

A Balkanist in Daghestan: Annotated Notes from the Field

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Introduction and Disclaimer

The Republic of Daghestan has received very little attention in the West. Chenciner (1997) is the only full-length account in English based on first-hand visits mostly in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Wixman's (1980) excellent study had to be based entirely on secondary sources, and Bennigsen and Wimbush (1986:146-81 et passim), while quite useful, is basically encyclopedic and somewhat dated. Since Daghestan is still difficult to get to, potentially unstable, and only infrequently visited by Western scholars (mostly linguists), I am offering this account of my recent visit there (16-20 June 1998), modestly supplemented by some published materials. My intent is basically informative and impressionistic, and I do not attempt to give complete coverage to many topics worthy of further research. This account does, however, update some items covered in the aforementioned works and makes some observations on Daghestan with respect to language, identity, the political situation, and a comparison with the another unstable, multi-ethnic, identity construction site, i.e., Balkans, particularly Macedonia.

Background

Daghestan is the third most populous Republic in the Russian Federation (after Bashkortostan and Tatarstan; Osmanov 1986:24). The northern half of its current territory, consisting of the Nogai steppe and the Kizljar region settled in part by Terek Cossacks, was added in 1922, after the fall of the North Caucasian Mountain Republic (1918-21) and the establishment of Soviet power (see Broxup 1992).¹ Between the definitive Czarist Russian defeat of Shamil in 1859 (see Broxup 1992 and Gammer 1994) and the revolutions of 1917, the Daghestan Oblast' consisted of a group of districts — some of them former principalities ruled by khans, shamxals, naibs, utsmis, etc., others groups of free villages — defined roughly by the rivers Sulak and Samur in the north and south, respectively, the Caspian sea on the east and the Caucasus peaks on the west. It is this region that more or less constitutes the Daghestan of

medieval Arab geographers, who referred to it not only as the ‘land of mountains’ (which glosses Turkic Daghestan) but also as the Mountain of Languages (Sergeeva 1996:107).² In this region, which is roughly the size of the state of Vermont, there are approximately thirty indigenous languages belonging to the Northeast Caucasian (or Naxo-Daghestanian) language family (see appendix), as well as two Turkic (Kumyk and Azeri) and one Iranian (Tat) language.³ It is a classic example of what Nichols (1992:17-21) calls a residual zone.

Getting There is Not the Fun

After more than 15 years of studying Lak (one of the five largest languages in the Daghestanian branch), I finally had a chance to travel to the place where it is spoken when the ninth meeting of the European Caucasian Society was scheduled for Daghestan’s capital, Maxachkala, in June 1998. I had not gone sooner because Daghestan was closed to Americans until 1989 or so, and subsequently I was too occupied with events in the Balkans (see Friedman 1996). Owing to a small uprising in the center of Maxachkala on May 20-22, however, almost all the Russian participants canceled their participation in the conference and the Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it would not accept the Daghestanis’ guarantee for the safety of foreigners and would refuse to grant them permission to go to Maxachkala.⁴ So the conference was canceled, and I began to wonder if I would ever see Daghestan. When the Russian visa that I had already applied for came, the day before my scheduled departure, with Maxachkala included despite the insistence that it could not be done, I therefore decided to go ahead and try to do some field work. Thanks to the help of a colleague at the University of Leiden I was able to contact a linguist at the Daghestan branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and arrange for a brief visit.

Visitors to and from Maxachkala are given special treatment due to the sensitive political situation in Daghestan and Chechnya, which is on Daghestan’s western border, and I was politely interrogated by immigration officials upon my arrival at the airport. (Identity incident: When the immigration official asks “Nationality?” and I answer “American” he replies that there is no such nationality, that that is citizenship, and he means nationality [nacional’nost’]). I could have made things easier for him by answering “Jewish”, which would have fit his categories, but I decide to insist that my nacional’nost’ is “American”. He relented after a guard assigned to the

Chechnya-Daghestan border with whom I had struck up a friendship during our two-day wait for a plane at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow said that indeed in America they do things differently and that “American” does count as a nacional’nost’.) The nice soldiers kept me company as young men in camouflage khakis patrolled the airport with submachine guns. Then my colleague arrived with a friend with a car and we drove off into the night.

Maxachkala

There is a police checkpoint leaving the region of the airport, another on the road between Kaspisk and Maxachkala (the airport is south of Kaspisk, which is south of Maxachkala), another when we get to the southern end of Maxachkala, and another about a hundred meters from my colleague’s apartment, on Shamil Boulevard (only recently renamed from Kalinin Prospekt; the huge, new bas-relief bust of Shamil a few hundred yards from my colleague’s apartment is the first monument in his honor in Maxachkala) . This part of Maxachkala reminds me of Tirana or of Skopje several years after the terrible 1963 earthquake: Blocks of apartments set down on the dirt with no real streets between huge, broad boulevards. The boulevards are empty, but in the courtyards a few groups of young men are hanging around. I am glad I am with my colleague as we pick our way over the rubble and around chunks of cement to his apartment. His wife has tasty dumplings with salty thickened yogurt ready. My colleague explains that he could put me up in a hotel, but they don’t really “have the conditions” what with the general lack of security, so he hopes I don’t mind staying at their house. Of course, I am happy to do so. I fall asleep to the barking of stray dogs and awaken to the crowing of roosters.

Daghestan resembles the Balkans in many respects. People are proud of their tradition of hospitality. The normal pace of life has the kind of slowness to it that actually seems to be the world norm outside of Northwestern Europe and such former colonies as the US and Canada. (However, the rapid increase in cars in recent years lends a more frantic atmosphere to the streets.) There is an intermingling of Christianity and Islam, with the presence of Islam being as strong as in the southern Balkans. Many women wear a type of head scarf that is typical of Islam. (According to one account, about 10% of the population of Daghestan have converted to the Wahhabi sect of Islam, whose puritanical and expansionist ideology has been a source of on-

going local tension.) The savory smell of shashlik on open grills is like that of kebabchinja roasting on similar grills in Macedonia. Men are fond of drinking, although the ritual is like that of Albanians (and Georgians; cf. Holisky 1989) involving elaborate toasts and the avoidance of drunkenness no matter how much alcohol is consumed. As in Albania, there is a living tradition of blood feuding. Like the contemporary Balkans, there are many ethnic groups whose current manifestations are of relatively modern origin and significant interethnic tensions, although Daghestan is considerably more complex in this respect.⁵

But there are differences, too. In Skopje, for example, many Muslim men wear white pill box caps proclaiming their adherence to Islam, Muslim women often wear a special cut of pale green or brown raincoat that substitutes for a chador, and one still sees occasionally people on the street wearing traditional Albanian or a Romani clothing. In Maxachkala, hem lines are generally ankle length, but many women wear sleeveless tops. The number of white caps on the streets is much smaller, and I saw only one woman in a traditional Caucasian dress. It was a gorgeous red-velvet and sequined affair, with tight wrist-length sleeves, a narrow waist and form fitting at the hips then flaring out. She was probably on her way to a wedding. There are as many women on the street as men. There are no salient mosques in Maxachkala except at the edge of town, where the Turks are building a huge replica of one of Istanbul's main mosques. There is also a new mosque right outside the gates to the airport. There are no salient churches either, so in that sense Maxachkala lacks the cultural character of a Balkan town. It is too young (built by the Russians in 1858, when it was named Petrovsk), and spent half its life under the communists.⁶ In a sense, Maxachkala feels like an Albanian or Macedonian town without any Muslim or Christian monuments. It is like a Russian border town on the Caucasian edge of the Arabo-Turko-Persian world. Apart from a few nineteenth century buildings near the sea shore, a couple of parks, and a fascinating ethnolinguistic complexity, Maxachkala does not have much to recommend it. Rose bushes wither in the brown dust as cars and mini-vans serving as communal taxis rush hither and thither. The earth is baked dry, the air is hot, dank, and dusty. Despite the humid heat, it is clear from the vegetation that this is not a tropical climate. Poplars and willows attest to the fact that Maxachkala has cold winters as well as hot summers. The first floor windows of all the buildings have bars on them, indicating a certain level of crime, but the bars have nice decorative patterns, and the actual entrances to apartment buildings do not have

the security locks of Moscow. Moreover, people leave their doors open during the day if someone is home.

I spent my first morning at the Institute working with Lak linguists. That afternoon my colleague's brother took me to the Bookstore of the Nationalities, which is actually, just a bookstore with one shelf of books each for Lak, Lezgi, Dargwa, and Kumyk, two for Avar, and nothing for Tabassaran.⁷ The other 90 or so shelves were all Russian books. (Most of the nationality books were poetry, a few were children's books, history, folklore, and guides to Islamic prayer.) It turns out that the situation for Daghestanian languages isn't really all that good in Daghestan. The languages are all quite vital in the villages up in the mountains, even those that are limited to just a village or two, so they cannot be described as genuinely endangered.⁸ Nonetheless, when people move down to the cities they end up Russified and their children often do not learn their parents' language(s). (Sociolinguistic example: I was told by a colleague that a Lak student meeting a Lak professor on street in Maxachkala who addressed the professor in Lak rather than Russian would be considered to be engaging in excessive familiarity.) There is not much official support for any of the languages. Thus, for example, it was only in 1991 that a weekly newspaper in Lak began to be published in Maxachkala (until then, there had only been local press in Lakkia, much like neighborhood newspapers in the US), there is one hour a day of radio in each of the five Daghestanian languages, and no regular television programming in any of them. (There are occasional folklore TV programs.) Thus, my experiences as someone interested in Lak were similar to those I had when I first went to Macedonia in the early 1970's, or even Albania in more recent years: People were grateful and touched and sometimes bewildered that I was interested in their language. A feature here similar to my early experiences in Macedonia but different from the modern situation is that speakers of other Daghestanian languages accepted my interest in Lak as a general affirmation of the worth of the languages of Daghestan. To be sure, an Avar would prefer to see an interest in Avar, but there was a sense of Daghestani linguistic identity that reminded me of the old days in the Macedonia, where if you knew one of the local languages people were impressed, but they then asked you if you knew other local languages and were even more impressed if you did. There was a sense of local multilingualism as a source of pride. This is still the case in the oldest Balkan generation, but not among the younger ones, among whom knowledge of Great Power languages (especially English) is the source of pride.⁹

Lakkia

The next day I finally got to Lakkia. The original idea was to take a bus, but everyone said that the Russians would check all the passengers' documents and not let a foreigner like me into the mountains (especially to Lakkia, since the Xachilaev brothers to be discussed below come from there), so my colleague arranged to rent a car and driver and also set it up so that we would go with a Lak linguist and native of Kumux, historical capital of Lakkia and source for the dialectal base of the literary language. I sat in the back with my Lak colleague drinking beer and taking notes. There was only one check point on the way out of Maxachkala, and all they did was look at the driver's papers. We passed through the town of Bunajksk (formerly Temir-Xan-Shura) beyond the first range of mountains, and then at last we were on our way into the mountains for which Daghestan was named. It is about 90 km from Maxachkala to Kumux as the crow flies, but the drive takes four or five hours. (Actually most of the road is asphalted, just very mountainous. Apparently the road to Lakkia is better than the one to Avaria.) We passed through the predominantly Wahhabi and ethnically Dargi village of Karamaxi, where on 23 May a group of 25 policemen attempting to investigate an attack on a police post two days earlier had been surrounded by villagers and forced to flee and one policeman was killed (see also note 16).¹⁰ We leave Kumyk territory, pass through part of Avaria, and then Dargi territory, including the aul of Xadzhalmaxi, which was the first village in Daghestan where, in 1986 or '87, the people rose up cut the head off their statue of Lenin. Finally we get to Cudaxar, the last Dargi village before Lakkia, we cross a bridge and drive through a narrow defile and out onto a small plain surrounded by high mountains. Lakkia at last!

Just inside Lakkia is a monument to Garun Saidov, a colonel in the White army who wrote poetry, drama, and translations into Lak. It is so badly in need of restoration that if I had not been told what it was, I would not have known. Row after row of mountains extend to the horizon, on which are visible peaks covered with eternal snows. Beyond that is Rutul territory, then Lezgistan and Azerbaijan. I am reminded in a way of the Grand Canyon. Of course the formations and geological histories are entirely different, but both present magnificent panoramic views that bear awe-inspiring witness to the forces of nature.

Despite the altitude, Kumux is not much cooler than in Maxachkala, but the air is clean and dry, so the warmth is not unpleasant. We drive to the town hall past a sports palace

decorated with ancient Assyrian motifs (probably intended as references to Urartu or Sumer, cf. the use of Hittite motifs in Turkey). At the town hall we go up to the second floor and join the mayor and other assembled dignitaries for toasts with red wine and little pale yellow apricots the size of quinces. It is a series of formal toasts and we are all standing. The toasting was not in a fixed order after the mayor's first toast and our Lak colleague's responding toast, but more on the basis of inspiration.

Next we go downstairs to the assistant mayor's office for informal toasts with konyak. The office is decorated with a map of Daghestan and three pictures: the cosmonaut Musa Manarov, the first Lak (and Daghestani) in space, Lenin in a gold frame, and a calendar proclaiming: "50 years of victory 1945-1995" with a huge picture of Stalin. (It is generally the case in the Caucasus that Stalin is much admired because he came from the Caucasus.) There are six of us seated at the table, one 50 ml shot glass, and a 375 ml bottle of konyak. Starting with the assistant mayor and proceeding around the table to his right, each person proposes a toast over a glass full of konyak and drinks.

During the toast listeners may exclaim "Amin!" (Amen) or "C'ulu anu!" (Be healthy). If a toast is directed at someone at the table, that person may respond with an expression of thanks. In general, like the Gjupci of Ohrid and some other Albanian-speaking Muslims, but unlike both Georgians and Russians, Daghestanis do not drink the entire glass. The glass is then refilled and passed on to the next person, who proposes a toast and drinks, and so on. However, if a person is especially moved, he will drink all or most of the contents of the glass, which is considered a mark of special sincerity. When a drinker is draining a glass in a particularly demonstrative fashion, others may accompany his drinking with the repeated exclamation "Lawgunni" ('It has gone'), apparently in imitation of the Russian custom of chanting "Pij do dna" ('Drink to the bottom') on such occasions. The themes of the toasts relate to the occasion that has brought us together, to the guest, the hosts, to Daghestan, and so on. (At a traditional Daghestani gathering, the first toast would be to the occasion and the last to The Prophet or to Stalin). After two complete rounds of toasting the gathering broke up and our Lak colleague took us around Kumux, showing us the mosque, the former residence of the Khan, the fortress that was reconstructed in 1970, the mountain where maidens go on 22 June (the start of summer) to pray for a husband, his parents' house, etc.

Kumux reminds me very much of mountain villages in Macedonia and Albania: rutted stony paths, some houses with walled courtyards so that the streets have the effect of solid walls with occasional doors, elsewhere unwallled houses. Everywhere we go we are warmly greeted and asked to stay the night, just as in the mountain villages in the Balkans. These mountains are much higher, however. We have Lak dumplings (xunk'ra) in lamb broth with lots of garlic and other delicacies at a cousin's house. More toasting with wine and vodka. We leave as night is falling and get home around midnight. There is one checkpoint at the entrance to Maxachkala, but they let us pass without stopping.

Back to Maxachkala

The next day I did more fieldwork at the Institute and left some materials to be xeroxed (16¢ a page — but at least it is available when the electricity is working). I also visited the radio station, where they had promised to let me copy archived tapes of the one hour a day Lak radio program. The station is up in the hills at the southwest edge of Maxachkala. The hillside is dotted with luxurious mansions in an orientalized style. This neighborhood is known locally as “Santa Barbara” and is inhabited by novye dagestanci (‘new Daghestanis’, the local equivalent of novye russkie ‘new Russians’, i.e. the nouveau riche, all of whom are presumed to have acquired their wealth by illegal or questionable means.) At the radio station we walk down a long corridor past six doors each labeled for one of the five official Daghestanian languages plus Kumyk. Lak is the last. Unfortunately, the technicians have all left for the weekend, but by coincidence we have arrived just as they are about to begin the day’s Lak broadcast (4 PM), so they let me into the authorized-personnel-only studio to tape it. The program consists of about 15 minutes of news, 15 minutes of Islamic religious songs in Lak, and a half an hour of a genre of urban popular music known as “stage songs”.

After this we go shopping, and on the way we pass through the central square of Maxachkala where the May uprising took place. The huge statue of Lenin stands at one end of the square, the parliament building, which was occupied by the rebels, at the other. The flag flying over the building is not that of the Republic of Daghestan but that of the Russian Federation. (Both consist of three horizontal stripes, but the Russian is white-blue-red while the Daghestani is green-blue-red [according to Ryan 1997:169, green is for agriculture and hope,

blue for the Caspian sea, and red for fidelity and courage]. During the uprising, however, the rebels hoisted a solid green flag as a symbol of political Islam.) This is my first substantive walk along the streets of central Maxachkala. The cafes have names like Covkra, Balxar, Saxli. (I thought this last was Georgian for 'house', but it turned out to be Avar for 'health'; the /l/ is voiceless.) A military convoy drives by as well as a couple of antique busses with destinations written in the Arabic script. One more trip to the Institute where — mashallah! — the electricity is back on and my xeroxing is ready. We return to my colleague's via some narrow passageways lined with stalls so he can pick up a few things and then into a central courtyard surrounded by apartment blocks where we chance upon an itinerant tight-rope walker (pahlaman in Lak; the Lak aul of Covkra is renowned for such acrobats. Apparently they do not come often to the city, so this is a rare and fortunate occasion). The rope-walker is accompanied by a clown in khakis whose head is covered by a ski mask decorated with woven horns and red outlines of the facial openings (a traditional Caucasian design), wielding a long tree-branch as a cane, and two musicians (zurna [shawm] and davul [drum played with sticks]). The clown capers around shouting in Russian to attract an audience (and, later, to collect money; when anyone gives anything the clown asks his name [he does not approach women] and loudly declares the amount to all present and calls down the blessings of Allah on the donor). The rope-walker, a gray-haired man in good shape wearing tight black pants and a bright saffron satin shirt, performs various feats on the tight rope stretched at the level of a garage roof (which he uses as a platform). He walks, bounces, dances, twirls, spins, does the act blindfolded, sits on a chair, and rides on a bicycle all to the accompaniment of the zurna and davul.

My colleague's wife was going to make Avar dumplings (xlink'al) for me, but there was a gas shortage that day and she could not get the water in the big pot to come to the rolling boil essential for making them, so we have roasted chicken instead. After dinner my colleague brings out the vodka and we begin toasting. The first toast is to the occasion, then to our parents, then to children and family, he toasts to peace and friendship with America, I to peace and friendship with Daghestan, then a couple of his friends drop by. Great discussions of current events and inter-ethnic relations. More toasts. We all take turns on the final to toast to each other and, inshallah, I will visit Daghestan again.

The next day we have a brief visit to the Republic art museum. We drive there through streets with walled courtyards, solid metal doors, and narrow alleys leading downward. It looks

a lot like an lowland Albanian village or neighborhood in Macedonia. The museum is in a hot, stuffy two-story 19th century pastel building on a corner about a block from the sea. We begin on the second floor with a room full of 19th-century paintings of the Caucasian War and other battle scenes punctuated by an occasional "at the well" or "hauling hay", but these pastoral scenes have a sad quality in a bilious yellow light. There are also threatening rough cast bronze statues of Caucasian warriors. The next room is full of 19th century West European art, then a long, unlit alcove of reproductions of Greco-Roman sculpture, Assyrian bas-reliefs, and a cuneiform inscription. The next room has a few pieces of gilt Meissen china, two blue and white Wedgwood vases, a Shinto reliquary, and some Chinese ceramics. Apparently these were gifts to the Czar and after the revolution, when treasures of the Hermitage were divided up, these were given to the Republic Art Museum. Next is a room of Daghestani crafts, beautiful 19th century Kubachi metal work, jewelry, photos of women wearing the jewelry, a decorated cradle, a pandur (square-boxed lute), kilims of varying age and quality, a seat cover here a vest there, kinzhals (Caucasian short swords), swords, ibriks (narrow spouted pitchers), some paintings, mostly portraits, and in the unlit central hall there is a display of large pots for milk, ibriks for water, ceramics, etc. Downstairs they open up a locked room with exhibitions of work of 20th century Daghestani artists, mostly portraits and illustrations from a Kumyk gazette.

While the plane back to Moscow is still on the runway, after all the passengers have boarded, a man enters, stops in front of the man sitting across the aisle from me (we are in the row closest to the door), and puts in his lap a cube-shaped package wrapped in white paper and completely sealed with clear cellophane tape. Drugs? I don't want to know. The seated one says in Russian why are you asking me to take this, but the standing one gives him a handful of rubles in large denominations, shows him a picture of the person who will be waiting for the package at the airport, and has him write down the address and phone just in case. He says the person waiting is an Avar. They shake hands and the non-passenger leaves. The seated guy puts the package in his duffel bag. Back in Moscow, we walk from the plane to the terminal and up a flight of stairs into a waiting room. Through a narrow door at the other end of the room is an improvised customs area, officials are checking each passport and putting hand luggage through a screener. This is not normal procedure for a domestic flight. It is being done because we are arriving from the Caucasus. As a foreigner I am waved past the passport formalities, but I still have to put my luggage through the screener. The machine just rolls stuff through and onto the

floor if you don't catch it in time, and my bottles of konyak almost broke. As I leave, I see the guy who took the cellophane wrapped package standing to one side and the package is on a table next to him.

Observations on Politics

The political situation in Daghestan is influenced by a number of factors of which the following broad categories appear to be the most significant: 1) ethnic complexity, 2) Chechnya, 3) Wahhabism, 4) Russia, 5) returned exiles and exiled returnees, 6) transnational ethnicities, 7) highlanders (rural) vs lowlanders (urban), 8) cis-Terek vs trans-Terek, 9) money, business, mafias, clan structure, and blood feuds.

The May incident in Maxachkala that caused the cancellation of the meeting I was supposed to attend can serve as an organizing principle for a discussion of politics (although some of the abovementioned factors are restricted to footnotes). The key actors in the uprising were Magomed Xachilaeu and his younger brother Nadirshah. Magomed is a member of the Daghestani parliament, president of the Daghestan Committee for Defense and Peace, and of the "Kazi-Kumux" Lak national movement.¹¹ Nadirshah is a member of the Russian Federal Parliament and head of the Union of Muslims of the Russian Federation.

Apparently on 17 May people in the Novolakskij rajon began to blockade roads into Chechnya, including the main Baku-Rostov highway. That highway runs along the Caspian to Maxachkala, then cuts across Daghestan to Xasavjurt, which borders on Novolakskij rajon. From there it continues through Novolakskij into neighboring Chechnya and on to Rostov. Novolakskij is itself the source of considerable tension, since it was the homeland of Akkin Chechens until 1944, when they were among the peoples deported by Stalin to Kazakhstan. Laks were resettled in the region. In 1957 the Akkin Chechens were allowed to return to Daghestan but not to resettle their traditional lands. Most of them are now in Xasavjurt. In 1989 Moscow began building a new Novolakskij rajon near Maxachkala for the Laks and planned allow the Chechens to return to their traditional lands, which would go back to the former name of Auxovskij rajon. The collapse of the Soviet Union, however, derailed the process. Since 1991 the Akkin Chechens have been reappropriating their former lands in a haphazard fashion.¹²

Progress has picked up again on the new Novolakskij project recently, but it will be at least another two or three years or more before it is done. Meanwhile tensions continue.

According to RFE/RL Newswire (20 May 1998) the blockade was a protest against cross-border raids and kidnappings by Chechen gangs. According to people I spoke to in Daghestan, the protesters were Akkin Chechens demanding a return to their traditional lands. (There were armed clashes between Kumyks and Dargis in Xasavjurt in 1993 [RFE/RL Daily Report 25 May 1993; cf. note 11], and during the 1994-96 Russian-Chechen war this was an area of all sorts of incidents, tensions, and refugee-related problems. In 1995, the estimated number of Chechen refugees in Daghestan was 70,000 [OMRI Daily Digest 26 September 1995].)

The next stage occurred when Nadirshah was returning from Novolakskij (or Xasavjurt) to Maxachkala. Here, too, accounts differ. According to some people I talked to, Nadirshah was returning from the Novolakskij rajon where he had supposedly gone to calm the demonstrators and refused to stop for a routine police checkpoint because, as a member of the federal parliament he had immunity. According to another version, Xachilaev broke through a police blockade that had been set up in the Novolakskij rajon connection with the unrest. In a third account, Xachilaev broke through a Chechen roadblock and was subsequently chased by police. Shortly after the uprising, Nadirshah claimed that Daghestani Prime Minister Xizri Shixsaidov provoked the incident by requesting him to travel with a group of armed followers to the Daghestan-Chechen border to calm the situation and then ordering local police to intercept them as they returned to Maxachkala (RFE/RL 26 May 1998).

According to what people told me, eventually Xachilaev's car stopped. When a police officer approached, one of Xachilaev's body guards shot the policeman dead. It was suggested to me by people I talked to that the circumstances were highly suspicious because Xachilaev had a cavalcade of cars, not just one, and thus the refusal to stop for the checkpoint or roadblock was interpreted as potentially being connected with arms smuggling.¹³

Nadirshah's people fled to his house in Maxachkala, where the police surrounded it and another policeman was killed on 21 May when the Xachilaev supporters attempted to break through the cordon of police. This was the day of the occupation of the Daghestani parliament building, which my Daghestani friends referred to as an uprising, as a literal seizure of power. The huge square in front of the building was filled with people (including my friends, who stopped by to see what was happening). Many people had automatic rifles, machine guns, or

bazookas. None of them wore masks or made any attempt to conceal their identity. The police simply ran, and armed rebels came and went as they pleased. (The RFE/RL report of 22 May 1998 wrote: "Moscow had responded to the seizure of the building by deploying additional police and security forces in the town. " This report fails to mention, however, that apparently none of these police were anywhere near the scene of the rebellion.) Hundreds of Xachilaev supporters occupied the parliament building. As noted above, they hoisted a green flag. They also stole all the computers, telephones, the food from the buffet, and raided the arms that were hidden in the basement. Meanwhile, also in the building, the body guard of Maxachkala's Mayor, Said Amirov — who is former assistant to state council president Magomedali M. Magomedov and, like him, a Dargi — surrounded him protectively ready to shoot to kill, but the rebels weren't interested in him and he left peacefully. Amirov is confined to a wheel chair as a result of one of the five assassination attempts he has survived so far.

My friends said that Amirov himself is deeply involved in his own "mafia" activities. The 16 June "Dagestanskaja Pravda" carried a small front-page notice of a homemade bomb filled with nails exploding in the Izberbash (a town midway between Maxachkala and Derbent on the Caspian) Muslim cemetery on 12 June. According to my friends, what the notice did not mention was that Amirov was attending his father's funeral in that cemetery at the time the explosion occurred. The May uprising was given a political focus by demands that the position of president of the state council (occupied since 1994 by Magomedali Magomedov) be elected directly rather than by the constitutional assembly.¹⁴ On 22 May, Xachilaev's supporters withdrew peacefully. Nadirshah said he had been promised that the constitution would be amended to allow for a direct election of state council president, while Magomed said that for the sake of stability they had dropped their demand for Magomedali Magomedov's immediate resignation.¹⁵ When I was in Maxachkala, a Russian officer told me that everything would be calm until 25 June, which was election day. In fact, however, Magomedali Magomedov was reelected peacefully by the constitutional assembly (his only challenger was Pension Fund head Sharaputdin Musaev, also a Dargi).¹⁶

Virtually everyone I spoke with in Daghestan, regardless of ethnicity, regarded the entire incident as a provocation, a set-up. When I described the Bit Pazar incident in Skopje (6 November 1992) — a young Albanian teenager selling smuggled cigarettes in the market fled from a routine Macedonian police inspection, fell down as he ran, began screaming that he was

being beaten, and the entire market quarter exploded into a riot in which there was shooting and six people were killed — everyone immediately agreed that it had the same ring of questionable motivation and people just waiting for an excuse to start shooting.

The people I spoke with did not care for the Xachilaev brothers politically (nor for anyone in power, for that matter), although some expressed feeling of loyalty for them based on personal connections. Apparently the brothers come from the aul of Xurukli/Xurukra(Lak X'uruk'ul), a tiny settlement just across the valley southeast of Kumux. Nadirshah has a red brick (i.e. expensive) house in Kumux and likes to style himself as native of Kumux, which is seen by people I spoke with as pretentious behavior. The involvement of the Xachilaevs both with opposition politics and the Lak national movement, combined with the problems created by the Akkin Chechens on the one hand and Chechen interest in Daghestani affairs on the other has focused so much attention on Novolakskij rajon that on the plane to Maxachkala my border guard friend told me it was highly unlikely the authorities would allow me to go to Lakkia, because it borders on Chechnya and is precisely the scene of recent unrest. When I said that according to the maps I had seen Lakkia was surrounded on all sides by other Daghestani peoples and thus not on the border, my friend was quite adamant that this was not the case, and so I let the matter drop. In fact, it was a misunderstanding because I was thinking of Lakkia proper while my friend thought of Novolakskij rajon as Lakkia and was more or less unaware of Lakkia proper.¹⁷

Ethnicity and Language

Despite linguistic diversity and lack of a unified national history prior to the Soviet period, there is in Daghestan a well developed over-arching common identity of 'mountaineer'.¹⁸ The cultural identity of mountaineer extends to a certain extent even to the Xevsurs, who are Georgian-speaking Christians living in the Georgian highlands on the other side of the Caucasus from Daghestan and Chechnya. Although Xevsurs have a Georgian "national identity," a Daghestani colleague told me that as students in Moscow the Xevsurs hang out with the Daghestanis rather than with the other Georgians. This difference of Xevsurs from other Georgians was confirmed also by Georgians I spoke to, who said they were different from all the other Georgian mountain groups (Pshav, Tush, Moxevi) in this respect. According to Wixman

(1980:68) the Xevsurs remained animists until the early twentieth century. Among Daghestanian-speaking peoples, identity was by village community. Neither Avars nor Dargis had a common ethnonym at the beginning of this century, although the Avars did refer to themselves as ma'arulal 'mountaineers'. The ethnonyms Lak and Lezgi are of considerable antiquity, and in the case of Lak there was the khanate of Kazi-Kumux to serve as a political basis.

Moreover, although Shamil led a multi-ethnic mountaineers' Islamic holy war against the Russians, there is an awareness that he was an Avar, lending to that identity a certain prestige. The Laks retain their cultural prestige based on both cultural and political history. In addition to the Kazi-Kumux khanate and the fact that they supported Shamil, the Laks claim (and are thought of by other Daghestanis) to be the first of the mountaineers to accept Islam. According to Bennigsen and Wimbush (1986:168) the Lezgi are “without the cultural or political prestige of the Avars of the Laks (they did not participate in the Shamil movement.)” This assessment was born out in a discussion I had with some Avars on ethnic stereotypes among Daghestanis themselves. They said that in terms of Daghestani in-group stereotypes, Avars are emotional and hot-headed, Laks are crafty and sly, Dargis are calculating, Lezgis are cowards, and Tabasarans are peace-loving and musical but not cowards. The stereotype of Kumyks is that they are neither fish nor fowl, not true mountaineers but not lowlanders either. (According to Bennigsen and Wimbush 1986:170 the northern Kumyks supported Shamil, the central Kumyks sided with the Russian, and the southern Kumyks remained neutral.) Although the relation to Shamil's war seems to influence ethnic stereotyping and prestige in modern Daghestan, such influence does not appear to extend to contemporary attitudes towards Chechens (cf. note 16)

While it can hardly be said that prior to the Soviet period people in Daghestan lived in a permanent state of peace and harmony, it is indeed the case that linguistically based ethnic differences were not the organizing principles of violence. Rather, there was the tradition of the blood feud, which was clan-based, and, when a large imperial neighbor such as Persia or Turkey (or later Russia) attempted conquest, clans would unite in self-defense, sometimes successfully. There was also a tradition among highlanders living on poor land of raiding people living at lower altitudes. The attitude toward vendettas expressed by modern urbanites was one of regretful understanding, the perception being that it functioned as a kind of legal system that regulated social relations and kept order in what would otherwise have degenerated into

lawlessness (e.g., it discouraged murder because of the consequences). The current ethnic basis of most conflicts, therefore, is seen as a product of the interference of Soviet nationality policies. It is certainly the case that the Soviet practice of exiling and resettling peoples on the basis of ethnicities so defined has contributed enormously to the current instability.

As discussed in note 11, the fall of Soviet power occasioned the rise of various national and cultural movements aimed at autonomy, independence, etc. One of the results of these movements is that the number of official literary Daghestanian languages has increased from five to nine: Basically those languages with populations over ten thousand (Agul, Rutul, Tsaxur, Andi) all demanded and received literary status, although there is no evidence of this yet in Maxachkala.¹⁹ Literary status affects local schooling, press, and literacy. According to those I spoke to, dictionaries had yet to be published and Andi was recognized but not implemented. Nonetheless, the movement among the Andi for separation from the Avars is quite strong. (From 1926-38 the Various Ando-Tsez peoples were listed separately in Soviet censuses, but from 1939 onward they have all been counted as Avars and used Avar as their literary language.) The Tsez and Chamalals are also pushing for separate recognition, and the Bezhta have been given a separate uchastok (sub-division) within Tsuntinskij rajon.²⁰ This is a strictly economic/administrative move however. Although a M. Sh. Xalilov's Bezhta-Russian dictionary was published by the Daghestan branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (1995), its avowed purpose is cultural-scholarly rather than the raising of Bezhta to literary status. According to those I spoke to, the other Ando-Tsez people still identify as Avars. For Dargwa the problem consists in the fact that even the dialects of Dargwa proper are not mutually intelligible, and so the position of Kaitag, Kubachi, and Megeb is felt in Daghestan itself to be midway between that of dialects and languages. They are all clearly in a Dargwa group, and as yet they all still use Dargwa (Akusha dialect) as the literary language. The situation is thus still as described, e.g. in Bennigsen and Wimbush (1986:171).

Archi represents an especially interesting example of a type that occurs elsewhere in Daghestan. Archi is spoken in a single aul (Archib), and until recently its affiliation within Daghestanian was uncertain. It has since been determined that, like Xinalug and Udi, it is an isolate within the Lezgian branch of Daghestanian. Archib is sandwiched between Lak and Avar territory in the highest and most inaccessible mountains of central Daghestan. The closest auls are almost all Avar (one is Lak), but Archib was part of the Kazi-Kumux feudal state, and so

Kumux (formerly Kazi-Kumux) was the focus of political and economic interaction. The structure of Archi attests to long contact with both Avar and Lak, but until 1917 the inhabitants of Archi considered themselves Lak, which was the main contact language. This pattern of identity being determined by political and economic units was a pattern typical of Daghestan. Under the Soviets, Archib was included in a predominantly Avar rajon, and when a paved road was finally built, it connected Archi to that rajon's center, Tsunib. The result has been a shift from Lak to Avar identity, and Archi-speakers are now demanding to be counted as Avars rather than as Laks.

Although the origins of Archib are lost in time, it is known that both Dargwa-speaking Megeb in Avar territory and Lak-speaking Shadni in Dargi territory were founded by families fleeing blood feuds centuries ago. Like the Archi, the Megeb are located between Lak and Avar territory and were part of Kazi-Kumux and Lak oriented prior to 1917. They were also assigned to a predominantly Avar rajon (Gunib) after 1921. Although most Megeb were bilingual in Lak prior to 1917, they registered as Dargi in the 1926 census, but they have registered as Avar in subsequent censuses. The older generation has Dargi identity, the younger has Avar identity, but everyone still speaks Megeb in the village itself. Schooling was in Avar until 1957, when the language of instruction was shifted to Russian and Avar became a subject.²¹ Here, too, schooling and administration seemed to have conditioned an identity shift without affecting home language use. Similarly, the Lak-speakers of Shadni are all bilingual in Dargwa, have their schooling in Russian with Dargwa as a subject, consider themselves to be Dargi, but continue to speak Lak in their village (Sergeeva 1996:113-116).

A Note on Maps

There are three principle problems with existing ethnolinguistic maps of Daghestan all connected to lack of detail and all shared with ethnolinguistic maps of the Balkans and similar regions. First, such maps invariably fail to portray multilingualism, thereby oversimplifying the complex social realities of linguistic interaction. Second, the village-to-village situation is sufficiently complex that most maps are not drawn to a sufficient scale to illustrate even first language distribution with complete accuracy. Finally, a problem which is particularly relevant to Daghestan (but also to the Balkans, especially before World War One) is that ethnolinguistic

maps do not include physical geography. Thus, for example, It would appear from such maps that southern Lakkia is directly in contact with Tsaxur and Rutul, but in fact there are uninhabited mountain peaks between the regions. Moreover, the single Azeri aul in southern Lakkia usually does not show up on ethnolinguistic maps and is much more significant for the neighboring southernmost Lak aul up the mountain than Rutul, which is what appears to be the contact language on most maps. Similarly, languages with small populations appear to occupy larger areas because uninhabited mountains are not distinguished from inhabited ones, and by failing to show altitudes, roads, and river valleys such maps do not necessarily indicate the actual directions of contact and orientation. According to Chenciner (1997:239) detailed ethnographic maps have been prepared by the Institute for Language, Literature, and Art, but their publication has been delayed for fear of fueling disputes.

Instead of a Conclusion

A systematic comparison of ethnic, ethnolinguistic, and ethnopolitical processes in Daghestan and Macedonia would show certain generalizable tendencies as well as salient differences, some of them arising from the political situation, some from differences in history. Both regions, however, have much to offer comparative perspectives in politics, linguistics, and ethnicity. I have only been able to touch lightly on a few of these. Both are regions of fascinating linguistic complexity and both are potential time bombs with diverse internal and external ethnopolitical factors contributing to potential instability. I can only hope that neither one explodes.

Appendix: Languages of the Naxo-Daghestanian Family

Totals for USSR as of 1989, some figures are estimates (Sources Geiger 1959, Comrie 1981, Tishkov 1994; Classification based on Schulze 1996; Asterisked Daghestanian Languages are spoken entirely in Azerbaijan.) I have used letters and numerals to indicate how the nodes would branch in a stem-tree diagram to indicate relative degrees of closeness.

NAX

A1. Chechen (904)

A2. Ingush (237)

B. Tsova-Tush [Bats'] (3)

DAGHESTANIAN

I. Avar-Andi-Cez

A. Avar (499.4) [Xunzax, Bol mac']

B. Andi

North

1a. Andi (30)

1b. Botlix (4)

1c. Godoberi (3)

2. Karata (6.4)

3. Axvax (6.5)

South

Bagvalal (5)

Tindi (10)

Chamalal (9.5)

C. Tsez [Dido]

West

Tsez [Dido] (8)

Hinux (0.6)

East

Xunzib (1.7)

Xvarshi (2)

Bezhta [Kapucha] (9)

II. Lakko-Dargwa

A. Lak [Kazikumux] (118.1)

B. Dargwa (345.9)

B1. Megeb

B2. Kubachi (1.9)

B3. Kaitak (17.2)

III. Lezgian [Samurian]

East Samur

A1. Lezgi (304)

A2a. Tabasaran (97.5)

A2b. Agul (18.7)

West Samur

B1a. Rutul (20.4)

B1b. Tsaxur (19.8)

Central Samur

B2a. Budux* (1)

B2b. Kryts [Djek]* (6)

C. Xinalug (1)*

D. Archi (1)

E. Udi (8)*

Notes

1. Most of the Nagai territory was administratively removed from Daghestan in 1938.

2. "Daghestan", like "Macedonia", is thus a regional geographic term of pre-modern origin referring to a multi-ethnic area. Unlike the Republic of Macedonia, however, the Republic of Daghestan is larger rather than smaller than the area claimed at the beginning of this century. Moreover, Macedonia is independent while Daghestan is not.

3. The most conservative estimate for the number of languages in the Daghestanian family is 26. In the case of Dargwa, however, there are three dialects (two limited each to a single aul ['mountain village'], one in a region that was a separate political unit in pre-Czarist times) that are so divergent that they are generally classed as separate languages within a Dargwa group. This brings the total to 29. For purposes of literacy, however, only the five most populous Daghestanian languages were used during the post-World War Two Soviet period: Avar, Lezgi, Dargwa, Lak, and Tabasaran. (In 1923 Azeri was declared the only official language of Daghestan other than Russian, but in the 1930's the current policies took shape. Tsaxur and Axvax were declared literary during this period but were subsequently abandoned; see Wixman 1980:151-52). Other Daghestani peoples used a geographically contiguous (and usually relatively closely related) literary language. Among the other languages currently spoken in the Republic of Daghestan are Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian (all Slavic), Nagai (Turkic), Ossetian (Iranian), and Georgian (Kartvelian). The region between the rivers Sulak and Terek was part of the Terskaja Oblast' in Czarist times but was traditionally Kumyk territory.

4. Although President Yeltsin signed a decree in 1997 allowing foreigners to move freely around the Russian Federation, the old Soviet system of specifying permitted cities on visas for US citizens remained in effect. As of October 1998 this situation is supposed to change (RFE/RL Newline, 4 September 1998).
5. Another difference is that the forced migrations of the Balkans during the first half of this century generally resulted in greater ethnolinguistic homogeneity, whereas the Soviet exiles have been more like those of Ottoman times in the Balkans, fragmenting populations.
6. According to Chenciner (1997:211), the number of mosques in Daghestan was reduced from 2,000 to 17 between 1928-38, but more than a thousand have now been rebuilt. These figures, however, apply mainly to villages and pre-Russian towns.
7. Striking by their absence from the shelves were the non-indigenous languages spoken in Deghastan that are literary languages spoken in Daghestan that are literary languages elsewhere: Azeri, Chechen, Ukrainian, Nogai, Tat, etc. In some cases this may have been due to relatively small numbers of speakers present in Daghestan. In others it may have been due to the location of Maxachkala, e.g. the main Azeri-speaking population is in the Derbent region to the south. It is possible, however, that political relations with Chechnya were also involved.
8. The one tragic exception is Udi, whose speakers are Armenian Orthodox Christians and lived in two villages in Azerbaijan and one in Georgia. According to Alice Harris of Vanderbilt University, due to their religion, they were identified with the Armenians (with whom, however, they have nothing linguistically in common) and murderously driven out of Azerbaijan during the Karabakh War. The survivors are living in Georgia, where it is not at all clear that they will be able to reconstitute their community and thereby save their language.)
9. I should note that a salient difference between Daghestan and Macedonia is the position of Russian in Daghestan as the lingua franca. It is more pervasive than was Serbo-Croatian in the former Yugoslav part of Macedonia. Leaving to one side the problem of the Skopje urban dialect, which happens to be in a north Macedonian transition zone, the retreat of Serbo-Croatian in the Republic of Macedonia since 1991 has been significant, while Russian continues to dominate in Daghestan's towns. Even were Daghestan to become an independent country, it is not clear that Russian would be replaced, since there was no single traditional lingua franca in pre-Czarist times but rather local contact languages; cf. Bennigsen and Wimbush 1986:174). The style of codeswitching that I heard---especially given the difference between Indo-European and Northeast Caucasian languages---was striking. The borrowing of interjections as discourse markers, e.g. Russ. ponimaesh 'you understand', is a well attested phenomenon in many languages (cf. Matras 1998), but particularly salient in Lak and Avar was code-switching in the use of temporal adverbials (v penodelnike, vecherom,uzhe 'on Monday, in the evening, already'). Further investigation is necessary concurring the systemic motivation for this.
10. Two days later an agreement was reached with villagers about investigating the killing.
11. Kazi-Kumux is the former name of Kumux, when it was the center of a small feudal state that dominated the central highlands of Daghestan. Aside from the Kazi-Kumux Lak movement

there are a number of other ethnonational movements and organizations that have been formed since 1989 in Daghestan, e.g. the Lezgian Sadval 'Unity' which is concerned with the cultural and possibly political unity of Lezgians on both sides of the Azerbaijan-Daghestan border, which runs through the middle of Lezgistan; the Kumyk Tenglik 'Equality', the Avar Imam Shamil Popular Front, as well as Nogai Birlik 'Unity', the Kizljar Community of the Ter Cossaks Army, the Derbent movement Azeri, and the movement Rossija 'Russia'. Bobrovnikov (1997:59) also mentions a Dargi movement Tsadesh 'Unity', but the Avar and Lak people I spoke to were not aware of it. Their perception was that Dargis are in key political and economic positions in Daghestan so they do not need a movement. (Prior to Soviet collapse, Avars dominated political life in Daghestan [Bobrovnikov 1997:55], but this is no longer the case.) They also mentioned a Tabasaran movement, described as 'a group with no leader but they call it a movement' and an Ando-Tsez separatist movement headed by Magomed Gamzatov. The Kumyk movement was at one time separatist, demanding that all the highlanders return to the mountains, and in 1990 the Republic was on the edge of war, especially between Avars and Kumyks, since so many Avars have settled in the lowlands. (There was significant migration of highlanders to the lowlands during the Soviet period, some of it the result of forced moves, as well as traditional seasonal transhumance and seasonal rural/urban economic migration.) Tenglik is currently concerned only with cultural autonomy. During 1992-94, Lezgistan and the problem of the Daghestan-Azerbaijan border, which had shifted from administrative to international, was the main focus of instability. Since the Russian-Chechen War of 1994-96, however, the problems of Chechen refugees and especially the Akkin Chechens are the main focus of attention (Bobrovnikov 1997:58). The Nogai and Cossack movements are also potentially separatist, which is of concern to the Avars, Laks, Dargis, and others settled in those northern regions of the Republic.

12. In 1991-92 the Chechens from Kalinin aul and Lenin aul just across the border of Novolakskij in Kazbekovskij rajon tried to expel the Avars who had been settled there since 1944 and there was almost a war. Aside from the problem of peoples exiled or resettled to, from or within Daghestan (including Nogais, Avars, and Lezgians) large numbers of Dargi and Avar merchants have had to return to Daghestan since 1989 from regions and republics to Daghestan while a smaller number of Chechen and Azeri merchants have had to leave Daghestan all due to worsening interethnic relations (Bobrovnikov 1998:51).

13. Russians in Daghestan characterized the Xachilaev brothers as gangsters and racketeers who were also involved in politics. Daghestanis that I spoke to said that all mafiosi become government officials.

14. In March 1998, the Daghestani constitution had been amended to allow for his election to a second term (RFE/RL 1 September 1998). According to other people I spoke with, popular dissatisfaction was centered on local concerns, such as the attempt of the government to close down a market place on the outskirts of Maxachkala, which the Xachilaevs promised to oppose. Other Daghestanis said the uprising was connected with the desire to unify Daghestan and Chechnya. Magomedov appears to represent the old guard, loyal to Russia. From this it can be seen that individual struggles for power, and regional and local concerns are intersecting in various ways (cf. also note 16).

15. I am reminded here of recent events in Albania. On 12 September 1998 (opposition) Democratic Party legislator Azem Hajdari and his body guard were killed in front of DP headquarters by unidentified gunmen. The next day, in connection with Hajdari's funeral, DP supporters stormed and occupied the prime minister's offices, parliament, and the radio-TV building. Central Tirana was in a state of anarchy, but by the following day police managed to establish control. DP leader Sali Berisha has been stripped of his immunity and accused by (Socialist Party) prime minister Fatos Nano of attempting a coup. Berisha continues to claim that he is committed to bringing down the government by "peaceful" means. Speculations for motivation for the assassination include political motivations (either SP anti-opposition or Berisha's removal of a rival or provocation to bring down the government by accusing them of responsibility), a blood feud, and a dispute involving arms trafficking. (Hajdari was from Bajram Curri near the border with Kosovo, where both these latter possible motivations are highly relevant).

16. On 17 August, however, Karamaxi (the Dargi Wahhabi village mentioned above) along with two others (not mentioned in the reports, but probably the two nearest villages, Chankurbe and Kadar, which are the only other Dargi villages in the predominantly Kumyk Bunajksk rajon) declared themselves an "independent Islamic territory," and on 20 August Chechen field commander Shamil Basaev warned that he would depoly his troops to protect the villagers if the Daghestani authorities resorted to violence against them. Daghestani Security Council acting Secretary Magomed-Salix Gusaev responded that Daghestan would treat any Chechen move to support the Wahhabi village leader was reported as rejecting Basaev's statement as a "provocation". Basaev is the founder and chairman of the Congress of Peoples of Chechnya and Daghestan. This organization is perceived by people I spoke with in Daghestan as essentially a Chechen ruse, using Islam as a cover, to take over Dagestan and gain access to the Caspian. (Despite "brotherhood and unity" disclaimers to the contrary, it is my impression that the Chechens are particularly resented and feared. One Avar I spoke with expressed it like this: "One Chechen is OK, but as so as you get two in a room they try to take over and tell everyone what to do. We have nothing in common with them aside from Islam." In discussing ethnic stereotyping in Daghestan with a Lak colleague in the US who had not seen her father's aul for many decades, the only stereotype she could remember hearing expressed was a negative one of Chechens.) Although it could be argued that Russian news sources are attempting to put an anti-Chechen slant on events, the people I spoke with in Daghestan had no particular love for either Russians or Chechens. Meanwhile, on 21 August, the Mufti of Daghestan, said Muxamed Abub akarov, who was known for his anti-Wahhabi position, was killed in Maxachkala by a car bomb. On 26 August, 10,000 people from Xasavjurt and Kiziljurt marched on Maxachkala to demand the resignation of the Magomedali Magomedov. The demonstrators returned peacefully when Abubakarov's father appealed to them not to engage in violence during the period of mourning. On 29 August, the Union of Muslims (whose head is Nadirshah Xachilaev) demanded Magomedov's resignation in connection with the killing. On 31 August, Dzhelav Gadzhibagomedov of Karamaxi (the Wahhabi village mentioned above) was arrested for the Mufti's murder. It was said that he was trained in Chechnya. On 2 September two of the three Wahhabi villages reportedly withdrew their declaration of independence. On 4 September a car bomb killed 17 people in a residential district in Maxachkala. A warrant was subsequently issued for the arrest of former Maxachkala municipal council chairman Kurban Maxmudgadzhiev for both the bombing and yet another assassination attempt on Maxachkala Mayor Said Amirov in

July. On 9 September Magomed Xachilaev was arrested in connection with the May uprising. Chechen warlord ("maverick field commander") Salman Raduev and the Congress of the Peoples of Chechnya and Daghestan both demanded his release and threatened reprisals against the Daghestani government. On 18 September the Russian federal parliament stripped Nadirshah Xachilaev of his immunity. On 24 September Magomed's supporters began a demonstration demanding his release. Russian Parliament deputy speaker Mikhail Gutseriev reported declared that he believed the charges against the Xachilaev brothers are politically motivated rather than part of a crackdown on crime, as the Daghestani leadership had claimed. Magomedali Magomedov assured Prime Minister Primakov on 24 September that there are no anti-Russian or separatist sentiments in Daghestan. The next day, however, newly appointed minister for nationalities Ramazan Abdulatipov criticized "the practice of selecting regional leaders based on their loyalty to Moscow" declared the need to outlaw ethnic discrimination [a reference to the fact that hatred of "persons of Caucasian nationality" has replaced anti-Semitism as the dominant Russian prejudice (see Grannes 1998)], and stated that only 10% of conflicts in the North Caucasus were based on ethnic factors, the remainder being political or economic (Source RFE/RL 21, 26, 27 August 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, 16, 21, 23, 25, 28 September).

17. In a sense, Chechnya is the Kosovo of the Caucasus, and Xasavjurt is Daghestan's Tetovo. Like the Kosovars, the Chcehens have been oppressed, radicalized, and militarized on a national (versus clan) basis. The position of Daghestan vis-a-vis Chechnya in some ways resembles that of Macedonia vis-a-vis Kosovo and in others that of Albania vis-a-vis Kosovo. Like Macedonia, Daghestan is multi-ethnic whereas like Kosovo, Chechnya is more homogenous, although not entirely. Like Tetvo, Xasavjurt is close to the border and filled with both disaffected refugees and people who claim the region as authochthonously theirs. In other respects, the Chechan-Daghestan relationship is reminiscent of Kosovo with Albania. Both groups are predominantly Muslims in opposition to a dominant Slavic state perceived as the aggressor in Kosovo and Chechnya. Of course, Albania is independent while Daghestan is part of Russia, but the obligator sense of loyalty that Albanians feel toward their fellow Albanian-speakers in Kosovo is tempered by a fear that Kosovars will try to take over their country if a Greater Albanian were to be created. Similarly, although some Daghestanis feel a sense of Islamic and perhaps North Caucasian brotherhood with Chechnya (they did unite to fight the Russians under Shamil, after all), my sense is that many fear the Chechens would attempt to take over just as Albanians of Albania proper (especially in the south) fear the aggressive tendencies of the Kosovars. (Russian claims on Chechnya are not on the same historical basis as Serbian claims on Kosovo, but in both cases the civilian majority population has suffered horribly).

18. Islam is also an important identity marker (Bennigsen and 1986:180-81), but mountaineer can include Christians and even Jews (the Jewish Tats) as well. Most of the so-called Mountain Jews, however, have emigrated since the fall of the Soviet Union.

19. It should be noted that the population figure for Tsaxur in Daghestan is 5,200. Crucial here were the 13,500 Tsaxurs across the border in Azerbaidjan. An additional 1,300 Tsaxurs live elsewhere in the Russian Federation (Tis kov 1994:386). Unlike the other Daghestanian languages, which switched from Arabic to Latin alphabets in 1928 and thence to Cyrillic in 1938, Tsaxur has revived its Latin alphabet, as has Azeri.

20. This is a distinct contrast to the situation described in Wixman (1983:205), according to which Soviet policies of consolidation of Avars, Archi, and Ando-Tsez peoples appeared to be successful. The current situation indicates that they were only partially successful. Cf. also the revival of literary Tsaxur (vs. note 3). There does, however, appear to be a correlation between relative distance from administrative centers and separatist movements.

21. The whole problem of language use versus status is in a need of further study. Statistics show that attempted Russification in the villages has failed.

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