

## REPUBLIC OF DAGHESTAN: ETHNOPOLITICAL AND ETHNOSOCIAL SITUATION AND THE RECENT CONFLICTS

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### 1. Ethnic and National Conflicts and How the Problems of the Peoples of Daghestan were Addressed in 1990-2000

Daghestan is a unique region of the Russian Federation: its past, culture, polyethnic and polyconfessional nature, climate and landscape, economic and demographic potential, as well as geostrategic and geographic location, set it apart from all the other regions of Russia.

Its specific nature and key role on Russia's southern borders have made it a special constituent of the Russian Federation.

By the beginning of the democratic changes, the Republic of Daghestan (RD) had accumulated a heavy load of ethnic contradictions and conflicts.

The Soviet policy of moving the highlanders down to the plains, which was carried out insistently and consistently, altered beyond repair the republic's ethnic composition, which became even more varied and culturally diverse in the plains. Kumyks, Nogays, Chechen-Akkinty, Azeris, and Russians, who formed compact ethnic groups, found themselves outnumbered by the newcomers (Avars, Darghins, Lakhs, and Lezghians). Tension between the old and new settlers and the latent conflicts between them were a natural result of the upturned balance.

The situation was aggravated by the high level of migration outside the republic (to other CIS countries and Russian regions), as well as inside the republic (from the mountains to the plains and back), which is typical of Daghestan and caused by the surplus (up to 25 percent) workforce. The republic has people living in it who have still not been rehabilitated or reinstated on their own territory: this applies to the Chechen-Akkinty and a large number of mountain-dwellers moved to Chechnia by force in 1944 and returned to their original place of residence in 1957. The assimilation policy regarding smaller ethnic groups was equally harmful.

While the Soviet Union was falling apart and the socioeconomic system undergoing radical changes, numerous hitherto suppressed local conflicts flared up to create new zones of confrontation and tension. Private life became less comfortable socially and politically, which forced people to keep within their ethnic groups and form ethnic public movements.

They became part of the republic's ethnopolitical context; more than that: they were more diverse than elsewhere: there were unitarian, separatist, ethno-confessional, nationalist, democratic, and other movements. Many of them consolidated on the ethno-corporate basis, a fact that spoke of politicized clans, tukhums, and social groups. All this created an ethnic paradox: internationalization of culture, on the one hand, and an obvious trend toward the national, on the other. The republic had 17 parties, 22 national and public political movements, 17 centers, and other associations.<sup>1</sup>

The movements formed with humanitarian, educational, and cultural centers, which set themselves the aim of reviving the local cultures, tongues, and traditions, betrayed a trend toward politics at a very early stage. Some of the local nations even went as far as falsifying their histories and distorting the past.

The Chechen Republic, which brimmed with weapons and extremely aggressive armed groups that spent their time making inroads into other territories, presented the greatest hazard for the RD. These unfriendly actions incurred considerable material losses and destabilized the already shaky situation.

Criminals brought weapons and ammunition into Daghestan and sold their plundered wealth there, while all kinds of lawbreakers went into hiding in the republic. In 1993, people from Chechnia committed 223 offenses (23 murders), there were dozens of robberies and car thefts, and kidnapping was also practiced. In 1993, 120 railway carriages were completely plundered; 5,010 carriages and containers that crossed Chechnia arrived with traces of breaking and pilferage; agricultural machinery that traveled across Chechnia on 350 platforms lost some of their parts.<sup>2</sup>

The Kumyks and Lezghians demanded an autonomous status within the RD, which invited protests from other peoples. The years 1991-1992 were marked by a chain of sharp conflicts: the Avars and Chechens in the village of Leninaul (the Kazbek District) could not reach a consensus on a land issue; the Darghins and Kumyks in the village of Kostek clashed over land plots, while the Kumyks in the Khasaviurt zone went on a prolonged strike demanding the removal of all the heads of the law-enforcement structures; and Kumyk women staged a hunger strike on the central square in Makhachkala.

Dangerous incidents took place in all corners of the republic: in Derbent between Lezghians and Azeris, in Kizliar between Cossacks and the national movements of the mountain people, and in Kiziliurt between the Avar national movement and the law-enforcement bodies.

The considerable industrial decline and increased pressure from criminal elements have been driving the Russians away from the republic.

On 24 October, 1992, the first forum of the Congress of the Peoples of Daghestan, attended by representatives of 42 public and political associations and national movements, demanded that each of the over 30 nationalities and ethnic groups should have the right to achieve self-determination and set up a federative republic in Daghestan.<sup>3</sup> This was a time when the destructive pressure of social movements was on the increase; the movements of the Chechen-Akkinty (Nokhchi) and Kumyks (Tanglik) were the most active in this respect. Some of the local Chechen-Akkinty called themselves citizens of the Chechen Republic. Despite the fact that the Congress of People's Deputies of Daghestan passed a decision on the territorial rehabilitation of the Chechen-Akkinty by moving the Lakhs away from the Novolaxskoe District and restoring the Aukhovo District, the Chechen-Akkinty called

<sup>1</sup> See: K.M. Tsagolov, *Dokladnaia zapiska pravitel'stvu RF*, Tekushchiiy arkhiv Minnatsinformvneshsviazi RD, Makhachkala, 1998, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Kongress narodov Daghestana*, Makhachkala, 2000, p. 6.

for rallies and went on strike to demand immediate implementation of the Congress' decision, which was obviously impossible.

In 1992 and 1993, criminal groups used arms against law-enforcement bodies 15 times; on seven occasions officials of the Ministry of the Interior, Procurator's Office, and of a military registration and an enlistment office were taken hostage; and four times criminals captured administrative buildings. In April-May 1992, similar clashes took place in Kiziliurt and Makhachkala, during which officials of law-enforcement bodies were taken hostage.<sup>4</sup>

The Presidium of the RD Supreme Soviet had to declare a state of emergency in the Kazbek and Khasaviurt districts and the city of Kiziliurt.<sup>5</sup>

On 13-14 December, 1992, Makhachkala hosted a congress of the peoples of Daghestan, which confirmed three key principles (later they were registered in the RD Constitution: (1) Daghestan is a single and indivisible unit; (2) Daghestan is part of Russia; (3) all peoples have their problems, the solution to which should take into account the interests of all Daghestanis. They were supported by the absolute majority of the republic's population, irrespective of political convictions and ethnic or religious affiliation.<sup>6</sup>

At the trying time when ethnic contradictions reached their peak, social and political stabilization could be achieved solely through peaceful negotiations and consensus-based settlements. Prof. A. Matsnev correctly pointed out: "No stability in the Russian state will be possible if we fail to settle ethnic conflicts and learn how to settle them in a civilized way."<sup>7</sup> He has also said that "pure" ethnopolitical conflicts are rare, whereas the ethnic component per se is often present in many conflicts, while its potential travels from one conflict to another.<sup>8</sup> This was what happened in Daghestan: the conflicts that started as socioeconomic, later developed into ethnopolitical clashes.

At that time, the state structures and public were doing what they could to defuse the tension.

Over time it became clear that the republic needed consistent ethnic policies that would take into account the interests and requirements of all the peoples for the sake of civil peace, political stability, and unity. The Comprehensive Program of Dealing with the Problems of National Relations in the Republic of Daghestan, which the Presidium of the RD Supreme Soviet adopted on 28 June, 1993, served precisely these aims.

In this context, the following measures were taken to address the problems of:

### **(a) The Chechen-Akkinty as a Repressed People**

On 23 June, 1991, the Third Congress of the People's Deputies of Daghestan passed a decision on the territorial rehabilitation of the Chechen-Akkinty. With this aim in view, it was decided to resettle those Lakhs who lived on formerly Chechen territory. The decision required a lot of preliminary work and the consent of the Lakhs of the Novolakskoe District. This is the only case in Russia when repressed people restored their right to live on their former territory. The RD government set up organizational committees to explain the situation to the local people, restore the annulled Aukhovo District, and resettle people from the Novolakskoe District. This required coordination, which was carried out by a department under the RD Council of Ministers; the Lakhs of the Novolakskoe District were moved to a new place of residence north of Makhachkala.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See: K.M. Tsagolov, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Respublika Daghestan: sovremennye problemy natsional'nykh otnosheniy*, Makhachkala, 1995, pp. 48, 102.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>7</sup> *Osnovy natsional'nykh i federativnykh otnosheniy*. Textbook, ed. by R.G. Abdulatipov, Moscow, 2001, pp. 241, 243.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> See: *Respublika Daghestan: sovremennye problemy natsional'nykh otnosheniy*, p. 171.

### **(b) The “Divided Peoples”**

The authorities of the republic did not succumb to the temptation to declare independence, which could have caused a lot of concern among the republic's ethnic groups and nationalities divided by state (Azerbaijan and Georgia) or administrative (Stavropol Territory and Chechnia) borders.

On 29 June, 1993, at the request of the Lezghians living in several settlements of the Akhty District, the RD Supreme Soviet formed the Dokuzpara District, which gathered the Lezghian settlements into a new administrative unit.<sup>10</sup> On 15 January, 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the Daghestanian S.S.R. approved a plan of cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan (RA) and the Republic of Daghestan in meeting the needs and requirements of the Lezghian and Avar population of Azerbaijan and the Azeris in Daghestan.<sup>11</sup>

In fulfillment of Decision No. 1151 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 10 September, 1997 On Urgent Measures to Stabilize and Develop the Economy of the Republic of Daghestan, the republican government drew up an intergovernmental agreement On Cooperation in the Border Areas of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan and coordinated it with all the corresponding federal ministries and departments.

In April 1998, the Government of Russia adopted a Plan of Measures Designed to Extend Ethnic and Cultural Support to the Diaspora of the Peoples of Daghestan in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Azeri Diaspora in the Republic of Daghestan.<sup>12</sup>

### **(c) The Russian Population**

The issue has several aspects to be taken into account. From the political point of view, the Russians and Russia are helping the republic to move toward fast, sustainable, and secure development in all spheres. There is a moral side too: most Russians came to the republic to promote its economic and cultural revival and made an immense contribution to this cause. Prof. R. Magomedov, the patriarch of historical science in the Republic of Daghestan, has the following to say on this score: “As part of Russia Daghestan was absolutely secure; during these years, Daghestan developed and adjusted to contemporary forms of life. We should always remember that those Russians who lived among us played an integrating and balancing role; they promoted closer relations among our peoples and stabilization of our society. Can we forget about this when looking ahead?”<sup>13</sup>

There is an economic aspect as well: the republic is closely connected with the Stavropol and Krasnodar Territories and the Rostov Region. It would be wise to adopt a special program that encourages Russians to remain in the republic.

From the ethnocultural viewpoint, the Russians should be convinced to continue living in the republic and friendly relations should be preserved between them and the Daghestani peoples. The Russian language is used not only to speak to other nationalities: many of the local people regard Russian as their native tongue; the younger generation of creative intelligentsia uses Russian as well. The state structures believe it to be one of their tasks to prevent an outflow of Russian speakers from the republic; they are taking practical measures to defuse the tension that is driving Russian speakers away from Daghestan in the first place. A Governmental Commission has been set up to deal with the problems of Russian speakers.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See: *Respublika Daghestan: sovremennye problemy natsional'nykh otnosheniy*, p. 134.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> See: Tekushchiy arkhiv Minnatsinformvneshsviazi.

<sup>13</sup> *Sovremennoe sostoianie i perspektivy razvitiya istoricheskoy nauki Daghestana i Severnogo Kavkaza*, Makhachkala, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> See: *Problemy russkogo i russkoiazыchnogo naseleniya respubliki Daghestan*, Makhachkala, 1996, p. 49.

#### **(d) The Kumyks**

With respect to the Kumyks, the parliament's decision to provide the land-hungry Kumyk settlements with additional land plots in the mountains played a very important role. Those who lived in the Makhachkala suburbs (Tarki, Alburikent, and Kiakhulay) and who were settled in 1944 on the land of the deported Chechen-Akkinty in the Khasaviurt District received large plots for building houses in their new places of residence.

To stem or, at least, limit migration and resettlement from the mountains to the plains, as well as to smooth out certain socioeconomic discrepancies, more money was poured into the conflict-prone districts; three new programs—The Mountains, Revival, and The South—were adopted. The Kumyk settlements of the Kiziliurt District and some of the Kumyk administrative territorial units of the Buynaksk District were united into the Kumtorkala District.<sup>15</sup> On 22 March, 1993, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RD passed a decree On Setting up the Novokostek Village Soviet in the Khasaviurt District. This was done to alleviate tension between the Darghins and the Kumyks over land within the Kostek Village Soviet.<sup>16</sup>

#### **(e) National Minorities**

Much was done to preserve the cultural and ethnic space of the divided peoples and to enhance the status of numerically small peoples, as well as realize the principle of equal representation of all ethnic groups in the state power structures. Three national minorities (Aguls, Rutuls, and Tsakhurs) acquired written languages. All fourteen ethnoses of Daghestan with written languages of their own were equally represented in the State Council and proportionally represented in the RD People's Assembly. The State Council and the government of Daghestan founded the republican newspapers *Vestnik Agula* (in the Agul language) and *Vatan* (in the Tat language).<sup>17</sup>

#### **(f) The Nogays**

Instead of one, the Nogays received two constituencies to elect their representatives to the RD People's Assembly. Under the Federal Law of the Russian Federation on the National-Cultural Autonomy, the national-cultural autonomy of the Nogay people with its governing structure appeared in the Nogay District of Daghestan.<sup>18</sup>

#### **(g) Autonomization of Daghestan**

Sooner or later everyone finally agreed that the republic's population is too ethnically diverse and mingled to set up national-territorial units on its territory.

Had this idea been realized, the republic could have been called not only a "mountain of languages," but also a "mountain of divided peoples." Only 19 percent of the Lakhs, for example, still live in their historical homeland in the Lakh and Kulin districts (60 percent of them are city dwellers);

<sup>15</sup> See: *Respublika Daghestan: sovremennye problemy natsional'nykh otnosheniy*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> See: *Molodezh Daghestana*, No. 46, 2004.

21 percent of the Lakhs live elsewhere in the republic. If a Lakh District were set up, it would unite only 19 percent of this ethnic group, while 81 percent would continue living outside it, in nine or ten areas. Such an arrangement can hardly be called an autonomy; it would serve no positive purpose.<sup>19</sup>

There is a political side to the problem: in the proposed autonomies, most people would be deprived of their political rights: national constituencies would inevitably acquire an ethnically homogeneous political elite. In fact, this is the main idea behind the project, which means that all other nationalities would suffer—self-determination would develop into self-isolation and ethnic struggle.

### **(h) Political Reform**

The changes and the republic's domestic and very specific political system that eventually took shape fit the society's social and political structure. A State Council was formed consisting of fourteen members, who represented the fourteen officially registered nationalities. It was the highest executive and representative body. The parliament, the RD People's Assembly of 121 deputies, in which all fourteen nationalities were proportionally represented, was elected by universal vote. The prime minister became first deputy chairman of the State Council.

This system functioned successfully and helped address the following key tasks:

- suppression of separatism and prevention of the republic's division;
- liquidation of the causes behind mass ethnic conflicts and ethnic purges;
- encouraging political will of not being drawn into border conflicts with neighbors;
- prevention of any serious movement to effect separation from Russia;
- prevention of Islamists' more or less strong influence on political decision-making even though the religious (Islamic) factor remained prominent.<sup>20</sup>

The decision to set up an RD Ministry of Nationalities and Foreign Relations was one of the most important legislative acts in the ethnic sphere. The two functions were combined in one ministry because the widespread Daghestanian diaspora called for contacts with other constituents of the Russian Federation and CIS countries. Under Decree No.137 of 19 June, 1996 of the RD State Council On the Coordinating Role of the Ministry of Nationalities and Foreign Relations in Carrying out a Single Foreign Economic Policy of the Republic of Daghestan, the ministry's functions were extended.<sup>21</sup>

## **2. Ethnopolitical and Ethnosocial Situation and Conflicts after 2000**

The wave of ethnic conflicts that engulfed the republic in the early 1990s (which were not typical of the republic anyway) soon subsided. Conflicts gradually disappeared from the political scene; however, those who were invited to join the elites in exchange for abandoning confrontational stands remained at the helm of the republic's politics and economy.

<sup>19</sup> The authors' calculations are based on the 1989 census data.

<sup>20</sup> See: E.F. Kisriev, "Soprotivlenie sistemy politicheskikh institutov Daghestana protsessu sozdania edinogo pravovogo prostranstva v Rossii," in: *Federalizm v Rossii*, Kazan, 2001, pp. 123-143.

<sup>21</sup> See: *V interesakh narodov Daghestana*, Machachkala, 2003, p. 3.

Society as a whole was not less conflict-prone: several confrontations of the past remained unresolved, while others became exacerbated. New conflicts (rooted in the past), this time of a sociopolitical nature, arose within the ethnic groups. The government and society with their conflicting interests were both guilty of this.

What bred the new conflicts? Why were there more conflicts? Why did they become even more variegated? According to the studies the RD Ministry for Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations carried out in 2005-the first half of 2006 in the municipal units, there were 47 conflicts: over land—29; social—7; political—3; ethnic—2; economic—1, domestic—1. The conflicts became more complex: they developed from simple appeals to the authorities into picketing administrative buildings and from rallies and road blocks into legal action in local courts and in the European Court in Strasbourg. Many of the conflicts have been going on for years.

We have classified the recent conflicts in the following way: conflicts connected with the rehabilitation of the repressed Chechen-Akkinty; rehabilitation of forcibly displaced persons; religious confrontation; and generation conflicts.

### Rehabilitation of the Chechen-Akkinty

On 23 June, 1991, the Congress of People's Deputies of Daghestan passed a Regulation on Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples in execution of the Law of the R.S.F.S.R. of 26 April, 1991 of the same name. Under Para 3.1 of the republican document, there were plans to move the Lakhs of the Novolakskoe District elsewhere from the territory of the former Aukhovo District (from which the Chechen-Akkinty were evicted in 1944).

At the same time, the congress instructed the Supreme Soviet to pass a law on forcibly displaced peoples and set a time-table for later resettlements: in 1991-1992, the former Aukhovo District was to be restored and its settlements returned their old names; the Lakhs were to be moved before 1996, while the Chechen-Akkinty were to be returned to their former villages at the same time. This has not been done yet: there is no Aukhovo District, while the settlements still bear their new names.

This happened because the Law on Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples was not an act of historical justice in relation to the repressed peoples: it was the product of a haggle between a group of Checheno-Ingushetian deputies and Boris Yeltsin's team over deputy support when Yeltsin ran for Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R.<sup>22</sup>

The law presupposed political, legal, and territorial rehabilitation, but the latter contradicted the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. In fact, those who passed the law failed to take into account the inevitable ethnic complications in the Northern Caucasus. Very soon the R.S.F.S.R. Supreme Soviet had to suspend its own decision regarding territorial rehabilitation.

In Daghestan, however, territorial rehabilitation of the Chechen-Akkinty was never suspended; the republic tried but failed to fulfill the decisions of its Supreme Soviet. Why did this happen? The sums allocated for moving the Lakhs from the Novolakskoe District were too small to speed up the process. It also proved hard to restore the Aukhovo District within its former boundaries—the Avar settlements of the Kazbek District refused to join the Aukhovo District. The federal center, in turn, never bothered about adopting a law on the deported nationalities.

The leaders of Daghestan were firm in their resolve to succeed in rehabilitating the Chechen-Akkinty. President Mukhu Aliev pointed out that the smoldering conflict could not be left untended; it was thanks to him that a decision was made to allocate 433 million rubles from the federal budget

<sup>22</sup> See: V.D. Dzidzoev, *Kavkaz kontsa XX veka: tendentsii etnopoliticheskogo razvitiia (istoriko-politicheskoe issledovanie)*, The Vladikavkaz Scientific Center, RAS RSOA, Vladikavkaz, 2004, p. 146.

for building houses for Lakhs in 2007. The deported nationalities issue, however, cannot be settled once and for all without a corresponding federal law.

We wonder why the Chechen-Akkinty were not immediately returned to the Aukhovo District in the same way that other Chechen groups were reinstated when the Chechen-Ingush republic was restored? According to M. Abuev, former first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of D.A.S.S.R. and bureau member of the C.P.S.U. Daghestanian Regional Committee, it was the C.P.S.U. Central Committee that recommended not to return the Akkinty to the Aukhovo District, but offer them land elsewhere. They were given land in the Khasaviurt District and the town of Khasaviurt, close to the Novolakscoe District. The Akkinty, however, proved obstinate. Under the pressure of their incessant demands to be moved back to their historical homeland, the leaders of Daghestan obtained the consent of both nationalities to swap territories. The C.C. C.P.S.U. interfered once more: it was dead set against a solution that might serve as a precedent in another place: the Prigorodny District in North Ossetia, where people from South Ossetia settled in 1944. It was obviously impossible to move them back to Georgia, where they lived before 1944.

### Religious Conflicts

At the end of 2006, President of Daghestan Mukhu Aliev summed up all the steps taken to oppose religious extremism: in 2005, the republic fell victim to 47 terrorist acts, in 2006, it lived through 16 acts of terror (a drop of 60 percent); and 36 fighters laid down arms. The president described the sources of terror in the following way: “The main causes are the appalling social and economic conditions and unemployment.” Despite a spectacular drop in the number of terrorist acts, the president warned: “Terrorism has come to the Northern Caucasus, Daghestan, and Russia to stay.”<sup>23</sup>

The growing number of mosques (from 27 in Soviet times to the present 1,786), as well as numerous religious institutes and schools, has done nothing to improve the moral standards in Daghestan. The local ethnic groups set up numerous conflicting national movements, even though the republic shares Islam as the religion of the majority. This means that social and ethnic relations come first, while religion is trailing behind.

Confrontations between Sunnis and Shi‘a (triggered by religious postulates and the religious literature market) are a more or less recent development; before that local Islam stood opposed to Wahhabism. In the Akhtyn District, the supporters and opponents of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Daghestan cannot agree on certain issues, while in the Shamkhal settlement, different groups of believers do not see eye to eye on certain Islamic dogmas.

There is no agreement on why Wahhabism spreads in the republic: some people say that it is a religion of unemployed young people, while others argue that it attracts the smartest and the wealthier part of the younger generation, the potential of which remains unclaimed by the state. Unwilling to follow the usual road to the top through bribes and nepotism they prefer armed struggle. There is another opinion—young people are rejecting capitalism and social differentiation. They are taking up arms to fight for social justice as one of the Islamic principles. Some people regard terror as a form of struggle of the weak against the strong.

The traditional clerics object to the term “religious extremism:” religion, they argue, has nothing to do with extremism.

The government and academic community have different opinions about religion as a stabilizing factor. The government accepts compromises and alliances with the loyal part of the faithful, which is wise: traditional religion and the government have joined forces in the struggle against Wahhabism.

<sup>23</sup> *Daghestanskaia pravda*, No. 333, 2006.



The traditional clergy, at the same time, spares no ideological effort to prove that a Shari'a state is better than a secular one. Here is an example from the past: when Imam Shamil launched his anti-colonial struggle in the 19th century the Sufis, concerned about moving closer to Allah, became the most consistent warriors of jihad. This means that the position of all the religious trends is determined by socioeconomic and political reality. This is how the academic community interprets Shamil and his struggle, while specific assessments in specific situations depend on the interests of society. From this point of view, traditional Islam is the only correct and justified form of Islam.

Conflicts inside ethnic groups, a relatively novel phenomenon, stem from social contradictions. In fact, they are rooted in the first post-Soviet period when property was snatched or given away right and left, while the public remained a passive onlooker. The theory of a "social state" (Art 7 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation) has failed: recent years have seen an active onslaught against the rights and interests of the ordinary people at the municipal level. This is particularly true of land relations, financial machinations, privatization, and falsification of the election results.

The land issue has already stirred up unrest in the Kumtorkala, Kazbek, Dokuzpara, Magaramkent, Tabasaran, Khivsk, Untsukul, Tsumada, Kizliar, Derbent, and Lakh districts and in the cities of Kaspiysk and Makhachkala.

In the Kumtorkala District, for example, the local administration head "transferred" 400 hectares of the best agricultural land to the non-agricultural category in violation of all the laws; the plots were sold as construction sites to people from the capital; the locals were left out in the cold.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, this has become a habit with the local authorities: in the Derbent District, the local people complained that businessmen from Moscow and other big cities buy up vast areas of land to build what can be described as nothing short of mansions. In most cases, these mansions stand empty, while the local people cannot obtain a decent plot of land to grow vegetables or build a house.<sup>25</sup> This is happening everywhere. In 2006, 40 criminal cases of this sort were investigated in the Untsukul District alone.

The local administrators respond with protest actions of their own, staged with the help of people employed by state-financed organizations accountable to the local authorities who, in turn, spare no effort to laud the local heads to the skies.

Recently the republic had a taste of another type of conflict inside the departments. On 18 February, 2007, militiamen of the patrol service gathered once more for a rally to demand higher wages. They accused the militia bosses of corruption: employment and promotion allegedly depended on fixed bribes.<sup>26</sup>

## The Diaspora's Double Role

The Daghestani peoples are always on the move because of the surplus labor force at home. People from Daghestan are scattered across nearly all of Russia's Federation constituents and other CIS countries. The diaspora is over 400,000-strong. Recently its situation changed dramatically: at the early stage of the market reforms, the migrant workers competed with the locals for jobs, which naturally ended in conflicts and clashes over trivial matters. Later, when the most mobile part of the population joined the diaspora, the situation changed a great deal. In an alien ethnic milieu, any diaspora is economically much more active than the local people. The local state and municipal structures might try to keep it within certain limits. In our case, however, these institutions, already corrupted by the market

<sup>24</sup> See: *Chernovik*, No. 46, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> RVGK. Aktsenty TV program, 26 June, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> RVGK Vesti Daghestana TV Program, 18 February, 2007.

reforms, permitted the newcomers to enter the most attractive economic segments. There are millionaires and even billionaires in the Daghestani diaspora; seven of them sit in the State Duma, which speaks of the diaspora's immense clout outside the republic.

Some of the local people, who found themselves on the poorer side of the already split society, think nothing good of the diaspora. In fact, this has become a delayed action bomb which might explode at any moment. On many occasions, it was people from Daghestan who provoked such explosions: in 2006-2007, there were clashes that claimed the lives of Daghestanis and local people and insistent demands to deport the unwelcome guests. This happened twice in the Republic of Kalmykia, in the city of Salsk (Rostov Region) and in the Astrakhan Region.<sup>27</sup>

It should be said that there are Daghestanis who fill high posts in the Federation constituents and in Moscow and enjoy the respect and trust of all who know them. The most active members of the diaspora are involved in local cultural developments, while all the members can count on all-round support. This is especially true of the Moscow mayor's office and the Ministry of Culture and National Relations of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

The leaders of Daghestan, in turn, are trying to maintain regular contacts with the diaspora members scattered across the country for the sake of their peaceful coexistence with the local societies. The Ministry for Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations has offices in all the constituents of the Russian Federation. In 2004 and 2005, their representatives met in Makhachkala.

President of Daghestan Mukhu Aliev came to Moscow to persuade Daghestani businessmen to invest their money in their native republic. Some of them have already registered their businesses in Daghestan.<sup>28</sup> The representative offices, meanwhile, do not spare any effort to establish trade contacts with the RD. This shows that while in the past the diaspora relieved part of the unemployment pressure at home, today it has gained considerable economic and political weight to start the economic revival of the Republic of Daghestan by strengthening its contacts with its native land.

### **National Minorities: Self-Identification of Small Ethnic Groups**

It is a well-known fact that the Ando-Tsezian peoples of Daghestan were not mentioned in any of the population censuses after 1926—they identified themselves with the Avars. In the 2002 population census, the numerically largest of the small ethnic groups (Andiis, Akhvakhts, Tsezes, Bezhtins, and Karatins) identified themselves as small ethnic groups. There is a frequently voiced opinion that the true ethnic identity of the Ando-Tsezian people was sacrificed to the ambitions of the local career-minded politicians. The numerically small ethnic groups were deprived of education in their native languages; without the status of an ethnic group they had no chance of being represented in power structures. Recently, however, they have developed an avid interest in the past of their villages; books and newspapers in their native languages are being published; nearly all such groups have formed closely-knit monoethnic communities in Makhachkala. Today, ethnic affiliation has obviously become a trump card for unification and mobilization.

The question is why are all these problems starting now? There are three reasons.

1. Under the Constitution of the Republic of Daghestan of 1997, fourteen nationalities are represented in the State Council and the parliament (the Aguls, Tsakhurs, and Rutuls are smaller than some of the Ando-Tsezian ethnic groups). This was regarded as an insult, which caused a grudge.

<sup>27</sup> See: *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 17 January, 2007; *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, No. 244, 2006, *Chernovik*, No. 28, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> See: *Molodezh Daghestana*, No. 38, 2006.

2. In 1999, the State Duma passed a Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small Peoples of Russia, which admitted that expansion into the traditional territories of the numerically small nationalities had pushed them to the brink of extinction. The law outlined the measures designed to protect the territories of small ethnic groups against invasions and promote their progress, culture, and languages. The small nationalities of Daghestan expected privileges, but it turned out that the law was not applied in the republic. The small nationalities never experienced territorial invasion; the groups engaged in pasturing were given winter grazing grounds. This explains why the republic did not pass a similar law.

The issue of education in the native language dates back to the early 1930s when primary education became general, a decision that created an issue for the numerically small nationalities. At that time, even larger ethnic groups had no stable alphabets; there were no teachers capable of teaching the native tongues either. In the 1950s-1960s, about 18,000 teachers from other regions were dispatched to Daghestan. In these conditions, the central authorities instructed the republic to use kindred tongues to teach the smaller nationalities. Today there are dictionaries in nearly all the languages of the numerically small nationalities that have acquired alphabets, thanks to the Institute of Language, Literature, and Art of the Daghestanian Scientific Center, RAS. The small nationalities can finally be educated in their native tongues.

3. The above can be described as two provoking factors—the large intelligentsia of the numerically small peoples is the real reason for the revived problem: the best educated part of society inevitably complicates ethnic-related issues. This is especially true of Daghestan, where the national factor plays an important role in public life and politics: the emerging supra-national community cannot downplay the carefully preserved ethnic identity.

It is a well-known fact that if individual nationalities of a multi-national community formulate new ethnic demands, they should be studied and satisfied. In our case, it seems wise to call a conference of the Ando-Tsezian peoples to discuss all the issues in detail. In the absence of an agreement among the numerically small nationalities themselves, it is even more advisable to clarify the various viewpoints.

## The Elite-Society Conflict

The conflict between the elite and society is more destructive than the other conflicts.

Ideally, the elite is supposed to be the best part of society, its most active and leading part, ensuring reasonable and effective administration. Life and ideals are two different things. The new Daghestani elite is a counter-elite of sorts—it is corrupt, criminal, and loves luxury. Its members prefer to keep business within their own clans.

The large part of the elite has its own “shadow” businesses and indulges in tax evasion. Speaking in Khasaviurt, President Mukhu Aliev pointed out that the city’s business community is ten times larger than that of Iuzhno-Sukhokumsk, which paid more taxes.<sup>29</sup> There are any number of markets in Daghestan, the owners of which prefer to remain unknown so as to evade taxes.<sup>30</sup>

The new Daghestani elite quickly mastered the Western lifestyle; it has become a self-contained community with a lot of privatized property. It is indifferent to the rest of the people, which it treats like a crowd of voters. There is sharp confrontation between the elite and society.

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<sup>29</sup> See: *Novoe delo*, No. 50, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 4, 2007.

### The Generation Conflict

This is an eternal phenomenon. The older generation regards the younger as lazy, idle, immoral, and non-patriotic. The younger generation accuses the older of conservatism, backwardness, etc. Later it turns out that the “bad younger” generation grows into the “good older” generation and the story repeats itself. Today, young people live under very different conditions, which explains their behavior.

In Daghestan, the generation conflict goes much deeper than the ordinary conflict—it bears the stamp of an era of crisis. Corruption accompanies the rising generation from kindergarten to school, in higher educational establishments and at work. They have learned to tolerate violence, drugs, and excessive drinking. One cannot expect effective administration from them.

Perestroika and the transfer to the market crippled the mentality of the rising generation; disrespect of parents and elderly people has become the norm. Instances where grandchildren murder their grandparents have become common. Before the era of social change, such things were unheard of in Daghestan; no one could have even imagined them. The generation gap can be remedied only if its cause, the social crisis, is removed.

The above means that the problems of Daghestan’s national progress, its economy, and its culture are multiplying, therefore the tasks of coordinating national and regional development remain on the agenda. It is becoming increasingly clear that the federal center should be more closely involved in the process.