

IV. Politological Analysis

One of the most widespread themes in various discussions about the reasons of the long time Russian- Chechen military confrontation is the attempt to find out which was the more guilty party in the beginning war and who is interested in its continuation. May be the Chechens themselves had not enough rationality to persist the many adventurers were engaged by the Russian special services according to the Chechen general belief? The world famous political scientist Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov¹ appealed to the Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudaev² warning him of a military confrontation with Russia because it would result in a catastrophe for the Chechen people.

The names of the “visible instigators of the fight” are outspoken, much about them is known to many people. Such stunning "successes" of their political activity hardly can be explained by the power of their intelligence, or the quality of other human properties. Perhaps with the exception of D. Dudaev, all of them are not very likable people. But nevertheless... the role and influence of foreign political and economic "actors" is less obvious though their presence can be guessed. For the overwhelming majority of people in the Republic, i.e. for the interrogated respondents, the main role of the ruling circles of Russia who didn't avoid these events so disastrous for all involved parties is obvious. At the 20th of February 2004 in the programme "Freedom of speech" of the federal TV Channel NTV³ Akhmad Kadyrov⁴ publicly named the Kremlin as the originator of the tragedy. It should be noted, that such views are not popular among Chechens who are orientated to the Federal centre⁵. For them Kadyrov's declaration came fully unexpected. Despite all doubts and suspicion about the Russian policy in the Chechen Republic, many Chechens saw the reason for the tragic events in their own actions. It is hardly possible to define the true nature of the Chechen events and the roles of various forces without a scientific analysis of the socio-

¹This footnote and the following are the translators explanations. Abdurakhman Genazovich Avtorkhanov (1908—1997). A civil servant of the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the CPSU until his arrest in 1937, fled to Germany in 1943. He wrote books on the Soviet system.

²Dzhokhar Musayevich Dudaev (15 February 1944 – 21 April 1996) was a former Soviet general, he was the first (separatist) President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (27 October 1991 – 21 April 1996). He was killed in 1996 by a Russian air attack located via the signal from his satellite phone

³www.ntv.ru

⁴Akhmat Abdulhamidovich Kadyrov (August 23, 1951 - May 9, 2004) was former supreme Muslim leader (Mufti) of Chechnya, he was elected as (non-separatist) President of Chechen Republic within the legal framework of the Russian Federation on October 5, 2003. Assassinated on May 9, 2004 in Grozny stadium by a bomb blast under a VIP stage during a World War II memorial victory parade

⁵Referring to persons with a non-separatist orientation. .

political and ethnic processes before the armed conflict and of the actions of the involved parties during the conflict, especially the actions of the Russian troops and special services.

A particular factor was the characteristic of the Chechen mentality aspiring preserving the aspiration to freedom despite the long time bondage and suppression. The position of the Chechen people in Russia's social structure of was never an equal one. It should be noted that the ethnic confrontation between Russians and Chechens occurred since the beginning of the Russian presence in the Caucasus. In different periods of history the forms of the confrontations varied. The conflict was damped for a long time, but the underlying contradictions remained.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the liberation of many peoples ethnic problems didn't become less acute for the "new" Russia. Russia still remains a multiethnic power and the situation of the dozens of peoples and nationalities⁶ within Russia cannot be designed as ideal. Dozens of violently integrated and the voluntary forced peoples and nationalities remain oppressed. And the situation of the proper imperial nation consisting the overwhelming majority of the population of the country hardly can be named as privileged. In the past Russia was called a prison of peoples.

It is not the first time in the recent history of Russia that ethnic problems play such a fatal role. Being chronic, ethnic problems constantly serve as a theme of sharp discussions and disputes, turning then in fuel for the heating of the conflict and a means for acquiring power and allies. "All interested parties" in the Chechen events excellently applied this theoretical postulate of the Leninism and in such a manner unfortunately proved its vitality. Appropriate to the nature of Leninism, such activities resulted in innumerable human sufferings and material losses. Contrary to the declared purposes the events resulted in incalculable and significant deterioration of the people aspiring to liberation. Hardly a people in the modern world stays in such a depressing position as the Chechens. At the same time, the recent public discussions in the Russian mass-media devoted to the Chechen problem became less sharp. After the realisation in the Chechen Republic of a "referendum" on the constitution, "presidential elections" and a lot of other noisy propaganda campaigns, there are made attempts to create the illusion of the solution of the basic problems and resolvability of the remaining problems, if not today then tomorrow. Numerous virtual victories above acute problems are, certainly, not the proof of their reduction or even a

⁶In the Russian language use "nationalities" refers to ethnic groups

serious attempt to improve the situation of a people staying in unbearable conditions. It is, probably, not superfluous to note, that an accumulation of negative socio-ethnic "energy" mainly is caused not by certain existing pure ethnic or inter-ethnic problems but by socio-political problems. All the centuries of the "integration" of the Chechen people into the Russian empire as well as being subjects of the tsars, and as decades being "citizens" of the USSR and Russia there was no remarkable period of time when the Chechens really could feel themselves as emancipated citizens of this state which was extremely hard for them. The analysis of the situation of the Chechens at the labour market or in the sphere of education and culture in the former ChIASSR after the repressions⁷ and until the dissolution of the USSR, and it was the most favourable period of the common Russian-Chechen history, shows the objectivity and social regularity of the later social and political cataclysms. There is research, based on exact enough statistics showing the inequality of the Chechens in their own territory, not including proper Russian regions. In 1956, having recognised mass reprisals against the Chechen people as illegal and having allowed the Chechens to return home, the authorities, nevertheless, did not compensate for moral and a material damages, nor did they return the violently taken away dwellings. In some localities Chechens had to redeem their own houses from persons occupying them after the dispatch of the Chechens. Despite the obvious injustice of previous actions against the Chechens, favourable conditions for the rehabilitation and integration into the society were not created. Moreover, the authorities purposefully constricted it. So, on parameters of access to higher education, the Chechens comprising about 53 % of the Republic's population, conceded not only to the Russians, but also to other nationalities living in the ChIASSR. From the general number of 5555 students of high education facilities in the Republic in the 1959/60 educational year there were 4002 Russians (29,1 % of the population of the Republic) and 483 Chechens. 807 students belonged to the group of "other nationalities" (11.1 thousand persons or 0,9% of the population of the Republic) not including the separately counted peoples of Dagestan.

In the next years these parameters regarding the Chechens improved little, in particular in the 1976/77 educational year: from 11735 students the overwhelming majority - 6425 were Russians, but the number of Chechens to this time also has increased up to 3057. The discrimination against Chechens compared with citizens of other nationalities in education, as well as in other spheres, determining the quality of life and directly influencing social self-confidence existed until the

⁷In 1944 banishment of the Chechens and Ingush to Central Asia and dissolution of the ChIASSR, in 1956: return of the Chechen and Ingush peoples and restoration of the ChIASSR

disintegration of the USSR. The access of Chechens to most of the major branches of the national economy - oil extraction and refining and petrochemical enterprises, was artificially restricted. At the end of eighties only a few Chechens worked in the largest industrial enterprises of Grozny such as the factory “Krasnyj molot” (“Red Hammer”)⁸ and “Elektropribor” (“Electrical device”)⁹ though Chechens tried to work there. The ethnic composition of Grozny confirms such a policy. According to the census of 1989, only 75,000 of the 450,000 inhabitants of the capital of the Chechen –Ingush Republic were Chechens. As a consequence of the unequal position of the indigenous population in their own territory there existed in the countryside a much greater number of marginalised, politically unstable and radical elements in the Chechen society. It is quite difficult to quantify the exact amount of such people, but some researchers of this problem suggest that in the sixties and seventies of the 20th century 250-300 thousand persons left the ChIAASR annually for seasonal work in different regions of Russia and Kazakhstan. It is a quite meaningful number regarding the fact, that according to the census of 1979 there were altogether 755,000 Chechens. The number of seasonal workers increased from year to year. At the same time access of indigenous inhabitants to branches of the national economy of the Republic, requiring special knowledge and providing higher salaries was artificially restrained. The politics of the Regional committee of the CPSU was quite obvious for many people. Until 1989 the leadership of the Chechen regional committee of the CPSU entirely consisted of Russians and non-indigenous persons¹⁰. All of these facts were well known by the not very numerous Chechen intellectuals, especially those working in higher education facilities facing to with similar discrimination until the end of the eighties. It would be erroneous to consider all these people as a fringe group but nevertheless a significant amount of socially unstable elements came from them. Being a driving force of those events, this part of the population brought to the situation social chaos and disorganisation peculiar to fringe groups. The rhetoric of the Chechen leaders clearly contradicting common sense was exactly designed for the maintenance of the "revolutionary" enthusiasm of these strata. It is interesting to note, that when the "big" people from Moscow frequently visited Chechnya they encouraged the radicalism of the Chechen leaders. “All democratic mass media in Moscow will help you in your noble issue. In the relations with the central Russian authorities you should take a hard line, you don't need compromises. You should

⁸In Soviet times the factory produced oil engineering

⁹In Soviet times the factory exported products to 19 countries, during the war produced grenade launchers. Now the factory is partially reconstructed and produce electrical instruments, plastic products, mechanical metal working

¹⁰I.e. neither Chechens nor Ingushs

accept only such a compromise with the Centre which assumes full freedom and full independence to your Republic from Moscow”, said Gennady Burbulis¹¹, a confidant of B. Yeltsin, at one of the meetings with the leadership of the OKChN (United committee of the Chechen people) in the autumn of 1991. Social forces capable of directing the development in a peaceful, evolutionary direction couldn’t be found in the Chechen society. As shown in the last events, the rulers in the Federal centre¹² wouldn’t allow such an alternative development. The influence of the amorphous and unripe Chechen intelligentsia on public processes was and remains still a rather insignificant phenomenon. If there was an influence of the Chechen intelligentsia it was a rather negative one. Some Chechen intellectuals trudged in the "tail" of the events and their selfish provocative declarations in Russian mass media directly provoked the Federal centre¹³ to use force. As against other regions of the USSR and Russia none of the more or less known Chechen intellectuals proposed their ideas requested at that time and a program of a further democratic development either outside or inside of the Russian state. It would be probably not redundant to note that the reprisals against the Chechen people during the 20th century also did not promote the formation of a national elite. Revealing the motives and the objective reasons of the complex ethno-social processes, characteristic not only to the Chechen Republic, but to the Caucasus and Russia as a whole, it is necessary to note that the presence of a set of objective and subjective preconditions did not always result in a social explosion. Also in the Chechen Republic the transition of these contradictions in a "hot" condition was not inevitable. Such master of social shocks as Vladimir Lenin had reasons to say, that for the realisation of the plans of a revolutionary party it needs favourable external conditions, the presence or elimination of which entirely depends on actions of the Russian state power. A new essential reflexion about the Russian-Chechen war induces the very sad guess about the provoked character of the revolution itself and the following military actions although at present it is now difficult to prove this idea. The justification for such a view will appear gradually. As eyewitnesses and involuntary participants of all these events, it seems to us more and more, that

¹¹Gennadij Eduardovich Burbulis (August 4, 1945 in Pervoural’sk, Region Sverdlovsk). Former Professor of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, 1989 elected as Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1991 chief of Boris Yeltsin’s election campaign, State Secretary – Secretary of the State Council at the President of Russia, First Deputy of the Chairman of the Russian Government; 1992 State Secretary at the Russian President, Chief Counsellor of the President. 1993 - 1999 – Deputy of the State Duma, 2001 Vice-governor of the Novgorod region, since 2001 representative of the Novgorod region in the Federation Council (Upper Chamber of the Federal Assembly).

¹²Referring to Moscow

¹³Bodies of Presidential administration, Federal government and ministries, Supreme court and Federal Office of the Public Prosecutor.

the radicalisation of the crisis in its beginning and transformation into a military phase was caused by policy, i.e. the activities as well as the inactivities of the Russian authorities, generals and mass media. Long before these tragic events, in beginning of the Perestroika, the Soviet and later the Russian press and TV openly published and broadcasted hostile materials about the Chechens. At the same time the not very credible Russian courts did not confirmed the crimes attributed to Chechens. A lot of financial and criminal offences, attributed to Chechens, were not judicially proved even after several years. To the present time the Russian authorities still could not prove the participation of Chechens in these crimes. After numerous anti-Chechen statements by various representatives of the Russian authorities, including the President, it is obvious, that all this was conducted from one centre. The former Russian Minister of National Relations Valery Tishkov, nowadays is the director of the N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences¹⁴ wrote in the newspaper Izvestia¹⁵: “Representatives of of the authorities also participate in racism!” Not only Chechens meet racism from the authorities on streets of the Russian cities.

At the same time, despite the situation of the Chechens in Russia, there is no remarkable ethnic and cultural incompatibility with Russians and other ethnic groups with whom the Chechens have lived together for centuries. The major element of the Russian national culture is language and the overwhelming majority of Chechens were able to speak it not worse then the Russian themselves. The same can be said of the spiritual culture and the whole social structure too. Also in relation with less important ethnic groups the Chechens showed tolerance and respect. Any Chechen who had friends among other peoples – Avars, Georgians, Kabardinians, got great respect of his fellow tribesmen. It has found reflection in epic songs, songs (“illi”) and in ethnic traditions. A continuation of these traditions is the everyday rule kept until now to give the favourite child a name resembling the name of a people: Arbi (Arab), Gyrzhi (Georgian), Gymki (Kumyk), Gebert (Kabardian), Girman (German), In the past Chechens even named their sons Japon.

All sides to a conflict bring forward arguments justifying their actions. The Russian side is more active, the opposite side has no opportunities to present their arguments, therefore its arguments are represented as weak and unpersuasive. Figuratively to say: “The Taiga is the law and the bear

¹⁴www.iea.ras.ru/

¹⁵www.izvestia.ru

the public prosecutor”¹⁶. Thus, analysing the influence of the intrastate "actors" on the autonomous processes at the beginning of the nineties and continuing till now, unfortunately, it is possible to give only traditional examples. An objective evaluation cannot positively characterise neither Russian actions nor the Russian policy as a whole. The activities of the resistance forces, ostensibly aspiring self determination, are inconsistent and awkward from the very beginning, and give reason for suspicions of acting in the interests of the anti-Chechen forces and being connected to various Russian special services. Since the separatists headed by D. Dudaev came to power in Chechnya they did not make any serious efforts to construct a democratic society. These new authorities never got broad social support and remained in power only due to Russian provocations. Though Russian actions looked chaotic and senseless they were rational in achieving the designated goals. In Russia the Chechen ethnic group was considered always as a hostile force in the Caucasus. At the time of the disintegration of the USSR, the Chechens have recovered from the consequences of mass reprisals and have started to play an essential role in the all-Russian scale. There were Chechens – recognisable politicians, scientists and journalists. Chechens had significant successes in business. In the Rostov region, the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories the Chechen communities have started to play a role economically and politically too significant from the point of view of the Russian state. The author, attending different meetings with Russian intellectuals working at universities and other higher education facilities in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, more than once heard statements from Russian colleagues about the growing Chechen expansion and the necessity to struggle against it. This task and not the struggle against separatism was the undeclared purpose of the war. The methods of warfare since the first day were directed to maximise the bleeding of the opponent. And the threat of separatism was present, probably, because fighting it facilitated such radical solution of the problem. If the situation develops in Russian authorities assume the problem of the Chechen influence in the Russian society will, hardly, arise the next 20-30 years. Approximately so much time the Chechens required to recover after returning from the exile.

As to the problem of separatism it perhaps was never so actual as nowadays. The Chechen people are so destitute and destroyed, the social, economic and political problems are so enormous, that even if Russia was smitten with love for Chechnya and wanting to facilitate its fate there would little it could do. The degree of destruction is so big that Russia, occupied with its own

¹⁶Proverb from the GULag-time

unsolvable problems, hardly expects to solve the Chechen problems.

Difference from the intrastate actors, the influence of foreign "actors" on the autonomous processes is not so obvious. One can rather speak about it as about unsatisfied hopes. The analysis of a lot of public statements of the separatists and personal meetings with many leaders of the separatists show that they were convinced the international community would not allow Russia to put intolerable losses to Chechnya. In the case of a military collision the public opinion would support us, the international mechanism would force Russia to behave according to the norms of international law. Dudaev with his Baltic experience seriously expected such development. Chechen society had to pay a high price for these widespread illusions and a lot of other mistakes. As one of our respondents told, the international support was restrained to humanitarian flour and foodstuffs bought from Russia at inflated prices.

Myths and Eschatology partially referring to outside factors are important in explaining the behaviour and expectations of the people, living for a long time in unfree conditions. A detailed presentation of such views within the framework of the given research doesn't seem to be convenient, but probably it is not needles to state that most events in the nineties in details repeated the content of these myths. Therein also is said that Russia will be followed by the "Ingalz pachhwalq" (English state) and then will come an unprecedented freedom. In this sense the role of the external factors in the Chechen events can be considered as quite important, but the external political influence seems to be more essential. Though the world community as a whole remained indifferent to the Chechen tragedy, Russia certainly had to look at the "West", sometimes clumsily justifying its actions. Without this factor the amount of victims among the peaceful population would have been much larger. The conflict affected not only the population of Chechnya itself, but also to Chechen persons in different regions of Russia. In some periods of the war the Russian authorities created for them insufferable conditions too. Permanent house searches and mass detention by the police became a constant phenomena. Thereby the officers often put furtively drugs and weapons. In the days of the hostage-taking [in Moscow] of the audience of the musical "Nord-Ost" [23/10/2002 – 26/10/2002], as testified by eyewitnesses, more than 3 thousand persons in Moscow were detained, including women and elderly persons. Almost all of the apartments in which Chechens lived were roughly house searched. A part of the population of the Republic still connect political expectations with the position of the Western Democracies. The reason for it is certainly, first of all, the role of the

Western Democracies in many hot points of the world and their declared adherence to fundamental values.

The role of the intrastate and the foreign economic "actors" is essentially different both on possible consequences as on the level of influence. At the beginning of the military campaigns, especially during the second anti-Chechen war, the intrastate and the external forces played completely opposite roles. If the international humanitarian organisations have literally rescued hundreds of thousands inhabitants of the Chechen Republic from famine, the purposes behind the actions of the other "players" were apparently different. It is difficult to ascertain the volume of this aid in Chechnya but it can be surely stated, also from the personal experience, that this aid was efficient not only in the struggle against mass famine but also after the initial stage of the war in the resumption of work of the completely ruined institutions of education and the public health service. Almost all of the schools and hospitals in Grozny reconstructed at the beginning of 2003 were reconstructed only due to these humanitarian organisations. The nachal'nik¹⁷ of Gosstroi¹⁸ Nikolai Koshman in a public speech asserted that more then 400 schools in Chechnya were reconstructed by his department. To put it mildly, this doesn't correspond to the reality. There were many schools before the First war, thanks to the efforts of the so called Federal centre only a few of them were not destroyed. When Koshman made his statement none of the many schools destroyed by bombardments were restored by means allocated from the Russian state budget. In Grozny humanitarian organisations restored several schools. Among them is the School No. 7, restored by a Czech humanitarian organisation, which is constantly shown on the channels of Russian TV. Speaking about the economic processes in the autonomous Republic, it is necessary to allocate three real and "potential acting" actors. One of them is Russia or, as it is named here nowadays, the Federal centre. Formally it bears the responsibility for everything, that occurs here, supervising all of the major natural resources, and is obliged to play a determining role in the restoration of the national economy of the Republic destroyed by its efforts. At the same time neither the experience of the former generations nor the present state of Russia give occasion for optimistic forecasts in connection with its role.

The role of the Chechens themselves seems to be potentially essential. Among the Chechens there are quite wealthy, solvent and enterprising people which could under suitable conditions

¹⁷Here pejorative for chief, his official title is Chairman

¹⁸State Committee of Construction i.e. Federal ministry of Construction

solve many economic problems. But in the existing social and political situation of the Chechen Republic where no laws apply, even by criteria of the contemporary Russia, the realisation of their potential is impossible.

Not only the possession of a large property, appreciable for the multiplicity “law enforcement officers”, but currently here even new trousers are a risk factor. A manifestation of economic activity of all three "actors" are groups of women, sweeping the dust on some completely broken streets of Grozny. They work in the middle of ruins of houses and numerous waste grounds overgrown by tall weeds. Another manifestation is the “hard” work of reconstructing of the destroyed houses. The graveness of the intention to reconstruct the city show buckets lifted with a cord on the top floors. These realities and the very low activity in reconstructing the dwellings up to now (not typical for the Chechens but explained by the disbelief in sense of any expenses and efforts until a political prospect will occur) do not inspire a great optimism.