

ETHNIC POLITICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:  
THE CASE OF VOLGA TATARS

A Master's Thesis

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **ETHNIC POLITICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THE CASE OF VOLGA TATARS**

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January 2012

This thesis analyses an under-examined subject in the discipline of International Relations, ethnic politics, with reference to the case of Volga Tatars, the second largest ethnic group after Russians within the Russian Federation. Ethnicity is one of the phenomena that are at the core of International Relations. Its significance can be observed in debates on nation-state, identity, and international and internal conflicts. The phenomenon of ethnic politics transcends the traditional study of ethnicity in the discipline, which confines it to the study of conflicts. However, ethnicity is not conflictual by its nature and matters beyond conflict. Therefore, ethnic politics can significantly affect domestic and foreign policies of states, and for that matter the world politics at the global level. The very processes of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the Russian Federation in general, and Volga Tatars in particular, represent a perfect microcosm of how ethnic politics is significant in international relations.

**Key Words:** Ethnic politics, Ethnic Conflict, Soviet nationalities policy, Volga Tatars, Tatarstan, Turkey-Russian Relations

## ÖZET

### ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLERDE ETNİK POLİTİKALAR: VOLGA TATARLARI ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde yeterince incelenmemiş bir konuyu, etnik politikaları, Rusya Federasyonu içinde Ruslardan sonra ikinci büyük etnik grup olan Volga Tatarları örneği üzerinden incelemektedir. Etnisite, Uluslararası İlişkiler'in merkezinde yer alan fenomenlerden biridir. Etnisitenin önemi ulus-devlet, kimlik, uluslararası çatışmalar ve devlet içi çatışmalar konularındaki tartışmalarda gözlemlenebilir. Etnik politikalar kavramı, etnisiteyi çatışmalara sınırlayan geleneksel yaklaşımın ötesine geçer. Etnisite, her durumda çatışmacı değildir ve çatışmanın ötesinde önem arz eder. Bu nedenle, etnik politikalar devletlerin iç ve dış politikalarını ve böylelikle küresel düzeyde dünya politikalarını etkileyebilir. Genel ölçekte Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması ve Rusya Federasyonu'nun kurulması, özellikle de Volga Tatarları, etnik politikaların uluslararası ilişkilerdeki önemini ortaya koyan yetkin örnek durumlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Etnik politikalar, Etnik çatışma, Sovyet milliyetler politikası, Volga Tatarları, Tataristan, Türk-Rus İlişkileri

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“Three rings for the Elven-kings under the sky  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone  
Nine for mortal Men doomed to die.”

- J. R. R. Tolkien

These famous verses on the One Ring of Tolkien’s Middle Earth have their own fatal-to-utter meaning in their fictional world. However, they perfectly reflect a sheer reality: Even in a fantastic fiction which is a product of *escapism*, the author needs to organise people and countries around the principle of self-determination, namely on the basis of nationality/ethnicity/race.

The organisation of the modern political world on the basis of the principle of self-determination is today taken for granted; it may even seem to be an inherent feature of the world to inattentive eyes. The questions were striking to me when I first realised them: Why the political units are organised around the principle of nationality, but not that of another categorical/identical ascription? Why is it that the

state cannot be possible without a nation, which either truly or artificially carries a notion of ethnicity? Why only nations can claim right for self-determination; while, say, a social class or scholars of a scientific branch cannot? These questions, ultimately, have been the main drives for me in choosing the subject *ethnic politics* in this thesis.

### **1.1 Research Question and Synopsis**

This thesis is based around the question that “how does ethnic politics, without and beyond turning into ethnic conflict, influence domestic and foreign policies of states?” Ethnic conflict has been a settled area of study within the International Relations (IR) discipline, especially after the end of the Cold War. However, the examination of ethnicity under the rubric of “conflict” mistakenly limits the comprehensiveness of the phenomenon. Therefore, there is a considerable gap in the literature in terms of defining the influence of ethnicity through non-conflictual politics.

The second chapter begins with a literature review outlining the genealogy of studies in IR discipline that can be gathered under the rubric of ethnic politics. For this purpose, the main academic journals analysing ethnic politics, namely *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Nationalities Papers*, and *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, are reviewed and analysed. Concurrently, the interdisciplinarity of the subject is problematised and the place of the studies of ethnic politics within the IR discipline is delineated. Further, analyses of ethnic politics by theories of International Relations are examined.

In the third chapter, the nationalities policies of the Soviet Union are contextualised with reference to ethnic politics. The roles of ethnic politics in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the Russian Federation are analysed. This chapter, at the same time, constitutes the broader background for the main case study, that of the Volga Tatars, in the fourth chapter.

The fourth chapter is a historical analysis of the case of the Volga Tatars from the Muscovite conquest of Kazan to the contemporary post-Soviet period. The case of Volga Tatars provides a perfect example of the influence of ethnic politics in international relations. Throughout different phases of history, Volga Tatars influenced the domestic and foreign policies of Russia, at times significantly.

In the fifth chapter, the role of Tatarstan, the titular republic of Volga Tatars, in Turkish-Russian relations is analysed in order to exemplify the influence of ethnic politics in foreign policies. The analysis demonstrates that ethnic politics can significantly matter beyond conflict in international relations.

## **2.2 Methodology**

In the second chapter, literature review and content analysis are conducted. The third chapter is built upon historicising and contextualising. The fourth chapter is a historical analysis that includes examination of certain specific periods and issues of the Volga Tatar history that are rarely analysed in academic studies. For this purpose, books, periodicals, and newspapers not only in English but also in Tatar and

Turkish are examined. The political history of Volga Tatars is yet an understudied chapter of Russian history, which can provide significant insights for students of International Relations. Therefore, this subject can be more deeply analysed through field research and full access to documents in Russian and Tatar. The fifth chapter provides a foreign policy analysis of the specific issue of the role of Tatarstan in Turkish-Russian relations. The speeches of key actors in this respect and the main relevant documents (agreements, constitutions, declarations) are analysed. Therefore, this chapter is built upon discourse and content analysis as methods.

## CHAPTER 2

### ETHNIC POLITICS STUDIES AND THEIR PLACE WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DISCIPLINE

“We must start by noticing that ‘ethnic’ identity is not a thing in itself, or for eternity. It is an identity that is constantly forged. [...] The kind of ethnic strife we have been seeing in the last two decades is not at all comparable to the wave of nationalism the world-system knew from the early nineteenth century up to the mid twentieth century.”

- Immanuel Wallerstein, *Utopistics* (1998)

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a genealogy of ethnic politics studies and to problematise their place within the International Relations (IR) discipline. This analysis is carried out with reference to both ethnic politics studies as a separate subfield under the IR discipline and the attitude of IR theories towards ethnicity and ethnic politics. It is argued that the significance of ethnicity and ethnic politics has been underestimated in the IR discipline. Therefore, theories and analyses of ethnic



politics have remained scattered and unconnected. Further, the extent of ethnic politics and nature of ethnicity have been mistakenly reduced to conflict or simply dismissed as a source of conflict.

## **2.2 A Genealogy**

Ethnicity and its influences on international politics had gone unnoticed in the discipline of International Relations until the decolonisation movements emerged in the Third World. The nation-state had been taken for granted as the universal form of political organisation. The decolonisation movements demonstrated that the nation-state was not “inscribed into the nature of things” (Gellner 1983: 49) and ethnicity matters for international politics. The end of the Cold War and outburst of ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space necessarily made International Relations discipline to attach significance to ethnicity. However, the study of ethnicity and ethnic politics has remained epiphenomenal in the discipline as yet.

### **2.2.1 Studies before the End of the Cold War**

Studies of ethnic politics within the scope of the IR discipline dates back to the immediate aftermath of the decolonisation movements in the post-Second World War period, especially to the 1960s (Ryan 1990: xxii). Decolonisation, while granting independence, left these new states on their own in consolidating their nation-states, the universal political organisation of the twentieth century (Riggs 1994: 588). Ethnic conflicts that broke out during this era demonstrated that ethnic

groups, whose importance had been sacrificed on the altar of the nation-state, can play a role in world politics (Gurr and Harff 1994: 2).

Having their initial *raison d'être* in explaining the ethnic controversies that erupted after decolonisation, early studies of ethnic politics mostly remained content with offering shallow and temporary surveys of the cases at stake. Though, few later-to-be milestone works, such as Fredrik Barth's study (1969), were created during this period. The dominance of the Cold War in the IR discipline, as well as in political life, arguably had the greatest share in the neglect of ethnic politics during the initial period of the emergence of studies on the subject. However, the Cold War is indeed far from bearing the whole responsibility, for the reasons that will be set forth and elaborated subsequently.

A stronger rise and standing out of ethnic politics studies in the discipline was during the 1970s and 1980s. It was in these decades when the most prominent nationalism scholars, Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Walker Connor, published their *magna opera* on the phenomenon of nationalism *per se*; and when the first academic journals specifically devoted to the studies of ethnic politics, such as *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, and *Nationalities Papers* started to be published. Although nationalism is a separate area of study, more exclusively belonging to political science and sociology, the relationship between ethnic politics studies and nationalism studies have been mutually constructive and mutually cultivating. Those two specific areas of studies have inevitably been interlaced to a certain degree and tended to converge by the virtue of the fact that concepts of ethnicity and nation are interlocked. However, during this period, ethnicity was still a recent phenomenon (Horowitz 1985: 4), and it

was only Anthony Smith among the nationalism scholars who included the word “ethnic” in the title of his books (1981; 1986).

During 1970s and 1980s, particular scholars were significant contributors to the initiation of ethnic politics studies within the IR context. In 1975, Nathan Glazer, a sociologist, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a scholar of political science and a politician as well, published a milestone book, titled *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, which they co-edited after a conference under the same rubric held in 1972. Already in 1963, two scholars had co-authored another book, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, which focused on the ethnic groups in New York. Although it contained inspirational insights for future studies of ethnic politics, it was dominantly a sociological analysis. *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, on the other hand, had been one of the precursors of the significance of ethnicity in world politics and of ethnic studies in academia. The authors concisely portrayed the condition of the studies on the subject:

Little in this field has been resolved. We are all beginners here. We consider this volume very much an initial contribution in an enterprise to be continued. [...] There is a phenomenon here that is, in ways not yet explicated, no mere survival but intimately and organically bound up with major trends of modern societies (Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 25-26).

Nathan and Moynihan, significantly, considered ethnicity beyond a minor concept of social stratification. The authors envisaged that ethnicity has prospects to be a rising phenomenon in world politics, an influential factor in shaping foreign policies, and an indispensable reality of the post-Second World War world.

In 1985, Donald L. Horowitz, a professor of Law and Political Science, one of few scholars writing exclusively on ethnic politics since the beginning of 1970s,

published his later-to-be a primer book, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. The very first lines heralded the inevitable significance of ethnic politics, which was only to be fully recognized in the 1990s:

The importance of ethnic conflict, as a force shaping human affairs, as a phenomenon to be understood, as a threat to be controlled, can no longer be denied. [...] Ethnicity is at the centre of politics in country after country, a potent source of challenges to the cohesion of states and of international tension (Horowitz 1985: xi).

Horowitz not only delineated salience of ethnic politics, which was incrementally emerging from obscurity, but also underlined its irresistible break into academia, with his *locus classicus* line that “ethnicity has fought and bled and burned its way into public and scholarly consciousness” (Horowitz 1985: xi).

During the 1980s the realities of the Cold War ceased to have their absolute hold in the discipline. The focus deflected to the looming end of the Cold War and to its sweeping and numerous consequences. Critical approaches against the pervasiveness of the dogmas of the Cold War emerged (Lepgold and Nincic 2001: 23). During the 1980s, however, the emphasis was not on ethnic politics *per se* but on the philosophical questions about the concept of nation-state. After all, with communism seemed to fail in the Soviet Union, this was a period when the dominant ideologies of the twentieth century were being questioned.

### **2.2.2 Studies after the End of the Cold War**

Studies of ethnic politics blossomed with the end of the Cold War, specifically with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the demise of communist regimes in the Eastern Europe. After the bipolarity of international politics was

unchained, the bipolar friction and nuclear threat ceased to be the main security issue. The most significant matter which arose in the international sphere suddenly became the insurgence of ethnic groups within the dissolved multinational regimes.

Therefore, the focus of academic lenses of ethnic studies turned from the third world to Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union. Since this geographical area was at the heart of politics and thus of the academic endeavour of IR, studies of ethnic politics accordingly found a relatively more significant place within the discipline. Thus, starting from the 1980s and during the 1990s, scholars from IR background, in contrast to previous scholars who were mostly from anthropology, philosophy, sociology, and political science backgrounds, specialised on the studies of ethnic politics. Consequently, broad studies and projects were initiated, such as Edward Azar's *Conflict and Peace Databank* (1980) and Ted Gurr's *Minorities at Risk* (1993).

However, in spite of the relevance and significance of ethnic politics in international relations, studies of ethnic politics have not been appreciated sufficiently within the discipline. The role of ethnic politics has been neglected by IR theories and its importance for national and international security tends to be overlooked. The reasons behind this neglect are twofold, that is both on the part of the separate field of ethnic politics studies and of the broader discipline of IR.

## 2.3 “Pandaemonium”<sup>1</sup> in Ethnic Politics Studies

After the end of the Cold War, ethnic politics, especially in the form of ethnic conflict, boomed. A broad literature with plethora of studies, very different in terms of disciplinary backgrounds and approaches but in one way or another within the boundaries of the IR discipline, were added to the literature of ethnic politics. Although most of the prominent works start with accepting that there remain to be a need for a major theory, there is not any general theory of ethnic politics which is acknowledged and embraced in the field as yet (Hale 2008: 30). The field still seems to suffer from disorder and a need of an organizing theory. As Ernst Haas argued about the state of nationalism studies, the field of ethnic politics also suffers from the "proverbial elephant problem" (1986: 707), which is an analogy for grasping only parts of a phenomenon without seeing the whole limits of it.

### 2.3.1 The Theoretical Background of the Studies of Ethnic Politics

The preliminary theoretical background upon which ethnic politics studies in IR is built is derived from a variety of frameworks offered in sociological and anthropological studies as well as in classical philosophical works. Ethnic politics studies have selected these frameworks generally along two broad questions: the nature of ethnicity and ethnic loyalty/consciousness/identification, and the possibility of multiethnic societies. The analyses of multiethnic societies are distinguished along incompatibility, of which well-known representatives are John Stuart Mill and

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<sup>1</sup> In John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, Pandaemonium is the capital of Satan where he sat "high on a throne of royal state" (Kean 2005: 94). Moynihan borrowed it as the title of his book published in 1993, 'Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics', to depict the tumultuousness of ethnic conflicts after the end of the Cold War.

Woodrow Wilson, and consociationalism, that is characterized by J. S. Furnivall's plural society theory to which Anthony Smith also made substantial contributions (Ryan 1990: 4-5). Mill (2009 [1861]: 344) argued that

Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative government cannot exist.

Furnivall, on the other hand, suggested that different ethnic groups within the same society can peacefully coexist, except for in the marketplace. Therefore, in order to provide coexistence in the marketplace, it would be necessary to impose certain frameworks of rule (Rex 1959: 115-116).

With the risk of simplifying a vast philosophical debate, the approaches to the nature of ethnicity can be outlined as divided between primordialism and constructivism (Hale 2008: 15). Primordialism asserts that the prototypes of ethnic identification, such as rituals of collectivity and a sense of belonging to a common origin, reaches back to time immemorial (Reminick 1983: 47). Therefore, this approach treats ethnicity as an ontological given.

Primordialism is criticised by prominent anthropology scholars, such as Fredrik Barth, on the basis of the argument that ethnicity is a category of "ascription and identification, thus have characteristic of organizing interaction between people" (1969: 10). By defining ethnicity as a superordinate category of identity and status (Barth 1969: 17), he opposed primordialism on the basis of situationalism (circumstantialism), which implies that ethnicity is a social construction through interaction that is necessitated by certain circumstances.

Further, instrumentalism, which is mostly inspired by political economy (Covers and Merveulen 1997: 2), views ethnicity not as a matter of identity and status, but as an instrument constructed for “pursuit of collective interests” (Young 1983:660). Therefore, these two distinctive categories of situationalism and instrumentalism fall into the constructivist approach with respect to their ontological assumptions.

Primordialism is also discredited to a large extent by nationalism scholars, prominently by Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. Anderson’s argument (2006: 4), although it is specifically on the creation of the sense of nation-ness, reflects the punch line of the constructivist approach:

I will be trying to argue that the creation of these artefacts [i.e. nation-ness and nationalism] towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces; but that once created they became ‘modular’, capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations.

Max Weber, who is accepted as the first in using the term “ethnic group” in a scholarly work, adopted an approach that discredits primordialism, in his work titled *Economy and Society*. Weber (1978: 387-288) argued:

The question of whether conspicuous "racial" differences are based on biological heredity or on tradition is usually of no importance as far as their effect on mutual attraction or repulsion is concerned. [...] We can conclude then that similarity and contrast of physical type and custom, regardless of whether they are biologically inherited or culturally transmitted, are subject to the same conditions of group life, in origin as well as in effectiveness, and identical in their potential for group formation.



In spite of deriving from solid, though intricate, theoretical bases, ethnic politics studies in IR had difficulties to transplant ethnicity with a strong theoretical framework into the international relations context. It is argued here is that the primary reason of this problem is the deficiency of anchoring a central relational question under the focus of inquiry: “How ethnic politics shape/influence the state behaviour and/or international politics, which encompasses and incorporates all other questions and subtopics that emerge as a result of ethnic politics?” Along with this primary reason, centrifugal factors also exist.

### **2.3.2 Theoretical Frameworks within the Context of International Relations**

As indicated beforehand, many scholars of ethnic politics studies in IR acknowledge and underline the necessity of a theoretical framework (Horowitz 1971: 232; Moynihan 1993: 61; Ryan 1990: xiii; Carment 1993: 137). However, they generally stay content with acknowledging this necessity or offering frameworks that provide insights only for parts of the phenomenon without diagnosing the reason why such a theoretical framework cannot be achieved. As a result of the absence of a common agenda with a central question, studies of ethnic politics resemble a Pollock picture. A huge literature falls under the same rubric but remain disorderly because of lack of interconnectedness, although works under each sub-rubric are sophisticated in themselves.

Since the breakthrough of ethnicity into the discipline as a result of the emergence of ethnic conflicts, initially in the 1960s and then after 1990, the field of ethnic politics studies is generally identified with the term “ethnic conflict”. This denomination is inevitably subject to the inference that ethnicity is by definition

conflictual and studies of ethnic politics consist of studying conflicts in which ethnic groups involve. Although ethnic conflicts have been evidently the most prominent and relevant issue, it has turned out to be that ethnic politics is not limited to conflicts, even not necessarily conflictual by nature<sup>2</sup>. Hale concisely puts it by saying “next to almost every ethnic hotspot lie multiple zones of ethnic peace” (2008: 18). Far from being a modality of conflict, ethnic politics has stood out as an enduring phenomenon of the post-Cold War international politics. However, limiting ethnic politics to ethnic conflict *per se* have put understanding of and offering solutions for particular cases at the centre of the scholarly inquiry, not ethnic politics as a phenomenon to be understood. Consequently, separate scholarly works leaning upon separate particular events dominated the field. The issue of denomination, therefore, goes beyond to be a semantic detail but it designates the boundaries of the field.

Being strictly related to those problems elaborated hitherto, the problem of the lack of interconnectedness seems to be pervasive in studies of ethnic politics. Scholars tend to overlook the theoretical frameworks offered beforehand. This interconnectedness hinders the cumulative evolution of the theoretical knowledge and the construction of an overarching theory of ethnic politics. To make the case, certain examples are helpful.

Donald Horowitz sets forth a framework for explaining the structure of differentiations among ethnic groups (1971: 232). In this framework, “vertical” and “horizontal” systems of ethnic stratification are distinguished. Vertical systems partake of caste structures and they are generally a result of conquests and captures. Therefore, in vertical systems relations between ethnic groups are hierarchical among

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<sup>2</sup> “There is no such thing as an inherently ethnic interest or ethnic preference. Instead, we should assume ethnic group behavior is motivated by the same kinds of motives that drive human behavior more generally in all kinds of situations” (Hale 2008: 52).

subordinate and superordinate groups. On the other hand, horizontal systems are generally constituted through either annexations<sup>3</sup> or voluntary migrations, which result in parallel ethnic structures. However, Horowitz argues, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that social cohesion is higher in horizontal systems, on the contrary, vertical systems might prove to be having more social cement in time. Building upon this classification, Horowitz analyses political interaction among ethnic groups.

Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff concentrated exactly the same issue that Horowitz had, that is types of ethnic groups, the ways in which different ethnic groups come together, and political interaction among those groups. They classified “politically active ethnic groups” into four: ethnonationalists, indigenous peoples, communal contenders, and ethnoclasses (1994: 15). However, this framework is not related, compared, or contrasted to the previous one offered by Horowitz. Although both Horowitz and Gurr are among the most prominent scholars of ethnic politics, because of this lack of interconnectedness, neither of their frameworks is acknowledged as a reference point nor evaluated/criticised for improvement or replacement by other scholars.

Henry Hale, in his book published in 2008, problematises the deficiencies of current state of theorisation in studies of ethnic politics and proposes an alternative “relational” theoretical basis. He argues that theories of ethnic politics fall into two broad category: ethnicity-as-conflictual theories and ethnicity-as-epiphenomenal theories. He discredits both on the basis of the argument that theories of ethnic politics must have solid and firmer grounds (2008: 31). His relational and

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<sup>3</sup> Horowitz use “invasion resulting less than conquest” as a way that constitutes horizontal systems. I interpreted it as “annexation”.

microfoundational theory, having its roots at the psychology of human behaviour, comprises two main arguments, which are about the nature of ethnicity and of ethnic politics. Primordialist and constructivist views, Hale argues, are not relational, since ethnicity can best be seen as an instrument for human beings to neatly categorize and simplify and thus make sense of the complex world, that is to say as an instrument for “uncertainty reduction”. Indeed his argument about the nature of ethnicity coincides with Barth’s analysis. Barth (1969: 10) had argued that:

Ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people. We attempt to relate other characteristics of ethnic groups to this primary feature.

Second argument of Hale’s relational theory sets forth that ethnic politics is mainly a way through which human beings can most effectively further their interests. Therefore, he conceptualizes ethnic politics as a result stemming from individuals’ desire or intrinsic human behaviour to pursue their various interests (Hale 2008: 55), given that interests are broadly defined as both material and emotional. This approach overlaps with what Moynihan put forward that significance of ethnicity is because it “combines interests with affective ties” (1993: 56).

As it is attempt to be argued hitherto, one side of the reasons behind ethnic politics’ insufficient appreciation in the discipline is the perplexity and disorder, or pandaemonium, in the field of ethnic politics studies, although recently there have been comprehensive examinations of the literature and attempts to propose a theory that compiles the literature like Hale’s. The other side of the reasons seems to be the neglect of ethnic politics by IR theory. These two sides of reasons are not

independent from each other, but they are mutually reinforcing the perplexity and neglect in one another respectively.

## **2.4 Ethnic Politics within the Frameworks of International Relations Theories**

David Carment in 1993 made the observation that “first, the neglect of the study of ethnic conflict within international relations theory needs to be rectified” (138). The point of reference of this observation was that ethnic politics “presents a wide range of challenges for foreign policy and interstate cooperation” (Carment 1993: 137). With reference to Anthony Birch, Carment (1993: 229) concludes his point:

Interestingly, though many scholars recognize the protractedness of ethnic conflicts and their oft violent nature, few have argued that this intensity of violence poses a major threat to the viability of the contemporary state and international system.

Carment’s observations seem to have validly survived as yet. Stephen Ryan certifies the observations and argues “the discipline of IR has underestimated the significance of ethnic conflict” (1990: xix). He enumerates certain reasons that inhibited a full appreciation of ethnicity in the IR discipline. The features of the broader ideological context in which twentieth century embedded are the primary one among those reasons. Two ideological forces that had shaped the twentieth century, liberalism and Marxism, did not attach any significance to ethnicity and “tended to be dismissive of ethnic sentiment” (Ryan 1990: xix).

This argument is shared by many nationalism and ethnic studies scholars. Moynihan describes how ethnicity was disregarded by both “the liberal expectancy”

and “the Marxist prediction”. The liberal views, based upon the Enlightenment ideas, saw ethnicity as a component of primitive and feudal societies that would be transcended through progress. The Marxist prediction, on the other hand, envisaged that class would be the overarching identity and ethnicity would be replaced by “proletarian internationalism” (Moynihan 1993: 27). Benedict Anderson (1983: 3) argues that “the end of the era of nationalism, so long prophesied [by liberalism and Marxism], is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time”.

As the second reason, a long tradition in social sciences, as the dominant ideologies, has predicted the end of ethnicity, and optimistically believed that acculturation or assimilation would prevail (Ryan 1990: xx). With reference to Anthony Smith and J. A. Fishman, Ryan underlines the “sociological contempt” and prediction of the end of ethnicity from “Durkheim to Deutsch” (1990: xx). The term ethnicity *per se*, as a nascent phenomenon in 1950s and 1960s, and ethnic politics indeed had discriminative and racial connotations, which evoked tribalism and primitivism. These connotations continued to survive till after 1990s, as it was reflected in a 1991 issue of *The Economist* with a headline read “tribalism revisited” and in a 1992 issue of *New York Times*, which evaluated ethnic conflicts by claiming that “the roll call of warring nationalities invokes some forgotten primer on the warring tribes of the Dark Ages” (Moynihan 1993: 16-19). However, in time ethnicity made its way into academe with a broadened definition that includes any kind of subgroups within a society (Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 4). Ryan stipulates as the third reason that this attitude of the long tradition in social sciences influenced the IR discipline; therefore the realist tradition was committed to the strength of the sovereign state and attached no importance to ethnic particularism (1990: xxi).

Realist theories of international relations, specifically classical realism and structural realism, treat states as unitary actors in the international system, therefore they are indifferent to the domestic environments, and by definition to ethnic politics (Lobell and Mauceri 2004: 1). Ethnic politics is seen as a “change in unit level”; thereby it would not matter for the international system (Waltz 2000: 5). Consequently, it can be argued that the neglect of ethnic politics in IR theory is primarily caused by the dominance of realism, given that the realist tradition has dominated IR theory and together with liberal theories has constituted “mainstream IR”.

Neoclassical realism, on the other hand, acknowledges the role of domestic politics as an intervening variable between the international system and state behaviour (Schweller 2004: 164). The domestic politics variables that neoclassical realism formulates are elite consensus, government/regime vulnerability, social cohesion, and elite cohesion (Schweller 2004: 169). “Ethnic animosities”, as a component of social cohesion, are taken into account as a potential source of conflict along with “divergent class interests, economic inequalities, competing political goals, and normative conflicts” (Schweller 2004: 175). Therefore, ethnic politics is indirectly incorporated into the framework of neoclassical realism. However, it is seen as epiphenomenal and solely as a source of conflict and fragmentation, a view that reduces ethnic politics exclusively to one dimension.

It is possible to argue that ethnic politics, after all, may not pose a challenge to neither realist theories, save neoclassical realism, nor to neoliberalism. These theories can simply ignore ethnic politics within their theoretical logical consistency without any threat to their theoretical framework. However, for liberal theory of international relations, ethnic politics seems to exert a substantial threat as a highly

relevant variable that has been ignored. Liberal theory of IR “opens the black box of state” and views states as not unitary actors, but representatives of individuals, groups, and polities embedded within their domestic societies (Moravcsik 2003: 5). Therefore, ethnic politics inevitably becomes relational within the context of liberal theorisation, since ethnic groups may be influential domestic actors.

Ethnic politics studies concentrating on the inter-state or international dimensions of ethnic conflict abound. Some of those studies explain the role of ethnic politics on state behaviour. However, ethnic politics is evidently “tended to be slighted, if not ignored” in mainstream IR theory, to borrow Moynihan’s expression (1993: 27). Even liberal theory of IR, which aims to explain state behaviour with reference to domestic societal actors, does not take ethnic politics into account. This neglect in theory prevents ethnic politics studies to develop systematically upon an overarching central question of how ethnic politics affects state behaviour, which could make a stronger connection between ethnic politics and international relations.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Studies of ethnic politics in IR emerged after decolonisation and made a genuine breakthrough during the post-Cold War era. Its boundaries as a subfield of IR have been quite permeable, deriving theoretical backgrounds from anthropology, sociology, political science, and even human psychology. Ethnic politics studies have not been systematically organised around a relational central question because of disorder and lack of interconnectedness within the field and neglect of ethnic politics within IR theory. However, ethnicity and ethnic politics remain significant factors that influence state behaviour and international politics as yet.



## CHAPTER 3

### ETHNIC POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

“But no one can exactly predict what will happen tomorrow. The Soviet Union may dissolve, crumble away just like the Ottoman Empire or Austria-Hungary. The nations which it holds firmly in its hand may slip through its fingers.”

- Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *At the receptions of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Republic*, 29  
October 1933

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the roles of ethnicity, ethnic politics, and ethnic mobilisations during the dissolution of the Soviet Union and in the Russian Federation. In the first part, the legacy of the Soviet nationalities policy is examined. It is argued that the Soviet nationalities policy and the Soviet leaders' failure to forge a unifying national identity have the greatest share in the dissolution of the Soviet Union along ethnic/national lines. In the second part, the place of the national/ethnic

movements in the dissolution of the Soviet Union is analysed. National/ethnic movements, it is argued, were not the main cause of the dissolution but they came to be the catalyst and decisive cause, as national/ethnic movements tend to become during times of crisis. In the third part, ethnic politics within the Russian Federation under Yeltsin's and Putin's rules are analysed. It is argued that ethnic politics was one of the most significant and influential issues on the agenda of both Yeltsin and Putin.

### **3.2 The Soviet Legacy**

It is possible to argue that there is a tendency in both scholarly and political environments of international relations to perceive and treat the Russian Federation as a nation-state, as the short and common name Russia clearly exposes. This tendency does apply with respect to the Soviet Union (Harmstone 1977: 74; Suny 2001: 3), but not as strong as it does for the Russian Federation. The understanding of the Soviet Union in the scholarly perception, as Yuri Slezkine's famous article implies with its title *The USSR as a Communal Apartment* (1994), tended to incorporate the awareness of and the emphasis on the ethnic diversity and multinational structure of the Soviet Union, especially after mid-1970s (Suny 2001: 6).

There is also considerable scholarly agreement on the conclusion that although the Soviet nationalities policy had ultimately intended to replace ethnic identifications with class structure and communist ideology, it only strengthened ethnic particularism and nation-building processes and "succeeded only too well in creating the conditions for ultimate demise [of the Soviet Union]" (Suny 2007: 52).

However, a kind of unifying identity, or a quasi-national identity had been developed even if not deliberately intended. The construction of that identity came in the form of applying family metaphors to the people and thus creating a unifying identity based on family ties. This conception of identity with reference to family metaphors was not indeed an invention of the Bolsheviks, but it was a traditional practice developed during the Tsarist era. Tsar was seen as the father of his subjects, while the homeland was frequently referred as “mother Russia” (Tolz 2001: 4). The employment of family metaphors provided some sense of unity, since it invoked feelings of loyalty and sacrifice for the unity of the motherland that is represented by the concept of family itself.

Further, the denomination “Soviet” was used as a quasi-national identity (Beissinger 2004: 53). Accordingly, *homo sovieticus* found a place as a quasi-national identity of the Soviet Union in the minds of Western scholars and politicians. As certain authors contend (Sanborn 2002; Beissinger 2004: 50), these identifications can be seen as attempts to promote a nation-building project on the basis of civic ties. However, more than being unifying identities that can mobilise or consolidate people; they are expressions of a common way of life and of a *lingua franca*.

Neither social upheavals nor nationalist and ethnic uprisings that started during the course of *perestroika* and *glasnost* were unprecedented in Russia. The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the ensuing civil war provided the ethnic groups under the Tsarist rule an opportunity to mobilise under the banner of the right of self-determination and to establish their own independent<sup>4</sup> or autonomous states (Suny

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<sup>4</sup> By the word ‘independence’, intellectuals and politicians of some ethnic groups, such as Volga Tatars, did not refer to full-fledged secession from Russia. Their understanding was to enjoy the right

2006: 130-131). These ethnic groups enjoyed ephemeral independent statehood until 1922 when the Bolsheviks ultimately settled their rule and order. Thereafter, they were incorporated into the Soviet Union with different levels of autonomy, ranging from union republic to no political status at all (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 22). Nationalist and ethnic mobilisations demonstrated that those insurgent ethnic groups in Russia were not mere *ethnies*, but they had developed an idea of nationalism in the modern sense.

In the Soviet Union, especially starting with Stalin's rule, the absence of a common national identity was compensated with an omnipresence of ideology and "state-dominated socio-political structure" (Viola 1996: 11). This could be maintained through coercive mechanisms and repressions in many spheres of life including but not exclusive to ethnic identities (McLoughlin and McDermott 2003: 6). Totalitarian rule and coercive policies did not go without reactions and rebellions. Economic policies, *dekulakisation* (liquidation of well-to-do peasants) and collectivisation under Stalin were carried out through coercive mechanisms; and they caused peasant resistances and revolts. However, these revolts did not turn into revolutionary movements because coercive mechanisms were further strengthened as a response to those revolts (Viola 1996: 234-235). The Soviet system clearly had serious economic, social, and ethnic problems which would not come to the forefront in a revolutionary manner until the coercive mechanisms highly diminish or cease to exist. This diminishing of coercive rule was not to happen until Gorbachev's reform programs.

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of national self-determination within autonomy under the greater Russian rule. This issue is to be elaborated in detail in the next chapter.

### 3.2.1 Lenin Era

Classical Marxist theory, though incompatible in its nature with nationalism and ethnic differentiation, appreciated the salience of nationalism as an instrument in the course of the socialist revolution (Connor 1983: 7). Therefore, it managed to deal with nationalism by successfully contextualising national questions into its framework as “by-products of capitalism” (Connor 1983: 6). Lenin’s understanding of socialism represented a transitory and evolutionary process; as he considered state capitalism a functional device in the transition to “full socialism” (Lenin 1983:24). Since “backward nations had not developed a differentiation of the proletariat from bourgeois elements” according to the Bolshevik understanding (Slezkine 1994: 421), the backwardness on the national or ethnic level stood as an impediment in front of this evolution.

Therefore, according to Lenin’s conception of socialism most of the nationalities of Russia could not be considered as genuine participants to the revolution. Those nationalities along with others outside Russia were “destined to follow us [revolutionaries] on the stage of history in the near future” (Lenin 1966: 610). Based on this reasoning, not only strengthening and but also inventing not-yet-constructed ethnic identities and cultures became one of the basic underpinning elements of Lenin’s policy.

Along with this broader background, *korenizatsiia* (“indigenisation” or “nativisation”) (Payne 2001: 224) was instrumental for the indoctrination of socialism, since the adoption of Russian as *lingua franca* would mean “great nation chauvinism” (Lenin 1966: 606), which was seen as one of the greatest dangers by Lenin. “Great nation chauvinism” was also named “greater danger principle”, which

suggested that while all kinds of nationalisms are products of capitalism, defensive nationalism of smaller ethnic groups cannot be considered equal with offensive nationalism of the colonialist greater nation (Martin 2002: 70). Building upon this principle Lenin justified his nationalities policy, which supported the national, cultural and linguistic development of non-Russian ethnic groups while suppressing any kind of emphasis on Russianness or Russian nationalism.

The juxtaposition of Lenin's understanding of ethnicity and nationalism between the constructivist and primordialism approaches is difficult. The understanding that ethnic identification and nationalism are by-products of capitalism implies a constructivist notion, suggesting that pre-capitalist societies do not have such identifications. However, Lenin's emphasis that ethnicity is a reality which cannot be externally overcome, and his ascription of ethnicity to the biology rather than culture (Beissinger 2004: 52), overlaps with primordialism.

### **3.2.2 Stalin Era**

During Lenin's rule, Stalin, as the Commissar of Nationalities, influenced Lenin's nationalities policy. It is generally accepted that Lenin's nationalities policy was consistently carried out by Stalin during his own rule (Payne 2001: 224). However, there are disagreements which stipulate that Stalin betrayed Lenin's ideology and his policies on the whole (Carr 1953: 1). Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) aimed at the economic and industrial development of backward nationalities (Blitstein 2001: 253).

Yet, Stalin's approach to the nationalities question differed from Lenin's understanding, at certain respects in implementation, if not in content. The tendency is to accept that, arguably in contrast with Lenin, Stalin was not ideologically driven in his policies, but he used ideology as a disguise and legitimate tool to exert stronger political control (Ree 2002: 1-2). Stalin's decision for standardisation of the obligatory Russian language education in non-Russian schools in 1937 (Blitstein 2001: 255) is one of the indicators of the difference, although this did not necessarily imply Russification or Russian nationalism (Suny 2001: 12). Furthermore, Stalin's great purges, mobilisation campaigns for World War II, deportations of nationalities, and mass repressions and necessarily imply a kind of Russification, though the main impulse in those policies were not nationalistic but rather they were for the purpose of consolidation of Stalin's totalitarian rule.

Ultimately, either with purely idealistic urges or with a strategic concern (Connor 1983: 47-48), or with a combination of both, Lenin and Stalin had been sympathetic to and supportive of the right of national self-determination up to a certain extent. They even granted initially each and every nationality the right to secede and establish their own independent states during the revolution and civil war (Connor 1983: 45). The Soviet Union, as a result, had been designated along ethnic lines as a great confederation in which smaller federations of smaller ethnic groups were interbedded.

The unity of the Soviet Union was based on a strong centralised authority and commitment to a common ideology. The ardent commitment to the ideology prevented Bolshevik leaders to attend the rising model of political organisation of the twentieth century, nation-state, which entailed forging a single nation from the peoples within the boundaries of the territories at hand. This process was generally

implemented through incorporating all different ethnic identities into the supra-national identity of the great power. A strong nation-making project in the Soviet Union became impossible because the greater danger principle necessarily ruled out any attempts to create a national identity based on Russianness, and because Marxism as the roots of the official ideology did not suggest that national identity would be a dominant feature of world politics.

### **3.2.3 Khrushchev Era**

After Stalin's death, it became evident to the party leaders or to the *presidium*, and later to specifically Khrushchev, that relaxation of Stalin's mechanisms was urgently necessary to cope with the alarming problems of the system. However, the main question remained as "how far could any relaxation go without endangering the Soviet state" (Nove 1992: 118). Being aware of this fact and together with a concern on the maintenance of his rule, Khrushchev carried out his policy of de-Stalinisation and of relative liberalisation with control and caution (Benson 1990: 103). The main purpose of Khrushchev's reforms was to tackle the economic and social problems of Stalin's overcentralised state-command economy and to relieve the mass fear stemming from state terror and repressions under Stalin (Kulavig 2002: 156-157).

Nevertheless, Khrushchev's liberal policy of nationalities was significant as preparatory conditions for national movements, both within the territories of the Soviet Union and in the Central and Eastern European communist states (Nove 1992: 135-136). Khrushchev's rule and policies of de-Stalinisation gave the opportunity the people to voice their grievances; made uprisings in the labour camps (Kulavig 2002:



216) and mass unrests by workers possible (Kulavig 2002: 123). Having significant similarities with Gorbachev's reforms (Gorbachev 2000: 34; Tompson 1993: 77), society's reaction to Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation policy heralded the upcoming movements and upheavals when coercive means were both deliberately and inevitably relaxed by Gorbachev.

### **3.2.4 Brezhnev Era**

Brezhnev's policies that led to "stagnation" (Gorbachev 2000: 48) or to "successful stabilisation" of the Soviet system (Bacon 2002: 10) prevented the explosion of ethnic and social discontents. Brezhnev's nationalities policy consisted of "merging" the Soviet nations under a single national identity through the principles of *sliyanie* (fusion), which included elements of corporatism (Bunce 1983: 134) and ethnic equalisation (Fowkes 2002: 72). This policy resulted in a prevalent "domestic tranquillity" (Smith 2005: 12) and the empowerment of the leaders of the union republics (Smith 2005: 18).

Either as a result of Brezhnev's nationalities policy or of his stabilisation policy, ethnic conflicts were still of lesser significance among all kinds of unrests in the Soviet Union (Fowkes 2002: 75). A comparison among the Soviet leaders, specifically between Khrushchev and Brezhnev, reveals the fact that under repressive rules ethnic factors do not generally initiate times of crisis in the first place, but they tend to dominate all other factors during the course of the crisis.

### 3.3 Dissolution of the Soviet Union

As it was analysed previously, the dissolution of the Soviet Union had tremendously influential implications not only for international politics but also for the International Relations discipline. The dissolution of the Soviet Union along national/ethnic lines and through ethnic/national mobilisations is one of the reasons that make its implications groundbreaking.

Explanations accounting for the dissolution abound. Although various different explanations can be provided for the underlying reasons that brought the end of the Soviet system; the ultimate, or the prominent, cause of the dissolution necessarily stems from the ethnic structure of the Soviet Union (Smith 2005: 19; Beissinger 2004: 160). It is argued here that although national and ethnic mobilisations were not the initiating cause of the dissolution, their rising dominance during the course of events made the ethnic structure of the Soviet Union turn out to be one of the most significant causes.

#### 3.3.1 Gorbachev Era

Gorbachev's reform programs of *perestroika* (construction), adopted in the twenty-seventh party congress in February 1986, and *glasnost* (transparency), emerged concurrently in early 1986<sup>5</sup>, have been revolutionary in the sense that they were designed to significantly change and impose a "new thinking" (Groth and Britton 1993: 628) on the traditional characteristics of Russia<sup>6</sup>. Those characteristics

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed chronology of late Gorbachev era, see Stephen Kotkin's *Select Chronology* in *Steeltown, USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era*.

<sup>6</sup> The denomination "Russia" is used to refer to both the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Russia at the same time.

can be identified as “authoritarian politics, economic underdevelopment, and considerable power in the international system” (Bunce 1993: 107). The characterisation of Gorbachev’s new thinking as revolutionary is not overstating its significance, since new ideas aimed at designing the future and discrediting the past are among triggering causes of revolutions (Almond 1996: 15). This characterisation makes Gorbachev’s new thinking an initiator of a time of crisis, which is generally caused by wars and revolutions. The tides of nationalism and ethnic mobilisations that seem as pointless efforts under strong coercive rules (Beissinger 2004: 54) are encouraged during times of crisis. However, their character of threatening the very existence of the state, either an empire or a nation-state, supplants the initiating dimensions of the crisis and leads to the alterations of the crisis into national and ethnic uprisings.

When Gorbachev assumed power in 1985, a number of chronic economic problems of the Soviet system, especially stagnation, climaxed. The need for reform appeared to be urgent rather than revolutionary (Kotz 1997: 54-55). Gorbachev initially thought of his reform programs as a continuation of the October Revolution and as attempts for the realisation of certain fundamental ideas. These ideas were overcoming repression, regulating bureaucracy, implanting democracy, and settlement of economic failure (Gorbachev 2000: 56). Later, however, he concluded that these challenges were only the tip of the iceberg; and that the problems of the Soviet Union stemmed from the very foundations of the system itself, specifically its totalitarian character, overall inertia, and ineffective economic and political structure.

Therefore, Gorbachev contended the necessity of a revolutionary change, which entailed a shift to a “democratic political system and social market economy” (Gorbachev 2000: 56). In line with the conclusion above, Gorbachev did not consider

the nationalities question as alarming as economic failure or the absence of democracy. Therefore, the nationalities question did not have a place in the *raison d'être* of Gorbachev's reform programs. Similarly, the popular fronts initially emerged for the purpose of providing support for perestroika. However, they later began to protest perestroika and became centres of national mobilisation (Beissinger 2004: 170). The very initial protests that enjoyed the opportunity provided by *glasnost* emerged against environmental problems in Kazakhstan and Baltic states. However, they quite easily turned into national mobilisations (Smith 2005: 73). Streams of protests started as against systemic failures of Soviet state, specifically economic failures that had resulted in shortages of main supplies and in social problems of most prominently workers. However, within a short period of time the "master frame" became the "anti-imperial secessionist frame" (Beissinger 2004: 159).

### **3.3.2 The Parade of Sovereignties**

Kazakhs had been the earliest in nationalist mobilisation against the Soviet Union. In 1986, Gorbachev replaced Dinmukhamed Kunayev, the First Secretary of Kazakh Communist Party and an ethnic Kazakh, with an ethnic Chuvash Gennady Kolbin. In December 1986, Kazakhs protested the dismissal in Alma-Ata. The protests are known as *Jeltoqsan* (in Kazakh "December") Riot, and considered as one of the "major nationalist crack" in the Soviet system (Cummings 2002: 60).

The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania followed the Kazakhs in the manner of nationalist mobilisation (Beissinger 2004: 166). Another prominent ethnic/national mobilisation emerged among Armenians, once one of the ethnic

groups most loyal the centre (Beissinger 2004: 186). They raised their demands under *glasnost* to Gorbachev, and asked for a settlement under *perestroika* over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue in late 1987 (Abrahamian 2001: 117). Crimean Tatars, one of the ethnic groups that was subjected to mass deportation under Stalin, organised mass protests in Red Square in summer 1987 demanding complete return to their homeland (Uehling 2004: 167). In late 1987 and early 1988, Ukrainians and Georgians were mobilised with separatist demands (Smith 2005: 74).

The tide of national and ethnic mobilisation, therefore, had become the dominant character of the times of crisis which followed Gorbachev's reforms. Almost within all ethnic groups of the Soviet Union, whether with an autonomous union republic or not, nationalist movements came into existence when the Soviet Union formally dissolved on December 31, 1991.

These instances help to demonstrate why national mobilisation and ethnic identity had been one of the ultimate, though not initiating, cause of the dissolution. Had the Soviet Union been a unified state in terms of its national identity, streams of protests might have led to overall reforms, a revolution or a regime change, but they could not find a way to turn out to be a threat to the very existence and integrity of the state. Without the legitimacy provided by the principle of self-determination, social and economic grievances cannot possibly lead to the dissolution or demise of a state; since people's tie to the state would be preserved on the basis of national identity. Mark Beissinger concluded his analysis pointing out that "by the end of 1990, no one needed the centre in any form" (2004: 94). It is possible to argue that, given the economic and political failures of the Soviet system, the only form in which people could need the centre was a common national identity, which had not been built during the course of the Soviet Union.

### **3.4 Yeltsin Era: 1991-2000**

The radically idealist ideology of creating an overall changed society that was adopted by Lenin and Stalin had incrementally been challenged by the Soviet leaders after Stalin, from Khrushchev to Gorbachev. With Gorbachev, this trend of de-Stalinisation and change became a revolutionary project, which ultimately led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation officially declared itself as the successor of the Soviet Union in international affairs and accordingly recognized by the United Nations. Although Yeltsin was ideologically and politically antagonist to Gorbachev, he was committed to the principles of change that were identified with *perestroika* (Breslauer 2002: 12). Accordingly, to the new Russian Federation Yeltsin applied policies similar to *perestroika*.

#### **3.4.1 Nation-Building in Yeltsin's Russia**

The end of the Soviet system did not mean a settlement of ethnic conflicts through dissolution and emergence of new states. On the contrary, it brought the ramifications of ethnic problems which had been dormant under the strong Soviet authority to the forefront. The newly founded Russian Federation experienced a more strongly rising "ethnic revival" (Treisman 1997: 212), which began with the *perestroika*. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, therefore, it had become a significant and widespread question whether the Russian Federation would dissolve in a similar vein (Payin 1995: 185; Hale 2005: 55; Latter 1994: 2; Smith 1999).

As argued in the first section, Soviet leaders failed to construct a strong national identity - neither an ethnic one nor a civic one. Therefore, given that the

Soviet Union dissolved along national/ethnic lines, the Russian Federation, also a multinational state, was left with the challenge of defining its national identity and thus of initiating a nation-building process. This was one of the most significant, if not overtly alarming, tasks for the future of the new Russia that Yeltsin had to deal with during the first decade of the Russian Federation (Tolz 2004: 178).

However, Yeltsin seemed to have no concrete theory or vision which he envisaged as the model for nation-building in the Russian Federation (Kremenyuk 1994: xii). For that matter, the new Russian Federation operated under the defunct Soviet Constitution and federal treaty until 1993 (Chenoy 1999: 85).

That was because, firstly, the major preoccupation of Yeltsin's Russia was state-building or "state-restoration" (Kagarlitsky 2002: 3), rather than "nation-building". The most imminent challenges, accordingly, came as such: The obscurity of the legitimacy of the Yeltsin's rule (Billington 2004: 43), full transition of the system from communism to market economy, tension between the Soviet authorities and the emerging Russian Federation (attempted coup of August 1991), and political crisis stemming from the discord among the branches of the separation of political power (1993 Constitution crisis) (McFaul 1997: 6).

Secondly, Russian Federation emerged as the first political entity which has come closest to a nation-state in Russian history (Billington 2004: 2). It was, after all, the "core ethnic region" of the Soviet Union (Hale 2005: 58). In contrast to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation had no "core ethnic region", no "Russian" federative unit in itself. Instead, ethnic Russian population, which constituted 81.5 per cent according to 1989 Census of Nationality (Shaw 1999: 61), was predominant and scattered all across the country. Along with this fact, it was left with the Soviet

legacy that failed to provide a sound answer to the question of Russian national identity (Chafetz 1996-1997: 671).

Nevertheless, issues of nation-building and nationalism, as a part of “state-restoration” process, also had their own peculiar place in Yeltsin’s policies. Therefore, the influence of ethnic politics in the course of Yeltsin’s presidency was a significant instance of the *modus vivendi* of ethnic politics. Ethnic politics is as influential as the significance of threats it poses to state survival. When ethnic politics carries notions of either potential or actual separatism and threatens the integrity of the state, it elevates to the top on the agenda, even becomes the main issue, and trivialize all other struggles and ambitions; since survival precedes and conquers all other national interests (Waltz 1997: 913).

During 1991 and 1992, while Yeltsin was still struggling to establish his rule, unionists, those who were defining Russia in the imperial sense and defending the revival of the Soviet Union, were prevalent in the Russian Federation and influential on Yeltsin (Kaushik 1999: 4). They were represented by the opposition coalition named “National Patriotic Forces” led by Gennady Zyuganov and supported by influential politicians such as Nikolai Ryzhkov and Alexander Rutskoi (Medish 1997: viii). With very diverse impulses, envisagements, and ideologies at their background, what was in common for the all the unionists was that they defined Russian national identity geographically, above either ethnic or civic connotations, and discredited the prospects for designing the new Russia as a nation-state. Among the unionist there were communists, nationalists, and also some moderates in Yeltsin’s circle such as Sergei Karaganov and Oleg Kiselev (Tolz 2004: 161). The influence of the unionists on Yeltsin can be observed in Yeltsin’s policies toward the



Commonwealth of Independent States, which were aimed at preserving Russia's ties with the former Soviet republics (Sakwa and Webber 1999: 381).

After 1992, unionist views began to shrink into insignificance in terms of their influence on Russian politics and Yeltsin; and the views that contend a nation-state model for Russia became more influential (Tolz 2004: 162). Defenders of the nation-state framework were liberals, among who were Yeltsin himself and most of his allies - most prominently Grigory Yavlinsky and Andrei Kozyrev. They put a highly slighted emphasis on the concept of nationness and national identity of the Russian Federation. As a characteristic of liberal theory, they did not ascribe much significance to the matters of national identity. Rather, their affiliation with and support for the nation-state framework only stemmed from their commitment to Western values and thus identification of Russia with Western type of democratic, neoliberal, Westphalian nation-state (Chafetz 1996-1997: 672).

A middle ground was occupied by the statist, who are most prominently represented by Victor Chernomyrdin and Alexander Lebed. These statist were defending a slower and state-controlled transition to market economy and proposing "a more Slavophilic conception of Russian identity" (Chafetz 1996-1997: 672-673).

Among these three lines of main political groups in the new Russian Federation, Yeltsin's nation-building and nationalities policies were decisively determined by the liberal view, although each view had its own lesser influence (Kaushik 1999: 16). The incompetence, and even at times indifference, of this Russian liberal view in the issues of nation-building and nationalities could only avoid and keep at bay the disintegration of the Russian Federation, rather than providing a decisive solution and a consistent policy to the question of the post-

Soviet Russian national identity (Chenoy 1999: 85). As a result, ethnic politics and ethnic conflicts came to the forefront as the most serious threats to the survival of the Russian Federation under Yeltsin's rule.

### **3.4.2 Ethnic Politics and Ethnic Conflicts under Yeltsin's Rule**

During 1990 and 1991, while the "parade of sovereignties" took the Soviet Union by the storm, not only the union republics of the USSR but also most autonomous republics within RSFSR, not least Chechnya, Ingushetia<sup>7</sup>, Tyva, Tatarstan, and Bashkiria, declared either complete independence or sovereignty (Melvin 1994: 2). It is important to note that not only autonomous ethnic republics but also a considerable number of regional federative subjects of RSFSR declared sovereignty. However, the movements of ethnic republics had been significant and formative in Russian politics, whereas regional movements proved to be ephemeral.

Since a new constitution for the Russian Federation was not legislated until 1993 and a new federal treaty not proposed until 1992, the parade of sovereignties continued. Certain autonomous republics in the Federation had gone through plans and calculations of increasing their power and sovereignty in different levels. These plans ranged from declaration of complete independence as Chechnya did to demanding only economic autonomy as Sakha (Yakutia) went for (Kempton 1996: 591). The most important national/ethnic movements in the newly independent Russian Federation emerged in Northern Caucasus and in Volga, initiated by Chechnya and Tatarstan.

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<sup>7</sup> The Chechen and Ingush peoples had a single associate republic - Chechen-Ingush ASSR - under Soviet rule.

In October 1991, while the Soviet Union was officially still not dissolved, the self-proclaimed National Congress of Chechen People under the leadership of Dzhokhar Dudayev seized power in Chechnya and held parliamentary and presidential elections. Gorbachev remained totally ineffective in pursuing any kind of policy towards this declaration of sovereignty. Yeltsin, on the other hand, was alarmed. He declared state of emergency in Chechnya and send interior ministry troops (Evangelista 2002: 19). Thereupon, Dudayev began to form paramilitary forces and also to arm ordinary Chechen people.

The Chechen problem remained hung in the air until November 1994, when Yeltsin issued the decree for the use of military force in Chechnya, since the travails of “state-restoration” and Yeltsin’s fight for power preoccupied Yeltsin’s agenda. It was only after Yeltsin had the new constitution ratified in 1993 and entrusted himself with vast powers that could not be limited by checks and balances; he initiated the military intervention in Chechnya in December 1994. Indecisive military operations and fighting continued for two years. Dudayev was killed in April 1996. Russian army fought Chechen paramilitary forces until August 1996, when an ambiguous treaty between Moscow and Chechnya was signed. The withdrawal of troops and ending of the intervention, which was far from being a success story for Yeltsin, was mostly due to his concerns for the upcoming presidential elections.

Yeltsin’s policies towards Chechnya represent an appropriate instance of his and his ministers’ and advisors’ lack of a concrete and consistent nationalities and nation-building project. Yeltsin followed, or seemed to follow, a policy which underestimated and partly remained indifferent to this serious threat until 1994. He was unequivocally refusing to negotiate with Dudayev (Evangelista 2002: 23) and supporting a solution through force. However, at the same time, he failed to launch a

successful and decisive military operation. Neither the initiation nor the termination of the military operations was planned accordingly with military and strategic considerations. During the whole course of the Chechen problem, Yeltsin's drive was protecting and maintaining his own power in domestic politics rather than providing a policy that would stabilize the relations between centre and the periphery and avoid ethnic conflicts in the Federation.

Tatarstan declared sovereignty in August 1990 and Mintimer Shaimiev was elected president in 1991. Shaimiev refused to sign the federal treaty proposed by Yeltsin in March 1992, being one of the two federal subjects to refuse, on the basis that the treaty did not envisage enough authority and sovereignty for Tatarstan. Shaimiev, the local communist party leader during the Soviet era, was a moderate politician who did not speak of either full secession from the Federation or resorting to paramilitary fighting for guaranteeing his terms. There were also nationalist Tatar politicians and activists who were in favour of full-fledged independence as the union republics of the USSR, especially Turkic republics, gained after the dissolution. The nationalist activism in Tatarstan had been already developed by the end of 1980s (Coppieters and Sakwa 2003: 144).

The idea of the unity of fate with the other Turkic peoples has been the main drive in Tatarstan's search for a greater sovereignty or full independence. That is firstly because Volga Tatars have been the pioneers of the Turkic enlightenment and nationalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Secondly, the geographical closeness of Volga Tatars with the Central Asian Turkic peoples, especially with Kazakhstan, rendered the ties between those peoples significant in terms of their security concerns vis-a-vis Russians (Karasar and Kuşkumbayev 2009: 49).

Accordingly, in late summer 1992, Shaimiev arranged a tripartite meeting with presidents of Bashkiria and Kazakhstan - Murtaza Rakhimov and Nursultan Nazarbayev - in search for the support of other Turkic peoples in the former Soviet Union (Kremenyuk 1994: 30). Tatarstan's search for greater sovereignty, unlike Chechnya, did not escalate into violent conflict. Shaimiev signed a special federal treaty with Moscow in 1994 and settled its demands mostly in favour of Tatarstan's terms; granting "even confederate relations" (Hann 2003: 344) between Kazan and Moscow.

Yeltsin's policy towards Tatarstan was diametrically different from the policy he pursued towards Chechnya. Yeltsin's initial standing concerning the "parade of sovereignties", which he used as a trump card against Gorbachev and which is famously summarized in his words, declared while on a visit to Kazan in 1990, as "take as much sovereignty as you can swallow" (Kahn 2002: 282), did not change with respect to Tatarstan, unlike with respect to Chechnya. While Yeltsin consistently refused to negotiate with Dudayev, he was comfortable with Tatar demands, which were not indeed lesser than Chechen demands in content. Moreover, Tatarstan was often seen and exemplified as a benign alternative of sovereignty in contrast to Chechnya (Evangelista 2002: 96).

Beyond any doubt, Yeltsin's two contradistinctive attitudes towards Tatarstan and Chechnya cannot be explained firstly without the historical background of the relations between these two peoples and Russia. The images of Tatar and Caucasian in the minds of Russian rulers are in many ways different. Secondly, the resort to force and violence by Chechen nationalists was certainly decisive in shaping Yeltsin's policies. However, ultimately, it can be deduced that Yeltsin's policy on nationalities and nation-building in Russia was based on short-term calculations, if

they were not totally spontaneous and haphazard. Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar's strategy of economic transition, summarized in his words as "we must simply shut our eyes tightly and leap into the unknown" (Medvedev 2000: 14), seemed to also characterize Yeltsin's nationalities policy.

Ethnic politics and ethnic conflicts, therefore, determined the course of Yeltsin's policies and end of his presidency. Given that Yeltsin left Russia within only six years with an unsuccessful war against one of its own federal subject, critical concessions to many other federal subjects, and an undefined, let alone unified, national identity for the Federation; Vladimir Putin's rise, to quote Norman Stone's conclusion on the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution, "was a fact before it happened". (1998: 301)

### **3.5 Putin Era: 2000-2008**

On the night of December 31, 1999, at the turn of the millennium, Yeltsin voluntarily and prematurely resigned and entrusted presidency provisionally until the upcoming elections in March 2000 to Vladimir Putin, who had been in office as the prime minister since August 1999. At the time, Putin was largely unknown to both the populace and to the elites. However, he made an astonishing breakthrough in a short span of time and elected president in March 2000 in the first round by sweeping over the runner-up Zyuganov.

The Putin era has been a unique and new chapter for Russia, especially in regard to its breaking the infinite loop of so-called "Russia's search for itself" and of constant state of emergency, revolution, and dramatic vicissitudes. In most spheres of

Russian politics the ambiguity and haphazardness, bequeathed especially by Yeltsin, was either practically settled or approached with a concrete policy. Among certain others, the issues of Russian national identity, nationalities, federalism, and ethnic politics had been significantly central to Putin's policies.

### **3.5.1 The Revision of the Federal Arrangements**

Early in his presidency Putin strongly emphasized that he did not want Russia to have an official ideology and supported ideological pluralism. He considered revolutionary change as detrimental and pointless (Sakwa 2008: 46), and favoured executing changes and transformations in "normality and normalization" (Sakwa 2008: 43). It is clear that Putin believed in the power of practice and execution while discrediting ideological and theoretical efforts as dysfunctional. Therefore, he is not a fit for traditional ideological camps of Slavophiles, Westernisers, and Eurasianists; he was eclectic and practical. However, he can be best identified with statism, which had been defended as a middle ground during Yeltsin era by Victor Chernomyrdin and Alexander Lebed. As a statist, Putin attached importance to strengthening the central authority above anything else. This notion first and foremost entailed a reformation of the federal system (Petrov 2002: 73).

Yeltsin's rule left Russia as an "asymmetrical federation" (Starovoitova 1995: 138) and with a "segmented regionalism" (Sakwa 2008: 194), in which relations between the centre and the federative subjects are arranged through special bilateral power-sharing treaties. This type of a federative system led to strengthening of the autonomy of the federal subjects, especially the autonomous ethnic republics, and to

a cumbersome bureaucratic and governmental system. Further, and arguably most importantly, this asymmetrical federation precluded the nation-building process and threatened the very integrity of the state.

Putin's new federalism policy was not an *ad hoc* and spontaneous arrangement. In 1998, while Putin was First Deputy Chief of Presidential Staff for Regions, he was appointed as the head of the commission for power-sharing treaties with the federal subjects, replacing Sergei Shakhrai. Putin did not sign one single additional treaty, while during Shakhrai's incumbency 42 treaties were signed. When Putin was appointed as the head of FSB, he initiated the project "The Law on Regions", which would redefine federal relations (Sakwa 2008: 189).

Only after two months Putin was elected president, in May 2000, he issued a presidential decree dividing Russia into seven administrative districts as larger super-regions overriding eighty-nine federative regions (Petrov and Slider 2005: 243). The governors of the new seven federal districts, *polpredy* (plenipotentiary governors), were to be appointed directly by the president. *Polpredy* were granted authorization for overseeing the realization of changes in regional constitutions sanctioned by Putin on the basis that they were contradictory to the Constitution. Therefore, the forming of the new federal districts ended the horizontal power-sharing between the federal centre and its subjects; established a power vertical, and undermined the sovereignty of the federative regions.

Simultaneously, Putin, within his policy of new federalism, revised the structure of the Federation Council, the upper house of the bicameral Federal Assembly of Russia. The Federation Council formally had significant powers granted by the constitution, including approving or rejecting the legislations made by the



State Duma (Remington 2003: 669). According to the 1993 Constitution and 1995 amendment, the first two leaders, one executive and one legislative, of federal subjects were to be directly the members of the Federation Council. In May 2000, Putin applied a new law which stipulated that the leaders of the federal subjects would not be the members, but they were to appoint two representatives in the Federation Council as members. This law curtailed the power of regional leaders (Remington 2003: 671) and took away their parliamentary immunity (Petrov and Slider 2005: 243). Further, in June 2000, the Constitutional Court declared the sovereignty declarations of the federal subjects illegal; and the bilateral power-sharing treaties were either amended or removed by not renewing the expiring ones (Sakwa 2008: 200).

Along with all these rearrangements, Putin's most significant new federalism reform was the change in the accession of regional leaders. Officially since 1996, regional leaders had been taking office through elections. In September 2003, Putin declared that the candidates for presidential elections in the federal regions were to be nominated by the president of the Russian Federation. This reform was an indicator that Putin was undertaking a strong re-centralization and nation-building, which would evade federalism and reduce the federal authorities to nothing more than ordinary state bureaucrats.

These reforms of new federalism, especially the nomination of regional presidential candidates, were met by protests and criticism on the part of the presidents of the national republics, especially of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan (RFE/RL 2004: Tatar President Criticizes Putin Reform Plans). Reforms were also criticized by public protests and demonstrations (Gorenburg 2004: 3). However, Putin managed the process successfully through by appeasing the presidents of

Tatarstan and Bashkortostan by nominating them for new additional terms. Although nationalists in those republics saw reforms as unacceptable, as presidents, too, initially did; in time the presidents came to comply with them. Shaimiev, once an ardent critic of the reforms, admitted that he suddenly changed his approach to reforms, by thinking that it is quite natural for the president of Russian Federation to try to consolidate his own power as it is natural for the president of Tatarstan to consolidate his in Tatarstan (Tatar.ru 2003: Statements and Interviews ) . Further, Putin could easily justify the reforms with reference to separatist acts of Chechen separatists (Goode 2007: 366).

### **3.5.2 Chechnya Revisited**

In August 1999, the Chechen separatists led by Shamil Basaev attacked and invaded a village in Dagestan. Putin, who was appointed acting prime minister only few days after the attacks, saw bringing a final and decisive solution for the problem of Chechen separatism as his “historical mission” (Evangelista 2002: 65). Putin immediately launched a military campaign in response to the attacks in Dagestan. Serious fighting in battle formation continued until 2001, leaving behind 12,000 casualties in Russian military (around 3,000 killed and 9,000 wounded), many more casualties with statistics unavailable on the Chechen side, and around 100,000 refugees (Tishkov 2004: xvii). The “second war in Chechnya” ended with the victory of Russian military, which conducted a more successful campaign in comparison to the “first war” (Stone 2006: 246). In June 2000, Putin secured an interim civilian government in Chechnya and appointed Akhmad-Hadji Kadyrov as the head of government (Evangelista 2002: 85).

However, Chechen separatism, temporarily defeated as a national force, was evolved into a jihadist insurgency, being supported by international jihadist networks. Jihadist schools mushroomed in Chechnya, giving more and more graduates; and jihadist commanders from the Middle East and Afghanistan poured in Chechnya and to North Caucasus (Bodansky 2007: 117). Al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks strengthened Putin's hand in his war against Chechen separatism; since both international and domestic criticisms were to a large extent silenced after 9/11. However, formidable terrorist attacks, most prominently Moscow theatre hostage crisis in 2002 and Beslan school siege in 2004 put Putin in a difficult position. A general perception became prevalent in 2005 that "Russia under Putin was backsliding into chaos and authoritarianism" (Sakwa 2008: 63). After 2006, however, the separatist insurgency began to evaporate and terrorist activity became loosely scattered to broader regions in Northern Caucasus.

It is misleading to attribute Putin's war in Chechnya and his federal reforms, which are in many respects related with Chechen separatism, to traditional Russian imperialism or to Putin's statism/authoritarianism. Such kind of approaches cannot avoid providing easy, unsophisticated, and pseudo-conspiracy theory explanations. Putin's war in Chechnya and his federal reforms can be better explained from the point of view of the significance of ethnic politics in international relations. Putin's war and reforms were driven by the fear of dissolution, which could be easily initiated by a successful secession of one of the federal subjects - Chechnya.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Both the formation and the dissolution of the Soviet Union had been remarkable cases proving the significance of ethnic politics. Although ethnic politics seemed to languish in the face of the Cold War in international politics and of the systemic problems within the Soviet Union; it characteristically exploded as the Soviet system ceased to work functionally. Thereby, ethnic politics precipitated, if not caused, the way in which the Soviet Union was disintegrated. The strength of ethnic politics during the dissolution puts the nationalities/ethnic groups who carried out their own politics to a significant position. Among them, Volga Tatars, through their whole relations with Russians in different phases of history, present a very prominent case of national resilience and ethnic politics.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE VOLGA TATARS: NATIONAL RESILIENCE THROUGH TSARIST, SOVIET, AND POST-SOVIET ERAS

“I trust to be able to convince you that *Kazan*, the supposed miserable semi-Tartar, semi-Russian hamlet, of which you know but the name, and which you consider unworthy of a moment’s attention, [...] possesses nevertheless certain rare and extraordinary elements, which give it a claim to the historian, the antiquarian, the artist, and the author.”

- Edward Tracy Turnerelli, *Kazan: The Ancient Capital of the Tartar Khans* (1854)

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the historical and contemporary positions of the Volga Tatars during the Tsarist and Soviet eras with reference to their national resilience/consciousness. In the first part, the Muscovite conquest of Kazan and its great impact on Tatar national identity is examined. In the second part, a detailed account of the national movements among Volga Tatars is provided. In the third part, the course of the national movements of Volga Tatars in the chaotic environment of the war and revolution is analysed. The fourth part focuses on the national

communism of Sultangaliev, the establishment of an autonomous Soviet Tatarstan, and the national identity of Volga Tatars under the Soviet rule. The ethnic politics performed by Volga Tatars is one of the prominent instances of the significance of ethnicity in international and domestic politics throughout the different stages of history.

#### **4.2 The Muscovite Conquest of Kazan and Volga Tatars under the Tsarist Rule**

The Volga Tatars<sup>8</sup> have experienced many distinctive epochs of different political organizations, either as founders or as subjects, throughout their history. Until the Genghisid invasion of the Kipchak steppe, a storming conquest of the lands ranging roughly from Central Asia to Central Europe, the ancestors of the Volga Tatars, named as Bulgars, had kept their own state. The Bulgar State was established in the Volga basin around the city of Bulgar, and maintained its unique civilization from ninth to mid-thirteenth century (Rorlich 1986: 16; Zimonyi 1990: 183). After the Genghisid conquest (1215), the ethnonym “Tatar” had began to be used for all Turkic/Muslim peoples in the region, among which the Mongolic tribes were incorporated and assimilated. Initially subjects and one of the targets of the invasion, Tatars became in time the *khans* and the ruling elites of the Golden Horde, an empire established by Mongols, incorporating mainly Turkic and Slavic elements as its subjects.

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<sup>8</sup> There are several possible denominations for Volga Tatars. “Itil (or Idel) Tatars” is indeed the authentically correct version, since Volga is called Itil in Tatar language. However, “Volga Tatar” is widely used in the literature. “Kazan Tatar” is another denomination that is widely used. However, it has a connotation that limits this nationality within the city of Kazan. Although Kazan is the heartland, Tatars are widely spread densely along the middle and lower Volga and loosely all over Eurasia. For these reasons, the denomination “Volga Tatar” is preferred. In places, simply “Tatar” is used.

The Kazan Khanate (1437-1552) was the main successor state to the Golden Horde (*Altın Orda*), which was divided along several khanates in the first half of the fifteenth century: Astrakhan Khanate, Crimean Khanate, and Sibir Khanate. The provinces of Kazan and Astrakhan were named as the “Great Country” (*Uluğ Yurt*) by the khans of Golden Horde. The Grand Duchy of Muscovy, as a Russian *knyazhestvo* (principality), was paying tribute to the Khan of Golden Horde, whose house was based in the city of *Saray* in the lower Volga. It was by the courtesy of the tribute that Duchy of Muscovy was given the title “grand” by the Khan of the Golden Horde (İnalçık 2008: 47). The Grand Duchy of Muscovy continued to pay taxes to the successor states; however, not as regularly and accurately as to the Golden Horde. That was because the successor khanates were fighting a “cold war” of political influence after the dissolution of the Golden Horde. Kasım as one of the sons of the first khan of the Kazan Khanate Uluğ Muhammed (Khudiakov 1991: 22), seceded from the Kazan Khanate by having the support of Muscovy and established his own little khanate, Kasım Khanate, in 1452.

Further, the Crimean Khanate exerted a strong influence in the Kazan Khanate with the support of the Ottomans. The concern of the Ottomans was to curtail the expansion of Muscovy; but at the same time, it did not want the Crimean Khanate to gain too much political influence. Also, Kazan was not the primary concern of the Ottomans. However, for Muscovy, conquering Kazan and Astrakhan and expanding towards the East by annexing Volga was a matter of life and death, not only strategically but also psychologically. Muscovy, therefore, had already been harbouring serious plans of conquering Kazan before 1552 (Sevcenko 1967: 543). Consequently, Muscovy had a greater advantage to have more political influence in the Kazan Khanate and Ivan IV used the advantage successfully.

Russian conquest of Kazan in 1552 was, therefore, one of the greatest landmarks for both Russians and Volga Tatars - indeed, ultimately, of most of the Turkic/Muslim peoples. For Russia, the conquest was the “prelude to empire” (Huttenbach 1988: 45) before anything else. It had been a prelude in political, geographical, and cultural respects. For Volga Tatars, and indirectly for all Genghisid and earlier Asiatic inheritance in the Eurasian landmass, the conquest marked the end of their “Tatar yoke” over Muscovy. The fall of Kazan, therefore, changed the places of the suzerain and the subject and decisively reversed the balance of power.

The Tatar-Russian relations that had diametrically changed with the conquest of Kazan retained two prominent aspects. The first, and at first sight the most important, aspect was the religious one; since it was a time when “religious identity was synonymous with political identity” (Huttenbach 1988: 55) and “relations between Russian and non-Russian had more of a religious than an ethnic bases” (quoted in Martin 1990: 31). Ivan IV saw his military expedition on Kazan as a means to convey “the True God to the unbelievers” (Rorlich 1986: 38). Therefore, the conquest was followed by an ardent campaign of converting Muslim Tatars into Orthodox Christianity.

The measures of the missionary activity carried out by the Russians were mostly “punitive” and at times “conciliatory” (Rorlich 1986: 40). They were continued potently until the reign of Catherine II, when the “punitive” missionary activity stagnated and a more liberal policy towards Muslims was adopted (Devlet 1991: 107). Starting with the reign of Catherine II (1762-1796), policies against Volga Tatars, such as that of Nikolai Il’minskii (1822–1891), took a more sophisticated form by incorporating ethnographic and linguistic studies on Tatars.



Most of the earlier converted Tatars either soon after or after even centuries returned to Islam (Benningsen and Wimbush 1986: 11; Devlet 1985: 107). However, Tatars who were baptized during the course of the nineteenth century, *Kiryashins* (Krashens), sincerely embraced Orthodox Christianity and remained devoted to their new religion. They were granted with Russian names and with promised privileges, such as tax inducements (Lewis 1997: 215) and granted *pomestia* (hereditary holdings) (Martin 1990: 14), and considerably took their place within the Russian nobility. In time, they did not only harbour a new faith, but culturally and linguistically differentiated from the Muslim Tatars (Bayazitova 1997: 5). So that *Kiryashins* are considered as a separate ethnic group (Werth 2000: 498). However, on the whole, the efforts for converting Tatars into Orthodox Christianity found strong reaction on the Tatar side (Rorlich 2000: 39; Lewis 1997: 215), and became one of the most influential factors in the construction of Tatar national identity (Lazzerini 1981: 628).

The Russian subjugation of Volga Tatars not only affected the formation of Tatar identity in a reactionary manner, but also in a progressive respect. The emergence and development of a reformist movement (Jadidism), initially in religion and education, later in culture and politics, is to a great extent engendered by the Russian enlightenment. Through the agency of an empire aspiring to elicit enlightenment from Europe, Volga Tatars had become “perhaps as much indebted to the French enlightenment as the Russians” (Rorlich 1986: 54).

The second aspect was, on the other hand, the national/ethnic one. It is anachronistic to ascribe a national/ethnic consciousness to a medieval community unless one is not committed to primordialism as a theoretical framework. However, even with a constructivist point of view, it is possible to argue that a sense of

national/ethnic identity was ignited among the Volga Tatars. Such sense of identity took its roots from political and religious persecution but permeated to all other dimensions of life. Therefore, it created a sense of distinctiveness not only as Muslims but also as “Tatars” or “Kazanis” (Rorlich 1986: 3).

The military conquest of Kazan and the Tatar resistance did not prove to be too challenging for Ivan IV and for his formidable power of forty pieces of artillery. What came to be the real resistance was after the conquest. Serious Tatar uprisings against the conquest continued until the end of the sixteenth century (Devletşin 1981: 9). Later, Tatars also participated in the uprisings of Stenka Razin (Rorlich 1986: 39) and Emelyan Pugachev (Roberts 2007: 154; Türkoğlu 2000: 75). However, Tatar resistance to Russian conquest had been more significant in the form of national/cultural/religious resilience than as an armed opposition. Religious education, which was deep-rooted and systematised since the times of Bulgar Khanate, had its peculiar and critical place in Tatar efforts for identity protection. Religious schools (*medreses*) were mushroomed in a way that they were established even in villages at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Bukharaev 2007: 103).

By the means of preserving their educational, cultural, and religious traditions, Volga Tatars maintained their own communal identity; and therefore prepared a ground for a strong national consciousness to be gained in the beginning of the twentieth century. However, at the same time, they considered Russian culture, enlightenment and political rule as an inseparable chapter of their history. Characteristically, “although they believed in adopting themselves to the Russian culture to live in this world, they did not want to share the same afterlife with the Russians” (Türkoğlu 2000: 34). This peculiar, Janus-faced characteristic of Volga Tatars, which was developed after the fall of Kazan and consolidated with the

persecutions inflicted on them, was to be permanent and decisive throughout all stages of Tatar-Russian relations. It became strictly obvious when Tatars are compared with the other Muslim subjects of Russia, especially with the North Caucasians.

### **4.3 Volga Tatars in the Late Tsarist Russia**

Tsarist Russia, as the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, had ruled over, either nominally or practically, a large spectrum of different ethnic groups. The first and only general systematic census in imperial Russia was carried out in 1897. The criterion for nationality in the census was language. Although this criterion does not accurately represent nationality (Cadiot 2005: 442), the census demonstrated that 55.7 per cent of the population was non-Russian (Pipes 1954: 2).

1905 Revolution had been a turning point for ideological and political consciousness among both Russians and non-Russians. The period of relative liberalisation and establishment of Duma paved way for greater political activity, thereby for national movements (Roshwald 2001: 27). However, the conception of “patrimonial state” remained as a centrepiece of Tsarist policy until the end of the empire (Roshwald 2001: 20). Therefore, intellectual and political developments began by the eighteenth century in Russia outdistanced the Tsarist policy. Richard Pipes summarises this discrepancy:

The paradox - and tragedy - of Russian history in the last century of the *ancien régime* was the fact that while the government clung to the anachronistic notion of absolutism, the country itself was undergoing an extremely rapid economic, social, and intellectual evolution, which required a new, more flexible form of administration (1954: 7).

Tsarist policy though lacked a sense of Russian nationalism, considered non-Russian, specifically non-Slavic and non-Orthodox, ethnic groups as *inorodtsy* (aliens) who were exempted from nobility and military service (Slocum 1998: 173). This policy contributed to maintenance and development of the sense of distinctiveness on the part of especially Turkic/Muslim nationalities of the empire. Together with the flourishing intellectual and political consciousness after 1905, those nationalities found the opportunity to participate in political life by asserting their national causes.

#### **4.3.1 Jadidism: Reformism and Enlightenment among Volga Tatars**

The Volga Tatars, since the times of the Volga Bulgaria, were distinguished from most of the other Turkic peoples with their settled civilisation and accommodation to the Russian culture. As it was analysed in the previous part, having a settled civilisation entailed proficiency in trade, mediation between the Russians and the other Turkic/Muslim peoples of the empire, and a strong tradition of religious education. Tatar religious figures, almost as an unwritten rule, took religious education in the schools (*medreses*) in Bukhara and Samarkand, which were the centres of both classical religious education for Turkic peoples and of traditionalism/conservatism.

The Volga Tatars, inevitably being less conservative because of the conditions of their civilisation and history, began to criticise the supposedly unquestionable verdicts of the religious *ulama* in Turkestan as early as the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries (Rorlich 1986: 49).

Ebunasır Kursavi (1726-1813) had been the initiator of this critical attitude towards traditional Islam after he returned from Turkestan to give religious education in Kazan. Kursavi's criticisms faced harsh reactions; but his critical attitude was adopted by his students, and represented most prominently by Şihabettin Mercani (1818-1889).

Mercani, a religion-teacher and an *imam* in Kazan, adopted and verified Kursavi's criticisms (Rorlich 1986: 50) after he returned to Kazan from Bukhara and Samarkand in 1849. His views were revolutionary for the conditions of the time: he was arguing that learning Russian was not a sin at all and that jurisprudence in Islamic tradition was open to criticism and progress (Türkoğlu 2000: 51). Further, his reformism did not remain limited to religious issues. He is at the same time considered as the "father of modern Kazan Tatar historiography" (Schamiloglu 1990: 39), with reference to his work examining Tatar history titled *Müstefâdü'l Ahbâr fi Ahvâl-i Kazan ve Bulgar* (Select Information on the Situation of Kazan and Bulgar) (Rorlich 1986: 51). Although the title is Arabic, Mercani wrote this work in Tatar language, as the first scholar to write Tatar history in native Tatar.

Rızaeddin Fahreddin (1858-1936), who was initially *kazi* (Muslim judge) and then the *mufti* in Orenburg, was influenced by the works of Mercani and committed to the reformist ideas (Rorlich 1986: 54). Along with Kayyum Nasiri and Mercani, he had been one of the pioneers of reformism and of the national awakening of Volga Tatars (Taymas 1958: 1). Rızaeddin Fahreddin emphasised the academic deficiencies of religious education in *medreses* and the lack of philosophers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Kant in Islamic thought (Erul 2005: 70-71). He saw certain traditional religious books as "thieves stealing people's lives and times" (Türkoğlu 2000: 35).

The reformism and enlightenment, namely Jadidism, of Volga Tatars were based on two pillars. The initial one, represented by Kursavi, Mercani, Nasiri, and Fahreddin, was the critical and reformist attitude towards traditional understanding and interpretation of Islam. The second pillar, intertwined with the first one, had been reform in education and the introduction of a “new method” (*usul-ü cedit*), which envisaged a new system of education (Pipes 1954: 14).

The founder of the new method in education was Ismail Bey Gaspıralı, who was not a Volga Tatar, but a Crimean Tatar. His new method was as much the tangible fruition of the almost a century of Jadidist efforts of the Volga Tatar intellectuals as it was his own remarkable individual effort. Gaspıralı himself wrote textbooks for students, in a common Turkic language that he envisaged for all Turkic peoples. He simplified the Arabic script in a way that pupils could learn literacy within forty days. He tried to convince his people of the necessity of the education of girls (Seydahmet 1934).

Gaspıralı’s efforts went beyond education. He published the newspaper *Tercüman* (*Perevodchik* in Russian, literally Interpreter) in 1883 in the Crimea, at a time when Turkic peoples of Russia did not have any periodicals yet (Devlet 2004: 51). The only exception was the short-lived *Ekinci*, the first periodical by Turkic peoples of the empire, which was published between 1875 and 1877 by Azerbaijani Hasan Bey Zerbabi in Baku (Jersild 1999: 504). *Tercüman* served as a means of creating political consciousness among Turkic and Muslim nationalities of Russia until 1914. It also aimed to create a Turkic *lingua franca* among those nationalities, each of which had already been speaking slightly different dialects. Gaspıralı’s idea of a Turkic unity among the Turkic peoples of the empire had been one of the milestones of the national awakening of the Turkic peoples.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Jadidism had already been quickly embraced, developed and represented by the Volga Tatars (Schamiloglu 1990: 40-41), who were, in Pipes' words, "culturally and economically, the most advanced Turks in Russia" (1954: 12). At the time, they were the only Turkic people that developed a middle class (Lewis 1997: 216) and become a predominantly merchant community. Proficiency in trade became one of the main characteristics of Volga Tatars (Zenkovsky 1953: 309). As reformist religion-teachers and merchants, Volga Tatars spread among the Turkic/Muslim communities, specifically to Central Asia. They have been the pioneers of religious enlightenment and national awakening among those communities as well as the mediators of language and culture between them and Russians.

Jadidism was a reform movement began in the areas of religion, historiography, language, and education respectively. However, Jadidist intellectuals had necessarily carried notions of national/cultural consciousness. Although these intellectuals were not driven by the idea of nationalism in the modern sense, their works on Tatar history and language prepared the ground for a modern nationalism and political activism. Further, for the Turkic intellectuals of Russia, religious identity could not be distinguished from ethnic/communal identity. Since they were ruled by an Orthodox empire, their religious issues became strictly intertwined with ethnic/communal ones (Mende 2004: 18). Therefore, Jadidism in time gave birth to national consciousness and political activism, which flourished by the outbreak of 1905 Revolution. Volga Tatar intellectuals and activists began to take part in the political life of Russia by asserting their own national causes.

### **4.3.2 The Congresses: Political Activism and First National Movements among Volga Tatars**

The Turkic/Muslim political activists and intellectuals, under the initiative of mostly Volga Tatars but also including representatives from the Crimea, Caucasus, and Turkestan, organised a series of congresses in 1905 and 1906. These congresses (*kurultais*) marked the entrance of Volga Tatars in particular and of all Turkic peoples in general into the political life of the empire.

The first concrete landmark of political activism of Volga Tatars was initiated by a Tatar from Tobolsk in Siberia, Abdurreşid İbrahim (1857-1944). Abdurreşid İbrahim was an extraordinary Tatar intellectual in many respects. Although a majority of Turkic/Muslim intellectuals had lived or received education outside of their homeland, mostly in Europe and/or Turkestan, Abdurreşid İbrahim was literally a professional traveller. In addition to his journey to Switzerland and contacts with Russian socialists in 1896, he travelled to many countries that harboured Islamic population, including Turkey, Japan, Korea, Turkestan, China, Singapore, India, and Egypt. Another distinctive feature of Abdurreşid İbrahim was his profession. Unlike most of his counterparts, he refused to have a religious education and maintained his life by petty trade (Türkoğlu 1997). Most probably, this distinctive formation made him the carrier of Jadidism from the intellectual arena to the political one.

On April 5, 1905 Abdurreşid İbrahim organised a small convention in his house together with some Azerbaijani intellectuals, Ali Merdan Topçubaşı, Ahmed Agayev, and Ali Hüseyinzade. In this convention, they decided to establish a political party under the name of the “Alliance of Muslims” (*İttifak-ul Muslimin*). Later, İsmail Bey Gaspıralı supported the idea and was included in the project



(Devlet 1985: 89). Under this initiative, they decided to assemble all like-minded Muslim intellectuals and activists in the Russian Empire in a large-scale congress.

The First Congress of Muslims of Russia convened on August 15, 1905 in Nizhny Novgorod and carried out on the boat *Gustav Struve* on River Oka. The majority of participants in the congress were Volga Tatar intellectuals and wealth-owners, among whom were Gerey Alkin, Yusuf Akçura, Fatih Kerimi, Carullah Bigi, and Gani Hüseyin. Topçubaşı from Baku, Gaspıralı from the Crimea, and Haydar Sırtlanov from Ufa also participated. It is important to note that certain prominent Volga Tatar intellectuals, such as Ayaz İshaki, were not invited because of their socialist ideas (Devlet 1985: 91). The main decision at the end of the congress was the “unification of all Russian Muslims for the purpose of carrying out political, economic, and social reforms” (Rorlich 1986: 111).

The Second Congress of Muslims of Russia convened on January 13, 1906 in St. Petersburg, in accordance with the decision taken in the first congress. The main profile of participants remained same, namely with pro-Kadet leaning and Volga Tatar dominance (Rorlich 1986 114). However, this time, there were efforts to gain support from the Kazaks, which did not prove to be successful (Devlet 1985: 96). The congress certified the decisions of the first congress, but the main topic in the agenda was to procure legal acceptance for the congresses from the Russian authorities (Devlet 1985: 98) and to prepare a preliminary charter for the envisaged political party, Ittifak (Hablemitoğlu 1997: 59).

The ratified charter of Ittifak articulated the party’s aim of unification of all Muslims in the empire, its adherence to parliamentary monarchy, its decision to establish local authorities of the party and to support the Kadets in the upcoming

Duma elections (Hablemitoğlu 1997: 62-68). Due to its alliance with the Kadets, Ittifak sent twenty-five deputies to the short-lived First Duma (April-July 1906) and constituted the Muslim Faction in the Duma. Upon the dissolving of the Duma by Tsar Nicholas II, Ittifak needed a third congress.

The third congress was held again in Nizhny Novgorod, on August 16, 1906. This congress, unlike the previous ones, assembled with the ratification of the Russian Interior Ministry. The main discussion in the congress was about the charter and the program of the Ittifak. Through these discussions, ideological and political disagreements among the participants which were kept in the background by the courtesy of the zeal of the initiative surfaced in a significant manner.

Ayaz İshaki, who was already seen as an outsider by the majority because of his socialist ideas, discredited the program of Ittifak by arguing that it was prepared by the bourgeoisie and the wealthy (Devlet 1985: 100). İshaki had a point since Jadidism, after all, was as much an achievement of Tatar bourgeoisie as it was of Tatar intellectuals (Türkoğlu 2000: 108). Further, the congresses were being funded by Volga Tatar wealthy men such as Gani Hüseyin. On this basis, Ishaki demanded for establishment of different political parties for different social classes of Muslims in the empire. After all, Ishaki was ideologically against Ittifak, since it was “a replica of the Kadet Party”, as one prominent Tatar intellectual, Abdullah Taymas, put it (1959: 27).

The mastermind of the congresses, Abdurreşid İbhahim, argued that Ittifak should not aim to unite and represent only the Muslims in the empire, but all the Muslims in the world (Devlet 1985: 100). In his speech during the third congress, he emphasised that “the Muslim brotherhood cannot be limited with twenty million

Muslims in the Russian Empire; since it encompasses three hundred million Muslims in the world (Türkoğlu 1997: 46). On the other hand, Yusuf Akçura, as the ideological founder of Turkism (*Türkçülük*) (Yemelianova 1997: 544), was opposing İbrahim by arguing that the union around religion was discredited in Europe and that union around nationality should be the program of the Turkic peoples of the empire. He referred to Poles and Czechs in Austria who were establishing political parties on the basis of nationality (Devlet 1985: 100).

The only reason of division among the Turkic political activists and intellectuals was not that of different political orientations. Local national movements flourished separately and they were critical of Ittifak. One of the most prominent of these local national movements was the Bashkir movement under the leadership of the Bashkir intellectual Zeki Velidi. He claimed about Ittifak that:

Kazan Turks [referring to Volga Tatars] were assigning themselves the central role among the all Turkic peoples of Russia. We knew that these domineering Tatar groups were trying to impose their will and authority on the Bashkirs, and this would have tragic results for us. (Togan 2003: 113).

#### **4.3.3 The Muslim Faction: Participation in the Duma**

The First Russian State Duma (April 1906 - July 1906) symbolised the success of 1905 revolution and all factions were in one way or another in opposition to the Tsarist government. Kadets, constitutional democrats, were the largest faction in the Duma with 190 deputies (Keep 1955: 186). That was also because all social revolutionaries boycotted the elections, except the Mensheviks, who later stopped the

boycott and sent several deputies (Treadgold and Ellison 2000: 54). Therefore, in accordance with the power of Kadets, Ittifak, though not yet a legal political party, had 25 deputies in the ranks of Kadets. Among those 25 deputies, 12 were Volga Tatar or Bashkir (Rorlich 1986: Appendix). Volga Tatar deputies were dominantly from landowners, merchants, or religious figures (Bennigsen and Wimbush 1979: 5). Prominent Tatar intellectuals and activists were not in the Duma, save Gerey Alkin.

Ittifak's deputies in the first Duma could not be effective due to their lack of political experience and organisation and because of the premature dissolution of the Duma. However, several of Ittifak's deputies signed the Viborg Manifesto (Devlet 1985: 114), which called on Russian people to civil disobedience, namely not to pay taxes and not to serve in the military (Chamberlin 1967: 147).

The second Duma (February 1907 - June 1907) had been the term during which the Ittifak's deputies had been most active and powerful. First of all, this time there were 35 deputies from Ittifak. Further, 29 of those deputies were organised under a pro-Kadet bloc named the Muslim Faction with Topçubaşı elected as its leader. However, 6 social revolutionary deputies who were representing the political line of Ayaz İshaki formed another bloc called "Muslim Labour Party" and joined in the ranks of *Trudoviki* (Toilers). Those deputies in the Second Duma tried to defend the interests of their respective Turkic peoples in the face of proposed agrarian reforms and land problems (Rorlich 1986: 118).

The Third Duma assembled in June 1907. Stolypin modified the electoral law for Duma elections to the chagrin of the liberal Kadets and non-Russian nationalities (Devlet 1985: 116). The new electoral law completely excluded Central Asians (Roberts 2000: 117). Social revolutionaries again boycotted the elections, and this

Duma was predominantly composed of rightists, namely Octoberists and the newborn Progressists (Treadgold and Ellison 2000: 79). In the Third Duma there were only 10 Muslim deputies, of whom 7 were Volga Tatars. They again formed the Muslim Faction.

Two main issues concerning Turkic/Muslim peoples of the empire came to the forefront in the Third Duma: Stolypin's agrarian reform, and introduction of obligatory Russian language courses in the schools of the non-Russian nationalities (Devlet 1985: 117). The Muslim Faction remained ineffective in defending the rights of Turkic peoples regarding these issues. However, Sadri Maksudi (1879-1957), Volga Tatar lawyer and intellectual, as one of the deputies in the Muslim Faction, distinguished oneself with his fervent speeches (Taymas 1959: 28).

The Third Duma lasted five years. The Fourth Duma assembled in November 1912. This Duma was characterised by the breakthrough of Russian nationalists in addition to the already powerful rightists (Treadgold and Ellison 2000: 81). There were only 7 Muslim deputies. They were totally discouraged and ineffective because of the new electoral law. The only noteworthy initiative of the Muslim Fraction in the Fourth Duma was to convene an all-Muslims congress in 1917.

#### **4.4 Volga Tatars in Revolutionary Russia**

An All-Russian Muslims Congress convened on May 1, 1917 in the both free and anarchic atmosphere that prevailed after the February Revolution. This congress was, indeed, ideologically and organically a continuation of the tradition of the congresses held in 1905 and 1906. However, the political conditions had changed

dramatically from 1906 to 1917, mostly because of the Great War and the February Revolution. As Mustafa Çokay (1890-1941), the Kazak deputy in the Muslim Faction in the Fourth Duma, remarked in his memoirs, the February Revolution brought hopes for Turkic peoples to establish their own national states (Çokay 1988: 10). Therefore, this congress was named the “First Congress of All Muslims of Russia” instead of the “Fourth Congress of Muslims of Russia”.

The congress was organised and dominated by members of Ittifak. It was opened by Caucasian Ittifak member Ahmed Salihov; and the first speech was delivered by Volga Tatar Jadidist scholar Musa Carullah Bigi. However, this congress was more inclusive than those held in 1905 and 1906. 900 delegates, much more than the invited number, from Volga Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Azerbaijanians, Bashkirs, and Turkestanis participated. The marginalised socialist intellectual *Ayaz Ishaki* and Sultangaliev were elected members of the executive council (Roberts 2000: 38). This inclusiveness of the congress, therefore, marked certain significant changes.

First of all, the Great War affected positively the progress of national movements. As Roshwald argues (2001: 3) “the First World War telescoped some stages of nationalist movements into a very brief period of time”. Therefore, political stakes were strikingly much higher after the February Revolution when they were compared to the aftermath of 1905 Revolution. The power of the central authority was now almost absent. The “socialist spring” prowled around all over Russia, carrying slogans of “freedom, equality, and justice”. This caused a new enthusiasm among the nationalities of the empire, not least among the Turkic peoples.

Secondly, the ineffectiveness of the Muslim Faction in the Dumas led to the questioning of the authority and competence of Ittifak. The criticism of the Tatar left, prominently of Ayaz Ishaki and Fuat Tuktarov, directed towards Ittifak seemed to be to the point (Devlet 1985: 118). With the socialist zeal brought by the February Revolution, social revolutionary Tatar parties, such as *Tangçılar*, gained significance. As a result, the congress had been more inclusive and ideologically more cosmopolitan (Ilgar 1990: X).

The congresses of 1905 and 1906 were convened mainly with the purpose of securing cultural and religious rights of the Muslims in the empire, as well as of establishing cooperation among them. However, the main aim of the “First Congress of All Muslims of Russia” was to discuss the political future of Russia and of Turkic/Muslim nationalities. There were three main topics in the agenda of the congress: religious reform, problems of religious administration (mainly the appointment of the *Mufti*), and the national question (Pipes 1954: 76-77). Therefore, this was the first official political gathering that carried notions of political self-determination.

The approach of Turkic nationalities, specifically that of All-Russian Muslim Congress, toward the national question and the issue of self-determination significantly differed from that of ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire, with which Russia suffered a very similar fate since the beginning of twentieth century (Reynolds 2011: 3). The war-weariness brought in general chaos in the empire; and its nationalities could think of self-determination in the atmosphere of lack of strong authority. However, none of the fractions and delegates of nationalities that took part in the congress made a proposal for complete independence from Russian rule. Such

a formulation of self-determination did not find place in the minds of most Turkic intelligentsia.

The political, cultural, and economic life of Volga Tatars, as having coexisted with Russians for nearly four centuries, was highly interlocked with those of Russians. Although Kazan was the heartland of Volga Tatars in all respects, they were very much scattered across the imperial territories. Therefore, Volga Tatars, no matter with pro-Kadet and pro-socialist political leanings, opposed federalism and territorial autonomy. They defended a formulation of “extraterritorial national-cultural autonomy”.

On the other hand, nationalities living in borderlands could develop a stronger national consciousness because of their moving back and forth between practical borders in the course of the war (Reynolds 2011: 103). Those nationalities living in the borderlands of the empire, namely Azerbaijanians, Bashkirs, and Crimean Tatars, ideologically gathered under the leadership of Mehmet Emin Resulzade, defended territorial self-determination. The congress favoured territorial self-rule by vote despite the discontent of the most critical nationality - Volga Tatars (Pipes 1954: 77; Roberts 2000: 22).

Therefore, when Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government, Turkic nationalities of the empire were not intending a complete secession from Russia. Further, although they had have produced sophisticated formulations about their political future, they were disunited about which formulation to adopt. This situation was quite to the advantage of the Bolsheviks, as it is to any political authority aspiring for ruling a multinational state.



#### **4.5 Volga Tatars under Bolshevik Rule**

The Bolsheviks were aware of the power of national movements, especially those of Turkic/Muslim peoples of the empire, and they incorporated promises for nationalities in their policies. As Slezkine points out:

Nations might not be helpful and they might not last [in Bolshevik ideology], but they were here and they were real. As far as both Lenin and Stalin were concerned, this meant that nations had rights: “A nation can organize its life as it sees fit. It has the right to organize its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal” (1994: 416).

In November 1917, Lenin and Stalin, in the name of the Commissariat of Nationalities, issued the “Appeal to All Muslim Toilers of Russia and the East”. The declaration was quite sympathetic to the national and religious causes of the Turkic/Muslim peoples, who had religious issues and nationality question as the two main topics in their agenda. It was also quite optimistic and promising for those nationalities:

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Trans-Caucasia, Chechens and mountain Cossacks! All you, whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia! Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable! Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the revolution, by the Councils of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies!

Support this revolution and its authorized Government! (Roberts 2007: 21).

Therefore, the Bolsheviks provided the only promising proposal among the self-declared authorities of Russia for the Turkic/Muslim nationalities, of whose political activists and intelligentsia were already in disagreement about the formulation of their political future. They envisaged the critical role of national movements and incorporated appealing promises for the Turkic/Muslim nationalities of Russia in their policies. These promises found support on the side of those nationalities and contributed as a political support to the consolidation of the Bolshevik Revolution and indirectly to the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War.

#### **4.5.1 Sultangaliev and National Communism**

The Bolsheviks had already declared in March 1918 their project of establishing a “Tatar-Bashkir Republic” in the Volga-Ural region, in accordance with their promise of self-determination. As claimed in the previous section, this promise of the Bolsheviks found considerable appeal from Volga Tatars. However, the legitimacy of the Bolshevik power was not unequivocally recognized by all fractions among Volga Tatars. Tatar right, namely Ittifak, and conservatives (*Qadimists*) were opposing the Bolsheviks because of the latter’s attitude towards religion. Both the liberal Jadidists and socialists were suspicious towards the Bolshevik project of self-determination, because instead of self-determination they rather envisaged an extraterritorial national-cultural autonomy under the name of Idel-Ural Republic within a united Russia. The socialist Ayaz Ishaki emerged as the most ardent advocate of the Idel-Ural Republic (Taymas 1958: 39). Later he would spearhead the Volga Tatar national émigré opposition with his journal *Milli Yul* (the National Path), which was published between 1928 and 1935.

On the other hand, the Bashkir leader Zeki Velidi rejected the Bolshevik project of Tatar-Bashkir Republic and sided with Admiral Kolchak to establish a separate state for Bashkirs. However, his alliance with the Whites proved to be ephemeral. He was provisionally and tactically supported by the Bolsheviks and proclaimed the Bashkir Autonomous Republic in March 1919. Zeki Velidi's opting for a separate Bashkir state instead of a united Idel-Ural or Tatar-Bashkir republic, therefore, was to be the main breaking point for the problematic Tatar-Bashkir relations.

Communist Tatar Jadidists, led by Sultangaliev, had been the main pioneers in conveying the Bolshevik Revolution among Volga Tatars. Sultangaliev, along with Mullanur Vahitov, shaped the policies of the Muslim Committee, which was operating under the *Narkomnats* (People's Commissariat of Nationalities) headed by Stalin. Sultangaliev had his original thesis about the relationship between Marxism and Islam. He considered socialist and proletarian character as indispensable notions of national movements of the Muslim nationalities (Rorlich 1982: 19; Tellal 2001: 111-112). Not only the Communist Jadidists, but also the mainstream Tatar nationalist movement, *Milli Mejlis* (the National Congress), which was the continuation of the Ittifak movement, came to a compromise with the Bolsheviks. Sadri Maksudi established an autonomous government in November 1917; however, the Bolshevik support for him did last only two months (Yemelianova 1988: 101).

#### **4.5.2 The Establishment of Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR)**

As of 1920, the future of self-determination promised by the Bolsheviks for Volga Tatars was still ambiguous. Idel-Ural Republic was overthrown by the Bolsheviks and the project of Tatar-Bashkir Republic was not concretely established (Devletşin 1981: 279). It seemed that the Bolsheviks did not have a substantial plan for the future political formation of the Volga-Ural region. With Volga Tatars' mistrust of the Bolsheviks because of religious drives, this uncertainty led to an uprising mainly in Kazan, Ufa, Simbirsk, and Samara, which is known as "Black Hawk Revolt" (Devletşin 1981: 282; Daulet 2003: 495). The revolt was suppressed by the Red Army. Most probably, after that point the Bolsheviks felt the necessity of giving a concrete shape to the future of Volga Tatars.

On May 27, 1920 the Bolsheviks declared Tatarstan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a sub-state within the Russian Soviet Socialist Federation. Sultangaliev, quite uncomfortable with this arrangement, struggled to convince Lenin to the idea of a united Tatar-Bashkir republic to the last minute (Rorlich 1986: 138). The organization of the new republic, however, was far from satisfying any of the national demands on the part of Volga Tatars. First of all, the new TASSR included only slightly more than one-fourth of Volga Tatars within its borders (Devletşin 1981: 287). To make the matters worse, now there was a considerable number of Bashkirs within the TASSR and of Tatars within the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Secondly, the territory of TASSR was far smaller than the short-lived Idel-Ural Republic. Volga Tatars, now left with a downsized state instead of an Idel Ural

Republic which aspired to rule over the whole Turkic/Muslim peoples in the lower Volga, felt that they would shrink into insignificance with respect to their leader status among the Turkic/Muslim peoples of Russia. Volga Tatar intellectuals were trying to portray themselves, contrary to the fact, as an equal to the union republics (Devletşin 1981: 62).

During the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, to reverse this degradation had been the main drive in Tatar politics and national activism. In 1977, Tatar politicians and intellectuals petitioned to the Soviet government with the demand of being upgraded to the status of union republic (Graney 2009: 18). The claim for the status of union republic was the main theme in the sovereignty declaration of August 1990 (Graney 2009: 25). Interestingly, the scholarly examinations of Soviet policies towards the Volga Tatars generally do not take into account this political and psychological aspect of Volga Tatars' grievances under the Soviet rule. They tend to limit Tatar concerns only with religious matters (Benningson and Wimbush 1986; Akiner 1983; Rorlich 1982; Yemelianova 1988).

#### **4.5.3 Tatar National Identity under the Soviet Rule**

During the first decade of TASSR, the Volga Tatar national intelligentsia, though not satisfied with the arrangement of their new state, welcomed the opportunity came with the official Soviet policy of *korenizatsiia* (nativisation) and took significant steps in consolidation the national character of the republic and maintaining Tatar culture (Rorlich 1986: 153).

In 1921, the Academic Centre was established by the People's Commissariat of Education. The Academic Centre was carrying out researches on Tatar language, preparing school textbooks, and translating important works from foreign languages into Tatar. In the same year, the History and Culture Centre was founded; and began research on literature and folk culture. In 1924, the Tatarology Research Centre, the Tatarstan Pedagogy Centre, and a separate Tatarstan Library were established. In 1927, Tatar Cultural Home was established. In 1928, several research centres and writers' unions were founded (Devletşin 1981: 402-403). Further, in the same year, pseudo-academic and literary journals of *Beznen Yul* (Our Path), *Magarif* (Education), and *Tataristan* were started to be published (Devletşin 1981: 404).

The principle purpose of those national-cultural activities of the Volga Tatars was their concern with the development of the Tatar language and reforming its Arabic alphabet into a simpler format, which had already been, indeed, an earlier concern of the Volga Tatars.

The breaking-point for the Soviet attitude towards the Volga Tatars was marked by the reaction of the CPSU to an article by Galimcan Ibragimov, the editor of the journal *Beznen Yul*, titled "Which Way Will Tatar Culture Go?", published in 1927 (Rorlich 1974: 364). In this article, Ibragimov asserted that "Tatar people will tread not the path of being assimilated by some other cultures but that of developing on its own culture on the basis of its native language" (quoted in Devletşin 1981: 405).

After this breaking-point, at the end of the 1920s, the Soviet policy towards Volga Tatars ceased to cooperate with the national-communist cadres and to appeal to religious, cultural, and national rights. It began to take shape of an anti-national

and anti-religious policy (Devlet 1985: 108). This policy was characterised by discrimination toward Tatar language (Rorlich 1986: 153) and propaganda against religion (Rorlich 1982: 18). The adoption of Latin alphabet in 1927 instead of the Arabic script that Tatars had been using found reaction from the Tatar intelligentsia, mostly prominently from Ibragimov. These intellectuals saw this decision as a tool of Russification of Tatars.

Further, although Tatar was declared as the official language of TASSR along with Russian, in time, Russian had turned to be the only *de facto* official language (Devletşin 1981: 363-364). The Soviet policy towards language continued after the prelude of World War II, during which Soviet nationalities policy was revised in favour of the nationalities to “boost the morale of the population” (Devlet 1985: 109). A law enacted in 1958 entailed that families had to choose between Russian and Tatar schools. To meet the requirements of the *de facto* condition, they generally had to choose Russian schools. Further, education in Russian was highly encouraged by the policies of the Soviet rule. Textbooks in Tatar cost much higher than those in Russian (Devletşin 1981: 364-366).

The first official anti-religious propaganda in Tatar language took place in the first issue of *Fen hem Din* (Science and Religion) in 1925 (Rorlich 1982: 24). In 1930s, the anti-religious propaganda escalated. 10 newspapers and 23 journals, which is more than the number of all other anti-religious propaganda journals in other Turkic languages, were mainly being published for this purpose (Devlet 1985: 108). These policies were moderated only during the period World War II, when the *Muftiat* (religious administration of Muslims) in Ufa was entrusted legal status by Stalin in 1942 (Devlet 1985: 109).

The Soviet experience, therefore, had been derogatory for the national and cultural development of the Volga Tatars (Lazzerini, 1982: 61). Already In 1973, there were a considerable number of Tatars who could not communicate in Tatar language at all (Devletşin 1981: 379). When the Soviet Union dissolved, national identity meant for some Tatars not more than the official record on their passports (Lewis 1997: 217).

#### **4.7 Volga Tatars in the Russian Federation**

Starting with Gorbachev's *perestroika*, main lines of political groups, which are nationalists, socialists, and centrists, emerged in Tatarstan (Devlet 2008: 218). The first prominent political organization, *Tatar İctimaiy Üzegi* (Tatar Public Centre), came as a civil society association. Tatar Public Centre was founded by a group of academicians in Kazan State University. They were on the socialist-democrat side of the political spectrum; however they later turned to be moderate nationalists. They aimed to work for sovereignty of Tatarstan and for the protection of Tatars' cultural and economic rights, but they did not reject the Soviet rule. However, they had been producing projects for maintaining Tatar culture since from 1982 (Gorenburg 2003: 54).

Nationalists were represented by the party Ittifak and the youth organization *Azatlık* (literally "freedom"). Ittifak, which was founded by Rafael Muhammeddinov in March 1990 and taken over by Fevziye Bayramova in 1991, is a resurrection of the first Tatar political organization Ittifak that was founded in 1906. The primary aim of Ittifak was articulated as "establishing an independent Tatar state". They also retained notions of Turkic and Muslim unity (Devlet 2008: 220). The movement *Azatlık*, on the other hand, envisaged Tatarstan's future as directly intertwined with



the Turkic world. It defended outright independence and strong relations with the fellow Turkic nations.

#### **4.7.1 The Path to Sovereignty**

Mintimer Shaimiev, who began his political career as the Minister for Melioration and Water Resources of the TASSR in 1969 (Bukharaev 2007: 38) and became the First Secretary of the Tatar Oblast Committee of CPSU in 1989, had been the most influential and strongest political leader in the post-Soviet Tatarstan. He described himself as a “centrist” (Bukharaev 1999: 2). He was elected as the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1990. During the chaotic environment of the parades of sovereignty, he sought to keep a balance between Moscow and the nationalist demands in Tatarstan (Williams 2011: 95). The influence of the nationalist parties and movements had peaked in the year 1990 and Shaimiev declared sovereignty of Tatarstan on August 30, not only on behalf of ethnic Tatars, but in the name of the multiethnic people of Tatarstan (Bukharaev 1999: 3). His political constitution and diplomatic skills were strong and he managed to get support from almost all political groups in Tatarstan (Devlet 2008: 222).

Shaimiev was to remain as an ardent centrist until the end of his twenty years of presidency, which he carried out *de facto* until 1996 and as elected for two terms on end until 2010. However, his incorporation of Tatar nationalism and practice of ethnic politics (Guiliano 2000: 309) came after 1991, when Tatarstan Supreme Soviet recognized the sovereignty declaration. Shaimiev demanded extensive

autonomy and special rights for Tatarstan; and the power-sharing treaty between Tatarstan and the Russian Federation could not be signed until 1994. Within this period, the political stance as well as civil society activities had been nationalistic and irredentist; since they tended to address not only Tatars in Tatarstan but all Volga Tatars in the Russian Federation, and even the Volga Tatar diaspora in Finland (Devlet 2008: 225).

#### **4.7.2 Power-Sharing with Moscow and Tatarstan's Post- Soviet Sovereignty**

Tatarstan's post-Soviet sovereignty is legally based on three main documents: Declaration On the State Sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan (August 30, 1990), Treaty on Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Powers between Bodies of Public Authority of the Russian Federation and Bodies of Public Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan (February 15, 1994) (thereafter referred as the "Power-Sharing Treaty"), and Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan (1992).

The Declaration of Sovereignty was promulgated by Mintimer Shaimiev, as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic at the time. The Declaration reveals the two main drives behind Tatarstan's "sovereignty project" (Graney 2009: xx). The first and foremost one was the aim of reversing, or at least modifying, the historical degradation of the status of Volga Tatars with respect to Russians and to the Turkic/Muslim peoples of Russia. This notion is clearly expressed in the preamble of the Declaration as "realising the historical responsibility for the fortunes of multinational peoples", "realising the incapability of the status of the Autonomous Republic", and "ensuring the inherent rights of Tatars".

Accordingly, the first article of the Declaration of sovereignty proclaims that Tatarstan “reforms the Autonomous Republic into the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic - The Republic of Tatarstan”. So many times in the Declaration, and in each and every article, it is emphasised that Tatarstan is no longer an ASSR but a SSR.

The second drive was Shaimiev’s aim of usurping as much power as possible in the chaotic period of the parade of sovereignties without severing his relationship with the Soviet authorities and the federal centre, Moscow. The Declaration (Appendix A), which can be indeed interpreted as a potential secessionist initiative, did not openly threaten the territorial integrity and nominal authority of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federative Soviet Socialist Republic. Instead, it had made clear that the Supreme Soviet of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic “express[es] respect to sovereign rights of all the peoples, inhabiting the Russian Federation and USSR” and “aim[s] at the creation of legal democratic state.” Further, Article 6 makes it clear that as long as the Declaration is not violated the “acts and normative documents” enacting Tatarstan-RFSSR and Tatarstan- the USSR relations were to be remain valid.

Tatarstan refused to sign the Federal Treaty in April 1992 on the basis that special provisions are vitally necessary for Tatarstan to take part as a sovereign state in the new federal system of Russia. Tatarstan had held a referendum in March, in which 61 per cent of Tatarstan’s population voted for the sovereignty of Tatarstan described in the Declaration and for the presidency of Shaimiev. The result of the referendum strengthened the already strong leverage at the hands of Shaimiev (Graney 2009: 35); and even the idea of a referendum alarmed Yeltsin (Bukharaev 2007: 52).

Further, the Constitution of Tatarstan became a matter of disagreement between Kazan and Moscow, but Tatarstan Supreme Soviet approved the draft in November 1992 with few changes among many demanded by the Federal government on the basis that constituent units' constitutions should be in accordance with the Federal Constitution (Graney 2009: 35). The Constitution asserts that “the sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan shall consist in full possession of the State authority (legislative, executive and judicial) beyond the competence of the Russian Federation”; and that Tatarstan is “a democratic constitutional State associated with the Russian Federation” and “a subject of the Russian Federation” (“Constitution of Tatarstan, Article-1”, [kcn.ru](http://kcn.ru)).

Negotiations between hesitant Yeltsin and determined Shaimiev for a power-sharing treaty continued for two years. The Power-Sharing Treaty (Appendix B) was signed in February 1994, which clearly guaranteed the sovereignty of Tatarstan as Shaimiev demanded. The Treaty recognised Tatarstan and the Russian Federation as equals in sovereignty (Preamble and Article 1), endorsed the Constitution of Tatarstan (Article 2), and recognised the Republic of Tatarstan as “a state - a constituent entity of the Russian Federation - possess[ing] full state authority beyond the competence of the Russian Federation” (Article 2). The Treaty granted Tatarstan the authority to carry out external relations with federal entities and foreign states, though in a limited way for the latter (Article 2). Tatar is recognised as the state language along with Russian (Article 2) and secured the right for special Tatar passports (Article 3).

### 4.7.3 The “Tatarstan Model”

Tatarstan’s influence, as a “restless region” (Latter 1993: 6), on the future and in the domestic politics of the Russian Federation was by no means less than significant (Bukharaev 2007: 18) during especially Yeltsin era. Tatarstan was seen as a “classical case of the secessionist process” in the academic audience (Zverev 2002: 134).

Given Yeltsin’s suffering from Chechen separatism, it can be argued that the prospect of a possible separatist movement in Tatarstan was one of the most anxious concerns of Yeltsin. Even as early as 1990, after the declaration of sovereignty, Yeltsin attempted to remove Shaimiev (Bahry 2005: 139). Tatarstan, unlike Chechnya, was geographically at the very centre of the lands of the Russian Federation and economically one of the most developed and most critical regions among all (McCann 2005: 78). Further, Tatarstan was not on the agenda of the Russian domestic politics alone. International audience had also begun to direct attention to the case of Tatarstan (Bukharaev 1999: 2). At the same time, Tatarstan developed its own “Conception of the Foreign Economic Policy” in 1993 and emerged as an actor on the international scene (Sharafutdinova 2003: 616).

Shaimiev’s balanced policy between nationalists and the centre emerged as ‘the Tatar Model’ (Bukharaev 1999: 3; Yemelianova 1999: 448) in the face of Chechen example. For that matter, Yeltsin had to give concessions from a strong federalism and signed a special power-sharing treaty with Tatarstan. This privileged arrangement with Tatarstan triggered a domino effect; and other subjects of the Federation, though not as bold as Tatarstan, demanded similar treaties. Bilateral power-sharing treaties had become a common practice until Putin was appointed as

the head of FSB and initiated the project “The Law on Regions”, which would redefine federal relations (Sakwa 2008: 189). However, even after Putin’s federal reforms, Tatar intellectuals still maintain and cherish notions of independence (Ishakov 2005: 7).

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The history of Volga Tatars, the second greatest ethnic group in numbers after ethnic Russians, has been intricately intertwined with that of Russians. The conquest of Kazan was the first great landmark in the formation of Volga Tatar identity. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Volga Tatars started to develop a substantial national movement in the modern sense, as the first Turkic people to do so. Their ultimate siding with the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, let alone satisfying their national demands, degraded their status of political and intellectual leadership among the Turkic/Muslim peoples of Russia. This can be marked as the second great landmark in the formation of their identity. The significance of Tatarstan increased with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Along with Chechnya, Tatarstan became one of the most critical regions of the Russian Federation. Although Putin’s federal reforms curtailed this significance, Tatarstan, with its influence on Russian domestic and foreign relations continues to be important instance of the significance of ethnic politics. This last point is to be elaborated in the next chapter with a focus on Russian-Turkish relations.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE ROLE OF ETHNIC POLITICS IN FOREIGN POLICY: THE INFLUENCE OF TATARSTAN IN TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

“Still, our country has another distinctive feature, as compared to other countries, where many peoples and nationalities reside. Our country was originally formed as a multiethnic state. [...] I believe there are no such countries in the world. There are countries mostly inhabited by immigrants, like the United States, for instance. But in Russia each ethnic group occupies its national territory and has its own roots.”

- Vladimir Putin, *At a meeting with representatives of confessions and ethnic and public organisations*, 19 July 2011

#### 5.1 Introduction

The role of ethnic politics in foreign policy-making is one of the under-examined subjects in International Relations. The subject can be seen as indirectly analysed mainly in three areas of study in the discipline: ethnic conflict, foreign intervention, and diaspora studies. However, the direct influence of one of the most significant phenomena in the post-Cold War period, ethnic politics, goes

unexamined. In this chapter, the role of ethnic politics in foreign policy-making is examined with reference to the role of Tatarstan in Russian-Turkish relations.

Tatarstan, a national autonomous republic of a titular nation, has carried an influential ethnic politics under Russian rule through many chapters of its history. As it was analysed in the previous chapter, the impact of its ethnic politics has become substantively significant in influencing Russian domestic politics during Yeltsin era. This chapter aims to analyse the role of ethnic politics in international relations in general, and in foreign policies of states in particular, by focusing on the role of Tatarstan in Turkish-Russian relations.

## **5.2 Tatarstan's Foreign Relations**

As Valuev puts it, Tatarstan is a perfect example of “the way in which the boundary between domestic and international spheres is becoming increasingly blurred” (2002: 8). By the virtue of its constitution, “within its competence the Republic of Tatarstan shall independently participate in international and foreign economic relations.” (“Constitution of Tatarstan, Article 1 - Clause 4”, kcn.ru). From the declaration of sovereignty in 1990 until the signing of the power-sharing treaty in 1994, Tatarstan acted as a *de facto* independent actor in international system (Sharafutdinova 2003: 613) and as a sub-state unit of the Russian Federation at the same time. This peculiarity of Tatarstan's political status continued after 1994, since it retained extensive rights of establishing its own foreign relations.

Tatarstan's foreign relations in a sovereign manner began after 1990 as semi-diplomatic contacts; and became more official with the establishment of the Ministry



of Foreign Economic Affairs in 1993 (Sharafutdinova 2003: 616). Later in 1997, this ministry was reorganised as Department of Foreign Affairs of the President of Tatarstan. Under this department, Tatarstan formulated its own foreign policy concept and began to educate its own diplomats. For this purpose, the department of International Relations at the Kazan State University was opened in 1995, with the aim of “producing representatives of Tatarstan for the world stage” (Graney 2004: 277).

On the other hand, Tatarstan established its own contacts with the United Nations during its *de facto* independence period. As a part of its “sovereignty project” (Graney 2009: xxxi), Tatarstan strived for membership in the United Nations, in the manner that Ukraine and Belarus enjoyed under the USSR (Malik 1994). In 1994, The United Nations assistant Secretary General Joseph Verner Reed officially visited Tatarstan; and between 1993 and 1997 two UNESCO conferences were held in Kazan (Graney 2004: 274). The cooperation with the United Nations still continues, however more loosely than before. The UN Special Adviser on Sports, Wilfried Lemke, visited Kazan as a part of his official visit to Russia in May 2011, and stated that he is very impressed by the cultural and ethnic integration in Tatarstan, where two large religious groups are living in harmony; and he will, as a representative of the United Nations, will promote this example (“UN Special Adviser Strengthens Cooperation with Russia”, un.org).

Further, Tatarstan signed cooperation treaties with Chechnya and Abkhazia, respectively in 1993 and 1994, as a leverage for consolidating its authority of performing foreign relations (Valuev 2002: 27). It also established foreign representatives in a sovereign manner during 1990s. A Permanent Representative Office in Azerbaijan; Plenipotentiary Representative Offices in France, Kazakhstan,

Turkey, and Turkmenistan; a Representative Office in Uzbekistan; and Trade and Economic Representative Offices in Finland, Belarus, Cuba, Vietnam, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Ukraine, the USA were established.

### **5.3 Tatarstans's Place in Turkish-Russian Relations since 1990**

In terms of foreign policy, Turkey and Russia have a common distinctive characteristic. Both countries have, or at least ascribe themselves, a unique position/identity politically and geographically within the international community (Warhola and Mitchell 2006: 128). Building upon this premise, these countries define their foreign policies not only in political and strategic terms, but also, indeed necessarily, in ideational terms.

Certainly, Turkish-Russian relations are not shaped around ethnic matters. Since the imperial times strategic and political matters predominated over others. During the Cold War, bipolar nuclear and political friction almost fully trivialised ethnic and cultural issues. However, with the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and with concurrently rising national mobilisations, ethnic and cultural, or civilisational (Bilgin 2004), matters gained significance, which was quite visible in the case of Turkish-Russian relations (Torbakov 2007: 3).

Therefore, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the most important chapters of Turkish-Russian relations had been shaped around a mostly ethnic matter - Turkish foreign policy towards the newly independent Turkic states in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Turkish foreign policy experienced an emergence of great zeal towards the Central Asia. First and foremost, Turkey recognised ethnic

unity with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan by declaring those states as kith and kin. Secondly, Turkey has been presented as a proper model for these newly independent Turkic states. Thirdly, various state branches and international organisations were established within the context of the Turkic World.

Although Turkey's relations with the Turkic states had been close and intense during the 1990s, and Turkey claimed itself as a contender for dominance in Central Asia (Kramer 1996: 114); Turkey, at the state level, did not pursue a policy of Pan-Turkism (Landau 1995: 222). However, Russian perception of Turkey's such activities had always been perceived as Pan-Turkism, and as the ghost of Enver Pasha resurrecting, which threatens the "backyard" and even the very heartland of Russia (Sezer 2001: 153-154).

Tatarstan is not one of the fundamental issues that shape Turkish-Russian relations. That is because, as previously indicated, ethnic politics has a peculiar *modus vivendi*; it becomes much more significant during certain period of times and in certain contexts. Accordingly, the place of Tatarstan in Turkish foreign policy concept was integrated within the context of Turkey's policy towards Turkic World during 1990s. When Turkey's Turkic World policy came to a regression, however, Tatarstan has found its individual place as a promoting chapter in Turkish-Russian relations. Ultimately, therefore, the "Tatarstan factor" in Turkish-Russian relations is an established reality (Devlet 1998: 128).

#### **5.4. The 1990s: Tatarstan as a Part of Turkic World**

Although Turkey's new foreign policy toward the Turkic World was shaped around the Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan, other Turkic peoples with an autonomous state or even without any recognition at all in Eurasia was included in this policy. Tatarstan, which remained as an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation after 1991, was politically the most significant of non-independent Turkic peoples, since it rejected the federal agreement presented by Yeltsin and demanded full-fledged sovereignty. For this purpose, Shaimiev convened a World Tatar Congress on 19-21 June 1992 in Kazan. Turkey sent a formal representative, Namık Kemal Zeybek, the Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister, to the congress.

Following that, Shaimiev was invited to Turkey quasi-officially in October 1992 (Devlet 1998: 129-130). In 1996, after the power-sharing agreement between Kazan and Moscow was signed and Tatarstan's status was settled as an autonomous republic, Turkey paid an official visit under the presidency of Minister of State to Tatarstan. Further, a Turkish Consulate General in Kazan and the Plenipotentiary Representative Office of the Republic of Tatarstan in Turkey were established respectively in 1996 and 1997. Although these relations were mostly semi-official, nonetheless Tatarstan's relations with Turkey became the sign of its independent foreign policy (Selbach 2001: 10) Therefore, during the 1990s Tatarstan could find a considerable place in the Turkish Foreign Policy concept within the context of Turkey's policy towards the Turkic World.

Since the beginning of 1990s, Tatarstan has found its place in the Turkish foreign policy concept. Turkey has a Consulate General in Kazan, which has a formal precedence over other Consulate Generals in St. Petersburg and

Novorossiysk. Furthermore, Tatarstan is an associate member of The International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY), which is accredited by the Turkish Foreign Ministry as “an international organisation with diplomatic status” and aims at developing relations with Turkic-speaking states and peoples (“Orta Asya Ülkeleri ile İlişkiler” mfa.gov.tr).

On the other hand, as previously noted, Tatarstan operates a diplomatic representation through the Plenipotentiary Representative Office of the Republic of Tatarstan in Turkey since 1997. The Office aims to provide coordination among Turkey, Russia, and Tatarstan; and to promote cooperation “in the fields of trade, economy, science, technology, and culture” (“Cooperation between Tatarstan and Turkey”, tatartrade.com). The mission of the Office does not clearly states political purposes, but indeed it has at least a quasi-political status. As a matter of fact, the Speaker of the Tatarstan Parliament, Farid Mukhammedshin, during his meeting with the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, in 2011, emphasised the significance of the support that Turkey provides for the Representative Office of Tatarstan in Turkey (“Tataristan Parlamento Başkanı Köşk’te”, tcb.gov.tr).

### **5.5 The 2000s: Tatarstan as a Chapter in Turkish-Russian Relations**

Towards the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s, Turkey’s policy towards the Turkic World had become structuralised and Russia’s anxieties about Pan-Turkism began to wear off. Further, economic relations and energy partnership between Russia and Turkey became much more significant. Therefore, Turkish-Russian relations shifted from a bothersome relationship to a closer cooperation. Especially after Prime Minister Erdoğan’s visit to Moscow in December 2004 and

President Putin's reciprocal visit to Ankara in January 2005, cooperation became stronger. These visits were even interpreted as Turkey's message to the Europe by considering Russia as an ally that can replace the European Union (Warhola and Mitchell 2006: 127) .

### **5.5.1 Official Visit of the President of Turkey to Tatarstan**

Together with this turn in Turkish-Russian relations at the beginning of the 2000s, Turkey's policy towards Tatarstan has taken a new shape. Turkey began to see Tatarstan as a promoting chapter of Turkey-Russian relations. In an article in Turkish foreign ministry's website, titled "Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation", Tatarstan is defined as "a brotherly country with which Turkey has historical and cultural ties" ("Türkiye-Rusya Federasyonu Siyasi İlişkileri", mfa.gov.tr).

Accordingly, on 12-15 February 2009, the President of Turkey Abdullah Gül visited Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan. This visit is labelled as a "historic visit", since it was the first visit from Turkey to Tatarstan at the presidential level. The President of Turkey emphasised the importance that Turkey gives to relations with Tatarstan by stating the aim of "mak[ing] more business, and chase[ing] common goals" ("Gul's Historic Visit to Tatarstan", turkishweekly.net).

Gül's visit has been significant for both Turkish-Tatar relations and Tatarstan's own foreign relations. As for Turkish-Tatar relations, visiting Kazan after visits to Moscow seemed to become a regular practice, as the Prime Minister of Turkey visited Tatarstan two years later. The impact of Gül's visit on Tatarstan's

foreign relations was acknowledged by Farid Mukhammedshin, Speaker of Tatarstan Parliament. Mukhammedshin stated that Gül's visit "marked an era for the Republic of Tatarstan, since the presidents of Finland and Austria paid visits to Tatarstan after Gül's visit" ("Tataristan Parlamento Başkanı Köşk'te", tcbb.gov.tr).

### **5.5.2 Official Visit of the Prime Minister of Turkey to Tatarstan**

The visit of the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, to Kazan in 2009, has been a milestone in Turkish-Tatarstan relations. After that visit, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan paid an official visit to Tatarstan in March 2011. The visit was given great significance by Tatarstan, Russia, and Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister stated that "it was my long-held dream to visit Tatarstan and I'm happy to be the first Prime Minister of Turkey to visit your republic" ("Turkish Prime Minister Visits Kazan", president.tatarstan.ru). Erdoğan also emphasised that "hearts of Tatar and Turkish nations beat in unison" since these two nations are "brothers sharing a common culture, history, and belief" and that "if our brothers are troubled, we are also troubled; and we take our positions if they face any injustice" ("Turkish Prime Minister Visits Kazan", president.tatarstan.ru). These statements of Erdoğan disturbed Russia, and he had to emphasise that "Turkey does not have otherwise purposes, and is not in a struggle for influence" ("Farklı Gayeler İçinde Değiliz", Cumhuriyet).

### **5.5.3 Official Speech of Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs on Tatarstan**

Another milestone in Turkish foreign policy concerning Tatarstan was the Commemoration Program for Tatar National Poet Abdullah Tukay's 124th Birthday which was organised by Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador of Russian Federation to Turkey and Counsellor of Foreign Relations of President of Tatarstan attended the meeting. Turkish minister of foreign affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu gave a comprehensive speech, which indeed, sketched the place of Tatarstan within Turkish foreign policy concept.

Along with the emphasis on Abdullah Tukay, Davutoğlu briefly analysed the lives and works of Tatar Jadidists, such as Yusuf Akçura, Abdurreşid İbrahim, Sultangaliev, and Carullah Bigi; and thereafter he presented himself intellectually as “a member of this Jadidist tradition”. He characterised the Jadidist movement as a global representative of the greater Turkic culture. Furthermore, he mentioned the affiliation of Tolstoy and Lenin with the city of Kazan.

However, more strikingly than that, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs described Kazan as “a place that brings the East and the West, the Turk and the Russian, together; and as a miraculous city with its settled culture in the face of numerous nomadic ones all across the Eurasia. Thereupon, he characterised Tatarstan as “a great bridge of friendship between Russia and Turkey”. Thereby, Davutoğlu indeed recognised the common distinctive characteristics of Turkish and Russian foreign policies, which is commitment to multiple identities of East and West. Further, this speech, along with Turkish President's visit to Kazan in 2009 and Prime Minister's speeches during his visit to Kazan in 2010, formulates a new place for Tatarstan within the Turkish foreign policy concept. According to this new



formulation, Tatarstan is seen as a promoting chapter in Turkish-Russian relations, rather than being a part of Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic World.

Turkey's conception of Tatarstan as a "bridge" between Turkey and Russia is also officially recognised by Tatarstan. The President of the Tatarstan Parliament, Farid Mukhammedshin, emphasised not only the unity of Tatarstan and Turkey in language and culture but also the importance of the political activities of Yusuf Akçura and Sadri Maksudi Arsal in the early phases of Turkish Republic. He also ascribed utmost salience to the economic and commercial relations between Turkey and Tatarstan. Finally, he described Tatarstan as a "bridge of friendship" between Russia and Turkey ("Tataristan Rusya ile Türkiye arasında Köprüdür", [turkish.ruvr.ru](http://turkish.ruvr.ru)).

## **5.6 Economic Relations between Turkey and Tatarstan**

Economic relations and trade partnerships have a peculiar and important place in Turkey-Tatarstan relations, in a way that they are complementary of the cautious and limited political relations (Kamalov 2008: 83). Tatarstan has a separate representative office in Istanbul, Tatar Trade House, which is exclusively founded for economic and commercial purposes in 1995.

The economic activity between Turkey and Tatarstan is shaped around five main areas, which are crude oil export, petrochemical products, machinery, real-estate, and energy and industrial production ("Address by General Manager", [tatartrade.com](http://tatartrade.com)). Along these main lines of economic activity, a large number of

Turkish and Tatar companies, including Tatneft and Tupraş, have cooperation treaties.

Tatarstan's exports to Turkey constitute 10 % of total foreign trade turnover of Tatarstan. Further, Turkish-Tatar trade volume constitutes 10 % of total turnover between Turkey and Russian Federation ("Cooperation between Tatarstan and Turkey", tatartrade.com). During his visit to Kazan, Turkey's Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that Turkey aims to increase its trade volume with Russia to \$ 100 million dollar a year. He emphasised that Turkey aims to maintain this growth through higher economic cooperation with Tatarstan ("Turkey to step up trade with Tatarstan", eng.tatar-inform.ru). Further, Turkey is listed as several main trade partners of Tatarstan by Tatarstan Ministry of Industry and Trade ("Foreign Trade Partners of Tatarstan", mpt.tatarstan.ru).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Tatarstan is not an issue in Turkish foreign policy upon which Turkish-Russian relations are based. However, it has had a certain influence in shaping Turkish-Russian relations. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Tatarstan was seen as a part of the greater Turkic World, towards which Turkey formulated a new foreign policy concept during 1990s. During the 2000s, with the regression of the Turkic World policy, Tatarstan has been seen as a promoting actor that is positively influencing Turkish-Russian relations. The "Tatarstan factor" in Turkish-Russian relations, as a specific case study, therefore, reflects the significance of ethnic politics that is beyond conflict in international relations.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Theoretical Implications

Esman (1994: 1-2) noted that “ethnic identity, ethnic solidarity, and ethnic conflict are by no means new phenomena [...]; what distinguishes the current era is their global salience”. Ethnic politics, therefore, is not a post-Cold War production; it has been present through different stages of history. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnicity was undermined by “liberal expectancy” and “Marxist prediction”. The decolonisation movements in the “Third World” heralded the persistence of ethnic politics in international relations; but the dominance of the Cold War trivialised its significance at the time.

However, the phenomenon has become immitigably influential after the end of the Cold War. This explosion of ethnic politics, mostly in the form of ethnic conflict, put forth a new challenge for the International Relations discipline, to the degree that ethnic conflict was considered as the main characteristic of the “changing world system” (Gurr 1994; Smith 1981). In this regard, numerous analyses of various individual cases of ethnic conflict were conducted. Notwithstanding the significance

and contribution of those studies, they remained as individual case studies, theoretically disconnected and separated.

This thesis strived to argue that the phenomenon of ethnic politics is not sufficiently conceptualised and operationalised within the International Relations discipline yet. Studies of ethnic politics *per se* could not offer a celebrated theoretical framework. Further, ethnic politics is yet to be adequately incorporated in IR theories.

The main reason of the considerable neglect and theoretical lacunae in the discipline with regard to ethnic politics, this thesis argued, is seeing ethnicity as an *ad hoc* contingency that is irrelevant for international relations unless it turns into conflict and violence. The misnomer rubric “ethnic conflict” for studies of ethnic politics stands as the most obvious demonstration of the understanding of ethnicity in the discipline. This understanding is a legacy of the “liberal expectancy” and the “Marxist prediction”; and accordingly of “the Cold-War annexation of social sciences” (Bilgin and Morton 2002: 57). This approach mistakenly limits the nature of ethnicity and of ethnic politics to conflict.

However, ethnicity is a persistent reality and matters in international politics beyond conflict and violence. Ethnic groups, while they promote their national/communal causes, can perform influential politics that affect the domestic and foreign policies of states, and for that matter global politics in the international arena. These “ethnic politics” and their influence on the state and world politics need not to be necessarily conflictual. On the contrary, they can contribute to and promote non-conflictual politics.

## 6.2 Significance of the Volga Tatar Case and of Russia

The classical Marxist theory viewed national and ethnic identities as products of capitalism and predicted their end together with capitalism. However, Lenin's and Stalin's nationalities policies had to take ethnic identities seriously and contextualised them within Marxist theory. Therefore, the Soviet Union was not only formed as an ethno-territorial confederation; but its system also supported, consolidated, and even promoted new ethnic identities. As a result, the Soviet Union, as it shaped the world system during the Cold War, had the greatest share in shaping the persistence of ethnic politics in international relations. It is possible to argue that ethnicity could have still been considered as irrelevant to world politics without the Soviet experience.

The Eurasian landmass in general and the territories of the former Soviet Union in particular, has been a "paradise" of ethnic groups. Almost all of the ethnic groups/nationalities asserted their own national causes during *perestroika*. However, this thesis chose to analyse the Volga Tatars as a case study; since they represent a peculiar case in many respects.

First and foremost, the Volga Tatars had performed an exceptional national resilience and conducted an influential ethnic politics since their subjugation to Russian rule in 1552. Secondly, they did not choose to pursue a policy of fighting and separatism against Russians, in contrast to Caucasians, but at the same time they succeeded in preserving their national identity in a strong manner. Thirdly, and accordingly, they ended up in being the most critical ethnic group (Walker 1996) in the Russian Federation, by putting forward their own "Tatar Model" vis-a-vis Chechen separatism.

All these characteristics of the Volga Tatars present a perfect case study for the general argument of this thesis. The Volga Tatar case demonstrates the significance of ethnicity beyond conflict. Tatarstan's quasi-independent foreign policy proves the direct influence of ethnic politics in international politics; and its promoting role in Turkish-Russian relations refutes the traditional argument that ethnicity is by nature conflictual.

Apart from that, this thesis attempted to conduct a historical analysis of the Volga Tatars with reference to their national resilience. Certain remarks and deductions that do not find a place in the literature are made as a result of this analysis.

First, in the literature the national causes of the Volga Tatars are generally analysed with reference to their religious persecution under the Russian rule. Notwithstanding that religion had a significant influence in the formation of the Volga Tatar identity; this thesis strived to argue that the national identity of the Volga Tatars is strictly tied with their historical role within the Turkic World. Accordingly, the ethnic politics they perform is significantly interdependent with those of other Turkic peoples.

Secondly, the mainstream literature on Jadidism tends to slight the role of the Jadidists on the socialist side of the political spectrum, most prominently Ayaz İshaki and Fuat Tuktar. The political activity of Sultangaliev before the Bolshevik Revolution, for that matter, remains unexamined. The political stand of those "dissident" Jadidists, however, represents the force and development of Volga Tatar national consciousness at the turn of the twentieth century. Further, their marginalisation by the mainstream İttifak has a certain share in the relative

inefficiency of Tatar politics in the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution.

This thesis also strived to demonstrate the influence of ethnicity and ethnic politics in international relations by analysing the post-Soviet sovereignty project of Tatarstan. Tatarstan's emergence as the most powerful national republic in the Russian Federation without resorting to violence or harbouring separatism is a perfect example of the influence of ethnic politics in domestic politics of states. The foreign relations of Tatarstan that are analysed with respect to Turkish-Russian relations, on the other hand, prove that ethnicity and ethnic politics matter for international politics. Further, Tatarstan's place as a "promoting chapter" in Turkish-Russian relations is an instance for the argument that ethnic politics is not limited to conflict and violence.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **TATARSTAN'S DECLARATION OF SOVEREIGNTY**

#### **Declaration On the State Sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan**

The Supreme Soviet of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Social Republic,

- realising the historical responsibility for the fortunes of multinational peoples;
  - expressing respect to sovereign rights of all the peoples, inhabiting the Russian Federation and USSR;
  - realising the incapability of the status of the Autonomous Republic, and the interests of the future political, economic, social and spiritual development of the multinational peoples;
  - ensuring the inherent rights of Tatars, of the whole population of the Republic to self-determination;
  - aiming at the creation of legal democratic state,
1. Proclaims Tatar state sovereignty and reforms the Autonomous Republic into the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic - The Republic of Tatarstan.
  2. The land, its natural resources and other resources on the territory of the Tatar SSR are the exclusive property of Tatar people.
  3. Irrespective of nationality, social origin, belief, political convictions and other differences, Tatar SSR guarantees all the citizens of the Republic equal rights and freedoms. Russian and Tatar are the state languages and are equal in the Tatar SSR, the maintenance and development of the languages of other nationalities are ensured.
  4. In the future the official state name in the Constitution and in other legal acts and in state activity is "Tatar Soviet Social Republic" ("Tatar SSR" or "The Republic of Tatarstan").

The Republic's Supreme body of power shall be named "The Supreme Soviet of the Tatar SSR" and its enacting acts shall be named the acts of the Supreme Soviet of the Tatar SSR.

5.The present declaration is the basis for the creation of the Tatar SSR Constitution, for the development of the Tatar legislation, for the collaboration of the Tatar SSR in the creation and signing the Union Treaty, for agreements with the Russian Federation and other republics, for the presentation of the most important questions of the formation of the Tatar SSR and its relations with USSR, the Russian Federation and other republics for the consideration of its people.

The Constitution and the acts of the Tatar SSR shall be supreme on the territory of the Tatar SSR.

6.Before the adoption of the new Constitution of the Tatar SSR, other acts and normative documents of the Tatar SSR on the territory of the Tatar SSR, the acts of the Tatar SSR, the Russian Federation and the USSR, unless they contradict the Declaration on the state sovereignty of the Tatar SSR, remain valid.

The present Declaration is valid since the date of its adoption.

Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Tatar Soviet Social Republic  
M.SHAIMIYEV  
Kazan, August 30,1990

*Retrieved on 10 October 2011 from*  
[http://www.kcn.ru/tat\\_en/politics/dfa/sover/decl1.htm](http://www.kcn.ru/tat_en/politics/dfa/sover/decl1.htm)>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **THE POWER-SHARING TREATY OF 1994**

#### **Treaty on Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Powers between Bodies of Public Authority of the Russian Federation and Bodies of Public Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan**

Bodies of public authority of the Russian Federation and bodies of public authority of the Republic of Tatarstan,

Governed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, federal laws, and laws of the Republic of Tatarstan;

Taking into consideration the experience of applying the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan "On Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Mutual Delegation of Powers between Bodies of Public Authority of the Russian Federation and Bodies of Public Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan" dated the 15th of February 1994, concluded on the basis of the referendum in the Republic of Tatarstan held on the 21st of March 1992 and in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan;

Proceeding from historical, cultural, economic, environmental and other specific features of the Republic of Tatarstan,

have agreed on the following:

#### Article 1

Delimitation of jurisdictional subjects and powers between bodies of public authority of the Russian Federation and bodies of public authority of the Republic of Tatarstan is effected by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, and this Treaty.

## Article 2

1. In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Republic of Tatarstan (a state) - a constituent entity of the Russian Federation - possesses full state authority beyond the competence of the Russian Federation and powers of the Russian Federation concerning the matters within the joint competence of the Russian Federation and constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

2. Taking into consideration that the use and protection of land, subsurface resources, water, forest and other natural resources in the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan constitute the basis of life and activity of its multinational people, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan conclude agreements providing for the joint resolution of issues related to economic, environmental (resulting from the long use of oil deposits with account taken for the mining and geological conditions of hydrocarbons extraction), cultural and other specific features of the Republic of Tatarstan. The Government of the Russian Federation and the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan introduce the corresponding draft laws pertaining to issues mentioned in this clause to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

3. The Republic of Tatarstan, within its competence, carries out international and foreign economic relations with constituent entities and administrative-territorial divisions of foreign states; participates in the activities of bodies of international organisations specially created for these purposes; as well as signs agreements for the implementation of international and foreign economic relations and carries out such communications with bodies of public authority of foreign states in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Russian Federation.

4. The Republic of Tatarstan, in coordination with the Government of the Russian Federation, provides state support and assistance to its compatriots in the preservation of the identity and in the development of national culture and language.

5. State languages in the Republic of Tatarstan are the Russian and Tatar languages, the status and procedures of the use of which are determined by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, federal law, and law of Republic Tatarstan.

For nominees to fill the supreme official position of the Republic of Tatarstan introduced in accordance with the procedure stipulated by federal law, an additional requirement is established, providing for the competence in the state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan. The competence in the state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan is established in a declarative way.

### Article 3

The citizens of the Russian Federation residing in the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan have the right to obtain the main document proving their identity (a regular passport of the citizen of the Russian Federation) with an inserted page in the state language of the Republic of Tatarstan (Tatar) and with the State Emblem of the Republic of Tatarstan.

### Article 4

The bodies of public authority of the Republic of Tatarstan have a corresponding representative office under the President of the Russian Federation in Moscow.

### Article 5

1. Validity of this Treaty is 10 years from the date of its coming into force.
2. The procedure of renewal of this Treaty, as well as the procedure and the grounds of its early termination (cancellation) are determined by federal law.

### Article 6

Done in Moscow on the 26th of June 2007 in two copies, each in the Tatar and the Russian languages, with both texts having equal validity.

*Retrieved on 10 October 2011 from [http://1997-2011.tatarstan.ru/?DNSID=09833d9662858febeee12683bbde3ce0&node\\_id=813](http://1997-2011.tatarstan.ru/?DNSID=09833d9662858febeee12683bbde3ce0&node_id=813)*

## APPENDIX C

### THE SPEECH OF AHMET DAVUTOĞLU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY, ON TATAR NATIONAL POET ABDULLAH TUKAY

Tataristan Cumhurbaşkanlığı temsilcisi sayın Timur Bey, sayın Büyükelçi, Tataristan'dan gelen dostlarımız, kardeşlerimiz, Türkiye'nin seçkin aydınları;

Ben her şeyden önce hepimize Cumhuriyet'imizin kalbi, ilk Büyük Millet Meclisi binamızın hemen karşısında, Ankara Palas'ta, sizi misafir etmekten duyduğum onuru ifade etmek istiyorum ve hepimize tekrar hoşgeldiniz diyorum.

Büyük şahsiyetleri düşünmek, sadece onların hayatlarını ya da onların yazdıklarını düşünmek değildir. Aslına büyük şahsiyetleri düşünmek üzerinden biz, bir tarih ve mekan muhasebesi de yaparız. Abdullah Tukay böyle bir şahsiyet. Ben bundan 3 sene önce, İslam Konferansı Örgütü Gençlik Forumu'nun davetlisi olarak, Kazan'a gittiğimde, aslında sadece bir toplantıya katılmak niyetiyle gitmedim. Hep merak ettiğim bir mekan, hep merak ettiğim bir çevreyi, bizzat teneffüs etmek, bizzat oralarda yürümek, o toprakları hissetmek için gittim. Nedendi bu merak? Çünkü tarihte çok az görülen mucizeli iki gelişmenin soruları zihnimde hep yer almıştı. Bir, mekanla ilgili olarak; iki, tarihi dönemle ilgili olarak; üç, Abdullah Tukay'ın şahsiyetiyle ilgili olarak.

Mekanla ilgili olarak zihnimdeki soru şuydu: O engin Avrasya stepleri genellikle göçebe kavimlerin büyük akınlarının coğrafyası olarak, çok az kültürün kökleştiği, kültürlerin genellikle akıp gittiği bir coğrafyayı oluşturmuştu. Bunun bir istisnası vardı: Kazan. Kazan kökleşmiş bir mekanın simge ismiydi benim zihnimde.

Birçok kavimler geçti o Avrasya steplerinden, Volga boylarından. Ama çok az kavim bir mekanı yurt edip, o mekanda 1000 yılı aşkın bir kültürü nesilden nesile bütün zorluklara rağmen aktarabildi. Bu, Tatar kültürünün ne kadar köklü olduğunun bir işaretidir. Ben bunu anlamak istedim her şeyden önce. Hangi dinamiklerdi ki, birçok imparatorlukların, birçok göçüşlerin, göçlerin yaşandığı bu coğrafyada, köklü bir medeniyeti, bir medeniyet merkezini inşa edebilmişti.

İkinci olarak, yine bu mekanda merak ettiğim husus şuydu: Birçok merkezler var. Farklı medeniyetlerin hesaplaşmasını yapmış olan, çok farklı kültürle yüzleşmiş olan. Ama çok yoğun bir dönemde o derece yoğun bir kültür hareketi yaşamış olan çok az mekan vardır Kazan gibi, Tataristan gibi. Bu bahsettiğim dönem de, 1000 yıllık dönem içinde, özellikle 19. yüzyılın sonları ve 20. yüzyılın başları. O dönemin durumunu iyi anlamak lazım. O dönem birçok millet için otantik kültürler için, İslam toplumları için, Türk toplulukları için, Hintliler için, Çinliler için, herkes için Batılılaşma, modernleşme ve bir hesaplaşma dönemiymi. Sömürgeleşmenin yaygınlaştığı bir dönemde, birçok aydın kendi kimliğini aradı.

Ama çok az yerde ceditçilik hareketinin yaptığı etkiye benzer şekilde, bir bölgeye, bir şehre, bir yere teksif edilmiş şekilde bu derece yoğun bir kültür hareketliliği görülmüştür. Bu kültür hareketliliği sadece o bölgeye de münhasır kalmamıştır. Kazan'da yetişen büyük şahsiyetler, neredeyse bir keşif hareketine çıkıyormuş gibi, kendi kültürlerini muhafaza etme yanında, Batı kültürünü, Rus kültürünü yakından tanıma, ayrıca büyük seferlere çıkma cesaretini gösterdiler. Abdullah Tukay eğer uzun yaşamış olsaydı, muhtemelen o da aynı sefere çıkardı.

Ama sadece bir örneği vererek sizi pekiştireyim. Hepimizin bildiği Yusuf Akçura. Kitabı Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset'i Kazan'da yazdı. O kitap 1905'te Kahire'de basıldı, ama en çok İstanbul'da, Ankara'da okundu. Şimdi düşünün: Kazan'la Kahire'yi ortak kılan bugün ne kadar şey kaldı? Kazan'da yazılan hangi kitap Kahire'de basılıyor ve Türkiye'de aynı yoğunlukta okunabiliyor? Küreselleşme yaşıyoruz, değil mi? İnternet var. Ama ben bir profesör olarak, öğretim üyesi olarak soruyorum kendime: Çok az Tatarstanlı, Tatar, Kazanlı öğrencim olabildi. Gerçekten buna da hayıflanıyorum. Ama Yusuf Akçura'nın oldu. Türk öğrencileri oldu, kitapları Kahire'de okutuldu.



Yine dönemin ruhunu anlamak bakımından, hangi insan Abdurreşid İbrahim gibi, neredeyse heybesini alıp sırtına bütün Avrasya'yı dolaşır? Hangi güç, hangi motivasyon onu Asya'nın içlerinden Uzakdoğu'ya kadar götürdü? Çünkü çok basit bir şeyi vardı Abdurreşid İbrahim'in, Yusuf Akçura'nın, Musa Carullah'ın ve tabii Abdullah Tukay'ın: kendilerinden emindiler. Hangi kültür havzasına ait olduklarının farkındaydılar ve şunu düşünüyorlardı: Asırlarca kökleştikleri, köklü bir şekilde yaşadıkları kültürün dünyaya vereceği bir mesaj var. O dili yaymanın, o kültürü yaymanın bir evrensel mesajı da var. Yerellikle evrensellik arasında dengeyi kuramamış hiçbir aydın, hiçbir aydın grubu, geceleğe birşey aktaramaz. Eğer kendi milli bilincinizi, tarih bilincinizi, ve kimliğinizi muhafaza edememişseniz, ne kadar dolaşırsanız dolaşın sadece gezgin olursunuz. Eğer değişik kültürlerle açılmayı düşünememişseniz, kendi kültürünüzü ne kadar muhafaza ederseniz edin yerel kalırsınız, lokal kalırsınız.

Kazan bugün belki dünyanın en büyük şehirleri arasında değil. Ama Kazan öyle bir mekan ki, Tolstoy orada okumuş. Sadece Yusuf Akçura'lar, Abdurreşid İbrahim'ler, Abdullah Tukay'lar değil. Tolstoy'a mekan olmuş. 1804'te Kazan Devlet Üniversitesi kurulmuş. Sadece Tolstoy'a mı, Lenin'e de mekan olmuş. Sosyal hareketliliğin herşeyini yaşamış, kültür hareketliliğini yaşamış, doğuyu batıyla, Türkü Rusla buluşturmuş bir mekan Kazan. Onun için Kazan'ın ruhunu keşfetmek lazım.

Ben 3 sene önce Sabantuy şenlikleri için oraya gittiğimde, hem kendi atalarımın büyük serüvenini, Avrasya'dan girip Asya derinliklerinden Toroslara gelen serüvenini, anlamaya çalıştım; hem kendimi de ait gördüğüm bir aydın geleneğinin ne kadar köklü bir birikimle insanlığa kısa bir dönemde ne kadar büyük şeyler sunduğunu farkettim. Benim rahmetli babaannem vardı. Bizim Toros dağları, Türkmen kültürünün çok katıksız şekliyle yaşadığı nadir mekanlardır, bizim oralar, ağıtlarıyla şiirleriyle. Babaannem durur durur tekrar ederdi: Horasan'dır bizim ilimiz/İsfahan'dan geçti yolumuz. Ondan sonra da devam ederdi. Sorsanız coğrafya bilgisi yok mübarek kadının, irfanı kuvvetli değil. Erdemi büyük ve benim şahsiyetim üzerinde büyük etkisi var. Annemin vefatı sonrasında özellikle elinde büyüdüğüm için. Ama dualarıyla, ağıtlarıyla hala kulağımda. Ama eminim Horasan'ı bilmiyordu. Eminim İsfahan'ı da bilmiyordu. Ama bir topluluk, o büyük güç, Hazar'ın ve Karadeniz'in güneyinde yaşadı, bizler gibi. Bir başka topluluk da kuzeyinde yaşadı,

Tatarlar gibi. Ve o toplulukların kaderleri bir dönemde birleşti. Yusuf Akçura'nın yaptığı etki gibi, Abdurresid İbrahim'in Mehmet Akif'in ruh dünyasına nüfuz etmesi gibi. Mehmet Akif'in Safahat'ında kimi zaman Abdurresid İbrahim'in, kimi zaman Abdullah Tukay'ın şiirindeki izleri bulursunuz. Ve öylesine bir etkileşim ki, bizim şimdi ders almamız gereken bir etkileşim. Gittikçe küçülen, gittikçe daralan dünyada, onlar, Doğu'yu Batı'yla, Türk'ü Rus'la buluşturdular.

Şimdi bu mekan, Kazan, ne bu tarihi dilim, 1886-1913, Abdullah Tukay için, Yusuf Akçura için daha uzun, Abdurresid İbrahim için daha farklı. Ama 1880li yıllarda doğanların meydan okumasıdır bu. Gazi Mustafa Kemal gibi, Mehmet Akif gibi. Yazın bunları arka arkaya, bir büyük arayışın izlerini bulursunuz. Abdullah Tukay, çok kısa hayatına, 26 yıllık hayatına, işte bütün bu dediğim şeyleri sığdırdı. Sanki ait olduğu 1000 yıllık kültürün bütün yükünü üzerinde taşıyordu, bütün sorumluluğunu, güzelliğini. Karşı karşıya kaldığı, içinde yaşadığı bu kültür atmosferinin bütün özelliklerine nüfuz etmeye çalışıyordu. Türk, Rus, Arap, Fars edebiyatını, Fransız edebiyatını tanımişti çok daha genç yaşta. Ve dilinin farkındaydı, dilini kullanıyordu. Şiir yazarken sadece bir edebi eser yazmanın ötesinde bir neslin ağıtını yazıyordu. Bir Tatar destanı yazıyordu bir açıdan da. Ve sahip olduğu kültürü her yere aktaracak bir bilinç taşıyordu.

Geleneği taşıyordu çünkü bildiğimiz kadarıyla 7 kuşağa kadar ailesi imamdı. Kuşaklar önemli, nesillerden nesillere aktarılan kültür bakımından. Dolayısıyla, İslam kültürünün ve medeniyetinin farkındaydı. Aynen yine çağdaşları ve ceditçilik hareketinin diğer mensupları gibi: Musa Carullah gibi, Sultangaliyev gibi, ve diğerleri gibi. Çok küçük yaşta, 5 aylıkken daha babasını kaybetti, sonra annesini kaybetti 3 yaşında. Aynen aslında o nesil kültür dünyasında kendisini hem öksüz hem yetim hissetmesini, yani yükselen batı karşısında kendi ati olduğu kültürün öksüz ve yetim hissetmesi gibi, bu şekilde yaşadı. Mutiyullah Medresesi'nde okudu, ama medreseyle de yüzleşti. Yine aynen benzer şekilde Mehmet Akif'in o zamanki medreselere yaptığı eleştiriler gibi, ama aynı gelenekten gelerek İslam kültürüne olan güçlü aidiyetle. Türkçe'yi en öz, güzel şekliyle kullandı Abdullah Tukay. Ve o dili belki de yaşatan, o coğrafyalarda yaşatan, büyük eserlere imza attı. Doğu ve Batı felsefelerini buluşturdu, bir erdemi, bir kültürü yansıttı. Yine şu dizelere baktıktan sonra Mehmet Akif'i hatırlamamak mümkün mü? Biraz daha öztürkçeye diyelim, şöyle diyor bir şiirinde: İyilik karşısında eririm ben, balmumuyum / Överim iyi

şeyleri, tatlı dilliyim / Kötülüğü kınarım, övemem / O hususta pek katıyım, affedemem. Bunu Safahat'ın bazı beyitlerinin öztürkçeleştirilmiş şekli gibi düşünebilirsiniz.

Mehmet Akif, İpek'te doğmuştu Makedonya'da; Abdullah Tukay Kazan'da, Tatarstan'da. Ama ortak bir kültürü paylaşıyorlardı, ortak bir heyecanı taşıyorlardı. Ve ait oldukları kültürün o zamanki bir psikolojisi itibariyle düşüşe geçmiş bir kültür olmasına isyan ediyorlardı. Ve iddia ediyorlardı ki o kültür, o dil, Türkçe, o medeniyet, Türk-İslam medeniyetinin değişik versiyonlarının, hala bütün dünyaya ileteceği bir mesaj vardı. O mesajı taşımak için 26 yıla çok güzel bir Türkçe, çok güzel bir edebiyat literatürü bıraktı ve bir köprü oldu. Sadece şiir yazmadı, sadece sanat icra etmedi, aynı zamanda o zamanki sosyal hareketliliğin içinde yer aldı. Tarihin sorumluluğunu, gereğini, yerine getirdi. Bütün sosyal hareketlerde bulundu. Gazeteler çıkardı, Asr-ı Cedit gibi. Dergiler çıkardı, susmadı. Tarihin, bulunduğu mekanın hakkını verdi, bulunduğu tarihi dönemin sözcüsü oldu.

Son olarak şunu da Abdullah Tukay'la ilgili, söylemek isterim, bazı insanlar vardır yaşadığı dönemde etkili olurlar. Bazı insanlar hayatları ne kadar kısa süre olursa olsun, sonraki nesillere birşeyler aktarırlar. O 26 yaş yaşadı, ama, burada biz onun 124. doğumgününü kutluyoruz. Aslında hala yaşıyor güzel Türkçe'siyle. Ve aslında ondan sonra eğer Avrasya steplerinde standartlaşmış bir Türkçe kalmışsa, onun hemen hemen her Türk lehçesinde yayınlanmış şiirlerinin etkisi büyüktür: Kırgızca, Özbekçe, Başkurtça, Türkçe, her dilde. Bugün biz böylesine coğrafyaları yatay olarak kesen ve yine böylesine tarihi asırları dikey olarak kesebilen aydınlar ihtiyacımız var. Onun için biz Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı olarak Abdullah Tukay'ı bugün anmayı gerekli gördük. Onun için bu bayrağın yaşaması gerektiğini düşünüyoruz. Onun için bu bayrak hem ait olduğumuz büyük Türk kültürünün bayrağıdır, hem Türk-Rus kültür dostluğunun bayrağıdır, hem Asya'dan Avrupa'ya uzanan o büyük kültür hareketinin bayrağıdır. Ben Stratejik Derinlik'in bir yerinde şunu ifade etmeye çalışmıştım: Türklerin Avrupa'yla Asya arasındaki seferi, stratejisi, ok - yay ilişkisi gibidir. Yayı Asya'nın derinliğine doğru ne kadar gererseniz, oku Avrupa'nın ufuklarına doğru o kadar uzağa atabilirsiniz. Abdullah Tukay kendi tecrübesiyle bana bunu öğretmişti. Ceditçilik hareketi böyle bir hareketin sözcüsüydü; onlardan öğreneceğimiz çok şey var. Hep beraber büyük bir serüvene yürümeye hazır olmalıyız. Bu serüven Abdürreşid İbrahim gibi heybesini sırtına alıp

gezmeyi gerektirir, Yusuf Akçura gibi bir köşede yazdığı bir kitabı dünyanın ülkesinde yayınlamayı gerektirirse bunu yapcaz. Ve bütün dünyaya vereceğimiz bir mesajımız olduğunu hiç unutmayacağız. Her sene Abdullah Tukay'ı anarken bunu da anmış olacağız.

Ve bir şeyi daha burada, sayın Büyükelçimiz de buradayken, vurgulamak istiyorum. Abdullah Tukay üzerinden, Tataristan üzerinden, Timur Bey ve sayın Cumhurbaşkanı Şeymiyev'le çok uzun dönem beraber olduk. Onun erdemli yönetimiyle, aslında Tataristan Türkiye'yle Rusya arasında büyük bir dostluk köprüsü olmuştur, olmaya da devam edecektir.

*Retrieved as an audio file on 10 October 2011 from [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/bakan-davutoglu\\_nun-tatar-milli-sairi-abdullah-tukay\\_in-124\\_-dogumgunu-vesilesiyle-gerceklestirilen-anma-programindaki-konusmasi.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/bakan-davutoglu_nun-tatar-milli-sairi-abdullah-tukay_in-124_-dogumgunu-vesilesiyle-gerceklestirilen-anma-programindaki-konusmasi.tr.mfa)>*

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