

THE MUSLIM MINORITIES IN THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Dissertation Submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SHABANA AKHTER

Centre for Russian, Central Asian and
East European Studies,
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067
1999



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

Centre for Russian, Central Asian &
East European Studies,
School of International Studies

GRAM : JAYENU
TELEX : JNU IN
TEL. : 6107676 / Extn.
6167557 / 2365
FAX : 91-11-6165886
91-11-6868234

DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled, **'THE MUSLIM MINORITIES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'** submitted by Ms. SHABANA AKHTER is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

(Prof. SHAMS-UD-DIN)
Supervisor

(Prof. SHAMS-UD-DIN)
Chairperson

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Writing an acknowledgement is a difficult exercise, mostly because of inadequacy of words. However, it is the only way, in which I can record my sense of gratitude, to numerous people, who in so many way have helped me in the course of my work.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Shams-ud-din, who inspired me to choose this topic, and gave me full support and encouragement to complete my work successfully.

I owe a lot to my husband, my relatives, my friends, for extending full cooperation to me.

My special thanks to the staff member of JNU library, IDSA, Teen Murti, Sapru House etc. and Dada (Electra Photo Studio, SSS-II, JNU) for typing this dissertation ..

Shabana Akhter
Shabana Akhter

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Federation Formerly the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) stretches from Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states in the West, to the Pacific Coast in the east, and from Finland and the Arctic sea in the north to the Caucasus, Central Asia and China in the south. The Federation is an intricately interwoven set of ethno-territorial units, with sizeable minorities with or without a titular "homeland" and some major ones include the Muslim minorities of Upper and Middle Volga and Northern Caucasus.¹ This paper will examine the status of these Muslim minorities in the Russian Federation. The main adherents of Islam are among the Volga Tartars, Chuvash, Bashkirs and the people of Northern Caucasus, including the Chechens, Ingush, Ossetians, Kabardinians, Balkars, Karachayeros, Cherkesses, and the people of Dagestan. An evaluation of the Muslim minorities necessitates their study in the context of their historical legacies in the Pre-Soviet and Soviet era.

¹. "Russian Federation" in World Directory of Minorities Europe Publications, 1998, pp. 294

A historical examination of the major Muslim ethnic groups is necessary because history of the major Muslim ethnic groups is necessary because history may radically alter and modernize a country's understanding of its past and future or veer them towards exaltation of values, that are narrowly nationalistic. The Muslim minorities in Russia are also vulnerable to these pressures.

Islam was brought to the territory, of the present-day Soviet Union, first to Eastern Trans-Caucasia as early as the seventh century, the first century of the Hijra, by the conquering Arab armies, during the period of the Medina Caliphate. The conquest of the Eastern Caucasus was followed by a rapid Islamisation with practically, no opposition. After the Arabs, the expansion of Islam in the territory of the present-day USSR, continued for thirteen centuries, as a result of the diplomatic action of the Caliphate and later on of the Ottoman Empire. Later this process was assisted by the personal missionary activity of Sufi Orders from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Paradoxically the Russian conquest of the Muslim lands, between the mid-sixteenth century and 1900 did not stop the

progress of Islam, and it went on with relentless dynamism until the October Revolution.

The expansion of the Russian empire in the Muslim lands lasted 348 years. Muslims first came under Russian rule in the mid-sixteenth century, after the fall of Kazan(1552) and Astrakhan(1556) to Ivan IV.² Ivan IV's extraordinary religious liberalism contrasts curiously with the intolerance of his own ancestors. The spirit of religious tolerance in the newly conquered Muslim lands was imposed by the Tsar personally. The first bishop of Kazan, Mgr. Gurie, received a special order from Ivan to avoid brutality when dealing with the new Muslim subjects, and while conversion to Christianity was advisable, it had to be conducted 'with love and sympathy and never by force.' After his death began a long era of religious intolerance which lasted practically until Catherine I. Ivan the terrible died in 1584. Ivan's son and successor Feodar and

². Bennigsen, Alexandre and Broxup, Marie, in, "The Islamic threat to the Soviet State", Croom & Helm. London and Canberra, 1978 pp 9-58.

Boris Godunov, who succeeded Feodar maintained the southward drive, but under a different ideological banner. The muslims were no longer treated as equals but as second-rate subjects, to whom the rights reserved for Christians were denied. Thus under the reign of Tsar Feodar, Muscovy created for itself a 'nationality problem' to be handed on to the Imperial Russia of St. Petersburg and later to the Soviet Union. Another result was a series of violent uprisings led by the Tsar feudal aristocracy and following their failure the massive exodus of Tatars eastward, towards Bashkiriya, the Kazakh steppes and Turkestan. This has left the Tatars with a lasting hatred of Russia which they passed on to the other Muslim peoples, subjugated and which still survives, more than four centuries later.

Between 1584 after the death of Ivan the terrible and beginning of the what is known as the 'Times of Trouble' and 1605, Russia expansion, was directed mainly south towards the North Caucasus, the Kabardinan territory and Daghestan. Muscovy's offensive against Muslim territories ended, in the 16th century with mixed results: a great success on the Volga and in Western Siberia

but a significant set-back in the Caucasus. In a strategic move, the Ottoman Turks and the Crimean Tartars, realising the danger of the Russian advance, took steps to reinforce the presence of Islam, among the mountain peoples in North Caucasus. Competition in Kabardina between Christianity and Islam ended with a total Muslim victory.

Next it was in the steppe area, stretching from the Urals and the northern shores of the Caspian sea to the Tian shan and across Siberian forests to the Aral sea that the Russians continued their advance. This task was facilitated by the anarchy reigning in the steppes. From 1605 until the 1770s, Russian influence over the Muslim and lower Volga-Caspian sea area was steadily strengthened. From the of the first Romanov the Tsar Mikhail to that of Catherine II, Islam was treated as an alien, hostile and various measures were taken to liquidate it completely, Mosques were closed or destroyed, waqf property was confiscated by the state, special schools were opened for the children of the converted Tatar and intense missionary activity was instituted while Muslim countermeasure were punishable by death. Muslims were expelled from villages where

groups of converts had been formed and deported to remote districts. Notable among the consequences of these pressures were the continued exodus of the Volga Tatars towards Central Asia and Siberia and the active part played by the Tatars and the Bashkirs in the great popular uprising of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Russian expansion into Muslim Asia was resumed under the reign of Catherine II and continued unabated until shortly before the revolution.³ In 1771, the Crimean Peninsula was occupied. The conquest of the North Caucasus began in 1783, but the Russian's met with fierce resistance from the Mountaineers, organised by the Sufi Naqshbandi. It took a century to conquer this small territory. In 1856, the surrender of the last Naqshbandi leader, Imam Shamil, signified the end of the Caucasian wars although in the Dagestan and Chechen regions, the Russians were obliged to maintain their presence by military means, rather than by a civil administration. To this day, they remain the most insecure territories of the soviet

³. Ibid.

Union.

Catherine II was personally, interested in Islam and believed it was a 'reasonable' religion better fitted 'to civilize' the 'wild Asian populations than Orthodox Christianity. Moreover like her distant predecessor Ivan terrible her subjects notwithstanding their creed and cultural background, were treated as equals. The Tatar landed nobility retained its rights and prerogatives and was accepted into the hierarchy of Russian society without being obliged to adopt their new Russian masters could not last for long. From the first years of Russian rule, Crimea, the most pleasant land, comparable with the French and Italian reveries received a flood of German, Baltic and Russian immigrants and the best lands, situated along the sea-shore, were requisitioned for the benefit of Catherine's numerous favorites. Relegated to the most arid lands of Central Crimea and faced with ever worsening living conditions, the Tartars resorted to their only salvation-exodus.

Thus the nationality problem was not resolved by the assimilation of the natives by the Russians but their expulsion and the transformation of Crimea into a Christian land. However, in 1913

a Tatar minority still remained in Crimea, and it was therefore left to the Soviet's to provide the final solution, which they did in 1943. There are no Tatars left in Crimea and the territory which played a considerable role in the history of the Dar-ul-Islam is lost for ever to that world.

In the Volga Regions, Catherine II was rewarded in her efforts to correct the transmatic errors of her predecessors from Peter to Elizabeth. The anti-Muslim campaign was halted, schools for Tatars converts were closed and permission was granted to Tatars, for the building of mosques. In 1783, the Tsarina established a Central Muslim Spiritual Board in Orenburg, chaired by the Mufti, to administer the religious life of her Muslim subjects. Volga-Tatars enjoyed their uniquely favourable position for almost a century. Their trading colonies spread throughout the Tsarist Empire and beyond to Western Europe, Scandinavia, Manchuria and Central Asia. They were wealthy, prosperous, active communities closely allied to their homeland by cultural and religious ties. In the nineteenth century, the Volga-Ural. Tatar cities became important cultural centres and several Tatar madrassas in Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg and Troiitsk,

gained a world-wide reputation. The zadidi movement often called the Tatar Renaissance of the nineteenth century was made possible by the extraordinary economic prosperity of the entire community.

The era of prosperity and cooperation came to an end after the Russian conquest of Central Asia eliminated the need for the commercial and diplomatic services of Tatar middlemen in Turkestan. The Russian and Tatar bourgeoisie, once allied became competitors and new pressures were brought to bear by the Russian government on the Tatars as economic and religious rivals.

The Russian state again tried to solve the 'nationality problem in the Volga region by assimilating the Tatar subjects of the Tsar. In 1663, Nikolas II' minsky of the Religious Academy of Kazan aimed at the creation of a new Tatar, intelligentsia, converted Orthodoxy but speaking and writing Tatar. A new Russian Orthodox, was a more reliable proposition than a Russian atheist. This approach quickly achieved spectacular success, so much so that it is seen as a threat to the very survival of the Tatar Muslim community.

In the Caucasus, conquered after a fierce resistance, the Russian's applied a different policy. The status of nobility was

granted to Kabardinans, Ossettians and to some Cherkess feudal leaders not involved in the resistance movement, while it was denied to the Dagestanis who had formed the back bone of Shamil's movement. Muslim Caucasians were not granted the status of citizens of the Russian Empire, but remained natives(inorodtsy) not subject to military service. It should thus seem that the Russians had no clearly defined strategy when dealing with North Caucasian Islam. Russia rural colonialisation was encouraged in the lowlands and in the North-Western Caucasus, what is on the Cherkess territory. In the 1860s, over a million Cherkess left the Caucasus for the Ottoman Empire . Their exodus left the Russian's sole masters, and reduced the native Muslims who remained to the status of a weak minority. On the other hand the migration did not touch the North-Eastern Caucasus. The mountains of Dagestan and of the Chechen territory, remained inviolate and no effort was made to colonise them. The low lands were however intensively colonise them. The low lands were however intensively colonised by the mountains, where the Russian presence made itself felt by a few scattered military post. The Russian authorities reframed from interfering in

the internal affairs of the country and limited their activity to the maintenance of law and order. No assimilation policy was introduced. Proselytism among the mountaineers were strictly forbidden, except in Ossetia where Christianity has sunk into animism and was threatened by Islam. Thus during the three and a half century(1552-1917) during which Russians ruled over their subjects, various tactics and methods were devised to enable Moscow to preserve their colonial empire.

The Soviet empire inherited the 'nationality' problem. For years Soviet leaders claimed that a problem no longer existed, in their country, or if it survived it was only a remnant of the pre-Socialist era i.e. of capitalism. The Soviet 'final solution' in claimed to be completely original, based on 'scientific marxist-leninist doctrine owing nothing to the earlier models developed by the Trarists. As a result the Soviet policy towards the Muslim minorities of the USSR, developed into a sophisticated blend of Marxism(as interpreted by Stalin) and of various pre-revolutionary Tsarist experiments. It may be summarized as follows:

1. All Soviet citizens are equal. In the case of Soviet Muslims there is no longer any difference between former Russian citizens (such as Tatars and Bashkirs) and former 'morodtsy' (North Caucasian, Kazakhs, Turks).
2. The Russians represent the 'Elder Brother', the guide the model for all Soviet Nations.
3. All nationalities of the USSR are equal and enjoy the same collective rights.
4. Religion in the USSR is a private affair and not a criterion for national determination. Therefore there cannot be such a thing as a 'Muslim nation'.
5. Communist ideology is compulsory and has no rival.
6. The Communist Party of the USSR is a super-national institution and the totality of powers belong to the CPSU.
7. Soviet society is dynamic, engaged in building socialism and straining towards communism amidst constant change and evolution. This process draws the different Soviet nationalities closer to each other and the final stage of this evolution will be the emerging of all nationalities (Sliyanie) into one 'Soviet

nationality', proletarian supranational consciousness.⁴

When it became clear in the early 1920s, that the Marxist Leninist doctrine would not solve the nationality problem, or even to hasten its solution, the Soviet leaders were forced to revert to more practical measures eg.

1. The elimination of the Muslim 'alien body' by genocide or expulsion.
2. The Integration of the Muslim 'alien body' into Soviet society through Sovietisation and/or Russification.

Genocide: This drastic solution was tried with varying degrees of success after the war by Stalin against certain Muslim nationalities which had been in contact with German armies or which, although remaining out of reach of the Germans, were nevertheless accused of preparing an anti-Soviet uprising. The aim was to punish them collectively by suppressing their administrative, national-territorial units and deporting the entire population Siberia and Central Asia.

⁴. Ibid.

The punished 'treacherous' nationalities comprised the Volga Germans, the Buddhist Kalmyks, and five Muslim nationalities: the Crimean Tatars, the Karachay and the Balkars (North Caucasian Turks) the Chechens and the Ingushes.

An Example of successful genocide was the Crimean Tatars, their republic was liquidated by a decree dated 30 November, 1945 and attached to RSFSR, and later passed to Ukraine. They were rounded up under horrifying conditions and sent to Siberia and Kazakhstan. After Stalin's death, many victims of the cult of personality were rehabilitated and allowed to go back to their homelands, but there were two exceptions, the Crimean Tatar and Volga German republics.

Another attempt to solve drastically the Muslim problem through genocide took place in the North Central Caucasus. After the German armies had reached the territories of the Crimeans Tatars, the Karachay and the Balkars they remained for some time under German rule. The other territories of the Lower Volga (Kalmyks) and North-Eastern Caucasus (Chechens, Ingushes) however, had never

been occupied by the 'wehrmach', so it is absolutely absurd to pretend that the deported peoples had even individually collaborated with the invaders.

The Chechens and Ingushes were rounded up in February 1994 and deported on 3rd March, 1994. The Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic was liquidated and its territory annexed to the RSFSR.

The deportation of the Karachay and the Balkar took place almost at the same time. Their national territories were suppressed. The Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Region, the Karachay districts being annexed to Georgia, and the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republic became the Kabardinian Autonomous Republic. The Balkar territory was annexed by the Georgian Republic. Some Dagestanis(Avars) were also deported though it is difficult to ascertain it.

Contrary to the Crimean Tatar experience, the attempt at genocide of the North Caucasian Mountaineers failed. Their national territories were restored(Decree of 9th January, 1957) and the deportees allowed to go back to their homelands. The real reason for

the rehabilitation of the mountaineers could reside in the extraordinary vitality and resistance of the deportees who refused to die out and fought back victoriously. This astonishing evolution was due to the activity of two Sufi brotherhood, the Naqshibandiya and the Quadiriya. They have dominated religious life in Northern Caucasus even since the later eighteenth century and have inspired and directed all major resistance movement against the Russian conquest, from Imam Mansur, a Naqshbandi Sheikh in 1783, to the last uprising against Soviet rule during 1941 -3.

When the mountaineers were deported a unique experiment was tried in the Chechen-Ingush territory, whereby total destruction of Islam was attempted through suppression of all mosques which, were not opened when the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland. On the Contrary, the closure of the mosques contributed to the growth of clandestine brotherhood, and xenophobia. the Chechens and the former exiles are the most violently, anti-Russia of all the Soviet nationalities, with the Chechen-Ingush Republic being classified as the most insecure of all Soviet territories.

Another drastic solution to subjugate the minorities was the destruction of the Muslim Millet.⁵ From the beginning of the sixteenth century, until the last day of the monarchy the Tsarist government treated Russian Islam as a whole as though it constituted one 'nation' though divided geographically, ethnically, linguistically and administratively.

In spite of these administrative and legal differences, all Muslims were considered as members of one nation, 'the Nation of Islam' the Russian equivalent of the Ottoman concept of Millet, which intermingles the notions of religion and nation, and of the Turkish-Mongol concept of Yurt, incorporating the notions of state, country and nation.

Until the Revolution, the term 'Muslim' was officially in use in all administrative and legal documents. All the pre-revolutionary Muslim reformers, from Ismail Gasprinsky to young socialists like Ayaz Iskhaki and the future Muslim communists Mulla-Nir Vahitov

⁵. Ibid.

and Mir Said Sultan Galiev were convinced 'pan-Islamists'. For them there could be no doubt about the unity of the Muslim Millet.

The Great Pan-Muslim Congress met in Moscow on 1 May, 1917, with 900 delegates representing all the Muslim territories of Russia. The Congress stood by the Pan-turk and non-Islamic deal and the principle of the unity of the Muslim nation, was not in doubt. The idea of unity was further reinforced at the second Pan-Muslim congress in Kazan in July, 1917. It was obvious that as long as the Muslim Millet remained as one nation, the Muslims of the Soviet Union constituted a powerful potential threat which could challenge, Russian claims to leadership of USSR. The destruction of the Muslim unity was the essential first step which the Soviet government had to take in order to solve the nationality problem. During the first six years of the new regime (from 1918 to 1923), the term 'Muslim' was used in official soviet texts to designate all the Muslim nationalities of the USSR.

After 1923, the Muslim communist leaders resisted soviet plans for the division of the Muslim Millet into small 'modern nations and proposed instead the amalgamation of the entire soviet Muslim world

into a unified Turkestan with the addition of the Middle volga territories, Tatarstan, Bashkiria and the Turkic, Christian Chuvash Republic, the Muslim areas of North Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Daghestan. This was to be the 'Republic of Turan' whose population would have been 75 percent Turkic and approximately 80 percent Muslim. It was to have been an independent, sovereign state.

To the Bolshevik leadership this proposal was of course quite unacceptable. The Bolshevik leadership proceeded to break up the unified Muslim Millet and put the fragments together into new small modern nations.

Volga-Ural: the attack on Muslim unity began in the Volga-Ural district. At the time of the Revolution, the Bashkir and Tatar peoples of this area were well on their way to uniting into a single nation- Tatar in language and culture. In May 1918, hard pressed by the white armies, the Bolshevik leadership was obliged to make concessions to their Muslim allies by accepting the principle of a Tatar-Bashkir Republic. But as soon as victory swung to the Red Army in the autumn of 1918, the Soviet leaders changed their attitude completely and the dream of the great Muslim state in the

Volga- region was shattered. Moscow decided on two small republics. Tatarstan and Bashkiria on 23rd March, 1991, Autonomous Bashkir Republic was set up and on 27th May, 1920, the Tatar Republic was created. This first administrative stage was followed in 1923 by the elaboration of a literary Bashkir language. the new Bashkir literary language did not prosper either, and has failed to oust tatar as the written or spoken language of the Bashkir Republic. The Soviet authorities have been unable to create a Bashkir culture. Baskir still consider themselves as part of the 'greater Tatar' nation.

The North Caucasus presented a different problem. It was a mosaic of ethnic groups which were separated from each other, by high mountains, speaking dozens of different languages derived from three linguistic families. Turkic, Iranian and Ibero-caucasian. They had different social structures, historical traditions, and economic orientations. The mountaineers were however united by Islam by the vivid memory of the common fight against the Russian invaders, and the widespread use of two literary languages, classical Arabic and Azeri Turkic. The Soviet authorities who were at the outset forced to look for allies where these could be found, seemed willing so satisfy

the demand for unity. On January 1919, an Autonomous Mountain Republic was founded. It embraced all Muslim nationalities founded by the area from the Black Sea east to the borders of Daghestan: Cherkess, Kabardinians, Karachay, Balkars, Ossetians, Abazas, Chechens and Ingushs (the neighbouring Daghestianis were to set up an autonomous republic of their own in November, the same year).

The unity was short-lived, for as soon as the Civil was over and the Chechen-Daghestan uprising came to an end in 1921, the soviet authorities began to dismantle the Mountain Republic.

Five administrative national territories were eventually created, with the addition of eight small nationalities, each with its own written language. These were:

1. The Autonomous Republic of the Chechens and the Ingush created on 5th December, 1936 by the fusion of the Chechen Autonomous Region (founded in 1922) and the Ingush Autonomous Region (1924). The Chechen language was promoted to written language in 1925 and the Ingush in 1923.
2. The Kabarda-Balkar Autonomous Republic created in



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December 1936 by the fusion of the Kabarda Autonomous district(1922). The Kabardian and the Balkar languages became written in 1924.

3. The North Ossetian Autonomous region was made into an Autonomous region in 1936. In the beginning the Soviet authorities seemed to take into consideration the hetero-religious character of the Ossetian people and created two Ossetian literary languages: "Iron" spoken by the Christian Iron tribes and "Digor" spoken by the Muslim digors. However, in 1936, the later lost the status of a literary language.
4. The Adyghe Autonomous Region was created on 27th July, 1922. the Adyghe language became written in 1928.
5. The Karachay- Balkar Autonomous Region was created on 22 January 1922, with three written literary national languages: the Cherkess(similar to the Balkar) and Abaza, a Cherkess

dialect, was promoted to the rank of literary language in 1938.⁶

Thus in Northern Caucasus, the Soviet authorities pushed the principle of fragmentation to the utmost, ignoring the wishes of the local intelligentsia and creating micro-nationalities of tribal type.

In Daghestan the policy of linguistic fragmentation was applied even further. In this territory, were lumped together two dozen communities belonging to several linguistic families: Turkic (Kумыks in the North, Azeris in the south), Ibero-Caucasians (asars, Laks, Darghenis, Tabasarans, lezhghins, Rutuls, Tsakhurs, Aguls, didos) and Iranian (Tates). The country had no economic or social unity and different cultural and historical traditions intervened to draw the various ethnic linguistic groups apart. None of the local languages had reached the level of an authentic literary tongue.

In spite of the diversity of the population all the pre-revolutionary political leaders had been convinced that a unification of Daghestan was not only desirable but possible. The conservative advocated Arabic and the young modernist advocated

⁶. Ibid.

the use of Azeri Turkic, but both wanted unity.

The Soviet began by banning Arabic as a 'reactionary' language, an obstacle to modernisation. After 1928, the authorities decided to stop the Turkification Daghestani and Azeri began to lose ground. In 1933, the Republic had eleven official literary administrative languages: Russian, Azeri, Kunyk, Nogay, Avar, Darghin, Lak, Lezghin, Tabarasans, Chechens and Tates. In the following years, several languages disappeared from the administrative use such as Nogay, Chechen and Tates. Azeris was confined to the city of Derbent and to the southern part of the Caspian plain, where it is still used in the press and some schools. In practice, Russian is now the lingua franca of the Republic.

Sovietization and Russification

The destruction of administrative, linguistic and cultural unity and the creation of modern Muslim nations, out of the debris of the Umma could ensure only administrative, not political equality between Russian and Muslims. It was a preliminary stage in the building of a happy new socialist world supposed to be the final goal

in the evolution of mankind. It was a novel endeavor, based on Stalins personal doctrine of nationalities and while it has been often criticised even within the USSR- it still forms the basis of soviet policy. All Soviet theoretical works from Lenin to Brezhnev unanimous on this theme. Old Bolsheviks believe that the destruction of old order would be an easy process. The massive assault against Islam was launched around 1928, some years after the beginning of the anti-Christian campaign. Its avowed goal was the destruction of Muslim religion in order to bring about equality between Russians and Muslims. this for the first time history, an important Muslim community was faced with the systematic challenge of atheism and its religion threatened with total destruction. The theme of anti-Muslim propaganda has varies little since 1924. According to Marxism, Islam, is the opium of the toiling masses, distracting them from social struggle and change. There were five main objections to Islam. Islam was said to be a foreign religion, conservative and reactionary. Anti-religious propaganda in considered in the USSR, as the moral duty of call honest soviet citizens' and atheism vital to communism. Anti-religion propaganda was not the one weapon, the

soviet government had begun to expropriate all clerical property(Waqf) and an attack was directed against the Quranic(Shariyat) and customary(Adat) laws. another step was an offensive against religious teaching, and finally a frontal assault on religious establishment. This lasted for ten years, and later resumed by Khrushchev in 1953 under his policy of "back to Lenin".

A Profile of the Muslim Minorities in Russia

Tatars

In a strictly historical sense, the term Tartar is most frequently used for the Turkic(mainly Kipchak) tribes who constituted the bulk of the Mongol army that invaded Russia in the early thirteenth century. Present day Russia formed the core of the western wing of the Mongol empire, known as the Ulus of dzhuchi or the Golden Horde. It split up into separate hordes or colonies(eg. Nogais, Crimeans, Uzbeks and Grand Duchy Tatars).The word Tatar continued to be used for the Turkic tribes of Volga region, and represent the basis of the Golden Horde. When it disintegrated into smaller units, new Tatar states emerged, the Astrakhan and Kazan Khanates, during 15th century. A century later they fell to Ivan the

Terrible. Ostensibly it reversed the roles of the 'oppressor' and oppressed. The Russian attitude to the mass of the Tatar population, was very different to the Tatar aristocracy, that had been assimilated. Efforts were made to forcibly convert the Tatars to Christianity, but met with little success, despite such measures as the wholesale destruction of mosques, confiscation of Tatar property and curtailment of civil rights. The Tatar merchant class was crippled, and thousands of Tatars were deported to the north, to work in the shipyards of Kroustadt and Riga and on the Ladoga Canal.

The situation improved under Catherine the Great, (1762-96) who revoked some of the anti-Tatar legislation. The Orenburg Mohammedan spiritual Assembly was created in Ufa in 1788, under the direction of a Mufti. Mosques and medressas were built and the privileges of the Tatar mobility was restored. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Russians once more adopted a repressive policy. Despite the difficulty of the circumstances, the intellectual life of the Tatars continued to flourish. They were influenced by European ideas, were progressive, yet firmly committed

to Islam. It was they who provided the main inspiration of Dzhadid(new) movement in education. The literacy rates was exceptionally high, and it was accompanied by an impressive number of printed publications. at the second-All-Russian Muslim Congress, eleven of the fifteen members of the central committee were Volga Tatars.

In the First World war, the Volga Tartars like the Crimeans were conscripted into the Russian Army. Many of them deserted and the existing tensions in the region was heightened by the efforts of 'emigre' Tatar leaders in Turkey. It crystallized into a separatist movement, but total autonomy was an impossible dream: there was an attempt to set up an independent federation of Volga-Ural states in 1917, but it was overthrown in 1918, and Soviet power was established in its place. Czech Internationalists and the white Army under Kilchak briefly gained control of the region in summer of 1918, but were driven out by the Red Army in mid- 1919. On 27 May, 1920 the Tatar ASSR was created with RSFSR.

The destruction of the Muslim religion was an essential element of a broader aim to sovietize the entire Muslim society.

Other aspects of the campaign included attack on the traditional patriarchal framework. The eventual aim was to achieve a new Soviet, based on the absolute equality of the sexes, a monogamous marriage and creating a new Muslim 'Soviet man'.

Liquidation of the pre-revolutionary elite; an entire generation disappeared during the bloody stalinist purges of the 1930s and was replaced by a new generation of intellectuals, bureaucrats and technicians mostly of peasant origin, brought up in the Soviet mould and trained ideologically as Marxists. An effort was made to bring about a younger generation of Muslim communist cadres, sovietized but also nationalists and Muslims. the experiment had ambiguous results.

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In a strictly historical sense, the term Tartar is most frequently used for the Turkic (mainly Kipchak) tribes who constituted the bulk of the Mongol army that invaded Russia in the early thirteenth century. Present day Russia formed the core of the western wing of the Mongol empire, known as the Ulus of Dzhuchi or the Golden

Horde. It split up into separate hordes or Colonies (e.g. Nogaise, Crimeans, Uzbeks and Grand Duchy Tatars). The word Tatar continued to be used for the Turkic tribes of the Volga region, and represent the basis of the Golden Horde. When it disintegrated into smaller units, new Tatar states emerged, the Astrakhan and Kazan Khanates, during 15th century. A century later they fell to Ivan the Territory Ostensibly it reversed the roles of the 'oppressor' and oppressed. The Russia attitude to the mass of the Tatar population, was very different to the Tatar aristocracy, that had been assimilated. Efforts were made to forcibly convert the Taars to Christianity, but me with little success, despite such measures as the wholesale destruction of mosques, confiscation of Tatar property and curtailment of civil rights. The Tatar merchant class was crippled, and thousands of Tatars were deported to the north, to work in the shipyards of Kroustadt and Riga and on the Ladoga Canal.

The situation improved under Catherine the Great (1762-96) who revoked some of the anti-Tatar legislation. The Orenburg Mohammedan spiritual Assembly was created in Ufa in 1788, under the direction of a Mufti. Mosques and medrssas were built and the

privileges of the Tatar mobility was restored. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Russians once more adopted a repressive policy. Despite the difficulty of the circumstances, the intellectual life of the Tatars continued to flourish. They were influenced by European ideas, were progressive, yet firmly committed to Islam. It was they who provided the main inspiration of Dzhadid (new) movement in education. The literacy rates was exceptionally high, and it was accompanied by an impressive number of printed publications. At the second-All Russia Muslim Congress, eleven of the fifteen members of the Central committee were Volga Tatars.

In the First World War, the Volga Tatars like the Crimeans were conscripted into the Russian Army. Many of them deserted and the existing tensions in the region was heightened by the efforts of 'emigre' Tatar leaders in Turkey. It crystallized into a separatist movement, but total autonomy was an impossible dream; there was an attempt to set up an independent federation of Volga-Ural states in 1917, but it was overthrown in 1918, and Soviet power was established in its place. Czech Internationalists and the white Army under Kolchak briefly gained control of the region in summer of 1918,

but were driven out by the Red Army in mid-1919. On 27 May, 1920 the Tatar ASSR was created with RSFSR.

CAUVASH

The forbearers of the Chuvash were Finno-Ugric tribes of the Middle Volga and the Turkic-Speaking Bolgars, who established a state on the Rivers Kama and Volga in the sixth to eight centuries. In the early, thirteenth century they were conquered by the Golden Horde. Later they formed a part of the Kazam Khanate, and after it fell to Ivan the Terrible (1552) the Churvash passed under Russian rule. They were required to pay (jasak), and the poverty stricken peasants were forced to work as labourers in timber industry for having barges up and down the Volga.

Islam was established in the Volga state towards the end of the ninth century. Under Russian rule, intensive efforts were made to Christianize them, and hence there was little love for the Russians, and threat of revolt was never far from the surface. Nevertheless there was some interest in the Churvash language and the first grammar of the language appeared in 1769. The Faculty of Oriental

languages at Kazan university, pioneered research in the language, and there was some instruction in the Chuvash language towards the end of the nineteenth century.

There were a number of anti-government uprisings in the early twentieth century, most serious being of the summer of 1913 in the Jadrin district. During the Civil war, there was fighting here between the various opposing factions, (Red and white armies) but the Bolsheviks finally gained control in 1920.

On 24th June, 1920, the Chuvash Autonomous Province was created within the RSFSR; in 1925 it was transformed into the Chuvash ASSR.

Bashkirs

The Bashkirs represent an intermingling of Finno-Ugric tribes of the South Ural and Turkic tribes such as the Kipchak, Kazakhs, Volga - Bolgars, Kara-Katis, Kilaris etc. In the early 13th century they were conquered by the Golden Horde, and were under the rule of Dzhuchi's son, Sheiban. After the dissolution of the Golden Horde, they were divided between the Kazan Khanate, white Horde and the

Nogai Horde. Ivan the Terrible conquered the Tatar states of the Volga in the mid-sixteenth century, after which the Bashkirs, too, came under Russian rule.

As in Chuvasia, there lands were expropriated and the population was impoverished. The great mineral wealth of the country attracted Russian Speculators, who united with the state to cheat the Bashkirs of their remaining possessions. The Pugachev rebellion(1773) received string support from the Bashkirs, who fought for him under their own leader, Salavat Yulai.

The Bashkirs began to adopt Islam as early as the tenth century, long before the advent of the Golden Horde. Under Russian rule, they were subjected to proselytism and Russification but they retained their allegiance to Islam and in 1788, Catherine the Great permitted the establishment of the Qrenburg Mohammedan spiritual Assembly in Ufa.

The nineteenth century was marked more peaceful, thou influx if Russian settlers further undermined their position. Intellectual activity was quite non-existent, though Muhammed Salim Umitbaj

translated Pushkin's Fountain of Bakh Chaisaray into Bashkir.

At the time of the 1917 Revolution, there was a strong Muslim dominated nationalist movement in Bashkiria. During the Civil war, there were attempts to create an autonomous state. The region constantly changed hands: Soviet gained control of Ufa in October in 1917, Bashkir autonomy was proclaimed in Orenburg in December, Czech Interventionists and the white Army (Dufor and Kolchak) took Ufa in July 1918, till finally the Red Army recaptured Ufa. On 23rd March, the Bashkir ASSR was created.

Peoples of Dagestan

The term includes the Avars Darghin, Kumyks, Laks, Lezghis, Nogais, Tabarasans, Tshakurs, Rutuls and Aguls.

Dageshtan has been inhabited since pre-historic times, and the tough interiors afforded good protection against marauders. One of the significant events in the history of Dageshtan was the Arab conquest. The region had been subjected to Arab incursion from 664 A.D. onwards, but it was only in the early part of eighth century, that they succeeded in establishing a base at Derbent-The full

conversion took place as late as 16th century.

the Arabs were succeeded by many other intruders by the Seljucks in the eleventh century by the Mongols in the early thirteenth century who penetrated derbend, traversed the Volga and the desert and accomplished the circuit of the Caspian sea by an extraordinary expedition. It was bought over by Timur and Toktamysh of the Golden Horde, in the late fourteenth century, occupied by Ottomans, invaded by the Persian and finally annexed by Russia in the early nineteenth century.

Even though subject to numerous foreign rulers, they retained a virtually independent character. There was a system of tribal federation called by Russian historians as 'free societies' since they were not bound by any formal structure of Kinship or territorial claims, but by more or less voluntary alliances. Under the leadership of their chiefs (beks) they like the larger states would throw in their lot sometimes with one side, sometimes with another, and in this way a strong but highly volatile force was built up, starting at the smallest unit and reaching to alliances on a multi-national level.

After Dagestan had been annexed by the Russian, many of the local princes retained a semblance of power, but as uprising against the new order, continued, the principalities were gradually abolished and their land bought under direct Russian administration. The most significant uprising which also lasted the longest was led by Avar Shamy 1. It sprang from a sufi revival in the end of the eighteenth century. In the 1820s, a Naqshbandi sheikh began to spread these teaching in Daghestan, where they proved to be the inspiration for a fiercely puritanical, antifidel upsurge of feeling. There were more rebellions during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78, but the power of the princes, the traditional leaders, had been broken and their resistance at this stage ineffective.

The 1917 Revolution and subsequent Civil war brought immense confusion and bloodshed to the area. The Mensheviks and social Revolutionaries established themselves in Dagestan towards the end of 1917, but were even thrown when the area was occupied by the white Army in 1918. The Red Army defeated the white army, in 1920 and thereby re-established soviet control of Dagestan. The Dagestan

Assr was proclaimed on 20th January 1921(as part of RSFSR). The last uprising led by Imam Nadzmuddin and Sheik Uzun Hadzhi was quelled a few month later.

THE CENTRE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS OF RUSSIA AND THE MUSLIM AUTONOMOUS REPUBLICS

CHAPTER-II

The question of the relations of the Eastern Borderlands¹, meaning the lands of the Volga basin, the Caucasus and Central Asia east of the Caspian Sea, presented an unique problem. The population of these regions, by their origins and by their languages, and by the still remaining vestiges of a medieval mongol civilization, belonged to Asia rather than to Europe. Some ten millions of them were still nomadic, and primitive tribal organisation was not extinct. Standards of living and culture set them far below the Russians and people of the western borderlands. here the sparsely, scattered Russians played the part of settlers and colonizers. Engels had in the 1850s said of these regions:

"Russian rule, far all its nastiness, all of its Slav slovenliness, has a civilizing significance far the Black and Caspian seas, for

¹. Carr. E. H. "Socialism in one country", Vol.I. Penguin Publication, London, 1963.

Central Asia, for the Bashkirs and Tatars."²

In Soviet literature, the "national" and "colonial" question were linked together

The October Revolution marked a new phase in the "sovietization" of the eastern borderlands and drawing them into the new socialist State. Unrest among the Muslim peoples of the Tsarist empire has begun to make itself felt even before the February Revolution. Among the Tatars of the Volga, who alone possessed the rudiments of a commercial middle class, and the Bashkirs, formerly nomadic, but now settled in agriculture and forestry, incipient national movements. Fostered by tiny intellectuals, had existed since the revolution of 1905. These symptoms were the precursors of the general movement of 1917. In May, a first all-Russian Muslim congress met in Petrograd to demand not national independence, but national autonomy. A second all-Russian Muslim Congress, meeting in Kazan in July 1917, mainly controlled by the Tatars, sought to dominate national movement, and even played with pan-Turan

². Ibid.

aspirations. A Bashkir congress was held in orenburg, to demand autonomy for the Bashkirs.

Following the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, Lenin proclaimed an end to natural oppression, the equality of all nationalities and the rights of all nations to self-determination, upto the point of secession. The first act of the soviet government in thin sphere was a general declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russian with a special appeal "To all muslim Toilers of Russian and the East."

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Turks and Tatars of Trans Caucasia, Chechens and mountaineers of the Caucasus, and all those whose mosques and oratorios have been destroyed, whose belongings and customs have been trampled, under the foot of the Tsars and oppressors of Russia, your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are henceforth free and inviolable. Know what you rights are under the powerful safeguard of the revolution. Lend your support to this revolution and

to its government."³

The Bolsheviks appealed for support, particularly to the Muslims of Russia, seeing them as a link with the oppressed masses of India and other colonies of the imperialist powers.

The second stage of Soviet policy which started in early 1918, was marked in the east, by active intervention against "bourgeois" national movements which had sprung into life, in the interval between February and October revolutions.⁴ These governments like the Ukrainian Rada, tended after the October Revolution to turn against the Soviets in Petrograd, because there were regarded naturally inimical to the former subject people. This period unlike its predecessor was marked by vigorous attack on the Muslim religion, and its traditions and practices, partly on ideological grounds and partly to destroy the influence of the Mullahs, who had often been the backbone of the "bourgeois" national movements. Stalin issued a declaration saying special measures were necessary

³. Ibid.

⁴. Ibid.

to draw the toiling and exploited masses of these borderlands into the process of revolutionary development.

The policy of an enforced Sovietization of the eastern borderlands, based on the hypothetical support of native revolutionaries hostile both to bourgeois nationalism and to Islam, proved a fiasco. Though the influence of the mullahs and bourgeois intellectuals who headed the embryonic national movements can easily be exaggerated, especially among the nomadic people, there was even less understanding or sympathy for the purposes and methods of the Bolsheviks. It was impossible to obtain any serious Tatar or Bashkir backing for the proposed Tatar-Bashkir Soviet Republic, or of the Chuvashes who according to a local historian, wanted neither independence nor autonomy. The Civil war descended on a scene of widespread anarchy.

The year 1920, marked a sharp change in relations between Moscow and the eastern borderlands.⁵ The weight of Soviet policy, once the danger from the west was over, changed from West

⁵. Ibid.

to East. The same moment brought a corresponding change of attitude among the eastern people's themselves. In all these regions the ultimate effect of the civil war, waged by the "whites" with foreign backing, had been to consolidate the prestige and authority of the Russian Soviet government. Now they were more amenable to Soviet promises of unfettered National Self-determination. Experience of the heavier hand of the 'white' armies was one of the factors which from 1920 onwards made them more amenable to Soviet pressure and guidance. In pursuance of a more liberal policy, Soviets decrees were issued by VTsIK in the course of May 1920, creating Bahkir and Tatar Autonomous SSRs and a Chuvash Autonomous Region. In Bashkiria, the creation of Bashkir ASSR, entailed crushing of the capable and troublesome Validov. In the northern Caucasus, a general settlement was also reached before the end of 1920. The Mullah Gotsinsky still defied the Soviet power in Dagestan. Stalin addressing the question of autonomy of Dagestan, said, 'Dagestan should be governed according to its own peculiarities, its own way of life and customs'.

The settlement reached through out the eastern

borderlands in the winter of 1920-21 was the sequel of the growing victory of Soviet arms in the Civil war. The issue of power had been decided, and it was then time, to settle down under forms of government acceptable to Moscow and under rulers, whether Russian or native, who would work in harmony with Moscow. In all these territories autonomy, was a reasonable solution of the administrative problem, since none of them could on any count be said to possess the elements of independence; and the degree of autonomy to be enjoyed in practice was limited not so much by the niggardliness of the sovereign power as by the limited capacity of the local authority. The constitutional form of the agreement was significant. No kind of the agreement or stipulation was made for any of these territories between the Central and the local power. Autonomy in each case was granted by a unilateral decision of the Central authority.⁶ When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) was constituted in 1922, those nationalities which didn't qualify for a union republic, were given the status of autonomous republics. Thus, Russia emerged as

⁶. Ibid.

a multi-ethnic federation, with approximately half of the members of the ethnic minorities belonging to nationalities which are traditionally Muslims. The Muslims in Russia live in officially recognized "homelands" that have been granted territorial recognition, as a result of the pact, after the civil war; a pact that offered territorial advantage in return for allegiance. It was also a sequel to the divide-and-rule policy of the Bolsheviks, creating separate republics for each nationality, to thwart Pan-Turkism or Pan-Islamism. The roots of the recently growing national sentiments amongst the Muslim minorities can be traced back to the 'nationality' policies of the Bolsheviks after 1917 October Revolution. It may be added here that the "autonomy" granted was purely illusory in nature and the Russian Federation has never been a federation in the normal sense. The CPSU exercised a monopoly of power. Most economic powers were reserved for the centre. Any attempt to promote the secession of a republic was branded counter-revolutionary. Steps were taken to ensure that ethno-territorial units did not develop as centers for nationalism. Regional and minority interests were subordinated to the security,

the Russian Parliament. In a speech in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, in September 1990, Yeltsin called on the republics to "take as much independence as you can handle".⁷ The independence drive accelerated in April 1990, and Gorbachev too sought to use these a Republic but his plans was to enlist these against the Russian democrats and thereby prevent the disintegration of the Union. On his behalf, the Soviet Parliament passed the "All Union law on the Delimitation of Powers between the USSR and the subjects of the Federation." This law declared that the USSR's Autonomous Republics were all subjects of the Federation. By implying that the autonomous republics enjoyed equal status with the Union republics, it was this law that had the effect of provoking a string of declarations of sovereignty. The first to declare its sovereignty was Tatarstan.

In 1989, Tatar intellectuals in Kazan had established the Tatar Public centre (TOTs). Their programme demanded that autonomous republics such as the Tatar republic be given the status

⁷. Russian Federation in "World Directory of Minorities", Europe Publications, 1998 pp.294.

economic and diplomatic concerns of the Soviet government. The centralised character of the Soviet system made minority rights a little more than an illusion.

The Perestroika Period

Under Gorbachev, rising ethnic tensions, on the periphery of the Soviet Union was accompanied by increasing tensions within the RSFSR itself. The abandonment of old communist, centralist economic and political structures and accompanying constitutional changes proved decisive. In 1989, nationwide competitive elections were held for the first time since 1917, with voting for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, and the following year, competitive elections took place in the republics and localities. With extra representation in the Soviets of Nationalities, a movement for increased regional powers began to build up.

The Muslim republics which later declared their sovereignty were emboldened by the struggle of power between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Russian democrats saw the haemorrhage of power to the regions as a means to undermine Gorbachev's position. As a result substantial autonomy was granted to them by Yeltsin and

of Union republics within the USSR, democratization of the republic, a reduction in Russian immigration reduced republics contribution to the Russian budget, and finally cultural facilities for Tatar language to become the state language of the republic, alongside Russian. Following the declaration of State Sovereignty of the USSR, Tatarstan declared its sovereignty.⁸ The Bashkirs were quick to follow, and a movement which arose from a fear of their people being culturally assimilated by the superior Tatars ended in a declaration of sovereignty. In this "parade of sovereignties" Chuvasia declared its sovereignty on 27th October, 1990. Kabardino's declared their sovereignty in December 1991. The Karachai - Cherkess's proclaimed the Autonomous area as a Republic. The Adygei's too demanded republican status. Chechnya the most intransigent experienced a growth in ethnic sentiments since the 1970s, and it also was quick to declare its sovereignty. In practice the declarations were largely symbolic, but they reflected the determination of the republics to

8. Szparluk, Roman, "Statehood and nation building in Post-Soviet Space" in Dawisha, Karen and Parrot. Bruce, 'Russia and the New states of Eurasia', Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

increase their autonomy.⁹

Since January 1992, Moscow has dealt with these assertive republics in a series of bilateral pacts. The first attempt to meet the demands of the republics within the Russian Federation by moving towards some codification of the relations between the centre and the Republics was the Federation Treaty of 1992.

The Federation Treaty of 1992

The treaty referred to the republics within the Russian Federations as "states".¹⁰ It contained a long list of functions reserved to the Federation, another long list of areas shared by the Federation and the republics, and a provision assigning the unlisted functions to the republics. On the key question of control over resources, the treaty declared, "The land and its resources, waters, flora and fauna are the property of the peoples living on the territories of the corresponding republics'. The use of these resources

⁹. MacIver, Dan (ed.) "The politics of Multinational States", Macmillian Press Ltd., 99, pp.63.

¹⁰. 'Tatar Vice-President on Treaty with Russia, Current Digest of the Soviet Press, August, 1994, pg.43.

however could be determined by the laws of the Federation and the republics. The Federation Treaty widened the rights of the republics in relation to ownership of resources, taxation and foreign relations, putting them in a privileged position above the other regions. This did not satisfy Tatarstan and Chechna who refused to sign. Tatarstan had voted in a referendum on 1st March, that it was a "sovereign" state, a subject of international law conducting its relations with the Russian Federation and other republics on the basis of equal treaties. Those who signed were Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Kabardino-Balkars and Karacheyvo-Cherkess etc.

Critics of the treaty say that while the centre's responsibilities have been clearly delineated, the category stipulating which functions should be shared between the centre and the republics or regions are rather vague.¹¹ Included in this are, maintenance of law and order, rights of the minorities, health, education etc. The provision of a mechanism to mediate disputes between the centre and the

¹¹. Teague, Elizabeth, "Centre periphery relations in the Russian Federation", in Dawisha Karen and Parrot Bruce, 'Russia and the New states of Eurasia', Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1996.

periphery, are also left undefined. The republics and regions have complained constantly about the failure of the centre to implement the treaty's provisions. The result has been great confusion. The section of the Federal treaty that dealt with the residual rights belonging to the republics and region have been circumscribed by the stipulation that they must be exercised in accordance with federal law. The treaty also reserved the final say in matters of foreign policies, defense, security and also foreign economic relations for the central government. It is therefore questionable how much autonomy, the republics and the regions finally won.

On the other hand, the chairman of the constitutional court has expressed dismay over the intransigence shown by Chechnya and Tatarstan, and asserted that this created first and second class members of the Russian Federation, to say nothing of the Special class in which Tatarstan fell since it was allowed to get away without signing the treaty. After Tatarstan refused to sign, Rumantsev was quoted as advancing the idea of giving these republics the status of "freely associated states". This concept has since been written into the Tatarstan Constitution even though it has no official base in the

Russian law and negotiation are continuing between Moscow and Kazan, over Tatarstan's status. Only Chechnya still insists, that it does not consider itself as part of the Federation, though it has expressed willingness to open negotiation over a treaty, normalizing relations between Chechnya and Russia on the basis of some kind of a federation. Chechnya may fall into the same position vis-a-vis the centre as Tatarstan. We can say, that, even after the promulgation of the Federation treaty, the status of the Muslim Autonomous Republics still remain ambiguous in relation with the centre, with separatist Chechnya at one extreme and those who have agreed to remain within the Federation with heightened powers at the other.

Through 1992 and most of 1993, these republics and the other regions of Russia, further sought to maximise their autonomy and control over their resources, this time by taking advantage of the power struggle between the Yeltsin government and the Parliament.¹² Yeltsin particularly favored the republics, reducing

¹². Duncan, Peter, "Accommodating Ethnic minorities", in MacIver, Dan ed. "The politics of multi-national states", Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999, pg.63.

their tax obligations, even though they were wealthier than the non-ethnic, non-Muslim regions. At the same time, debates took place over whether the Leninist concept of linking territory and ethnicity should be continued in Russia. Other argued for putting the republics on the same level as the regions, while allowing cultural autonomy to the minorities wherever they were within the Russian Federation. Valeru Tishkov, Chairman of the State committee for Nationality Policy pointed out that any attempt to take away the forms of national statehood granted to the minorities would be likely to be met by violence.

The Constitutional Battle

The signing of the Federal treaty created fresh problems because, the republics began to demand that the rights they claimed should be enshrined in the New Russian constitution. There was not much enthusiasm among the central authorities for constitutionalising the Federation treaty. The latter step was opposed by then Deputy Oleg Rymyankev, secretary of the Constitutional Commission, who publicly scorned nationalist

agitation within the federation as "tribalism".¹³

In spite of centralist leaning and a unitarist mindset in both presidential and parliamentary camps, their struggle for power within a constitutional framework became so intense in the spring of 1993, that each side courted the federation's subjects, trying to win their support in the separation-of-powers conflict. In the April 1993, referendum Yeltsin won approval of his presidential performance, and an emboldened President bypassed the parliament, which constitutionally enjoyed a monopoly in constitution making and used his executive authority to call the first constitutional convention.¹⁴

The draft constitution finally promulgated in June 1993 though including the controversial equality provision of federation subjects, also anomalously retained the "Federation Treaty" which reflected the republics' advantage. Yeltsin hope of seeking a solution to the federal issue were dashed when a number of regional and republic legislature found the draft, unacceptable. Beset by two

¹³. Sharlet Robert, 'Federalism in Russian Constitutional Politics, in Publius, Spring 1993, pg. 118.

¹⁴. Ibid.

opponents, the parliament and the republics, Yeltsin carried out a constitutional coup, dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution. From October 1993 to January 1994, Yeltsin governed by executive decree, and reconvened the constitutional convention. On this occasion he picked the delegates carefully, and the November draft of the constitution was more pro-presidential and pro-centrist in terms of the division of power. The summer convention converted Russia from an asymmetrical to a symmetrical federation and stripped them of their "sovereignty" and right to separate republic citizenship. The focus was now from decentralization to the unity of state power. Section II of the draft not only omitted the Federation Treaty but also demoted it to a sub-constitutional document, specifying that in the event of a conflict between the two documents, the constitution will prevail. Thus, the new constitution adopted by referendum in December 1993, strengthened the powers of the executive over the legislature and centre over the periphery and reflects the current shifting political situation. As Rachel Walker pointed out, "In crucial aspects, therefore, the subjects of the Federation are quite clearly subordinate to the federal authorities in

a way that are not characteristic of classical federation, but are rather reminiscent of unitary states".¹⁵

Serious infringements of the constitution continues. Many republics (e.g. Ingushetiya) claim primacy of their constitution over the federal one. Several republics (Bashkortostan, Tatarstan) claim full responsibilities for matters which are defined as joint functions, and some (Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Chechnya etc.) have appointed independent procurator generals.

The inability of the centre to provide a constitution, which would assist in the formation of a stable political system implies that the new constitution is also transitory, and discord between members and centre will occur frequently.

The constitutional battle, and widespread rejection of the constitution led to another spate of treaty signing.

The practice of signing treaties as the bilateral treaty between Russia and Tatarstan and subsequently with other republics

¹⁵. "Democratization and the Federal Republic", by Rachel Walker in paper prepared for political studies university of New York, April, 1995.

shows that these pacts will continue to define federal relations.

Tatarstan-Russian Federation Treaty of 1994

In February 1994, the Russian Federation signed a bilateral treaty with Tatarstan, using a face-saving formula, whereby both sides recognized each others constitution despite the fact that Russia was no longer prepared to recognize Tatarstan's sovereignty. While Kazan was given the right to "decide questions of republication citizenship". (not then allowed to other republics) it had been forced to settle for less than that had been on offer at the time of the Federation treaty of 1992.

The Tatar Vice-President, Commenting on the treaty saw, "This treaty performed a revolutionary role, in the restructuring of the thinking of the top Russian leadership. The treaty is a firm barrier to any attempts to transfer relations with Tatarstan to a plane of relations between subordinate and superior. The treaty enshrines the 'new status' of the Republic of Tatarstan, conditioned by the results of a referendum of the population of Tatarstan (March, 1992) and the constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan adopted subsequently (November, 1992) on its basis. This approach reflected

the specific features of the status of the Republic of Tatarstan as a 'Sovereign' state that is united with the Russian Federation, participates in international relations, and recognizes the basic liberties and rights of man. It is a special category of legal instrument that is by nature on interstate instrument. Demeaning its political significance and reforming role in legal support it to a simple interstate agreement in both politically and legally improper. The problem of the international legal personality of the Republic of Tatarstan is resolved also in the text of the treaty of 15th February of 1994. That is, first recognition of the Republic of Tatarstan as a state (which automatically does away with arguments regarding its sovereign rights), second, the declaration of its right to conclude international agreements and third, announcement of its authority to engage in foreign economic activity."¹⁶

This treaty reflects the fact that the Tatar leadership has modified its position in the course, but the most significant change of attitude was on the Russian side. From that point, the treaty,

¹⁶. Shamiyev. M. 'Tatarstan is a part of Russia', FBIS Report, 21st August, 1994, pp.44.

represents a triumph of political realism and an important step in the direction of federalising Russia's relations with the autonomous units. Both sides have gained; Russia, by Tatarstan's acceptance of indivisible sovereignty and by a two-channel tax system in the republic, and Tatarstan, by control over its natural resources, (e.g. oil), as well as considerable fiscal autonomy and the right to conduct foreign economic relations.¹⁷

The subsequent treaties of the state authorities of Russia and other Republics are based on the same lines. In August 1994, Bashkortostan, agreed on a bilateral treaty with Russia on more favourable terms than those gained by Tatarstan, winning control of natural resources and the valuable oil-refining and petrochemical plants, and being allowed its own citizenship.

Chuvashiya signed a treaty with Moscow in May 1996 on the delimitation of powers. It granted the republic greater freedom to determine policies in political, economic, and social areas. Kabardino-Balkaria also signed a bilateral treaty with the federal

¹⁷. Shamiyev, M. "Tatarstan-Russia treaty is five, what's next", FBIS Reports, 15 February, 1999.

authorities during 1995. Karachayevo-Cherkessiya too signed a treaty in 1995, on division of responsibilities.

Chechnia could not be negotiated back into the Russian Federation, and after three years of tolerating its independence Yeltsin ordered the invasion of the republic in December 1994. Chechen resistance was intense, and the Russian Army responded by mass bombing of civilian areas, which upset both Russian and world opinion. After the capture of Grozni, Russia allowed the organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to mediate and facilitate negotiations with Dudaev's forces. While the Chechens had the sympathy of the Ingush and among some groups in Daghestan, there was no large-scale show solidarity in the North Caucasus. Nevertheless the leaders of other republics expressed their opposition to the use of force, and Moscow was humiliated by the episode.

Supporters of Chechen independence succeeded by the summer of 1996 in regaining control of most of Grozni. During his short tenure as Secretary of Yeltsin's Security Council, Lieutenant General Alexandre Libed negotiated a cease-fire with the rebels. It was agreed that Russian forces would withdraw from Chechnia but the

question of the republics future could be shelved until 2002. All Russians troops left Chechnia by January 1997. Moscow hoped that by that time economic pressures might persuade the Chechens of the value of staying in Russia, but other observers believed that the Kremlin was being forced towards a gradual withdrawal from the Caucasus.

Relations between the centre and the autonomous units are thus, based on pacts between leaders, reflecting the relative strength of the sides at the time, rather than an acceptance of an established set of rules. The quasi-federal structure inherited from the Soviet period, linked with ethnicity has been used at advantage by the various Muslim autonomies. It will be some time before Moscow succeeds in negotiating a system which meets these various demands of the ethnic republics, while preserving a strong and stable centre. Although it is early to say so, there are indications that a constructive dialogue is emerging with respect to the division of power. The inception of this process was the Russian-Tatar treaty concluded in early 1994. Russian pro-reform parties and the liberal media are holding the treaty up as a possible harbinger for new,

more flexible relations between Russia and its constituent republics, including the Muslim ethnic republics. For Russia, at the end of the twentieth century, the road back to absolute unitarism is effectively closed. Negotiating and legislating federal treaties, is forging a looser though more durable centre-periphery relations. Constitutionalized power sharing the essence of federalism will further support the process.

Recent Developments

The hotbeds : Dagestan : Politican unrest reached a climax in mid-1998 on May 21st. A group of 200-300 fighters belonging to the Union of Russian Muslims the leader of which, Nadir Khachilayev, also the head of the ethnic Lak community in Dagestan occupied a government building in Makhachkala. At the same time around 2000 demonstrators gathered in the main square of the capital demanding the resignation of the republican government. A few days later republican forces were involved in armed hostilities with so-called Wahabis, members of an ascetic Sunni Islamic sect, in the village of Kara Makhi, Buinaksk district. On 16 August, a local supreme body, the Shura (elected the previous day) proclaimed a

separate Islamic territory, in the village and its neighbours. This move by the Wahabis added to fears of increasing religious fundamentalism in Dagestan and the North Caucasus, generally. Also in August, the spiritual leader of Dagstan's Muslim establishment, Said Muhammad-Khjazi Abubakarov and his brother were killed by a bomb in an attack blamed on Islamic fundamentalists.¹⁸

Ingushetiya

In June '92, adopted a law on the separate formation of the Ingush Republic within the Russian Federation. The new Republic claimed the eastern regions of North Ossetiya, as part of the Ossetian capital, Vladikavkoz. The raion (Prigorodnyi), also became a centre of dispute. (A federal law passed in April 1991, established the right of formerly deported people to repossess territory) Armed hostilities between the two Republics, began in October 1992 and continued till 1994. Despite a peace agreement, which included provisions for the

¹⁸. Is Dagestan on the brink of civil war, Current Digest of the Soviet Press, vol. 50, No.21, June 24, 1999.

return of refugees, relations remained strained. Thus, at the beginning of 1999, Ingushtetian leadership condemned North Ossetiya following a border incident on 31 December 1998. This background did not contribute to stability in the Republic, and it too was troubled by incidents of violence and hostage-taking.

Chechnya

The main issues that dominate the republic Chechnya post signing of the Khasvyurt Accords (peace) are increasing lawlessness and Islamicization of the Republic. The kidnapping of Valentin Vlasov (federal presidential representative) and capture and murder of four western hostage became international news. Political opposition to Mashkadov, elected on January, 1997, presidential elections, led by warlord, Salman Radyuev, and his attempted seizure of governmental buildings in Dzakhan is another example of lawlessness.

Even after the 1996 peace agreements the territory's leadership, remained committed to complete independence, from Russia, re-inforcing its intent to introduce Islamic law (Shari'a in contravention of federal laws) in the region Religion has led to

political fragmentation, and armed hostilities in Gudermes in July, 1998, resulting in outlawing of Wahabis in Chechnya. In January 1999, Mashkadov declared that Sharia would be introduced over a three year period, supervised by an Islamic Council or Shura. Chechnya recently declared itself as a Muslim Orthodox State.¹⁹+

¹⁹. Maksakov, Ilya, "Chechnya on the verge of Chaos", FBIS Report, 17 August, 1999.

THE REVIVAL AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN RUSSIA

Of the twenty two title nations in Russia, nine republic are Moslems. In the North Caucasus there are 4.5 million Moslems, in the Volga and Urals there are 3.5 muslims and in Siberia there are 500,000 of them.¹

For more than 1400 years of Islamic history, before the arrival of the communist regime, Islam was the regulator of social and economic matters. Culture, morality, law and mode of family life was clearly determined by it. The Soviet power not only denied Islam the right to regulate the social and spiritual life of society, but also imposed a concrete task, to eradicate Islam and replace it by a Communist world outlook. The entire political apparatus, the legal and social institutions, the activities of the party and ideological workers, and the educational system was directed towards achieving

¹. Kerimov, Grasyim, 'Islam and Muslim in Russia', Russia and the Moslem World. N5 (59), 1997 Moscow.

this end. The domination of the communist regime in the region of traditional Islam in the Soviet Union has left its mark and its wounds.

It is possible to identify various stages in the relationship between Islam and the Soviet authorities. A once open mutual hostility between Islam and the Soviet State was replaced by obligatory Islamic loyalty to the Soviet regime. It should be noted that in this period, the communist party and the government succeeded in isolating part of the mass of poor and landless peasants of Volga region from the more prosperous Muslim leaders and clergy, with appealing socio-economic and class slogans. "Red Mullah"² appeared from the lower ranks of the Islami clergy. They openly adjusted Islam to the requirements of the time and strove to coordinate the dogmas of the Islam with the ideals of socialism. Thus from 1920-24 officially recognised Soviet power and proclaimed all

². Kerimov, Gasym, "Islam and Muslims in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union", Russia and the Moslem World. N4 (58) 1997. Moscow.

actions of the opposition Muslim movements (e.g. basmachi) as contrary to Sharia. Between 1928-41, Sharia courts were dissolved, the Soviet government enacted measures on the gradual transition from the Arabic written languages to the Latin alphabet and closing down of Mektebs and madrasas. The appearance of new schools and new the new script deprived religious leaders of the possibility of engaging in the Islamic education of the next generation. All taxes and contributions required by Islam was abolished. In this way, the Islamic organisations were deprived of the possibility of engaging in charitable work, and deprived of their social functions. The Soviet system created yet another unusual situation for Muslims. An officially, totally unregistered Islam called "parallel Islam" started flourishing all over Caucasus and the Volga region.

Marxist ideology, according to Michael Bourdeauz³, never understood the true nature of Islam, analysing it by materialistic and

³. Bourdeauz, Michael, "Introductory Chapter" in Dawisha, Karen and Parrot Bruce, *Religion and Society in Eurasia*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

worldly criteria, whose obliteration would allow an ideal socialist society to emerge. As the recent reinvigoration of Islam in Russia shows, Islam was never completely obliterated.

It was, however, only in 1986, a year after Gorbachev's accession, that the first signs of a positive government response to the human rights and religious liberty questions emerged. In 1987, all those imprisoned for religious nationalism, or human rights offenses were released. Gorbachev confronted with the dead weight of Soviet conservatism saw the potential of the believers. Gorbachev kept his promise and the Stalinist laws *de facto* no longer operated. Religion though defying all definition now, may either contribute to the process of destabilisation or fulfil its potential as an agent of reconciliation.

Resurgence of Islam

In this favourable religious climate, there were visible signs of the resurgence of Islam, also called by some as "Islamic

Renaissance".⁴ Not only were more mosques and madrasas were being built, but a young generation was growing, brought up on Koranic laws. Today people have the right of choice, and the young people are choosing Islam. Islam has survived in Russia.

According to a sociological study done by the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences', (Institute of history), data from this ethno-sociological studies conducted indicate a broad scale of re-Islamization of the republic's population whereas from the 1960s to the early 1980s, the bulk of Tatars stated that they were indifferent to religion (even in the rural areas, 47% of the survey respondents placed themselves in this category and only 15.7% called themselves believers) the situation began to radically change in the late 1980s. According to survey data from 1989 and 1990, about two-thirds of respondents categorised themselves as more or less religious. Among Urban Tatars 34.1% called themselves as more or

⁴. Resurrection and activation of functioning confessional communities taking place e.g. Building mosques, religious schools, religious parties formed etc. 'Tatar nationalism and revival of Islam', Current Digest of the Soviet Press, vol. XLIV. No. 42, 1997. pg. 9.

less religious, with 30.4% saying that they wavered between belief and unbelief, among rural Tatars the figures were 43.4% and 19.1% respectively. In 1994, a dramatic 66.6% of urban Tatars classified themselves as believers, and 12% as waverers, while the figures in rural areas were whopping 86% and 9.8% respectively.

An increase in religious awareness can be observed in all social and age groups.

For instance, whereas in 1990 only 20.4% of urban Tatars in the 20-24 age group called themselves believers, and 36.7% said they were waverers, in 1994, as many as 53% of urban young people under the age of 25 called themselves believers, and the figures between 25-29 age group was 61%. A survey conducted in 1995, among various groups of the elite also showed a rather high proportion of individuals who considered themselves believers, more than 72% among skilled workers, 62% of the artistic and creative elite and 34% of the political elite. For Tatars the basic spheres in which Islam is practiced is family and everyday life. A 1994 study turned up only a

small group (13%) among urban Tatars surveyed whose families did not observe any religious rites, customs or holiday.

This trend is confirmed by the dynamics of newly built mosques. Ten years ago, out of the 22 in the country there were 17 mosques in Tatarstan. Today there are more than 700 mosques. The event of 1000 years of Islamization of Volga-Bulgaria (992 A.D.) and two centuries of Muftait in Ufa was celebrated with great pomp. In 1990-92 more mosques were built, the press wrote a lot about Islam and more Muslims entered muslim educational establishments.

Many public organisations in Tatarstan reflected the new developments in their program documents. The 1990 programme clearly specified Islam as "one of the pillars of national culture'. The program emphasized Muslim enlightenment and education, so as to introduce Tatars to the best achievements of Muslim culture. Revival of 'jadidism' was also contemplated.

The All-Tatars Association, Magrif, in January 1992,

pointed out the relation between Tatar history and the culture of the East including global Islamic culture. The members believe that a return to the foundation of Muslim culture and civilization would enrich Tatar's culture.⁵

The Muslim organisations use clearer terms to declare their ties with Islam in their program documents. The resolution of the youth centre of Islamic culture, called for concentrated efforts of the Muslim youth, students intellectuals, workers of art and sciences, the mass media and public figures to revive Muslim spiritual heritage.

The Saf Islam, an extremely claustrophobic group has no program but talks with its members reveal the key ideas :

a) the group believes that the only true path on earth is the path indicated by the KORAN.

⁵. Ishkhakov, Dmitry, "Tatarstan : Islamic Problem today", Russia and the Moslem world. N1 (55) 1997, Moscow.

- b) they favour the idea of an elected Mufti.
- c) they insist that every Muslim with a deep knowledge of Koran has the right to interpret it.

In August 23, 1992, a Congress of the Imams of Tataria, set up an independent spiritual board, in response to the demand of the Muslim Community, for a quick solution of humerous, organisational, financial and personal problems of the believers. The setting up of this body was necessary for uniting religious organisations on a democratic basis. However, it did not realise the hopes placed on it, and, gradually turned into an organisation of the upper crust, of the Muslim clergy.

Islam in Tatarstan, today, reveals the stability of Islam as a form of public consciousness, and its ability to adapt itself to the changing social and political conditions, in line with the transition

going on its society.⁶

In Dagestan, Islam has existed not only as a religious form of piety but also as a mode of daily life, a factor organising the village commune and as a structure of real authority. Dagestan has demonstrated a high rate of survival, preservation spiritual resistance and an uninterrupted tradition of Islamic education. A good knowledge of Arabic among the rural population, has helped.

In the ethnically and linguistically heterogenous Dagestan, Islam has long provide a cultural common denominator and a source of firm personal identity.

As in other region, there are tendencies of Islamic revival. The number of mosques is growing, were was 162 in 1990 and 2500 in 1993. The murid movement in spreading, and the tradition of

⁶. Mukhammet Shin, Rafik, "Tatarstan : Struggle for power in the face of the state", Russia and the Moslem World. N11(65) 1997, Moscow.

studying and using Arabic is gradually reviving. The radical movement, "DZHEMAAT UL MUSLIMIN" has become more active in Dagestan. Though the predominant Avars support the local nomenclature, a movement for equal ethnic rights has taken a religious garb.

North Caucasian and Dagestan have recently shown an reorientation from traditional Islam to its more militant form "Wahabism".⁷ The new Imams began to abolish age old Muslim tradition and introduced new and alien ones, and have called for Jihad against the infidel rulers. In mid 1998, the republican forces were involved in armed hostilities with the Wahabis, in the village of Karamakhi (BUINASSK district). On 16th August, a local supreme body, the Shura (elected the previous day) proclaimed a separate Islamic territory.⁸ The move by the Wahabis added to the fears of

⁷. Wahabbis was a term applied to Sunni Muslim but is now applied to fundamentalists and loosely applied to any opposition group with a religious agenda.

⁸. "Chechen Fighters strike Russian Posts in Dagestan", Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Volume XLIX, No. 51, January 21, 1998, pp. 1.

increasing religious fundamentalism in Dagestan and August, the spiritual leader of Dagestan's Muslim establishment, said Mukhammad Khadzi Abubakara and his brother were killed by a bomb in an attack blamed on Islamic fundamentalism.

The arrest of Magormed Khachilayev, leader of the Laks, in connection with Buinaksk had led to great unrest. Also known for their great wealth and underworld connections, any criminal proceedings, against them would be seen as repression of a tiny nation. Khachilayer brother trump card is that Chechnya's influential field commanders Salman Raduyev and Shamil Basayer have promised assistance to them.

Chechnya

In Chechnya, similar tendencies of the revival of Islam may be seen in June 1989, Muslims in Grozny, called a meeting demanding permission to build mosques, read the Koran and educate

their children as Muslim. In the two years of Dzokhar Dudaev's rule, about 200 mosques and two Islamic Institutes (Grozny and Nazran) were built, Islaman Zamarsh (Dawn of Islam) journal was started and the places of traditional pilgrimages restored. Finally in that period an independent Spiritual Department was formed.⁹

The 'Islamic Path' a party founded by a Chechen businessman Bistan Gantamirov in 1989 was more popular. He united rural Imams from the mountainous Chechen regions and offered a political program of fighting the totalitarian regime, and organising state and society according to the Islamic principles and national customs and tradition.

The day Dudaev took the oath of office on the Koran, turned into a national festival. Rams and cows were slaughtered in honor of Allah, and meat was distributed in the streets. Soon

⁹. Nasardinov, Sulim, "On the elaboration of the national concept of the revival of Chechnya", Russia and the Moslem world. N11(65) 1997 Moscow.

thereafter, Dudaev declared the sovereignty of Chechnya, in defiance of Moscow. It provoked an immediate response from Moscow, who on 8th November Yeltsin declared a state of Emergency over the whole territory of Chechnya. President Yeltsins' decree on Emergency had the opposite desired effect. In the face of imperial invasion, the nation closed its ranks under General Dudaev Chechens put on green bands of "ghazavat".¹⁰ Dudaev called on the Chechens to turn Chechnya into a zone free of infidel. The Chechnya war against the centre was given a similar colour. The Muslim republic of Northern Caucasus displayed solidarity with Chechnya.

Even after the 1996 peace agreements at Khasyavunt, the territory's leadership remained committed to complete independence from Russia, and reinforced the intent to introduce Islamic law (Shari'a in contravention of federal law) and religious education. On schools' on 4th September, 1998, Chechnya declared itself a orthodox

¹⁰. Supreme sacrifice in the name of Islam.

Moslem State.¹¹ The activities of its parliament was suspended as "contradictory to Sharia" standards. Within the next three months parliament is to be replaced by the Shura (assemblance of a state council comprising of former field commanders and other respected person). Speaker Ruslan Ali Khadzhiyev was dismissed "for repeated public statements which contradict Islamic standards. The President's wife Kusama, was removed from the post of the head of the Marsho charity fund because females may not hold high posts in an Islamic state.

Some field commanders had suggested to Dudaev way back to introduce Islamic rule but Dudaev was in principle for a secular state.

Last week, Vice-President had again appealed to the disbanded parliament to introduce Sharia rule, this must have been the reason for its dissolution. The situation may turn out to be in

¹¹. Kornilov, Sergia, " Is Chechnya turning into Orthodox Moslem State" FBIS Report, 3rd September, 1998, pp.5.

favour of Moscow, because amongst the two sufi orders (Kadiris & Naqshbandis) it is possible to win one of them as ally. Yet the demands to terminate all relations with Russia and end all "persecution" has raised alarm. The call for Mashkadov's resignation may bring Chechnya in the face of another crisis. Basayev and Yanderyev, officially the armed opposition acting under the green banner of Islam also have other aims, a single Islamic state of Chechnya and Dagestan, independent of Moscow, having access to the Caspian sea, with the western Caucasus subsequently joining it.

Karachanyevo - Circassia

In the early 1990s a certain Magomed Bijiyeu, of Karachai-Circassian origin arrived at Stavropol Territory from Moscow. He called himself a representative of the "Islamic party of Revival". Soon after his arrival reactionary societies began to appear, which did not bother to conceal their real aims. In 1992, at the second Congress of Moslems of Karacha-Circassia and Stavropol territory, a 20 man group headed by Bijiyeu, and standing under the

green band of Islam, demanded that a political decision be taken, proclaiming the secession of the Karachai-Cherkeris Republic from Russia. The groups demand was turned down, but the tactics of fighting the infidels were evolved. Mass meetings for the overthrow of the Spiritual Board of Moslems of the republics was organised, and resolution passed for adopting a new political course. Madrasas and mosques were built.

According to information, clandestine preparations are going on in the republic, and the neighboring republics for the formation of an Islamic State on the pattern of Chechnya. Literature is being distributed. The call is for the "fight for purity of Islam" and expelling infidels from the village. Killing Russians is no sin. Local mullahs have established contacts with Islamists of Chechnya and Dagestan. Wahbites pay mullahs great lumps of money.

At a prayer meeting in a mosque, wahabite priests called on young people to refuse serving Russian army and serve their own army. They distribute provocative leaflets calling for the secession

of North-Caucasian territories from Russia. The armed conflict in the Buinaksk district when numerous units of militants attacked local.

Another thing worth mentioning is there are "foreign missionary activities" here, along the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline. May be it is an attempt to drive Russia away from oil markets. It is difficult to deport them on the connection between destabilisation as their activities cannot be proved.

Regional Variation in the Levels of Religiosity

An American sociologist, Alexander Bennigien¹² reports results of survey research conducted in 1993 among Muslim in the five Autonomous Republics of Russia. The data demonstrate that the strength of Islam as both a religious and social institution varied regionally despite the shared experience of Soviet anti-religious

¹². Goodrich Lehman, Susan, "Islam and ethnicity in the Republics of Russia", Post Soviet Affairs, Vol. 41(5), 1997, pp.78-103.

policies. Muslims in Chechnya and Dagestan were much more likely to report that they actively practiced Islam than Muslims living in Kabardino - Balkaria, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. Moreover, religious practice was high among non-traditional Chechen and Avar. The young, the urban migrants, the highly educated, and men reported high level of active worship. In Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and Kabardino - Balkaria, in contrast, active religiosity was primarily confined to old, rural women and those with low levels of education. These differences, it is argued, are linked to the Sufi Islam tradition present in Chechnya and Dagestan, but absent in other Muslim autonomous republics.

Islam in Russia today has the broadest base of support in Chechnya and Dagestan. These findings suggest that Sufi Islam practiced here contained features necessary for religious survival in the face of state opposition. Key amongst these features were its decentralization nature and lack of dependence on formal hierarchy, its basis in local clans, its perpetration of Arabic as a language of worship, and its ties to ethnic nationalism. The demographic profile

of the believes in these Autonomous Republics also suggest a broader base of revival in Chechnya and Dagestan and narrower base of revival in Tararstan, and Bashkortosten. In fact, Tatars and Bashkorts, display the lowest level of both religious belief and practice.

Factors like ethnic assimilation, length of Russian colonial rule, deportation, native language schooling, and intermarriage either fail to correspond to differences within Islam or when controlled fail to diminish regional variation in religious practice.

The factors are :-

- 1) Date of conquest by the Russians
- 2) Deportation
- 3) Availability of native-language schooling
- 4) Differences in inter-ethnic marriage.¹³

¹³. Hadja and Beissinger, "Muslim Conservative opposition to the Soviet Regime", in Dennin J Dunn ed Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union. Boulder Co. Westview,

Briefly the expectations are as follows. a) Those who came under Russian rule the earliest should be the longest along the assimilation process. b) Deported people are more cohesive and hostile to Russians as a result of this shared experiences of exile, assimilation is retarded and c) inter-ethnic marriages commonly facilitate assimilation. The Kabardinos and Balkars came later than the Chechens under Russian rule, but their level of religious practice is the same as Tatars. In that case, religiosity shows inverse relation to length of exposure to Russian culture. The Chechens and Balkars both suffered deportation, yet Chechnya has the highest level of active behaviour and Balkars the least. The only ethnic groups to have the native - language of instruction are Tatars and Baskirs, but they are least likely to practice Islam. Lastly the role of inter-ethnic marriage in cultural assimilation. The data collected show some correlation between mixed marriages and assimilation, but was not by itself effective in explaining variations in religiosity among the Muslim people of Russia. According to Bennigsen the best

1997.

explanation still remains the regional character of the Islamic tradition.

Politicization of Islam

The leading Moslem socio-political movements maintain that Islam is inseparable from politics. Apart from tackling the traditional problems of arranging "hajj building" and opening mosques and modrasas, and organising various religious "shows" the Moslem clergy are beginning to show an interest in political tasks such as winning voters sympathies and consolidating their positions in the region.¹⁴

The Russian Moslems feel that the actual state of affairs as regards their political, and cultural rights are not satisfactory. There is a great gap between proclaimed rights and corresponding

¹⁴. Khalidov, Denga, "What will Russian Moslems do, if developments in Russia do not change," Russia and the Moslem World.N5, 1993 Moscow.

laws. Moslems are inadequately represented in the bodies of power. Large groups of Moslems are scattered outside their boundaries, and are looked upon as second-rate citizens. In these conditions it is important for the Moslems to organise. To effect a serious change in the work of the state institution, and introduce amendments to the existing laws, steps should be taken which would take into consideration the interests and requirements of more than 10% of the Russian Moslem citizens. The growing politicisation of the Muslims can be attributed to a whole number of reasons¹⁵

- a) Serious losses of the people of the Moslem culture in their traditional development for the past decades.
- b) the rapid growth of national self-consciousness of the people.
- c) accumulated feelings of the infringements of their rights and lastly.
- d) the understanding of the impossibility of safeguarding effectively their rights and interests without organising themselves.

¹⁵. Malashenko, Alexei, "Islam and Politics in the Russian Federation, Russia and the Moslem World.

This realisation has urged them to unite in their efforts to struggle for preservation and development of their original ethnic feature, their mother tongue, culture and tradition. This trend is becoming stronger after the recent suggestions in the press to turn Russia into administrative "gubernujas", which means the elimination of national-territorial formation.

The Islamic Revival Party (IRP) and the Islamic Democratic Party of Dagestan (IDPD) have aroused great interest among citizens of Russia.¹⁶ The Islamic Revival Party was formed in Spring 1990 by a group of enthusiastic young Muslims. At first they were active in Dagestan, Astrakan and Moscow, although among the party's founders were immigrants from Central Asia. Regional structures of IRP operate in places where Muslims of the former USSR were living together. Regional structures of IRP operate in Northern Caucasus, Central Asia and some other regions of Russia.

¹⁶. Ibid.

In its programme documents, the IRP points to the necessity of restoration of Islamic values among Muslims and its return to the primary sources of Islam, the Quran and the Sunna. However, negative attitudes towards the party has not allowed it to broaden its activities and was discredited during the Tajikistan war.

The Islamic Democratic Party of Dagestan (IDPD) was founded in the beginning of 1990 by the Human rights activities, Abdur Rashid Saidor. It is one of the largest parties in Dagestan and is regarded as one of the most influential. The muftis of Dagestan unofficially support it. In 1988 Saidor made a radical speech attracting the attention of his compatriots, and also the then KGB. From the very start Saidov believed that the party should be a union of Muslims and those democrats whose work correspond to the norms of Islam, since to think of creating some kind of Sharia-based state without the secular intelligentsia was just a dream. One of the most important questions for the IDPD is that of Dagestan's relations with Russia.

On the eve of the elections in the summer of 1995, Russia's Moslems set up two political organisations, NUR and the UNION OF RUSSIA'S MOSLEM (URM) with each claiming the right to represent the interests of the Moslems in the whole federation.¹⁷

Nur which has branches in 47 regions is viewed as the more moderate and less political oriented and focussed its efforts on such purely "Islamic issues", such as easy access to theological education, creating a favourable environment for the performance of Moslem rituals and observations of traditions etc. Nur's activity was initially not so much political as cultural and educational.

The "Union of Russia's Moslems" has over 50 branches in the Russian Federation. It stated its political ambitions right away. Its program defines it as an all-Russian political organisation capable of bringing together the moslems and defend their political, economic

¹⁷. Nurulayev, A, "Religious and Political movements of Moslems of modern Russia", Russia and the Moslem World. N1(55) 1995 Moscow.

and social interests. Though the initial goal of its members were mainly to get elected into the Duma, yet its establishment has a broader context. The IRPs role had declined, and in the mid 1990s the climate was favourable to set up such a political organisation. Secondly, there has come into being, a small but very energetic stratum of Muslim youth who would like to have a more important place in public and political life. Thirdly, an interest in such an organisation was displayed by some fairly prominent politicians, including Abdulatipov and Kalymkov. Lastly, there appeared sponsors, Muslim businessmen, and bankers who would like to see more Moslems, among the Russian political figures. The URM's initial activities showed that ideologically the movement has adopted some principles upheld by the Islamic Renaissance Party. The Congress discussed the need for a Moslem factor at the RF Duma. By October '95 the URM was still short of the required number of signatures to act in the Duma elections as a separate group.

Basically both Nur and URM reject separatist efforts. The election platform of the URM declares "we are decisively against

confessional isolationism and religious extremism and stand for inter-ethnic interaction of all Russians for the sake of unity and prosperity of our motherland".¹⁸ They practice wide interactions with the Muslim clergy and Islamic institutions and are loyal to the state. It remains to be seen whether they imbibe more radical views in the future.

Religious Extremism in Russia

More after than not, the religious component of society serves as an ideological foundation for extremist parties and organisations. Religion is fertile ground for breeding extremism because, religious consciousness transforms the economic-social problems to religious-political problems. In these cases religions organisations claim a role in setting social, political, economic, moral and legal issues. They seek to upturn the already established nature of relationship with the state. The reject legal possibilities to realise

¹⁸. Ibid.

their religious and political aim and escalate violation e.g. Wahabis of Dagestan, emerged due to the worsening socio-economic situation in the republic, and the impoverishment of the people.¹⁹ They recently attempted to set up an independent "Islamic state" consisting of four villages in Buinask, as a solution to socio-economic problems there.

In these conditions they have easily acquired the image of the defenders of the poor and socially unprotected sections of the population. The Wahabis do not orient themselves to any political figures, all the more, since the latter are oriented to their opponents. The militant Daghestan Wahhabites do play a provocative role and frighten the rank-and-file citizens with the Wahabi threat, yet their activities are local. They have failed to become a factor of the national movement, to determine its future. They do not have clearly formulated political aims to come to power. Evidently they are on the side of Chechnya.

¹⁹. Sivertsev, Mikhail, "Civil society and Religion in traditional political culture", The case of Russia in Dauisha, Karen and Parrot, Bruce ed., International Politics of Eurasia Armonk, M.E. Sharp Publications, 1998.

Religious ideas, images and systems have a hidden potential that can be employed by extremist socio-political organisations. Religious dogmas of extremism are based on ideology that goes back many centuries. The most eloquent example in Jihad, an instrument used by Muslims to reach their religio-political aims. Again, negative attitudes against the authorities are inculcated in the believers. This has laid the seeds of conflicts in the Russian Federation. Chechnyas rise against the centre can be explained by socio-economic reasons. The absence of jobs, poverty and the lack of rights created favourable ground for the growth of extremist and separatists views. Yet the phenomenon of Chechnya cannot be explained entirely in the confessional context. The main reasons, that the new local elites challenged the federal authorities were for control over resources, territory and prosperity. For them Islam was a natural ideology of resistance. At the same time, the war has substantially worsened the situation in Chechnya, crime, unemployment, and lawlessness is on the rise. The inability of the local authorities to control the situation led to a good breeding ground for various extremists.

This is also true for Dagestan Political aims placed on an Islamic basis can destroy the integrity of Russia and lead to growing instability and terrorism. Military pressure is powerless to confront such Islamic extremism. The authorities should pursue a long term, well thought out social and economic policy and seek support of those religious leaders denouncing violence and preaching genuine Islamic values.

The problem of fundamentalism as a global phenomenon has not yet struck root in the Muslim autonomous republics.²⁰ Instead of terming the reinvigoration of Islam as a 'renaissance' or as 'fundamentalist' we may safely say that it is more or less linked with the growing awareness of ethnic nationalism. The increase in the number of people defining themselves as believers, just like the increase in various manifestations of so-called religious behaviour, cannot be unequivocally be interpreted as a rapid upswing in religiosity, or as a profound changes in the world view of the

²⁰. Ifimov, Boris, " Islamic fundamentalism as a threat to Russia", Russia and the Muslim World. No.(64) 1997. Moscow.

Muslims. To a large extent it is a reaction to the changes in the broader political environment, and to the political, social and economic instability in the republics. Spiritual and moral degeneration over a period provided further impetus. Islamization is most likely not a evidence of religious feelings as it is a manifestation of national consciousness and a distinctive (religious) nationalism. Religious awareness is a very important component of ethnic identity. Religion binds the people together into one nation, along with a common language and culture. Muslim holiday and rites are perceived as an organic part of ethnic culture and gives significance to ethnic tradition. Islam, which existed in a latent form, revived itself with increasing ethnic self-consciousness in the Russian Federation. It became an ally in the nation-building process and the most profound mode of self-expressism. The decline of Wahabism in its more extremist form, in recent times, with greater success in bargaining for autonomy from the centre lends credence to this view. Wahabism is now outlawed in many republics.

ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES AND GOALS OF THE MUSLIM ETHNIC REPUBLICS

The evolving status of the federal centre with the ethnic periphery has an important economic dimension. The demands for political sovereignty co-existed with economic autonomy. Uncertainties over the constitution, contracting economy, increasing poverty and unemployment, rising prices and the lack of a clear regional policy fuelled resentments in the autonomous ethnic units. The desire to have a self-sufficient, prosperous economy, make use of their own natural resources, chart out an independent course to the market and tap foreign investment, made the provincial/regional elites seek greater economic independence.

They voiced their economic grievances vociferously, forcing the centre so accede so many of their demands. The economic grievances can be grouped under three broad heading

- a) ownership of natural resources
- b) Greater fiscal autonomy and
- c) Independent foreign economic activity

Regional assertive ness clearly reflects that the regional leader

seek to close the glaring gaps in the economy. The stranger the republic and the richer in natural resources, the louder has been its demands for greater central over their assets. They resent the patron-client relation with the centre, and the way centre has controlled the budget and allocated sums of money, as part of political pressure and patronage. The need for regional power elite to safeguard their constituencies from sharp socio-economic decline, and to maintain themselves in power has led to great economic regionalisation.

Economic Profile of the ethnic autonomous units

Tatarstan :

This territory is one of the most developed economic regions of the Russian Federation and has vast agricultural and industrial potential. Its main industrial centres are at Kazan, Naberezhnye chelny, Nizhnekamak etc. Russia's second primary petroleum export pipeline to Europe starts in Atmetyevsk.

Tatarstan's agriculture in which some 14.7% of the work force were engaged in 1995, consists mainly of grain production, animal

husbandry, horticulture and bee-keeping. Mineral resources are more important. In early 1998 in Republic was ranked 18th in the world, in terms of its hydro-carbon reserves. The region is an important industrial centre : its capital Kazan and neighbouring Zelendolsk are centres for light industry, the manufacture of petro-chemicals, building materials and mechanical engineering. The automobile (KAMAZ trucks) and petroleum industry (Tatneft) are major employers. Kazan Orgsintez, a petrochemical giant is one of the largest polyethylene producers in Europe. In 1996 LUK oil - Tatarstan company was created, to use the Republics industrial and labour resources to develop oil fields in W.Siberia.

By the mid-1990s Tatarstan was also attracting foreign investors owing to its reformist policies. For eg. the US automobile company, General Motors signed a contract to manufacture 50,000 automobiles per year at the Telabuga plant. In April 1996, a programme drafted with US and French assistance, envisage the transformation of Tatarstan's economy from a military to a socially oriented one. A five year credit programme, signed with Germany will convert former military plants to civilian use. The 1994 law on

Foreign Investment provided for specific advantages to investors including a three year tax-exemptions for major projects. Foreign investment in the year 1996, amounted to \$ 1000 m, with over 230 companies attracting foreign capital from Finland, Germany, Poland, Turkey, UK and the USA. In November 1998, some anxiety was caused when Tatarstan defaulted on a debt to a western bank; although the republican authorities blamed the general economic crisis in Russia.¹

Bashkortostan

Bashkertostan's economy is dominated by its fuel-energy and agro-industrial complex. The republic is one of Russia's key petroleum - producing areas and one of the centres of its oil-refining industry. Its major industrial centres are at Ufa, Sterlitamak, Salavat etc. Avi a Kompaniya BAL operates air services between Ufa and major centres within Russia and CIS.

¹ Kirkov, Peter, "Russia's' provinces : Authoritarian Transformation vs local autonomy" Macmillan Press, New York, 1998.

Bashkortostan's agricultural production, ranks among the highest in the Russian Federation. Its main agricultural activities are grain, sugar-beet, sunflower, vegetables, animal husbandry, poultry forming and bee keeping. Bashkortostan also contains deposits of natural gas, brawn coal, iron-ore, copper, gold (32 metric tonnes in 1997) zinc, aluminium, chromium, manganese, gypsum and limestone. The other industries include processing of agricultural and forestry products, mechanical engineering, metal working, metallurgy mining etc.

Foreign investment in the republic in the year 1995 amounted to mere \$ 2.49 m. In March 1998, the republican premier Rim Bakiyev, signed a two year loan arranged by Moscow Narodnye Bank and HSBC Markets (UK) to be used in its petrochemicals and hydro-carbon industries.

Chuvasia

Chuvasia's major industrial centres are Cheboksary, Novocheboksarsk, Kanash, Atalyr and Shumerlya.

Its agriculture consists mainly of grains, potato, vegetables,

hop, hemp, makhorka - tobacco, horticulture and animal industry. The Republic contains deposits of peat, sand, limestone and dolomites. Its main industries are mechanical engineering, metal-working, electricity generation, production of chemicals, light industry, wood working, manufacture of building materials and food processing. Chuvasiya's major trading partners are the People's republic of China, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Ukraine and USA.

Chechnya

Prior to armed hostilities, Grozny (Dzokhar) was the principal industrial area. The republic's agriculture consists mainly of horticulture, production of grain and sugar beet and animal husbandry. Its main industrial activities were production of petroleum and petro-chemicals, petroleum refining, power engineering manufacture of machinery and the processing of forestry and agriculture products. Conflict in the "Great Patriotic war" severely damaged the economic infrastructure and disrupted both agriculture and industrial activity. A high degree of lawlessness in

the latter half of the 1990s, impeded tangible reconstruction. In the middle of 1998, the federal authorities had permitted Chechnya to apply for western aid, but such sources are unlikely by end of 1998. Future development depends on a great extent on greater stability, in the region.

Inghusetiya

Essentially agricultural, Ingushetiya was a tax haven during the mid-1990s, and hoped to benefit from the transit of Caspian hydrocarbons from the beginning of the 21st Century.

In the early 1990s, Inghusetiya's was largely agricultural, its primary activity being cattle-breeding. Agricultural production, however was in a state of serious decline at this time, necessitating certain measure by the republican government to prevent its collapse. Unprofitable collective forms of the Soviet period was successfully converted into private enterprises and joint-stock companies. Inghusatiya's industry, which employs just 11.1% of the working population, consists of chemical production, petroleum refining and light industry. During the mid 1990s the service sector has also made

a contribution to the economy. On July 1994, the republic had become an "off-shore" tax haven. This produced substantial benefits for the economy. The IMF has sought to dissuade the republican government from granting ad-hoc tax exemptions.

At the end of 1996, the republican President Aushev, signed an agreement with the President of the major petroleum company, LUK oil which provided the company with favourable rates of taxation in return for investing US \$ 5,000 m, in a variety of technical and construction projects. LUK oil was also a participant in the constructions of the Caspian pipeline running through the country.

Dagaestan

The economic situation in the Republic suffered greatly from the war in Chechnya, mainly as a result of the transport blockade, the energy shortage and the influx of refugees. The republic's major industrial centres are at Makhachkala, Derbent, Kaspiisk, Khasaryurt, Buinask etc. There are fishing and trading ports in Makhachkala. It is, a major junction for trading routes by rail, land and sea.

Owing to its mountainous terrain, Dagestan's economy is largely based on animal husbandry, particularly sheep-breeding. Its agriculture also consists of grain production, viniculture, horticulture and fishing. Its main industries are petroleum and natural gas production, electricity generation, mechanical engineering, metal working, food-processing, light industry and handicrafts. The republic's large defence sector enterprises, such as the Dagdizel Caspian Plant, the Mogomed Gadhziyer Plant, Aviagreg at and the Dagestan plant of Electrothermal equipment, were operating below capacity by the mid 1990s.

Foreign investment in the territory was minimal owing to its proximity to Chechnya and its own incidents of terrorism and unrest during the 1990s.

Kabardino-Balkar

The Republic's main industrial centres are at Nalchik, Tyrnyauz and Prokhladnyi.

Kabardino - Balkar's main agricultural products are maize, and sunflowers. Animal husbandry, horticulture and viticulture are also

important. Like the rest of the north Caucasus, the republic is rich in minerals, with reserves of petroleum, natural gas, gold, iron-ore, garnet, talc etc. The republic is deficient in electricity. Its main industries are mechanical engineering, metal-working non-ferrous metallurgy, food processing and light industry, manufacture of building materials and the production and processing of tungsten-molybdenum ores. Most of the Republics exports are to (raw materials comprise 70%) Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey and the USA.

Foreign investments in the Republic in that year amounted to US \$ 2.45 m. At 1 January, 1996 there was a total of 4,100 small business in operation.

Karachayevo - Cherkessiya

The predominant sector within the economy in terms of volume of output, and number of employees in industry. The republic's major industrial centres are at Cherkess, Karachayevsk and Zelenchukskaya.

Karachayevo - Cherkerssiya's agriculture consists mainly of animal husbandry. The production of grain, sunflower seeds, sugar - beets and vegetables is also important. The republics main industries are petro-chemicals, mechanical engineering and metal working. Timber processing and coal production is also important. There is practically no foreign investment.

Shortcoming of the economies of the ethnic republic

Mukhammat Sabiror, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan has pointed out the shortcomings² of the economies of the ethnic republics.

"It must be underscored that the economy of Tatarstan as other ethnic republics have developed under strict influence from the centre with no consideration for needs between industrial sectors or for the interests of the republics itself and its people. As a result this led to major disproportions between industrial sectors and between production and non-production sectors.

². Tatar Deputy Premier on socio-economic Plan, FBIS, Report, October 31, 1994 pp 40.

For eg, Tatarstan was forced to import a great proportion of its consumer goods. For many years, it was USSR's 'principal oil granaries', sending over two million tonnes of fuel, which was mainly sold by it for exports, with the republics getting virtually nothing, in terms of the development of its production capacity and improvement in the living conditions of the people. The revenues that the republics collected in its own territory were taken in their entirety by the central government and returned to it in a greatly reduced amount. For eg. again in Tatarstan in 1991, tax revenues totalled to Rs. 7.89 billion but its total expenditure was only Rs. 6.9 billion.³

Other issues were value - added tax (VAT) derived solely from the republics from their labor and inexplicably appropriated by the centre. The same could be said of income tax on banks, insurance and exchange operations, taxes on securities, customers etc.

Further **problems** of the economy described by the Tatar Deputy Premier were

³. "Sovereignty and the Republics Economy", FBIS Reports, February 16, 1993 pp 11.

- a) Decline in **investment activity**. The crisis of sales, the industrial slump and the wave of non-payments have entitled a diminution in enterprise profit. Non-traditional sources of investment had not become widespread.
- b) Consequently, there has been **shrinking production** and continued intensification of this decline.
- c) Credit **indebtedness** of industrial, agricultural, construction and transport enterprises and organisations of the republics.
- d) Reform has not touched the **technological structure** of production, under conditions of deformed economy. The majority of the enterprises could not lower production costs, and thereby react to demand limitations.
- e) Decline in **commodity product** and decline in the consumption of electric power.
- f) The absence of integral mechanisms for counteracting the crises has led to a socio-economic crisis, and a "self-devouring economy".⁴

⁴. Tatar Deputy Premier on socio-economic plan, FBIS Reports, October 31, 1994 pp. 41.

In order to rectify the above mentioned shortcoming and distortions of the economy it was necessary to infuse the political domain of the republics by real economic independence. To achieve 'real' economic sovereignty, the republics began to clamour for mutually beneficial economic relations between the centre and the periphery. Some broad demand where for (i) ownership of natural resources and enterprises (ii) rational fiscal arrangements or in other words more fiscal autonomy for the republics and greater share in taxes, revenues and investments (iii) independence in undertaking foreign economic activity and a (iv) gentler entry into market relations with social production, to ease the negative consequences of shock-therapy.

Other related, issues were greater freedom for internal mobilisation of resources, conversion of the defence sector into a civilian one, quicker privatisation, and bettering the living conditions of the people.

These issues related to the republic's struggle for greater economic freedom has been discussed in some details in this chapter.

The economic goals of the republics

The shortcomings of the economies of these ethnic republics today largely reflect the process of the formation and consolidation of their statehood. To succeed in forming a strong state, and infusing the political domain with economic self-sufficiency, they have entered into long-term agreements with the federal authorities, reflected in the various pacts signed between them. The areas of agreements are sought in the

- a) Constitutional-legal sphere
- b) privatisation
- c) soft entry into the market economy,
- d) fiscal autonomy (budget, tax finance, credit investment etc.) and foreign economic activity. The crux of the demand is for legal recognition of natural resources and economic decentralization.

Ownership of natural resources

Ownership of natural resources, ownership of major industrial enterprises, and collection and use of income taxes are matters which

are both political and economic. According to the Tatar Premier, it is impossible to separate them. Some of these matters are solved to a certain extent and the republics have succeeded in achieving legal recognition of this principle. The second part of the constitution,⁵ clearly spells out that, "land, underground resources, water resources, bodies of water and natural resources, along with enterprises, organisations, and other real and chattel property located in the republics are the exclusive property of its people, and are under their joint jurisdiction." This matter is more or less resolved.

FISCAL AUTONOMY

Correspondence of revenue and expenditures

One of the first demands of fiscal autonomy of the ethnic republics is that they want the centre to ensure that there is correspondence between revenue and expenditure. The central authorities would first have to determine the cost of public expenditure and then to design a system of tax assignments, shared

⁵ Draft constitution of the Russian Federation FBIS Reports.

taxes, and intergovernmental transfers that provides the republics' with sufficient revenues to meet necessary expenditure. This includes both budgetary discretions for local officials and a mechanism to make them accountable would be ensured by a more decentralised system of intra-governmental relations. Fiscal decentralisation would increase economic efficiency through direct linkages between costs and benefits as well as political responsibility, for the provisions of social services in the regions. Heavy reliance in grants goes hand in hand with central intrusion into expenditure decisions, and destroys the incentives for responsible local decisions. Provincial authorities would also have a much greater efficiency in tax collection. Lack of correspondence has led Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Ingushetiya and Chechnya to demand preferential treatment and increase their share of assigned taxes from 20% to 100%. they were also granted tax exemptions.⁶

⁶. Kirkov, Peter, "Russia's Provinces - Authoritarian transformation vs local autonomy. Macmillan Press, New York, 1998. Pp 46-79.

Revenues

Due to the absence of any significant rent-on-base setting authority, the ethnic republics were for most of the time, vulnerable to central tax policy and were not able to pursue a discretionary policy⁷ of their own. They demand an efficient tax rate-on-base setting policy, so that local taxes could generate regional revenues. This is for two reasons, (a) the erosion of the corporate income tax base due to the reduction of enterprise subsidies and their decline of profitability, provincial authorities were denied major revenues (b) The existing tax regime applied to natural resources in Russia were also ill-suited for extraction of economic rent. Though the situation, local taxes still provide for only one to two percent of total regional revenues. Most of the local taxes turned out to be "nuisance" taxes (gambling tax, dog tax etc.). Hence the republics' want an increase in the importance of local taxes as a share of the total regional budget any income.

Equalisation Formula

Some low per-capita income republics also demand federal support to equalise regional differences.

To sum up the demands for fiscal reform the republics demand fair fiscal federal relations

1. Fair system of revenue sharing
2. Equalisation of regional differences, and
3. financing of national programmes in the provinces. Fiscal reform would play a crucial role in the success of macro-economic stabilisation efforts and the extent of tax assignment and expenditure responsibilities at each administrative - territorial levels and will further determine the cohesiveness of the Russian Federation. In its absence "single-channel tax systems' became common in which the regional authorities decided for themselves, unilaterally which amount of taxes they transfer to the federal budget, became a widespread practice and threatened sanctions by the centre

was of no avail.⁷

Central Investment

In the centrally planned economy, there was strict centralisation of capital investments and resource transfers the rough the system of industrial, branch industries. With the collapse of this economic system, central investments were mainly reduced to the fuel and energy sectors, agriculture and defence industry, while machine building, metal - working etc. suffered. The republics' demand a more balanced inter-sectoral investment and creation of a more dependable and attractive mechanism of work with investments.

Mobilisation of internal resources

Since the Central government off-loaded responsibilities for social services and capital investment to provincial authorities in 1992, the letter's response was to get involved in those economic activities to manipulate extra-budgetary funds, to devise mortgage

⁷ Ibid.

schemes and bills of exchange and to issue municipal bonds.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The afore mentioned fiscal and monetary demands, led to the republic's growing interest in inter national economic activities.

The draft constitution of December 1993 also recognizes that the republics are full-fledged participants in international and foreign economic relations, to enter into agreements with other republics krays, blasts, autonomous blasts and autonomous okrug of the Russian Federation, unless this contradicts the constitution and the laws of the Russian Federation. Coordination of international and foreign economic relations of republics' of the Russian Federation is provided by government bodies of the Russia Federation in conjunction with republics of the Russian Federation. This clause was further affirmed in the Federal treaty of 1994 on "Delienation of terms of reference and the mutual Delegation of Authority between Organs of State power of the Russian Federation," signed by Tatarstan, Bashkortostan etc. The treaty, though preserving the common political legal and economic space of the Russian Federation

and the republics' also declares the latter's authority to engage in independent foreign economic activity.

SOFT ENTRY INTO MARKET REFORMS

The transition to a market economy has begun with the creation of a multi-structural system and development of new forms of management. Large enterprises are being broken up and demonopolised, there has been an increase in the number of enterprises in industry, capital construction, and consumer services, and an alternative economy is gaining strength and structures necessary the a market economy are emerging in the republics' eg. The groundwork for introduction of market relations was laid in Tatarstan on 1 April, 1992 with the law, "On Transformation of state and municipal property in the Republic of Tatarstan". Also there are laws to restrict monopolistic tendencies, on privatisation of houses etc. At the same time these republics' are keen to protect public interest, to prevent market reduction in the living standard, especially among poorly protected segments of the population, and hence have selected the tactic of 'soft-entry' into market economy.

This has made it possible to reduce negative effects of massive price liberalisation and soften the worsening economic situation of the people. Their tactics of transition to market relation do not necessarily conform to those of the centre and they have selected an independent course.⁸

Defense Conversion

Another issue which has cropped up in the federal economic relations between the centre and the republics in the financing of a well-planned conversion of the defence sector to develop and begin production of new types of high-tech civilian production. Some defense enterprises have begun producing instruments for diagnostic monitoring, submersible electric pumps, boiler plants, pipelines etc. in Tatarstan.⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "The mazes of conversion - but Tatarstan has found a way out". In current Digest of the Soviet Press Vol. XLIX No. 58, 8 April 1994.

It is also clearly discernible that, the republics with the most economic strength have tried the hardest and have been the most successful in extracting economic powers from the centre, in order to make the most of the assets within their borders, including the legal recognition of natural resources. Local politicians in weaker territories were less keen to offend the federal authorities in Moscow, though slowly their demands fall in line with the stronger ones Chechnya is perhaps the odd-man out. Although a poor, mountainous region, its inhabitants have fought Russian invaders throughout much of the 19th century and in the last decade of the 20th Century, they saw an opportunity to express their feelings once more. The stronger republics like Tatarstan and Bashkortostan have also signed treaties retaining larger than normal shares of taxes collected within the borders of their territories concerned, considerable fiscal autonomy, decentralization of economic powers and independence in conducting foreign economic relations.

Yet not all their economic grievances have been successfully dealt with. What concerns fiscal arrangements, a continuation of and an improvement of tax-sharing - cum-grant system is required.

Income re-distribution (unemployment, benefit, social welfare) and capital investments, instead of off-loading them on the republics, (making their demands more vociferous) should be expenditure responsibilities of the federal state. The current movement for strengthening sub-regional local self-government should be done without leading to institutional confusion and duplication. Russian Central authorities will have to show an extra-ordinary flexibility to accommodate provincial governments' demands motivated by economic hardships with hopefully more sensitivity than has been shown in the bloody war in Chechnya. Regional autonomy has to be encouraged and an effective regional policy formulated.

Conclusion

An evaluation of the status of the Muslim minorities necessitates their study in the context of their historical legacies in the pre-Soviet and Soviet era. It has direct implications for the present and future relations between the Russian Federation and the ethnic autonomous unit. History of the former USSR has created a geographical intermingling of ethnic groups, and bequeathed economic links with the centre, and their peculiar situation in the Islamic world. History as social memory has also influenced the political agenda of these republics. The republics' have a collective memory of past event that are transmitted through popular celebrations, folklore, art etc. The sense of shared origins have given them certain goals to achieve. Yet history has also bequeathed the republic with many objective points of entanglement, and conflicts. The Tsarist era and the Soviet era has kindled animosities whose repercussion are felt even today the 'past' of the republic have had relative influence which is difficult to assess, and two questions remain. Will Tsarist and Soviet authoritarianism legitimize the same

in the present in the eyes of the republic and how far economic independence and cultural assimilation lead to some centrifugal forces and political re-integration?

Russian history has been marked by a long history of wars that have threatened the country's existence and have killed million of its inhabitants. At the same time Russia too has embarked on a 'gathering of the Russian lands', propagated the notion of patrimony, and reclaimed territories belonging to it before the Mongol invasion. The eastern borderlands of Russia could not have remained immune to it. This commenced in the fifteenth century under Ivan III, and soon Kazan (1552) Astrakan (1556) etc. fell under the Russians. This expansion of territory was resumed by Catherine II.

Thus the reign of the Tsars created for itself a nationality problem, which was later handed to Imperial Russia, of St.Petersburg and later to the Soviet Union. Another result was a series of violent uprisings led by Tatars and Chechens, and following failures rapid exodus. The lasting hatred for the Russian in now reflected in the intransigent attitude on the 'sovereignty' question today.

The Soviet policy towards the Muslim minorities developed

along a sophisticated blend of Marxism (as interpreted by Stalin) and of various pre-revolutionary Tsarist experiments. Though all Soviet citizens and nationalities were considered equals, the Communist party remained the super-national institution, with overriding powers. The Soviet followed more practical measures to solve the nationality problem, genocide, destruction of the Muslim millet (the single nation of Islam) by fragmenting it into various ethnic autonomous units. Five administrative national territories were eventually created with the addition of eight small nationalities each with its own territory, language and culture, in North Caucasia alone, together with the Tatar, Bashkir and Chuvash ethnic republic. Then followed Sovietization and Russification. A massive assault against Islam was followed, and attempts were made to Sovietize the entire Muslim society. The entire pre-revolutionary elite was liquidated.

This brief recounting of the past of the ethnic republic and their valiant struggle against the imperialist and their final subjugation will explain their present status in the Russian Federation, and separatism rife among them

The legacies of 'empire-building' and 'civilising of the native' can be seen even now, and defines the centre-periphery relation in the Russian Federation.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a 'parade of sovereignties' began in the ethnic republics, as notoriously advised by Boris Yeltsin 'to grab as much sovereignty as you can swallow'. Thus began a process of federalization, the making of federation from the smallest of bases, more precisely it was the members of the Muslim ethnic republics who initiated such claims, where the regional political elites are well established in their existing spheres of influence. The extent of popular support, for autonomous assertiveness varies greatly. In some republics like Tatarstan and Chechnya it is very strong. In the territories with the greatest economic strength, the elites have tried the hardest to extract powers. It has further been complicated by a struggle between the branches of government, notably the executive and legislative branches. The ruler of the political game are still to the established.

In the March 1992, three months after Russian's emergence as an independent state, three federal treaties, (sometimes collectively

known as the Federal treaty) were signed between the federal leadership on one hand and on the other, separately the republic, krajs, oblasts, okrugs etc. Tatarstan and Chechen - Inghushetiya refused to sign, (Ingush separated itself from the republic later).

The powers of the federal centre was predictable, defence, foreign policy, amendments etc. The list of shared power were long, and the treaties contained little guidance as to how these were to signed. The treaties left many unresolved powers. The judicial system was an unsuitable arbiter.

The federal treaties were superseded by the new Russian Constitution, approved in late 1993. Also the federal constitution had precedence. The new constitution gave the president exceptionally strong powers.

Meanwhile, the Federation shared a series of so-called power sharing treaties with the dissatisfied ethnic republics. The power sharing treaties were anomalous, often allowing conflicting provision in federal and regional constitutions to exist.

Thus, since 1990s the centre has been weak, and consequently the stronger ethnic republic have had considerable leeway in

grabbing powers. The bargaining powers of the republics, has initiated an examination of centre-periphery relations. The federal treaties served as adequate interim measures. But the Russian invasion of Chechnya in December 1994, the rise of Wahabism in Dagestan, kidnapping, lawlessness and corruption in the autonomous republic show that their status in the Russian Federation still remain indeterminate, and the repercussion are yet to be seen.

For more than 1400 years of Islamic history in Russia, before the arrival of the Communist regime in the Volga, Urals and Caucasian region, Islam was the sole regulator of social, economic and cultural life of the Russian muslims. It is also possible to identify various stages in the relationship between Islam and the Soviet authorities, phases of obligatory obedience and confrontation. Yet the soviet regime left utter moral ruin in the religious sphere. It was only after the period of Perestroika and collapse of the Soviet Union, that a favourable climate for religion emerged. Latest sociological research shows increased levels of religiosity in the muslim ethnic republics. New mosques were built, more people identified themselves as believers, educational establishments were built, and the multiple

public organisation and media mouthed an Islamic way of life. In the Caucasian region where Sufi culture was prevalent, showed the highest intensity of revivalism.

A new tendency appeared i.e. of politicisation of Islam. The Russian Muslim socio-political movement feel that Islam is inseparable from politics and struggled for greater political, civil and cultural rights. The Islamic Revival Party aroused great interest, but its links with the Tajik religious warriors has defamed it. On the eve of the election of summer 1995, Russian moslems set up two political organisations 'NUR' and the 'UNION OF RUSSIAN MUSLEMS' with each claiming the right to represent the Moslem of federation. As opposed to the Islamic Revival Party they have clearly proclaimed against confessional isolationism and extremism.

The role of religion also proved destabilising in the more volatile Chechnya and Dagestan, where Islam was firmly entrenched. It was easy to appeal to the impoverished population here to take up cudgels against the infidel rulers, to set right the socio-economic evils of society. The call for jihad against the centre and the rule of Sharia as opposed to federal laws, has made this area a 'hot bed' of conflicts.

The Chechnya tragedy, Biinaksk raids and the recent proclamation of Chechnya under rule of Sharia have made the region precarious. Kidnapping, lawlessness and a collapsing economy has made the region prove to crisis, and cause of anxiety.

In sum, an analysis of the religious revival, in the ethnic republics cannot be justiciably, called an 'Islamic boom' or 'Islamic Renaissance'. It merely shows that the spiritual life in Russia was never replaced by Marxist ideology, religion, especially, Islam, which combined ideology a legal system, and a sum of customs and rites and ethical consciousness, could not be replaced by any new forms of social consciousness. Though there was gradual 'de-institutionalization of Islam' in the Soviet era, Islam remained strong in the religious customs and rites of the people. This proved the stability of Islam as form of public consciousness and its ability to adopt itself to the changing social and political condition.

An analysis of these activities shows that Islamization does not go much beyond the bounds of religious sphere. It is created around satisfying cult requirements. This includes the construction of mosques, opening of educational institutions, distribution of religious

literature etc. Religious leaders have also tried to express political views and form political organisation.

Thus we may say that religious consciousness or re-Islamization is more of national consciousness, an element of national culture, emphasizing the affiliation of the individual to his ethnos, and a form of self-expression of collective desires, It varies with religious nationalism or fundamentalism found in the neighboring countries of Iran, Algeria etc. Religious consciousness is an essential component of the ethnic identity of the Muslims. The Muslim festival, customs and rites are regarded as an organic part of ethnic culture and ethnic traditions. The degree of actualization of confessional identity, the character and forms of manifestation of the religious feelings, depend on the socio-political condition in the ethnic republics and the Russian Federation.

The economies of the ethnic republic today largely reflects the process of the formation and consolidation of their statehood. The republics are also geared to a 'gentle entry' into the market economy, with a targeted programme of social protection to ease the negative consequences of the shock therapy in Russia Privatisation is going on

at a break-neck speed. The economic goal is to have a self-sufficient economy. To achieve this long-term negotiations with the centre is required, so that political autonomy is accompanied by economic autonomy.

There are various shortcomings in the economies of these republics. In order to rectify these distortion, it was necessary to restructure the economies. The prime issue was the ownership of natural resources, public enterprises etc. i.e. the opportunity to truly manage what is naturally their a prime condition of independence. The issue of ownership is now recognized in part II of the 1993, December constitution. The constitution also recognizes the republics' as full-fledged participants in international and foreign economic activity. This clause was further affirmed by the Federal treaty of 1994.

Frictions over budget matters and fiscal autonomy is frequent.. Bargaining powers of the economically stronger Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, has led to their retention of larger than normal share of taxes (e.g. tax collection) investment etc. Struggle is on for a significant rent-a-base setting agenda, greater correspondence

between revenue-expenditure, fair system of revenue sharing, greater investment in productive centres, infra-structure building, social protection and so on. The crux of the demands is greater fiscal discipline, fiscal autonomy and transparency. Some of these problems are on the way of being solved. But economic regionalization is continuing unabated. The ethnic republics have begun to pursue policies independent of the centre, seeking local improvement in economic well-being that has the potential to contribute to or undermine overall economic success. Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Chechnya have moved forward with their own plans to issue local currencies and levy taxes. They have challenged Moscow's right to control economic activity in their regions. They have established foreign links independent of the centre. Virtually all have shored up their economies and minimized the extent of central direction in their lives.

The Russian Muslims have links with the Muslim world abroad even prior to the Tsarist conquest of the eastern borderlands. The Tsarist conquest led to total cessation of intellectual and cultural contact. The turning point came with the spread of jadidist influence abroad. In the Soviet era, the Bolsheviks encouraged contacts

between the Russian and non-Russian muslims even though the marxism of the later was strongly tainted by pan-Islamic aspiration. Several muslim organisations based in Russia played an important role in the spread of communism in the neighboring countries like Iran, Turkey etc. The period of the Iron Curtain (1928-68) was a temporary set-back and the post-Khrushchev era saw the Soviet muftis acting as roving ambassador with the message of Soviet Marxism.

The rise of Khomeinism in Iran reversed the flow of influence and the Soviet muslims were deeply impressed by the fundamentalist and anti-imperialistic revolution in Iran. The Afghan tragedy saw a re-establishment of brotherhood ties, and many muslim in Russia had a deep sympathy for the warriors with a religious cause.

The supra-national consciousness of the Russian muslims has its root in the concept of 'Umma' (single nation for all muslims) which recognises no state and ethnic border, putting the religious factor before everything else. This fans an apprehension that Islamic expansion can penetrate the lands of the Russian Federation. Chechnya, where the separatists employed the Islamic factor in their

attempt to detach themselves from Russia is a vivid example. Even though Chechnya did not gain much progress in the contacts with the countries of the Islamic conference organisation, the supra-national consciousness of the Russian muslims have influenced their foreign policy goals and this is a factor to be reckoned with.

The Russian muslims have also sought to shape Russian policy towards Bosnia, and Kosovo, in their attempt to help their co-religionist abroad.

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