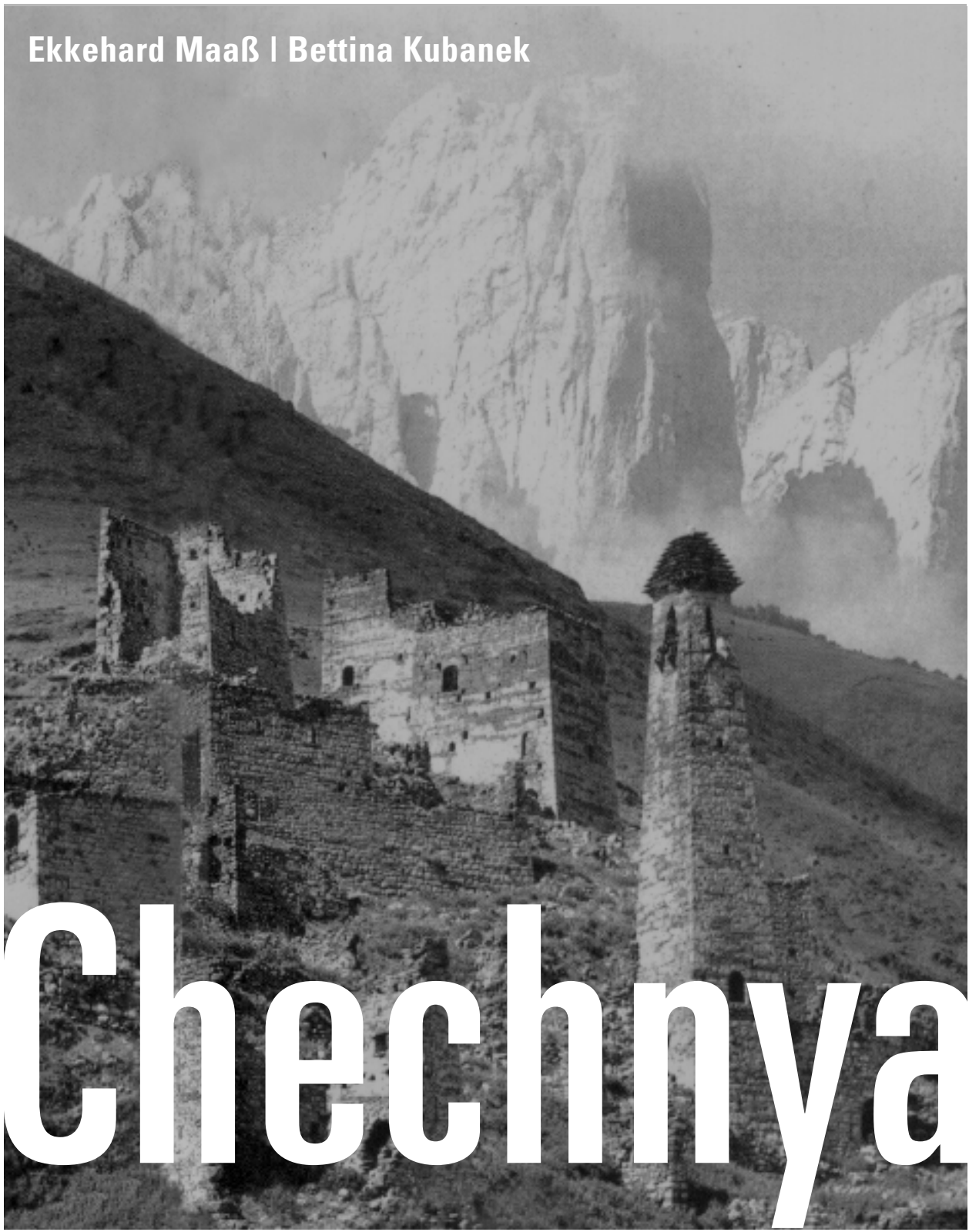


Ekkehard Maaß | Bettina Kubanek



Chechnya

War and History

400 Years of Colonial Conquest – 400 Years of Resistance

This exhibition was produced by the German-Caucasian Society

An old Chechen legend



A long, long time ago there was a violent storm. It plucked trees by their roots, caused rivers and seas to burst their banks and razed mountains flat. It was so violent that all living beings fled before it. None resisted but a lone wolf, who stood fast on all four legs to spite the storm. The storm grew angry, tearing the wolf's hide from his body in tatters and biting him until his blood ran, and yet the wolf would not flinch from where he stood... for he had no other home but this and refused to abandon it, however great the misfortune that befell it.

Chechnya – War and History

400 Years of Colonial Conquest – 400 Years of Resistance

When Chechnya left the Soviet Union in 1991 to declare independence, its prospects were just as real as those of former Soviet republics in the Baltic, South Caucasus and Asia. Never did the Chechens imagine that their country would be totally destroyed by air raids and artillery fire during two Russian wars while Western democracies, for the most part, stood by. 200,000 dead, the plight of refugees, concentration camps, purges and cruel torture have uprooted Chechen society and driven people to a despair that makes them increasingly unpredictable. The spread of the conflict throughout the North Caucasus and its devastating impact on Russian society itself should be a cause for deep concern among the governments of Europe.

This exhibition seeks to show visitors that there is long-standing continuity to the conflict between Russia and Chechnya and, with the aid of historical pictures, reports, portraits and statistics, to offer material so that people can form their own opinions. It hopes to demonstrate that by remaining silent about the crimes committed in Chechnya by the Russian armed forces we, too, would bear a portion of the blame, and that there is a need for our commitment. Rather than waiting fifty years to conduct research into the genocide against the Chechen people, we must put an end to it now. A chunk of Europe is dying in Chechnya. It is a part of Europe and its unique and ancient culture has enriched this continent.

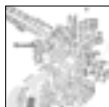
Ekkehard Maass, Berlin 2003





Where is Chechnya? – Geographical data

3



Chechnya lies in the **north-east of the Caucasus Mountains** which stretch along Europe's southern edge between the Black and Caspian Seas. Together with the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia it covers a surface area of 19,300 km² and at the last Soviet census in 1989 the population numbered 1,282,000. Of these 750,000 were Chechens, 186,000 Ingush, 320,000 Russians, 14,500 Armenians and 12,000 Ukrainians.



Grozny before 1994



The capital **Grozny**, with 300,000 inhabitants, was the largest city and the cultural linchpin of the North Caucasus. Grozny boasted three theatres, a national museum, the famous Chekhov Library, a university, the largest institute of petroleum in the world, avenues, parks, mosques and churches.

Chechnya has an **agrarian economy**. Its main crops were wheat, corn, tobacco and vegetables. Herds of cows and sheep were seen all over the country. During the Soviet period the extraction and processing of oil was by no means insignificant, particularly the production of kerosene, paraffin and paints and varnishes. Heavily polluting factories, such as the biochemical site in Gudermes which made hormone preparations for animal feedstuffs and battery-making plant in Grozny, were closed down in 1991. Chechnya had a number of furniture factories and one unusual facility, the four underground storeys of the Red Hammer factory which produced heavy machinery, notably tanks and army vehicles.



The first **oilfields** in Chechnya were discovered in 1833. Oil has actually been mined since 1906 and in 1917 it accounted for 17% of Russia's entire output of natural petroleum. Today's oil deposits still amount to about 30 million tonnes. After the First Chechen War certain field commanders exploited the wells illegally and sold oil on the black market to neighbouring republics. During the current war this business has been pursued by the occupying Russian forces in their own interest. Chechnya's oil has at most been a secondary factor behind the war. When the pipeline from Baku to Russia could no longer be secured in Chechnya, it was rapidly re-routed.

In the wake of these two wars all Chechen industry has ceased operation. Agricultural land is riddled with landmines. **80% of the infrastructure**, including housing, hospitals, schools, and the water supply and sewage system, has been **destroyed**.

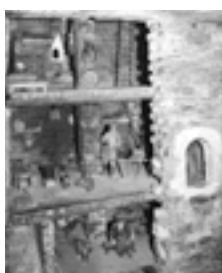


A burnt-out refinery



4

Chechnya – A Caucasian country



Inside a residential tower

top: an early medieval tower complex. Every Chechen clan had a defence tower and several towers to live in. These have all deliberately been destroyed in the Chechen Wars.

The Caucasus: majestic peaks, icy glaciers, rugged canyons, blossoming gardens in valleys and plains, tables decked for eating and almost suicidal hospitality. In ancient times the Caucasus were regarded as the **cradle of civilisation**. There have been human settlements here for 700,000 years. Arable farming and trade links date back to the Late Stone Age. This is where **Noah** and his Ark ran aground, where **Prometheus** was chained to the rocks, where Jason met **Medea**, Princess of Colchis, and joined forces with her to steal the Golden Fleece – an indication that Caucasians have been masters of the copper- and goldsmith's craft for 5,000 years. The Caucasus also symbolises a tragic and never-ending struggle for freedom and independence waged by local peoples against the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Persians, Mongols, Turks and Russians. The greatest tragedy was the Russian expansion that drove out the Cherkess and Lazi, led to the annihilation of the Ubykhs and now threatens to destroy the largest ethnic group in the North Caucasus, the Chechens.



There is hardly any other region in the world that can rival the Caucasus as a self-contained geographical and cultural formation that evolved historically to contain such a rich diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. The concept “Caucasian peoples” refers not only to the original inhabitants of the North and South Caucasus, such as the Georgians, Abkhazians, Adyghians, Kabardians, Ingush, Chechens and the Lakks, Dargin, Lezgin, Rutuls, Udi and other ethnic groups of Dagestan, but also the peoples who were formed by migration and assimilation, such as the Armenians, Ossetians, Balkars, Karachai, Azeri, Kumyk and Nogay, to mention only the largest communities. More than 40 nations have their home in the Caucasus and speak a Caucasian, Iranian, Turkish, Mongol, Semitic, Slavic, Romance or Uralic language.



Although all these peoples have their own independent culture, one cannot fail to recognise their Caucasian affinity, which has evolved over many centuries of living side by side. It is reflected in clothing, dances, songs, table manners, expressions of pleasure and above all in their **code of morals**, the **Adat**. They may subscribe to various religions – the Armenians and Georgians have had an official Christian Church since the 4th century, while Islam arrived from the east to spread across the North Caucasus from the 16th century – but some of the Caucasian code of honour is still flourishing today. In Chechnya a young man will immediately stand up if an older man enters the room, and will only speak if spoken to in the presence of his elders. When a man meets a woman he must put his own interests to one side and offer her assistance. Within ethnic groups and clans, **solidarity** is the very fountain of life. Without it these mountain peoples would not survive. They sow, harvest, build, marry, mourn and fight together. Courage, generosity and readiness to help are the prime virtues of the valiant man. Deceitfulness and intrigue, greed and power lust, or bragging about a possession, are considered shameful. The same applies to dishonest trading.

Hospitality is a major feature of the culture. A guest is considered to be a messenger from God and will be honoured, even if he is an arch-enemy. It can happen that a man is plunged into great debt because he is obliged to receive his visitors in the proper manner. Another vital principle is giving. If a guest admires an object in the house, the host must give it to him, even if it is a family heirloom. “What you grant as a gift you have won, what you hide away you have lost,” insists Georgia’s 12th-century national poet Shota Rustaveli in “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”. In recent centuries many Caucasian traditions have fallen prey to war, flight, deportation or waves of newcomers. And yet many have remained intact among the descendants of those North Caucasians driven into the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, some of whom ended up in Germany in more recent years as Turkish migrant workers.



The Chechen dance company “Vainakh”

bottom: A woman may mediate in a dispute by throwing a white veil between two adversaries.

Georgians entertain friends





6

Who are the Chechens?

*The Chechens need liberty
because without it they would
lose their human dignity and no
longer be Chechens.*

Dolkhan Khojaev



Man with burka (felt cape), papakha (fur hat) and kinshal (dagger)

The Chechens are the native inhabitants of the central North-East Caucasus. Their own term for themselves is “nokhchi” (the people). There are early references to them in Ancient Greek, Armenian and Georgian sources, where they are designated variously as Dzurdzuki, Michkizi, Burteli, Shishan, Nakhchmaty, Shibutyani, Aukhs and Kistis. The name Chechnya (or Chechenia) was derived in the 18th century from the village of Chechana 15 kilometres south-east of Grozny.

If we are to believe the **tyaptari**, the old Chechen chronicles inscribed on parchment rolls that were burnt at Stalin’s behest in 1944, the Nakh tribes arrived here from Sumeria via Urartu/Media. By the first millennium AD they had settled between the Terek, Aksai and Argun rivers as Lamanan-nakh (mountain clans) and between the Terek and Sunzha rivers as Okharan-nakh (valley clans). In the 8th century BC the valley clans merged with the Scythians/Sarmatians, who spoke an Iranian language, and became the Alans, the ancestors of today’s Ossetians. The mountain clans founded an association of clans called **Dzurdzuketia**, which survived into the early Middle Ages despite incursions by Khazars, Huns, Arabs, Persians, Mongols and others.

When **Tamerlane** reached the Caucasus in the 14th century the Chechens must have resisted so fiercely that Tamerlane sought to make them his allies and presented them with a precious sabre. According to the saga, he asked his commander: “Is it true that you have subjugated the Chechens, that their widows are weeping and wailing?” – “No, sire,” the officer was compelled to admit. “They are playing on their panduri and dancing!” – “Then you have not vanquished them!”

Where did the Chechens derive this force to resist? It was rooted in the social organisation of the **nokhchicha**, or **clan association**, and the personal liberty of every Chechen. The Chechens’ homeland was the only territory in the Caucasus where feudal structures never took hold. They knew neither princes nor kings, neither taxes nor the force of the state. They were free farmers working their own land, and their only duties were to their reputation and that of their family and clan. Every clan lived in a specific area, had its own holy mountain and built its own towers for defence and residential purposes. At each tier – the extended family (dosal), the **clan (taip)**, the tribe (tukkhum) and the country (mekhk) – there was a **council of elders** to determine social and politi-



Chechen family photos around the turn of the last century



Men from Kurchaloy



cal affairs (although reputation was the decisive factor in the election of its members, rather than age). The system was founded on the **code of common law, the adat**, which applied throughout the Caucasus. It required respect for older people, women and children, hospitality and social justice. It also stipulated that nature should be protected, that animals should not be hunted while grazing, and that a community decision was needed to fell a fruit-bearing tree. It was also the basis for jurisdiction, blood feuding and all social matters. The greatest moral virtue to which it subscribed was to defend one's family, the tombs of the dead, the country and its liberty. Riding and the use of weapons was learned in childhood. All Chechen greetings contain the word "freedom".

Chechnya is a modern society with **independently minded women** who study at universities and pursue their own careers. The women in particular resist medieval interpretations of Islam which force them to wear yellow headscarves and seek to confine them to a life as mothers and housewives. The campaign for a democratic state of the Western type is driven primarily by women.



above: Street scene in Grozny, 1997

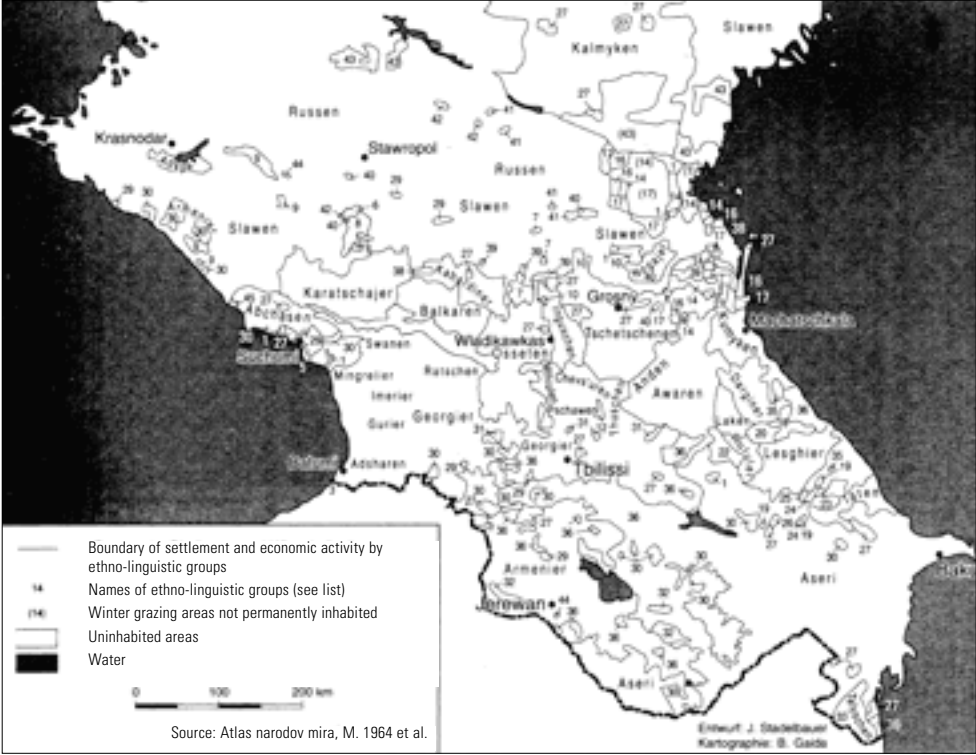
left: Student in Grozny, 2002

Chechen taipy (clans)

- Achaloy
- Aitkalloy
- Alaroy
- Amakhoy
- Barchakhoy
- Bavloy
- Bekakhoy
- Belgatoy
- Belkhoy
- Benoy
- Biltay
- Bugaroy
- Chantiy
- Charkhoy
- Chartoy
- Chermoy
- Chinkhoy
- Chinnakhoy
- Chungaroy
- Day
- Dirakhoy
- Dishniy
- Egashbatoy
- Elistanzkhoy
- Eltparkhoy
- Enakalloy
- Enganoy
- Erkhoy
- Ersenoy
- Eshniy
- Galay
- Gandaloy
- Garchoy
- Gattoy
- Gendarganoy
- Giloy
- Gordaloy
- Goy
- Guchingiy
- Gukhoy
- Gunoy
- Hacharoy
- Hakkoy
- Hakmadoy
- Hurkoy
- Ihirkhoy
- Ishkhoy
- Italchkhoy
- Kakankhoy
- Kamalkhoy
- Kegankhoy
- Keloy
- Key
- Kharachoy
- Khersanoy
- Khikhoy
- Khildeharoy
- Khimoy
- Khoy
- Khulandoy
- Khurkhoy
- Kontaroy
- Kuloy
- Kurchaloy
- Lashkaroy
- Makashoy
- Marshaloy
- Maystoy
- Mazarkhoy
- Melardoy
- Merloy
- Mershoy
- Mulkoy
- Muzhakhoy
- Nashkhoy
- Nikaroy
- Nikhaloy
- Nishaloy
- Nokkoy
- P'harchoy
- Pamtoy
- Peshkhoy
- Qartoy
- Rigakhoy
- Satoy
- Sharoy
- Shikaroy
- Shirdoy
- Shonoy
- Shyndiy
- Spiridoy
- Tertakhoy
- Tulkoy
- Tumsoy
- Turkkhoy
- Vappiy
- Varandoy
- Vashhandaroy
- Zadoy
- Zahandoy
- Zandakoy
- Zerbeloy
- Zezankhoy
- Zhevoy
- Zirkhoy
- Zogoy
- Zumsoy
- Zursakoy

Chechen tukkhum (tribal unions)

- Akkiy
- Chantiy
- Chebarloy
- Ershtkhoy (Orstkhoy)
- Myalkiy
- Nokhchmakkhakhoy
- Sharoy
- Shotoy
- Terloy



8

Ethnic groups in the Caucasus

CAUCASIAN LANGUAGES

Kartvelian (South Caucasian) family

- 1 Georgian
 - a Tush
 - b Racha
 - c Pshav
 - d Imeretian
 - e Ajarian
 - f Mtiul
 - g Gurian
 - h Khevsur
 - i Ingilo
- 2 Mingrelian
- 3 Laz
- 4 Svan

- 22 Tsakhur
- 23 Budukh
- 24 Kryz
- 25 Khinalug
- 26 Udi

INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

- 27 Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian)
- 28 Moldavian (Romanian)
- 29 Greek
- 30 Armenian

Abkhazo-Adyghian (West Caucasian) family

- 5 Abkhaz
- 6 Abaza
- 7 Kabardian
- 8 Circassian
- 9 Adyghian
 - k Abadsekh
- l Shapsug

- Iranian family
 - 31 Ossetic
 - 32 Kurdish
 - 33 Talishi
 - 34 Tati
 - 35 Mountain Jews

ALTAIC LANGUAGES

Dagestanian (East Caucasian) family

- Nakhi sub-group
 - 10 Chechen
 - 11 Ingush
 - 12 Kist
 - 13 Bats

- Turkic family
 - 36 Azeri (Azerbaijani)
 - 37 Karachay
 - 38 Balkar
 - 39 Kumyk
 - 40 Nogay
 - 41 Turkmen
 - 42 Tatar

Dagestani sub-group strictu sensu (Avar-Ando)

- 14 Avar
- 15 Andi
- 16 Lakk
- 17 Dargwa
- 18 Tabasaran
- 19 Lezgi
- 20 Agul
- 21 Rutul

- Mongolian family
 - 43 Kalmyk



A café in Grozny, 1997

Language

9

Chechen, like Ingush and Bats, belongs to the Vainakh subset of North-East Caucasian languages. The ancient Caucasian languages constitute a branch of their own in the human language tree and are not related to the Semitic, Turkic or Indo-Germanic languages. The **Caucasus** was known to the Ancients as the **mount of tongues**. At least 46 languages are spoken here, making it one of the most ethnically differentiated regions in the world. Many of the peoples who have preserved their language and traditions for millennia are extremely small in size. The Caucasian linguistic family embraces the North-West Caucasian languages Abkhaz, Adyghian, Circassian and Kabardian, the North-East Caucasian languages Ingush, Chechen, Avar, Andi, Lakk, Dargwa, Lezgi and others spoken in Dagestan, and the South Caucasian languages encountered in Georgia: Svan, Mingrelian, Laz and other Kartvelian tongues.

Scholars assume that the Caucasian languages are inter-related, but the evidence to prove this theory is still insufficient.

The Chechens are, nevertheless, closely related to the **Ingush** who live in the neighbouring republic. And also to the **Bats**, who moved on to the more fertile valleys of Georgia in the 16th century and became Christians. They have kept their language. The **Kists**, who speak an unusual Chechen dialect, migrated to the Pankissi Valley in Georgia in the first half of the 19th century. They remained Sunni Moslems.

The Chechens do not have their own **alphabet** like the Armenians and Georgians. After Islam was established they used Arabic script, as old gravestones testify. In the mid-1920s Latin letters were introduced, but none of these adapted systems really asserted itself. In the mid-1940s Latin was replaced by Cyrillic, which is still written in Chechnya today, although since independence there have been efforts to return to the Latin or Arabic script. The two reforms of the Soviet alphabet were successful repression mechanisms: in each case all books printed in the old script were destroyed, sapping the cultural heritage of the people.





Mosque at Itum-Kale

Religion



Tusholi, the fertility goddess

For a long time the Chechens worshipped **natural deities**, especially the sun-god Malkha-Dela, whose name has become the generic Chechen term for God. In the mountain regions graves are still called sun-graves, and ancient rock art with solar symbols testifies to the cult of the sun. One of the oldest Chechen tukkhum (tribe) is Myalkiy, the “people of the sun”. Other gods revered by the Vainakhs (Chechens and Ingush) include Ziu-Dela (the fire-god), Elta (god of hunting), Tusholi (goddess of fertility) and Erda (goddess of the house). Others were Dika-Dela (goddess of truth), Kchokha-Dela (goddess of peace) and Pkha-Dela (god of place). Chechens still recall a rite of rain to summon the rain-god Khin-Dela. A group of children would go from door to door, among them a boy with a waterproof bag over his head. They would cry: “Send a storm, God of Rain!” The occupants of the house would drench the lad with water and hand out sweets to the children.

There is no evidence that Chechnya fostered any links with Christianity in Armenia, Georgia and Caucasian Albania. If they did, any missionary attempts proved as unsuccessful as those of the Arabs seeking to spread Islam in the 7th century.



Mosque with a defensive tower as its minaret

The form of **Islam** practised in Chechnya today, the **Sufism** of the Naqshbandi and Qadiri tariqats (orders), arrived from Dagestan in the late 18th century. The essence of Sufism is a close bond between a pupil (murid – the seeker) and a teacher, the sheikh. The sheikh promises to help the murid obtain mystic experience of God and to intercede for him at the Last Judgment. The murid shows humility and obedience to the sheikh and receives his instruction on all questions of religion and life. We do not know for certain whether Sufism was already being taught by Sheikh Mansur Ushurma, who organised ghazavat (holy war) against the conquering Russian infidels from 1785 to 1791 on the basis of strict religious morals and the shariat (Islamic law). From 1825 the Chechens began to back the Dagestani religious leaders Mullah Mohammed, Ghazi Mohammed and **Imam Shamil**. Shamil established a theocratic state with religious foundations in Chechnya and Dagestan, and for forty years it resisted Tsarist expansionism. It eventually crumbled, however, being too autocratic to suit the Chechen concept of freedom, exacerbated by incompatibilities between shariat and adat, and no doubt the powerlessness that prevailed in the face of Russia’s untiring armies.



Mosque in Shali; right: in a Grozny mosque

During the **Soviet era** religion was heavily repressed but survived in small tariqat units called virds, which worshipped different saints and were sometimes hostile to one another. The **deportation** of the Chechens between 1944 and 1957 encouraged the emergence of a collective Chechen sense of national identity and a renewal of the links with Islam. The **Qadiri Order** was to play a prominent role in this. After the return to the Caucasus, Sufism – which had become infused with many popular traditions – was increasingly infiltrated by state agencies and the KGB. Almost all muftis (religious leaders) who were allowed to study were KGB officers. This diluted form of Islam is particularly unacceptable to young Chechens. They find greater appeal in the radical Islamic renewal sought by **Wahhabism**, which stresses the oneness of God, the absolute authority of the Koran and the prophets, the strict rules of the shariat, the equality before Allah of all believers and an end to often naïve folk traditions.



Interestingly enough, the earliest Wahhabi preachers in Chechnya – such as Adam Deniev – were KGB agents. It is not unlikely that Wahhabism was used by the KGB in the early nineties to counter the revival of popular Islam. During the Chechen wars Wahhabism has above all been promoted by donations and volunteers from Saudi Arabia.

Of course, 70 years of Soviet rule also left traces of **secularisation**. There are many Chechens who are atheists and only follow Islamic traditions because these form an integral part of the newly forming national identity.

Sheikh Kunta Hadji (1830–1867)

Sheikh Kunta Hadji is a Chechen Gandhi and the best-known holy figure in the country's history. In contrast to the ghazavat (holy war) of Imam Shamil he preached peace, and he preferred the salvation of the soul to war. **His teachings about charity, living at peace with others** and loving one's enemies deeply impressed Leo Tolstoy.

Kunta Hadji was born around 1830 in the mountain village of Isti-Su (Melcha-Khi). He grew up in IIs'khan-Yurt, the heart of Chechen Nokhch-Mokhka, and founded the **Sufi Qadiri Order** and the tradition of the **sikr dance**. When he was arrested by the Tsar's secret police in 1864, thousands of his murids converged on Shali to demand their teacher's release. Although, in accordance with their master's teaching, they came unarmed waving white flags, the Russian troops opened fire. Over 500 murids fell in the hail of cannon balls and gunfire. Apparently Kunta Hadji was a greater threat to Tsarist power than Imam Shamil. He died in the prisons of Tsar Alexander II, whereas Shamil was allowed to travel to Mecca as the Tsar's prisoner-of-honour. Here are some extracts from Kunta Hadji's teachings:

1. To love the Almighty you must love justice. Wish for your brother what you would wish for yourself. Do not seek to be richer, higher or stronger than others, but share what the Almighty gives you with the poor. Pray that you do not have what the toil and labour of others has created.

2. Your weapons should be your cheeks, not the dagger or the gun. Tyrants are powerless in the face of such weapons, for no tyrant is stronger than the Creator. To die in battle against an enemy who is far stronger is equal to suicide. And suicide is the greatest of all earthly sins...

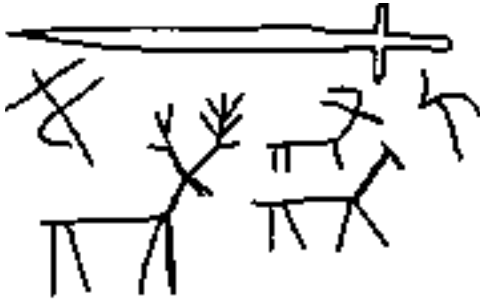
3. Evil is vanquished by goodness and love; avarice by generosity; lies by honesty; faithlessness by faith; be charitable and modest and always ready to make a sacrifice...

4. War is savagery. Keep your distance from everything that relates to war, unless an enemy has come to rob you of your faith and honour. Your strength – is understanding, patience, justice.

5. Carry no weapons. Keep your distance from them. Weapons remind you of violence and will place a distance between you and the tariqat. Armed force cannot be compared with the power of the human soul which faithfully pursues the path of the tariqat. Every type of weapon is a symbol of failure to trust that the All-Highest will come to your aid if it is necessary. Moreover, it is Iblis that draws your hand to the kinshal (dagger) or gun. You will fall prey to Iblis.

6. Bear no malice. Carry no evil in your heart between the hours of prayer. Forgive whoever insults you and he will be ashamed. If he is not, the Supreme One will recognise your patience and cleanse you of sin. Any undeserved slight, any malicious calumny or any other injustice shall, if you bear it with patience, make you greater before the name of the Supreme One.





7. Our customs have evolved over thousands of years. That is why they are close to Islam. We should consider them holy and never under any circumstances relinquish them. Honouring women as saints, honouring the old, respecting the family, providing particular attentions to a guest, mutual help and common labour, oneness in suffering and joy, the propensity to show charity and accommodate others – all this unites us and preserves our honour. We must fight those who attack it to the last Chechen.

8. Do not argue with power. Do not seek to take its place. All power stems from God. Allah knows best what power to establish where and to what purpose...

9. Life on Earth is like salt water: with every sip your thirst grows greater. Find peace in the tariqat. A contemplative soul that aspires to the highest – that is eternal joy and happiness.

10. Purify your hearts so that the Prophet and teachers may enter freely and through them the All-Highest. Scholarliness and education mean nothing if the heart is not pure, if the heart does not glow with love for the supreme Creator.

11. Wear your turban not for glory so that others will see it, but as a token of your love for Allah, the Supreme One. Do not be hasty as you wind your turban. First wrap your heart. A holy man is ashamed of his holiness. Those who think base thoughts clothe themselves in fine garments, let their beards grow long and seek to appear different from what they are. They are hypocrites and in the Koran they are called the worst of sinners.

12. Love the animals with and around you. Care adequately for them and in a timely manner. Cows, sheep, horses, dogs and cats speak no language to tell you their needs. We ourselves must understand them.

13. Relations with animals require greater attention than with people. If they have wandered into the vegetable garden, they should not be beaten or cursed. They should be driven out gently, as if a person had mistakenly lost their way. It is a heavy sin to torment animals or vent one's wrath on them. It is sinful to kill innocent birds or insects. Every living thing that does no harm to people must be protected by the murids.

14. All plants are living beings too and have a soul. Pack away your axe when you enter the forest and cut down nothing but the designated bush or tree. We must care for every tree, every bush, every blade of grass. We must love them and treat them as good friends. It is a great sin to fell a tree bearing fruit, a tree by the river or alongside a path, where it may grant shade to a traveller. The murids should plant trees everywhere and tend them until they are able to grow themselves.

15. Water is the holiest thing the All-Highest created. No laundry or dirty thing should be washed in a spring or river, nor may one bathe there to cleanse oneself. To do these things, draw water and wash a small distance away from the spring or river. No rubbish shall be thrown into the water; a river bed may not be moved unless urgently necessary, for then all living creatures in it will die.





“...With the pretence of civilising savage peoples, the servants of the great military powers commit all kinds of crimes against small nations, persuaded that there is no other way of dealing with them. And so it was in the Caucasus... To gain distinction or obtain booty, the Russian commanders attacked peaceful regions, devastated villages, killed hundreds of people...”

L.N. Tolstoy (from Hadji Murad)

Transporting the wounded

14

Chechen resistance to Russian conquest (17th/18th century)



Peter I

When Russia aspired to become a **colonial empire** in the Western mould, it had no need of discovering lands to conquer overseas. They were right there on its northern, eastern and southern margins. Sights were increasingly set on the legendary Caucasus, contesting the rival claims of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. The most vehement resistance to Russian conquest was that of the Chechens, who lived in a tribal democracy and equated the loss of their freedom with the loss of their dignity.

Russia launched its earliest expeditions against the Chechens and Kumyks under **Ivan the Terrible** in the 16th century. After the **fortress at Terki** was built in **1567** the first Russian colonies, such as Chervlonnaya, appeared on the left bank of the River Terek. However, Russia's military campaigns, including those of 1604 and 1615, were repelled.

In 1707 Tsarist troops led by the Astrakhan prince Pyotr Apraxin set off once again for the Caucasus. They suffered a heavy defeat near the village of Chechen (Chechana). Thereupon the Kalmyks were given the task of hounding the Chechens. Under their Khan Ayuka they drove the Chechens from the north bank of the Terek in 1711, razing villages by fire. **Cossack settlements** were then installed, and subsequently it was above all the Cossacks who were used against the Chechens, receiving Chechen land in return.

When **Peter I** marched on Persia with 160,000 men, seeking to conquer Chechnya and Dagestan en route, the resistance put up by the Chechens and the Dagestan princes of Enderi was so fierce that Peter sent a force of 6,000 soldiers and 400 Cossacks to subjugate the village. They suffered great losses. Peter then sent a penal expedition of 10,000 Kalmyks who murdered and set the landscape aflame, but even these were beaten back by the Chechens. Peter commented: “If this people knew anything about the art of war, there would be no other capable of attacking it.”



Russian soldiers around 1800



Chechen warriors
left: tower, 17th/18th c.

After the Pugachov Uprising (1773-75) and the conquest of the Crimea (1768-74) the **Caucasian Line** was built in the form of fortifications from Mozdok to Azov. The first stone was then laid to **Vladikavkas** ("Rule the Caucasus!") in 1784.

Empress Catherine II established a Caucasian Gouvernement for the Caucasus and Astrakhan in 1785. The governor was Prince Grigori Potemkin. The Chechens fought bitterly against Tsarist expeditions into their hinterland under **Sheikh Mansur** Ushurma. The campaigns led by Colonel De Pieri (1785) and Potemkin (1787) ended in Russian defeats. But the new commander in the Caucasus, General Tekkeli, managed to break the resistance in October 1787 with 12,000 men. Many villages were ravaged. Sheikh Mansur fled to the Turkish fortress of Sudzhuk-Kale (Novorossisk). Although Sheikh Mansur, who may have been the first person to preach Sufism as an ascetic form of Islam, succeeded in uniting peoples in a religious war or **ghazavat** against the infidel, it was as if David had challenged Goliath. In 1791 General Gudovich captured the Turkish fortress of Anapa. Sheikh Mansur was taken prisoner and died at the Schlüsselburg Fortress in St Petersburg in 1794.

But this first joint campaign by people of the North Caucasus drove the Tsarist expansionists back to the Caucasian Line at Mozdok. Their garrisons – Vladikavkas, Potomkinsoye and others – were engulfed in flames. Sheikh Mansur became a legend symbolising anti-colonial resistance.



Catherine II



Catherine II with her family

*We were born in the night as the she-wolf whelped.
 As the dawn panthers howled we were given our names.
 Our mothers fed us in nests of eagles.
 Our fathers taught us to tame the wild horse.*

*Our mothers gave birth to our people and
 if they call us we will stand up without fear.
 We were raised in freedom with mountain eagles.
 We preserved our dignity in every misfortune.*

*The blue heavens would sooner fuse like lead
 than foreign princes force us to our knees.
 Granite rocks would sooner crumble to powder
 than we would yield our honour and still live.*

*Never can we be humbled into submission.
 Freedom or death – there is no third way.
 Our sisters heal our wounds with their singing.
 The eyes of our sweethearts will inspire us to fight.*

*If hunger torments us, then we will gnaw roots.
 If thirst bites our throats we will sip morning dew.
 In rugged caves we shall light fire from ice.
 The tips of our sabres will fan its flames.*

Anonymous, 15th/16th century; music by Ali Dimaev, 1990;
 anthem of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria since 1992



Sheikh Mansur Ushurma (1760–1794)

17

Ushurma was born in the aul (village) of **Aldi** in 1760 as the fourth son of the farmer Shaabaza. He married when he was 22 and fathered three children. But he left his aul in search of humanist ideals and justice and began living as a hermit. From 1785 he travelled between villages preaching equality and social justice in conjunction with an ascetic form of Islam. He could not read or write, and yet his ideas and ideals fired people's imagination and soon he became an acknowledged authority in Chechnya. He condemned stealing, blood feuding, smoking and drinking and urged support for the sick, orphaned and needy. As he roamed the country he preached the **equality before God of all Caucasian peoples**, uniting them in a religious struggle – **ghazavat** – against the unbelievers. Ushurma received the support of influential mullahs and elders in Chechnya who elected him as their sheikh and gave him the name Mansur, which is Arabic for “victor”. He had soon amassed thousands of supporters in Dagestan, Kumykia and Northern Azerbaijan, to be joined later by Kabardians, Ingush, Ossetians and Circassians.

The Russian invaders warned against believing this “prophet of lies”, but their words fell on deaf ears. So in 1785 Colonel **De Pieri** set off for Aldi to annihilate Sheikh Mansur. When the delegation sent to parley for Mansur were shot, the 400 crofts in the village were plundered and burnt and Sheikh Mansur's brother was killed, the peace-loving Mansur Ushurma finally lost his patience. The Tsar's troops were decimated in a legendary battle and De Pieri lost his life. Only one man resisted until he, too, was wounded: the Georgian Prince Peter Bagration, then a low-ranking officer, who was later to be a hero of the war against Napoleon. Ushurma returned him on a stretcher to Russian officers. When they sought to reward the stretcher-bearers the Chechens retorted: “The brave are not for buying or selling!”

This resistance against the Tsarist conquerors infected many **serfs**, who rose up against their masters and offered allegiance to Sheikh Mansur. Most supporters of his movement were simple farmers.

In 1786 the Tsar's troops attacked the Chechens again. Almost every village along the Sunzha River and in the region of Karabulaki was razed to the ground, including Mansur's birthplace Aldi.

Again and again the Tsarist forces suffered tremendous casualties. In September 1787 **Potemkin's** 8,000-man campaign was beaten into retreat. But the Russians were able to draw on never-ending reinforcements. In October that year **General Tekkeli**, the new commander in the Caucasus, inflicted a defeat on Sheikh Mansur with a force of 12,000 troops.

Mansur sought refuge in the Turkish fortress Sudzhuk-Kale (Novorossisk). The North Caucasians launched further successful attacks on Russian forts south of the Caucasian Line, and the Tsarist troops were obliged to abandon them and withdraw north of the River Terek. In 1791, after a protracted battle, Sheikh Mansur Ushurma was captured in the Turkish fortress **Anapa** and taken to the Schlüsselburg in St Petersburg. He died there in 1794, but lived on in the Caucasus as an immortal legend.

Chechen resistance to Russian conquest (19th century)



General Alexei Petrovich Yermolov commanded the Russian troops in the Caucasus from 1816 to 1827.

“The slightest disobedience and your auls will be destroyed, your families sold to the mountains, the hostages hanged, the villages consigned to flames, women and children massacred!”

“I will not rest as long as a single Chechen remains alive!”

“I want the terror that my name inspires to protect our borders more effectively than the chain of fortresses, and the natives to accept my words as law, more absolute than death!”

A. P. Yermolov

When Georgia was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1801, work accelerated on constructing the **Georgian military way** as the main artery between Mother Russia and the new colony. Villages that obstructed it were burnt down and their inhabitants were resettled. The Chechens enjoyed a brief respite in the early years of the century while Russia was engaged in its wars on Persia and Turkey and the Great Patriotic War against Napoleon.

A new wave of misfortune befell the region when infantry general Alexei Petrovich **Yermolov** was appointed supreme commander in the Caucasus. As new fortresses were built, the Chechens were driven out and the Caucasian Line was shifted from the left bank of the Terek to the River Sunzha. Towns appeared, among them Nazran, Slobniy okop (Angry Trench), Vnesapnaya (Sudden Attack) and in 1818 **Grozny** (The Terrible). Eight outlying villages were razed to the ground to make way for Grozny, including Chechana and Suzhna. Local inhabitants were used as forced building labour, a form of **collective punishment** for resistance.

One of the cruellest expeditions by Tsarist troops took place on 15 September 1819 in **Dadi-Yurt**. The village, one of the most prosperous in Chechnya, was surrounded and subjected to artillery fire. The inhabitants, many young boys and girls among them, defended their home, flinging themselves onto bayonets. All the men were killed. Of the 140 girls taken prisoner, 46 leaped from a high bridge into the raging Terek below, dragging their guards with them. The massacre of Dadi-Yurt came to symbolise the Yermolov's merciless rule.



Massacre at Dadi-Yurt, 1819





Russian army, mid-19th century

One Tsarist officer, General N.N. Rayevski, refused to take part in the crimes committed by Yermolov and wrote a letter to the War Minister: “I am the only man here to oppose the pointless acts of war in the Caucasus and therefore feel compelled to leave this area. Our methods remind me of the disastrous conquest of America by the Spaniards...”

In their struggle against the Russian occupation the Chechens joined the holy war waged by religious leaders from Dagestan: **Mohammed of Yaraglar** and **Ghazi Mullah**, the first Dagestani imam. However, it was only under **Shamil**, elected Imam of Dagestan and Chechnya, that the peoples of the North Caucasus were united between 1834 and 1859 on the basis of an efficiently organised religious state. The Russian forces were driven from their garrisons in Chechnya and Dagestan.

In 1845, under **Beisungur Benoyevski**, the Chechens inflicted a crushing defeat in Voronzov's army. But from 1847 Shamil's strict regime provoked increasingly frequent rebellions. Although the Imamate received cannon and guns from England, France and Turkey during the Crimean War of 1853–56, its army could not withstand the new force of 240,000 men. In 1859 Shamil surrendered and was banished to Kaluga in Southern Russia. The fall of **Kbaadas**, the last bastion of the mountain dwellers, is regarded as the end of the war between Russia and the Caucasus. 750,000 North Caucasians took refuge in the Ottoman Empire, where their descendants still live today as ethnic minorities. Others were settled in their villages, mostly Cossacks and Armenians. Although the uprisings continued, by the end of the 19th century Chechnya was a **Russian colony**.



Imam Shamil (1799–1871)



Imam Shamil (1799–1871)

Shamil was born around 1799 in **Ghimry**, a village in Dagestan. At first he was named Ali after the cousin and companion of the Prophet Mohammed. As he was frequently ill as a child, his parents gave him the simple name Shamil. But as he grew he gained in strength and soon surpassed his contemporaries in all sporting disciplines. He was extremely gifted and received instruction from the best teachers in Dagestan in grammar, logic, rhetoric, Arabic, mathematics, geography, theology and law. At the age of 12 he was sent to the well-known scholar Sheikh Jemal ed-Din, and remained with him for eight years as a murid (seeker).

From 1827 Shamil accompanied Imam Ghazi Mohammed, who led **Dagestan's struggle** – joined in 1830 by Chechnya – against the Russian conquerors. In 1832, when Ghazi Mohammed was hopelessly trapped in Ghimry by the 10,000-man force of Baron Rosen, the murids hurled themselves from the tower onto the bayonets of their attackers. Ghazi Mohammed fell. Shamil escaped severely wounded.

In 1834 Shamil was elected **Imam of Dagestan** and for 25 years he led the liberation struggle. That same year he drove Baron Rosen's troops out of Ghimry. From 1836 he travelled the villages preaching social justice, help for the needy, abstinence from all sins and a life according to the shariat. In 1839 he was also elected **Imam of Chechnya**.

In 1839 General Grabbe laid waste the mountain communities of Chechnya and Dagestan. The village of Akhulgo was taken after a three-month siege and its defenders were killed. Shamil's oldest son Jemal ed-Din was taken prisoner by the Russians, his wife died and his pregnant sister Petimat threw herself into the river.

That same year the villages of Sandak-Ara and Gendergen were captured, plundered and burnt down by troops under General Pullo.

All Chechens began to rebel in 1840. General Galafeyev was heavily defeated in the Battle of the River **Valerik**. General Grabbe's men met the same fate in spring 1842 and by autumn 1843 all Russian occupying forces had been driven from their garrisons in Dagestan and Chechnya.

Despite these wars and battles, Imam Shamil quickly succeeded in founding an efficiently organised **theocratic state**. He divided the imamate, which embraced Dagestan and Chechnya, into areas governed by a **naib** (commander). Alongside the naib there was a mufti representing clerical power, a qadi (judge) and a guardian of the law. Misconduct such as smoking, drinking and stealing was severely punished in line with the shariat. A revenue authority was established to collect and administer taxes (10%) and war booty (20%). Payment was in kind, although silver coins taken as booty were also appreciated. A permanent Higher Council (Divan-Khana) was created in 1841 to decide upon state, administrative and religious affairs. The fortress of Dargo-Vedeno was built north of Vedeno to serve as a capital city. Other fortifications were erected at all strategically significant points in Chechnya.

After the Chechens defeated Count Voronzov in 1845 – a year after Nicholas I had made him supreme commander of the Caucasus – the Imamate was upgraded into the **North Caucasus Emirate**. Shamil declared himself emir and in 1848 he invested his son Ghazi Mohammed as heir to the monarchy.



When Shamil surrendered and left the fortress, Beisungur called to him: "Shemall!" – for it was inadmissible to pronounce the Imam's name, Shamil. But Shamil did not turn back. He knew that if he did a deadly bullet would meet him to save his name from shame.

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But the people were weary of battles and of Shamil's repressive regime. Betrayal and intrigue among the naibs undermined his power. Collisions between the Islamic shariat and the adat as Chechen common law led to increasingly frequent conflicts. In 1844, for example, one of Shamil's closest friends and companions, Shoaip Mullah, was murdered by his cousins because he tried to marry a girl against her will, contrary to Chechen tradition. As he would not yield, he had to be killed so as not to inflict further shame on his clan. Shamil took revenge by executing 50 men from the extended family to which the cousins belonged.

Among the freedom-loving Chechens there were many who openly opposed Shamil's regime. He felt obliged to subdue no small number of villages.

In 1854 Shamil's troops, under the command of his son Ghazi Mohammed, invaded East Georgia, plundered and burned 18 villages, ravaged the village **Zinandali** and took 885 prisoners, including the grandchild of the Georgian King George VII, the Orbeliani princesses and the family of Prince Chavchavadze. The Chechens found this dishonourable and unworthy. The prisoners were exchanged in 1855 for Shamil's son Jemal ed-Din.

The Russian government, whose military forces were tied up in the Crimean War, persuaded more and more naibs to abandon Shamil by promising peace. Shamil held out inflexibly and missed his opportunity for one final decisive attack.

In 1856 Russia broke the peace agreements and launched a new campaign against Shamil's Imamate with an army of 240,000 men – as large as the force that fought Napoleon – under a new commander, **A. Baryatinski**. The plains of Chechnya were soon subjugated and villages burned again. Shamil once more called all the naibs and warriors together, but their adversary was too powerful. Shatoy fell in 1858. In 1859 Russian troops under general Yevdokima reached the gates of the capital Dargo-Vedeno. Shamil sought a haven in Dagestan.

In July 1859 a delegation of honourable Chechen figures visited Prince Baryatinski. They were granted medals and titles and appointed officials of a pacified Chechnya. Only Shamil's closest Chechen companions, including Beisungur Benoyevski, remained loyal to him.

On 18 August Russian troops laid siege to the fortress at **Gunib**, where Shamil was ensconced with 400 warriors. Shamil wanted to fight and die, but he was softened by love of his wives and children who were with him in the fortress. He decided to surrender. On 25 August Prince Baryatinski reported to the Tsar: Gunib taken, **Shamil captured**.

Shamil spent 11 years as a prisoner-of-honour in Kaluga in the company of 17 family members. In 1870 the Tsar kept his promise and let him travel to **Mecca for the Hajj**. He died in Medina in 1871.

Imam Shamil had succeeded in uniting the peoples of the Caucasus in an Islamic state and resisting the superior power of the Russians for 40 years. The idea of an Islamic state consisting of Dagestan and Chechnya is still alive today.





Beisungur Benoyevski (1794–1861)

23

Beisungur and his companion Zoltamurad were from **Benoy**, the bulwark of anti-Russian resistance. From youth onwards they participated in every battle and urged Chechens to fight. After the defeat in Akhulgo in 1839 Shamil fled to Benoy, where he was welcomed into Beisungur's house and granted refuge. It was thanks to Beisungur's reputation and influence that Shamil, an Avar, was elected Imam of Chechnya. When he summoned them to ghazavat (holy war), Chechnya and Dagestan rose together against the Russian expansionists. Shamil made Beisungur **Naib** (commander) of the Benoy region, and Zoltamurad was his deputy. In 1842 Beisungur and Zoltamurad helped to surround and decimate General **Grabbe's** troops and in 1845 they participated in the victorious battle against General **Voronzov**, when over 3000 Russian soldiers and officers met their death. But the price for this victory was high, as many warriors fell. Beisungur lost his left arm and left eye. His left leg was shot from underneath him as he defended the village Gergebil, and he was taken prisoner by the Russians.

Zoltamurad managed to buy his friend's freedom during a transport operation. Hardly had his wounds healed, bound to his saddle by a leather strap, when the **one-eyed, one-armed and one-legged** Beisungur helped to defend the village of Salto.

Legends began to surround him while he was still alive. When a Cossack army stood facing Shamil's troops, a strong Cossack called upon him to duel. Beisungur responded at once and rode towards him at a gallop. When he returned wounded in the chest, Shamil angrily asked: "What is the matter with you? Why do you bring shame upon us? You are wounded and the Cossack is astride of his saddle." Beisungur answered: "Wait until the horse moves." As the horse took a step, the Cossack's head rolled to the ground...

In 1859, when the Tsar's army of 240,000 set out to meet Shamil, more and more naibs were abandoning the Imam. Apart from Benoy all Chechnya had fallen to the Tsarist troops. Beisungur accompanied Shamil to Dagestan, where he stood beside him as the fortress of Gunib, Shamil's last bastion, was under siege. When Shamil surrendered and left the fortress, Beisungur called: "Shemal!" – for it was inadmissible to pronounce the Imam's name. But Shamil did not turn back. He knew that if he did he would be met by a deadly bullet to protect his name from shame. When Shamil wrote to Beisungur under instructions from the Tsar, asking him to give up his resistance, Beisungur replied: "You have exchanged the struggle for freedom against a life of imprisonment and servitude. I shall fight until my life's end for the freedom of my people!"

Beisungur and Zoltamurad managed to organise one last uprising in 1860/61, but it was crushed with great loss of blood. On 17 February 1861 Beisungur was ambushed, captured and sentenced to death by hanging. Hundreds of Caucasians gathered on the square outside the church in **Khazav-Yurt** to murmur the death prayer Yasin. The drum roll stopped, the sentence was read out. The Tsar's executioners wished to humiliate the Caucasians and shouted provocatively to the crowd that one of them should come forward to perform the execution and he would be duly rewarded. After a long silence a man from Dagestan spoke up who had probably been recruited in advance. But before he could proceed Beisungur himself leapt from his stool into immortality ...



The arsenal of the 71-year-old abreke Hazukha, 1976

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Chechen resistance to Russian conquest (20th century)



The foundation of the Soviet Mountain Republic in 1918



Photo of veterans taken around 1900 to commemorate taking Russian cannon under Naib Telkhid

The revolutionary mood festering in Russia, and in particular the **1905 Revolution**, met with the harsh response of the Tsar's police, and the effects were also felt in the Caucasus. 17 people were killed during a strike in Grozny when the police fired into the crowd. Hundreds of innocent people were banished. The abreke (lone resistance fighter) Zelimkhan took his revenge on the Russian governors, maintaining his personal campaign until 1913.

In 1920 General **Denikin** chose to attack Chechnya rather than Moscow and Petersburg, destroying countless villages. The Chechens fought him under Umar Khaji and Aslambek **Sheripov**. The Bolsheviks who appeared to offer assistance ended up occupying the country under Orjonokidze. They killed all the Chechen leaders, including Aslambek Sheripov, and founded the Soviet Mountain Republic. This was dissolved in 1924, and one by one the Soviet Republics of the North Caucasus were established: Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Ossetia, Chechnya and others. The Chechens continued to rebel, and the Soviet powers reacted with cruel reprisals, especially under **Beria**. Until the late 1930s **Stalin** raged against the Chechen intelligentsia. Two reforms of the alphabet, with the introduction of Latin script in the twenties and Cyrillic script in the forties, broke the nation's cultural backbone. The language and religion were massively suppressed. Although many Chechens earned the highest honours in the war against Germany, 550,000 Chechens were deported in Eastern Kazakhstan and Siberia on **23 February 1944**, accused of collaborating with Hitler's Nazis. 60% of the Chechen population perished during this ordeal. The ancient Chechen chronicles inscribed on parchment scrolls, the tyaptari, and thousands of Chechen books – scientific and literary works alike – went up in smoke on the central square of Grozny. After **Khrushchev's** secret speech in 1956, the Chechens gradually returned, although for a long time they were not allowed back to their mountain villages.



A meeting of the Chechen defence council, July 2002

During **perestroika** independence movements emerged, similar to those in Georgia and the Baltic Republics. In 1990 and 1991 the Chechen People's Congress **declared** independence for Chechnya. The first statue of Lenin to be toppled was in Chechnya. The first KGB building to be occupied was in Chechnya. In 1991 General Dzhokhar Dudayev, the air force officer who refused to send in his men against demonstrators in Estonia, was to become the first President of a free Chechnya. All Russia's attempts to oust him and replace him with puppet regimes were thwarted. **Chechnya has been completely destroyed** by two terrible wars, one from 1994 to 1996 and another which has continued since 1999. According to estimates by international human rights organisations, 200,000 civilians have died and as many again have been wounded, crippled, widowed and orphaned. Grozny with its population of 300,000 is in ruins. Museums, libraries, three theatres, valuable art collections, the university, the oil institute – they are all gone. **Refugees** by their hundreds of thousands are suffering indescribably misery.



There may have been a chance between those two wars to bring peace to the country and begin reconstruction by recognising and supporting President **Maskhadov**, elected under the aegis of the OSCE and acknowledged at the time by Russia. Western governments did not seize that opportunity. The crimes of the second war have completely uprooted the people and deprived them of a chance to earn their livelihoods. The daily atrocities committed by the Russian army as it plunders, steals, tortures and kills Chechen civilians have provoked the emergence of unpredictable groups seeking revenge and prepared with radical Islamicist support to be deployed as human bombs, also against civilian targets. The new Chechen President Abdul-Khalim **Sadulayev** has continued Aslan Maskhadov's policies and is prepared to negotiate peace. He has condemned terrorist attacks on women, children and the civil population in general, but will continue to resist Russian occupation. Russia cannot win this war, which is already escalating and will set the whole Caucasus alight.





№ 2. Адъютант Семенов.
Убит 20-го февр. 1918 г.



Abreke Zelimkhan (1872–1913)

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After the February Revolution in Russia in 1905 the Tsarist police attempted to nip revolutionary activities in the bud with cruel repression, and the effects were felt in Chechnya, too. On 10 October 1905 the police shot into the crowd during a strike at the industrial plant in Grozny, killing 17 people. A week later Abreke Zelimkhan held up a passenger train near Kadi-Yurt Station and had the same number of men shot.

Zelimkhan Guzhmazukayev was born in **Kharchoy** near Vedeno in 1872. After a dispute involving his brother's bride led to the death of a man in his family, Zelimkhan was required by the code of clan revenge to kill a man from the other family. Although peace was restored between the two families and there was no evidence of any crime, Zelimkhan, his father and his two brothers were sentenced by the Russian administration. Zelimkhan escaped from prison. One brother died in custody. The other returned from banishment only to be sentenced unjustly yet again, and fled to the mountains. Other relatives and villagers were banished without legal justification. In 1906 Zelimkhan killed Lieutenant-Colonel Dobrovolski, the district official in Vedeno who was responsible for these decisions, followed in 1908 by Colonel Galaev, who had banished over 500 innocent Chechens to the Russian North.

As he was unable to live a life in peace, Zelimkhan became an **abreke** (lone resistance fighter), wreaking vengeance Robin Hood style on the arrogant Russian governors.

On 1909 the Tsarist powers placed a reward of 5,000 roubles on his head. But all efforts to capture him were in vain. Zelimkhan attacked Grozny Station in January 1910 and made off with 18,000 roubles. In response to the pogrom in Gudermes he warned the Cossack ataman (leader) Ferbizki that he would raid the bank in Kizlyar at 12 noon on 9 April. He

attacked punctually and all Chechnya mocked the Tsar's police for their failure to stop him. Zelimkhan distributed the proceeds among the poor and needy.

In September 1910 Prince Andronnikov, the highest-ranking official in the Nazran region, set off with a strong division on a penal expedition to catch Zelimkhan. He lured the troops into an ambush by a bridge and personally took the lives of Prince Andronnikov and First Lieutenant Afanasyev, wounding the Dagestani Staff Captain Dayaghev.

Zelimkhan was a legend in his own lifetime, and occasionally others sought to jump on the bandwagon. One of these fake Zelimkhans is said to have taken a bull from a farmer by claiming "I am Zelimkhan!". By chance the real Zelimkhan came along, brought the bull back and handed it over to the farmer together with an ear, saying: "The man who took your bull is one-eared Zelimkhan. I am the true Zelimkhan for I have, as you see, two ears."

On a number of occasions Zelimkhan slipped through troops laying siege. Badly wounded by a shot in the back from a traitor, he hid in a house in Shali, but it was surrounded on 27 September 1913 and after a long struggle he was killed. His capturers proudly had their photograph taken with him. The inhabitants of Grozny and Vedeno were forced to pay 100,000 roubles in reparation for the damage caused by Zelimkhan and his companions.

*I know nothing, not where head or foot
 A beak gnaws away at my heart
 Sharp claws force out a scream
 My song resounds over ruins
 Soft tissue oozing from spine
 No pain remains, no fear,
 Wings fanning ash
 Echoes catching cries:
 “Khaibakh, ach, Khaibakh, ach, Khaibakh!
 Bodies – people, animals – burning!
 Prayers for the dead burning!
 Graves of our fathers burning!”
 I must stand – am nothing but bones
 Must walk – my knees are crushed.
 Rocks towering form a dungeon
 Shadows flickering enclose me:
 “Who is your father? His name?”
 “Leave me be, ghosts of the dead.
 Would you shatter my skull?”
 Gradually the ghosts assume form.*

Apti Bisultanov

Deportation of Ingush and Chechens on 23 February 1944



Joseph Stalin

The official reason given by the Soviet Union for deporting Karachay, Ingush, Chechens and Balkars was the accusation that they had failed to support the Soviet Union sufficiently against Hitler's troops and that they had even collaborated. The real reason was the existence of opposition groups consisting largely of deserters and conscientious objectors who destabilised the region by attacking Soviet institutions, military bases and collective farms in the region. Of altogether 1,667,000 deserters between 1941 and 1943, combined with those who refused to answer their call up, 62,751 originated from the North Caucasus. In 1944 there were about 10,000 more. In Karachay there was an illegal National Committee and an illegal military headquarters, and an **illegal congress of Caucasian mountain peoples** was held in Chechnya under Israilov and Terloyev. They commanded some 24,000 Chechens and maintained links with the commanders of two German parachute units operating behind the Soviet front.

The deportation of Ingush and Chechens was set for the 23 February 1944, **Red Army Day**. 100,000 soldiers and 19,000 officers were involved. Perfidiously they were garrisoned in all families and in every village under the pretence that they were carrying out a military exercise, and as guests they were treated to Chechen hospitality. Red Army Day was to be marked everywhere by festive rallies. All the men were obliged to take part and, as they had no suspicions of what was about to happen, they turned up unarmed in their Sunday best. They were loaded directly onto trucks and taken to the stations, while their families were chased from their homes. Anyone who resisted was shot. According to reports by the Russian secret police, the NKVD, they numbered 7,200. Many elderly and bed-ridden people were shot, too. The next morning the villages looked deserted, with cattle lowing helplessly in their byres.

People were herded into unheated cattle trucks for a journey that lasted many weeks. The train stopped every 24 hours and the dead, who are sacred to the Chechens, were thrown down the embankment. In **Eastern Kazakhstan and Siberia**, they had to build their own shelters and find their own food, constantly watched by the local authorities, who monitored every move. Of the 550,000 Chechens who were deported, NKVD reports suggest that 260,000 perished.



The empty farmsteads and gardens were filled with mouths to feed who could not contribute much to society, such as orphans from Moscow.

Anatoly Pristavkin has described this in his novel “The Inseparable Twins”. The Chechno-Ingush Soviet Republic had ceased to exist. Many place names were altered by a decree of the Supreme Soviet and the land was divided up among neighbouring republics.

Like a thunderbolt, the deportation galvanised Soviet-Chechen consciousness. The mountain village of **Khaibakh** at the heart of Chechnya came to symbolise Russia’s policy of genocide. Its 700 or so inhabitants, including pregnant women, centenarians and toddlers, were driven into a large stable and burnt alive. Like an evil omen, the village kolkhoz had been named after Lavrenty Beria, the man who initiated the deportation. He received the following telegram:

To the People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR Comrade L.P. Beria.

For your eyes only. Given the impossibility of transportation and in order to complete Operation Mountains on schedule I was obliged to liquidate the over 700 residents of the village Khaibakh.

Grozny, Dept. Internal Affairs, Lieut.-Col. Gveshiani.

The reply from Moscow read:

Following your resolute action while resettling Chechens in the Khaibakh area you have been proposed for a state distinction with promotion. Congratulations,

PC Internal Affairs USSR L.P. Beria.

After Khrushchev’s secret speech during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, which identified some of Stalin’s crimes, the Chechens gradually returned home. In their suitcases they carried the bones of their dead. They re-erected the gravestones that had been used for building roads.

Except that much more time passed before they were allowed back to the mountain villages. The unspeakable suffering caused by deportation prompted Chechens to close ranks. This led to a **renewal of Islam**, led especially by the Sufi Qaddiri order, and to the emergence of a **common Chechen national identity**.

A monument made from gravestones used to pave roads after the Chechens were deported in 1944:

“We do not weep!

“We do not forget!

“We do not accept!”

29



Lavrenty Beria, Head of the Soviet secret service under Stalin





Abreke Hazukha (1905 – 1976)

31

Chechnya's last abreke, **Hazukha Magomadov**, was born in 1905 in the little mountain village of **Gatin-Kali** in Shatoy Region. When his father died, the 18-year-old Hazukha had to take charge of his family. He was gifted and received instruction from the mullah, learning Arabic and reading the Koran.

Stalin stepped up his repression in 1930. The NKVD persecuted all religious leaders and scholars. Hazukha's teacher and fellow pupils were arrested. Well-known Chechen writers – S. Raduyev, A. Dudayev, Sh. Aiskhanov and M. Shadiyev – were shot. Sh. Oshayev and A. Makakayev were banished.

In summer 1939 Hazukha had accidentally killed a man. Although he was declared innocent under shariah law and the dead man's family forgave him, the NKVD took advantage of the situation to imprison him. He was unbearably humiliated in gaol and asked the warden if escape was possible. The warden told him: "Only one man has ever managed it: Abreke Zelimkhan." – "Then I will be the second!" Hazukha escaped and swore to die rather than ever be caught again.

Hazukha went into the mountains to the lawyers Khazan Israilov and Meirbek **Sheripov**, who were planning an uprising. Their rebellion was crushed and Israilov and Sheripov were killed.

Hazukha laid a trap for the soldiers of the secret police and killed more than 20 of them. He **witnessed the deportation in 1944**. He walked through the empty villages and was the first to see Khaibakh, where over 700 inhabitants had been burnt to death in a stable. Hazukha, full of grief and rage, began to seek revenge. He killed the Communist district chairman, the officers and everyone who came after him. He once spent the night in the home of a farmer who stole his clothes and weapons. When Hazukha woke up, it was too late. The house was surrounded. The troops were led by the hated Lieutenant-Colonel

Salko. Hazukha found a knife and waited. A burning papakha flew through the window. It was followed by the officer. Hazukha stabbed him and quickly donned the cloak and blue-rimmed hat from his uniform. Before the chekists had registered their mistake, Hazukha had leaped over the fence and plunged down the rugged hillside ...

The KGB spread the story that Hazukha had shot two of his friends and thrown them in a cave. This was printed in the newspapers. In fact, one of the abrekes had followed his relative into exile in 1944 and returned with orders to kill Hazukha. But Hazukha sensed the danger. He slipped unnoticed out of his burka (felt cape) and waited. Suddenly his so-called friend stood up and fired two bullets each into Hazukha's cape and the other man. When he recognised his error it was too late. Hazukha shot him first in the hand and then, after he confessed to working for the KGB, in the heart.

On 28 March 1976 the 71-year-old Hazukha, weary of his homeless existence after a harsh winter, was finally caught. A militia man emptied the barrel of his machine gun into him. Nobody dared approach Hazukha until the evening of the next day, so awestruck were they by the dead abreke, who weighed no more than 36 kilos...

“Take as much sovereignty
as you can bear...”

B. Yeltsin



32

The First Chechen War 1994 – 1996



Boris Yeltsin

Dzhokhar Dudayev and
Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev

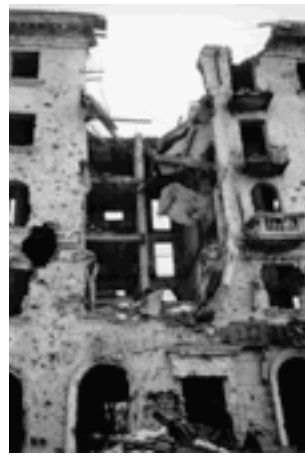


Aslan Maskhadov

Under Gorbachev **perestroika** brought a thaw. In Chechnya, as in the Baltic countries and the South Caucasus, new parties and movements appeared, and in one objective they all concurred: liberation from colonial Russian rule. The most influential party at that time was the **Green Movement** of Chechnya, chaired by Dr Ramzan Goitemirov. In November 1990 and on 8 June 1991, at two Chechen National Congresses, more than 1,000 delegates elected in all regions decided that Chechnya should be independent. The Soviet air force general **Dzhokhar Dudayev**, who had refused to act against demonstrators in Estonia, was elected Speaker. On 1 September he dissolved the Supreme Soviet in Chechnya and had all strategically important nodes of power occupied by the National Guard. On 27 October 1991 Chechens elected a new parliament and a big majority elected Dudayev as their President. On 8 November 1991 Dudayev declared the sovereignty and **independence** of Chechnya. In 1992 Chechnya did not sign the Federation Treaty with Russia and was no longer part of Russia. In 1992 the first Chechen Constitution, drawn up with the help of Baltic lawyers, entered into force.

All Moscow’s attempts to topple Dudayev with military support from the Communist opposition (i.e. the former Communists), by imposing an economic blockade and by blocking transport routes remained unsuccessful. The ground was prepared for war with a great deal of invective the Russian media. The war began on **11 December 1994**.

One of the most sophisticated armies in the world bombarded Chechen villages and the city of Grozny from the ground and air alike. Over 460,000 people fled to neighbouring republics, especially Ingushetia and Dagestan. Among the sad highlights were the **massacre of Samashki**, when 94 civilians were tortured and murdered, and the conquest of Bamut, when multiple-head missile launchers destroyed the entire village. Mountain villages in the south of the country were shelled without any regard for the civilian population, and the weaponry used included **arms banned under international law** such as vacuum bombs, splinter bombs and defoliation agents. The air raids were stopped by two terrorist acts: the **hostage-taking in Budyyunnovsk** in June 1995 and in **Pervomaiskoye** in January 1996. The ceasefire negotiations which began in 1995 were repeatedly torpedoed by Yeltsin, who broke an agreement with Dudayev and installed the former First Secretary of the Communist Party, Doku Savgayev, as counter-President of Chechnya, imposed pseudo-elections and concluded an agreement about the status of Chechnya within the Russian Federation.



Grozny

left: a monument of gravestones outside the ruins of the oil institute, 1997



On 22 April Chechnya's first President Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed by a cruise missile and the Chechen writer **Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev** was appointed as his successor. While Yandarbiyev and the former Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin were in the Kremlin signing a ceasefire agreement, Yeltsin flew to Grozny, declared victory over the Chechen rebels and announced parliamentary elections.

But these pseudo-elections for a puppet government were followed in August 1996 by a **major Chechen offensive**, notably on Grozny, where 1,000 Russian soldiers found themselves under siege. Air raids and shelling again prompted thousands of civilians to flee Grozny. But the Chechen advance could no longer be halted. General **Lebed**, the Commissioner for Chechnya, prevented the all-out defeat of the Russian Army and on 31 August he signed an agreement in Khassav-Yurt (Dagestan) on the basis for relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic. Russian troops withdrew. Although there were acts of sabotage, as when six International Red Cross workers were murdered in Novy Atagi, but on 27 January 1997 presidential and parliamentary elections were held under the aegis of the OSCE. As 72 election observers and 200 journalists watched, Aslan Maskhadov was elected with 59.3% of the vote. Yeltsin phoned to congratulate him.

On 12 May 1997 Presidents Maskhadov and Yeltsin signed a **peace agreement** in Moscow, thereby indirectly recognising Chechnya's sovereignty.

But the country had been almost entirely destroyed and its population uprooted. About 100,000 civilians had lost their lives in the hostilities. The war left behind at last twice as many wounded, cripples, widows and orphans. The reconstruction of Chechnya provided for under the peace agreement did not take place. Similarly, over 70 other agreements signed with Russia were not implemented. Instead, the war continued, now as a **cold war** waged by the Russian secret service. The post-war situation overtaxed Maskhadov. His reputation suffered and he was soon confronted with a political and religious opposition that won the support of Moscow in spite of its terrorist potential. Without assistance from Russia and the international community, President Maskhadov was condemned to failure. A second Chechen War was waiting to begin.



The library destroyed
above: the university destroyed



Chronicle of Chechen Independence up to the end of the 1st Chechen War

1990	23 – 25 Nov	1st Chechen National Congress in Grozny. 1,000 delegates decide on independence for Chechnya.
1991	8 Jun	Full National Congress of the Chechen People; the former Soviet air force general Dzhokhar Dudayev is elected Speaker.
	August	Failed coup in Moscow, Dudayev supports Gorbachev and Yeltsin.
	1 Sep	Full National Congress dissolves the Supreme Soviet of Chechnya by decree; all key positions of power are occupied by Dudayev's National Guard; the statue of Lenin is thrown in the river; a Provisional Committee of the Republic is established; the Islamic Path Party (Beslan Gantimirov) sends 7,000 fighters to support Dudayev; Yeltsin appoints the toppled Supreme Soviet as a Provisional Soviet.
	5 Oct	National Guard storms KGB headquarters in Grozny; Moscow calls for Dudayev's National Guard to be disarmed.
	27 Oct	New parliament elected with Dudayev elected President
	8 Nov	Dudayev declares Chechnya's sovereignty and independence
1992	12 Mar	New Constitution enters into force
	31 Mar	Failed coup by alternative government formed under Ruslan Khasbulatov in Moscow; Chechnya refuses to sign the Federation Treaty.
	from May	Economic blockade, all Chechen accounts are frozen, access roads and air traffic are blocked
	June	12th Motorised Infantry Training Division leaves Chechnya.
	Dec & Jan '93	Dudayev proposes transferring certain rights of sovereignty to Russia and joining the CIS.
1993	April	Dudayev dissolves parliament
	December	Failed opposition coup
1994	from May	Russia openly supports the opposition but all armed attacks on the Dudayev government fail.
	11 Dec	Russian tank units invade Chechnya
	19 Dec	Shelling of Grozny begins, many civilian casualties, approx. 280,000 people flee
	31 Dec	Unsecured Russian tank attack on Grozny centre; hundreds of tanks are set on fire or captured by Chechens.
1995	18 Feb	Major Russian offensive launched against Gudermes, Argun and Shali
	7/8 Apr	Massacre of Samashki, use of vacuum bombs, splinter bombs and defoliation agents; 94 civilians tortured and killed
	14 Apr	Bamut attacked and taken, 400 soldiers killed; Dudayev begins guerrilla warfare
	14-17 Jun	Shamil Bassayev takes about 1,000 hostages in the South Russian town Budunnovsk and barricades himself in the hospital with them. The hostage-takers demand an end to the shelling of Chechen mountain villages. Two armed attempts at liberation fail and cost 123 lives. The ensuing peace process is above all torpedoed by Yeltsin.
	1 Nov	Yeltsin appoints the former First Secretary of the Communist Party, Doku Savgayev, President of Chechnya.
	20 Nov & 4 Dec	Attacks on Savgayev and the headquarters of Moscow's puppet government
	8 Dec	Moscow and Doku Savgayev agree on a treaty governing Chechnya's status within the Russian federation, violating the agreement with Dudayev.
	17 Dec	Pseudo-parliamentary elections in Chechnya. Doku Savgayev allegedly receives 65% of the votes and is elected President.
	14 – 25 Dec	Heavy fighting around Gudermes

1996	9 Jan	Failed attack on a Russian airfield in Dagestan led by Salman Raduyev; 3,000 hostages then taken in Kizlyar and barricaded in hospital. Raduyev negotiates with Dagestan to withdraw his men in return for release of hostages.
	15 – 17 Jan	Disregarding the hostages Russia deploys artillery, tanks, infantry, fighter helicopters, missile launchers and scatter bombs in Pervomaiskoye against Raduyev, who escapes to the mountains with 75 hostages.
	22 Apr	Chechnya's first President Dzhokhar Dudayev is killed by a cruise missile; writer Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev is designated his successor.
	27/28 May	Ceasefire agreement signed in the Kremlin by Yandarbiyev and Chernomyrdin. While this is happening Yeltsin flies to Grozny, designates Doku Zavgayev the only lawful President of Chechnya, declares victory over the Chechen rebels and announces parliamentary elections.
	11 – 16 Jun	Pseudo-elections for the puppet regime
	From 6 Aug	Major Chechen offensive, especially on Grozny where 1,000 Russian soldiers are besieged. Grozny is bombarded from the air and ground. Thousands of civilians try to escape.
	31 Aug	An agreement on the basis for relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic is signed in Khassav-Yurt (Dagestan) by Maskhadov and Alexander Lebed in the presence of Tom Guildemann, head of the OSCE mission in Grozny.
	17 Dec	6 ICRC workers are killed in Novy Atagi
1997	27 Jan	Presidential and parliamentary elections in Chechnya organised by the OSCE for \$350,000. 72 observers and 200 journalists witness Aslan Maskhadov's election as President with 59.3% of the vote.
	12 May	A peace treaty is signed in Moscow by Presidents Maskhadov and Yeltsin



Dzhokhar Dudayev (1943 – 1996)



Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev (1952 – 2004)



Aslan Maskhadov (1951 – 2005)

The Presidents of Chechnya since 1991

Dzhokhar Dudayev was born in 1943 in Pervomaiskoye and deported to Kazakhstan in 1944, where his family remained until 1957. From 1962 to 1966 he trained as a pilot in the Soviet Army and subsequently piloted a strategic bomber. From 1971 to 1974 he attended Yuri Gagarin Military Academy, run by the Soviet air force. From 1987 to 1989 he was major-general in command of a division of strategic bombers and also local commander in Estonia, where he refused to carry out Gorbachev's orders to seal off the Estonian parliament and left the armed forces.

He returned to Chechnya and was elected speaker of the Chechen National Congress in 1991 and Chechnya's first President. All his offers of a peaceful solution to Chechen independence were ignored by Russia. Shortly before the end of the first Chechen War, Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed by a cruise missile on 22 April 1996.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev was born in 1952 in Kazakhstan. In 1956 his family returned to Chechnya to live in Stary Atagi. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev studied at the Maxim Gorki Institute of Literature in Moscow. He was a co-founder of the clandestine Prometheus literature club, which was banned in 1989. He published several volumes of poetry.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev supported the independence movement from the outset. He was co-founder and chair of the Vainakh Democratic Party and Vice-President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. When Dzhokhar Dudayev was assassinated in 1996 he became acting President and stood in the presidential elections in 1997.

In 1999 he went into exile in Qatar, where he was killed by a car bomb on 13 February 2004. Two agents of the Russian secret service FSB were convicted of the crime and sentenced to life-long imprisonment in June 2004. They were later handed over to Russia.

Aslan Maskhadov was born in Kazakhstan in 1951 into the influential Aleroy taip (clan). His family returned to Chechnya in 1957 and lived in Zebir-Yurt. Aslan Maskhadov began his career in the Soviet Army, attending the Artillery College in Tbilisi in 1972 and concluding his training as a colonel at the Kalinin Military Academy in Leningrad (St Petersburg). He served in the Far East, Hungary and the Baltic. In 1991 he took part in the storming of the TV tower in Vilnius under orders from Gorbachev.

From 1992 Maskhadov served in the Chechen armed forces, becoming Chief of Staff in 1993. From 1994 to 1996 he led the resistance against the Russian Army. On 31 August 1996 he and General Lebed signed the Treaty of Khassav-Yurt. On 27 January 1997 he was elected President under the aegis of the OSCE and with 72 international observers and 200 journalists to witness the proceedings. On 12 May he and Yeltsin met in Moscow to sign the Peace Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

However, his policy of pursuing peace with Russia was unsuccessful. Russian boycotted all the agreements that had been signed, secretly supported the opposition and discredited his government through acts of sabotage, hostage-takings etc. The international community failed to take the opportunity to assist the moderate Maskhadov in coping with the post-war situation, constructing civil structures and containing the radical Islamicist forces.

From 1999, as Supreme Commander of the Chechen armed forces and Chairman of the Defence Council, Aslan Maskhadov led the military resistance against Russia. 8 March 2005 is considered the date of his assassination by the Russian soldateska. The authorities still refuse to hand over his body to his family for burial.



Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev (1967 – 2006) Dokku Umarov (*1964)

Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev was born in Argun in 1967. He was a member of the Biltoy branch of the Ustradoy taip. The Ustradoys are believed to have founded Argun.

Abdul-Khalim took lessons from well-known religious teachers and played an active part in Chechnya's Islamic rebirth. He studied Philology at the University of Chechnya until the Second Chechen War broke out. He spoke not only Chechen, but also Russian and Arabic. After the First Chechen War he was best known for preaching on Chechen television. He headed the Islamic Dzhamaat in Argun and delivered lectures on religious matters in many parts of the country. For a while he was imam of the mosque in Argun.

In 1999 President Aslan Maskhadov appointed him to the State Commission on Constitutional Reform. In 2002 he was appointed Chair of the Supreme Court and Vice-President. When the Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov was assassinated on 8 March 2005, he assumed the office of Chechen President and Supreme Commander of the Chechen armed forces in line with the Constitution.

Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev received major Chechen distinctions, including the highest medal of state, the Kyoman Ssiy (Honour of the Nation) founded by Dzhokhar Dudayev.

In 2003 Sadulayev's wife was abducted by special troops. All efforts to ransom her failed. She was tortured and murdered by members of the FSB, the Russian secret service.

Apart from the hadji to Mecca, he never left Chechnya. His undisputed religious authority which he used, for example, to condemn terrorist acts against innocent people as incompatible with the Koran, might have presented an opportunity to reconcile the people of Chechnya and begin a peace process. Under his government there were no suicide attacks and no hostage-takings.

Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev was assassinated on 17 June 2006. His death signified a further setback for democratic forces within the Chechen resistance.

Dokku Umarov was born on 13 April 1964 in the village of Kharsenoy (Shatoy District) and is a member of the Mulkhoy taip. He is a construction engineer, married with six children, the youngest is a month old.

Dokku Umarov fought in both Chechen Wars. During the first he commanded a special battalion, the Borz (wolf), which later became a regiment. He was rewarded for his services by promotion to brigadier general and granted Chechnya's highest distinctions, the Kjuman Sij (Honour of the Nation) and Kjuman Turpal (Hero of the Nation).

In 1997 Aslan Maskhadov appointed Dokku Umarov Head of the Security Council of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. He kept this post until 2005, when Said-Khalim Sadulayev made him Vice-President and also Director of the National Security Service. Since 2001 Dokku Umarov has commanded the Western Front. He has been wounded several times, once in the face by a grenade.

In June 2006, on the death of Said-Khalim Sadulayev, he assumed the office of President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria as the Constitution provides. His political and military experience have won him great respect among both Chechen fighters and the people of the country.

“This war is the final solution to the Chechen problem!”

B. Yeltsin



“They (the Chechens) must be destroyed like vermin!”

“We will hunt them down in every corner of the globe and drown them in toilets if we must!”

V. Putin

38

The Second Chechen War from 1999



President and Supreme Commander Vladimir Putin flies to Grozny in a Russian Air Force fighter plane in March 2000



Akhmed Kadyrov, head of the Russian administration in Chechnya

There were **four major reasons** for the Second War waged by Russia in Chechnya. First, it was a direct response to the American air raids over Yugoslavia, when Russia was ignored as a world power. Second, it was revenge for the humiliating defeat the Russians had suffered in 1996. Third, many Russian generals liked to quote Putin's idea that this war would mark the rebirth of the Russian Army and the Russian nation, and that it would boost a sense of Russian national identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And last but not least, it was this war that made for KGB/FSB agent Vladimir Putin President of Russia.

Whether or not the FSB helped, the Chechen field commander **Shamil Bassayev marched into Dagestan** and provided a welcome excuse for launching military operations. There is not conclusive proof that the FSB was involved in the **bomb attacks on Moscow and Volgadonsk**, but there are lots of indications. There are neither indications nor evidence that Chechens were to blame.

The war began with air raids, and the whole of Chechnya came under artillery fire from a safe distance, with no regard for the civilian population. On 10 October 1999 **three ground-to-ground missiles raced towards Grozny**. One hit the busy market, leaving 167 dead and countless people injured. The second hit the only maternity hospital in Grozny, with 27 deaths. The third landed in a suburb and hit several houses, all occupied. **Hundreds of thousands of refugees** fled amid helicopter fire to the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan and – via the mountains – Georgia. Then tanks swarmed across the Chechen plains. The Chechen government elected a **defence council** and retreated in February 2000 to the mountains with almost all their troops. Hundreds perished as they crossed a minefield. The city of Grozny, in ruins since the first war, was now destroyed completely. Nothing remains of it. The same fate befell 15 major villages. The battle was waged above all from the air and it hit the old, the sick and the poor who lacked either the resources or the options to escape.

Unlike in the first war, the bombardment made no allowance for **industrial sites**. Highly toxic chemicals filtered through the groundwater into the Sunzha. Oil depots caught fire and belched rasping smoke.

Another difference to the first war was that observers and journalists were for the most part well removed from the proceedings. The **propaganda machine** has ensured that almost all Russians are in favour of this war against the Chechens.





After a series of battles – for example Goichu (Komsomolskoye) in March 2000, where the entire village of 6,000 inhabitants was destroyed without trace and 1,100 Chechen soldiers killed – the Chechen Defence Council decided to conduct a **partisan war**.

Today, occupied Chechnya is like a huge concentration camp. Military guards haunt crossroads and village access routes, venting their frustrations on people at will and trying to earn some extra cash. Sentry posts often bear the sign: “We are sick of killing you. 50 roubles to pass.” The Russian Army of 100,000 men or more is everywhere, but so amenable to bribery that it controls nothing, as recent terrorist attacks have shown.

The population live in constant fear of **purges** which are systematically decimating their numbers. At every purge up to 100 people are taken away, cruelly whipped and interrogated. Fifteen or twenty disappear into the notorious camps and can be ransomed if the village can collect enough money. Some are tortured over the next few days and found mutilated in unmarked graves. Many villages have experienced up to forty purges. International human rights organisations, who have no official access to Chechnya, have documented atrocities.

Skirmishes continue unabated between Russian troops and Chechen fighters, and yet Putin’s administration talks of normalisation. The West hopes that the conflict will die down so that trade with Russia can be stepped up. The partisans have demonstrated with their successful attacks on Russian military targets and command centres, even outside Chechnya, that there can be no peace without negotiations.



Russian checkpoint



“People live here. Everything plundered. Nothing left.”



Chronicle of the Second Chechen War

1999	March	Planning and preparations for the Second Chechen War (according to former Prime Minister Stepashin)
	8 Aug	Shamil Bassayev and Amir al-Khattab enter Dagestan with 2,000 fighters and declare an independent Islamic state. President Maskhadov distances himself from this and condemns the invasion.
	9 Aug	Yeltsin dismisses Prime Minister Stepashin and replaces him wit Vladimir Putin, who orders a major Russian offensive against the Chechen warriors in Dagestan, which will spread to Chechnya.
	9 – 16 Sep	Three explosions in residential blocks in Moscow and Volgadonsk in Southern Russia claim 240 dead and over 300 injured. Although there is no evidence of Chechen responsibility, a wave of persecution breaks out in Russia against Chechens and Caucasians.
	From 21 Sep	Chechnya is isolated with air raids over Grozny. By 26 Sep all oil depots and refineries have been set on fire. Columns of refugees create bottlenecks at the crossing-point to Ingushetia.
	6 Oct	A bus carrying refugees is shelled on the edge of Grozny. 28 die.
	4 Nov	The number of refugees arriving in Ingushetia reaches 200,000. 7,000 flee over the mountains to Georgia, approx. 100,000 to Dagestan, and 175,00 roam the country unprotected.
2000	9 Nov	Bamut is destroyed
	1 Feb	President Maskhadov, parliament and a large section of the Chechen armed forces break out of Grozny. Over 3,000 soldiers die crossing a minefield near Alkhan-Kala. Shamil Bassayev loses a foot.
	March	Battle of Goichu (Komsomolskoye). 400 residents – women, the sick and elderly – are detained in a field of snow for days and witness the total destruction of their village. Over 1,000 men are killed. The village of Goichu, which once had a population of 6,000 no longer exists.
	11 Feb	Maskhadov declares partisan war. Russian troops are attacked throughout the country.
	From February	Filtration camps like Khankala, Chernokozovo, PAP-5 (near Grozny), Internat (near Urus Martan), Ptichnik (former chicken factory in Okhroy-Martan) and GUOSCH are used for regular torture and killing.
	12 Jun	Heavy fighting between Chechen and Russian troops
	21 Jun	Three Council of Europe human rights experts begin work in Grozny.
	3 Jul	Suicide attacks by the Mujahedin in Argun, Gudermes and Urus-Martan cause hundreds of deaths among Russian troops and officers.
	26 Jul	French philosopher André Glucksmann writes in the German weekly “Die Zeit” about his secret journey through Chechnya and warns that Russia is one of the biggest rogue states of the 21st century.
	25 Oct	The human rights organisation Human Rights Watch presents a new study on the use of torture in Chernokozovo.
2001	24 Feb	Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya of “Novaya Gazeta” accuses the Russian government of serious human rights violations.
	25 Feb	A mass grave by the military base at Khankala (by Grozny military airport) is exhumed in the presence of members of the Russian human rights group Memorial. The bodies of 48 murdered Chechens are discovered, including three women. Almost all are civilians. Many corpses show signs of serious torture: burns, amputated ears, scalping.
	14 Mar	Three Chechens hijack a Russian plane with 162 passengers en route to Saudi Arabia and demand an end to the Chechen War.
	10 Apr	A second mass grave is found in the cellar of a Russian police station. The 17 corpses display signs of torture.
	12 Apr	The pro-Russian administrator Adam Deniev, an FSB officer who had preached Wahhabism in Chechnya in the early nineties, is killed by a bomb in Grozny.
	5 Sep	Chechen fighters under Galyev cross Georgia with the consent of the Georgian government and engage in battle in the Kodori Valley until mid-October against Abkhaz troops who have support from the Russian air force.
	25 Sep	Talks in Grozny between Akhmed Sakayev and Kazantsev
	18 Nov	Meeting between Akhmed Sakayev and Kazantsev at an airport in Moscow ends without agreement
	28 Nov	Russian air attack on Georgian villages in the Pankissi Valley where several thousand Chechen refugees are living
	30 Dec	Ingushetian President Ruslan Auschev resigns, to be succeeded in April 2002 by FSB officer Zyazikov.

2002	27 Jan	Russian military helicopter shot down. The 14 dead include two generals and three colonels. By February the Russians have lost three helicopters.
	23 Oct	A Chechen suicide commando including many women take some 400 hostages in a Moscow musical theatre and demand a sign that the Chechen War will be ended. About 13 hostages die when the theatre is gassed. The hostage-takers are shot. Shamil Bassayev claims responsibility for the incident. Maskhadov condemns his action.
	28/29 Oct	Chechen World Congress in Copenhagen. After the Congress Akhmed Sakayev, Chechen Minister and Maskhadov's special envoy, is arrested.
	30 Nov	Assassination of Malika Umadzhieva. mayor of Alkhan-Yurt.
	27 Dec	Attack on the headquarters of the Russian administration
2003	2 Jan	Russia does not extend the OSCE mandate in Chechnya
	23 Mar	Forced referendum in Chechnya on a new constitution and new laws for electing the President and parliament. In spite of a wide boycott Putin comments on the falsified result with "Now Chechnya is part of Russia again."
	20 Apr	Human rights activist Sura Betieva and her family are murdered
	1 Aug	Attack on a military hospital in Mosdok (North Ossetia)
	5 Oct	Pseudo-election of Akhmed Kadyrov as "President" of the Russian occupation regime in Chechnya
2004	10 Jan	Murder of Aslan Davletukayev of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society
	13 Feb	Assassination of the Chechen poet and ex-President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in Qatar; two FSB agents are convicted of the crime, sentenced in June to life-long imprisonment, then handed over to Russia.
	9 May	Lethal bomb attack on the Russian-imposed Chechen President Akhmed Kadyrov at a stadium in Grozny
	21 Jun	Attack in Nazran on the Interior Ministry, FSB headquarters, police stations and barracks. At least 98 police officers and officials are killed, including the Ministers of the Interior and Health, the Public Prosecutor of Nazran and the district prosecutor.
	30 Aug	Pseudo-election of the pro-Russian police general Alu Alkhanov as "President" of the Russian occupation regime in Chechnya
	1 Sep	Bloody hostage-taking in Beslan/North Ossetia. The school is then stormed with fire bombs. 330 people die, most of them children.
2005	2 Feb	Unilateral declaration of a one-month ceasefire by Aslan Maskhadov. Compliance demonstrates that Maskhadov has the authority to negotiate.
	24/25 Feb	London Memorandum signed at a meeting between Akhmed Zakayev and the Soldiers' Mothers of Russia on behalf of the European Parliament
	8 Mar	Assassination of the Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, allegedly in Tolstoy-Yurt. Pictures of his mutilated corpse circle the world. His family are refused the body for burial. Under the Constitution his successor is Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev.
	23 Aug	The government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria is restructured by Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev.
	13 Oct	Attack on 15 military targets and command centres in Nalchik/Kabardino-Balkaria involving 217 fighters from Kabardino-Balkaria, Chechnya and other North Caucasian republics
2006	17 Jun	Death of President Said-Khalim Sadulayev. His mutilated corpse is presented on television and he is refused burial; as the Constitution provides, Said-Khalim Sadulayev's successor is his deputy, Dokku Umarov. Dokku Umarov is the Director of the Chechen security service and Commander of the Western Front;
	10 Jul	Death of Shamil Bassaev

Human rights violations by Russians in Chechnya

I. GENERAL VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Bombardment and shelling of civilian targets

- 1.1 Bombardment of residential communities
- 1.2 Bombardierung von Krankenhäusern
- 1.3 Bombardierung von belebten Märkten

2. Bombardment and shelling of refugees

- 2.1 Treks
- 2.2 Camps

3. Deployment of internationally proscribed weapons

- 3.1 Aerosol bombs
- 3.2 Vacuum bombs
- 3.3 Splinter bombs
- 3.4 Anti-personnel mines
- 3.5 Rotary fire
- 3.6 Chemical weapons (nerve gas, defoliation agents)

4. Creation of concentration camps and torture centres

- 4.1 Filtration camps
- 4.2 Army bases
- 4.3 Police stations
- 4.4 Sentry units

5. Purges

- 5.1 Farmsteads
- 5.2 Villages

6. Targeted destruction of cultural monuments

- 6.1 Early medieval towers
- 6.2 Historical graveyards
- 6.3 Libraries
- 6.4 Museums
- 6.5 Collections
- 6.6 Mosques and churches

II. INDIVIDUAL VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Arbitrary arrests and abductions

2. Use of torture

- 2.1 Beatings
- 2.2 Electrical shocks
- 2.3 Mutilation
- 2.4 Burning with cigarettes and irons
- 2.5 Tying up
- 2.6 Sterilisation of women by benzene exposure

3. Rape

- 3.1 of women
- 3.2 of men
- 3.3 of children

4. Killing

- 4.1 Shooting
- 4.2 Slow stabbing
- 4.3 Beating to death
- 4.4 Suffocation
- 4.5 Throttling (Budanov)
- 4.6 Ejection from helicopters

5. Mutilation of corpses

- 5.1 Scalping
- 5.2 Amputation of limbs
- 5.3 Head boiling

6. Hostage-taking

- 6.1 Trafficking with the living
- 6.2 Trafficking with the dead

Refugees



Refugee camp in Ingushetia (B. Gladyshev)
Chechen refugees in Pankissi, Georgia



It is the **civilian population** of Chechnya who have suffered the most during both Chechen Wars. As a result of the air raids and shelling, an entire nation became refugees, either going into exile or suffering internal displacement, and they lost their possessions and their rights as citizens. International human rights organisations calculate that 200,000 people died during these two wars. That is a fifth of the population at the 1989 census. In March 1995 the International Red Cross provided aid for about **460,000 refugees** in one of its biggest operations. People fled to their families in the countryside, and then primarily to the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan. They could take no more than they could carry. The old and the sick remained behind. Small children froze to death in their mothers' arms. Refugees on the road and in camps were fired at and bombed, as on 27 March 1995 in Sershen-Yurt and on 21 August 1996 in Grozny.

During the **Second Chechen War** carpet bombing triggered a mass exodus. About **570,000 people** took flight, many for the third or fourth time, to the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan and across the mountains to Georgia, harassed by helicopters and artillery. Memorial activist Lipkhan Bazayeva reports: "On 29 October 1999 we left Grozny in a column of thousands of refugees. Suddenly we were bombed by planes and missiles were fired at us. The street was littered with the dead. We took refuge in ditches...."

Unlike the First Chechen War – when 150,000 refugees were recognised as forced resettlers and therefore enjoyed a certain entitlement to basic supplies – only 89 people were granted this status by Ingushetia between 1999 and the end of 2001, out of a total of 250,000 refugees. That means that these refugees could only survive thanks to the efforts of international organisations.

The election of FSB officer Zyazikov as Ingushetia's new President in April 2002 presaged further misfortune. The first thing he did was to sign an agreement with Akhmed Kadyrov, the head of the Russian administration in Chechnya, on **returning refugees** to Chechnya by the end of the year. There followed an increase in attacks, controls, disconnections of power and gas and even the violent dissolution of camps. The purges which kept the Chechen population in a constant state of fear have also reached the refugee camps.

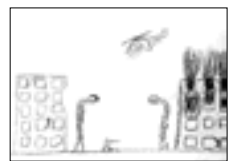
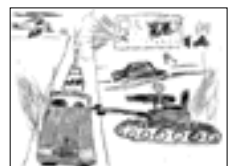


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Refugees who try to survive in **Russian towns** are completely disenfranchised. They are not recognised as refugees, nor do they have rights of residence, which means that all other rights are also denied them, such as the right to housing, health care, education or work. As Chechens they are subject to constant hostility, repeatedly searched, imprisoned under false pretences or forcibly deported.



Very few Chechens manage to **escape to Europe**. If they do they arrive first in reception camps with refugees from all over the world, where they face a complicated asylum procedure. The war in their country does not count as grounds for the recognition of refugee status. In terms of official politics, the Chechen War is Russia's internal affair. Contradictory to reports by the migration and law network of the Russian organisation Memorial, many German courts rule that Chechens can seek refuge within Russia. Only by proving that he or she has been personally persecuted by the Russian state can a person obtain temporary permission to stay. The others are threatened with deportation to a country where, due to the Chechen nationality noted in their passports, they have no guarantee of elementary civil rights – not even protection for their lives, not to mention their property.



Children's drawings from Chechnya

Since Poland, the Czech republic and Slovakia joined the EU, the **Dublin II Agreement** has been the undoing of many refugees. They are returned to these countries, which they had to cross on their journey to Europe, although provision for refugees does not meet European standards. In spite of their recognition as refugees, in Poland they are not entitled to social welfare, for example. Some have returned to Chechnya in despair, only to suffer renewed persecution.



Chechen refugees demonstrate against Putin's visit to Berlin, February 2003



"Destruction of the puppet regime's headquarters on 27 December 2002" (www.kavkazcenter.com)

46 Chechen terrorism



"Black widow", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 9 July 2003

The attack on the musical theatre in Moscow in 2002 and the hostage-taking in Beslan 2004 have shown that Chechen terrorism poses a dangerous threat to Russia and Europe. The acts of terrorism are probably financed by backers in Saudi Arabia or other Islamic states. A connection with the Al Qaida network on Bin Laden is unlikely.

Chechen terrorism is a direct **consequence of Russian state terrorism** in Chechnya. Merciless bombing and shelling of residential communities and the day-to-day terror inflicted on the civilian population have, according to international human rights groups, cost 200,000 lives and uprooted the entire Chechen people, depriving them of a livelihood. The result is a **political and religious radicalisation** of society. Terrorist groups and suicide bombers, like **Bassayev's sabotage unit Riyadus Salikhin**, reflect despair, but also the influence of radical Islamicist groups of the kind that have emerged in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq.



Salman Raduyev, field commander of the Lone Wolf militia, responsible for the hostage-taking in Pervomaiskoye in 1995. Taken prisoner by the Russians in 2002 and died there in 2002.

Terrorist attacks which harm civilians have always been condemned by the Chechen government. They discredit the struggle for independence and endorse the Russian propaganda which sells the Russian war on Chechnya to the rest of the world as a war on international terrorism.

The only effective way to end this kind of terrorism is to end the war. Without a credible peaceful solution which integrates the Chechen resistance, the conflict will spread with unpredictable consequences for Chechnya, the Caucasus, Russia and Europe.



Cover photo for the Islam theme at www.kavkazcenter.com



Koran with explosive device, a photomontage by Russian propagandists from a brochure on international terrorism



Bassayev's poster is a coveted prize, Presidential elections, 1997

Amir al-Kattib, born a Chechen in Saudi Arabia in 1962, fought in Afghanistan. Since 1995 Commander of the Islamic International Brigade in Chechnya and a Wahhabi. Seen here with Shamil Bassayev. Killed by a poisoned letter in 2002.

Shamil Bassayev

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Shamil Bassayev was born in Vedeno in 1965 and studied land surveying in Moscow.

In August 1991 he defended Gorbachev and Yeltsin against the Communist coup attempt. He was admitted to the Chechen armed forces under Dudayev and in 1992 he was sent to Abkhazia as a **major and commander of the Chechen Brigade** in order to support Abkhazian separatists against Georgian nationalists. The idea was to found a new Caucasian mountain republic – similar to the one which existed between 1918 and 1920 – once the Soviet Union collapsed. In fact the operation suited Russian interests. Russia also supported the Abkhazians to maintain its influence in the Black Sea region, and possibly with the intention of annexing Abkhazia at some stage in the future.

During the First Chechen War he commanded the Grozny garrison, later the Shali front and then a central section of the front lines. He was also head of basic training for all new soldiers. In June 1995 he was behind the **hostage-taking at Budyonnovsk**, which forced the Russians to stop bombing the mountain villages and begin negotiations. In 1996 he commanded the units that reconquered Grozny and forced Russia to sign the Treaty of Khassav-Yurt. In January 1997 Bassayev stood as a **presidential candidate**. While the younger generation revered him for his heroic deeds, their elders preferred the more moderate Maskhadov and hoped for peace. All efforts to integrate Bassayev into the government as Prime Minister failed. Instead of fighting together against Russian sabotage, Chechnya's elite split into two camps. Maskhadov was suspected of being a Kremlin agent because his policy of offering friendship to the Russians achieved nothing. Bassayev formed an opposition against him and demanded his resignation. Bassayev, who sees himself as following in the tradition of **Imam Shamil**, founded the Congress of Chechen and Dagestan peoples. Hoping to liberate

Dagestan from Russian colonial rule too with the help of Dagestan's Wahhabis, Bassayev and his friend Amir al-Kattab crossed the border to Dagestan/Russia in early August 1999 with 2,000 mujahedin, providing the pretext for the Second Chechen War.

Bassayev has been wounded eight times. Since losing his wife and six children, killed by a battle helicopter in 1995, he has maintained a radical position. He founded the sabotage battalion Riyadus Salikhin and has claimed responsibility for countless suicide bombs, the attack on North-East Theatre in Moscow in 2002 and the bloody hostage-taking in Beslan in 2004.

After Abdul Khalim Sadulayev became President, he sought to draw Shamil Bassayev, who has always acted independently, into political responsibility by naming him as his deputy. This was an attempt to end Chechen terrorism and unite the forces of military resistance against the Russian occupation. Shamil Bassayev's appointment as deputy and potential successor of new President Dokku Umarov however was extremely problematic.

Shamil Bassaev was killed on the 10th of July 2006.



President Aslan Maskhadov, 1997

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The Maskhadov Peace Plan:

Conditional autonomy under UN protection



Foreign Minister Ilyas Khamzatovich Akhmadov drew up the Peace Plan on behalf of the Maskhadov government.

There can be no peace in Chechnya if the warring parties do not negotiate. In February 2003 the Maskhadov government put forward a peace plan which described *the transformation of Chechnya into a truly democratic and peaceful state via a transitional period of several years of international administration*. After analysing the status quo (humanitarian costs, environmental costs, social costs...), the allegations of terrorism and the debate about secession, it contains a chapter called “The Way Out – Conditional Independence: A Win-Win Game”.

Here are some extracts:

Chechnya's aspirations

The experience of the last three centuries has clearly taught the Chechens that in their case only the achievement of a statehood can provide them with security and enforce their legitimate rights and freedoms. Since the formula proposed above enables Chechens to obtain a de jure recognized state, it fully satisfies Chechnya's legitimate aspirations.

Also, it is worth noting that we should not underestimate the chances of democracy in Chechnya, since the Chechen culture based on deeply rooted values of personal and communal freedom and democratic history can only be accommodated by a democratic system of self-rule. Somewhat remarkably, long before the 13 British colonies in America declared their independence in 1776 and the revolutionary French National Assembly adopted the “Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizens” in 1789, the Chechens lived in a basic decentralized democracy with a represented government limited in authority and in time, where everyone enjoyed equal rights. Ernest Chantre, a nineteenth-century French writer, testified that the Chechens lived “as people unfamiliar with class difference.... They all possess the same rights... The authority with which they invest their tribal chiefs grouped within the framework of an elected council is limited in time and power”. Likewise, a contemporary historian notes that “decisions on the most important issues concerning all members of the commune were based on general consent expressed at the people's assembly at which all adult males had the right of free voice and vote. In some communes one vote against the decision was enough in principle to revoke altogether”. While much has since changed and the long and brutal Russian and Soviet rule has inevitably left many negative marks on Chechen society,



President Maskhadov, July 2002



Demonstrators protest against Putin's visit to Berlin, January 2003

the traditional Chechen values based on the principle of freedom and political equality are still very much the driving force behind the Chechen bid for secession. Such a background clearly provides valuable potentials for the success of democracy in Chechnya.

Russia’s genuine security interests

The transformation of Chechnya into a genuine democratic and peaceful state with a clearly defined place in the international community also meets Russia’s genuine security interests. Critically, Russia’s security is threatened not by letting Chechnya go, but – on the contrary – by trying to hold on to it at all costs. As granting Chechnya independence would eliminate the cause of the Russian-Chechen conflict, Chechnya would have no reason left not to seek friendly relations with Russia. Moreover, with a population of roughly a million people, a democratic and stable Chechnya can never be a challenge to the over 140 million strong Russia. Furthermore, since a Russia with no strong democratic structures is likely to be a severe threat to Chechnya’s well being, the transformation of Russia into a truly democratic and modern state would become a substantial part of Chechnya’s national interests, thus providing a bridge for uniting

democratic forces in the two countries. Besides, the geographic proximity and Russia’s political and economic dominance in the region guarantee a continuing Russian influence in Chechnya’s calculations. A responsible Chechen leadership is bound to avoid risky policies and give due consideration to Russia’s interests in the region. In addition, adaptation of certain constitutional and institutional principles can assure the pacifism of an independent Chechnya.

International interests

Democratisation, free market reforms and unhindered trade and cooperation are the main pillars of the international community’s interests in the region. Since the idea of conditional independence provides the international community with influence to shape the future of Chechnya and enables it to end the long and brutal war by performing democratic and market reforms, the formula clearly serves these interests of the international community.

The mechanism

The idea of conditional independence can be implemented through the United Nations Trusteeship system under Chapters XII and XIII of the UN Charter or simply by a resolution of the Security Council. Since this can only be done with Russia’s consent, and given that Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council, she will have a substantial

say over the terms under which Chechnya will be governed for the period, and in the designation of the administering authority. This could make Russia feel more comfortable with the idea. It is worth noting that such a step by Russia would be the greatest move towards uniting Russia once and for all with the democratic world.

The prospect of the recognition of Chechnya, together with help in economic reconstruction and the immediate replacement of Russian troops with an interim international force, is likely to secure Chechnya’s assent. Notably, the suggested model to resolve this conflict is close to what is being applied in Kosovo since June 10, 1999. The real distinction here is that in the case of Chechnya granting de jure statehood on completion of the international trusteeship terms should be explicitly defined as a purpose of the trusteeship system, conditional on Chechnya’s transformation into a viable democratic state.

Russian troops and all government agencies will have to be withdrawn from the very beginning. Simultaneously, a three-sided deal should be crafted to find a compromise along the lines of an interim international force to be introduced into Chechnya. Gradually, a newly formed and internationally trained Chechen law enforcement body should replace the international interim force. With the issue of Chechnya’s final status settled, Chechnya will be motivated to meet its part of the challenge.

Crucially, one of the most serious tasks will be to build a truly independent, effective and apolitical judiciary. With the strengthening of cooperation between the interim international administration and a local government, a sophisticated

scheme for demilitarizing the country must be constructed. As arms, apart from their direct function, also have a stored value, the most effective way to collect weapons would be to offer market-price compensations. This will succeed if the flow of weapons from outside is prevented, which will require effective border control. The only non-Russian border Chechnya has is with Georgia. OSCE observers, together with the Georgian border forces, are already monitoring this perimeter. In future, they can and should be joined by internationally trained Chechen border guards.

To conclude

The formula of conditional recognition – transforming Chechnya into a truly democratic and peaceful state via a transitional period of several years of an international administration – provides a way to resolve the challenge of satisfying Chechnya’s legitimate aspirations while simultaneously meeting Russia’s genuine security interests, and indeed the interests of the international community. This is truly a win-win game for all sides. It is clear, however, that implementing the proposed formula will face many obstacles and requires a paradigm shift in the minds of some of Russia’s policy makers as well as a strong political will and commitment on the side of the international community, but it is far from impossible.

Given the existing active supporters of a peaceful solution of the conflict in every national assembly of European countries, the European Parliament, among other things, could initiate a parliamentary cooperation among the member states and candidate-states of the European Union. Such an initiative could lead to a significant unity of European lawmakers towards the issue.

To summarize, the US, the EU and its member states should assign the Russian-Chechen conflict a top priority in their relations with Russia, give genuine consideration to the proposal of conditional independence and initiate a three-sided framework at the level of the United Nations to implement the proposal. In this process, governmental and nongovernmental, international, national and sub-national actors could all help to advance the proposal.





The Daimokh ensemble

Is there any hope for Chechnya?

If you meet such wonderful people as the Chechen human rights activists Maya Shovkhalova, Zainab Gashayeva, Lipkhan Bazayeva and Eliza Mussayeva, who have recorded the crimes of the First and Second Chechen Wars, often at risk to their lives, and explain the situation in their country again and again to Western politicians with friendly patience, then you simply have to believe that there is a future for Chechnya. The same applies to encounters with politicians like Akhmed Zakayev, Ilyas Akhmadov, the poet and commander Apti Bisultanov or the members of the children's dance ensemble Daimokh.

Lipkhan Bazayeva was born during exile in Kazakhstan, like all Chechens of her generation, in 1945. Even as a child she loved books. She studied Philology at the State Chechno-Ingushetian University, with a focus on Russian language and literature, and concluded with a dissertation on bilingualism in Moscow. Until the First Chechen War broke out in 1994 she taught at the university in Grozny. She is married with four children and lots of grandchildren.

From 1994 to 1996 she worked closely with the Russian Soldiers' Mothers Committee in search of missing persons. After the war she was given a post at the Chechen Foreign Office. When she was required to wear a yellow headscarf at work she refused and left the ministry. She co-founded the **Union of Chechen Women** in Ichkeria and **Women's Dignity**.

Lipkhan Bazayeva works for the Russian **human rights group Memorial** in Ingushetia and Chechnya. In 2001 she attended the exhumation of a mass grave at the Russian Staff HQ in Khankala/Grozny. Her photos show that almost all the dead, civilians living nearby, had been badly tortured. In 2005 the case she took to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, about the artillery attacks on moving refugees that she had witnessed in October 1999, led to condemnation of Russian war crimes. Her many trips to international conferences have taken Lipkhan Bazayeva to Germany, France and Switzerland.



Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 October 2001

below: Lipkhan Bazayeva and Zainab Gashayeva visit Berlin





Photos taken by Zainab Gashayeva

Zainab Gashayeva was born in Kazakhstan in 1953. She is married with four children. Until the First Chechen War began she managed a bread factory in Grozny. She has been one of the most active founders of women's organisations such as the **Union of North Caucasian Women** and **Echo of War**, which she chairs. This group sends Chechen children to Moscow where they take a 10-14 break in Russian families and learn that not all Russians are like the soldiers on the rampage in Chechnya.

Together with the former actor **Maya Shovkhalova**, Zainab Gashayeva documents Russian war crimes. They often risk their lives doing so. She has travelled all over Europe with her photographs and videos to draw attention to the human rights situation in Chechnya. She has worked closely with the Quaker Peace Centre (Chris Hunter) and helped to open a centre for traumatised Chechen war orphans.

She lives in Moscow, but in spite of the war she travels to Chechnya every month to help distribute aid. In 2002 Zainab Gashayeva addressed the UN Human Rights Session in Geneva. She has received a number of human rights prizes. In 2005 Eric Bergkraut documented her work in his film **“Coca – The Dove from Chechnya”**.

The **Children's Dance Ensemble Daimokh** was founded in Grozny in 1989 to foster young talent for the Vainakh Ensemble. After the First Chechen War in 1997 the famous solo dancer Ramzan Akhmadov was made artistic director. But in October 1999 the children were once again found themselves scattered around refugees camps in neighbouring republics. Ramzan Akhmadov went to look for them and put the troupe together a second time. It now has about 35 children aged 7 to 16. Today the children are living in the ruins of Grozny under exceedingly difficult conditions, dancing on the fragments of a devastated city.

Since their first invitation to Düsseldorf in 2000, organised by the Mother for Peace Barbara Gladysch, their tours have taken them to Germany, France, Italy, Britain, Poland and Turkey.



Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 18 November 2002



Daimokh performed in Berlin in 2002 and 2003 at the invitation of the German-Caucasian Society

Chechen politicians in exile



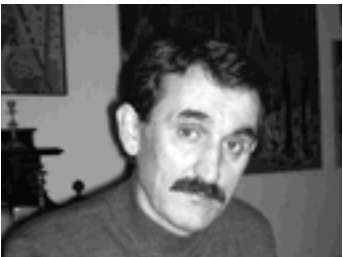
Akhmed Zakayev was born in Urus-Martan in 1959 and belongs to the influential Chinkho taip (clan). He graduated from the College of Acting in Voronezh in 1981 and played many leading roles at the state Theatre in Grozny.

Akhmed Zakayev was made Minister of Culture under Chechnya's first President Dshochar Dudayev in 1994. During the First Chechen War he commanded troops on the Urus-Martan section of the South-West Front. Under Yandarbiyev he headed the security service. After the election of Aslan Maskhadov in 1997 Akhmed Zakayev was vice-premier and Minister of Education Culture and Media. He was a close confidant of Maskhadov and took part in all negotiations with Russia.

In 1999 he was invited to Germany by the parliamentary party of Alliance 90/The Greens and the German-Caucasian Society. When the Second Chechen War began Akhmed Zakayev was severely wounded defending Grozny. From 2001 he was President Maskhadov's special representative in Europe. He is regarded as one of Chechnya's moderate politicians and repeatedly holds talks with Russian politicians, as he did with Kazantsev in September and November 2001. On 30 October 2002 Russian pressure led to his arrest after the Chechen World Congress in Copenhagen but later released, only to be placed on trial again in London, his home in exile. On 13 November 2003 he was cleared at Bow Street of all charges submitted by the Russian government. In October 2005 he was reconfirmed as Minister of Culture and in May 2006 he became **Foreign Minister**.



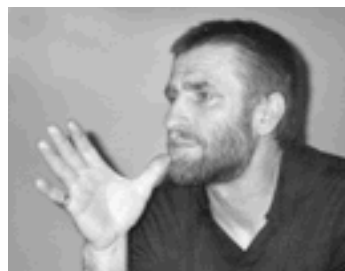
Ilyas Akhmadov was born in Shatoy in 1960, studied Political Sciences in Rostov on the Don and speaks fluent French. From 1999 to 2005 he was Foreign Minister of Chechnya and in November 1999 he attended the OSCE summit in Istanbul as an observer. He visited many Western countries, notably France and the United States. Ilyas Akhmadov drew up the Chechen Peace Plan at the request of President Maskhadov.



Usman Fersauli was born in Arshti in 1958. He first trained as a construction engineer then studied Law in St Petersburg. During the First Chechen War he was Commissioner for Prisoners of War. In 1996 he was sent to Denmark as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, and he still lives here. In October 2005 he succeeded Akhmadov as Foreign Minister, and from May 2006 he was **Deputy Foreign Minister**.

Poet Apti Bisultanov was born in 1959 in Goichu near Urus-Martan. His father returned from the Second World War wounded and died early.

Apti Bisultanov was one of the initiators of the First Chechen National Congress. Its preparatory committee met in his office. In 1995 he ran the Chechen Information Centre in Krakow. In 1997 he founded LAM for the research and popularisation of Chechen culture, and travelled to the United States as its executive director. In 1999 he became vice-premier with particular responsibility for social affairs. On 1 February 2000 he went into the mountains with Maskhadov. His birthplace Goichu was totally destroyed by Russian artillery. In October 2005 his position as Minister of Social Affairs was re-confirmed. In May 2006 he became the President's Special Envoy to International Organisations. Since 2003 he is living in Germany.



Dr Sait-Khassan Abumuslimov was born on 1 February 1953 in Kazakhstan. He studied History and German in Moscow and taught History at the State University in Grozny from 1990 to 1994. He is co-founder of the Vainakh Democratic Party of Chechnya and co-author of the Chechen Constitution.

From 1992 to 1997 he headed the Chechen delegation at the negotiations with Russia and from 1996 to 1997 he was Vice-President of Chechnya. Since the outbreak of the Second Chechen War Dr Sait-Khassan Abumuslimov has been living in exile, in Germany since 2003. He is a member of the Academic Forum for International Security and the German-Caucasian Society.



Umar Khanbiyev, born in Kazakhstan in 1955, is a surgeon. For many years he was senior consultant at a hospital in Grozny. In 1997 Maskhadov appointed him Minister of Health. When he was fleeing from Grozny in February 2000 with 18 doctors and about 40 patients, they were mown down and captured by Russian troops. The patients, many of them with amputated limbs, were forced to lie in the snow, where their fresh wounds were beaten. Umar Khanbiyev survived the underground pits and torture in Chernokozovo concentration camp. From 2002–2005 he travelled in Europe as Maskhadov's emissary.



Rakhman Dushuyev was born in 1962 in the village of Aleroy and was closely related to President Aslan Maskhadov. He graduated as an economic engineer from the Oil Institute in Grozny. During the First Chechen War he served on the General Staff of the Chechen armed forces. After Maskhadov's election as President in 1997 he was Deputy Commander of the Presidential Guard. In 2000, during the Second Chechen War, Rakhman Dushuyev was appointed the President's plenipotentiary ambassador abroad. He has been living in Germany since 2005 and is a member of the German-Caucasian Society.



Akhyad Idigov was born into a family of teachers in 1948. He studied at the Oil Institute in Grozny and worked as a construction engineer for the management of a Soviet oil company. Since 1991 he has been a Member of the Chechen Parliament, from 1993 to 1997 as its Speaker and from 1997 to 2000 as Chairman of its International relations Committee. Since 2000 Akhyad Idigov has been living in Paris. He is married with four children.





First poem after leaving Chechnya

*Grab your heart with both hands
That old hedgehog
And sew up all its wounds tight
with a cobbler's awl, like patching boots,
And travel to every point on the compass
And keep silence
At least till the end of life*

A. Bisultanov, May 2002

Childhoods

*My grandmother used to say
if you see your childhood three times
you will live a long life*

My father saw his childhood twice

*The first time when he went to war
through the carriage window
he saw it there on the platform
It had come from his mountain village
all the way to say goodbye*

*The second time he saw it
was when soldiers
marched him off to exile
He turned and saw it
on the edge of the village
too scared to come with him another step.
Later it hid
at night
in an old defence tower with the wild doves
But NKVD soldiers blew up the tower
and it died*

*The third time
returning from exile
when they weren't allowed home to the mountains
my father left his family on the plains
and went in search of his birthplace
On his way back
he turned
but he could not see his childhood*

*Then he understood
that one doesn't always have
to want to live so much*

*I was small and didn't take his point
But now I think I understand
his all too early death*

P.S.

I only saw my childhood once

*When I went to war
I turned around
and saw it at the gate
too scared to come with me another step*

Bombs tore up the streets

*Then
with timid terrified children
it went to hide in a cellar
But a valiant pilot dropped a bomb on the house*

My son never saw his childhood

He went to war as a child

This exhibition was produced by the Deutsch-Kaukasische Gesellschaft e.V. © 2003

www.d-k-g.de

Updated July 2006

Text: Ekkehard Maass Layout: Bettina Kubanek

English Translation: Kate Vanovitch

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Sources: Dalkhan Khozhaev, Chechnya in the Russian-Caucasian War (tschetschenci v russko-kavkaskoj vojne), Grozny 1998; Dshambulat Sulejmanera, Nachfahren Noahs, Gabala 2001; Dr. Hans Krech, Der Erste Tschetschenienkrieg, Der Zweite Tschetschenienkrieg, Verlag Dr. Köster, Berlin; Anna Politowskaja, Die Wahrheit über den Krieg, DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, Cologne; oral reports by the Chechen poet and Minister Apti Bisultanov, et al.

Facts and evidence relating to Russian human rights violations in Chechnya are contained in the reports by Human Rights Watch, amnesty international, the International Red Cross, the Society for Threatened Peoples and the Russian human rights organisation Memorial, as well as on Chechen websites such as www.chechenpress.com, www.kavkazcenter.org, www.amina.com

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The exhibition “Chechnya – War and History” (44 b&w posters in 59.4 x 118.9 cm format) can be printed or obtained as a pdf file from: Deutsch-Kaukasische Gesellschaft e.V. (www.d-k-g.de), Schönfliesser Strasse 21, D-10439 Berlin, tel. +49-30-4457006, fax +49-30-44678203, mobile +49-171-1773543, d-k-g@gmx.net

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