Ethnic Conflict in Soviet Central Asia Under Gorbachev : Case Studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia (1986-1990)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA UNDER GORBACHEV: CASE STUDIES OF KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGHIZIA (1986-1990)" submitted by Ms.GEETA LAKSHMI is an original work and has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in this or any other University.

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- Bhagavadgita 10:44

TO MY LOVE

PREFACE

Ethnic conflicts have their origin in multi-national, multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies. Central Asia important case in point. Its distinct presents an peculiarities particularly its geography, history, socioeconomic development, language, religion and culture are important determinants of the overall ethnic situation in In recent years, the demographic trends, viz. this region. increase in Muslim population, modernization and ethnoreligious resurgence have lent new dimensions to the ethnic relations in the former Soviet Central Asia. Central Asia is strategically located bordering both China and the Muslim Middle-East. This area is divided into five states bearing the names of the five nationalities - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizistan, and Tadjikistan. Its predominant Muslim population which is linked by race, religion and tradition to the Islamic countries in the south, than to the Slav dominated Russia in the northwest. The population of the region, in general, is made up of three main elements - Turkic (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Kirghiz, and Turkmen), Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians), and Iranians (Tadjiks). The Muslims constituted the second largest religious community in the former Soviet Union after the orthodox Christians.

(i)

This region had been witness to undergoing sociopolitical tensions and ethno-religious resurgence, which led to the emergence of a qualitatively new and complex situation Ethno-religious nationalism assumed unprecedented proportions thereby disturbing the status quo in this entire region. Islam has remained the manifestation of the the local identity, a unifying force that cuts across social barriers. Its great potential was felt in mobilizing masses on a supra-national basis. Political assertion by the native Muslim was a direct consequence of socio-economic development the former in Soviet Central Asia. Islam has discarded some of its traditional practices to attract the younger generation. It has been following the policy of adoption, accommodation and adjustment. Thus, in the course of modernization self-awareness manifested itself in the form of nationalist movements, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist demonstrations.

Known as the land of more than hundred nationalities and ethnic groups, Kazakhstan presents an ideal case for the present study. It extends over vast territory comprising both Muslim Kazakhs and Slav population in almost equal numbers. On December 18, 1986, a serious political riot occurred in Alma-Ata, as a result of the dismissal of Dinmukhamad Kunaev from the position of First Secretary of the Central Committee of Kazakhstan, and his replacement by

(ii)

an ethnic Russian, Gennady Kolbin. This provided a pretext to the socially and politically aware Kazakh youth to express their nationalist fervour with a vengeance. The slogans at various demonstrations included. 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs', 'Kolbin, Go back to Russia'. Again in June 1989, ethnic riots took place in Novy Uzen city in Guryev province of Kazakh republic. Fighting broke out between indigenous and Caucasian nationalities. Demonstrations were held demanding expulsion of Caucasian nationalities and work for jobless. unrest spread to the neighbouring Thus communities. Inflammatory leaflets of nationalist content appeared with calls for disturbances.

Besides Kazakhstan, Kyrghizia is another important case under study. This republic witnessed violent clashes between nationalities in June 1990. Hundreds of thousands of Uzbeks live in Kirghizia. However one finds almost no Uzbeks among the leadership of the provinces, districts and farms. This led to discontent, tension and confrontation between the Kirghiz and Uzbeks. Rallies were held in Frunze, capital of Kirghiz republic and Osh Province. At various demonstrations there were calls for the defence of Kirghiz national interests.

That the persistent Soviet policy of assimilation and integration of different ethnic groups did not achieve the

(iii)

desired results, is quite obvious from these occurrences. It is due to perstroika and glasnost which provided an opportunity to the people to give vent to their feelings and aspirations that had remained suppressed for long. Freedom to voice their grievances and demands of press enabled publicly through the media. Ever since, the entire Soviet Central Asia has been witnessing ethnic turmoil and discontent. Recent revolutionary developments led to the disintegration Soviet Union and formation of commonwealth of independent states (CIS). As such, it is all the more important to study the dynamics of ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Central Asia

This study aims at examining the complex nature and extent of ethnic conflict, its causes and consequences in Kazakhstan and Kyrghzia. Various factors - territorial, ethno-demographic, cultural, linguistic, educational, socioeconomic and political, which have been contributing to tenuous ethnic relations in this region have been examined. This study deals with the two above mentioned cases in the light of Gorbachev's policies of <u>perestroika</u> and <u>glasnost</u>. The time frame of this study is limited from 1986 to 1990, which is propitious to take a look at this region with fresh eyes because this period witnessed vigorous and occasionally violent ethno-nationalist movements in the former Soviet Central Asia. This study seeks to shed light on the process

(iv)

of change that was set in motion in Soviet Central Asia much before the failure of August 1991 coup and its aftermath. It is an attempt towards a micro-level study of ethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia

First, chapter deals with the theoretical framework geographical situation, historical perspective and review of Soviet Nationalities policy. Chapter II gives an overview of the ethnic situation in the former Soviet Central Asia and also deals with various factors demographic, ethnoreligious, linguistic, educational and other socio-economic factors which led to the conflict. Chapter III and chapter IV take up the conflicts in Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia for micro study respectively.

In the concluding chapter both the case studies have been compared and conclusion drawn. The study has followed empirical and historico analytical methodology for analysing the dynamics of ethnic conflict. Various primary and secondary sources, were consulted, including the Summary of World Board casts (USSR). Soviet Press Translations, journals and newspapers.

This dissertation has been completed under the supervision of Dr. K.Warikoo, Associate Professor in Central Asian Studies Division, SIS. His deep insight and sustained guidance throughout the course of my research enabled me to

(v)

accomplish this work successfully. His constant encouragement brought the task within my reach. My thanks are due to the members of his family for their affection.

I am also grateful to my teachers **Prof. S.D.Muni**, Chairperson, CSCSEASWPS and **Dr. Dawa Norbu** for their valuable instructions and suggestions.

My thanks are due to the personnel of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Indian Council of World Affairs, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Russian Culture, Arts, Science, Library, Ministry of External Affairs Library, and American Centre Library for their cooperation during my studies there.

Credit also goes to a number of friends and relatives who kept my interest alive. To begin with, my husband, Satya Sai Babu, proved to be my greatest strength, but for him I could not have seen the light at the end of tunnel. He understood me perfectly, and it is to him I dedicate this work. My deepest regards are due to my parents and parentsin-law for their unwavering moral support encouragement and confidence in me.

(vi)

Without the tenacious support of my brother, Chaitanya, and friends Manila and Sujata, this venture would have been just another dream.

Tara helped me to draw map and tables. Rajiv Narayan provided access to latest publications. Sangeeta and Aruna proofread meticulously. There were many more who were ready to deviate from their busy academic schedule.

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Geola lakshimi

July 20, 1992

GEETA LAKSHMI

CONTENTS

		Page
CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION	1-35
	 Theoretical Framework Geographical Setting Historical Perspective Review of Soviet Nationalities Policy 	
CHAPTER II	ETHNIC SITUATION IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA	36-58
	i. Demographic Trends ii. Ethno-Religious Resurgence iii. The Language Factor iv. Educational Factor v. Socio-Economic Situation	
CHAPTER III	THE CONFLICT IN KAZAKHASTAN (1986-1990)	59-85
CHAPTER IV	THE CONFLICT IN KYRGHIZIA (1990)	86-104
CHAPTER V	CONCLUSION	105-113
BIBLIOGRAPHY		114-119

TABLES AND MAP

TABLES

1.	Population Change in RSFSR and Central Asian Republics 1950-1984.	39
2.	Population of Russians and Central Asian Ethnic Groups, 1959-1989.	40
3.	Percentage of Select Muslim Peoples in their own Autonomies and in Neighbouring Tradition Territories 1959, 1970, 1979.	43
4.	Urban Population as a percentage of Total population : by Republic, 1959-1989.	43
5.	Native Language Retention in Percentage, 1959, 1970, 1979.	53
6.	Percentage of Members of Non-Russian Ethnic Groups using Russian as mother tongue or Second language within own republics (170 and 1979).	53
7.	Enrollment in Higher and Secondary Specialized Education in Soviet Central Asian Republics.	55
8.	USSR and Union Republics 1979-1989.	58
9.	Ethnic Trends in Kazakhstan.	62
10.	Population of Kazakhstan 1989.	64
11.	Ethnic Trends in Kyrighizia.	87
12.	Census Population of Kyrghizia 1989.	87

MAP

Soviet Central Asia 120

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Framework :

Ethnic relations are inherent in human conduct. The tension in such relations varies according to an infinite number of objective and subjective factors present in a situation at a particular historical moment.¹ Despite the fact that a plethora of studies on ethnic groups has been carried out in many different societies, it is often claimed that little progress has been made toward developing a general theory of ethnic relations.²

There are different approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic mobilisation-structural, cultural construction, or social psychological theories. Many theories help to explain and analyse the problem of minority nationalities. Chief among them is the internal colonialist

Goldie Blank off-Ccarr, 'Possible ways to defuse-inter Ethnic tension in the USSR', <u>Central Asian Survey</u>, Vol.9, No.3, 1990;, p.113-118.

^{2.} N. Glazer and D.P. Moyniham, "Introduction", in N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihem, eds, <u>Ethnicity: Theory and Experience</u> (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1975), p.25.

theory expounded by Michael Hecther.³ He suggested that it was first anumbrated in Lenin's analysis of the development of Russian capitalism and some years later in Gramsci's discussion of the Italian South. The essence of the theory is that the relationships between members of the core community and members of the peripheral communities in a state are characterised by exploitation. The core community having acquired an advantage over the outlying communities in the period of state building or in the early period of modernisation, uses its political and economic power to maintain its superior position. The culture and ethnic differences between the communities do not disappear and in certain circumstances, (for example launching of Perestroika and Glasnost in case of Soviet Central Asia) they may form the basis of demonstration and separatist agitation by members of the peripheral communities.⁴

Charles Tilly pleads for a strongly political interpretation of ethnicity and ethnic mobilisation in the tradition of structural theory.⁵ According to this theory,

^{3.} Anthony Birth, 'Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Policitcal Integration', <u>World Politics</u> Vol.30 no.3, April, 1978.

^{4.} Ibid.

^{5.} Charles Tilly, 'Ethnic Conflict in the Soviet Union' in <u>Theory & Society</u>, Vol.20/5 Oct.1991 p.569-580.

ethnic groups make strong claims for control over autonomous state or subdivisions of states under two conditions.

- I. a. When two competing ethnic groups begin claim for statehood that would exclude or subordinate the ethnic group in question and
 - b. When the agents of a state to which the population is already subordinated begin to threaten (i) group's distinctive identity or (ii) its shared access to advantages niches.
- II. Within each of the ethnic territories, those who control the state apparatus enjoy enormous advantages of power and wealth over those who do not.
- III. Rulers generally give priority to a single language and culture, reinforcing its hegemony by means of educational institution, administrative communication and moral legislation.⁶

Algis Prazaukas strongly emphasised the influence of incipient democratisation on the contention of Soviet ethnic groups.⁷ The transition from authoritarianism to democracy

^{6.} Ibid. p.575.

^{7.} Ibid.

in multi-national states means first of all the disintegration of the coercive system of checks and controls. This inevitably leads to ethnic flare-ups as ethnic communities begin to organize, to mobilize their members and to voice their grievances and demands upon the state and each other⁸ as happened in Soviet Central Asia after the launching of <u>Perestroika</u> and <u>Glasnost</u>.

Some of his basic contentions are:

- 1a. Ethnic communities, that is stable linguistic socio-cultural territorial groups have potentially high degree of group solidarity. Ethnic identification arises directly or indirectly, as a natural reaction to inter-ethnic contacts.
- 2b. With the exception of diasporus ethnic societies generally reside within a consistent territory or home land, which they have usually occupied for time out of mind and consider to be their inalienable property. Deprived of its territory, an ethnic community will become assimilated

Algis Prazuakas, 'Ethnic Conflicts in the Context of Democratizing Political Systems', <u>Theory and Society</u>, Vol.20/5, Oct. 1991, p.582.

relatively rapidly, often reduced to the status of an ethno-occupational or ethno-racial sub-group of the larger society.

- c. Ethnic groups have a historical memory, consisting primarily of historical symbols or myths, ethnic stereo types and auto stereotypes.
- d. Shared cultures, ways of life, history, territory, and political cultures define the common interests, or more precisely the shared complex of interests, of the ethnic group.
- 2. Ethnic Conflicts arise as result of particular instances of inequality that are perceived by ethnic elites as directly infringing on the rights or interests of the entire community or of one of its territorially based sub-groups. The most important of these are the threatened or actual loss of group status, the danger of assimilation, the loss of cultural integrity, the curtailment of the functions and sphere of utilisation of the native language, the erosion of the ethnic territorial base due to an influx of migrants and the lack of real self-government.⁹

9. Ibid. pp.586-587.

A radically different situation arises if the ethnic components of a multinational state have sharply divergent political cultures as a result of their adherence to different civilisations, religions, or centres of gravity outside the boundaries of the state. Inter-ethnic conflicts in the former USSR, Ethiopia, Burma, and to some extent Yugoslavia, have been characterised by precisely such divergent and frequently incompatible value orientations, goals and rules of the game.¹⁰

- 3. Integration is a natural process that occurs in all multi-ethnic societies. However, this process contains internal contradictioins that both stimulate and generate the opposite tendency - disintegration, seclusion, particularism, and the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations and conflicts.
- 4. Modernisation is generally represented in multi-ethnic nations as a dual process: one that ensures both economic development and "national integration" or "nation building".

10. Ibid p.588

The economic development of peripheral ethno-regions is often accompanied by extensive migration and the creation of migrant colonies in 'foreign ethnic' territories. Over a long period of time the competition for resources and status will intensity. The social contradictions that result are obvious and become personalised. Natives and foreigners blame each other for their loss of status. Under such circumstances social conflicts in ethnically mixed regions frequently escalate to physical conflict and mass disorder, with the development of extremist and separatist movements and campaigns for the explusion of "foreigners" or "migrants from the ethno-regions".¹¹

Policies of forcible assimilation in order to overcome ethnic heterogenity have generally produced the opposite effect and increased the alienation of the ethnic groups, reducing their loyalty to state by creating a situation that is ripe for the maturation of interethnic conflicts.

The contemporary global trends toward increasing nationalism and the breakdown of totalitarian regimes have increased interest in the problems associated with the

^{11.} Ibid p.595.

transition to democracy in multi-ethnic states. among those states currently in transition the former Soviet Union and its successor the Commonwealth of Independent States faces many such challenges. The five years of Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost have laid bare and exacerbated the endemic ailments of Soviet Central Asia. The specific causes of inter-ethnic conflicts may vary in each specific case. The responses of different ethnic groups in similar situations range from no reaction at all to the formation of violent separatist movements. This great variety of responses greatly hampers the construction of a general theory of inter-ethnic relations. The present study is based on the above mentioned contentions of the theoretical framework. Various other important factors will be taken into consideration, like religion, demographic situtaion, language etc, while analysing the causes and consequences of the ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Central Asia in general and in Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia in particular.

Geographical Setting

Soviet Central Asian is closely linked both geographically, historically and culturally to the Muslim Middle-East. Located in the southern part of the former

Soviet Union Central Asia is the geopolitical cross roads where the Slavic world meets the Muslim and Chinese worlds. The concept of Central Asia is in profound flux. The grand eighteenth and nineteenth century concept of this region envisioned this area as a distnct geopolitical whole : Iran, Afghanisatan, Inner (or Western) China, and the territory of the former Soviet Central Asian republics, all divided into local tribal domains and Khanates.¹² This area was known as Russian Turkestan. But ever since the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia, of all the Central Asia only Iran and Afghanistan remained politically and economically accessible to the West. The peripheral Muslim Central Asian republics experienced seven decades of Communist rule.

The five Central Asian states Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrghizia and Turkmenia - occupy a vast territory extending from Western Siberia in the north to Afghanistan and Iran in the south, from the banks of the Volga and the Caspian Sea in the West to China in the east.¹³ The unifying factor around which the people of Soviet Central Asia coalesced was Islam, which was

Graham Fuller, 'The emergence of Central Asia,' <u>Foreign</u> <u>Policy</u>, No.78, Spring 1990 p.49.

^{13.} D. Kaushik, <u>Central Asia in Modern Times</u>, (Moscow, 1970), p.13.

introduced between 705 and 715 A.D.¹⁴ Therefore it follows that they are linked by race, religion and tradition more to the Islamic countries - Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey etc. - in the south than to the Slav dominated Russia in the northwest. Iran's extensive border with the Central Asia republics contributes to its status as the major external geo-political influence on the former Soviet Central Asia.

The five republics came into being as entities of mixed ethnic composition. The political and administrative boundaries rarely coincided with ethnic boundaries. Frequently regions with larger foreign population were included in their borderlands.¹⁵ Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turanianism, religious orthodoxy - all these sensitive areas of Muslim consciousness were played upon by the Soviet government during the revolution in order to gain foothold in the Muslem border lands.¹⁶ By 1936 all the five republics were elevated to the Union republic status.

^{14.} Helene Carrere d'Encausse, <u>Islam and the Russian Empire</u> I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., London, 1988, p.1

^{15.} V.I. Kozlov, <u>The Peoples of Soviet Union</u>, London, 1988, p.29.

Richard Pipes, <u>The Formation of Soviet Union</u>, (Cambridge, 1954), p.155.

Kazakhstan is the largest among Central Asian republics. It alone covers over one million square miles.¹⁷ From the mountainous Chinese border in the east, it stretches to the Caspian Sea and the Urals in the West, extending from the Kyrghizian steppe in the south through the deserts of Central Asia to the marshes and vast forest of Siberia in the north.¹⁸ The republic is subdivided into eighteen provinces, including the capital city, Alma-Ata, as a separate administrative unit.¹⁹

The Kyrghizia, which was created as a separate administrative - territorial unit in 1924²⁰, is located in the north-eastern portion of the former Soviet Central Asia. The area of Kyrghizia is 76,100 square miles. In the east it borders on the Sinkiang-Uioghur Autonomous Region of China, in the West on Uzbekistan, in the south on Tajikistan and in

^{17.} E. Allworth, <u>Central Asia, A Century of Russian Rule</u>, (New York, 1967), p.115.

^{18.} Zev Katz, 'Kazakhsten and the Kazekhs' in Katz ed., <u>Hand Book of Major Soviet Nationalities</u>, (London, 1975), p.213.

^{19.} Ibid, p.214.

^{20.} Theodre Shabad, <u>Geography of USSR</u>, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1951), p.37.

the north on Kazakhstan.²¹ Many of the Muslims of China are kin to Soviet Kazakhs and Kyrghiz.

The strategic location of Soviet Central Asia with its increasing Muslim pouplation caused concern to the soviet autorities over the years. For more than seventy years the ramparts that blocked off this region remained impenetrable. And now, like the Berlin Wall, those Central Asian ramparts have come down, affording unique new glimpses into the long isolated and exotic Muslim periphery of the Soviet empire.²² All these five republic of the former Soviet Union have become sovereign and independent nations.

Historical Perspective

The Central Asian territories, before they were incorporated into the Soviet Union had traumatic experiences under Tsarist Russian rule. Prior to the Russian conquest, there existed three Khanates on the territory of Central Asia - Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand. All the three Khanates were economically backward feudal states with many survivals

22. Graham Fuller, n.12, p.49.

^{21.} Allen Hetmanek, n.8, p.238.

from slave-owning society.²³ Between 1800 and 1890 the conquest of Central Asia was virtually complete²⁴. The aggressive British designs in the nineteenth century in Central Asia had, among other factors, motivated the Russians to annex Central Asia.²⁵ The colonisation of the steppe was undertaken without sufficient consideration for the interests of the native population and it created great hardships particularly among the Kazakh and the Kyrghizs. They were in effect expelled from the best grazing lands and prevented from pursuing their traditional mode of life.²⁶

The immense territory of the steppes with its scarce nomadic population seemed to offer a tempting solution to the eternal problem of pre-revolutionary Russia--the peasant's land hunger. In 1891 the first wave of Russian and Ukranian settlers reached the steppes.²⁷ It was an organised migration planned by the administration Kazakhs lost their

- 23. D. Kaushik, n.13 p.30.
- 24. Amir Taheri, <u>Crescent in a Red Sky</u>, (London, 1989), p.63.
- 25. D. Kaushik, n.13, p.39.
- 26. Richard Pipes, n.16, p.83.
- 27. Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Bronup, <u>The Islamic</u> <u>Threat to the Soviet State</u>, (London, 1983), p.21.

pastures and livestock and their standard of living was plunged drastically Conflict between natives and foreigners became a special feature of the steppe life.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the annexed territory in Central Asia was organised into the Governorate General ship of Turkestan.²⁸ By 1866 it was divided into three parts : Syr Darya Province, Ferghana Province, and Zeravshan Distirct. All of Central Asia was subjected to the "White Tsar"²⁹. No policy of Russification was pursued in the area, but resentment was caused by large scale Slavic migration into the region.³⁰ Throughout Central Asia there were revolts against the forced conscription in 1916.

The fall of Trarism in February 1917 offered exciting new opportunities to Russia's opperessed nation.Seeking national emancipation they wre sufficiently encouraged by the democratic transformation of Russia to entertain hopes for the emergence of a free multinational republic Russia

^{28.} D. Kaushik, n.13, p.65.

Michael Rywkin, <u>Moscow's Muslim Chellenge</u>, (London, 1982), p.14.

^{30.} Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, <u>Soviet_Disunion</u>, (New York, 1989), p.12.

was still at war, however, and the provisional Government used this as a pretext to prevaricate. Bolsheviks seized power under Lenin's leadership on 25 October, 1917.³¹

Under the Soviet rule the cultural and political unity of Central Asia was broken and each nationality was given constitutional recognition in the form of a Union or autonomous republic within the political system.³² Lenin and his proteges, being Marxist, derived their basic tenets from the writings of Marx and Engels. Both of them did not produce any systematic treatment of the natinalities problem, though they frequently expressed their opinions on Russia's imperialist annexation of her neighbours. The First Congress of Lenin's Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) in 1898 adopted a resolution proclaiming 'the right of nations to self-determination.³³

In the wake of October Revolution a series of declarations were addressed to the oppressed nations. A special appeal issued specifically to the Moslems signed by

^{31.} Ibid, p.14.

^{32.} Teresa Rakowska Harmstone, <u>Russia and Nationalism in</u> <u>Central Asia : The case of Tadsijstan</u>, (London, 1970), p.1.

^{33.} Lenin's Collected Works Vol.20, pp.430-1.

Lenin and Stalin led to formation of many independent national governments. From 5 to 13 December 1917 Third All Kazakh National Congress took place in Orenburg, organised by Alash-Orda-the Kazakh National Party. It proclaimed the autonomy of the Kazakh-Kyrghiz regions and set up its government, the Provisional People's Council of Alash-Orada.³⁴ These governments however, were disbanded by Russian Bolshevik Red Guards. The struggle for national independence further continued and led to Basmachi movement. Such slogans as "Turkestan for the Turks" and "Turkestan without violence"³⁵ became popular among the native Muslim population. The Basmachis, however, suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Red Guards.

However, on Lenin's directives a high powered governmental commission on Turkestan Affairs was created³⁶ and national Communist group was formed to deal with all problems related to the Muslim nationalities in Central Asia.

- 34. Bohdan Mahaylo and Victor Swoboda, n.30, p.32.
- 35. Michael Rywkin n.29, p.34.
- 36. Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swobodam, n.30, p.42.

The new Soviet regime began a campaign of intensive reform in Central Asia which led to dramatic changes. It altered the economic base, transformed the social structure and ethnic composition, collectivised the farms, extended of mass education and communication, the benefits industrialisation and the provision of basic medical and services.³⁷ welfare It also created а new Muslim intellectual elite. As an offshoot of modernisation process in Central Asia contrary to the Soviet beliefs, national awareness gained momentum. All non-Russians now felt that they were deprived of their real status in all spheres of life due to the presence of foreigners in their home lands. These emotions were released and found expression in anti-Russian activities, mass demonstrations and violent clashes. Under Gorbachev, the nationalities problem assumed serious dimensions and threatening than ever, as the relative importance of the non-Russian element in the Soviet population grew rapidly and the Soviet Union gradually started losing its 'Russian character'. These negative developments became more expressive during the last decade.

^{37.} Geoffrey Wheeler, <u>The Modern History of Central Asia</u>, (New York, Praeger, 1954), pp.46ff 128ff.

A clear understanding and objective assessment of the nature, consequences, successes and failures of the Soviet nationality policy would help us to analyse the dynamics of nationality problem which has created complex situations, so far unexpected.

Review of Soviet Nationality Policy

With few exceptions, there had been no uniformity in the Russian policies towards her newly acquired colonies. Tsarist nationality policy towards the majority of non-Russians consisted mainly in the suppression of their languages and cultures with a view to forced Russification. It kindled ethnic and religious differences and enimity between peoples, setting one against the another.³⁸ Through the succeeding Soviet era various methods were tried and applied at diffeent times and in different regions. In Central Asia political and social institutions and usages were suppressed, subverted. However, the common history and the centuries old Islamic unity made for a uniform response to the nationality policy in this region.³⁹

38. Kozlov n.15, p.26.

39. Teresa Rakowrska Harmstone, n.34, p.1.

The revolution in 1917 brought to the fore not only class spirit, but also the national self-awareness of the formerly oppressed and discriminated peoples, which manifested itself, in particular, in their attempts to acquire national statehood. The central problem in Soviet nationality policy has been to maintain a delicate balance between two conflicting interests : to assure the continued dominance of the Russian majority and of its values, language and cultural heritage, and at the same time to reduce the alienation of non-Russian nationalities, and to guarantee that they will be equal, valued and respected members of a Soviet multinational community. In practice, Soviet policy fluctuated between these impulses.⁴⁰

Lenin's Nationality Policy

Marx held that after the revolution, when there would be a single class, nationalism would disappear. Distinctions of nationhood would evaporate. No longer motivated by considerations of nationality individuals would loose their parochial, or ethnic character, and became truly

^{40.} Gail W. Lapidius. 'The Soviet Nationality Question', in Alexander Dallina dn C. Rice ed. <u>The Gorbachev Era</u>, (Standford, California 1987), p.77.

"international".⁴¹ Lenin formulated his policy on the basis of Marxist notions. At the same time he was aware of political potential of the minority nationalism.

Lenin developed, his own rather idiosyneratic theory of national self-determination which offered the non-Russian subjects the theoretical right to independent statehood. His generosity was due to his strong belief that the minorities could not separate themselves even if they wanted to do so, because of the prevailing poor socio-economic conditions. By offering them more than they wanted on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, he denied them realistic alternatives that lay somewhere between assimilation and separatism. Lenin believed all along that the right to self-determination should be employed to end demands for national independence, and not satisfy them.⁴² Lenin's changing attitude toward the nationality question reflected very clearly its importance in Russian political life. During the period 1918-20 Lenin devoted his attention to the establishment of institutional

^{41.} Dan N. Jacobs and Theresa M. Hill. 'Soviet Ethnic Policy in the 1980s', in Joseph L. Noges ed. <u>Soviet</u> <u>Politics</u>, (Praeger, New York, 1985). p.155.

^{42.} Helene Carrere d'Encausse, 'Determinants and Parameters of Soviet Nationality Policy', in Jemey R. Azrael ed., <u>Soviet Nationality polcies and practices</u>, (Praeger, New York, 1978), p.40.

and administrative organs that would become the framework of a powerful and centralised Soviet state, the State, Narkommets⁴³ (The People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs) and the Communist Party. Thus, soon after the establishment of Soviet regime, with the help of policy and machinery the momentous task of building a supra national state was carried out. A number of republics were formed on ethnic lines. According to their size of the territory, population, and economic sources appropriate degree of internal autonomy was granted. The expression "national in form but socialist in content" aptly describes the reconciliation effected by the Bolsheviks in their nationality policy between the rival claims at nationalism and socialism.44

In 1921 Lenin introduced New Economic policy which was aimed at placating the peasantry and consolidating Soviet rule. As the non-Russian nations were largely composed of peasants, the inauguration of the NEP inevitably had implications for Soviet nationalities policy. The non-

43. Ibid, p.41.

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44. R. Vaidyanath, <u>The Formation of Soviet Central Asian</u> <u>Republics (A study in Soviet Nationality Policy) (1917-1936)</u>, (New Delhi, 1967), p.265.

Y,75815-73; DERG N 2.

Russian masses would have to be wooed through the medium of their native languages and cultures. The more liberal approach in the economic sphere was therefore translated into the area of nationality policy. So Lenin's principles of nationality policy utilised a standard shield for the non-Russians.⁴⁵

Symbols of nationhood to a number of national groups were granted. National languages and cultures were developed. Nations assumed political responsibilities and this was done through the rapid promotion of native cadres. Lenin believed that this process could speed the rise of the new socialist man who would be capable of ridding himself of national prejudices,⁴⁶ with its persisting thrust on radical and internationalist ideology. This was the goal to which Lenin remained faithful until the very end.

Lenin's policy was, however, entirely inadequate as a solution to the complex national problem. By offering the minorities virtually no choice between assimilation and

^{45.} Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda n.30, p.59.

^{46.} Helene Carrered' Encausse n.42, p.47.

Richard Pipes, <u>The Formation of Soviet Union. Communism</u> <u>and Nationalism (1917-1923)</u>, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1954), p.49.

complete independence, it ignored the fact that they desired neither. He looked upon nationalist sentiments as a force suitable for exploitation in the struggle for power. However, as a psychological weapon the slogan of selfdetermination in Lenin's interpretation was to prove enormously successful as a means of winning the support of the natinoal movements which the revolutionay period developed in all their magnitude.⁴⁷

Korenizatsiia (1920's)

This programme advocated the equality of the non-Russian languages and cultures vis-a-vis the Russian languages and culture. Most importantly, it sought to enhance the position of the non-Russians by promoting them into leading position in the party. This policy sought to legitimise an urban-based revolution in a predominantly agricultural multi-ethnic state by encouraging the development of distinct national cultures.⁴⁸

It also led to creation of schools of Marxist literature in native languages.Very significant advances in

^{48.} George Liber, 'Koreniizatsia, restructuring Soviet Nationality Policy in the 1920s', <u>Ethnic and Racial</u> <u>Studies</u>, Vol.14, n.1, Jan. 1991.

culture are illustrated in the steep rise of publishing in non-Russian languages. The number of book titles in each language published per 100,000 persons of the respective republic provides a useful gauge. Thus in 1928 Uzbeks and . Turkomens had around ten each. While as Tadzhiks and Kazakhs with the Kyrghiz lagged behind with six each, among the Central Asians.⁴⁹

By the end of 1920s Stalin began to abandon the NEP and launched collectivisation, the rural terror which was completed by 1937. However, <u>Korenzatsiia</u> set the stage for Soviet Union's current crisis of authority among non-Russians. In the process of legitimizing multi-culturalism it created the social bases necessary for multi culturalism.

Every Soviet leader, from Stalin to Gorbachev, has derived his and his party and government's legitimacy from Lenin. The same holds for the legitimisation of the nationalities policy which, invoking the founder of the Soviet State, is usually described as the Leninist nationalities policy.

49. Bohdan Nahalylo and Victor Swoboda n.30, pp.62-65.

Stalin's Nationality Policy

Stalin's era began at the end of the 1920s. His perception of national question was somewhat different from that of Lenin. Stalin's dictatorship dramatically worsened the position of non-Russians. Until 1953, Stalin enjoyed unlimited decision-making power. He replaced the old party elites by new ones, Under the collectivisation campaign, Kazakhastan worst suffered areas During 1930's most of the USSR's political and cultural elite was exterminated. Between 1941 and 1945 a number of nationalities were deported enmasse to Soviet Asia at horrific cost in lives suffering. His reppressive measures included and destruction of local economic autonomy that had existed under NEP, imposition of Cyrillic alphabet, arbitrary redrawing of boundaries, rewriting of histories to emphasize the progressive character of the Russian imperialism and end of criticism of Great Russian Chauvnism. All these were to ethnic be giant steps in Stalin's subordination of nationalities. These measures far from obliterating national identities and loyalties, served to strengthen them. Modern urban elites and cultural intelligentsia provided critical

leadership in the process of national revival in subsequent decades.⁵⁰

Thus, one of the ironies of Soviet nationality policy in operation was that, though it seemed to place great emphasis on the subordination and suppression of minority peoples and cultures and even their ultimate <u>sliyanie</u> (merging) into the Russian people and culture, some of the Stalin's key policies tended to have just the opposite effect. The basis on which USSR was organised, despite the denial of national autonomy, preserved and even strengthened minority identification. The concept "national in form socialist in content" while designed to curtail nationalist aspirations, in its 'national in form' actually served to keep ethnic traditions alive.⁵¹

Nationality Polcy After Stalin

Stalin's immediate successorm, N.S.Khrushchev, started the process of destalinisation in 1953, while Brezhnev's policies sought to make further reform. Pressure on Russians

51. Dan N. Jacobs and Theresa M. Hill n.41, p.164.

^{50.} G.W. Lapidius, 'Gorbachev's Nationalities Problem', Foreign Affairs, (Fall 1989), 92-108.

as well as non-Russians was considerably minimised. Their policies brought much greater freedom of expression, the rehabilitation of parts of national cultures and a less completely twisted interpretation of history than those that existed under Stalin. Indigenisation of cadres resumed, though a solid convention was established that certain key officials in the republics, the most important being the Party Second Secretaries, should generally be Russian watchdogs over the activities of the native administrations.⁵²

Khrushchev envisioned his political future on a highly ambitious scheme that was to have grave consequence for the Kazakh nation. "The treatment of the Kazakhs was to demonstrate that the post-Stalin leadership was quite prepared to ride roughshod over a non-Russian nation in the name of economic exigencies". The Kazakhs, who were already decimated by Stalin's brutal collectivisation drive, underwent a second major trial within a quarter of a century in the form of innocuously sounding "Virgin Lands Scheme".⁵³

^{52.} Dominic Lieven, <u>Gorbachev and Nationalities</u>, (Centre for Security and Conflict Studies, London Nov.1988), p.5.

^{53.} Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, n.30, p.115.

Just before the implementation of the scheme Kazakh party was purged. Party leadership was replaced by Slavs. Launched in February 1954, the programme was aimed at transforming the vast areas of untilled steppe in Kazakhstan and south-Western Siberia into new grain producing regions. Hundreds of thousands of 'volunteers' were sent from the European parts of the USSR to settle and cultivate the supposedly idle areas of Kazakhstan, where the Kazakhs had for centuries bred livestock. For the Kazakhs the scheme represented a colonisation that threatened their very survival, and by 1959 their share in the population of their own republic had dropped to under a third.⁵⁴ The resistance of the Kazakhs was overridden.

After the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev's nationality policy took a new course. He condemned some of Stalin's crimes and admitted that "under Stalin there had been 'monstrous' and 'gross' violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationalities policy of the Soviet state', namely that entire nations had been deported on spurious grounds".⁵⁵

54. Ibid, p.116.

55. Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech', pp.58, 60-61.

Within the framework of central plan the republics were asked to decide for themselves concrete questions of development of particular branches of their economy. In other words, a form of what would now be called 'glasnost' or openness was tolerated in the area of national relations. The Soviet press began to air some of the grievances and demands of the non-Russians. Concessions were made to enhance the status of native languages. Today Central Asians compare this period with what was taking place under Mikhail Gorbachev. One Uzbek scholar wrote, "It felt as if the warm rays of the sparkling spring time sun had illuminated those many creations in life that had grown dim.⁵⁶

Khrushchev's de-stalinisation process revived national cultures and led to the growth of national assertiveness. By 1958 the more liberal course in nationalities policy began to backtrack probably in order to reduce national distinctions. An aggressive policy against the vestiges of capitalism, among which he included nationalism, religion and an improper attitude towards socially useful labour was started.⁵⁷ As a result, there was a shift of emphasis in

^{56.} Leo Gruliow, ed., <u>Current Soviet Policies II:</u> <u>Documentary Record of the 20th Communist Party Congress</u> <u>and Its Aftermath</u>, (New York, 1985), pp.52-3.

^{57.} Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swobodan.30, pp.121-124.

nationality policy away from the promotion of the 'flourishing' of the cultures of the peoples of the USSR, to the acceleration of their eventual 'fusion' or 'merger' (<u>Slijanie</u>). Many purges in non-Russian republics went on. The twenty-second Party Congress crystallised Khursheheve leadership's assimilationalist policy. Anti-religious, and anti-national measures were on the rise during the last three years of Khruschev.

After a few months of Khrushchev's removal in 1964 Brezhnev came into power. He was more tactful in his references to nationality policy than Khrushchev. Initially he ignored various social and national tensions that had made themselves felt.⁵⁸ But the result of 1970 census came as a shock and forced the Soviet leaders to go back to seriousness in dealing with nationality problem. The factors that contributed to this outcome are stagnation of the Russians, demographic explosion of non-Russians especially the Muslim population, low levels of migration and decline in the use of Russian.

Brezhnev's overall strategy had important impact on his treatment of the non-Russian elites. They were given enough

58. Ibid, p.130.

freedom to run their republics so long as nationalism was kept under control and the economic performance was not too disastrous. As a result bureaucrats ruled in an often thoroughly lethargic, corrupt, and nepotistic style; and corruption, nepotism or the "sabotage" of the State's economic policy thrived most in Central Asia.⁵⁹ He also stabilised party cadres. This period was later discredited and euphemestically labelled as "the period of stagnation".

Stalin's successors were more realistic in dealing with nationality problem. They gave up the idea of complete Russification in order to achieve an equilibrium between the dominant Russian political culture and the national cultures. It also led them to accept a certain degree of political decentralisation in order to give some real meaning to the federal system.⁶⁰ The diminishing vitality and relevance of official ideology reduced its pontency as a cohesive force in inter-ethnic relations and an upsurge of national and religious values began to fill the void. Competition increased for housing, employment etc. It led to

^{59.} Deminic Lieven n.52, p.6

^{60.} Helene Carrere d'Encausse n.42, p.51.

frustration and resentments. The obligatory tone of selfcongratulation failed to present the realities of national processes in preparing the leaders for the problems ahead.

Brezhnev was promopted to speak out in favour of more cautious policy on nationalities at the Twenty Sixth Party Congress. This approach was continued by Andropov and Chernenko, who were familiar with nationality problems.⁶¹

Nationality policy under Gorbachev

Gorbachev rose to power in March 1985. The epoch of democratisation in April 1985 placed Soviet multiethnic state in a complex and historical situation. Gorbachev faced a formidable accumulation of problems, economic stagnation, inefficency, mismanagement, corruption and above all, unexpected rise in ethnic tensions. He launched <u>Prestroika</u> (restructuring) and <u>Glasnost</u> (openness) with a view to solve the crisis in Soviet Union at varoius levels.

His initial pre-occupation with economic and political reform and focus on efficency undermined the importance of ethnic relations. Gorbachev is a Russian, whose whole career

^{61.} Boris Meissner, 'Implications of Leadership for Soviet Policies' in Kinya Nsiseki ed. <u>The Soviet-Union in</u> <u>Trensilicon</u> (Westview Press London 1987), p.58.

has been passed within the Russian republic and this may help to explain a certain insensitivity to the minorities problems feelings as evident in the early period of his rule. Since 1985, in his nationalities policy he largely reacted to, rather than shaped events.⁶²

Gorbachev's reforms unleashed an unprecedented tide of protests and demonstrations in which national grievances occupied a central place alongside economic unrest. Gorbachev did not formulate any specific policy to deal with the nationalities. His liberalizing policies in political and economic spheres had ethnic consequences. Central Asia remained the major problem. In Central Asia he carried out massive purges of political leaders under the guise of exchange of cadres and struggle with corruption. In Kazakhstan the relplacement of Kunayev, the First Secretary of CP of Kazakhstan by an ethnic Russian, Kolbin led to violent disturbances. Massive demonstrations were held. These events had repurcussions elsewhere. Similar events occurred in nearby provinces and republics of Soviet Central Asia. After Kazakh riots the issue of ethnic relations was forced to the centre of attention Soviet by authorities.Gorbachev realised that the nationalities

62. Dominic Lieven, n.52, p.11.

question was not a peripheral one but stood at the heart of the issue of reform itself.

Three aspects of Gorbechev's reforms, glasnot, democratisation and economic stringency played critical role in bringing the problem to the forefront of politics. When Gorbachev was contemplating as to how to stimulate initiative at the local level, it threw up later the challenge of containing and channelizing local forces.

Coming to Central Asian specifics, rising Islam based nationalism has been gaining momentum as a unifying force throughout Central Asia in recent years. As a response to Gorbachev's reforms, Soviet Asian republics has developed assertive popular movements. These popular movements were essentially anti-colonial, reformist and natinalist. Longsuppressed-resentment over Russian Soviet dominance, disillusionment with the results of socialism, revolt against economic stagnation and environment degradation, and the desire for cultural self-assertion were their primary motivations.⁶³

^{63.} Shireen T. Hunter. 'Nationalist movements in Soviet Asia' <u>Current History</u>, Vol.89, n.549, Oct.1990. Nearly seven decades of Soviet nationalities policy as

implemented in Central Asia-an ethnically heterogenous, supranational Muslim area led to the crystallisation of specific ethno-linguistic, ethno-cultural or ethno-religious groups. These groups became highly conscious of and attached to their present nationality identities, which Which some times manifested in the form of ethnic conflict, as was witnessed in several parts of the region in the recent past.

Three important myths about Soviet nationality policy have been exploded since 1988. Most Soviet and Western scholars admit that, contrary to the Marxist-Leninist postulates, ethnic consciousness does not necessarily decline as society moves towards modernisation or 'socialism'. Secondly, the assertion that "druzhba naradov" (friendship of the peoples) as characteristic of Soviet society was belied by the death of over a thousand people in inter-ethnic clashes, the wounding of more than 8,000, and the displacement of about a half-million others as a result of clashes in Caucasus and Central Asia. The third myth is that of an "unshakable union of free republics", exploded by declarations of sovereignty and independence by all republics.⁶⁴ The emergence of a "Soviet Nation" "New Soviet Man" proved to be exercises in self-deception and propaganda.

^{64.} Zvi Gitelmen, 'Comment on Prazaskas, Tishkov, and Kamskov', <u>Theory and Society</u>, Vol.20/5 Oct. 1991, p.701.

CHAPTER - II

ETHNIC SITUATION IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

Being the soft underbelly of the former USSR, Soviet Central Asia has been an area of great interest to scholars. Recent developments have put this region in a qualitatively new and complex situation. Even today, after seventy five years of Communist rule, each and every aspect of the lives of Central Asians is deeply rooted in their Islamic culture and traditions. The population of this region, in general, is made up of three main elements-Turks (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Kirghiz, and Turkmen), Slavs (Russians, Ukranians and Belorussians), and Iranians (Tadjiks). The Muslims constitute the predominant majority in Central Asia.

Of late the region has been witness to socio-political tensions and ethno-religious resurgence which have assumed unprecedented proportions thereby disturbing the statusquo. All these developments are demonstrative of a nation in turmoil.

Due to its geographical proximity to Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and India, Central Asia is

going to play a central role in the geo-politics of the entire region. As a response to glasnost the local and Russian media have been openly discussing various problems affecting the Central Asian society, polity and economy which places us in a better position to comprehend the trends prevailing in the region even earlier than the abortive coup (19-21 August 1991) and its aftermath¹.

Demographic trends, ethno-religious, linguistic, educational, socio-economic factors - all played a positive role in contributing to tenuous ethnic relations. Let us examine the implications of each of these factors here in order to visualize the emerged scenario, particularly, in the Gorbachev era.

The general Soviet belief, that the Nationality question has been solved and various ethnic groups were drawn closer together in a voluntary. Union of 'free and equal peoples' is no more valid today with the rise of ethno-nationalism. The trend towards greater recognition of national diversity as opposed to a hurried convergence

K. Warikoo, Soviet Central Asian in Ferment, in K., Warikoo and Dawa Norbu, ed. <u>Ethnicity and Politics in</u> <u>Central Asia</u>, (New Delhi, South Asia Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1992), p.62.

gained momentum during the Gorbachev years particularly after Perestroika and glasnost were launched.²

Demographic Trends

The demographic processes strongly affect the overall ethnic composition and had a definite bearing on the ethnic dynamics of Soviet Central Asia. In recent years, high birth rate and level of natural growth led to an increased rate of overall population growth in Central Asia as compared to the European parts of USSR. For example, during the period 1959-1979, while the Belorussian people grew by less than 20 per cent, the Uzbek population increased by nearly 90 per cent³. The population explosion forced them into more intense socio-economic rivalry with the Russians in terms of competition for employment, housing, educational facilities etc. The Central Asian Muslim population is projected to rise from 44 million in 1979 to 64 million in the year 2000. Between 1970 and 1979 roughly one third of the increase was accounted for by the growth of these Muslim peoples. The

Ibid. Devendra Kaushik, Cultural Aspects of Soviet Nationalities Policy in Central Asia, p.124.

Ronald Wixman, "Demographic Trends Among Soviet Muslims 1959-79 <u>Soviet Geography</u> vol. 30, no.1, Jan. 1989, p.46-60.

percentage increase from 1950-1984 was highest in Tadjikistan, (189.3%) followed by Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia (See Table- 1). The 1989 census more clearly illustrates this trend.

Table 1

Population Change in RSFSR and Central Asian Republics 1950-1984

(in thousands)							
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1984	Percentage increase 1950-1984	
RSFSR	101 438	119 046	130 079	138 365	142 117	40.1	
Uzbek SSR	6 164	8 395	11 799	15 765	17 498	182.5	
Kazakh SSR	6 592	9 755	13 009	14 858	15 648	137.4	
Kirghiz SSR	17 16	21 31	29 34	35 88	38 86	126.5	
Tadzhik SSR	15 09	20 45	29 00	39 01	43 65	189.3	
Turkmen SSR		15 65	21 59	28 27	31 18	160.5	

Source : Michael Ryan and Richard Prentice, <u>Social Trends in the</u> <u>Soviet Union from 1950</u>, (London, Macmilion, 1987), p.7.

Individually speaking, as per 1989 census, in their own republics Uzbeks formed 71.4 per cent, Tadzhiks, 62.3 per cent, Turkmens 72 per cent, Kazakhs 39.7 per cent and Kirghizs 52.4 per cent. Their percentage of total Soviet

population also increased between 1979 and 1989. (Kazakhs from 2.5 to 2.84%, Uzbeks 4.75% to 5.8%, Tadzhiks 1.11%, 1.47% Turkmens 0.77% to 0.95% and Kirghizs 0.73% to 0.88%). The percentage of Russian population during the same period declined from 52.4 per cent to 50.6 per cent (See Table -2). This trend led to distortions among ethnic relations. Muslim peoples presented potentially problematic situation for the Soviet state in general, and more so on the regional level.

Table 2

Ethnic groups		Populat	ion (in th	ousands)	Percent populat	-	Tótal	Soviet
	1959	1970	1979	1989	1959	1970	1979	1989
Russians	114,114	129,015	137,397	145,071,550	54.65	53.37	52.42	50.6
Uzbeks	6,015	9,195	12,456	16,686,240	2.88	3.80	4.75	5.82
Kazakhs	3,622	5,299	6,556	8,137,878	1.73	2.19	2.50	2.84
Tadzhiks	1,397	2,136	2,898	4,216,693	0.67	0.88	1.11	1.47
Turkmens	1,002	1,525	2,028	2,718,297	0.48	0.63	0.77	0.95
Kirgizs	969	1,452	1,906	2,530,998	0.46	0.60	0.73	0.88

Population of Russians and Central Asian Ethnic Groups, 1959-1989

Source : Ralph S. Clem in Nichael Paul Steeks and Jerry G. Pankhurst ed. Understanding Soviet Society, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1988), p.4 and Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, Soviet Disunion, (New York, The Free Press, 1989), p.363. As per 1989 census, except in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia (where Russians comprise 37.8 per cent and 21.5 per cent respectively), the percentage of Russians in other Soviet Central Asian republics is less than 10 per cent. They have been concentrated in the larger cities of Central Asia. In the capital cities of Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Alma-Ata (Kazekhstan), Frunze (Kirghizia), Dushanbe (Tadzhikistan), and Ashkabad (Turkmenia) the percentage share of Russians was, 34.0, 59.0, 55.7, 32.4 and 32.3 per cent respectively. If the Russian population were to be removed from just these cities alone, the share of Russians in the total population of Soviet Central Asia would drop to half.⁴

There is also a great difference between the fertility levels of the European and the Central Asian nationalities. By 1979, most European nationalities had fertility rates below the replacement level⁵. At the same time Central Asia exhibited levels indicating rapid multiplication of the population over a generation⁶. An astonishing fact was that

^{4.} Ibid.

^{5.} A total fertility rate of 2.1 corresponds to what demographers call the replacement level, which is the level of fertility needed to ensure a stationary population in the long run.

^{6.} Panels on nationalism in USSR, <u>Soviet Geography</u>, vol.30, no.6, 1989, pp. 448-449.

by 1970 itself, 35 per cent of the Soviet Moslem population was in the 0-10 age group and 50 per cent was in the agegroup 15 years or younger. Comparable figures for the Slavs were 18.0 per cent and 27.7 per cent respectively. This implies that during the next twenty years Central Asians would comprise more than half of able-bodied persons of the workforce.

Low migration is another important dimension of demographic processes among Central Asians. For them, republic was the limit. Their deep attachment to homeland, native language, life styles, general conservatism, low skills in Russian language acted as deterrent to migration. Between 1959 and 1979 the percentage of Muslims residing in their own autonomies and in neighbouring or traditional Territory remained almost the same which was more than 90 per cent (See Table - 3). This trend is a corollary to low levels of urbanisation between 1959 to 1989. The percentage of Urban population remained more or less the same in case of Tadzhikistan and Turkmenia. In Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kirghizia there was a significant rise in urban population between 1984 and 1989. But between 1984 and 1989 it remained the same or even decreased by 1 per cent (See Table 4).

Percentage		Tr	aditiona	al Territ	ories 1	959, 1970,	1979		bouring or
		Own		Neighb tradit	ouring ional T	or Own erritory	Plus r or tradi	neighbo tional	ouring Territory
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1959	1970	1979	1959	1970	1979	1959	1970	
Uzbek						14_4			99.3
Tadzhik	75.2	76.3	77.2	24.0	22.8	22.2	99.2	99.1	99.2
Turkmen	92.2	92.9	93.3	6.2	5.6	5.4	98.4	98.5	98.7
Kyrghiz	86.4	88.5	88.5	12.9	10.7	10.5	99.3	99.2	99.0
Kazakh									98.0
						ral Asian			Urbanizaatior

Table 3

ource : Theodre Shabad, Some Aspects of Central Asian Manpower and Urbanizaation, <u>Soviet Geography</u>, Review and Transition, vol.20, no.2, 1979.

Table 4

Urban Population as a Percentage of Total Population : by Republic

Republic	1959	1984	1989
Uzbekistan	34	42	41
Kazakhstan	44	57	57
Kyrghizia	34	39	38
Tadjikistan	33	34	33
Turkmenia	46	47	45

Source : Michael Ryan and Richard Prentice in <u>Social Trends</u> <u>in the Soviet Unions from 1950</u>, (London, MacMillian, 1987), p.20, and P.L. Dash in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu ed. <u>Ethnicity and Politics</u> <u>in Central Asia</u>, (New Delhi, South Asian Publishers, 1992), p.108, 109. Another noticeable change typical of the Muslim population growth has been the decline in urban population as against the sharp increased in rural population. The desire to maintain their religious - cultural traditions and Islamic ethos is primarily responsible for this attitude⁷. The negligible inclination for inter-state migration, relatively higher growth of population, and low levels of urbanisation were major causes of labour surplus and unemployment in the former Soviet Central Asia.

Thus, traditions played a vital role in population migrations. The mobility of the population was retarded by traditions of large families and strong ties of kinship that is, by ethnic factors.⁸

During the past few years particularly after the violent ethnic clashes in various parts of this region there has been a remarkable rise in the out migration of non-Central Asian groups - Russians, Armenians, Meshkitian Turks, Germans, Jews etc., from Central Asia. This has been the direct fall out of the violent attacks on such minority

^{7.} K. Warikoo, n.1, p. 71.

Bromelei, Iulien V, 'Ethnic Process in USSR' <u>Soviet</u> <u>Anthropology and Archaeology</u>, vol. 26, no.3, Winter 1987, p.3.

groups by the local majority, xenophobia, intensifying chauvinism and and declaration of local languages as the official language. According to an official report submitted to the Tadjikistn Communist Party Central Committee in August 1990 about 23,000 skilled Russians had left Tadjikistan during the first seven months of 1990 alone⁹. This exodus was ascribed to the riots in Dushanbe in February 1990 and declaration of Tajik as official language¹⁰.

The very fact that Central Asia alone accounted for nearly one-third of the total population growth of the USSR between 1979-1989, a proportion which was nearly thrice that of its nation's leading share of 11.5 per cent of the total population in 1989 and further that Central Asia accounted for more than one-fifth (20.2 per cent) of the rural population of the USSR, were facts to foretell us about the most complex rural scene that would was prevail in Soviet Central Asia in coming years¹¹.

^{9.} Current Digest of Soviet Press, vol.42, no.31, 1990, p.30.

^{10.} Ibid.

P.L. Dash, Ethnic Tussles in the Soviet Muslim Republics in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu, no.1, pp. 107,108.

Ethno-religious resurgence and nationalism

Islam has been the unifying factor among Central Asians for more than twelve centuries now. Their adherence to islam is manifested in the observance of religious rites. Traditionally a believer has had to observe the five pillars of faith, fasting during the month of Ramdan, daily prayers, a pilgrimage to Mecca, the payment of alms, and the profession of faith¹². However, during the Soviet Period these practices were not observed strictly. Islam did discard some of its traditional practices to attract the younger generation and to keep them away from the ideological influences of Marxism. It followed the policy of adoption, accommodation and adjustment. In other words, what may be called "Sophisticated Islam" was in vogue.

Muslims of Central Asia are Sunnis and follow the Hanafi School. Sunni Islam is more a clergyless religion than that of Baptists¹³. In terms of number of observers Islam ranked second after the Orthodox Christians in USSR.

^{12.} Rasma Karklins, Ethnic Relation in the USSR, (London, Allen and Union, 1986), p. 185.

^{13.} Ibid.

Uzbeks are the most numerous of the Muslim peoples followed by Kazakhs, Tadzhiks, Turkmen and the Kirghiz. The Spiritual Directorate of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was officially founded in 1946. It has been concerned with every aspect of the administration of Islam in this region.

The establishment of Soviet power transformed all spheres of life of indigenous population. Socio-economic and political system established by the October Revolution was based on an outright rejection of all religions and adherence to scientific atheism. Several confrontations left an indelible mark in the hearts of Muslims and deeply shaped their present attitude towards the Soviet authorities, particularly, the Russians. These were - The Basmachi war, Collectivisation drive, Virgin Lands scheme etc. which completely destroyed their national cultures and distorted their life styles. Forced sedenterisation of Kazakhs in the early 1920s, during which the Soviets killed the nomad's livestock and starved over one million Kazakhs to death, also left deep scars on the Kazakh pride.¹⁴ In 19289, an anti-Islam campaign was unleashed, followed by the

^{14.} Marie Broxup <u>Immigrants and Minorities</u>, (London), vol.9, no.3, Nov. 1990, pp. 294-295.

destruction in the purges of the 1930s, of all Muslim political elites - Communist, nationalist, and religious alike¹⁵. This campaign was slowed down after the Second World War and was revived by Khrushchev. He gave a new impetus to his policy towards Islam. Of the 25,000 mosques which existed in Russia before the revolution, all but some 300 or 400, were destroyed.¹⁶

During the last two decades, new "national-religious symbols" within the Muslim <u>Umma</u> (Community), a merging or overlapping of ethnic and religious sentiments and loyalties¹⁷ made their appearance in all spheres of Central Asian life. Islam based modern nationalist spirit emerged to assert national exclusiveness of the Moslem peoples. To the communist 'national in form, socialist in content' policy it offered a "socialist in form, nationalist in content" alternative¹⁸. The new Muslim consciousness among the intelligentsia, was linked to the social and political

^{15.} Ibid.

^{16.} Ibid.

^{17.} Michael Rywkin, Moscow's Muslim Challenge (London, 1982), p.84.

^{18.} Ibid. p. 85.

rather than to the strictly religious aspects of Islam¹⁹. Many Islamic traditions started being given the name of national traditions. Islam and national identity became synonymous expressions. Religion has become part of national life. To reject Islamic traditions is socially disapproved as showing lack of respect to the memory of one's ancestors, to the nation and national culture. This is why in traditional areas of Islam not only believers but a section of the non-believers as well looked favorably at religious rites²⁰. National awareness is shown by the often heard expression "You cannot be a Kazakh or Uzbek or Kirghiz without being a Muslim²¹.

The islamic resurgence in the former Soviet Central Asia is also due to the spillover effects of Khomeni revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan²². In case of Tadzhikistan, Kirghizia and Uzbekistan concern was expressed about the resilience of

22. K. Warikoo, n.1, p. 67.

^{19.} Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Bseoup The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State (London 1983), p. 143.

^{20.} Mariex Broxup, Islam in Central Asia Since Gorbachev <u>Asian Affairs</u> (London) vo.18, part 3, OCtober 1987, pp 283-293.

^{21.} Ibid.

religion and its links with nationalism, as well as the survival of backward traditions and customs like the <u>Kalym</u>, (bride price) etc. In 1986 a speaker at the Tadzhik party Congress stated that, doubtless Islam had been 'activised' to some degree by the circumstances surrounding regional events of recent years in certain countries²³.

The sudden popularity of religion in the past six years may be attributed to the policy of <u>glasnost</u> launched by Gorbachev which began to make real impact after 1986. Islamic revival in Central Asia today cannot be viewed as 'a single movement with a coherent programme and a set of easily recognizable goals. It has been inspired by different sources and represents a wide range of hopes, fears and aspirations²⁴. But it clearly suggests that socialism failed to replace Islam in Muslim republics. New radical groups have emerged. <u>Alash, Adilet, Azat</u> and <u>Atmaken</u> in Kazakhstan, <u>Kyrghizystan Democratic Front</u> in Kirghizia, <u>Birlik</u> in Uzbekistan are playing crucial roles in glorifying the past traditions. Islam is being used as a channel to mobilize

^{23.} Bohdan Nataylo and Victor Swobodas, <u>Soviet Discussion</u> (New York, 1989), p. 239.

^{24.} Amir Taheri, Cresent in a Red Sky (London 1989), p.182.

people and to assert their distinct national identity as against the alien Russians and slavic peoples.

The Language Factor

Language added yet another important dimension to ethnic dynamics in Soviet Central Asia. There are two major language families (i) Iranian group of the Indo-European family and (ii) Turkic group of the Altaic family. Except Tadjik which belongs to the Iranian group, the remaining four languages - Uzbek, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Turkmen - belong to the Altaic family. Besides these five major languages, the existence of more than a score of other languages -Tatar, Karakalpak, Uighur, Dolganic, to mention a few - adds to the diversity of the polyglot character of Central Asian society.

Despite Soviet efforts to impose the use of Russian, native language retention was high among Central Asians (See Table-5). The percentage of retention between 1959 and 1979 remained more or less the same in all five Muslim republics, which is above 97 per cent. They feared that the increasing use of Russian would result in a loss of their ethnic identities. Over the years, knowledge of Russian became the deciding factor for upward social mobility. Sixty per cent

of the non-Russian population accepted it as a language of inter-communication "At the same time, the fact that about forty per cent of non-Russians still do not know Russian was a serious problem affecting social and individual development²⁵. Knowledge of Russian is the highest among Kazakhas and Uzbeks followed by Tadjiks, Kirghizs and Turkmens.

Until recently no systematic methods have been developed to study native languages. On the other hand enough study materials are available to learn Russian and the method of teaching is highly developed. That anomaly existing between the Russian and national languages has been impediment, was emphasised in the special resolution on relations between Soviet nationalities adopted by the nineteenth CPSU Conference in June-July 1988²⁶. It emphasised that "every condition should be provided for national Russian bilingualism to develop harmoniously and naturally with an eye to the specific features of every region and without formalism; more concern should be for the active functioning of national languages in various

25. Cited by P.L. Dash, no.11, p. 105.

26. Ibid., p. 106.

Table 5

Native Language Retention in Percentage 1959, 1970, 1979

Nationality	1959	1970	 1979
Uzbek	98.4	98.6	98.5
Kazakh	. 98.4	98.0	97.5
Kyrghiz	98.7	98.8	97.9
Tadjik	98.1	98.5	97.8
Turkmen	98.9	98.9	98.7

Source : Theodre Shabad, 'Some Aspects of Central Asian Manpower and Urbanisation', <u>Soviet Geography</u>, Review and Transition, vol.20, no.2, 1979.

Table 6

Percentage of members of Non-Russian Ethnic Groups claiming Russian as Mother Tongue or Second language within own republics (1970 and 1979)

Ethnic Group and Republic	Mother 1970	Tongue 1979	Second 1970	Languag 1979	ge To 1970	otal 1979
Kazakhs and Kazakhstan	1	1	32	51	33	52
Kyrghiz and Kyrghizia	-	-	20	28	20	28
Uzbeks and Uzbekistan	-	-	13	53	13	53
Taurkmen and Turmenia	1	1	15	24	16	25
Tadjiks and Tadjikistan		1	17	28	17	29

Source: Compiled by Chauncy D. Harris from the 1970 and 1979 census of the USSR from Data in Theodre Shabad, "Ethnic Results of the 1979 Soviet Census", <u>Soviet Geography</u>, Review and Transition, Sept. 1980, vol.21, no.7, p.461.

spheres²⁷. Many demonstrations were organised demanding official status to native languages. There is also a growing pressure among the Moslem peoples for the reintroduction of Arabic script²⁸. Many language societies were formed in recent years for the promotion of study of native languages and literary works in them. The local Muslim Central Asian majorities succeeded in their efforts to pressurise the republican leaderships to concede their demands for declaration of local languages as the official languages thereby relegating the Russian language to a secondary status. This was done even before the disintegration of the former USSR. Subsequent to the formation of independent Central Asian States, the cyrillic script is being replaced by the Latin (as in Turkey) or the Arabic script. In this manner, the fruits of Russification drive over the past seventy years have been undone in a small fraction of time.

Educational attainment

Educational level of the population is an important indicator for measuring for socio-economic and cultural

^{27. 19}th All Union Conference of CPSU, Documents and materials, Novosti Press Agency, Moscow 1988, p. 149.

^{28.} Bohdan Mahaylo and Victor Swoboda, no.24, p. 320.

development. Under Soviet rule all Central Asian nationalities achieved hundred per cent literacy by 1970s. Their enrollment in higher and secondary specialised education increased gradually between 1970 and 1988 (See Table 7). This enhanced their interest in the past history and made them revive their past traditions. For example the usual way of greeting (Zsdratsyue) was now replaced by Salaam Av Lekum in many parts of Central Asia. Besides, the highly educated and professionally trained Central Asia

Table 7

Enrollment in Higher and Secondary Specialised Education in Soviet Central Asia Republics

					Pol	pulation	= per	10,000
			USSR	School Y	'ear			
Republic	197(0/1971 USSR Av.)/1981 USSR Av.		/1986 USSR Av.	1987/	1988 USSR Av.
Uzbek	326	88.6	319	86.4	306	88.4	303	91.0
Kazakh	316	85.9	349	94.6	344	99.4	334	100.3
Kyrghiz	301	81.8	287	77.8	270	78.0	256	76.0
Tadjik	267	72.6	242	65.6	204	59.0	199	60.0
Turkmen	260	70.6	242	65.6	232	67.0	225	67.6

Source: Andrew R. Bond Misha V. Belkindas, A.I.Treyvish, Economic Development Trend in the USSR 1970-1988, <u>Soviet Geography</u>, vol.32, no.1 January, 1991.

Population = per 10,000

cadres would not like the Russians and other Slav cadres to occupy. Key and even other positions in bureaucracy, industry, communications and other sectors. This competition turned into a rivalry in which the local majorities had a definite upper hand.

Socio-economic factors

The positive effect of seven and a half decades of Soviet rule has been transformation of once backward Soviet Central Asia into modern and well developed region. The composition of Muslims increased in various fields of social development. Their number in party cadres, managerial positions showed a significant rise. Illiteracy was eradicated completely.

The liberal New Economic policy led to the economic development of this region. Once the economy was based purely on agriculture. Today industrialisation, establishment of educational institutions, nuclear testing sites etc. have dramatically changed the overall economic scene. Many scholars opine that Central Asian republics are the best models of development for third world countries. However, the impact of some recent trends led to a complex situation.

The demographic trends, ethno-religious beliefs, linguistic and educational factors are inextricably intertwined. One determines or follows the other. All these factors as a whole affected the socio-economic development of Soviet Central Asia. Economically speaking, within USSR, the performance of Central Asian republics at various levels had been poor when compared to the European parts. At the same time they were better developed than neighbouring Islamic countries, say Pakistan, Afghanistan or even Iran.

Demographic explosion, strict adherence to backward traditions, which are inter-related to each other hampered social progress. The fruits of economic development were again, neutralised by excessive population growth. In terms of percentage increase in population European Republics are given below the Central Asian Republics (see table 8). Reluctance to leave home land, labour surpluses caused serious unemployment problem. The Central Asians often blamed the Russians and the Soviet authorities for their dismal failure in economic growth and social progress. All these factors added fuel to the rising ethno-nationalism.

Table 8

	1979	1989	Percentage Increase
USSR	262,436,000	286,717,000	9.3
RSFSR	137,551,000	147,386,000	7.2
Ukrainian SSR	49,755,000	51,704,000	3.9
Byelorussian SSR	9,560,000	10,200,000	6.7
Moldavian SSR	3,947,000	4,341,000	10.0
Lithuanian SSR	3,398,000	3,690,000	8.6
Latvian SSR	2,281,000	2,681,000	6.3
Estonian SSR	1,466,000	1,573,000	7.3
Georgian SSR	5,015,000	5,449,000	8.7
Azerbaijani SSR	6,028,000	7,029,000	16.6
Armenian SSR	3,031,000	3,283,000	8.3
Uzbek SSR	15,391,000	19,906,000	29.3
Kirghiz SSR	3,529,000	4,291,000	21.6
Tadzhik SSR	3,801,000	5,112,000	34.5
Turkmen SSR	2,759,000	3,534,000	28.1
Kazakh SSR	14,684,000	16,538,000	12.6

Population of USSR and of Union Republics 1979-89

Source : Bohdan Nahalyo and Victor Swoborda, <u>Soviet</u> <u>Disunion</u>, (New York, The Free Press, 1989), p.362.

CHAPTER - III

THE CONFLICT IN KAZAKHSTAN

Known as the land of more than hundred ethnic groups and languages, Kazakhstan has been well described as an ethnic melting pot. Kazakhstan is geographically distinct from other Central Asian Republics, despite ethnic and cultural affinities. It is a steppe region and has always been considered both by Tsarist and Soviet writers as a separate entity.¹ Nearly seven and a half decades of Soviet rule played positive as well as negative roles in transforming this region dramatically. In the Gorbachev period Kazakhstan a witnessed several ethnic disturbances and mass demonstrations. This period, particularly from 1986-90s may be characterised as an era of democratisation and national revival in the history of Kazakhstan.

Modernisation processes - industrialisation, organisation of state farms, factories and growth of cities - have transformed the once virgin lands into a welldeveloped region. Extremely rich in natural resources,

^{1.} D.Kaushik, <u>Central Asia in Modern Times</u>, (Moscow, 1970), p.13.

Kazakhastan registered all round economic development. The economic, social and cultural progress of the republic generated legitimate national pride among the Kazakhs. Now the Kazakhs who were slightly lesser in numbers than their Russian counterparts (as per 1979 census) began to resent the high-profile presence of Russians and other non-Kazkh nationalities in the republic. Newly trained and educated generation of Kazakhs was dissatisfied with the level of their participation with the level of their participation in nation-building process, which contributed to social tensions and inter-ethnic conflict.

The multi-national character of Kazakhstan presents an ideal case for the study of ethnic conflict. In a series of events that occurred in the latter half of the last decade, Alma-Ata riots and the Novy Uzen disturbances are the most striking cases of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kazakhastan. For proper understanding of the pattern of riots, various phenomena such as - demographic situation, bilingualism, religious revival etc. that fostered tension between Kazakhs and other nationalities or ethnic groups, are being discussed here.

Demographic Situation

The Kazakhs are a mixture of Turkic tribes. They speak a Turkic language - Kazakh - and are Muslim by religion. The ethnic composition of the population of Kazakhstan has changed remarkably over the years. In the years preceding of the Soviet era, Central Asia and Kazakhstan served as a dumping ground for political deportees and industrial labour. This process attained its peak in the early 1960s, when the 'Virgin Lands' campaign brought into Northern Kazakhstan, the last larger group of one and a half million European settlers.² Many of them remained for ever in Kazakhstan, which became the homeland of their descendants. These groups include the Russians, Jews, Germans, Chechens, Tatars, Belorussians, Uzbeks, Koreans, Uighurs, Dungans and Thus, the ethnic composition of the population of others. Kazakhstan became international gradually.

Broadly speaking, Kazakhstan today an is ethnically bifurcated state with the Russians and Ukrainians dominating the Northern and Eastern regions (East Kazakhstan, Karaganda, Kokechetav, Kustanay, Pavlodar, North Kazakhstan,

Milan Hauner, 'Geo-Politics in the last 100 years' <u>Central Asian Survey</u>, (London), Vol.8, No.1, 1989.

Table 9

Ethnic-Trends in the Kazakh SSR

- Ci	in	th	ou	sa	nd	s)
· · · ·						

	1959	1970	1979	1989	Percentage Change 1959-89	Percentag Change 1989
Kazakhs	2,795	4,234	5,289	6,535	+133.8	39.7
Russians	3,974	5,522	5,991	6,228	+56.7	37.8
Ukrainians	762	934	898	896	+17.6	5.4
Germans	660	858	900	958	+45.2	5.8
Tatars	192	288	313 ^b	328 ^b	+70.8	2.0
Uzbeks	137	216	263	332	+142.3	2.0
Belorussians	107	198	181	183	+71.0	1.1
Uighurs	60	121	148	185	+208.3	1.1
Koreans	74	82	92	103	+39.2	0.6
Azerbaijani	36	58	73	90	+136.8	0.5
Poles	53	61.4	61.1	60	+13.2	0.4
Bashkirs	9	21	32	42	+366.7	0.3
Moldovans	15	26	30	33	+120.0	0.2
Mordva	25	34	31	30	+20.0	0.2
)ungans	10	17	22	30	+200.0	0.2
Chuvash	11	23	22	22	+100.0	0.1
lews	23	28	22.8 ^a	18.5	-33.9	0.1
thers	345	288	337	391	+13.3	2.4
otal	9,295	13,009	14,684	16,464	+77.1	100.0

The 1989 census ajusted the number of Jews listed in the 1979 count from 23,466 to 22,762.

The figures for 1979 and 1989 do not include the Crimean Tatas, who were counted as Tatars in previous censuses. The 1979 census listed a Tatar population of 313,460 in the Kazakh SSR. The 1989 census listed the 1979 Tatar Population of Kazakhstan as 312,626. The difference of 834 was listed in the 1989 census as the Crimean Tatar population of Kazakhstan in 1979; the 1989 Crimean Tatar population of Kazakhstan was listed as 3.169.

Source: Lee Schwartz, USSR Nationality Distribution by Republic, <u>Soviet Geography</u>, vol.32, no.4, 1991, p.238.

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and Tselinograd oblasts and indigenous Kazakhs tending to predominate in the western and southern puts (Aktyubinsk, Alma-Ata, Guryev, Ozhanbul, Dzhezkazgan, Kzyl - Orda, Semipalatinsk, Taldy - Kurgan, Uralsk, and Chimkent Oblasts). The capital city of Alma-Ata, located in the south provides an exception as Russians are in majority here comprising about fifty percent of its population. In 1979 Kazakhs represented only 36% of the total population whereas non-Kazakhs were in majority (Russians - 40.8% Ukrainians - 6.1% and Germans - 6% and Others - 11.1%).³ In the census count of 1989, the Kazakhs constituted a majority (39.7 per cent) in their own republic for the first time since the early years of the Union. The Russian population declined from 42.7% in 1959 to 37.8% in 1989.⁴ By the year 2000 AD it is likely to be reduced to 30%. In view of the low birth rates of Russians and decline in the migration from European parts of USSR into the Kazakh republic and

K. Warikoo, 'Soviet Central Asia in Ferment', in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu (eds.), <u>Ethnicity and Politics</u> <u>in Central Asia</u>, (New Delhi, South Asian Publishers, 1992), p.64.

Lee Schwartz 'USSR, Nationalists Redistribution by Republic, 1979-1989', <u>Soviet Geography</u>, Vol. 32, April No.4, 1991, p.238-239.

Table 10

				(1989 Census)	
	Total	(In Urban	thousands Rural	;) % of urban	% of Rural
Kazakhstan	16536	9465	7071	57	43
Aktyubin Oblast	738	399	339	54	46
Atma-Ata city	1132	1132	-	100	-
Alma-Ata Oblast	978	216	762	22	78
East Kazakhstan Oblas	933	607	326	65	35
Gurev Oblast	755	548	207	73	27
Dzhamebul Oblast	1040	497	551	47	53
Dzhezkazgan Oblast	496	388	108	78	22
Karagand Oblast	1352	1147	205	85	15
Kyzl-Orda Oblast	651	422	229	65	35
Kokchetab Oblast	664	260	404	39	61
Kustanai	1221	616	605	50	50
Pablodar Oblast	944	605	339	64	36
North Kazakhstan Oblast	600	287	313	48	52
Semi Palatinzk Oblast	838	429	409	51	49
Talokyi Kwrgan Oblast	721	325	395	45	55
Jral Oblast	631	269	362	43	57
Fselimograd Dblast	1002	572	430	57	43
Chimkent Oblast	1832	746	1086	41	59

Source : P.L. DASH In K.Warikoo and Dawa Narbu ed. <u>Ethnicity</u> <u>Politics in Central Asia</u>, (New Delhi, 1992), p.108. continued high Kazakh fertility, some Kazakh news papers have even forcast an increase in the population of Kazakhs to 50% in 2000 A.D. and a further rise upto 65 to 70%.⁵

Bilingualism

Today bilingualism in Kazakhstan mainly involves people of the indigenous nations and other small nations. Kazakh belongs to the Kipchack group of Turkic languages, all of which belong to the Altaic family.⁶ Kazakh was written in Arabic Script until the early 1930s, when Arabic was supplanted by Latin alphabet. A decade later, as part of the Russification effort, the Latin alphabet was again replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet. The Kazakhs feel that it is one of the main duties of every Kazakh, every Kazakh family, everyone who regards himself as a Kazakh and the entire population to be proud of their native language, to be concerned for its purity and to promote its development.⁷

^{5.} Richard Weeks <u>Muslim Peoples</u> (London, Greenwood Press, 1975), p.210.

^{6.} Katz ed. Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalists (New York, The Free Press 1975), (New York), p.223.

Summary of World Broadcasts Part 1, USSR (hereafter SWB) 14 Feb. 1987.

It is therefore not surprising that 97.5% Kazakhs claimed Kazakh as their mother tongue (as per 1979 census). Only 2% degraded Russian as their mother tongue. However, 52.3% of Kazakhs regarded Russian as they second language.⁸

Many Kazakh language papers and journals, in particular, <u>Kazakhstan Ayyelderi</u> (Women of Kazakhstan), <u>Madeniyet Zhane Turmys</u> (Culture and Daily Life) and <u>Ontustik</u> <u>Kazakhstan</u> contain only Kazakh names and the photographs in them largely feature representatives of the indigenous nationality.

The Soviet authorities however, felt that this kind of one-sided coverage of life in a multi-national republic tended to artificially consolidated national isolation. Hence there were always attempts to make Russian the medium of instruction and relegating Kazakh to a secondary position. This attitude towards Kazakh hurt the feelings of the natives. The Kazakhs were dissatisfied with the low priority given to publication of teaching aids in the Kazakhs language such as self-instruction books, phrase books and dictionaries of the Kazakh language.⁸ By the mid

Current Digest of Soviet Press (hereafter CDSP), Vol. 39.No. 19 April 1987, p.11.

1980s, approximately 40 per cent of Kazakh youth were unable to read their native language.⁹ Despite such official efforts to foster the Russian language, Kazakhs have retained a strong degree of lingusitic cohesion. Almost all regard Kazakh as their mother tongue.¹⁰

The representation of various nationalities in higher educational establishment and technical colleges is skewed. The overwhelming majority of students belong to indigenous nationality, although Kazakhstan is a mosaic of a number of nationalities and ethnic groups. Students move about in hostels according to nationality. For many years, most of the students at the Kazakhstan State University, Faculty of Journalism and Law, most of have been coming from Southern oblasts.¹¹ Unequal representation and particularly when it is manipulated on the basis of religion, clan or region, often causes tension among various groups.

11. SWB, Part I USSR, 11 Jan. 1987.

^{9.} Kazakhstanya Parvada, June 10, 1989.

^{10.} Christian Science Monitor Dec. 21, 1986, cited in <u>Central Asian Survey</u>, Vol. 7, No.4, p.79.

Religious Revival

Though the Kazakhs are generaly believed to be the least Islamised of the Central Asian Turks, ¹² yet Islam has come up as the is the strongest traditional force in Kazakhstan.13 Religious ceremonies, Pilgrimages to holy places, observance of fast during Ramazan are widely prevalent. Various backward habits and customs are given the name of national traditions and several reactionary elements started acting under the banner of Islam. Atheistic education and mockery of rites and rituals by Soviet authorities failed to reduce the tenacity of Islam among the Kazakhs. They preserved their historical and cultural monuments and restored mausoleums of religious and quasi-religious historical figures. For example, the Kazakhs have embraced Ahmad Yasava, the first great Turkic saint and mystic and builder of the Yasavi Sufi order, whose tomb is in the town of Turkestan, as a Kazakh national saint, although the Kazakhs only appeared on the historical scene several centuries after his death.¹⁴

- 12. Weeks n.5, p.210.
- 13. Katz n.6, p.232.
- Maria Eva Subtelny, 'The Cult of Holy Places Religion Practices among Soviet Muslims', <u>The Middle East</u> <u>Journal Autumn</u>, 1989, pp.593-604.

The Soviet authorities, including Mikhail Gorbachev himself, have linked the disturbances that took place in Central Asia and Kazakhstan with Islam.¹⁵

THE ALMA-ATA RIOTS

Violent nationalist riots erupted in Alma-Ata, the capital city of Kazakhstan, on 17th and 18th December 1986. One Western newspaper report stated that this was the first time riots had been reported in the USSR in "at least 25 years" (UPI, 20 December). An editorial in the Los Angeles Times (21 December) was typical of the comments at that time: "The riots were the first known instances of resistance taking a violent turn."¹⁶

Three exclusivist and demanding needs confronted each other at Alma-Ata Communism, religion in the form of Islam and nationalism to which was added the locally powerful force of racist attitude. The riots in the Kazakh capital merely served to bring out into the open the antagonism

^{15.} Cited in Yacov, Roi, 'Islam and Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia', <u>Problems of Communism</u>, (Washington), July-August 1990, p.59.

^{16.} Cited in Kuzio Taras, 'Nationalist Riots in Kazakhstan', <u>Central Asian Survey</u>, Vol.7, No.4, pp.79-100.

between these forces that have been dormant, but just below the surface, in Soviet Central Asia. The ostensible cause of the trouble was the removal, because of age, inefficiency and corruption, of the 74-year old First Secretary of the Communist Party, the Kazakh, Dinmukhamed Kunayer and his replacement by a 59 year old Russian Gennady Kolbin.¹⁷

The Kazakhs felt that Kunayev's removal was an insult to the entire Kazakh people. It was seen by certain young people as a blow against national self-esteem and pride, as a personal tragedy and as the collapse of their hopes. Apart from the organised excesses in Alma-Ata, attempts were made to provoke anti-social marches in twelve of the republic's regional centres and hundreds of pamphlets and appeals were disseminated. Kunayev was a veteran party leader, who had administered Kazakhstan since 1964 and had been a full member of the Politburo since April 1971. He was closely associated with Leonard Breznev.¹⁸ His leadership was marked by a rise in the national consciousness among Kazakhs, nepotism, bias toward Kazakh officials, open participation by officials in religious

^{17.} Deccan Herald (Bangalore) 3 Jan. 1987.

^{18.} John Sallnow, "<u>Reform in Soviet Union Glasnost and the</u> <u>Future</u>" p.56.

ceremonies. He appears to have been something of a paternal figure in his republic, and although his removal was not entirely unexpected, the manner in which he was replaced by a Russian was an seen as insult to the Kazakh national pride.¹⁹

The Soviets were consistently following the practice of letting the provincial governments be headed by the representatives of local ethnic groups, with Moscow's man sitting in as number two.²⁰ This time, Kunayev's replacement by a Russian who was Kolbin a noted Gorbachev loyalist and prominent in the anti-alcohol and anticorruption campaigns,²¹ was viewed as a departure from the established practice and a means direct central intervention in the Kazakh republic. Thousands of disenchanted young Kazakhs gathered in Brezhnev Square to voice their discontent with Moscow's decision to appoint an outsider to head the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK).²² Nationalist

- 20. Ibid., p.80.
- 21. Ibid., p.81.
- 22. Martha Brill Olcolt, "Perestroika in Kazakhstan", Problems of Communism July-Aug, 1990, p.66.

^{19.} Kuzio n.16, p.81.

slogans including "Autonomy and separate seat for Kazakhstan at the UN", "We want to join China", "America is with us, the Russian against us" and "Kolbin go back to Russia", appeared suddenly in Alma-Ata. According to the Guardian, at the peak of the anti-Russian demonstration there were upwards of 300,000 people on the streets of Alma-Ata (a city of only 1 million). More than 200 people were seriously injured and Alma-Ata hospitals, and two of the temporary prison camps, used to accommodate drunkards, had been cleared to make room for the 1000 arrested rioters.²³ Hooligans, drunkards and other anti-social individuals also Wild rowdies armed with metal rods, joined the crowd. sticks and stones, beat up and and insulted citizens (i.e. Russians) overturned cars and set fire to them and broke the glasses in stores, hostels and other public buildings. 24

According to the official explanation the "riots" were the result of nationalist excesses on the part of Kazakh youths - inspired by ring leaders who were drunk or on drugs they attacked the Soviet militia that were trying to control

- 23. Cited in Kuzio, CAS, Vol.7, No.4, p.82-83.
- 24. SWB Part I USSR, 1 Jan. 1987.

an ugly, unruly crowd through peaceful means. The source of the young people's dis-affection was the apprehensions of the children of the local elite that they could no longer count on a life of privilege, and also as a manifestation of Among the other causes of anti-Russian sentiment.²⁵ discontent were dogmatism, alienation from real life instead of an active internationalist policy - both in education and in the distribution of benefits, the selection and placing of cadres.²⁶ According to one writer "bribery, corruption, favouritism, flattery, servility, absence of criticism and self-criticism engineered indifference and passivity in people and fostered parasitism, careerism and deception. The republic failed to wage a persistent struggle against hooliganism, alcoholism and drug addiction, especially among the juveniles. Taking advantage of all this, the organisers of the disorder pushed youngsters with the abyss of nationalism into rioting.²⁷

The other version of the Alma-Ata events is quite different from what the Russian commentators and Soviet

- 25. Marth Brill Olcolt, n.22, p.66.
- 26. SWB, Part I USSR 10 Jan 1987.
- 27. SWB Part I USSR 1 Jan. 1987.

official reports make us relieve. It is generally agreed that the local Soviet authorities' treatment of the crowds on December 17, 1986 was harsh and a violent repression of the Kazakhs who tried to give vent to their political aspirations.²⁸ The Kazakh authorities setup a commission to enquire into the disturbances in Alma-Ata, also concluded that the official version of the December events differed in many respects from what actually occurred. The commission emphasised particularly that the demonstrators were not a bunch of "alcoholics and drug addicts" but a politically and socially aware group of young members of the indigenous population. It stated , "the underlying causes of the young people's dissatisfaction were the low standard of living, social injustice and the failings of the commandadministrative system."²⁹ The Commission's findings confirmed instances of brutal treatment of demonstrators and use of unconstitutional methods. It proposed that December 17th be designated as a memorial day or a day of democratic renewal in memory of the tragic events of December 1986.30

- 28. Martha Bhay Brill Olcott, n.22, p.67.
- 29. CDSP. Vol. XLII No.39, Oct 31, 1990, p.22.
- 30. Ibid., p.23.

And this day has now been declared as a National Day by the newly independent state of Kazakhstan.

The Aftermath of the Riots

The riots in Alma-Ata created a new political agenda for the republic's political elite and masses, all alike, Kunayev's political legacy and Moscow's slowness in redressing inter-ethnic grievances hindered progress toward the political and economic restructuring of Kazakhstan.³¹ The events forced the Soviet leadership to reevaluate its nationalities policy. Gorbachev while speaking at the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on January 27, 1987 stressed the need to present "a real picture of relations between nationalities and the prospects for their development", and to combat "the negative phenomenon and deformation", which manifest themselves, including parochialism, tendencies towards ethnic violation, and incidents similar to those which took place in Alma-Ata. Gorbachev thought, "the events in Alma-Ata called for a serious analysis" and a "principled assessment for enhancing inter-nationalist education", especially with a view to

31. Martha Bril Olcolt, n.22, p.65.

"save the rising generation from the demoralising effect of (narrow) nationalism..."³²

A study group to examine public opinion in the republic was established under the auspices of the Kazakhstan's Communist Party's propaganda and agitation department. Its main aim was to prevent the recurrence of such riots.³³ Many were sentenced to death for provoking young people to participate in Alma-Ata riots. Resolutions were passed to improve the instruction of Kazakh as well as Russian language in schools. Besides, German, Korean and Dungan languages were also to be studied a as a first language in several parts of the republic depending upon the pattern of local population.³⁴ Vigorous social policies were pursued to improve the standard of living of the people in the republic.

Growth of Informal Groups

By 1988 various informal groups had provided an opportunity for ordinary citizens to become involved in

32.	See	John	Sallnow,	n.	18,	p.54.
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- 33. Kuzio., p.89.
- 34. SWB Part I USSR 8 Jan. 1989.

political action on issues of concern to them, such as environment or language issues. One such unofficial group had a particular political and economic significance in Kazakhstan: the committees set up by striking miners in Karaganda oblast, in June 1990.³⁵ Other groups included Alma-Ata Popular Front, Democratic Union, Alash, Adilet, Islam and Democracy, Atmaken etc. A deputy Republican prosecutor reported that there were more than 300 informal groups in Kazakhstan with more than 3000 members. He considered their most positive contribution to be moving bureaucracy to take action to deal with serious social problems like interethnic relations.³⁶ However, the authorities in Kazakhstan were strongly opposed to these groups and tried to repress them or to co-opt them.

Although Gennady Kolbin made some changes in Kazakhstan, especially with regard to the language issue there has been a fundamental re-definition of the political goals of the CPK since Nazerbayev took over as first secretary in June 1989.³⁷ To this end, the party changed its position on a number of key issues to retain its

- 36. Ibid.
- 37. Martha Brill Olcott, n.22, p.67.

^{35.} Bess Brown , The Public Role in Perestroika in Central Asia, <u>CAS</u>, Vol.4, n.3, 1990, p.87-96.

authority over the population and thus tried to project a new image. Fresh step began to be taken for making Kazakh the state language in the republic, eliminating the blank pages of Kazakh history, preserve the republic's natural resources, and acquire economic autonomy for Kazakhstan.

NOVY UZEN DISTURBANCES

In June 1989 ethnic riots took place at Novy Uzen city in the Guryev province of Kazakh republic. After a brief spell of peace after the Alma-Ata riots, the Novy Uzen disturbances caused concern to authorities once again. The population of Novy Uzen consists of approximately 56,000 people, including about 20,000 who are representatives of peoples of Caucusus: Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Lezghians and others. The city's life is characterised by high prices, inadequate housing, unemployment problem, poor social conditions, malfunctioning of cooperatives etc.

The disturbances began on the night of June 16-17, 1989 touching off a wave of riots. On the evening of June 16, a fight broke out on a dance floor between groups of indigenous and Caucasian nationalities.³⁸ Anti-social

^{38.} CDSP, Vol.XLI, n.25, 1989, p.19.

activities were carried out, public property was damaged, and even homes were not spared. Public services were paralysed and many establishments were shut down causing inconvenience to normal life. Many people were injured and a few died. Many demonstrations and rallies were held. The number of protesters at various places ranged between 250 to Their posters and slogans, written in Russian and 7,000. Kazakh, said: "We demand a fair distribution of benefits!" "Equal work, fair distribution of income!" and "Young people want work!" When the party executives and Republican authorities visited the scene, four demands were placed before them : (i) relaese of the people detained for hooliganism during the mass disturbances, (ii) handing over of the head of the Novy Uzen city internal affairs department for a settling of scores. (iii) Expulsion of every member of Caucasian nationality from the city within seven days and closure of their cooperatives, and (iv), to find jobs for all the unemployed people of indigenous nationality.³⁹

Following the violent disturbances, several hundred people of the Caucasian nationality were taken outside the

^{39.} Ibid., p.20.

city limits, where they were given protection by police officers and USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs troops and provided with food. Later they were returned to their own homes. Curfew was imposed to control the situation. It was also reported that many Caucasian nationals left Novy Uzen.⁴⁰

Soon after the violence spread to neighbouring provinces from June 22 to June 23, 1989 where there was no curfew and patrolling. Dzhetybai, Munaishy, and Yeraliev witnessed mass disturbances. It later came to notice that the persons detained were residents of Novy Uzen. Thev apparently came from there especially to organize demonstrations. Rumors were floated to stir the people in Tselinograd, Semipalatinsk, Kokchetav Pavlodar, Kustanai and Chimkent Provinces,⁴¹ including Kulsary, Shepke, Mangyshlak and the town fort of Shevchenko. In Kzyl-orda, some 30 taxi drivers left the depot and drove around the city trying to assemble people for a rally. Dzhambul province and several other areas witnessed the to appearance of inflammatory

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p.21.

leaflets of nationalist content with calls for disturbances.⁴²

The events in Novy Uzen depict that Central Asian nationalism has not been only Islamic in nature. It has a number of other components. It has long been and remains today on the whole xenophobic, above all anti-Russian as become quite clear, 43 in this case. The Kazakhs turned against unidentified Caucasians who had allegedly been given both homes and work at the expense of the indigenous population, by the Soviet authorities. The failure of Party, Soviet and Law enforcement agencies, to intervene in favour of local Kazakhs also caused these people to distrust them. This in turn ripened the conflict that exploded in Novy Uzen in such an outburst of emotions.⁴⁴ After the tension had finally subsided life became normal. An organisation, made up of Caucasians emerged spontaneously It came to an agreement with the Birlik Committee, created by Kazakhs, to tackle the social and national-cultural problems together.⁴⁵

- 43. Yaccov Roi, n.15, p.55.
- 44. CDSP, Vol.XLI, No.25, 1989, p.20.
- 45. Ibid., p.21.

^{42.} Ibid.

Though the conflicts in both Alma-Ata and Novy Uzen, clearly manifested the anti-Russian sentiments, they differed from each other to a great extent. In the case of Alma-Ata, the major cause was the removal of a Kazakh and his replacement by an ethnic Russian as First Secretary of the Communist Party which was a deviation from the general practice. An examination of the reasons for the Novy Uzen disturbances reveals that the low standard of living of the Kazakhs and their antagonism towards the Caucasias appeared to be the main cause. The riots in Kazakhstan brought to limelight the failures of Soviet nationalities policy. It demonstrated the strong presence of nationalism as an undercurrent within the non-Russian Communist Parties themselves. The riots also exposed the emotions of non-Russian nationalities, which were given a ventilation by perestroika and glasnost. Such sentiments echoed both within and outside the republic. Within Kazakhstan, Uralsk, Temirtov, Karanganda oblast and Novy Uzen city experienced mass disturbances. According to an Alma-Ata Radio report, "these violations of public order are due to the low standard of educational work in work collectives, and the inadequate influence of Komsomol and other public organisations on young people."46 Outside the republic

46. SWB Part I USSR, May 2 1989.

similar events occured in the neighbouring Central Asian Muslim republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrghizistan and Tadzhikstan.

However, it came as a surprise that Kazakhstan, of all the Central Asian republics, was the first one to experience such a violent outburst of discontent and nationalism, even though the Kazakhs were generally believed to have the highest degree of Russification of the Central Asian Muslim republics. These events demonstrated the hollowness of the Soviet claims of the nationalities policy.⁴⁷

Despite Nazarbayev's meticulous measures, ethnic disturbances did take place again. In June 1990 following an incident in Temirtau involving Azerbaijani and Kazakh students which resulted in the death of two of the students, there were fresh attempts to fuel the conflict after rumours had lent the incident an inter-ethnic hue. There was also unrest between Kazakhs and Chechens. Again in September 1990 a citywide rally took place in Alma-Ata in the Square in front of the building of the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. Several hundreds gathered carrying banners written in Kazakh and Russian. "We will not give up

47. Kuzio, n.16, p.100.

an inch of Kazakhstan's land!" "We will not let Kazakhstan Be Torn Apart", "My people Prepare to Defend your land, "Turkestan for the Turks", "Expel Chauvinists - Goloko, Vasilyeva, Petrushenk (USSR people's deputies from Eastern Kazakhstan oblast) from Kazakhstan", as they were charged of campaigning for the transfer of Eastern Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation. One more incident took place in October 1990 in Alma-Ata. Speeches delivered for more radical measures to achieve Kazakhstan's real sovereignty were heard by young people, and leaflets were also distributed.

Following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has been playing a key role as one of the prominent members of the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Kazakh President Nursultan Nazerbayev is keen to achieve new heights in the over all socio-economic and cultural development of Kazakhastan, Realising the vulnerability of Kazakhstan's economic position Nazarbayev has been pushing the five Central Asian republics to work in concert to solve their common problems through setting up direct economic ties and developing an all Central Asian market.⁴⁸

48. Martha Brill Olcolt, p.73.

In June 1990, Presidents of the republics of the five Central Asia republics met in Alma-Ata and signed an agreement for economic social, and cultural co-operation.⁴⁹ Now that Kazakhstan has become an independent sovereign and has established relations with other countries including Russia on an equal footing, the agenda of the Kazakhs has underwent a radical shift.

The priority now is to make the economy of Kazakhstan self-sufficient and viable. However, the settlement of inter-ethnic disputes is also one of the important issues require an amicable and lasting solution. Nazarbayev is keen to avert a potentially volatile situation in a deteriorating economy which could be accentuated by the eruption of antagonistic nationlist sentiments and Kazakh and Islamic resurgence. He is in search of new avenues to bridge the gap between the Kazakh and the Russian views of a reconstructed Kazakhstan.⁵⁰

- 49. SWB Oct. 18 1988, n.0898.
- 50. Martha Brill Olcolt, n.22, p.77.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONFLICT IN KYRGHIZIA (1990)

Besides Kazakhstan, Kyrghizia is another multiethnic mosaic and provides ample illustrations for the study of ethnic dynamism in recent years. This region which used to pride itself on its tranquillity has been swept by a wave of brutal clashes between different nationalities. It was in June 1990 that clashes occurred between natives Kyrghiz and Uzbek settlers in Osh province which spread to the neighbouring communities. Many parts of the region witnessed ethnic turmoil. Despite several steps by the authorities, the skirmishes continued for more than two months.

Demographic Situation

The ethnic composition of Kyrghizia includes a diverse population ratio of European and other non-Coughs minorities. Besides Kyrghiz there are Russians, Uzbeks, Ukranians, Germans, Tatars, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Tajiks and others. During the period 1959 to 1979 the percentage of Russian population declined from 30.2% to 25.9% in Kyrghizistan.¹ In 1989, it further declined to 21 percent

^{1.} Shirin Akiner, <u>Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union</u>, (London, 1983), p.43.

Source: Lee Schwartz, USSR Nationality Distribution by Republic, Soviet Geography, vol.32, no.4,

	Total	Urban	Rural	% of urban	% of Rural		
Kirghizia	4290	1641	2649	38	62		
Frinze city	626	622	4	99	1		
Issyik-Kul Oblast	665	184	481	28	72		
Osh Oblast	2010	577	1433	29	71		
Districts under	989	258	731	26	74		
Republican control	1						

Census Populatons of Kirghizia 1989

Table 12

а Tatars in previous censuses. The 1979 listed a Tatar population of 72,018 in the Kirghiz SSR. The 1989 census listed the 1979 Tatar population of Kirghizia as 71,744. The difference of 174 was listed in the 1989 census as the crimean Tatar population of Kirghizia in 1979; the 1989 Crimean Tartar population of Kirghizia was listed as 2,294.

- The figures for 1979 and 1989 do not include the Crimean Tatars, who were counted as
- +106.1 100.0 2,933 3,523 4,258 2,066
- Total

Change 1970 1979 1989 1959-89 1959 _____ +166.4 52.4 1,687 2,230 1,285 837

912

426

109

101

72^a

30

27

23

136

Kirghiz

Uzbeks

Russians

Ukranians

Germans

Tatars

Uighurs

Kazakhs

Tadzhiks

Others

624

219

137

40

56

14

20

15

104

1991, p.238.

856

333

120

90

69

25

22

22

111

Ethnic-Trends in the Kyrghiz SSR (in thousands)

917

550

108

101

70^a

37

37

34

174

Percentage

+47.0

+151.1

-21.2

+152.5

+25.0

+164.3

+85.0

+126.7

+67.3

Percentage

Change

1989

21.5

12.9

2.5

2.4

1.6

0.9

0.9

0.8

4.1

Table 11

Source: P.L. Dash, Kwarikoo and Dawa Norbu Ed. Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia. South Asia Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p.108.

and the Kyrghiz. The Kyrghiz represented a majority population within their own republic for the first time since the 1930s. The Kyrghiz share of the Kyrghizia population increased from 47.9 to 52.4% between 1979 and 1989 (See Table I).² Between 1979 and 1989, there was substantial Russian and Ukranian outmigration.³

Kyrghizia under Russian/Soviet Rule

The Kyrghizs who also call themselves Kik-kun, are racially Mongoloid and speak north-west Turkic (Kipchak) tongue of the Altaic family of languages. They are traditionally engaged in pastoral nomadism, and they belong to Sunni sect of the Hanafi school that is mixed richly with pre-Islamic totemism, demonism, and other beliefs.⁴ Following the conquest of Kyrghiz territory by Russia in the mid-nineteenth century, Kyrghyzystan became an area of Slavic agricultural resettlement.⁵ After 1928, the primary

- 4. Richard Weeks, <u>Muslim Peoples</u> (London, 1978), p.215.
- 5. Hetmanek in Katz ed. <u>Handbook of Major Soviet</u> <u>Nationalities</u>, (London, 1975), p.240.

Lee Schwartz, 'USSR Nationality Distribution by republic 1979-1989', <u>Soviet Geography</u> Vol.32, No.4, 1991, p.244.

^{3.} Ibid.

goal of Stalins program for Kyrghizia was the denomadisation and collectivisation of the indigenous herdsmen.⁶ Local culture also underwent significant changes during the Soviet period. However, many of the old mores are still retained. Although nomadism has been suppressed, many Kyrghizs are transhumant sheperds, still spending a part of the year away from their villages, pasturing their flocks in the mountains.⁷ Clans and other kinship ties still play a role in the conduct of funerals, memorial rites and other ceremonies, in mutual aid practices, social organisation, residential patterns and even popular attitudes toward officialdom.⁸ The official structure of the Kyrghizs continues to be patriarchical despite Soviet insistence on the contrary.⁹ Intermarriages are rare. The Kyrghiz brides and grooms go through both the brief Soviet civil rites and the traditional marriage ceremony, frequently taking days to consummate.¹⁰

- 8. Ibid., p.245.
- 9. Weeks, n.4, p.217.
- 10. Ibid.

^{6.} Ibid., p.241.

^{7.} Lawrence Krader <u>Peoples of Central Asia</u> (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications 1963), p.24.

Among the factors shaping national attitudes of the Kyrghiz may be mentioned the century-old Russian presence, the rise of the national consciousness among the Kyrghizs, their Islamic heritage and regional ties. Kyrghizs have traditionally placed high value on independence, they are most prone to voice disapproval of unpopular policies of the Soviet regime.¹¹ However, while significant progress has been achieved in economicm, educational (Kyrghiz have achieved hundred percent literacy) and health care fields, the Kyrghizs have been feeling concerned about the Russian influence over the Kyrghiz language and culture. This attitude, they feel, is clearly manifested itself in atheistic propaganda and various other similar measures.

Recent Trends - Negative Phenomena

There are over 80 nationalities and ethnic groups in Kyrghizia.¹² Social life is characterised by poor living conditions when compared with the Slavic republics. Industrialisation and modernisation have failed to bring about remarkable changes in the attitudes of the people. In

^{11.} Eligebeth Bacon, <u>Central Asia</u> <u>Under Russian Rule</u> (Ithaca Cornell Univ. Press 1963), p.213.

^{12.} SWB, Part I, USSR, 7th Feb. 1985.

recent years many shortcomings and distortions in various spheres of life have led to discontent among the people of the republic.

Nearly two-thirds of kirghiz population are employed in agriculture. The non-agricultural occupations were dominated by the non-Kyrghiz. Average industrial production in Kyrghizistan declined from 10.8% in the period 1961-65 to just 4.9% in 1986. As per 1989 estimates Kyrghizstan accounted for an insignificant share of 0.6% of the Gross National Product of the Soviet economy. There has been no significant share of indigenous workers in the industrial sector.¹³ Young Kyrghizs were reluctant to leave the republic for construction sites in other parts of the former Soviet Union.¹⁴ Low rates of inter-regional and intraregional mobility resulted in concentration of labour in the countryside. Serious failures in a number of national economy sectors were also observed.

Many party committees were found guilty of favoritism, which prevailed mostly in the the selection and placing of

SWB, Part I, USSR, 13th March 1987.
 14. Ibid.

cadres.¹⁵ Negative phenomena like home-town favouritism, nepotism and protectionism occurred in many higher educational establishments. Quite often student collectives were formed on this basis. The national structure of the republican population was by no means everywhere taken into account, for instance while staffing the social science departments. As a result about 70% of the lecturers working in these departments were representatives of the indigenous nationality. They accounted for over 90% of the staff in many departments. Personal interests took over public interests.¹⁶ Many officials were removed from their posts for organizing drinking parties and immoral behaviour. They were reprimanded for becoming irresponsible.

Serious decline in the study of Russian and Kyrghiz languages was noticed. Without knowing Russian many young people experienced difficulties in production, public activity and in military services. Though Kyrghiz language was allowed to flourish, many problems in its study and teaching remained unresolved. Previously, school children could study either Kyrghiz or Russian and the choice was

- 15. Ibid., 25th Jan. 1986.
- 16. Ibid., 4th Feb. 1987.

made by their parents. In recent years mandatory classes in both the languages have been introduced¹⁷ to satisfy the demands made by people at local and national levels. Some Turkologists feel that the poor care for the spiritual development of the Kyrghiz people led to the retardation of the functional development of the Kyrghiz language. Individual representatives of the intelligentia connect this with the mass studies of Russian language, which, in their opinion, allegedly lowers the importance of native language.¹⁸ Depsite these infrastructural difficulties, 97.9% people claimed Kyrghiz as their mother tongue (1979 census).

Rise in Religious Consciousness

Despite atheistic education by Soviet authorities, religious practices have been reviving in Kyrghistan. The influence of preachers of Islam on women, young people, and children increased in certain rayons of Osh and Issyk Kul oblasts.¹⁹ The funeral of almost all the deceased members of the indigenous nationality in rural areas continues to

- 17. Ibid., 21th Sept. 1987.
- 18. Ibid., 16th March 1987.
- 19. Ibid., 7th Feb. 1983.

involve the performance of the religious ritual 'Dzharaz' (the burial service). Orthodox church rituals are also actively practiced. In Talass oblast, there are believers who satisfy their religious needs freely and without violating the legislation. At the same time others enter on a path of confrontation with law. The number of selfappointed mullahs is increasing.

Several young people who are not even well-versed in Islam have started to study the Baptist religion, while the communist activist started learning Kyrghiz specifically with a view to spread God's is word among the younger generation.²⁰ Many strongly believe that being Kyrghiz makes them Muslim. Some young people started refusing to work in the army out of religious conviction.²¹ Leading cadres, communist and Kosmosol members and other officials openly take part in religious festivals and rituals quite often. Each year there are more the 2000 weddings in mosques, and 10,000 baptisms in orthodox churches.²² The income of religious associations has been increasing in recent years.

- 20. Ibid., 31th July 1986.
- 21. Ibid., 16th Dec. 1986.
- 22. Ibid., 7th Feb. 1986.

Impact of Alma-Ata Riots

The Alma-Ata events forced the Kyrghiz authorities to pay attention to the domestic and ethnic problems. A.M. Masaliyev, First Secretary of Kyrghiz Communist Party Central Committee foresaw the occurrence of nationalist attitudes in Kyrghizia, especially among the intelligentia and young people²³ Many young people started judging others not by their qualities but by whether they belong to a particular tribe. They ill-treat foreign students, studying in their republic. Often religious customs are attached to national traditions.

Majority of the people condemned the nationalistic riots in Alma Ata. Surprisingly some social science lecturers displayed national conceit, narrowmindedness and chauvinism and cultivated nationalist prejudices. Reports of Professor Attokurov aspired to engender distrust between different nationalities. He allowed himself to make attacks on the Russian people. In his lectures he demonstrated the tables of clan and tribal division of the Kyrghiz and asked the students from which clans and tribes they came.²⁴

- 23. Ibid., 4th Feb. 1987.
- 24. Ibid., 16th March 87.

Numerous informal groups cropped up. Their press coverage was very little. Representatives of Population Front reportedly took part in a Birlik demonstration in Tashkent on Oct. 15, 1989.²⁵ In December 1988 Sovietskaya Kyrghizia said that there were nine informal groups in Frunze six of them political clubs. It indicated that the groups had a certain grudjing acceptance on the part of the authorities, and wanted to advance their own ambitions.²⁶

Besides the above mentioned phenomena many instances of bribe taking law breaking and serious violations in administration were noticed. The total number of crimes was on the rise. Many swindlers were exposed in extortion during the allocation of housing and cars and during admission to higher educational establishments. The biggest increases in crime were in Osh Oblast and Alamedin and Sokuluk Rayons.²⁷

27. SWB, Part 1 USSR, 7th Feb. 1986.

^{25.} Birlik is Uzbek Popular Front which demands transformation of Uzbekistan into an independent republic.

^{26.} Bess Brown, 'The Public role in Perestroika' in <u>Central</u> <u>Asian Survey</u>, (London), Vol.9, No.3, 1990, p.87-96.

Ethnic disturbances in Osh Province

On June 4, 1990 tragic events occurred due to confrontation between the Kyrghiz and the Uzbeks the ostensible cause for the disturbance was the unauthorised capture by the Kyrghizs, of a field belonging to the suburban Lenin Collective Farm in Kara-Su-District²⁸, where many Uzbeks had settled in the past few years. Residents of the Uzbek neighbourhood considered themselves insulted by this action. In recent years quite a few new enterprises and organisations had expanded appreciably in Osh which required an influx of fresh man power from rural areas. Many Uzbeks from the neighbouring Uzbekistan were employed in those establishments. The arrival of these immigrants resulted in serious housing problem. Already, more than 12,000 residents of Osh were registered on the official waiting lists for housing.

To express dissatisfaction with the emerging situation stormy speeches were addressed to the people by those who had united under the auspicies of "Osh Land aimagy"²⁹, on June 4, 1990. This society has been reported to be involved

29. Ibid.

^{28.} CDSP Vol. XLII, No.23 July 1, 1990, p.1.

in most of the events in Osh. Its member adopted an extremist and provocative approach. By evening large groups of Uzbek also gathered for a rally including women and children when police officials tried to disrupt them. Stones and empty bottles flow through the air. Top leaders of the Osh city urged the participants of the rally to be prudent and promised to specifically examine all points of the demands advanced by Osh's Uzbek population. However doubt was expressed only with respect to one of the demands on creating an Uzbek autonomous province within the Kyrghiz republic.³⁰

The disturbances continued all night. Few people died and several were hospitalised. Emergency was introduced in the city of Osh. In the village of Uzgen, a few days later, extremist minded young people of the Uzbek nationality laid siege to the building housing the prosecutor's office. Violence spread to the capital, Frunze, on June 5, when all the Uzbek tradesmen at the capital's bazaars were beaten and driven out.³¹ On June 6, another rally of thousand of people was held on the central square, at which the leaders of the

30. SWB Part I USSR, Jan. 24, 1991.

31. Ibid.

recently created Kyrgyzstan Democratic Movement³² called for the defence of national interests. On June 7 a crowd of 4,000 young people blockaded the building of the Kyrghiz Communist Party Central Committee and demanded the resignation of the entire leadership. Yet another section on June 10, in Frunze demanded the resignation of the First Secretary A. Masaliyev, a review of economic relations with the neighbouring republics and the expulsion of all Uzbeks from Kyrghizia.³³

Soon, the unrest spread to Alai, Aravan, Kara-Su, Uzgen, Naukatsky, Sovetsky, Dzhalal-Abad, Suzak and Koktab. Everywhere rallies were organised and many demands were made by both the Kyrghiz and Uzbek nationalities. In Dzhalal Abad 5,000 people gathered in the town's central square. They urged the authorities to hand over the murderers and discharge police officials, who in their opinion failed to adopt necessary measures to detain the offenders, demanded resignation of some city officials, the introduction of Uzbek into the management of the Procurator's office, courts and the KGB, the establishment of self-defence units and the

33. CDSP, no.28, p.4.

^{32.} It came into being in Spring 1990, SWB Part I USSR, Nov.6, 1990.

opening of Uzbek language groups at Dzhalal Abad's secondary and vocational schools.³⁴ As a counter reaction Kyrghizs gathered in Suzak Rayon and expressed discontent with the demands of the Uzbeks.

For about two months transport facilities were affected, many houses were burnt, public property was damaged, roads were blocked, automatic weapons were confiscated, and sales were also disrupted. Tass gave the statistics of injuries, deaths and material damage for the period of ten days violence in June 1990; 200 people killed, 1,366 injured, and 1,069 hospitalised; 300 people were missing and 514 buildings were destroyed. Army troops seized 1,474 arms.³⁵

In connection with the tragic events in Osh Province of the Kyrghiz Republic, the situation became exacerbated in neighbouring Andizhan Province of the Uzbek Republic as well, especially in the border districts. This was because tens of thousands of Uzbeks live in Osh and the districts where the disturbances occurred. On the other hand, about 70,000 Kyrghiz live in Andizhan Province.

34. SWB Part I USSR, SU/0813, July 11, 199) 0.
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35. Ibid, July 14, 1990.

Causes and Consequences

Official version of the causes differs from other versions. According to the Kyrghiz republic's first secretary, A. Masaliyev, "having succumbed to emotions and fired by the ambitions of extremist minded elements, groups of young people organised disturbances."³⁶ But there are other important reasons to that led to the conflict. The first alarm bell went off as early as May 1989. Dissatisfaction with the existing housing shortage by some young workers in Frunze manifested in an arbitrary takeover land of the suburban farms. Frightened by the first of sparks of conflict, the authorities handed over the land to set their minds at rest. Certain distortions in personnel policy were allowed. Uzbeks who account for more than onefourth of the population in Osh province, occupied only 4 per cent of the leading party posts. This violation of social justice in selection and placement of personnel led to discontent, tension and confrontation.

According to some sources, the struggle for political nomenklatura representation which had taken on a separatist nature was thought to have been another cause of the

^{36.} CDSP Vol. XLII, No.25, July 25, p.14.

disturbances. Besides, problems of low living standards, demand for an autonomous entity for Uzbeks at numerous rallies also kindled the spark of violence. An Uzbek society 'Adilet' also increased the passions by organizing rallies. Many serious blunders made by the party officials like expulsion of Meshkhetian Turks and ignoring the interests of another section of the people while adopting the state language³⁷, education and employment on national lines created hostile atmosphere.

Even small things like signs on roads and on institutions which are mostly in Kyrghiz despite the presence of many Uzbek settlements caused concern. The Kyrghiz-Uzbek clashes left Kyrghizia in a state of total destruction. Many buildings and houses were damaged, some were burnt down. Economy was seriously affected. Many young people became jobless and nearly half of them were from the Osh province. Instability and lack of guarantees of safety generated a desire among the Russian speaking population to migrate elsewhere. The confrontation between Kyrghiz and Uzbeks led to the election of a Russian, A. Karpasov, as head of Uzgen district.

37. SWB Part I USSR, SU/0829, July 27, 1990.

Many measures were taken to stabilize the situation. A meeting of the leaders of the Kyrghiz and Uzbek Republics was held in Osh on June 9. It was declared that all those found guilty of committing grave crimes, as well as the officials who proved unable to prevent the tragic events would be punished.³⁸ As a consequence of this measure, Chairman of Osh oblast Soviet of People's Deputies was removed from this post by a decree of the Kyrghiz President because of his irresponsible attitude towards his official duties, incompetence leading to inter-ethnic conflict and for his inability prevent undesired consequences of the conflict.³⁹ Several steps were also taken to stop the outflow of specialists from the region's industrial enterprises and to renew their faith.

The ethnic turmoil reveals that the Soviet policies were not able to overcome the delicate issue of nationalities problem. All the leaders were under the impression that the fruits of industrialisation would normalize nationality relations. But they proved wrong. Modernisation process enhanced nationalist feelings and

38. CPSP Vol. XLII, no.23 July 11, 1990, p.5.

39. SWB Part I ISSR, SU/0955, Jan. 4, 1991.

encouraged the development of native cultures. The President of the Kyrghizhia, Askar Akayev, Doctor of Technical Sciences and the President of Republican Academy of Sciences put this priority to stabilize the social and political situation and bring the inter-ethnic relations onto a more healthy state.⁴⁰

Now that Kyrghizia has attained independence and sovereignty, Akayev, who was elected as its President by a large majority, is set to quicken the pace of democratisation and economic restructuring. At the same time, he needs to tackle the thorny issue of inter-ethnic problem in Kyrghizia.

40. SWB Part I USSR, Nov. 29, 1990.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Ordinarily nations are the result of the ethnic development of nationalities, whose name they, as a rule, retain. However, nationalities divided by state borders frequently bring into existence several ethnic entities.¹ When (a) state borders do not coincide with ethnic borders (b) people belonging to different historical backgrounds are forced to live together and, (c) there are big immigrant groups, relations between the natives and outsiders are complicated and often lead to disputes. and tensions. Manifestations of ethnic tension, take a wide variety of forms-ethno-national, ethno-territorial, ethno-cultural etc. This makes the study of the ethnic processes particularly significant. Due to its ethno-religious diversity Soviet Central Asia clearly represents the most important case for the study of ethnic conflict.

The conflicts in Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia, as we have seen, reveal that ethnicity pervades all aspects affecting relations between different nationalities. Ethnic factors language, religion, traditions etc. - determine their life style and their world outlook. And that Gorbachev's

^{1.} S.Brook, <u>Ethno-demographic Processes: The World</u> <u>Population at the Threshold of the Twentieth Century</u>, USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1986.

glasnost only helped the indigenous peoples (Kazakhs and Kyrghizs) to give vent to long suppressed nationalist aspirations.

Historically speaking, Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia have more in common than other ethnic groups. Three things should be kept in mind in this regard. (i) Politically and nationally Kyrghizistan does not coincide with its present boundaries. The imposed soviet distinction between steppe dwellers - Kazakhs - and mountain dwellers - Kyrghiz - has never been accepted by the peoples involved. Strong similarities in language and custom, a common history and economy, as well as the age-old admonition in the epic trilogy 'Manas' that "Kazakhs and Kyrghiz are blood brothers", bind them together². The past or present events have never succeeded in splitting them into two. (ii) Since the December 1986 riots in Alma-Ata, it was guite clear that Soviet Russians did not play a lead anymore. Today both of them are independent states. (iii) Craving for full independence in Kyrghizia and Kazakhstan was as strong as in other parts of the former Soviet Union.

^{2.} Guy G. Imart, 'Kirghizia - Kazakhstan : A Hinge or a Fault-line?' <u>Problems of Communism</u>, Sept-Oct 1990, p.1.

Certain national psychological factors still haunt these peoples. Even today they are overwhelmingly rural dewellers. Their nationalism remained totally deprived of "expansionist dreams" and was "alien to all sorts of abstract pan-isms"³ A century and half of foreign domination failed to distort their basic traditional structure and integrity. The strong clan-tribal ties were not affected by denationalization, de-tribalization so typical of both Russian society and of disorganized rural groups.

Coming to the pattern of riots in Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia, however, there were certain dissimilarities. Though mass demonstrations and rallies followed the disturbances in each case, the causes of the conflict were different. In Kazakhstan, in case of Alma-Ata riots, the confrontation was between the Muslim Kazakhs and the non-Muslim Russians. Again, in Novy Uzen the Kazakhs clashed with the Caucasians. In both these cases in Kazakhstan, non-Central Asians were the target. Contrary to this, in Kyrghizistan two Central Asian nationalities - Kyrghiz and Uzbeks expressed their resentment against each other and there were even violent clashes. However, demographic trends and ethno-religious resurgence were the common factors which

3. Ibid, p.3.

perpetuated ethnic ties and distorted socio-economic situation.

Economically speaking, Kazakhstan is better developed than Kyrghizia. While in Kazakhstan political factors removal of the Kazakh, Kunayev and his replacement by a Russian Kolbin - played the lead role, in Kyrghizistan economic factors dominated the scene. Low living standards, competition for resources, housing, employment etc., fueled the conflict there.

Both cases were demonstrative of the responses to Perestroika and Glasnost unleashed by the Gorbachev era, the tragic failure of Soviet nationalities policies of assimilation and integration, and atheistic propaganda which proved Marxism and Leninism could not provide any alternative to the newly emerged national-religioussymbiosis. Nearly seven decades of Soviet rule could not erase the post memories - collectivization, Virgin Lands programme, suppression of national cultures local and religious and traditions - from the hearts of these peoples. Islam still acts as a cementing factor which they think, is the very manifestation of their ethnic identity. Faith in Islamic values determined their life styles. Today's Islam" is following the policies of "sophisticated adoption, accommodation and adjustment. Current demographic

trends, ethno-religious resurgence are only some of the factors which not only crystallized their ethnic identities, but also increased their national awareness and moves towards independence from the former Soviet Union.

This phenomenon can be observed throughout the world : many ethnic groups within various multi-ethnic states have been demanding the right to autonomous existence and have even laid claim to their "Sovereign States" in recent decades. This has been particularly characteristic of peoples who have maintained their traditional way of life as those in the case of Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia. The most prevalent explanations for the recent manifestation nationalism have been supposed errors in the implementation of Soviet Nationalities policy and deviation from Leninist principles.

Between 1985 and 1990 there were violent ethnic-clashes which rocked almost all the Central Asian republics. Among them Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia are different from the rest in the sense that they belonged to the same territorial unit before they were divided into two Soviet Socialist Republics. However, the first episode of ethnic riots was recorded in Kazakhstan in December 1986 which was four years earlier to the Kyrghiz Conflict (1990). The degree of Russification was thought to be highest among Kazakhs. The

low level of their representation at various levels caused dissatisfaction and led to ethnic rivalries with Russians. In Kyrghizia, on the other hand, negative phenomena - low production, unemployment immigration of non-Kyrghizs (Uzbeks) from the neighbouring areas - strained the relations among different groups and particularly between the Kyrghizs and the Uzbeks in Osh Province in June 1990. After the disintegration of the Union they became independent sovereign states. The new leadership in Kazakhstan under Nursultan Narbayev and in Kyrghistan under Askar Akayev, who is equally strong are moving these states towards economic prosperity by means of industrialisation, market reforms and opening up to foreign investment.

Recent and continuing developments have once again brought Central Asia which was part of the former Soviet Union (now CIS) from the backyards of history to the sharp focus of international politics. The newly emerged independent states changed the balance of power in this region. Its geographical proximity to Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and India and ethno-graphic complexity, ethno-religious and nationalist resurgence, growth of informal activist groups - <u>Birlik</u>, <u>Adilet</u>, <u>Azat</u> etc., - has made this region politically volatile and socially fragile.

Recently a mass rally was held in Alma-Ata in memory of anti-Russian disturbances of December 1986. Nazarbayev who also addressed the rally, later issued a decree exonerating and rehabilitating all those implicated in these disturbances in the Soviet period. The land law adopted in Kyrghizistan in April 1991 ruled that 'land in the Republic of Kyrghyzistan is the property of the Kyrghyz people', which created dissatisfaction among the non-Kyrghiz ethnic minorities who constitute nearly 50 per cent of the population of Kyrghyzstan. Another noticeable fact is the establishment of non-Kazakh and non-Kyrghyz associations. In Kazakhstan, Cossacks have organized themselves under the banner of <u>Vozrozdeniye</u> (Revival) and other societies demanding separation of the Cossack dominated territory of Kazakhstan and its merger with Russia. Similarly, in Kyrghyzstan an association formed by Christian Democratic, Slavonic Unions and Cossacks is striving to defend the social and political rights of these minorities. All this suggests the perpetuation of ethnic discord in the former Soviet Central Asia between natives and non Central Asian ethnic minorities.

In the cultural sphere, national histories were being re-written, and speedy restoration work of old mausoleums and tombs is on. New madrassahs are being set up and there

has been significant rise in publication and circulation of religious literature. Saudi Arabia has also been pumping large sums of money to Central Asia in a bid to reorient the Central Asian society and politics on the puritan West Asian model of Islam⁴. The Islamic resurgence in Central Asia is also a repercussion of the Khomeni revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

In the economic sphere, there are moves toward creation of common Central Asian market, trade pacts with countries like Singapore, Korea, and Privatization. The formation of a Regional council of Central Asia and Kazakhstan to develop close economic, scientific and cultural cooperation between these states is a step toward the formation of Central Asian Federation⁵. In the years before the coup the five Central Asian republics has begun to forge foreign links, largely to consolidate economic independence from the Slavic republics which formed the bedrock of their sovereignty declarations. The virtually non-existent relations for the past three generations with Turkey are being revived.

All these dramatic changes would have been mere illusions, but for Gorbachev. His least attention towards

K. Warikoo, 'Central Asian resurgence', <u>Seminar</u>, (New Delhi), no. 393, p.31.
 Ibid, p.33.

ethnic problem during the initial years, and his insensitivity to the first episode of ethnic conflict of his times which occurred in the Kazakh capital, Alma Ata brought the region into ethnic turmoil. Today, ethno-religious nationalism which is associated with the revival of Islam and steps towards Central Asian Federation are likely to be the determinants of the future set-up in the former Soviet Central Asia.

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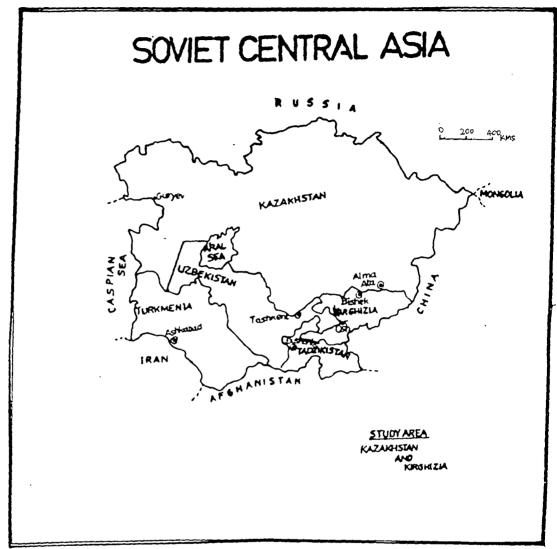
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120

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