley areas was plagued with conflict, specifically in the capital of Grozny and the North

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11   Cf. M.K. Lyubavskii, Obzor istorii Russkoi kolonizatsii s drevneishikh vremen do XX veka, Moscow 1996, pp. 392ff.

12   On this topic see Rudolf Karmann, Der Freiheitskampf der Kosaken. Die Weiße Armee in der Russischen Revolution 1917-1920 [The Cossack Struggle for Freedom. The White Army in the Russian Revolution 1917-1920], Puchheim 1985, pp. 453ff.; 588ff.

Terek region because many other nationalities - Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Nogai, Kabardins and so on - had moved into the towns and villages.

An important political effect of deportation was that in the "Grozny region", as it was renamed, the political-administrative structures in party organizations and the state machine had been newly systematized and were ruled by non-Chechens. As a result of this, after the return home, teip structures were at first clearly separated from the political-personnel power structures of the Republic. That Moscow was still suspicious of the Chechens was recognizable by the fact that until perestroika the Chechens were denied the office of Communist Party first regional secretary, which was the top party leadership position in Grozny. Nonetheless a silent revenge occurred in the traditional social order: During the long Brezhnev era - characterized by corruption, laxity, but also economic expansion - informal teip networks and teip loyalties slowly grew within the economic, state and party institutions. The teips of the North Terek region and specifically the clan of the long-standing second party secretary, Doku Savgaev, played an outstanding role in this process.[13] When Gorbachev began to give way to the pressures of non-Russian nationalities in 1989, Savgaev was able to rise to the post of Communist Party leader of Chechnya and shortly thereafter also became the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic. His position of power had one disadvantage, which within the inner-Chechen struggle for power proved to be a strategic weakness: Savgaev represented only the teips of the North Terek region.

Teip Rivalries and the Power Seizure by Dzhokhar Dudaev

The vulnerability of Savgaev's position became even more pronounced when Dzhokhar Dudaev resigned from his post as general in 1990 and went to Grozny to set up an opposition force in the form of the "Chechen National Congress" against the Republic's nomenklatura led by Savgaev. This was tantamount to a declaration of war, especially from the teip perspective, because Dudaev propagated the idea that the Chechen nation in the mountain region had remained the purest and mobilized predominantly the teips living there against the official power structures.[14] The fact that the Chechens from the mountain region had had a particularly hard time attaining leadership positions in the Republic also helped him in this endeavour. In fact in the south-

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13   Doku Gapurovich Savgaev was born in 1940 in the village of Beno-Yurt, in the Nadterechny district and had a flawless career as a party official, cf. Kto est' kto v Rossii i blizhnem zarubezh'e. Spravochnik, Moscow 1993, p. 249.

14   Dudaev was born in April 1944, i.e. after the deportation, in Pervomaiskoe, i.e. in the western part of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. Thus he did not come from the Chechen core area. The author was unable to determine which teip he belonged to. The fact that he was born in the Republic *after* the deportation, has been used by his opponents to cause political suspicion about the Dudaev family. Cf. Obshchaya gazeta of 13-19 November 1997, p. 5.

ern part of the country not only the teip settlements had been restored, but the clan groups in the mountains including the tukhum "Ichkerya"[15] that comprised the Shatoi and Vedeno districts were also re-established.[16] The name Ichkerya had a special melody for the nationally conscious Chechen ear because the villages from which most teips derive their origins lie in this area. These include the village of Nakhcho, which is the name Chechens call themselves ("Nokhcho", also "Nakhchi", "Nakhchoi"). The Russian ethnonym "Chechnya" also has a special and thoroughly harmonious tone for the Chechens because Chechen was the *aul* (village) in the Argun valley where the central assemblies of the mekhkel, the teip and tukhum representatives, met and far-reaching decisions on war and peace were taken.[17]

Later the name "Ichkerya" was given to the entire mountain region inhabited by the Chechens. Thus it was a "teip political" signal when in 1994 Dudaev renamed the entire state the "Chechen Republic of Ichkerya".

Dudaev was able to win support from important teips beyond the mountain region in the valley region (of Urus-Martan, Gudermes) to form a broad alliance. After Savgaev had manoeuvred himself into the offside nationally and politically through his support of the failed Moscow coup (August 1991), Dudaev was able, at the end of October 1991, to get himself elected to the Presidency of the Chechen Republic, after it had seceded from Russia on 6 September 1991.[18] At the same time a new Parliament was elected in which the representatives of the teips supporting Dudaev and the regional clan bosses had a clear majority. Doku Savgaev was forced to leave Grozny and switched over to Yeltsin's central government in Moscow, but remained - with federal support - the strong man in the North Terek region. In the meantime, Umar Avturkhanov, its administrative boss, acted as Savgaev's "governor".

Dudaev's supporters controlled the mountain and valley regions of Chechnya, but not the North Terek region. This was a serious problem for the Chechen Republic now *de facto* independent from Moscow, which was to have an effect in two different respects: First the northern teips and clans loyal to Moscow could be used as factors to influence the Chechen domestic power struggle, and furthermore, the North Terek region, in addition to the regions around the cities of Grozny and Gudermes, was an important economic area.

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15   This name was used as the designation of one of the eight administrative districts making up the "Terek region" in 1860/62. Cf. Semen Esadze (Ed.), Istoricheskaya zapiska ob upravlenii kavkazom, tom I, Tbilisi 1907, pp. 197f. In actuality it was called Nakhchimakhkovski. This name refers to the fact that the Chechens called themselves Nokhcho (as well as: Nakhchi, Nakhchoi) and also to the village of the same name in the upper Argun valley.

16   Cf. Igor' Rotar', Chechnya: Davnyaya smuta, in: Izvestya of 27 October 1995, p. 5.

17   See also Ernest Chantré, Recherches anthropologiques dans le Caucase, Volume 4, Paris 1887, pp. 100ff.

18   For these developments cf. the survey by Markus Soldner, Russlands Čečnja-Politik seit 1993. Der Weg in den Krieg vor dem Hintergrund innenpolitischer Machtverschiebungen [Russia's Chechnya Policies since 1993. The Path to War against the Background of Domestic Power Shifts], Hamburg 1999, pp. 98ff.

Without control over this area, the independence of the Chechen state was considerably endangered in an economic sense.

Dudaev's Strategy towards Polarization and the Unleashing of the First Chechen War

The greatest danger for peace within Chechnya however originated in the fact - which became increasingly clear in 1992 - that Dudaev was attempting to create a presidency with a powerful hand and push aside the politically more moderate teips, especially in the valley region and large cities. For this purpose he relied on the radical teips of the mountain region, mercenary troops devoted to him and propaganda on Greater Chechen nationalism and Islamic radicalism (*ghazawat* - "holy war"). From a superficial and institutional perspective the power struggle was veiled in a dispute between, on one side, the President and, on the other, the parliamentary majority backed up by sections of the government. With reinforcement from Moscow in the background, the fight ended in a coup in the late spring of 1993: Dudaev dissolved the Parliament by force, disposed of the government and created a presidential dictatorship. With this step he drove important teips who had been allied with him until that time as well as the parts of the country dominated by them and their clan bosses into the opposition. Thus his basis for power eroded so dramatically in 1993/1994 that the Moscow central government made the assumption, and this was realistic on their part, that the Dudaev regime could, indirectly through military logistical support, be overthrown without much difficulty by the opposition alliance forged by Savgaev.[19] However, this proved a false conclusion and in 1994 President Yeltsin, in an attempt to correct it, skidded into the first Chechen war.

With the erosion of Dudaev's authority, clan rivalries to control economic resources, teip regionalism and personal ambition for power, partially embellished with Islamistic, democratic or nationalist slogans, all fused together. An example of this could be seen in the developments in the city of Urus-Martan west of Grozny whose district is ruled by the Chankhoi teip, one of the most important clans in the country. The head of the republican procurement office, Sultan Khajiev, and his deputy, Yaragi Mamodaev had been the bosses of Urus-Martan since the final stages of perestroika. Their clan and the Chankhoi teip joined forces with General Dudaev in the power struggle against Savgaev in 1990/91 and they rose to central positions of power: Khajiev became director of Groznefttekh, a large Chechen combine in the oil branch, and Mamodaev became the Chechen Prime Minister. And a third, a member of the younger generation of the Chankhoi teip, made a comet-like assent to power: Bislan Gantamirov, one of the most colourful adventurers of

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19   For more details cf. ibid., pp. 109ff.

post-communist Chechnya.[20] In his position as sergeant in the militia, he devoted himself - a least on the surface - to radical Islamic political statements, became the head of the Chechen branch of the "Muslim Brothers" and with currency inflows from this organization in the Middle East created military training camps in his home districts Urus-Martan[21] and Achkhoi-Martan, where young men from the Chankhoi teip were trained to become "*boeviki*" (fighters) and quickly numbered over 1,000 men, a troupe staunchly loyal to Gantamirov. Dudaev relied on this kind of a person; he made Gantamirov the mayor of Grozny in 1992. Because of Dudaev's ambition for power, particularly however because of a dispute about oil policy, in which Khajiev and Mamodaev, in contrast to Dudaev, sought co-operation with Moscow to secure further deliveries of crude oil to the refinery in Grozny, they broke up in the spring of 1993: Khajiev, Mamodaev and Gantamirov and with them the Chankhoi teip formed an alliance with Savgaev's clan which was loyal to Moscow. Other teips joined them. Although their united forces were not enough to hold Grozny, the Urus-Martan district went over to the opposition and in 1994 Gantamirov, in his position as Avturkhanov's deputy, was in command of military units to fight against Dudaev. After the Russians had taken over Grozny in 1995, Gantamirov regained his position as mayor. His teip militia was incorporated into the police units of the capital and/or into the department of the interior. The posts in the Moscow-loyal government set up by Savgaev who had been appointed as an opposition President were divided between the clans from the North Terek region and the Chankhoi teip with Savgaev as President of the Republic and Salambek Khajiev as Prime Minister.[22] However, in reality there was much suspicion and hostility between them. The rivalry between Savgaev's police chief Avturkhanov and Gantamirov led the chief public prosecutor in Moscow, upon Savgaev's initiative, to open a preliminary investigation on the misappropriation of federal funds totalling 57 billion roubles, arrest Gantamirov in May 1996 and bring him to trial in Moscow. This was by no means the end of Gantamirov's career (see pp. 195f. below). The victorious outcome of the first Chechen war for Dudaev and his supporters, the armistice in Khasavyurt (August 1996), the election of Aslan Maskhadov to the Presidency (January 1997) and the conclusion of a peace agreement with Moscow in May 1997 again removed Savgaev from his position as the formally recognized leader of Chechnya. In-

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20   For more on him see Jevgeni Krutikov, Nachalo kontsa chankhoiskoi gruppirovki, in: Novoe vremya 20/1996, pp. 19/20; FAZ of 3 May 2000, p. 16, as well as of 19 July 2000, p. 2.

21   Gantamirov was born in 1963 in the village of Gekhi, west of Urus-Martan.

22   Salambek Khajiev became head of government, his cousin Movladi Khajiev deputy minister of the interior, his sister Tamara Dacheva deputy trade minister, his brother Deni Khajiev deputy prime minister and minister of construction, his son-in-law Jelddakhanov deputy minister of construction, another cousin of the head of government became director of the Grozny Central Bazaar etc.

stead, President Maskhadov took over this position after the January 1997 elections supported by Boris Yeltsin.[23]

Maskhadov's Concept to Avoid Civil War by Honouring the Field Commanders' "Military-Territorial Autonomy" and the Result: the Breakdown of Order Followed by Anarchy

Maskhadov's election was a turning-point in the distribution of power in Chechnya. The fact that after the horrors of war and despite the inner turmoil in the country almost 80 per cent of those eligible to vote took part in the presidential election, signalled that all teips and clans felt a great necessity to begin a new political course based upon power by the people and simultaneously decide which political direction to take. The fact that Maskhadov, even in the first round of voting, won handsomely collecting almost 60 per cent of the votes against his militant opponent Shamil Basaev (23.5 per cent) and the transitional President of Chechnya, Zelimkhan Yandarbiev (10.1 per cent),[24] raised the election results to the level of a decision on fundamental principles for a moderate and peaceful political course based on negotiation and agreement, which Maskhadov had already introduced successfully and represented convincingly through his character.

Contrary to the expectations of many, the teips of the mountain region did not vote primarily for the audacious "people's hero" Basaev, nor did only those in the valley region choose the statesmanlike Maskhadov. Even in the mountain region Basaev did not get more than a third of the vote.[25] In contrast, Maskhadov was even able to gain a clear win in the opposition stronghold of Urus-Martan against his local opponent Akhmed Sakaev of the Chankhoi teip. Because of Maskhadov's moderate and judicious character, teip rivalries were never so thoroughly defused as during this election.

Maskhadov was able to maintain this equilibrium for quite some time during his Presidency, but at the price of an insidious loss of authority and power, increasingly spreading anarchy in the country, and a disintegration towards regionally limited rule. The way in which resistance had been organized during the first Chechen war had laid the basis for this: its decentralization

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23   Moscow had hoped for a reintegration of Chechnya into the federal constitutional bodies, that is they hoped Maskhadov would take a seat in the Federation Council of the Russian Federal Assembly. However, these expectations were disappointed. Cf. Kommersant daily of 5 February 1997, p. 5.

24   Cf. Simone Schwanitz/Andreas Fahrner, Wahlbeobachtung bei den Präsidentschaftswahlen in Tschetschenien [Election Monitoring in the Chechen Presidential Elections], in: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien [Federal Institute for Russian, East European and International Studies], Aktuelle Analysen [Current Analyses] 12/1997, p. 4.

25   It was only in his hometown Vedeno and its vicinity that he claimed a clear victory. Cf. Vadim Dubnov, Iz Groznogo v Dzhokhar-galu i obratno, in: Novoe vremya 5/1997, p. 6-10, here: p. 8; also see later on-location reports by Christiane Hoffmann in the FAZ of 13 May 1997, p. 8.

with "field commanders" at the head of local "fronts", members of which were recruited from certain teips, who had unlimited access to the economic resources of their districts and in addition, financed their activities through criminal enterprises as well as some aid money from Islamic foreign countries. Because of his military professionalism and his position as Dudaev's chief of general staff, Maskhadov enjoyed high standing among field commanders, however because of the nature of the traditional, social and regional basis of these structures, the typical military relationship, i.e. hierarchical chain of command, did not exist between them. This did not even change when, after the war, units of irregulars were transformed into the "Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkerya"; the field commanders retained their regional positions of power. Therefore the army was structurally more like a loosely tied group comprised of local teip- and clan-based mercenary contingents, a phenomenon that was called "military-territorial autonomy", which was a generally accurate designation.[26] In 1998 it was estimated that there were approximately 25 large fighting units and over 100 smaller groups in existence.[27]

Maskhadov himself could rely only on the Chechen "National Guard" who were completely loyal to him. This is the answer to the question why the President did not make use of the clearly expressed and impressive confidence in him as well as the powerful legitimacy he had gained during the election to disarm the field commanders and place the regions under the civil presidential executive body subordinated to him: If he had taken this course he would have risked a civil war with no certainty of success. After all, at that time the legitimating force of democratic elections in Chechnya was only limited. It collided with the legitimacy of the field commanders, which they drew from victories gained through their weapons and their personal charisma as military leaders, and further with the legitimizing effects of regional teip structures.

The predominant financial independence from the central government enjoyed by the field commanders because they had direct access to important economic resources was a strategic weakness to Maskhadov. Although the primary wealth of Chechnya and the backbone of its economy, oil production and refinement, was hit hard by the war,[28] a portion of the approximately 20 state-run enterprises, especially many of the 776 oil wells distributed throughout the country, still functioned and with their more or less primitive methods of exploitation[29] built a fundamental economic basis for most field

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26   So did Vladimir Sorin, the then chairman of the State Duma committee on national issues, cf. Nezavisimaya gazeta of 24 July 1998, pp. 1/3, here: p. 3.
27   See Alexej Koslatschkow, Kommt es im Kaukasus zu einem Aufstand? [Will there be Rebellion in the Caucasus?], In: Wostok 6/1998, pp. 23-26, here: p. 24.
28   Cf. Sergei Leskov, Gorduyu Chechnyu sogrevaet rossiiskoe teplo, in: Izvestiya of 14 September 1994, p. 4.
29   On the situation today: Anna Politkovskaya, Truba, in: Novaya gazeta of 31 July-6 August 2000, pp. 1/7.

commanders. However, they were also the object of their rivalries and the origin of numerous and at times violent disputes between them.

In addition, criminal forms of "economic profit-making" played an ever increasing role; these were fostered by the collapse of the Republic's economy as a result of destruction and the flight and expulsion of almost the entire Russian population, but also of hundreds and thousands of Chechens: Abductions to extort ransom money and trafficking human beings became lucrative "business branches".[30] Freight robberies, stealing from travellers, livestock thefts, even on the other side of the border, illegal trade in "duty-free transit" between Russia and the Transcaucasian as well as Middle-Eastern neighbour states (weapons, narcotics, alcohol, oil products; white-slave traffic) became part of daily life. In addition, robbed civilians as well as Russian soldiers were taken prisoner and exploited as slaves.[31] Because of these activities, the originally brightly radiating image of the Chechen Republic, created by the effect of the fight for freedom and Maskhadov's friendly character, rapidly became besmirched and darkened. The direction and posture of the country became increasingly distant from its claim to national statehood, independence and international recognition, and in 1998, took on the gloomy characteristics of a criminal enclave in the Northern Caucasus far from law and order.

The criminalization of the procurement of money and goods was in no way born from oppressive troubles of a country destroyed by war alone, but were, at least partially, a regression to forms of ensuring support for one's livelihood, which were legitimized by old Caucasian-Chechen custom and customary law. According to reports of visitors to the Caucasus, robberies, kidnapping, theft, but also exploitation and the sale of prisoners for slave work belonged to the local colour of the mountain tribes. And although the right to hospitality was holy to them, not all strangers were privy to it, only those who were welcomed and accepted as guests.[32]

In the name of justice, to complete the picture and to dampen the seriousness of the reproach stemming from this image, one must add that numerous businessmen, state officials and soldiers from Dagestan, Stavropol Kray, Moscow

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30 Cf. Odd Gunnar Skagestad, Keeping Hope Alive. Experiences of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (Ed.), OSCE Yearbook 1999, Baden-Baden 2000, pp. 211-225, here: p. 215; Otto Luchterhandt, Dagestan. Unaufhaltsamer Zerfall einer gewachsenen Kultur interethnischer Balance [Dagestan. The Inexorable Disintegration of a Mature Culture of Inter-Ethnic Balance], in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg [Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg], Hamburger Beiträge zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik [The Hamburg Contributions to Peace Research and Security Policy] 118/1999, pp. 22f.

31 Cf. Nezavisimaya gazeta of 25 May 2000, p. 4.

32 On this aspect see Uwe Halbach, Die Bergvölker (gorcy) als Gegner und Opfer: Der Kaukasus in der Wahrnehmung Rußlands [The Mountain Peoples (gortsy) as Opposition and Victim: The Caucasus Perceived by Russia], in: Kleine Völker in der Geschichte Osteuropas. Festschrift für Günther Stökl zum 75. Geburtstag [Small Ethnic Groups in Eastern European History. Commemorative Volume for Günther Stökl for his 75th Anniversary], Stuttgart 1991, pp. 52-65 with further references.

and other regions in Russia have been involved and earned money in these criminal businesses. This is still true even today.[33] Moscow's charge that Chechnya is a "free trade zone for criminals" is therefore not devoid of hypocrisy.

The Failed Attempt at Integration through Islamization

As a means against the anarchy gripping the surroundings and to achieve unity of political action, totally different political forces in Chechnya placed their bets on Islam. In fact they only accelerated the disintegration process.

In the Northern Caucasus and especially in Chechnya, the traditional profession of faith in Islam had always been tightly bound to the teip order. A significant exception to this was the period that Imam Shamil ruled (till 1859) because the strict order of his theocratic state was in opposition to the competing claims to leadership of the teip and tukhum rooted in the customs and codes of customary law.[34] This did not have a profound effect; the mountain peoples continued combining their traditional way of life determined by customary law with a kind of Islam that was not political or aggressive, but emerged in the form of Sufism, which was directed inwardly towards the spiritual and ritual needs of people living in private family units and tribal communities. This "people's Islam" took the form of two different holy paths (*tariqat*) in the doctrines of the Naqshbandiya and the Qadiriya.[35] At the end of the Murid holy war (1860-1862), the latter was preached by a Chechen sheikh, Kunta-Hadji and became very popular with the teips in the mountain region.[36]

Because traditionally the teips partially followed one doctrine, partially the other, they simultaneously assumed the form of "confessional" communities (*vird*), which in Chechnya - in contrast to Dagestan - followed mainly the Qadiriya tariqat.[37] Because of the hostility by the Soviet regime towards religion, the teip religious dimension, the link between teip and vird, became weaker.[38]

An Islamic renaissance began in the Northern Caucasus with the onset of perestroika. It opened the path for new intolerant trends, thus increasing conflict potential and ironically, accelerating the disintegration of Chechnya

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33 In this respect the research by Anna Politkovskaya is very "impressive", cited above (Note 29).

34 See Halbach, cited above (Note 4).

35 Cf. Silim Nasardinov, Mify o religii i politicheskaya praktika, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 23 February 1996, p. 3.

36 One of its forms of worship knitting the communities together is the zikr (also zikra) dance, which is danced by men. In former times and again during the Chechen war this dance was an expression of willingness to battle against Russian foreign domination. For a complete view see: Esadze, cited above (Note 15), pp. 217f.; Rotar', cited above (Note 8), pp. 2/3; Halbach, cited above (Note 4), pp. 217ff.

37 Cf. Nasardinov, cited above (Note 35), p. 3.

38 Cf. Iskanderjan, cited above (Note 6), p. 20.

contrary to the intentions of the supporters of this development. Dudaev encouraged the intensive revival and politicization of the Qadiriya tariqat with his deputy Yandarbiev who was very active in these matters.[39] At the same time he took the course of transforming Chechnya into an "Islamic state" and introducing the Sharia as state law, he turned Imam Shamil and his imamate into idols and - like Shamil - proclaimed the "holy war" against Russia after the beginning of the first Chechen war. The combination of these measures led to a declaration of war on the Chechens' traditional social order based on customary law, but Dudaev did not have to confront this problem any longer.

However, during the reign of his heirs - Yandarbiev, Maskhadov, Basaev and Kadyrov - these contradictions could no longer be overlooked. Even during Dudaev's time there were preachers from Islamic states in the Middle East who came to Chechnya and preached a radical, "pure" and at the same time militant political understanding of Islam. They could have won over numerous supporters - not least through the use of colossal financial enticements. The first *jamaats* were created, like those already in Dagestan, which were self-contained settlements whose people lived exclusively according to Islamic precepts.[40] Since then the Russian media has polemicized these and other politically oriented Islamic groups by labelling them all "Wahhabis", an unclear designation that however was also soon to be adopted by the political actors in Chechnya with the same polemic undertones.[41]

Maskhadov's radical opponents, Yandarbiev, Udugov and later Basaev, who lost against him in the presidential elections, were inclined towards the new currents in which the concepts of Wahhabi and Qadiriya flowed together. With their militant Islam propaganda and references to the "inheritance" of Imam Shamil and the "legacy" of Dzhokhar Dudaev, they made targeted attempts to weaken the authority and legitimacy of the President and overthrow Maskhadov. Moreover they dreamed of turning this politically radicalized Islam into a revolutionary spark in an anti-imperialist fight against Russia in the entire Northern Caucasus.

Maskhadov was totally unfamiliar with these concepts and visions. He was not an Islamic zealot, but a supporter of traditional people's Islam and a Chechen patriot. He refused to accept the Wahhabis and was just as decisively against them as the leader of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Chechnya, the Mufti Akhmad-Hadji Kadyrov whose support against the Islamists could be relied upon. Like his radical challengers however, Maskhadov followed the concept that Islam could be used as a resource to

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39   Cf. Ramazan Džabarov, Extremisten gegen Traditionalisten [Extremists against Traditionalists], in: Glaube in der 2. Welt 3/2000, pp. 15-18.

40   More in Otto Luchterhandt, Dagestan - An Ethnic "Powder Keg" on the Caspian Sea, in: OSCE Yearbook 1999, cited above (Note 30). pp. 225-246, here: pp. 235ff.

41   More in Uwe Halbach, "Wahhabiten" im Kaukasus und Zentralasien [The "Wahhabis" in the Caucasus and Central Asia], in: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien [Federal Institute for Russian, East European and International Studies], Aktuelle Analysen [Current Analyses] 19/1998; from a Russian viewpoint: Aleksandr Ignatenko, Islamizatsiya po-chechenski, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 20 November 1997, p. 5.

strengthen political unity among the people and to stem the tendency towards disintegration flowing from the teip order.[42] Whether this was done out of conviction, a readiness to compromise or calculation must remain open. In no way did he want to leave this important field of political ideological debate to his opponents. To be able to get this under control he initiated the "Chechen Islamic State" movement in August 1997 on a broad, country-wide basis,[43] which of course made him the prisoner of the developments that Yandarbiev had put into gear when he was acting as transitional President: Already in November 1996, i.e. just before the Chechen presidential and parliamentary elections, Islam had been declared the "state religion" through an alteration in the constitution.[44] Shortly thereafter "Sharia Courts" were established alongside the People's Courts from the Soviet period. These Sharia Courts had exclusive jurisdiction for all disputes between Muslims from then on. This step was also controversial in Chechnya. It was justified on the - doubtful - grounds that strict Islam customs would make the Sharia judges incorruptible and thus give higher authority to the Sharia Courts over the despised "Russian" courts.[45] The main motive behind this Islamic court reform however was to further strengthen Chechen independence by detaching it from Russian legal space.

A rationale, which one could take more seriously is perhaps the reasoning or expectation that Sharia Courts, because they are more highly accepted by Chechens, were a stronger counterweight to the blood feuds anchored in the customs and codes of customary law than the Russian Courts, whose decisions, experience had shown, had not been able to end disputes burdened by blood feuds in a binding manner. In reality, the increase in violent disputes between teips and increasing kidnappings of persons belonging to other teips during both Chechen wars made the blood feud law, which must be fulfilled, an additional burden to Chechen society. It is significant, that Ruslan Khasbulatov, the former Russian Parliamentary President and a Chechen himself from the North Terek region (the village of Tolstoi-Yurt), placed it second on the list of the main Chechen problems to be solved in the future.[46] Many families are affected by this problem, he said. Unfortunately one learns even less about the extent of this problem from current Chechen press coverage than about the teips, but - along with the teips - it presents an omnipresent force in political events.

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42   Cf. Maksim Shevchenko, Kakoe gosudarstvo stroit Chechnya?, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 12 August 1998, pp. 1/3.
43   Cf. Ignatenko, cited above (Note 41).
44   Article 4 of the constitutional alteration law in the version of 11 November 1996. Cf. Ignatenko, cited above (Note 41).
45   Cf. Andrei Kamakin, "My prosto khotim navesti poryadok", in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 25 September 1997, pp. 1/3.
46   Cf. his programmatic declaration of principles, with which Khasbulatov wanted to recommend himself for the position of administrative head of Chechnya: Chechnya: Poslednyaya nadezhda. Kak nado zavershit' konflikt, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 23 May 2000, p. 8. Khasbulatov put the solution to the "teip problem" (!) at the top of the list.

In November 1997, Maskhadov declared Chechnya an "Islamic Republic". The results of this move were realized much later: In February 1999, Maskhadov, in a decree, made the Sharia the generally binding law of the Republic, abolished the legislative function of the Parliament and commissioned the Members of Parliament and the Muftiate to develop a new Islamic constitution. With this step Maskhadov had conclusively abandoned the foundation of the constitution and thus also his legitimacy as President and relinquished the decisive edge he held over his Islamistic challengers. A draft of the constitution was completed in the spring of 1999, but its adoption through a referendum could no longer be implemented because of the renewed outbreak of war.

The danger that Maskhadov would become a victim of an opposition alliance of materially and economically interested field commanders and his Islamistic challengers, became imminent during the summer of 1998 when the Russian presidential representative to Chechnya, Valentin Vlassov, was kidnapped (1 May) and Maskhadov used this occasion to declare a state of emergency (23 June). In this manner he wished to fight criminality and in particular the scourge of kidnappings that had been occurring more effectively.[47] Three weeks later bloody fighting broke out in Gudermes, the second largest city in the country, between units of the President's National Guard and Islamistic fighting units ("Sharia Guard"; "Islamistic Regiment"). When because of this Maskhadov disbanded all "Wahhabi" organizations, in addition placed a ban on the Islamistic media and announced the expulsion of all irregulars from Arabic countries acting in league with field commanders, an assassination attempt (23 July) was made on his life, which he barely escaped.

Not only did Maskhadov's actions not have any effect, but an opposition alliance was formed against him in September 1998 with the revival of the "All-National Congress of the Chechen People" originally created by Dudaev. In addition to the notorious adventurer Salman Raduev, Shamil Basaev and Khunkarpash Israpilov - both of whom had shortly before sat in Maskhadov's government, the latter as head of the "Anti-terrorist Centre" - took up positions at the head of this alliance. Although Maskhadov was able to have Raduev sentenced to four years of prison for an attempted overthrow of the government by the "Supreme Sharia Court" (4 November 1998), the President no longer had the authority to enforce this sentence; Raduev could for all practical purposes move about freely all over the country and even in the capital, Grozny. Maybe Maskhadov hoped that he could keep the Islamistic opposition in check, in particular through the objective institutional "Islamic" authority of the Sharia Courts, which the President controlled to a limited de-

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47   Cf. Moskovskie novosti of 17-24 May 1998, pp. 6/7. 1998 was Maskhadov's fateful year. See Uwe Halbach, Die Tschetschenische Republik Itschkeria 1998 [The Chechen Republic of Ichkerya 1998], in: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien [Federal Institute for Russian, East European and International Studies], Aktuelle Analysen [Current Analyses] 49/1998.

gree. But his sums did not add up because *de facto* the field commanders were unassailable.

Thus in 1999, the overly powerful divided forces in the country drove it deeper and deeper into anarchy. When the combat units of the combined forces of the "Jordanian" Al Khattab and those of the "Congress of the Peoples of Chechnya and Dagestan" led by Basaev and Udugov invaded neighbouring Dagestan in July 1999[48] and there was no concrete reaction from Maskhadov this was tantamount to the President's capitulation, to the admission of his powerlessness. Since then Maskhadov's name is only a symbol, which does not radiate any brilliance.[49]

Moscow's Temporary Administration of Chechnya

Because even before the outbreak of the second Chechnya war, President Maskhadov represented little more than his own power base, one can understand Moscow's refusal up to now to accept him as a negotiating partner - if this was in fact the real reason for their refusal. However, this is not the real reason. In reality President Vladimir Putin is no longer orienting his attempts towards a solution to the Chechnya problem based on the model of negotiations between Chechnya and Russia as they were carried out up to 1998, but is centring it on the principle of a one-sided military administrative scheme imposed by Moscow.[50] An outline of how this was supposed to work could already be seen in the (temporary) "administration of the Chechen Republic"[51] created by Putin on 8 June 2000 by decree and in particular the personnel decisions made. While the administrative heads of many of the 18 districts are Russians, Kadyrov, the Mufti of Chechnya, was appointed central head of the administration with Bislan Gantamirov as his deputy.[52] These decisions on personnel followed an all too well-known basic pattern: Kadyrov comes from one of the most important teips in the country, namely from the

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48 Cf. Uwe Halbach, Krieg in Dagestan [The War in Dagestan], in: Bundesinstitut für ost-wissenschaftliche und internationale Studien [Federal Institute for Russian, East European and International Studies], Aktuelle Analysen [Current Analyses] 28/1999; Alexander Iskanderjan, Der Krieg in Dagestan [The War in Dagestan], in: Wostok 4/1999, pp. 18-20.

49 Maskhadov's transformation from a professional soldier who sticks to his ethics to a guerrilla using terrorist methods may be understandable from a human point of view. However this does not bring Chechnya any further and degrades Maskhadov to the level of Raduev or Basaev. For more on these developments cf. FAZ of 4 July 2000, p. 8, as well as of 5 July 2000, p. 3.

50 For more on this, see the official statement by the President Putin's Chechnya Representative, Sergei Yastrshembski, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 18 July 2000, p. 2; In addition, the remarks of FSB head of department, Alexander Sdanovich in the round-table discussions in Nezavisimaya gazeta, 16 June 2000 supplement, pp. 9/12-14, here: p. 12.

51 Text in: Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2000, No. 24, Pos. 2545.

52 For background information see Nezavisimaya gazeta of 21 June 2000, pp. 1/2. For portraits on these two see the FAZ of 17 June 2000, p. 12 and/or of 3 May 2000, p. 16. Additional materials and especially interviews in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 14 June 2000, pp. 1/3; 1 July 2000, pp. 1/2.

Benoi teip based in the second largest Chechen city, Gudermes, whereas Gantamirov, as was previously mentioned, is from the Chankhoi teip. There is not only rivalry between these two teips, but personal enmity between Kadyrov and Gantamirov who already during the first Chechnya war, which Kadyrov officially declared a "holy war", fought on opposite sides. From the very start Gantamirov did not leave any doors closed to prevent President Putin's appointment of Kadyrov in June, but this proved fruitless. With the appointment of these two personalities, Moscow was following its century-old unaltered course of the principle of "divide and rule".

These two representatives of the administration could not have more different personal profiles and characters. Kadyrov enjoys a certain amount of standing as a spiritual leader, but does not have any experience in state administration, economics or finances. He does not have the necessary qualifications to carry out practical tasks of Chechen reconstruction. All the same he is regarded as a person with integrity. The opposite is true of Gantamirov who is responsible for the administration of the security apparatus and supervision of the Chechen police. One can only describe his appointment as a cynical provocation. In 1998, a Moscow court sentenced the former mayor of Grozny to six years in prison for misappropriation of funds on a large scale,[53] but Yeltsin pardoned him in November 1999 to be able to utilize his experience and connections in the retaking of Grozny. Within a short period of time Gantamirov had gained the support of over a thousand men from his teip and clan. Apparently army leaders were very pleased with his dedication; the Chief of General Staff, Kvashnin, personally promoted him to Colonel.

Gantamirov's activities as administrative head proceeded in a manner one generally presumed he would take from the start: He refused to do his job from the official seat of the temporary administration in Gudermes because he did not have the support of the teip grass roots there and instead moved to the familiar city of Grozny where he has lived ever since. In Grozny he made sure that a close relative, Supyan Mokhchaev was appointed the mayor of Grozny and that district administrative offices in Grozny were taken over by other members of the Chankhoi teip. Gantamirov's intimate friends from the same teip also took over leading positions in Urus-Martan and Archnoi-Martan.

As a prominent representative of the Benoi teip, Kadyrov benevolently supported Moscow's plan to move the country's capital to Gudermes. However, this led to decisive resistance by Gantamirov, who would have lost a considerable amount of influence if this solution had been implemented.

Kadyrov under no circumstances would have accepted the clan structure of his deputy. When he suspended Gantamirov's appointments in July, this led to outright confrontation between the two: On 18 July 2000, Gantamirov with the mayor of Grozny and 200 militia men from his "Chechen Militia" moved

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53 For the legal proceedings see Nezavisimaya gazeta of 22 October 1997, p. 3; Kommersant daily of 28 July 1998, p. 5.

into Gudermes, surrounded Kadyrov's office and attempted to force him to reverse these personnel decisions. As could have been expected, an attempt at mediation by a Russian military commander did not produce any results because Gantamirov stubbornly insisted that the appointments for positions in Grozny be left to his own discretion.

This is how the divisive tendency of the teip order, which was the country's undoing in the "Chechen Republic of Ichkerya", has also already influenced the "administration of Chechnya" under Russian auspices, just after it was set up.

One can easily believe that it was not easy for President Putin to appoint Kadyrov.[54]

Of course, he could also have chosen the most prominent Chechen in Moscow, the former Parliamentary President of Russia, Khasbulatov, who has since 1994 been considered a "third side" and the personnel alternative for a loyal Chechnya and is prepared to take on the job. However Khasbulatov is considered headstrong and furthermore would not be able to fulfil the task, which the Kremlin has given to Kadyrov. Moscow needs the Mufti to help them convince war-tired field commanders to put down their arms.[55] At the same time, the appointment of two Chechen leaders who are enemies is useful in helping the Russians maintain control over their work. It prevents them from conjointly following Chechen interests behind Moscow's back. The status of the temporary administration of Chechnya shows that there is no serious willingness to improve the situation in Chechnya.[56]

Conclusions

1. The hypothesis advocated by Chechens of differing political colours that one must allow them to solve their own problems and not allow foreign intervention into their internal affairs thus leading to an improvement in their way of life has, because of the events of the last few decades, proved wrong. There would have been a chance of success from August 1996 to August 1999 when the Chechens were practically independent and had constitutional institutions (a president, government, parliament, constitutional court) with clear-cut, not previously known democratic legitimacy. The political-military elite of the country, those who possessed real - central and regional - power did not take the opportunity to use it rationally, but placed their egotism above the general interest of reconstruction and the creation of a functional nation state and thus plunged the country into chaos. In this manner they gam-

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54 Cf. the interview with him in Paris Match of 5 July 2000; Russian text in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 8 July 2000, pp. 1/6.
55 Cf. Moskovskie novosti of 1-7 August 2000, p. 6.
56 Cf. Lema Turpalov, Voinu v Chechne zatyagivayut iskustvenno, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 29 July 2000, pp. 1/2.

bled away a historic opportunity, which has little chance of arising again. The burden of the blame can be placed on President Maskhadov for not having prevented this development.

2. Chechen territory is so ravaged and destroyed as a result of two wars fought in complete violation of all international humanitarian law regulations that the Republic will not be in a position to work its way to a minimal level of modern civilization - neither from an administrative nor infrastructural nor economic perspective. Chechen energies have been exhausted by huge losses in human life, innumerable deaths, the injured, the handicapped, through the misery of hundreds and thousands of refugees and moreover they have been debilitated and poisoned by enmity, hatred and mistrust. Therefore Chechnya needs outside support and aid to be able to rebuild, to recover and renew the country. Naturally this must come from within the Russian Federation itself, not only from its central government, but also from the regions neighbouring Chechnya.

However, the opportunity for and effectivity of aid from these sources have huge obstacles in their paths. As is well known, the financial and economic resources of the Moscow central government are so meagre that they do not have the slightest chance of sufficing to fulfil the most elementary tasks at the federal level. Furthermore, the neighbouring regions of Chechnya - Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, the Stavropol Kray - which to a certain extent have themselves been severely hit by the war belong to the poorest, structurally weakest regions of the Federation. Chechnya cannot expect sustainable aid from them and only very limited assistance from the federal centre.

From a psychological perspective, Russian readiness to provide assistance is practically zero because of the wars they have had to fight and the widely held racist discriminatory attitude towards the Chechens. Aid to Chechnya is not popular in today's impoverished Russia.

On the Chechen side, the traumatic experience with the authorities, the police and Russian armed forces have not encouraged readiness for close co-operation supported by harmony and trust. The chain of disappointing experiences in the daily events of government is long and further links have continually been added as a glance at the grotesque aspects of Moscow's temporary administration in Chechnya shows or at the current administration of the oil and gas systems, the profits of which have been flowing into the private pockets of - Russian - civilian and military clan structures.[57]

Nevertheless the industrial energy sector could be an important key to the reconstruction of Chechnya. Although the oil and natural gas reserves have only little significance for Russia altogether, for Chechnya itself they could be very important if the profits from energy enterprises

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57   Cf. the impressive research of Politkovskaya, cited above (Note. 29).

were to remain in the Republic. This factor would provide a good basis for the economic recovery of the Republic.[58] The Moscow central government would of course have to be prepared to allow Chechnya to control its own energy sector and take the appropriate steps towards this. A decision of this kind cannot be excluded, but currently seems rather improbable.

3. Because of these circumstances, the question is in what way Chechnya today and in the medium-term future could be provided with foreign aid. It is very urgent that investments be made in the energy sector and the communication system of the country; however it is also clear that no foreign investor - at least for the time being - is going to go into a country that has been "bombed back to the stone age" and torn apart by no less brutal guerrilla warfare,[59] even though a commitment of this kind would be hugely significant to lessen the conflict and lead to domestic peace.

In conjunction with this, considerations as to what ways international organizations and specifically the OSCE could put into effect tasks leading to the end of the war and the development of peace in Chechnya are more obvious. The OSCE has long been the organization with the most intensive experience and simultaneously can take the highest credit for negotiating and diminishing the conflict between Chechnya and Russia in the past.[60] Therefore it is an important achievement that Russia has agreed to the renewed presence of an OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya with an office in Snamenskoe/North Terek region.[61] The most important part of its mandate is to offer support for the construction of democratic institutions in Chechnya and to offer negotiating services for the political regulation of the conflict with the goal of ending the fighting. It is clear that the latter has the highest priority. At this point in time the task is to create steady contact through talks with Chechen partisans now acting in the underground, especially with Aslan Maskhadov. The OSCE could build on its experiences in 1996, which led to the Khasavyurt ceasefire agreement. Of course "Khasavyurt" will

58　For economic and financial policy considerations on how to organize the reconstruction see Vladimir Jurovitski, Chechenski kapkan, in: Nezavisimaya gazeta of 4 May 2000, p. 8.

59　For more on this see the reports in: Obshchaya gazeta of 13-19 July 2000, p. 2; Izvestiya of 21 July 2000, p. 3; Nezavisimaya gazeta of 20 July 2000, p. 2; Nezavisimaya gazeta of 18 July 2000, p. 2.

60　Cf. Ursel Schlichting, Das Engagement der OSZE in Tschetschenien [OSCE Involvement in Chechnya], in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg [Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg]/IFSH (Ed.), OSZE-Jahrbuch [OSCE Yearbook] 1995, Baden-Baden 1995, pp. 211-220; Tim Guldimann, Supporting the Doves against the Hawks. Experiences of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (Ed.), OSCE Yearbook 1997, Baden-Baden 1998, pp. 135-143; Skagestad, cited above (Note 30).

61　Cf. OSCE set to return to Chechnya, OSCE Newsletter, May 2000, pp. 1-2.

not recur because Moscow will no longer relinquish the presence of Russian security forces in Chechnya. Finally the continuing second Chechnya war is serving to re-establish the territorial integrity of Russia, which in principle particularly Western states support.

Nevertheless there is considerable leeway within Moscow's stipulations to solve the issues affecting the future political order of a "Chechen Republic inside Russia". This opens up a large field of action for the OSCE and its Assistance Group to mediate, which could be effected in close co-operation with the Council of Europe.

Another important dimension of activities directed towards confidence-building as well as control through an international presence would be the continual contact of the OSCE Assistance Group with the temporary administration of Chechnya as well as with the staffs of the acting security forces on Chechen territory, the ministry of defence, the ministry of the interior and the Russian state security services (FSB). One of the main goals of these contacts would have to be the combating and preventing violations of human rights by marauding Russian units - one of the main problems of the military presence in Chechnya today, which has been driving the Chechen population into the arms of the guerrillas and lengthening the war artificially.

In the long-term the OSCE could further make fundamental contributions to easing the conflict if it successfully convinced the Moscow central government to allow the Republic to enjoy the profits of the oil and natural gas industries. To put this into effect an administrative model would have to be developed, which would exclude private access of Chechen and Russian clans to these resources. Against the background of the teip and clan structures described, as well as endemic corruption, this would be a "Herculean task", but it should nevertheless be attempted. To be able to do this the inclusion of international economic organizations and well-known consulting firms should be canvassed.

4. A decisive prerequisite for the success of the mission of the OSCE Assistance Group is that in their negotiations they should no longer work based on the hypothesis of maintaining the political-constitutional status of Chechnya open, but they should see their task as aiding the Chechen Republic in gaining a position with equal rights in the Russian Federation to make peaceful development in the tension between autonomy and integration possible. As a federal member ("Subject of the Federation"), Chechnya, also in the future, will face the unsolved task - under the omen of their strivings for independence - of the formation of functional modern statehood. The solution to this task would be associated with a gradual transformation of the teip order. This is, at best, a long-term prospect.

In the medium-term, the problem of building democratic institutions must be solved. This addresses the continuation of the mandate of the

OSCE Assistance Group. In this respect they can rely on their far-reaching experience as joint organizers of the January 1997 elections. In view of the teip structures in this society, parliamentary elections are particularly important because this would allow the teips to participate in government to a broader extent and increase their representation at the central level of the Republic. The Parliament could play the part of a fundamental clearing-house function in the reconciliation of interests between the regions, clans and teips and thus make a large contribution to the reduction of the conflict potential in Chechnya.