KHĀLIDIYYA NETWORKS IN DAGHESTAN AND THE QUESTION OF JIHĀD

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There is no doubt that the Naqshbandiyya Khālidiyya Sufi order played an important role in Daghestan during the jihād under the Three Imāms (1828-1859). As the anti-colonial struggle of the mountaineers against Russia and her Muslim allies became famous under the name of “Muridism”, many Western, as well as Russian, historians believe that the Naqshbandiyya Khālidiyya Sufi order provided the political and spiritual leadership to Shāmil’s murīds, and it is often claimed that the tarīqa lent the jihād its “ideology” as well as its social network. Yet the positions and activities of Khālidiyya shaykhs during the jihād are still far from being clear, and as Alexander Knysh recently stated, the issue of how the jihād was related to Sufism is still open to question. In addition, the development of the tarīqa after the end of the jihād in 1859 has barely attracted the attention of scholars to date.

In this article, the author intends to study these questions on the basis of some Arabic biographical material from Daghestan which, for the most part, only became available recently. These texts reveal that there was no clear-cut position of the Khālidiyya on the question of jihād even during the era of the Imāms. After 1859, two factions of the Khālidiyya emerged in the North Cau-

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casus: one in Central Daghestan under Shaykh ’Abd al-Rahmān al-
Ṣughūrī, who tried to continue the heritage of jihād, and a new
branch coming from Shirwan to Daghestan which was outspokenly
against jihād. In the frame of Sufi discourse between the two
Khālidiyya groups the question of jihād was linked to a controversy
on dhikr practice. The rivalry between the two branches became
most manifest during the jihāds of 1877 and 1919-21, and contin-
ued far into the Soviet era.

1. The Great Jihād, 1828-59

It is common knowledge that the Khālidiyya first spread in
Daghestan under the shaykhs Muḥammad al-Yarāghī (d. 1254/
1838-39) and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzī-Ghumūqī (d. 1866), and that
two of the three subsequent Imāms of the jihād imamate, Ghāzī-
Muḥammad (1828 or 1829-32) and Shāmil (1834-59, d. 1871),
were students of these shaykhs. But did these Imāms act as
shaykhs in their own right, as some historians suggest? In fact we
find Ghāzī-Muḥammad and Shāmil gathering murīds and using
them to win political and military power in the village communi-
ties of Daghestan. Yet this does not necessarily imply a murshid-
murīd relationship in the Sufi sense, for in the era of the imamate,
the term murīd was above all used to characterize anyone who
“subjects himself to the sharī’a and obeys Islamic law”. Also it is

5 For the advent of the tarīqa, see Moshe Gammer, “The Beginnings of the Naqshbandiyya in Dāghestān and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus”, in: WI
34 (1994), 204-217; Clemens P. Sidorko, “Die Naqşbandiyya im nordöstlichen
For the political and military history of the jihād see Moshe Gammer, Muslim
Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan,
London 1994, and Nikolai I. Pokrovskii, Kavkazskie voiny i imamat Shamil’ia
(written before 1941, first published Moscow 2000), with a good overview of the European and
Arabic sources (pp. 27-100).

6 See Zelkina, In Quest for God, 137-38 and 170-71 (for Ghāzī-Muhammad and
Shāmil as shaykhs). The second Imām Hamzat Bek (1832-34) evidently had no
affiliation to Khālidiyya shaykhs at all.

7 Such a definition of the term murīd is for example given in an anonymous
gloss to Muhammad-Tāhir al-Qarākhi’s famous chronicle Bāriqat al-suyūf al-dāghis-
tāniyya fi ba’d al-ghazawat al-shāmiyya (ed. Barabanov/Krachkovskii, Moscow-Le-
ingrad 1946), 6.