

PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA" submitted by MR. MANOJ KUMAR MISHRA 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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TO MY PARENTS

PREFACE

Multi-ethnicity is a socio-political phenomenon in most civic societies and in the present century inter-ethnic cleavages, competition and conflict appear to have acquired a marked intensity. In the process, ethnic mobilisation has posed varied challenges to many 'developed' and 'developing' states. The pattern of ethnic group mobilisation has been complex and the demands variegated: 'affirmative discrimination', autonomy, secession.¹ The Central Asian Republics present a classic case in point. The sudden breakup of the Soviet Union had led to the emergence of five independent states in Central Asia. Landlocked and bordered by countries as diverse as Russia, China, Iran and Afghanistan, the five successor Central Asian states of the Soviet Union - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan cover a vast area of over

1. For further details refer , Phadnis, Urmila. Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia (New Delhi, 1990, Sage Publications).

(ii)

3,994,00 sq. kilometres but possess a collective population of only 51 million people. Yet this small and scattered population contains over 100 distinct ethnic groups. Hence the ethnic issue has gained prominence during their transitional period of state formation.

The political implications of ethnic politics in Central Asia have been largely influenced by Soviet legacy. From the geographic distribution and numerical location of ethnic entities to the demarcation of territorial borders, the impact of Tsarist rule and the nationality policies of successive Soviet regimes have determined the nature of inter-ethnic relations in the Central Asian region. Similarly, political developments and economic dynamics in the former Soviet Union have played a major role in influencing the direction of Central Asian ethnic politics.

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The region witnessed socio-political 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 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 Muslims was a direct consequence of socio-economic developments in Soviet Central Asia. In the course of modernization, self-awareness manifested itself in the form of nationalist movements, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist demonstrations. Moreover, it was Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost which provided an opportunity to the people of former Soviet Union, including those of Central Asia, to give vent to their feelings and aspirations that remained suppressed for long.

Freedom of the press enabled to voice their grievances and demands publicly through the media. During Gorbachev era, the entire Soviet Central Asia witnessed ethnic turmoil and discontent. Subsequent revolutionary developments led to the disintegration of Soviet Union and formation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It, therefore, becomes important to study the dynamics of ethnic conflict in the former Soviet Central Asia.

Solution to long-standing ethnic grievances have to be found and ethno-nationalistic demands accommodated. While ethnic sentiments have to be placated to attain legitimacy and to retain political control, safeguards have also to be provided to ethnic minority communities, with special emphasis on the position of the Russian population in their midst. The policies formulated, adopted and implemented by various Central Asian governments towards the ethnic people in the region.

This study seeks to examine the present socio-economic and political status of the Russian minorities in the Republics. We would also examine the changes that have occurred in the position of the ethnic Russians, after the disintegration of Soviet Union. The position of ethnicity in the politics of each individual state has also been analysed in an attempt to determine the future directions and shape of ethnic politics in Central Asia. The research is also to assess the impact of ethnic and Islamic resurgence in the Central Asian Republics. What are the government policies of the Central Asian Republics towards these Russian minorities and the Russian Federation as a whole. Will they go for economic cooperation with Russia and allow the Russian minorities for double citizenship? The study also looks into the impact of exodus of Russians on the socio-economic life of the Central Asian Republics and also evaluates the role played by external forces such as Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Pakistan and Turkey, in order to minimize the Russian influence in these states.

The first chapter looks at the position of Russians in Central Asia in a historical and political framework. It starts with the Tsarist period, followed by the Soviet period from Lenin to Gorbachev. Chapter II gives an account of the disintegration of Soviet Central Asia, and the subsequent ethnic-religious resurgence. Chapter III deals with the political problems of the Russian minorities in the Central Asian Republics and Chapter IV deals with their socio-economic problems. The study has followed an empirical and historico-analytical methodology for analysing the Russian minorities problems in the Central Asian Republics after the break-up of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Various primary and secondary sources were consulted, including Summary of World Broadcasts Part I (Former USSR), Foreign

Broadcasting Information Services (Central Eurasia), Current Digest of Soviet Press, journals and newspapers.

This dissertation has been completed under the supervision of Dr. K. Warikoo, Associated Professor in Central Asian Division, SIS. His deep insight on the subject and sustained guidance throughout the course of research enabled me to accomplish this work successfully. His constant encouragement made things much easier. My thanks are due to the members of his family for their affection.

I am also grateful to professor Dr. Dawa Norbu for his valuable instruction and suggestion.

I am especially thankful to the staff and members of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, American Centre Library who went out of their way and professional duties and gave me their

(viii)

invaluable cooperation which made my research pursuit a lot enjoyable.

I would be failing in my duties if I do not acknowledge UGC for providing me fellowship without which I might never have been able to pursue this research.

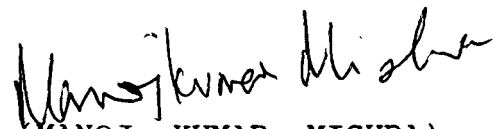
I deeply appreciate the typing skills of Mr. Talwar and photostat skills of Mr. Sanjay, but for whom this dissertation would not have attained the neat professional shape.

A word of thanks and deep acknowledgement to my friends who have with constant goading and support gave me the necessary inspiration to pursue all my endeavours especially to Manas, Pal, Samar, Chinu, Madhur, Rinkesh, Sunil, Mantu, Sana, Niharika, Naneet, Mandal, Praveen Singh, Romi, Kuni, Jamla, Datu and Ele.

I thank them all individually.

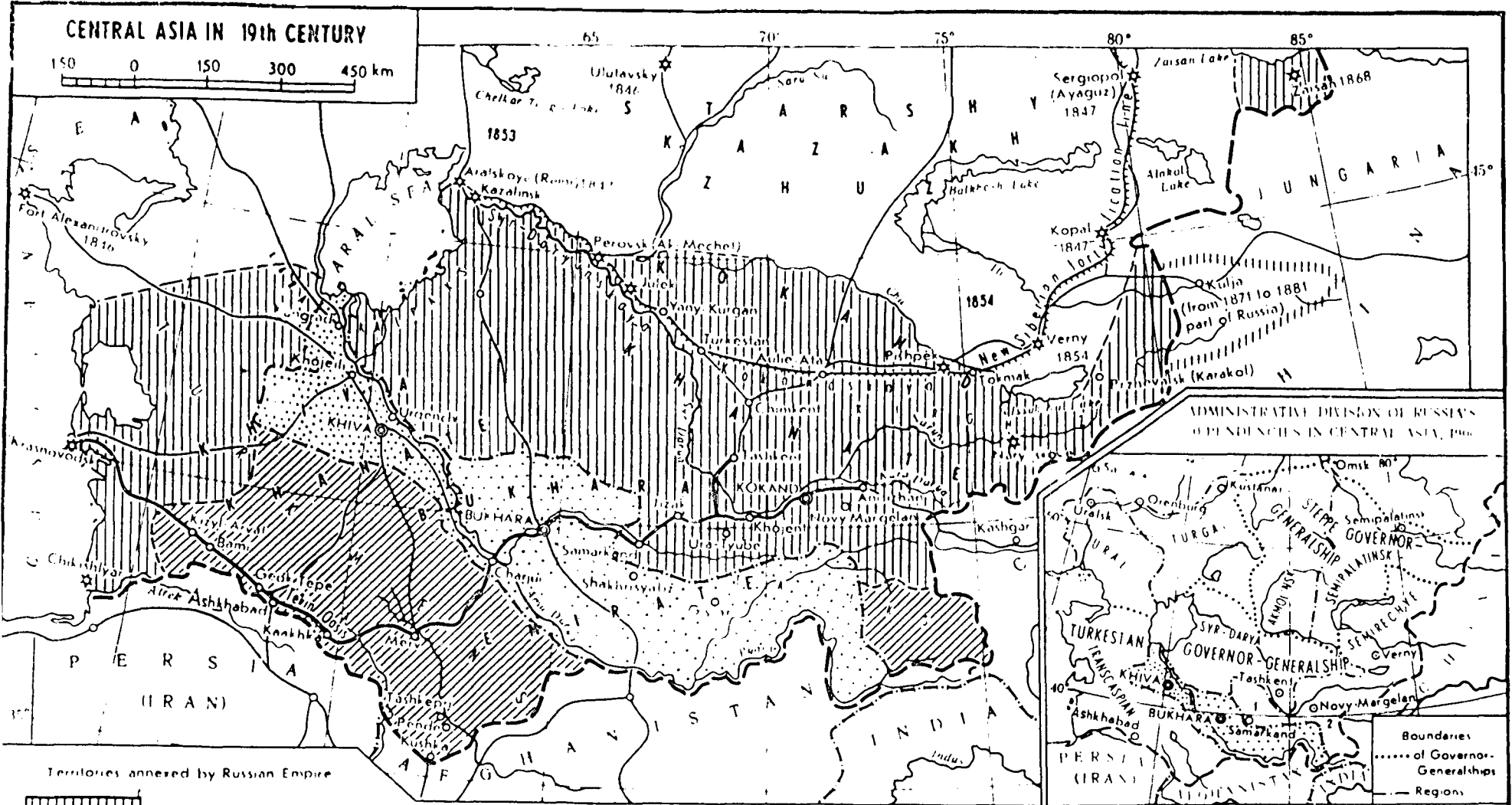
NEW DELHI

July 19, 1996


(MANOJ KUMAR MISHRA)

CENTRAL ASIA IN 19th CENTURY

150 0 150 300 450 km



ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF RUSSIA'S DEPENDENCIES IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1900



Figures on the map
1 Samarkand Region 2 Fergana Region

Territories annexed by Russian Empire

- from 1816 to 1876
- from 1877 to 1895

Territories depending on Russia

- of Bukhara Emirate since 1816
- Khiva Khanate since 1873

State frontiers of Russian Empire, 1900

1854

1847

Russian forts and dates of foundation

Russian fortification lines

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CHAPTER-I

CHAPTER-I

RUSSIANS IN CENTRAL ASIA - A HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

It was in the sixteenth century that the Russians began their expansion into Central Asia. The Muscovite Grand Duchy began its march on Asia as soon as it had overthrown the Mongolian yoke. In 1552, Ivan the Terrible occupied Kazan and in 1556 Astrakhan, on the Volga Delta. The southward movement from Siberia began in the eighteenth century, first into the steppe region and later into Turkestan. Russia's expansion into the steppe region may be said to have begun in 1730 with the acceptance of Russian control by Abulkhair the Khan of the Lesser Horde. The Russian advance towards the Khanates began chiefly in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ A

1. D. Kaushik, Central Asia In Modern Times - A History From The Early 19th Century, (Moscow, 1970), p.40.

scientific expedition was sent in 1824 to conduct a barometric study of the Caspian and the Aral Sea areas, with the support of half a battalion of Cossack infantry and six cannons. In 1834 a military base was established at fort Novo-Alexandrovsk on the north-eastern coast of the Caspian with the object of improving trade with Khiva.

The defeat of Tsarist Russia in the Crimean War resulted in the transfer of Russian interest from the Balkans and the Near East to the Far East and Central Asia. Instructions sent in 1858 by A. Gorchakov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire, to the Russian Ambassador in London, Buranov, reflected this policy. These instructions laid down "the strengthening of the influence of Russian industry, trade and culture in Asia" as the main object of Russian policy.² Y.A. Gagemeister recommended the annexation of

2. N.A. Khalfin, Prisoyedineniye Srednei Azii k Rossii, p.83.

Central Asia for economic reasons. The region was ideally suited to the cultivation of cotton and the Syr-Darya was navigable upto the vicinity of Tashkent. The conquest of Central Asia was seen to be of great significance to Russia, because it not only formed a convenient source of raw cotton for the Russian textile industry, but also a good market for Russian manufacturers. It also gave the advantage usually furnished by colonies to the military and officials of the conquering power.³

In June 1865, Cherneayev captured Tashkent, which according to Khalfin, "fully corresponded with the ideas both of the government and the military-feudal aristocracy of the Russian Empire, and of commercial and industrial circles". At first, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denied the intention of incorporating Tashkent into the Russian Empire. It wanted

3. W.P. and Zelda K. Coates, Soviets in Central Asia, (London 1951), p.44.

Tashkent to act as a buffer state between the Russian Empire and Bukhara. For some time the civil government of Tashkent remained in the hands of Cherneayev, with the religious and judicial administration vested in the "kazi kalam", or supreme judge of Canon Law, subject to confirmation by Cherneayev. Ultimately in August 1866, Tashkent was declared as part of Russia.

In the spring of 1866 military operations were started against the Bukhara Emirate, and by May 1866 Khodzhent, Dzhizak, and other towns and districts were taken, which opened up the direct road to Samarkand and Bukhara.⁴ In 1867 the newly acquired territory was formed into the Governorate General of Turkestan, with General K.P. Kaufman at its helm. In March 1868 the Emir of Bukhara declared a holy war against the Russian troops; disturbances occurred in Tashkent and

4. W.P. and Zelda K. Coates, Soviets in Central Asia. (London 1951), pp.45-46.

other conquered towns. Kaufman acted swiftly, and in April 1868 moved on Samarkand, defeated the troops of the Emir of Bukhara and entered the town on May 2.

Thus during the years 1864-68 the two most important Central Asian States - Kokand and Bukhara - were totally defeated, but, for external reasons, they were not formally annexed to the Tsarist Empire. Instead "peace treaties" were concluded in 1868 with the Kokand Khanate and the Bukhara Emirate, whereby these states relinquished the lands actually conquered by Russia, recognised themselves as vassals of the latter and gave the Russians extremely favourable trading terms.

Five years later came the turn of Khiva. In the spring of 1873 she was overrun by Russian and forced to accept terms dictated by Russia. In August 1873 a peace treaty was signed

between General Kaufman and Syed Mohammed Rahim Khan, the ruler of Khiva. This treaty forced the Khan to acknowledge that he was "the humble servant of the Emperor of All the Russians" and to renounce "all direct and friendly relations existing with neighbouring rulers and Khans".⁵ The whole of Amu-Darya and the surrounding lands belonging to Khiva were transferred to Russia, which also obtained free navigation on the Amu-Darya. The treaty with Khiva was a typical colonial treaty resembling to those of western powers and China. On the whole this treaty assured Russia an economic hold over these three khanates.

Next came the turn of Turkoman tribes who inhabited in Atrek valley and the Sorkhs of the Merv oasis. The Turkoman tribes of the Tekke suffered a shattering blow when their main centre, Goeke-Tepe, and also Ashkhabad were captured in

5. D.Kaushik, Central Asia In Modern Times - A History From The Early 19th Century (Moscow, 1970), p.46.

1881. But the whole of Turkoman territory was not yet in Russians hands, and another three years passed before Merv finally acknowledged Russian rule. In 1885 the Tedzhend oasis, which for a short time had been under Afghan rule, but which was inhabited by Turkomans, was annexed by Russia, thus bringing all the Turkoman country under Russian rule. By and large, by the end of 1885 the Russian conquest in Central Asia was rounded off. The work of two centuries was completed.

The conquest of the three Khanates and the Turkoman country raised enormously the prestige of Russia throughout Asia. There was the highest admiration for the might and fighting power of the great "White Padishah", who had sent forth his troops from his magnificent palace on the banks of the Neva, and had far exceeded in military achievement the great names of Genghiz Khan, Timur and Nadir.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT - After the annexation of the three Khanates, the Tsarist Russia then settled the Russian population in different Khanates. These Russian comprised of mainly military officials, skilled and unskilled workers for the construction of rail and roads, traders and middlemen who exploited the native people in the cotton cultivation. Another group, the Russian bourgeoisie also set up a variety of small and handicraft industries in these Khanates.

The entire Russian population of Turkestan amounted to 540,674. Of this 185,303 lived in towns and 330,469 in villages, 16,648 lived in town-like settlements and 8,254 near the stations along the railway line. Among the Russians town settlers approximately 26,000 were industrial workers, of whom about 20,000 were railway workers. In the Russian settlements in the Semirechye, there were 11,959 households with a population of 78,591. Out of these 10,531 were Russian

households with a population of 72,117 persons and 1,428 non-Russians with a population of 6,474. 3,322 (19.5 per cent) households (out of which 2,204, i.e., about 70 per cent, Russians, and 1,118, i.e., 30 per cent, non Russians). Among the Russians peasant settlers in the Chimkent 'uyezd' of the Sur-Darya oblast, about 35 per cent of the peasant families worked as agricultural labourers and 34 per cent as industrial workers.

Central Asia was converted into a raw material supplying base for the metropolitan industries in Russia. Tsarist administration paid great attention to cotton cultivation and encouraged it at expense of wheat and other agricultural products. Cotton export rose from 873 thousand poods in 1880 to 4,960 thousand poods in 1899, rising to 13,697 thousand poods in 1913. But the development of cotton cultivation did not improve their material conditions of the

dehkans (peasants). A new exploiter, the Russian, entered the scene when metropolitan capital began to finance cotton cultivation through local firms. The cotton purchasers, who were generally Russian, acted as a sort of middleman between the industrialist and the cotton producers, exploited them.

The administration of Turkestan was entrusted not to the Ministry of the Interior but to the War Ministry. The Governor-General appointed by the Tsar enjoyed wide powers and concentrated in his hands the entire military and civil administration of the territory. He had great powers in matters relating to Bukhara and Khiva as well. He appointed from among the representatives of Russian nobility and military officers the *oblast* and *vyezed* administrative officers. These officers indulged in all sorts of extortions and misuse of authority against the natives. Most of the *vyezed* commandants, writes R. pierce, levied "additional

taxes on the natives, usually to a degree that not only covered normal expenses but enabled them to live in luxury."

Although Tsarism purposely tried to keep Central Asia as its agricultural raw material base, its military and strategic interests and also the narrow interests of the Russian bourgeoisie obliged it to construct 3,377 kilometers of railway line and 14 railway repair workshops and depots which employed a total of approximately 24,000 workers, most of which were Russians. In 1888 Samarkand was joined by rail with Krasnovodsk, in 1898 with Andijan, and with Tashkent a year later. In 1906 Tashkent was also joined by a branch line with Orenburg. The introduction of railways marked the beginning of the end of economic seclusion of the different regions inside Central Asia and also the end of isolation of the whole of Central Asia.

The Russian bourgeoisie also had to allow a raw material processing industries to develop in the territory. Cotton ginning, oil, soap, beer, brick manufacturing and wool cleaning industries began to be established in Central Asia. By 1914, there were 818 semi-handicraft enterprises working in Turkestan. The total numerical strength of the industrial workers in Turkestan in 1914 was 49.9 thousand workers. Out of these 25.5 thousand (51 per cent) were engaged in industries and 24.4 thousand (49 oer cent) in railways. 72 per cent of the industrial workers were from local nationalities of Central Asia and 23 per cent were Russians. In the railways, however, Russian workers formed the bulk of the total strength (80 per cent).⁶

Thus the Central Asian economy before the October Revolution was an economy dominated by feudal relations of

6. Ibid., p.73.

production, of which the Russian bourgeoisie had the largest share.

In the colonial period a few significant developments in the cultural sphere may be noted. Of great importance was the opening of secular schools and other cultural institutions in Turkestan. The first Russian school was opened in Samarkand in 1870. The then Governor-General, Kaufman, attached great importance to the local people's sending their children to Russian schools where secular and scientific subjects were taught. By 1911, there were 105 such schools. The school curriculum was divided into two parts, viz., Russian language and arithmetic, etc., taught by a Russian teacher and Muslim religious instructions by a mullah.

There came to Central Asia after its annexation by Tsarist Russia, not only civil and military colonial

officials, "the scum" of Russian society, but also the noblest representatives of the Russian society, progressive Russian intelligentsia - scholars, scientists and teachers, democratic-minded middle level as well as minor officials, artisans and workers. A public library was opened in Tashkent in 1870, made possible by gifts of books from various cultural institutions of St. Petersburg and Moscow and from donations by many Russian scholars. A number of scientific societies were organized at the initiative of the Russian scientists for the study of geogrphy, anthropology, archaeology, astronomy and medicine. All these certainly made a contribution towards enriching the cultural life of Central Asia.

THE SOVIET NATIONALITY QUESTION

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 forcing Russification. The right to national self-determination as one of the basic principles of its foreign policy was proclaimed by the Soviet Union in one of its first decrees - the Decree on Peace. The Decree on Peace was subsequently confirmed by a series of other decrees of the Russian Federation such as the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People, the Appeal of the Council of People's Commissars of the Toiling Muslims of Russian and the East, numerous diplomatic notes, statements, etc. 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 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.⁷

LENIN'S VIEWS ON NATIONALISM - Lenin prior to 1917 adhered to the views of Marx and Engels on the question of federation. Marx opposed federation in general but accepted only the form of integral and undivided republic. Lenin and the Communist Party opted for the principles of democratic centralism. He preferred a unitary state. He believed that the Party will build a multinational socialist state - not forcibly but by voluntary and free consent.

The Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first step towards the founding of national states by the

7. Gail W. Lapidus, "The Soviet Nationality Question" in Alexander Dallin and C. Rice ed. The Gorbachev Era, (Strandford, California 1987), p.77

people of Central Asia. For implementing its nationalities policy the Soviet Government created a special organ, the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs (Narkomnats).⁸ Thus, soon after the establishment of their regime, the Bolsheviki were equipped with both a policy and the machinery for carrying out the momentous task of building a supra-national state. In place of the policy of national state pursued by the Tsarist regime in the multi-national Russian Empire, the Soviet Government put into practice a policy which aimed at building a number of republics which in proportion, were given an appropriate degree of internal autonomy. The expression "national in form but socialist in content" aptly describes the reconciliation effect by the

8. R. Vaidyanath; The Formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics(A Study in Soviet Nationality Policy) (1917-1936) New Delhi, 1964, p.264.

Bolsheviks in t he nationalities policy between the rival claims of nationalism and socialism.⁹

Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy in 1921 to placate the peasantry and consolidating Soviet rule. As the Central Asia nations were largely composed of peasants, the NEP had tremendous implications for Soviet nationalities policy. The ethnic population 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.¹⁰

9. Ibid., p.265.

10. Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda no.30, p.59.

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 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 self-determination in Lenin's interpretation was to prove enormously successful as a means of winning the support of the national movement which the revolutionary period developed in all their magnitude.¹¹

THE 1924 NATIONAL DELIMITATION

The national territorial delimitation of Central Asia which brought into existence several national republics in place of the former multinational political entities of

11. R.Pipes, The Formation of Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism (1917-1923), (Cambridge, Harvard University press, 1954), p.49.

Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorem. The necessity for undertaking such an extensive territorial reorganization of Central Asia arose from the desire to remedy the complex national tangle which considerably hindered the development of a socialist order within the region. The heterogeneous composition of the population of the Central Asian republics raised a number of problems. The various national groups which inhabited in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm did not exist on the same level of political, economic, social and cultural development, and they also differed from one another in language, ways of life, customs and tradition. Vareikis, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party, asserted that national delimitation was a 'progressive step forward in the implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy in Central Asia, and that it was bound to weld together the mosaic of clans and tribes which were

ethnically and culturally related to one another and consolidate them in a single socialist nation'.¹²

The main criticism of Soviet delimitation policy was that the Bolshevik motives for political reorganization were based on 'divide and rule, The true meaning of 'divide and rule' was not only the communist desire to prevent a Turkic federation of the Central Asian people. Mustafa Chokayev's dream of 'khalqynyng qany bir, tili bir, dini bir' (a people of one soul, one tongue, one body) was rejected not only by the Bolsheviks, but also by various other Central Asian peoples who feared Tatar (in spite of the fact that Chokayev was a Kazakh) domination. He believed that the 'division of Turkestan into tribal states' was a plan invented solely as a 'counterpoise' to Pan-Turanian tendencies and that it was

12. R. Vaidyanath, The Formation of Soviet Central Asian Republics (A Study in Soviet Nationality Policy (1917-1936)), New Delhi, 1967, p.169.

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the 'direct result of Sultan Galiyev's attempted counter-revolution'.¹³

STALIN'S NATIONALITY POLICY

Stalin's approach to the national question was opposite to that of Lenin. His policies were to pit one republic and one ethnic group against another. He replaced the old party elites by the new ones. Among the generals appointed between 1940 to 1970, 91 per cent were Slavs; none were from Central Asia. The use of the Arabic script, which was the only means of common communication in Central Asia before 1917, was forcibly ended in favour of Latin in 1922, and then Cyrillic after 1935 to increase the pace of integration with Russia. His other repressive measures included destruction of local

13.. Sabol, Steven. 'The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitation', Central Asian Survey, (U.K.), (1995), 14(2), pp.236-37.

economic autonomy that had existed under NEP, arbitrary redrawing of boundaries, rewriting of histories to emphasize the progressive character of the Russian imperialism and end of criticism of Great Russian chauvinism. The purges under Stalin did not stop at the political elite. Large parts of Kazakhstan, like Siberia, were turned into gulags. Anti-Islam propaganda increased dramatically under Stalin, to create a new 'Soviet man', which in Central Asia was only an excuse for greater Russification.¹⁴

NATIONALITY POLICY AFTER STALIN

The destalinisation process started in 1953, under Khrushchev. In 1955, attacks against Islam in Central Asia intensified. Veil-burning ceremonies were given widespread

14. Ahmed, Rashid; The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism. (Oxford University Press), Karachi (1994), pp.32-33.

publicity and Khrushchev revived the former Bolshevik 'Union of the Godless' in 1958, which shut down the few Islamic schools and mosques still open. Islamic weddings and funerals were banned, and in 1959 the end of the era of the veil was officially announced, with the ceremonial burning of the last veil in Bukhara.¹⁵ 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." At the Twenty-second Party Congress in 1961, a declaration was passed that the nationalities problem in the Soviet Union had been solved with complete fusion between all ethnic groups and peoples.¹⁶

15. A. Taheri; Crescent in a Red Sky: The Future of Islam in Soviet Union, Hutchison, London (1989).

16. A. Rashid; The Resurgence of Central Asia : Islam or Nationalism (Oxford University Press) Karachi (1994), p.35.

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. At the Twenty-fourth Party Congress in 1971, President Brezhnev said that fifty years of Soviet rule had produced 'a new historical community of people - the Soviet people had emerged', a people which was united.¹⁷ In the 1978 constitution even less formal independence and even fewer decision-making powers were given to these republics than before. As a result bureaucrats ruled in an often thoroughly lethargic, corrupt and nepolistic style. These two men had dominated Central Asia for nearly twenty years, throughout what was later called the 'era of stagnation'.

17. Ibid., p.35.

NATIONALITY POLICY UNDER GORBACHEV

Gorbachev's accession to in March 1985 coincided with the end of the long-running tenures of the first secretaries of the five Central Asian Communist Parties. The epoch of democratisation in April 1985 had confronted the Soviet multiethnic state in a complex and historical situation. Gorbachev faced with a formidable accumulation of problems, economic stagnation, inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption and above all unexpected rise of ethnic tension. He now had the opportunity to introduce his new policies of *Glasnost* (openness) and *Perestroika* (restructuring) through a more enlightened leadership in Central Asia, which would be more sensitive to local conditions.

Initially he showed remarkable insensitivity to Central Asia and continued to treat the republics as

colonies, which led to public resentment. The first resentment in Central Asia occurred in the most placid corner of the region - Alam Ata. In December 1986 Gorbachev removed the Kazakh party chief Dinmukhamed Kunayev, who ruled the republic since 1964, and replaced him by an ethnic Chuvash from Russia, Gennady Koblin. On 17 December 1986, a few days after Koblin took over, anti-Russian riots against Koblin which were partly engineered by Kunayev's supporters, but they fed on the strong Kazakh nationalist feeling in the street.¹⁸ Ethnic tensions spread to capitals like Tashkent and Dushanbe where the growing feelings of ethnic nationalism were vivid.

Central Asia continued to boil. In May 1988, there were riots in Ashkhabad. In June 1989 dozens of people were killed and 1,000 were injured in the Ferghana valley of Uzbekistan. In February 1990 dozens of people were killed in

18. Ibid., p.36.

riots in Dushanbe. Gorbachev did not formulate any specific policy to deal with the nationalities. The huge acclaim that Gorbachev's policies of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' received in the western Soviet republics and in Europe was never duplicated in Central Asia. The growth of nationalism in Central Asia was mirrored in Russia itself, where intellectuals first began to voice the need to dump the Soviet empire if Russia was to make meaningful progress. Central Asia was seen not as the source of raw material, but as an economic burden which was dragging Russia into backwardness. The Russian dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn argued in a prophetic essay published in 1991 that Russia would only be strong 'once it has shed the onerous burden of the Central Asia underbelly'. He called for the break-up of the Soviet Union and rebuilding of Russian nationalism. Echoing the sentiments of sizeable number of Russians, Solzhenitsyn stated: "We don't have the strength for the

peripheries either economically or morally. We don't have the strength for sustaining an empire - and it is just as well. Let this burden fall from our shoulders, it is crushing us, sapping our energy and hastening our demise.¹⁹

¹⁹. A. Solzhenitsyn; "Rebuilding Russia", Harvill, London, (1991).

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER-II

POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA - ETHNIC RELIGIOUS RESURGENCE

The collapse of the Soviet regime marked the end of a long and for the most part, agonizingly painful era in the history of the Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia. More specifically it marked the end of centuries of gradual and systematic incursion, penetration and eventually total control of the region by the economically motivated, ideologically driven and technologically and militarily powerful Russian and Soviet colonial powers. Under the Soviet system, the rich intellectual life of Islam was eliminated, but a vigorous, unsophisticated popular tradition remained.¹ Two language reforms - changing from Arabic script to Latin and subsequently from Latin to Cyrillic - were introduced to crush Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Stalinist purges replaced

1. Vitaly, Naumkin; "Islam in the States of Former USSR" Annals, AAPSS, 524, Nov. 1992.

the old national elites by a new local ruling class which strictly followed Moscow in total disregard to local nature, customs customs and traditions conducting itself as a true universal 'Soviet man' 'Homo Sovieticus'. After *perestroika*, an Islamic movement emerged as a form of political protest. Islam has served as a symbol of identity, a force for mobilization and a pressure for democracy.

The former USSR had the fifth largest population of Muslims in the world. Since its formation, that state pursued a rigid policy of forcing out religion not only from public and political life but also from the life of the individual. The ideology of the ruling Communist Party was atheistic antithesis. Officially, religion was separated from the state, but even outside the framework of the State, the transmission of religious knowledge was extremely inhibited, primarily due

to the strict limitation of the printing and distribution of religious literature and the absence of religious schools.

According to two French scholars on Central Asia and Islam in the Soviet Union - Helene d'Carrere Encausse and Alexandre Benningsen - despite suppression of national customs and traditions during the Stalinist period, the 'Homo Islamicus' emerged like phoenix from the ashes. The liberal atmosphere of the post-Stalin period also contributed to its rise. The Islamic revolution in Iran and the victory of the mujahidin in Afghanistan gave further impetus. Helene Carrere d'Encausse argued that the higher birth rate among the Central Asian Muslims, rising unemployment and the growing Muslim self-assertiveness posed a serious challenge to the Soviet power in that region.² Michael Rywkin in his work

2. D. Kaushik; 'Islamic Resurgence and Russia' in V.D. Chopra (ed.) Religious Fundamentalism in Asia, p.232.

Moscow's Muslim Challenge (1982) hinted at "the existence of growing racial antagonism between two non-integrated communities in Soviet Central Asia". It is later believed that the Soviet rule had resulted in the establishment of various sub-types of 'Russified Soviet sub-culture' and that the Soviets succeeded in co-opting the elite who stood alienated from their original ethno-cultural milieu.

PERESTROIKA AS CATALYST - With the beginning of perestroika, an Islamic movement emerged in the Soviet Muslim areas that started under the slogans of religious enlightenment, spreading of religious culture among the Muslim people of the former USSR, building and establishing Islamic traditions. Believers expressed dissatisfaction with Party and State control of religious communities and demanded the abolition of the official clergy. The supreme Mufti of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Shamsuddin Babakhan, was accused of godlessness

and violation of Islamic laws and was removed from his post. Alongside the trend of purely cultural enlightenment, the tendency of the politicization of Islam emerged in the USSR's Muslim area in the mid-1980's. For instance, Tadzhikistan witnessed the call to set up an Islamic state.

Three main blocs of political forces gradually formed in the Muslim republics: former leaders of the Communist parties and the state apparatus, who changed their political face, new democratic parties and movements, and Islamic fundamentalists. One of the most popular fronts, Birlik (Unity) Movement for the Preservation of Uzbekistan's Natural and Material and Spiritual Riches was started in November 1988 by the Uzbek intellectuals. In its first public demonstration held on 19th March 1989 more than 12,000 people

are reported to have attended .³ Similarly, one of the political and social activist group set up in Kazakhstan, the Adilet (Justice) seek to preserve the memory of the victims of Stalinist repression who perished in Kazakhstan. Another society Atmaken has been established to promote language and culture.

The establishment of these informal activist group, most of which have been recognized as such, has also contributed to the unprecedented national and religious resurgence throughout Central Asia. Local writers, artists and academicians are openly idealizing the medieval past history, their works of history, art and culture. The process of renaming the places and squares on old Islamic pattern has begun. It is also reported that Russian form of greeting

3. K. Warikoo; 'Soviet Central Asia in Ferment', in K. Warikoo, D.Norbu (ed), Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia. South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p.65.

(zdrastyte) has given way to usual Muslim style of "Asalammalaikum".

At the popular grassroots level one finds a strict observance of Islamic rites and rituals including fasting during the month of Ramzan, religious marriages, performance of daily prayers and large attendance at mosques during the holy festivals. Restoration work of old and neglected mausoleums and tombs has been proceeding quite fast and more often with the active participation of local communist party and administrative agencies.⁴ The number of unaccredited mullahs has increased and there is a proliferation of mosques particularly in rural areas. According to Soviet estimates

4. Sovetskaya Kultura, 18 December 1986.

the number of mosques has gone up to 5,000 from 160 during the past few years.⁵

FOREIGN INFLUENCE - The rise of Islamic resurgence in Soviet Central Asia is due to the spill over effects of Khomeini revolution in Iran and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The Iranian ideologues adopted a two-pronged strategy of exporting revolution to vulnerable areas. One was the launching of extensive propaganda of Islamic fundamentalism through the mass media and the second was by fomenting trouble and turmoil in these areas by arousing religious passions.

Several reports have appeared in the Soviet press about the religious propaganda launched by Iran in Soviet Central

5. V.Y. Kostokov; Islamic ascendancy in Soviet region. Times of India, 22 Oct. 1991.

Asia. An article in *Turkmenskia Iskara* dated 14 October 1984 revealed the widespread existence of radio cassettes in Turkmen, Azeri and Russian languages throughout Turkmenistan. Another report published in *Bakiinski Robochi* of 3 February 1985 described the activities of a Muslim religious group in Baku which reproduced religious books and literature in Arabic.⁶ Fifty million copies of Koran are reported to have been printed during the year 1989 alone. This is over and above the one million copies gifted by Saudi Arabia to the Central Asian Muslim Board. Saudi Arabia is also reported to be sending large sums of money to Central Asia in a bid to reorient the Central Asian Muslims society and politics in the West Asian mould of Islam.⁷

6. Warikoo; 'Soviet Central Asia in Ferment'. In K. Warikoo, D. Norbu (ed.) Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia. South Asian Publishers, New Delhi (1992), p.67.

7. Ibid., p.68.

Another influence has been Wahabism, which has especially gained roots in rural areas of Tadjikistan, particularly in the Tajik-Afghan borders. This is a fundamentalist religious-cum-political movement. The Wahabi literature that has been smuggled via Afghanistan, lays emphasis on religious absolutism and is opposed to Sufism and holy shrines which represent the traditional and tolerant trend in Islam. In Uzbekistan the main support was in the Ferghana Valley. In the Ferghana Valley, where Islamic customs and values were preserved over the entire Soviet period, Islamist groups consist mainly of rural people.

The Wahabism has struck roots in Uzbekistan as well, is evidenced by the sudden removal of Mukhammad Sadyk, the official recognized Mufti and Chairman of the Spritual Directorate of the Muslims of Centrl Asian headquarters in Tashkent by the Council of Imams. The popular movement of

Uzbekistan, Birlik too welcomed this move as a 'victory of popular forces'.⁸ The growing influence of radical political-religious trends like Wahabism and Khomeinism in Central Asia will be a factor to be reckoned within years to come.

SEARCH FOR ETHNIC NATIONALISM - The main problem in Central Asia today is the search for a new nationalism. During the Communist era the Party was organised as the Soviet State. The Soviet constitution had structured the many national identities in Central Asia as an articulated series from the sub-nations of the Autonomous Oblasts like Badakshan in Tajikistan, through the Autonomous republics like Karakalpakia in Uzbekistan and the five nations of Central Asia, to culminate in the Soviet super state itself. It did not permit the emergence of Central Asia or Turkestan. The

8. Ibid., p.70.

Party constituted in itself the major portion of the field of political battle. All the political forces we find today have either emerged from the Party or were its interlocutors and partners in the struggle for power. The 'problem' in Central Asia today, for the five 'nationalities' is to establish their independent identities.

But the modernization process in the USSR, led to the growth in self-assertion by the elites of what were essentially new nationalities. The most articulate native elites of the Muslim nationalities was striking throughout the region, although the individual republics were only created in 1924. Three distinct levels of ethnic consciousness among Muslims of Central Asia were identified by Alexandre Benningsen: sub-national, supra-national and national. National consciousness in Soviet Central Asia can be regarded as a form of culture quite as much as a social

movement. The 'cornelian term' nationalism is defined here as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population claimed by some of its members to constitute an actual (or potential) nation.⁹

National identity and nationalism is still much more prominent within the intelligentsia and the nomenklatura in Central Asia. Hardly surprisingly, the search for cultural and historical roots, including the repressed religious heritage, is a striking feature of the contemporary intellectual scene there. The changing cultural and political atmosphere is reflected throughout Central Asia in the renaming of squares, streets and parks. Communism and Russian culture alike are out of fashion. Instead, the symbols of Turkestan's own

9. Hyman, Anthony; "Moving out of Moscow's Orbit: the Outlook for Central Asia", International Affairs (69), 2 (1993) p.296.

ground history are favoured. A natural choice is the Central Asian adventurer Babur, founder of the Mughal empire in India, who was born in the Fergana Valley in 1483. In the town of Namangan the central park is no longer named Pushkin Garden but Babur Garden. Statue of Lenin has been replaced by one of Babur. And a brand new museum to Babur's memory has opened in Andijan, his birth place in Fergana.¹⁰

Ethnic nationalism, not various brands of Islam, constitutes the main potential threat to regional stability. The governments all support the status quo in state borders. But in nationalist intellectual circles there is an enthusiasm to bring about alterations in the 1924 borders drawn around the new republics and unite with their ethnic brethren living as minorities in neighbouring state.¹¹ The

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

influence of nationalist circles should not be dismissed out of hand, however, fervent nationalist sentiments among Tajiks and Uzbeks are out in the open. A "Great Khorasan" state is publicly advocated by a group of irredentist nationalist intellectuals recently formed in Tajikistan, the "Great Arian society". Their dream is to unite the Tajiks of Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well as to regain the 'lost' Tajik lands (of Samarkand and Bukhara) on Uzbek territory.¹²

PAN TURKIC NATIONALISM - Another gloomy prognosis offered for the future of Central Asia was the evolution of a nationhood along the concept of pan-Turkism. Turkey with its secular and democratic form of government was perceived to be the ideal political option as well as the most effective

12. Ibid, p.297.

weapon vis-a-vis Iranian religious motives in Central Asia by the West. 13

Undoubtedly, the concept did evoke emotional response among Central Asians. Many leaders, including President Karimov of Uzbekistan, became advocates of Turkish model. Turkey, on its part made generous offers to assist Central Asian states in their development programmes. Ankara assisted these new states to become members of the United Nations (UN), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).¹⁴

Interestingly enough, Central Asians began to take a cautious view of Turkey's interest -especially when they have

13. Stobdan, P., "Emergence of Central Asia: Strategic Implications", Strategic Analysis, June 1995.

14. Ibid.

just freed themselves from Russian "big brother". Not only did they politically reject Turkey's call for a common market but also realized the relative weakness of the Turkish economy. As the Central Asian states became confident of their diplomacy, they, particularly Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan, preferred to deal with the Western world directly, without any mediation of Turkey.

The pan-Turkism concept, at the other level, is confronted with the difficulty of regional complexities and the poly-ethnic population in Central Asia. Although it is extremely convenient for us to lump together all the Central Asian states as one entity, in reality these states are anything but homogeneous. The prospects for the forces of disintegration are much more powerful than the commonalities which will bring them together. Sub-nationalism, regionalism and tribalism may seriously hinder such concepts taking proper

shape. Tajiks are certainly not going to welcome such an idea. Apart from major divisions between Turks versus Iranian ethnic and cultural background, a potential fault lines existing along nomadic versus settled people, urban versus rural, oasis versus steppe, mountain versus valley and so forth. Moreover, both China and Russia, would not like to see either the pan-Islam or pan-Turkism perceptions gaining momentum in Central Asia.

SECULAR NATIONALISM - Alongside the growth of an Islamic movement in the Muslim areas there is a development of secular nationalist movement. A series of ethnic riots since 1989 helped to strengthen national identity, and chances of building a Pan-Islamic identity receded. In all the Central Asian States, free elections brought to power with popular mandate, secular and former communist leadership. Even in Tajikistan where Islamic revivalist forces are relatively

stronger compared to other Central Asian states, their hold over power was brief and secular forces were able to mobilise popular support to oust the Islamic leadership who had briefly seized power by force.¹⁵ The Tajik incidents (1992) have underlined factors that work against the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. It revealed that Central Asians are not one homogeneous group with one overriding identity - Islam. They are not just divided on nationality lines, but there are strong ideological and clan regional loyalties that negate and oppose the unifying appeal of Islam.¹⁶

Islamic revivalism is also likely to encounter resistance may be passive, from many Central Asian women who have seen a progressive improvement in their economic and social position during the Soviet era and who would be

15. A.K. Patnaik, 'Proposals of Islamic Fundamentalism in Central Asia' in V.D. Chopra (ed) Religious Fundamentalism In Asia, p.254.

16. Ibid., p.254.

required to, and might even be forced to lead a subordinate existence. Some are of the opinion that even at the religio-cultural level Central Asian women were more active in Soviet period, a role that they seem to be losing with the reassertion of patriarchal values and revival of Islam. Gilliam Telt, during her field work in Tajikistan, observed that with the revival of Islam across the republic, men are coming to play an even greater role in Islamic practices.¹⁷

Assessing the situation as a whole, the rise of militant Islam in the Central Asian Republics is still only a distant prospect. The overwhelming desire of the people in these Republics is, in order of priority, to achieve a higher standard of living, consolidate their respective nationalism and evolve a higher socio-cultural ethos. However, the growth

17. Ibid., p.255.

of fundamentalism in the Central Asian States in the future cannot be ruled out. There are usually three distinct steps through which Islam may move on its way to fundamentalism.

These are :

(i) Once the people feel with reasonable assurance, that their lives are morally, spiritually and materially unsatisfactory, a feeling develops that these issues could be addressed more effectively through an Islamic state.

(ii) The next stage is that in this environment, should such a group function with relative autonomy and a free and fair election takes place, then such an Islamic group may well succeed in coming to power.

(iii) Finally, of course, where it does come to power, it would be unable to fulfil the very same aspirations Islam cannot be implemented in its true sense and after this it leads towards fundamentalism.¹⁸

18. Dru. C. "The Muslim Face of China", Current History, September 1993, p.276.

However, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism cannot be entirely ruled out. A lot depends on how these states succeed in undertaking economic reforms while minimising the suffering of the population. Unless that happens, an impoverished and disillusioned population might find an appeal of fundamentalism alluring.¹⁹

19. A.K. Patnaik, 'Propects of Islamic Fundamentalism in Central Asia', in V.D. Chopra (ed.) Religious Fundamentalism in Asia, p.259.

CHAPTER-III

CHAPTER-III

POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

The nationality discord in the Soviet Union strewn over the vast territory of the country is demonstrative of a nation in turmoil. The unique feature of Soviet multinationalism and the national pride of Soviet socialism that had claimed for years to divergent national ethos of innumerable nationalities are all now questionable propositions. The open expression of hostile attitude of non-Russian against Russian, is a manifestation of a deep resentment imbedded in the ruptured ego of suppressed nationalities; vying with each other to ascertain the national identities and ensure for them tenets of real self-determination.¹ All of them together feel that the

1. P.L. Dash; 'Ethnic Tussels In The Soviet Muslim Republics' in Waikoo, D. Norbu (ed) Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia. South Asian Publishers, New Delhi (1992), p.102.

elements of self-determination have been severely stifled by the dictat and dominance of the majority over the minority; and each of them separately feel that the question of national equality is overshadowed by the demand for secession. While the modus operandi of a full secession remains in obscurity, ethnic riots fanned up by communal passions have been overtaking the national scene. Autonomy for the return to the homeland has become the demand of the day.²

INTER ETHNIC DISCORD - The events in the Kazakh Capital, Alma-Ata, on 17-18 December 1986 and those in Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan and the Dushanbe riots in February 1990, were telling stories of inter-ethnic discord in Central Asia. The high point of civil disturbances turning violent in Alma-Aty was clearly demonstrative of a deep discord prevailing among

2. Ibid. p.102.

the non-Russians and the on going struggle between the indigenous natives and the Russian settlers.

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 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 Kunayev and his replacement by a 59 year old Russian, Gennady Kolbin. The Kazakhs felt that Kunayev's removal was an insult to the entire Kazakh people. 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).³

National slogans including "Autonomy and separate seat for

3. Martha Brill Olcott, "Perestroika in Kazakhstan", Problems of Communism July-August, 1990, p.66.

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 - wild rowdies armed with rods, sticks and stones, beat up and insulted citizens (i.e. Russians) overturned cars and set fire to them and broke the glasses in stores, hostels and other public buildings.⁴

According to the official explanation the "riots" were the results of excesses on the part of Kazakh youth - inspired by ring leaders who were drunk or on drugs. They attacked the Soviet militia that were trying to control an ugly, unruly crowd through peaceful means. The sources of the youth peoples' dis-affection was the apprehensions of the children of the local elite that they could no longer count

4. SWB Part I USSR, 1 January 1987.

on a life of privilege, and also as a manifestation of anti-Russian sentiment.⁵

The causes of the Fergana pogrom in early June 1989 could only be traced in the periphery of history, of the deportation of Meskhetian Turks and the resultant demographic disproportion it created in their new place of resettlement. The potent causes of socio-economic anomaly existing through past four decades between the natives and the deportees generated resentment in the youth.

Despite the relatively high tide of carnage in Fergana compared to that in Alma-Ata, some similarities could be observed in both the cases of violence. Firstly, both the incidents occurred territorially not far from each other and in character and content both were ethnic riots aiming at

5. Marth Brill Olcott, No.22, p.66.

upholding the national identity of respective peoples in their republics. Secondly, in both places majority of the indigenous natives burst out against the non natives and the behaviour of rioters was as beastly in Alma-Ata as it was in Fergana. Thirdly, the government approach to crisis management in both the places was similar - go slow, cautious and compromising.⁶

A variety of reasons shrouded around what caused the Dushanbe riots might uphold the truth of that bloody event which wrecked the republic in February 1990. First, if the rumours about preferential allocation of housing to new arrivals from Fergana or Caucasus was accepted as a potential cause for instigating the riot.⁷ Secondly, the apprehensions

6. P.L. Dash; "Ethnic Tussle in the Soviet Muslim Republics", p.114.

7. Ibid. p.115.

that sufferers of the Fergana tragedy in Uzbekistan had fled to seek refuge in Dushanbe enlivened in Tadzik animosity. A combination of all these factors among others, plus the rumours about the impending arrival of refugees in Dushanbe was all that set the ball rolling. It led the city to witness an unputdownable conflict on 12-13 February 1990 that it had never seen before.

The ethnic dimension of the Dushanbe conflict of 1990 could be logically construed in the following potential elements: the presence of a strong Uzbek-Tadzik animosity, the prevalence of a strong anti-Caucasian especially anti-Armenian feeling among the Tadziks and a clear expression in leaflets mailed to the residents of Tashkents's Khamzin borough demanding that Russians leave the city by 1 March.⁸

3. Ibid. p.117.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE ETHNIC CONFLICT - Given the boisterous situation prevailing in the Central Asian Republics, it was feared that there may be widespread migration from these republics. In 1989 about 26.2 million Russians were living outside the Russian Republic, comprising 10% of the total population of the then USSR. The total population of Russians settled outside the Russian Republic constituted about 18% of their entire population. Russians comprised 52% of the total population of the former USSR, and 82% of the Russian Republics population. There is hardly any Central Asian Republic which does not contain a Russian mix in its population. The following table gives an indication of the presence of the ethnic Russian factor in the population of Central Asia Republics:

TABLE-1

PERCENTAGE OF RUSSIANS IN CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

Russian Federation	82.6%
Kazakhstan	41%
Kyrgyzstan	26%
Turkmenistan	13%
Uzbekistan	11%
Tajikistan	10%

Source: D. Kaushik; "Islamic Resurgence and Russia"
in V.D.Chopra (ed) Islamic Fundamentalism in Asia.

The out-migration of the Russians from these Central Asian Republics aggravated due to the crimes committed against the Russian and the pathetic economic conditions. It was upto 1989 that the republics had in-migration of Russians. The table below shows the increase in number of Russians in Central Asia, from 1959-1989 (1,000s).

TABLE-2

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF RUSSIANS IN
CENTRAL ASIA, FROM 1959-1989 (1,000)

	1956	1970	Change%	1979	1989	Change%
Uzbekistan	1,029	1,473	+35	1,665	1,652	-0.8
Kazakhstan	3,972	5,522	+39	5,991	6,226	+3.9
Kyrgyzstan	624	856	+37	911	916	+0.5
Tajikistan	263	344	+31	395	386	-2.3
Turkmenistan	263	313	+19	349	334	-4.3

Source: Ahmed Rashid; The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994.

Since the end of 1989, the intensity of the migration flow of Kazakhstan residents out of the country has

increased. The migration trend as of now is as follows:
intense emigration of the population from the republic and,
at the same time, decreased immigration.⁹ While over nine
months of last year the republic lost 247,100 residents, over
nine months of this year it lost 362,800 residents , which
comprises 60.5% of the entire migration flow (including
inter-republic migration). In absolute figures, emigration to
far abroad increased over the same period by 11,700, and to
near abroad states by 104,000 respectively; the number of
immigrants from the far abroad decreased by ,200 and from the
near abroad by 29,200. The greatest flow of emigrants was
registered from Karaganda (35,900), Kostanay (29,800),
Pavlodar (26,800) and Akmola (26,000) Oblasts, which
accounted for one-third of all emigration from the Republic
of Kazakhstan.¹⁰

9. FBIS-SOV-95-182; 20 September 1995. p.77.

10. Ibid.

The bulk of the emigration flow (73.3%) goes to the Russian Federation. Of that, 74.2% are ethnic Russians. The greater part of emigrants are urban populations (71%) and only 29% are from rural areas. People leaving Kazakhstan are mainly of the work-eligible age. A survey of 5,700 respondents leaving the country stated that the main cause of emigration from the republic are economic difficulties (fast-rising prices) - 45.9%; dissatisfaction with their pay 34.6% and poor supply of food stuffs and consumer goods. Among other identifiable reasons : lack of career prospects 16.2%, the unfavorable ecological situation 12.3%, and difficulties in finding a job 11.9% and dissatisfaction with living conditions.¹¹

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has expressed 'serious concern' over the emigration of Russians, Germans and other ethnic groups from the republic. Speaking in the

11. Ibid.

Kazakh capital on 29th December 1994, he said the main reason for the emigration was economic, and urged that reforms be speeded up to prevent the republic's economy from falling behind that of Russia. He further said the "ethnic accord and clam must be preserved in Kazakhstan."¹²

Article 1 of the Republic of Kazakhstan Constitution prohibits any form of discrimination against citizens. Secondly, an analysis of data from the republic's State Committee on Statistics on the numerical strength of individual ethnic groups by sector of the economy reveals the following picture with respect to the cross-section of Kazakhs and Russians. There are more Russians than Kazakhs in industry by a factor of 2.34, in information and computer science - by a factor of 2.06, in construction - by 1.9, in communication by 1.7, in transportation by 1.6, in consumer

12. SWB SU/2193 G/1 5 Jan 1995.

services - by 1.59, in management by 1.58, and in material technical supply by 1.56. The main reason for the intensified migration of Russians from Kazakhstan is not only the deteriorating economic state of the republic, but existing socio psychological alignments and stereotypes as well.¹³

The parliamentary election of March 7, 1994 provides further evidence of political Kazakhization in the State, and its detrimental effect on the development of democracy. Of the 177 parliamentary seats, 42 were filled by the president rather than by election. Over 700 candidates competed for the remaining 135 seats, giving the appearance of a democratic elections. However, Kazakhs electoral commissions struck 200 potential candidates from local ballots. As a result of such pre-election manoeuvring, only 128 Russian candidates

13. FBIS-SOV-95-108 6June 1995 pp.76-77.

appeared on the ballots, compared to 566 Kazakhs, even though voting-aged Russians outnumbered Kazakhs.¹⁴ According to election results, 60% of the parliamentary seats were filled by Kazakhs and 28% by Russians. These elections further exacerbated relations between Russians and Kazakhs and between Russia and Kazakhstan. Almaty's Kazakhization of local political organizations in northern oblasts and rayons, coupled with lack of Russian representation at the centre, further encourages Russians to reorient themselves northward towards Russia. For some Russians this orientation will mean emigration from Kazakhstan; for the majority it is more likely to trigger irredentist sentiments, especially now that the centre has begun to replace local political elites in the north with Kazakhs loyal to Almaty, the sense among Russians that they have no future in a centralized, unitary Kazakh nation state.

14. Kaiser, Robert, and Chinn, Jeff; "Russian-Kazakh Relation in Kazakhstan", Post-Soviet Geography, 36 No.5, 1995, pp.269-70.

In connection with the continued exodus of the Russian population from Kazakhstan, correspondent Victor Glukhovtsev interviewed Aleksey Andreyevich Sazonov, counsellor at the Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan, who admitted that neither Russia nor Kazakhstan had been prepared for this and that political decisions are evidently unable to reduce this flow. Russia is interested in Kazakhstan's citizens remaining in their homes in Kazakhstan and continuing living there. It is looking for ways to facilitate the integration of the Russophone population and make life easier there. There is an aid programme for compatriots in countries of the near-abroad. It includes political measures and diplomatic and economic support for Russian business in Kazakhstan and a certain cultural support in setting up cultural centres there.¹⁵ Even businessmen urged President to end

15. FBIS-SOV-95-091, 11 May 1995. p.86.

discrimination against Russians.¹⁶ The law-enforcement officials deny discrimination against ethnic Russians.¹⁷

The overall number of people emigrating from Kyrgyzstan to Russia has increased as reported by the Interfax News Agency on 20th January. The Russian consul in Bishkek told the agency that the number of Russian-speaking emigrants from Kyrgyzstan has risen from 16,000 people in 1993 to 32,000 people in 1994. The agency further said that the increase in the number of applicants could be explained by the fact that the deadline for applying for citizenship under a special 'simplified procedure' expired on 6th February, 1994.¹⁸

16. FBIS-SOV-95-051 16 March 1995, p.47.

17. SWB-SU-2461 G/1 15 November 1995.

18. SWB - SU-2210 G/2 25 January 1995.

Latest reports show that the rate of emigration from Kyrgyzstan among Russian speakers fell by over 50 per cent in 1994, compared to 1993. While 106,500 left in 1993, only about 50,000 did last year. The agency further said the number of Russian-Kyrgyz ventures operating in Kyrgyzstan rose from three in 1992 to 18 in 1994. Kyrgyzstan exported 1.5 m dollars worth of goods to Russia last year, and imported 8m dollars worth.¹⁹

Kyrgyzstan and Russia are to sign an agreement aimed at halting the emigration of Russian-speaking people from Kyrgyzstan, the news agency reported from Bishkek on 17th July 1995. The head of the Russian Federal Migration Service, Tatyana Regent, left Moscow from Bishkek on the 17th to sign the agreement, which would "secure the rights of citizens of

19. SWB SU/2242 G/3 3 MARCH 1995.

the two countries to freely choose a place of residence to their liking.²⁰ President Akayev is keen to retrieve the Russians and has been reported to have said. "I'm against emigration. I just want to keep the Russians, Jews and other minorities."

A meeting of Uzbek President Islam Karimov and visiting Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev was held in Tashkent in September 1995, to settle problems in bilateral relations, primarily, a staffer of the Russian-speaking residents of Uzbekistan. Th Uzbek President agreed to the opening of Russian consulates in Fergana and Samarkand, where the percentge of Russians-speaking residents is high and Russia has always had strong interests.²¹ Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev said that he himself had always been

20. SWB SU-2359 G-2 19 July 1995.

21. FBIS-SOV-95-182 20 September 1995.

keen taking a tough stand as far as protection of the so-called Russian-speaking population living outside Russia was concerned. Commenting on the recent tough statements of Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev on the issue, Grachev said, "The present situation with Russian speakers is likely to be such that Andrey Kozyrev has decided to speak about their protection more toughly." He said that he had made known his tough position on the necessity for protecting the lives of Russian servicemen to Tajik representatives. He further said that there had been incidents when Russian servicemen were beaten or sometimes killed. He said that such a situation could not be tolerated any more. He went to the extent of saying that force to be used to protect ethnic Russians.²²

22. SWB SU-2287 B-4 26 April 1995.

THE QUESTION OF DOUBLE CITIZENSHIP - The vexing question of "dual citizenship" has created a lot of problem in the Central Asian Republics, after the disintegration of Soviet Union. All the Central Asian States have Russian population with Kazakhstan having the largest. After initial migration the Russians are now reduced to a minority. Many ethnic Russians have lived in Central Asia their whole lives, and feel no obligation to accept the status of second class citizens.

If we assess Article 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan it discriminates against Russian speakers since it does not recognize for them affiliation to citizenship of Russia, but for "Kazakhs living in other states the right to hold citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with citizenship of other states is

recognized."²³ As far as the principle of self-determination of the people is concerned, V. Lafitskiy maintains, that the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan "does not recognize the right of the Russian-speaking population to self-determination" and "reunification with the Russian Federation", which, in his opinion "contravens the UN Charter and many other rules of international law."²⁴

After lot of debate an agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Russian Federation on simplification of the of the procedure of obtaining citizenship of the republic of Kazakhstan arriving for permanent residence in the Russian Federation and citizens of the Russian Federation arriving for permanent residence in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Hence both the republics are to be referred to as the Parties proceeding from a striving of

23. FBIS-SOV-95-100 24 May 1995 p.63.

24. Ibid.

the peoples of the two countries to maintain and strengthen historic and traditional friendly ties and reaffirming their adherence to obligation with respect to guaranteeing generally accepted international norms and human rights and freedom, desiring to ensure favorable conditions for the exercise by their citizens of the right to select and acquire citizenship of the other party on the basis of free will of the people, guided by the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of 25 May 1992 between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Russia.²⁵ This Citizenship Agreement Treaty was ratified by both the Parties.²⁶

President Karimov of Uzbekistan rules out dual citizenship in his country. He further said that the process of the migration, the exodus of the Russian speaking

25. FBIS-SOV-95-107 26, January 1995, p.67.

26. FBIS-SOV-95-044, 7 March 1995, p.75.

population from Uzbekistan took place in the past. Today, however, I would like to say with great satisfaction that this process has virtually been halted in 1995.²⁷ Both Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are not willing to grant dual citizenship to the ethnic Russians. The only Central Asian Republic to grant dual citizenship is Tajikistan. On 7th September both the countries signed an agreement on dual citizenship and a declaration on greater integration between the two countries.²⁸

Whatever it may be the impact of emigration by Russians could be so detrimental to the economies of the newly independent states of Central Asia that it is difficult to visualise any language based discrimination in the near future. Moreover these republics have to assure the skilled

27. SWB SU/2369 g/2 31 July 1995.KS

28. SWB SU/2404 G/1 9September 1995.

Russian work-force who out-migration would seriously affect the recession-hit industries. The recently concluded "Eurasian Alliance" the brain child of the Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev between Russian Federation, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, have decided to do away with customs, transport and banking payments barriers and enter into an excise and energy union In future there will be more such cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian Republics.

CHAPTER-IV

CHAPTER-IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN MINORITIES

Soviet Central Asian region was socially and economically backward on the eve of the October Revolution. It was predominantly agrarian. But seven decades of Soviet rule transformed the once backward Soviet Central Asia into modern and well developed region. The Muslim composition increased in various fields of social development. Their number in party cadres, managerial position showed a significant rise. Illiteracy was eradicated completely.

Industrial growth in the Central Asian Region received a great boost with the launching of the first five year plan in 1928. Industrialization, establishment of educational institutions, nuclear testing and mechanised farming dramatically changed the overall economic scene. The

demographic explosion, ethno-religious beliefs, linguistic and educational factors are inextricably intertwined. All these factors as a whole affected the socio-economic development of Soviet Central Asia. Economically speaking, within former USSR performance of Central Asian republics at various levels has been poor when compared to the European parts. But it is an acknowledged fact that the socio-economic development of former Soviet Central Asia have proceeded much ahead than that of its neighbouring countries like Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Central Asian Republics 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.

DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE - The "demographic explosion" strongly affect the overall ethnic composition and had a definite bearing on the ethnic dynamics of Central

Asia. Muslims of Central Asia have registered a high percentage of population growth as compared to the Russians. The average Muslim growth rate between 1959 and 1979 has been around 3 times the national average and approximately 4 times of the Russians.¹ The 1989 Soviet census count established a sizeable increase in the indigenous Muslim population of Central Asia. Kazakhs constituted a majority in Kazakhstan for the first time since the early years of the Union. Kazakhs shared 39.7% of the republic's total population in 1989 as against 30% in 1959. Similarly, Kirghizs became a majority within their own republic for the first time since 1930s. They increased their ratio of population from 40.5% in 1959 to 52.4% in 1989. Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmens continued to consolidate their leading position within their respective republics of Uzbekistan,

1. K. Warikoo: 'Soviet Central Asia in Ferment', in K Warikoo and D. Norbu, ed. Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia (New Delhi, South Asia Publishers, 1992), p.70.

Tadjikistan, and Turkmenistan rising their share of population from 62.1% in 1959 to 84.7% in 1989, 53.1% in 1959 to 62.3% in 1989, and 60.9% in 1959 to 72% in 1989 respectively.² Several factors such as poor family planning, practice of early marriages, low employment of women in organized sectors of economy and high ratio of rural population have contributed to this phenomenon. 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. Similarly during the period 1959 to 1979 the percentage of Russian population declined from 13.5% to 10.8% in Uzbekistan, 30.2% to 25.9% in Kyrghizstan, 13.3% to 10.4% in

2. Ibid., p.71.

Tadjikistan and from 17.3% to 12.6% in Kyrghizstan. It is expected to be reduced further to an average of 6% by the year 2000 A.D.³ The 1989 census more clearly illustrates this trend.

Table 3

Population Change in RSFSR and Central Asian Republics
(in thousand)

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1984	1950-1984 Percentage Increase
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	1 716	2 131	2 934	3 588	3 886	126.5
Tadzhik SSR	1 509	2 045	2 900	3 901	4 365	189.3
Turkmen SSR	1 197	1 565	2 159	2 827	3 118	160.5

Source: Michael Ryan and Richard Prentice, Social Trends in the Soviet Union from 1950, (London Macmillan, 1987), p.7.

3. Ibid., p.71.

Another important change typical of the Muslim population growth during this period has been a gradual decline in the urbanization process and a sharp rise in rural population. This is due to the unwillingness of rural cadres to migrate outside their territories even if they had better jobs. The desire to maintain their religio-cultural traditions and Islamic ethos is primarily responsible for this attitude.⁴ On the contrary, if we look at the 1989 census, except in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia (where Russians comprise 37.8 percent and 21.5 per cent respectively), the percentage of Russians in other Central Asian republics is less than 10 per cent. They have been concentrated in larger cities of Central Asia. In the capital cities of Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan), Frunze (Kirghizia), Dushanbe (Tadjhikistan) and Ashkabad (Turkmenistn) the

4. Ibid. p.71.

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 Russian in the total population of Soviet Central Asia would drop to half.⁵ Table-4 shows the trends of urban population.

Table 4

Urban population as proportion of the total population of Central Asia (per cent)

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 - P.L. Dash; Ethnic Tussles in the Soviet Muslim Republics in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu ed. Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia (South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1992), pp. 108-109.

 5. Ronald Wixman, "Demographic Trends Among Soviet Muslims 1959-79", Soviet Geography, Vol.30, No.1, January 1989, p.46-60.

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 outmigration of non-indigenous people such as Russians, Armenians, Meshkitian Turks, Germans, Jews, etc. from Central Asia. This has been the direct fall out of the violent attacks on such minority groups by the local majority, xenophobia, intensifying chauvinism and declaration of local languages as the official language. According to an official report submitted to the Tadjikistan Communist Party Central Committee in August 1990 about 23,000 skilled Russians had left Tadjikistan during the first seven months of 1990 alone.⁶ This exodus was ascribed to the riots in Dushanbe in February 1990 and declaration of Tajik as official language.⁷

6. Current Digest of Soviet Press, Vol.42, No.31, 1990, p.30.

7. Ibid.

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 prevail in Soviet Central Asia for years to come.⁸

ECONOMIC CRISIS - The economy of Central Asia improved greatly after 1927. The standard of living, education, communication, public health and productivity rose much higher than in all but one or two of the Muslim countries of the non-Soviet Asia. This was possible due to the Soviet policy of eliminating age-old backwardness and

8. P.L. Dash, Ethnic Tussles in Soviet Muslim Republics in K. Warikoo and D. Norbu (ed.), pp.107-108.

socio-economic inequality in Central Asia. As a result of huge capital investment made in the agricultural and industrial sectors, Central Asia has been transformed into an advanced region. In 1989 the Central Asia republics received from Russia 24 billion in US dollars.⁹ Despite the attempts of the Soviet leaders to prevent the worst, Central Asian economy experienced stagnation starting since the late 70s, afterwards transformed into the process of degradation. The industrial growth was halted by the end of 80s, and with the dissolution of the USSR a crucial decline started.

A series of ethnic tensions occurred in the Central Asian Republics after June 1986 till 1990. Important among them are the "Dushanbe Spring", "the Fergana Summer" and the "Alma-Ata Winter." The rise of nationalist sentiments and inter-ethnic conflicts coincided with

9. M.A. Khroustalev; "Central Asia as the Region of Conflict". Centre of International Studies, (MGIMO).

deteriorating economic conditions in Central Asia. Socio-economic inequalities between Russians and the indigenous people were great, causing resentment.¹⁰ Inside the Central Asian Republics, Russians and other Europeans are concentrated in urban and industrial areas, over-represented in white collar jobs and managerial positions and thus have higher incomes overall. They are over-represented in the institutions of higher education while the indigenous people are under-represented, while industry has developed in the Central Asian republic, the skilled labour employed in industrial locations is not the native people but 'outsiders'

So if the inequalities between republics, and between Russians and natives persisted all the time, why didn't nationalist sentiments materialize earlier? One reason was that despite the gap between republics, Moscow's

10. Y. Onaram; 'Economics and nationalism: the case of Muslim Central Asia', Central Asian Survey (1944). 13(4), p.497.

redistribution from rich to poor republics in the way of subsidies kept the latter happy for most part. The other reason was that the economic situation in the former Soviet Union was relatively stable and functioning well enough to meet the basic needs of society until the 1980s. So the rising of ethnic tension, deteriorating economic conditions seem to be a prerequisite.¹¹

The unemployed labour surplus, in the region, which, although existent in the 1970s, worsened in the 1980s, was strong contributor to 'anti-foreigner' feelings among native peoples. While unemployment got worse in the 1980s, new Russian immigrants were coming into the region and taking the best jobs because they were better trained. This fuelled the anti-immigrant sentiment as well.¹²

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

In Kazakhstan, where the largest-scale nationalist demonstrations of the region were staged in 1986, the economy was in a "catastrophic state" by 1985. The Kazakhs realized that they were among the most economically disadvantaged people in the federation and that, in the USSR's declining years, their impoverishment was rapidly worsening. If Kazakhstan could be only for Kazakhs, as the demonstrators demanded, then labour excess and food shortages would be less of a problem, since 40% of the population would have to disappear, either by migration or through extermination. Although such ethnic cleansing has not taken place in Kazakhstan or in any large scale in any of the other Central Asian republics, the desire of the native peoples remains there.¹³

13. Ibid. p.499.

THE LANGUAGE FACTOR - The polyglot character of the Soviet society had always remained a factor of paramount importance. 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, Kazah, Kirghiz and Turkmen - belong to the Altaic family. Besides these five major languages, there exist more than a score of other languages - Tatar, Karakalpak, Vighur, Dolganic, Nogaitsi, Shortsi, Tofalari, to mention a few.

Despite Soviet efforts to impose the use of the Russian, the pervasive influence of an educational system that emphasized the Russian language for upward mobility and a conscious policy of Russification, the Central Asian peoples remained intensely proud of their language and culture. Table 5 demonstrates that while the percentage of

those knowing the national language remained fairly constant between 1979 and 1989, the percentage of those claiming to speak good Russian actually decreased in Uzbekistan by more than half and in Tajikistan by more than 2 per cent. Those speaking good Russian increased only marginally in other republics - the largest increase being registered in Kazakhstan where nearly half the population was Russian anyway.

Table 5

Languages spoken in Central Asia, 1979 and 1989

	% regarding national language as their native tongue		% claiming to speak good Russian	
	1979	1989	1979	1989
Kyrgyz	97.9	97.8	29.3	35.2
Tajik	97.8	97.7	29.6	27.7
Turkmen	98.7	98.5	25.4	27.8
Uzbek	98.5	98.3	49.3	23.8
Kazak	97.5	97.0	52.3	60.4

Source - Ahmed Rashid; The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam Nationalism. Oxford University Press (Karachi 1994).

In contemporary Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also, as in the past, ethnic identity and language usage are distantly related, especially among the urban elite. The widespread introduction of Russian into Central Asian society separates

members of an ethnic/nationality group in two ways. Firstly Soviet nationality policy was constructed on the premise that a nationality had distinct language. If this premise had been strictly applied to individuals, then a person who did not speak his ethnic language would no longer have belonged to that nationality group. However, due to the additional premise that Soviet nationalities would converge or even merge to create a single Soviet culture in which Russian would dominate naturally, many Central Asian elites became effectively Russian native speakers without the possibility of adopting Russian nationality. In Central Asia this dichotomy is manifested among many professionals working, thinking and cultural language is Russian but who are officially regarded as Tajik, Uzbek and so forth.¹⁴

14. Eden. Naby; 'Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia'. Central Asian Survey 12(2) (1993) p.156.

The 1990 Law of the Official Language laid out a phased transition to adopting Kyrgyz as the official language to be used in government documents. It is estimated that up to 60 per cent of men and women in their thirties do not know their native language. Only 1 of 65 Bishkek high school offered classes in Kyrgyz. All colleges and universities conducted their classes in Russian. In the cities, Kyrgyz was spoken only at home, but it was widely used in rural areas, when the Russians living in Kyrgyzstan came to realize that the Kyrgyz language was to become predominant, they began to protest. The Russian population began to fear that the institution of Kyrgyz as the official language would seriously cripple its ability to succeed in Kyrgyzstan. The Russian emigration from Kyrgyzstan increased. At meetings organized by the government, participants were asked why they wanted to leave.

The most common reasons cited were language-related problems.¹⁵

Worsening inter-ethnic relations and the adoption of Kyrgyz as official language led to the Russian exodus from Kyrgyzstan. By the end of 1992, about two lakh Russians had left the Republic. This, in turn, is adversely affecting the economy and scientific potential of Kyrgyzstan as the emigres are skilled workers and professionals. The exodus was also provoked by a discriminatory clause in land law that was adopted as early as April 1991. It stipulated that "land in the republic of Kyrgyzstan is the property of Kyrgyzs". This provision created dissatisfaction among the non-Kyrgyz ethnic minorities. It was after three successive attempts that President Akayev was able to have his amendment, substituting it with "land belongs to the people of Kyrgyzstan" approved

15. A. Chukin; 'Free Kyrgyzstan: Problems and Solutions'. Current History. (April 1994) p.172.

by the parliament. However, the citizenship law published in June 1992, which ruled out double citizenship for the people of Kyrgyzstan. Similar law was also passed in Turkmenistan as well. This also led to the Russian exodus.

With the adoption of the "Law on Languages" in Kazakhstan, the Kazakh language was declared the only state language. But the Constitution now in force, though it declares Kazakh to be the state language, does not make it incumbent on all citizens to know it.¹⁶ Moreover, the civil movement Azat (Independence) has come out against land privatization and the proclamation of Russian as Kazakhstan's second official language. Azat's First Deputy Chairman Zhasral Kuanyshalin, a member of Kazakhstan' parliament, has

16. FBIS-SOV-95-146 31 July 1995, p.81.

declared, the movement is "categorically against the private ownership of land and the proclamation of Russian a state language alongside Kazakh."¹⁷ The language issue in Kazakhstan is yet to be solved, although the government is posing to be secular in this matter.

For most of urban Central Asia and for most professional people, Russian is still an indispensable language. Although English is gaining rapidly as necessary for international trade and discourse, it will take at least one generation for it to become widely and easily known.¹⁸ A distinct set of problems occurs as the language issue has boiled over from intellectual debate into the political forum.

17. FBIS-SOV-95-011, 11 January 1995, p.51.

18. E. Naby; 'Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia', Central Asian Survey 12(2) (1993), p.160.

The first problem emerged with the formal appointment in 1989 of the language of the ethnic majority in each republic as the official and national language. All these republics operate under the assumption that Russian will eventually be replaced by the national language. The second problem occurs as pressure mounts on local languages to substitute non-Russian vocabulary for political and scientific terminology. This has led to the creation of committees similar to the Farhangistan in Iran. These committees debate and decide among usages such as whether the word for the Russian republika (republic) should be the Iranian used 'jumhuria' or the Turkish used 'jumhuriyat'. The third problem arose as committees were formed to translate from Russian all government documents and forms into local language.¹⁹

19. Ibid. pp.160-161.

The fourth problem is the alphabet. The modified cyrillic alphabet, used in a slightly different form for each of the Central Asian languages, is seen as a vestige of Stalinism, unsuited to Central Asian languages, a barrier to pre-Soviet culture, and an impediment to communication with neighbouring areas such as Turkey and Iran. This alphabet enforces a closeness with the Russian language that many resent. As a consequence of these arguments against Cyrillic, proponents of the Latin and Arabic alphabets have pressed for the adoption of one of these.²⁰ In this way, the fruits of Russification drive over the past seventy years have been undone in a short period of time.

NEW POLICY OF DISCRIMINATION

Educational level of the population is an important indicator for measuring socio-economic and cultural development. Under Soviet rule all Central Asian Republics achieved nearly hundred per cent literacy by 1970s. Their enrollment in higher and secondary specialised education increased gradually between 1970 and 1988 (See Table 6). Beside, the highly educated and professionally trained Central Asian cadres would not like the Russians and other

20. Ibid., p.161.

Slav cadres to occupy key and other posts in bureaucracy, industry, communications and other sectors.

Table 6

Enrolment in Higher and Secondary Specialised Education in Soviet Central Asian Republics

USSR School Year (% per 10,000 population)									
Republic	1970/1971		1980/1981		1985/1986		1987/1988		
		USSR Av.		USSR Av.		USSR Av.		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	
Kyrgyz	301	81.8	287	77.8	270	78.0	217	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	

Population = per 10,000

Source: Andrew R. Bond Misha V. Belkindas, A.I. Treyvish, "Economic Development Trend in USSR 1970-1988, Soviet Geography, Vol.32, No.1, January 1991.

During the 1980's, Kazakh political and cultural elites began to reverse the socio-cultural - and particularly

educational - Russification that had occurred during the Soviet era. The Kazakh elites were particularly concerned about the status of Kazakh in the primary schools, which increasingly had been replaced by Russians during the previous two decades. As the first step, the number of hours of instruction in Kazakh was increased in 1987. The language law passed in 1989 made Kazakh a mandatory subject of study. In addition, a concerted effort has been undertaken to convert the language of instruction from Russian to Kazakh. The first step was to install partitions in the Russian-language schools to divide classes into Kazakh and Russian-language instruction. During the 1990's, Russian language schools increasingly have been converted to Kazakh-language, particularly in the south. An increasing proportion of students are being educated in Kazakh-languages schools. A Kazakhization of students, faculty, and

administration in higher education already was taking place by the 1980's.²¹

In the wake of the 1986 demonstration, one would have expected the new government to de-Kazakhize higher education, this did not happen. Not only did Kazakhs continue to be over-represented among students in colleges, but Russians in faculty and administrative positions in the universities and within the Ministry of Education were increasingly replaced by Kazakhs. Between 1989 and 1992, the share of Russian executives in the Ministry of Education had declined from 43% to 14% and Russian specialists in the Ministry had declined from 47% to 19%.²² This Kazakhization has continued in 1993 and 1994. Under the "Law of Languages" in Kazakhstan, passed in August 1989, which went into effect on July 1, 1990, study

21. Robert, Kaiser, and Jeff, Chinn; "Russian-Kazakh Relations in Kazakhstan", Post-Soviet Geography, 36, No.5, 1995, pp.262-63.

22. FBIS-USR, No.146, Nov. 14, 1992, pp.92-93.

of Kazakh is mandatory and competency in Kazakhs is required for admission to higher education and for governmental employment.

The Russians and other minorities are lamenting that ethnic favoritism towards Kazakhs put them at a comparative disadvantage, and that this change in the ethnic stratification also was causing out-migration. Kazakh over representation in higher education and political cadres, and the dramatic shift during the 1980s towards Kazakh participation in all sectors of the economy, provided an added incentive for Russian emigration. Russians perceive Kazakhization as forced acculturation and a means of replacing Russians with Kazakhs. Russians have realized that they have no future in an independent and increasingly nationalistic and exclusionary Kazakhstan.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic relations are inherent in human conduct. The tension in such relations varies according to an infinite number of objective and subjective factors present all over the world, and the list of current conflicts on various levels between different groups of human beings related to the recognition of their linguistic, economic, social, territorial and other rights. Generally nations are the result of the ethnic development of nationalities. However, nationalities divided by state borders frequently bring into existence several ethnic entities. 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 tensions take a wide variety of forms - ethno-national, ethno-territorial,

ethno-cultural and ethno-religious, etc. This makes the study of ethnic processes particularly significant in the Central Asian Republics.

In this study an attempt has been made to examine the various aspects of the Russian minorities in the Central Asian Republics in the post-Soviet era. In particular, the study has sought to analyse the myriad problems of the Russians minorities, important being political, social, economic, cultural, educational and linguistic. After these republics achieved independence from former Soviet Union, they started the policies of local majoritarianism. Both at the government and non-government level, favoritism was shown towards the native population, with total disregard to the Russian population. Although the heads of governments of these republics claim to be following secular and democratic policies, but no constitution of these Central Asian Republics guarantees equal status for the Russian minorities.

Between 1985 and 1990 there were violent ethnic clashes which rocked almost all the Central Asian republics. In Kazakhstan, in case of Alma-Ata riots, the confrontation was directly between the Muslim Kazakhs and the non-Muslim Russians. These riots 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 that Marxism and Leninism could not provide any alternative to the newly emergent national ethno-religious sentiments. Nearly seven decades of Soviet rule could not erase the past memories - collectivization, Virgin Lands programme, suppression of national cultures, local and religious traditions - from the hearts of these people. 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 "sophisticated

Islam" is following the policies of adoption, accommodation and adjustment. Current demographic trends, ethno-religious resurgence, the language factor 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.

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, Iran have 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 Islam. The Islamic resurgence in Central Asia is also a repercussion of the Khomeini revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

In the economic sphere, there are moves towards creation of common Central Asian market, trade pacts with countries like Singapore, Korea, Indonesia. The trend towards market economy and privatization has already started. 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 towards the formation of "Central Asian Federation". The recently concluded "Eurasian Alliance" between Russia, Byelorussian, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzistan heads of state is meant for greater security and economic ties. The virtually non-existent relations for the past three generations with Turkey are being revived.

Relations between the Central Asian States and Russia will remain a particularly significant factor in determining the directions of ethnicity in the region. The shape of these

relations will depend partly on political developments in Russia itself and partly on the policies adopted by the Central Asian states both towards their Russian populations and vis-a-vis their large and powerful CIS partners. The rise of ultra-nationalist forces within Russia bodes ill for Central Asian stability. Should Russian nationalist parties gain ascendancy in the states, there could be a change in Russia's policies towards the "near abroad", including the adoption of a more interventionist and assertive posture, in its dealings with the Central Asia. Similarly, if perceptions of alienation and insecurity are enhanced amongst the Russians population on Central Asian soil, there will not only be an increase in migration, with its adverse impact on the Central Asian economies, but also the possibility of are Russian communities, living in areas contiguous to Russian territory, such as northern Kazakhstan, deciding to opt for independence or reintegration with the ethnic homeland.

The leadership of the Central Asian states has, so far, demonstrated extreme caution in their dealings with Russia and with their resident Russian communities. Although the Russians feel particularly insecure in states such as Tajikistan, feelings of alienation have been somewhat contained by the extension of concession such as dual citizenship status for Russians residing in Tajikistan and the protection of interests of its Russian population by the Kazakh government. The special significance given to ties with Russia by the Central Asia states is also to assuage feelings of insecurity amongst their Russian population.

But the prospects of stability in Central Asia will depend, above all, on internal factors. In the economic sphere, the success of individual Central states in overcoming the present economic crisis arising from a sudden transition to independence and developing balanced especially

when non-discriminatory policies are adopted towards their ethnic Russian minorities. Continued shortages of consumer goods and essential services, high levels of unemployment and inflation, will, conversely destabilize Central Asian societies since the competition for access to scarce resources will take the shape of inter-ethnic conflict.

Ethnic mobilization is likely to remain a salient feature in Central Asian politics as the population of each state consists of different ethnic communities, each with its distinct languages, history, tradition and culture. Dominant groups will use ethnic mobilization, along linguistic, tribal, clan and territorial lines, to consolidate their position and to counter threats from opposing groups, while minority communities will appeal to ethnic sentiments to gain socio-economic benefits.

Since ethnic competition by its very nature is flexible, ever existing inter and intra-ethnic tensions in Central Asia could recede over time if steps are taken to provide all ethnic communities a stake in the state. The ability of each Central Asian state to evolve political systems which incorporate political pluralism and include power-sharing arrangements for their multi-ethnic populations will in particular, curb existing ethnic tensions and prevent confrontation along inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic lines.

Here, it is noteworthy to draw a parallel between India and the Central Asian Republics. India is a multi-ethnic society with a number of minority communities living in its territory. These minorities are given constitutional status. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees "Equality before Law." Moreover Article 29, which is a Fundamental Right ensures the "Protection of interests of minorities".

There is also other Fundamental Right like Article 25 "Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion", Article 30 "Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions ". There is also a Minorities Commission to look into the problems of different minorities of India. It is a sad fact that none of the countries of Central Asia guarantee such right for their minorities in their respective countries. The Russian and other minorities of the Central Asian Republics should be given minority status in the constitution and the fear psychosis which has been created among the Russians has to be removed.

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TABLE-7

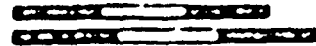
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CENTRAL ASIA, 1995*

(Figures in thousands)

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
Total Population	16,464	4,258	5,092	3,552	19,810
Kazakhs	6,535 (39.7%)	-	-	88 (2.5%)	808 (4.1%)
Kyrgyzs	-	2,230 (52.4%)	-	-	-
Russians and others	8,263 (50.2%)	1,126 (26.4%)	412 (8.1%)	370 (10.4%)	2,204 (11.1%)
Tajiks	-	-	3,172 (62.3%)	-	934 (4.7%)
Turmens	-	-	-	2,536 (71.4%)	-
Uzbeks	332 (2.0%)	550 (12.9%)	1,198 (23.5%)	317 (8.9%)	14,142 (71.4%)
Others	1,334 (8.1%)	352 (8.3%)	310 (6.1%)	241 (6.8%)	1,722 (8.7%)

*Source: Vestnik Statistiki, 1995.

300 miles



600 km

