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UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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**NATIONALITIES AND
CONFLICTING ETHNICITY
IN POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA**

by Valery Tishkov

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March 1994

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PREFACE

In 1989, UNRISD launched a major research project on Ethnic Conflict and Development. Since then 14 case studies have been carried out in countries experiencing ethnic conflicts in different regions of the world. The research has sought to examine:

- the conditions under which ethnic conflicts arise and sustain themselves;
- the roles of economic, cultural, social and political factors in shaping ethnic consciousness and claims;
- the effects of development processes, state policies and international politics on the dynamics of ethnic conflicts;
- the interests and goals of ethnic movements, and what kinds of strategies and ideologies they pursue;
- the reasons why some ethnic conflicts become violent while others are regulated within existing political and constitutional structures; and
- the mechanisms which can be developed to prevent, contain or resolve such conflicts.

This paper forms part of the author's larger study on ethnic conflict and development in Russia. It opens with a discussion of methodological approaches to understanding the phenomenon of ethnicity in the contemporary world, focusing on post-Soviet theory and social practice. The author argues that the Soviet régime deliberately constructed ethno-national identities in order to build a state based on ethnic principles. Its "success" in producing powerful ethnic élites and nationalist ideology ultimately played an important role in the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as ethnicity and nationalism became an accessible and easily understandable basis for collective mobilization when central power and ideology collapsed.

Thus the immediate post-Soviet period saw the formation of ethnically-based political entities within the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. However, these new entities are themselves multi-ethnic in character: in order for the new states to survive, and to avoid ethnic unrest and possible renewed fracturing along ethnic lines, they must sooner or later abandon the conception of ethno-national state systems and build new nations based on common citizenship.

The paper argues that this is the dilemma of ethnic self-determination: although the creation of new states may in some cases be essential or inevitable, the search for "natural" or "just" borders, especially along ethnic lines, "is both absurd and extremely dangerous". The author advocates instead that cultural pluralism form the basis of a political formula for addressing the national question within the current borders of the states of the former Soviet Union, and he argues that the "*de-étatisation* of ethnicity and the de-ethnicization of the state" is necessary to weaken the importance of exclusive ethnic loyalty in favour of multiple identity.

Finally, the paper offers suggestions for political strategies and mechanisms to address the ethnic tensions and conflicts in the region. Federalism and local self-government will alleviate some problems, while government support for non-territorial cultural autonomy, including for the use of minority languages, will address

other concerns. At the same time, the process of democratization in multi-ethnic states requires creativity: a system based simply on the principle of one person, one vote is likely to result in the under-representation of minorities. More complex electoral formulas which encourage inter-ethnic coalitions and co-operation must be sought.

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March 1994
Ghai

Dharam

Director

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I. ON THE PHENOMENON OF ETHNICITY

Rising nationalism and ongoing conflicts in post-Communist countries have exposed a quite common tendency: many societal institutions, in the midst of deep social change and radical reform, develop a manifestly ethnic form. In spite of significant intellectual efforts to understand why this is so, the results are disheartening. The dynamics and forms of conflicting ethnicity have become one of the dominant themes of discussion for modern social scientists and political practitioners (Stavenhagen, 1990; Rupersinghe et al., 1992; Moynihan, 1993). In Russia, this topic is at the centre of academic and public discourse. Society, its policy makers and its governors increasingly seek — instead of ideological invocations — “objective” analysis as the basis for adopting decisions, as well as “practical advice” for designing policy and carrying out public administration. On the other hand, scholars, though liberated from ideological dictates, continue to demonstrate a “detachment from life”, disseminating mutually exclusive opinions with weak prognostic power.

In spite of the lack of scholarly accord on the issue, it should be possible to avoid relativistic inertia in discussing the question of ethnicity and conflict governance. At least general mechanisms and rules can be traced from the efforts of policy makers, public forces, military personnel, and international agencies which have faced this challenge in recent decades. This is not a novel idea in many respects, yet concrete principles and approaches have rarely been formulated in the literature or in public statements.

Scholars, experts and politicians dealing with contemporary nationalism and conflicts express growing concerns about the destructive effects of complex discussions between intellectuals, political entrepreneurs and the lay public around ethnic myths, sentiments and demands. We can observe more and more attempts to avoid the raising (in Bakhtin’s term) of everyday dogmatism and irrational mythmaking to a level of political language and legal norms. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, nevertheless declared in **An Agenda for Peace** that as “fierce new assertions of nationalism and sovereignty spring up...the cohesion of states is threatened by brutal ethnic, religious or linguistic strife”. He made the important conclusion that “the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality”, and “if every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

1. Approaches to understanding ethnicity

Among the basic approaches to interpreting the ethnic phenomenon, three can be highlighted: the primordial, the instrumentalist, and the constructivist. The first of these scholarly traditions can be traced to the ideas of nineteenth century German romanticism and to the positivist tradition of social science. Its adherents see ethnicity as an objective given, a sort of primordial characteristic of humanity. For primordialists there exist objective entities with inherent characteristics such as territory, language, recognizable membership and even common mentality. In its

extreme form, this approach sees ethnicity in socio-biological categories as a “comprehensive form of natural selection and kinship connections”, as a primordial instinctive impulse (van den Berghe, 1981). Some take the point of view that a recognition of group affiliation is included in the genetic code and is the product of early human evolution, when the ability to recognize the members of one’s family group was necessary for survival (Shaw and Wong, 1989). Among the major Russian students of ethnicity, L.N. Gumilev believed in the existence of ethnos as a “bio-social organism” and tried to formulate a theory of “ethnogenesis”, albeit in an obviously superficial form (Gumilev, 1990). Y.V. Bromley and most other Soviet social scientists still adhere to deeply primordial positions. For them, ethnicity is natural, innate and inescapable; “ethnos” and “ethno-social organism” are the basic category and archetype, their highest manifestation being the nation (Bromley, 1983). On the whole, however, this approach remains marginal and is the subject of serious criticism in world ethnology and social and cultural anthropology (Skalnik, 1990; Plotkin, 1990).

With the emergence of the phenomenon of ethnic revival and the growth of ethnic nationalism and separatism in the world during recent decades, scholars have begun to focus more attention on ethnicity as a means for collective striving to material advantage in the socio-political arena. Instrumentalists see a collectivity’s claims to ethnicity as based on a political myth created, propagated and often manipulated by élites that are seeking power. Ethnicity began to be seen as a part of the repertoire that is calculated and chosen consciously by an individual or a group to satisfy certain interests and achieve certain goals.

The constructivist approach, which has special significance for the Russian reality, is unique for two reasons: first, it remains absolutely alien to domestic — Russian — social science and has never been seriously tested. Second, the social practice — specifically of the post-Communist world — contains a plethora of examples of constructed and mobilized ethnicity (Tishkov, 1992). What is the essence of the constructivist approach? It views ethnicity as a modern phenomenon, but posits a process of identity formation in which cultural élites play a significant, but not necessarily manipulative, role. Ethnic identities frequently develop out of recognition and articulation of a shared experience of discrimination and subordination. Adherents of the instrumentalist and constructivist approaches tend to see ethnic boundaries as constantly appropriating and eliminating elements, that is, as permeable and relatively fluid (Barth, 1969).

The constructivist approach views ethnic sentiment, which is engendered on the basis of historical differences in culture, as well as the myths, conceptions and doctrines that are formed in its context, as an intellectual construct. As such, ethnic sentiment is seen as the result of purposeful efforts of élites who are “professional producers of subjective visions of the social world” (Bourdieu, 1984:6). These “professionals” include writers, scholars and politicians, whose intellectual production became transmittable on a mass level with the spread of the printed word and education. The very idea of nation and so-called national consciousness (or self-consciousness), the intellectual product of Western élites, thus spread around the world almost simultaneously with the process of modernization (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Greenfeld, 1992). In the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, it had found support in Eastern Europe and Russia, especially among leaders of the peripheral nationalities of the former Ottoman,

Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. Later, specifically because of the increasing availability of education and the creation of intellectual élites among the nationalities of the former Soviet Union (as in the countries of Eastern Europe), the idea and doctrine of nationalism acquired deep emotional legitimacy; now they are stimulating attempts to convert myths and emotions into socio-political engineering (Roeder, 1991; Tishkov, 1992; Mircev, 1992).

The constructivist approach pays special attention to mentalities and language as key symbols around which a perception of ethnic distinctiveness crystallizes. Written texts and speeches contain, for example, historical reconstructions which are used to justify the authenticity and the continuity of one or another ethnic identity. Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, archaeology and ethnography, in many of their manifestations, reduce the past to the present, and represent a projection based on the concept of the “gradualness” and “homogeneity” of the historical process. In each contemporary reading of past cultures, history is drawn upon as a resource for addressing today’s political tasks.

Such was the case, for example, of Azerbaijani historians who gradually developed the nationalistic conception of Caucasus Albania, including Ancient Albania, as the “grand-fatherland of Azeris”, territories which Armenians view as “historical Armenia”. This construction of a “rich” and “ancient” history of the Azerbaijani people has, as a necessary component, a description of the Karabakh territory as the “heart of Azerbaijan”. Similarly, Georgian intellectuals declare Shida Kartli or Samochablo (Southern Ossetia) “the heartland of Georgia”; Ingush leaders consider the village of Angusht, located in a disputed area, as the “grand-fatherland of the Ingush”; and Ossetian intellectuals formulate a thesis about the Alans, the cultural predecessors of the Ossetians, whose “bones are scattered about all of the Northern Caucasus”. Political and heavily ideological archeology and ethnography has been flourishing for decades in peripheral as well as central academies of the former Soviet Union (Shnirelman, 1993).

On the other hand, national histories, encyclopedias and cultural research often have little in common with the people’s factual history and ethnography. The very nomenclature of the people themselves, especially their names, is the result of “outsiders’ prescriptions”, whether by ancient authors, travelers who first contacted and described the people, or by contemporary scholars and politicians.

The definition of “a people” in the sense of an ethnic community is most often understood in contemporary scholarship as **a group of people whose members share a common name and common elements of culture, possess a myth of common origin and a common historical memory, who associate themselves with a particular territory and possess a feeling of solidarity**. All of these indicators are the result of special efforts, and in particular the process of nation-building. National affiliation is a sort of “constant internal referendum” on affiliation and loyalty to one or another collective community. It is the result of family education and socialization. In the same way, nations are, according to B. Anderson’s widely accepted definition, “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983).

It is, nevertheless, difficult to overcome the dogmatism derived from the Stalinist definition of a nation as a community of people with objective characteristics (territory, common form of economy, language, mentality). But it is no less imperative to perceive the nature of ethnic phenomena and their projection onto

socio-political life in a more sophisticated manner. As E. Gellner observed, “a person must have a nationality, just as he must have a nose and two ears... All of this seems self-evident, although, alas, it is not. But that which unwillingly was driven into consciousness as self-evident truth represents the most important aspect or even the essence of the problem of nationalism” (Gellner, 1989:124).

Nationality or ethnic identity is not an innate human trait, although it is most often perceived as such. Nations are also created by people, by the efforts of intellectuals and by the state’s political will. “Nation” is an in-group definition: it is not possible to assign it strictly scientific or legal formulae. This also concerns the more mystical category of “ethnos”, which was enthusiastically developed by Soviet social scientists and as a result has become — in public discourse — much more than a scholarly construction. Unfortunately, both primordial definitions (nation and ethnos) are widely present and are carelessly used in contemporary political language and normative and legal texts. For example, Gorbachev — distressed by the inability of the central government to manage ethnically motivated groups — made statements like “all peoples, small and large ones, are Gods’ creatures” (*Izvestia*, 15 September 1991). Another example might be the aspirations of achieving certain political aims through the mobilization of memory about the socio-cultural characteristics of Russian Cossacks, which finally resulted in the official definition of Cossacks as an “ethno-cultural entity” at the highest state level in a decree by Yeltsin and in the Supreme Soviet’s law. This may be considered an example of Bakhtin’s raising of roots-level myths and memories under the pressure of politics and for the sake of populist gesture.

Although the concept of ethno-national communities may be an imagined one, this does not keep it from becoming a powerful reality and a most important basis for collective action. Ethno-cultural diversity does not remain a historical construct, but increasingly moves from the domain of material culture to the sphere of consciousness and values. A person employs ethnic identity and affiliation as a means of adaptation and better orientation in a modern and complex world, and as a mechanism for achieving certain social goals. In Russia, citizens regain lost feelings of personal worth and collective pride through ethnicity, while leaders often realize social control and political mobilization by evoking ethnic reasoning or ties.

Thus this intellectual construct is directly projected onto the exercise of power. It is often coupled with the realization of political will, ensuring for this purpose a necessary arsenal of arguments and recruits, as well as a tool of force. The former right of Communist party “high priests” to formulate from above and transmit downward their programmatic postulates was one of the most important pillars of their power, along with the repressive party-state apparatus. Today, the search for explanations of disorder, crisis and conflict continues in parliamentary debates, political discussions and the media.

A society used to living in one-dimensional symbolism cannot immediately become a multi-dimensional arena. The excessive emphasis on learning formulae proposed by intellectual and political élites, and their use, has become almost a genetic trait of the Soviet people. Post-Communist countries do not yet have powerful elements of civil, that is “private”, society, expressed as a high degree of individual autonomy and self-organization of social groupings on various levels. A society without these elements is the ideal material for a mythological “colonization” of the mass consciousness because, in a time of crisis and radical social transformation,

when perceptions of the “world as people know it” are overturned, the magic of the word — the right and the ability to label and call into existence — has become one of the simplest and most accessible forms of political power. As in ancient times, the task of explaining and producing the symbolic is granted to poets, artists, sculptors, and now also to playwrights, film makers, scholars and humanitarians, and, first and foremost, historians, ethnographers and archaeologists. No one historical period and region of the world had experienced such a wide-scale escalation to power positions of highly educated social scientists and other intellectuals as that which can be observed in the post-Soviet space. For example, among the 28 members of the State Council of Georgia formed by Shevardnadze, there were 11 philologists, historians and philosophers, seven art figures and journalists and only three lawyers and one economist.

2. The intelligentsia and the national idea

Since the collapse of Communist ideology, a new generation of politicians and leaders of nationalist movements has begun using — in order to gain recognition and receive a mandate for power — ideas and words that carry specific connotations for one or another group. In their midst, they revive mystical controversies and traumas suffered (usually by previous generations) under previous regimes. As such, the inertia of totalitarianism facilitated the replacement of the tyranny of party programmes with the no less oppressive tyranny of mobilized conceptions and group myths raised to the level of political declarations and demands. The situation in societies freed from Communist government can rightly be called a new form of dictatorship when, for example, no Armenian can oppose the policy of the Karabakh movement and no Ingush can oppose the unification of the disputed region of Northern Ossetia with the newly-forming Ingush Republic. One recalls the singular example of the free spirit of the deceased Georgian philosopher Mamardashvili, who said, “For truth’s sake I would act against my own people”.

The analyses of motives and intentions of those who take the “path to power” or become activists on ethnic battlefields has yet to be placed on the research agenda. The fate of today’s intellectuals in politics most often assumes a dramatic or even a tragic shape. My assessment of their activities is not a criticism of personalities who most often deserve respect and sympathy, but rather an analysis of the phenomenon of educated intellectuals in power or at the head of nationalist movements. Post-Soviet politics is confronted with this phenomenon on a large scale. Its essence can be seen from the perspective of social anthropology as **a struggle for the power of knowledge and a struggle for power by means of knowledge**. And in this struggle in the collapsing multi-ethnic state, the knowledge of archaeologists, ethnographers and historians is the most “professional” in terms of its ability to influence political mobilization.

Therefore, violent conflicts in Southern and Northern Ossetia, Abkhazia, Moldova and Tadjikistan have brought to the fore the issue of cost and responsibility related to intellectuals’ participation in political action and government. The collapse of the Soviet Union provided new leaders — of various degrees of legitimacy — with easy means to supply their adherents with the most modern weaponry, organize for war and give orders to kill. In this context, the struggle for

knowledge, for the “correct classification and order”, has been transformed easily and quickly into mass violence and enormous destruction. Harm has been done first of all to the people themselves, in whose name leaders have formulated positions and arguments, slogans and demands. For example, the former academician and social scientist and current president of Armenia, L. Ter-Petrosyan, asserted that “the right of a nation to self-determination is absolute. If a people decides to take its fate into its own hands, nothing, including violence, can turn this process backward” (Ter-Petrosyan, 1991). There is nothing scholarly in this thesis, but it was proclaimed by a scholar-politician as accomplished truth and as prescription for action for the whole group. It is notable that this thesis was put forth in a society of general literacy (among Armenians in Armenia, the percentage of people with a higher education is one of the world’s highest and almost four times that of the central regions of Russia) and political exaltation of citizens who follow their leaders.

The fact that “struggles of peoples (nations) for self-determination” are seen by post-Soviet scholars, and by politicians, as “national, democratic movements” is not actually evidence of objectively existing trends and factors. This does not mean that one could deny a long list of ethnic groups’ grievances and fundamental reasons for disintegrationist projects. Indeed, this explanation for the end of the Soviet Union was put forth by the present author (Tishkov, 1991a), but it cannot be seen as satisfactory. Rather, concerning post-Soviet space the “realization of historical law” can be seen more as a constructed reality created by theory and dogma. The phenomenon of manipulating ethnic feelings and nationalist sentiments is not at all new. In his **Essays on the Russian Troubles**, General A.I. Denikin made the following observations about the situation in Transcaucasia with regard to the 1918 Transcaucasian Republic’s declaration of independence from Russia, after which followed a sharp political destabilization, and an exacerbation of ethnic and inter-societal conflicts and the growth of local chauvinism, especially among Georgians with regard to Abkhazians, Armenians, and Russians.

The ‘will of the people’ and the ‘pressure from the masses’ — these legal and natural stimuli to political and national movements in Transcaucasia — have been insignificant. If on the all-Russian scale the waves of revolution swept the life of the Russian intelligentsia from its heights, here, by contrast, the history of Transcaucasia during its troubled years is a history of its predominantly socialist intelligentsia. Only the intelligentsia would determine domestic events, and only in it lies the historic responsibility for the fate of the Transcaucasian peoples (Denikin, 1992:92).

A most important part of the present approach to the problems of ethnicity lies in rejecting the arrogance of the objective-positivist paradigm, which is at the root of the contemporary crisis in domestic social science. The present approach allows us to rid ourselves of illusions that see theoretically constructed classifications as objectively existing groups of people or as laws of social life. It does not allow senseless haste in translating mythical constructs and symbolic struggle into the language of state laws, presidential decrees or military orders.

Russian social scientists, who have substantially constructed the subject of their studies and at the same time have not recognized their “co-authorship” of a perverted reality, through their indifference to relativist and constructivist approaches actually limit the very possibilities for influence and participation in the process of

change and innovation. The understanding that ethnicity is a social construct, according to M. Smith,

give[s] greater opportunities for mediating political and socio-cultural interactions within and among ethnic groups through the same constructed symbolic action than are available to those who consider ethnicity either in naturalistic categories, regarding ‘Ethnos’ (like ‘Eros’ and ‘Thanatos’) as a deep structural parameter of consciousness, or else in existential categories as a component of personal identity, so deeply rooted in past historical memory that no present-day human influence is capable of forming the character of this identity or mitigating antagonistic manifestations on the parts of certain ethnic groups vis-à-vis others (Smith, 1992:526).

Such an approach might represent a break-through from the grand methodological impasse and from discouraging political helplessness in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. One needs to accept that **ethnicity is constructed and reconstructed by certain verbal actions which reflect contemporary conditions. Among these conditions are power relations between social groups and those interpretative meanings that people give to these conditions. One must not look at ethnicity as a timeless or primordial parameter of human existence.** Thus, the activities of political and cultural élites, and the daily actions of ordinary citizens, can acquire new meaning.

We need an understanding that social experience is not constructed with a single meaning and that professional historical data are being used to create a particular version of the “ideal present”. We must not continue to subscribe to the primitive formula that the historian studies the past in order to understand the present and predict the future. This new understanding would not make social scientists and political activists naive enthusiasts of the Wilsonian-Leninist interpretation of the right to self-determination in its narrowly ethnic variant. It is extremely risky to conclude that, after Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Southern Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, the Crimea and Transdnestria, “in the twenty-first century this problem [self determination] will confront the African continent, too, where post-colonial borders artificially divided ethnic territories” (Starovoitova and Kedrov, 1992). A more well-founded opinion states that “in the existing world system, formulae for sovereignty from the epochs of Sauares, Boden, and even Rousseau are just ridiculous”, that in the countries of a former empire it is the élites of the new political formations that are “self-determined” and “inter-determined” (Fillipov, 1992:112). Scholars who directly or indirectly participate in radical Russian transformations must be able to differentiate between myth-making rhetoric and real interests, and to act amidst everyday dogmatism and political motives.

Thus, the approach suggested here — since it is not arrogant or totalitarian in relation to societal reality — is not a refusal to understand or participate, but rather a platform for **participation based on understanding** and greater guarantees against irresponsible social engineering. It does not preclude the possibility of formulating suggestions for governing ethnicity, including mechanisms of managing inter-ethnic controversy and conflict in the former Soviet Union.

3. The Ethno-national state and the plural society

The list of injustices committed against ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union is long and extremely painful. Therapy for past traumas may necessarily be lasting and costly, especially if resources and energy are directed to reconcile the past and to return the “norm” of existence once lost. For some groups and leaders this might mean the moment before the collapse of the Soviet Union or before 1917 (groups of Russian national patriots), for others, before the start of massive deportations (the Ingush, Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, and others), for a third group, before the pre-war annexations (the Baltic peoples, Moldovans), for a fourth group before the Civil War and Red Terror (the Transcaucasian peoples), for a fifth group, before their inclusion in the Russian empire and colonization (the peoples of the Northern Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia), for a sixth group, before the expansion of the Muscovite state (the peoples of the Volga region), and for a seventh group, before the period of ancient state formations or even ancient cultures. In any case, the ideal is represented by that historical period from which the most arguments in favor of the currently desirable territorial borders, political status and cultural conditions can be derived. The further one looks for the roots of the past, the more mythologized the concepts of “historical territories”, “nation state” and “cultural traditions” become.

Past traumas relived through externally-introduced consciousness (only a small share of citizens were destined to live through them personally) are complicated by recent challenges, of which the most serious is the search for new identities in the context of the newly forming states. The collapse of the Soviet Union occurred under the defining influence of the doctrine of ethnic nationalism or the ideas of national self-determination. The realities which have emerged, however, are quite far from the proposed goal. The new states are multi-ethnic formations in which the titular population (that is, the group which gives the state its name or, alternatively, that which derives its name from the state’s) comprises from 80 per cent (Russia, Lithuania) to 40-50 per cent (Latvia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Kirgizia) of the overall population.

Former Soviet minorities now have become majorities in 14 successor states, and are discovering new minorities just as hungry for their own national self-determination. The majority of these groups are homogeneously settled, regard their cultural characteristics and leaders highly, and are able to formulate their own national idea. Strictly speaking, national identity is already a reality for those groups which had autonomous status in the former union republics or gained it in recent years. As the events in Georgia show, eliminating such status is practically impossible.

The emphasis on ethno-nation state systems presents new states and their leaders with a difficult task: either declare a process of national self-determination in the form of secession espoused by the December 1991 agreement, denying other groups similar rights, or try to find a new formula for legitimizing the state — one that is not fraught with future disintegration. Such a new formula for 15 states, as well as for the autonomous republics, might be based on the idea of a civil or political nation (instead of ethno-nation) and on accompanying efforts to establish common symbols, values and interests. Instead of the dominating group’s claim to preferential access to power and resources in its “own” nation state, new states must be

constructed in the interests of all groups on the basis of common citizenship, and not blood (that is, states of those living in Russia, Kazakhstan, Tatarstan, Yakutia, etc.)

A nation is a multi-ethnic entity in composition, whose basic indicators are territory, citizenship and shared loyalties. Belonging to a nation does not preclude belonging to one or another ethno-cultural community of people. National and ethnic loyalties are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, a nation may assume a distinct ethno-cultural profile determined by the culture of the dominating group or by several groups. The English do not lose their characteristics in not undergoing “national self-determination” and being members of the British nation. The same is true of the peoples of Spain, India and other multi-ethnic states. In the same measure, it should not threaten Russians in Russia, Georgians in Georgia or Tatars in Tatarstan, if their respective state formations, while they may be at different levels, are not declared ethno-national.

The official declaration of the ethnic nature of a state or even elements of one culture (for example, language) always engenders controversy that weakens territorial co-citizenship. If the desire to restrict access to power and resources does not stand behind this controversy, then achieving the goals of development and perception of language and culture is more easily and effectively accomplished through educational, informational, and publishing programmes and projects than through usurpation of power structures. As for the incorporation of ethnicity into the state, this process must reflect the entire cultural mosaic of those citizens who live in the state. The Estonian or Latvian language need not assume the exclusive functions of a state language. It is much more important to ensure civil unity through official bilingualism (or even possible trilingualism as, for example, is needed in Crimea, Abkhazia, Bashkiria and Gagauzia), which today would not threaten but rather strengthens newly-acquired political sovereignty.

A search for new formulae, apart from doctrine, of ethnic nationalism is needed in order to keep the 15 new states from disintegration and to make them peaceful societies. As D. Horowitz has observed,

in a significant way, national self-determination is the problem and not the solution, for Sinhalese self-determination has come at the expense of the Tamils, Georgian self-determination may come at the expense of the Ossetians, and down the line Eritrean Muslims’ self-determination may come at the expense of Eritrean Christians. There are many arguments against national self-determination and for the acceptance of the conception of mutual compromise” (Horowitz, 1992:152).

However, the vitality of doctrine in the post-Communist mentality is amazing, although it would seem that in the past 50 years a whole galaxy of leading scholars and politicians has shown doctrine’s insolvency. In 1945, Karl Popper wrote in his work **The Open Society and Its Enemies** that

the attempt to uncover certain ‘natural’ state borders and, accordingly, to see state as a ‘natural’ element, leads to the principle of nation state and to the romantic fictions of nationalism, racism and tribalism. However, this principle is not ‘natural,’ and the very thought that natural elements such as nation, linguistic or racial groups do exist is simply fabrication. At least this we must make clear from history: after all, from the beginning of time people have been intermingling, uniting,

separating and again intermingling. This will not stop, even if we want it to (Popper, 1992:1, 357).

This discussion contains a partial explanation of why it is so difficult to resist the principle of the ethnic nation state. “The popularity of this principle is explained by the fact that it appeals to tribal instincts, and that it is the cheapest and most reliable means for a politician without anything else to offer to rise to prominence”, wrote K. Popper.

II. ASSESSING THE SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD EXPERIENCE

Thus, the problems of inter-ethnic relations, ethnic conflict and the forming of a new Russian state remain at the centre of the country’s socio-political life. However, Russian federal authorities, and the authorities of Federation entities, for a series of reasons, have not begun to design large programmes, let alone to implement them, as has been done for economic reform and political reorganization. The matter has been limited by efforts to regulate the more bitter crises and open conflicts, by political journalism, and by the few initiatives on the part of scholars and political groups. Some experience is being gained in the area of governing ethnic and minority issues in the republics and administrative regions. What is the essence of what was going on in the field of ethno-politics, and what is our assessment of the most important projects and proposals?

1. The ethnic politics of Gorbachev and Yeltsin

When Mikhail Gorbachev began liberal reforms in the Soviet Union, no one could predict such an explosion of ethnic issues in the country. One of the reasons for this evolution was the multi-faceted role ethnicity and nationalism began to play as the most accessible and understandable bases for collective mobilization and actions when central power and Communist ideology collapsed. Another reason for this unexpected turn of events was the highly contradictory and voluntaristic character of the nationality policy pursued by political leaders in response to ethnic challenges. The Communist political legacies combined two characteristics detrimental to democratic governance of multi-ethnic societies: first, the doctrine and practice of ethnic nationalism, and second, the hypocrisy of double-standard politics which combined specious declarations with forceful suppressions.

As it is well known, the first serious challenge to Gorbachev’s gradual decentralization came from the Baltic republics where nationalist movements took up the cause of succession from the Soviet Union. These were followed by independence movements in Georgia, Azerbaidjan, Ukraine and Moldova. These vertical and predominantly political conflicts between the centre and the periphery were accompanied by sporadic communal violence and political conflicts at a lower level between non-Russian titular nationalities and local minorities in several republics (Meskhetian Turks in Uzbekistan, Armenians in Azerbaidjan, Ossets and Abkhazians in Georgia, Gaguz, Russians and Ukrainians in Ukraine, Uzbeks in Kirgizia). Forcibly

relocated groups, which had lost their political status under Stalin (Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and others) also manifested their discontent.

The centre found itself ill-prepared for the substantial measures, negotiations and concessions needed to meet these challenges. The reaction was mainly impulsive and inclined to the politics of force and of covert repression. While the Communist party leaders and academic experts were trying to modify the official policy toward nationalities and to integrate revised approaches into political platforms and legal documents (like making a new Union treaty with the republics), the proponents of force were acting to suppress growing opposition in Tbilisi, Baku and Vilnius. Even local revolts of minorities, like in Nagorno-Karabakh, in some cases were used to manipulate the situation — not without the consent of top leaders, including Gorbachev himself. This inconsistent and inarticulate policy provoked additional dissent, as well as disillusionment concerning the ability of the centre and the Communist régime to give more power and freedom to “non-dominant” nationalities and peripheral territories.

The ethnic politics of *perestroika* was a grand failure, and it was used by Gorbachev’s opponents as the main argument in favour of the demise of the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, it could be considered a major success for the leaders of major non-Russian groups who were able peacefully to dismember the Soviet state. Ironically, the initiator of this divorce was the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin who, in spite of previous promises not to fracture the Soviet Union, made an agreement with the leaders of Ukraine and Belorussia in December 1991 to establish the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was a giant political improvisation not preceded or immediately followed by any serious analysis of the emerging situation or of its possible consequences. Yeltsin and his closest advisors were prisoners of the same so-called Marxist-Leninist theory of the national question which gives only one answer for multi-ethnic societies: national self-determination up to and including secession (Connor, 1984). The new leaders of Russia inherited the deeply ambivalent views of their predecessors on these issues, and reproduced many of the same ambivalent policies. In running for the presidency, Boris Yeltsin made open promises to grant to “ethno-territories” of Russia “as much sovereignty as you can swallow” and to restore all abolished ethnic autonomies. In April 1991 a law on the rehabilitation of repressed peoples was passed by the Supreme Soviet, establishing a legal basis for claims and demands on the part of many groups. However, no resources or procedures were provided for its implementation.

Obviously, ethnic conflicts have not vanished with the demise of the Soviet Union. In some areas they have evolved into protracted wars and ethnic cleansings. For example, the war around Nagorno-Karabakh has resulted in 13,000 deaths and one million displaced persons. Furthermore, 25 million Russians have found themselves “new minorities” in the “near abroad”, often treated as second-class citizens or exposed to violence. This has been one of the major unanticipated consequences of the “raising” of ethnic issues, and one of the basic assumptions of Yeltsin’s team which was found to be wrong. As it was explained by Dimitri Simes,

when the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, the attitude toward the ‘near abroad’ was based on wishful thinking: since all of the new post-Soviet nations had been victimized by the Communist régime, they would be able to work together harmoniously, taking each other’s interests into account. In addition, there was the clear expectation that

Russia, by far the most powerful of the newly independent states, would be accepted eagerly as the first among equals (Simes, 1994:78).

Reality has been different, however. Andrei Kozyrev, minister of foreign affairs, was ultimately forced by events to state that the government intended “to firmly uphold the interests of the Russian-speaking population and stand up for them wherever need be” (Foreign Ministry Briefing, 22 November 1993).

But for the reformers, the most disturbing factor was the disintegration of the Federation. Among 20 constituent republics, many decided to take advantage of the paralysis of central authority in Moscow and follow their own way. The Chechen republic proclaimed its full independence. Tatarstan favoured hard political bargaining and rejected the federal constitution and law. Since 1992, the federal authorities of Russia have thus been undertaking serious steps to overcome difficulties with managing ethnic issues. In March 1992 the federal treaty on dividing the powers was signed in the Kremlin by all federal units except for the Chechen and Tatar republics. It was presented as a major success of Yeltsin’s nationality policy which would prevent the disintegration of Russia. In reality the federal treaty again reflected ambivalent and wishful politics: to proclaim republics as “national states” and to block their aspirations by central bureaucracy and directives.

In the spring of 1993, federal authorities began moving away from ethnic nationalism and bringing into political discourse elements of multi-culturalism and territorial federalism. The new constitution of Russia, adopted during the election on 12 December 1993, confirmed the existing structure of the state with 63 administrative territories (*krai* and *oblast*) and 21 ethno-territorial formations (republics and an autonomous *oblast*). But at the same time the exclusive status of republics was questioned by granting all federal units the same amount of rights and power, and by removing from the text a conflict-generating provision regarding “sovereignty”. Republics are therefore not defined as “nation states”, but as “states”. In routine political language, however, the term is still operational and is employed even on a high level as was done very recently by the minister of nationalities and regional politics, Sergei Shakhkrai, who wrote on future perspectives of Russian federalism (**Nezavisimaya Gazeta**, 26 February 1994).

In his 1994 annual address to the newly elected Federal Assembly, Yeltsin broke out of the past legacies of ethno-nationalism. Remarkably, for the first time in Soviet and post-Soviet history, the leader of the country spoke of the profound contradiction in previous nationality policy.

A lot of national [read ethnic] problems are caused by the contradiction of two principles which were, from the very beginning, put at the basis of the state structure of the Russian Federation: national-territorial and administrative-territorial. Today, when a division of the powers is taking place between federal authorities and subjects of federation this contradiction has become explicitly clear. Under contemporary conditions there is a historical necessity for both principles to co-exist. At the same time, this contradiction will be diminishing on a basis of a new notion of a nation as a co-citizenship what was fixed in the constitution (**Rossiskaya Gazeta**, 25 February 1994).

2. On national self-determination

About four years ago the academician Sakharov proposed a “Constitution of the United States of Europe and Asia”, which called for the creation of a union of nation states with equal status for the 53 nation state formations that existed at that moment in the Soviet Union. Thus, Sakharov envisioned the realization of the right of a people to national self-determination as a part of democratic transformation. At the beginning of 1993 G. Popov proposed to “solve all national problems of man by allotting him rights”, and national-cultural autonomy for “all nations — both on the level of Russia and on the level of lands”. He suggested that 15-20 federal lands should comprise Russia, and that there should be no national-territorial structures, and added “whoever doesn’t agree with this can leave the Federation” (Popov, 1993).

In spite of the contrasting stances of these two approaches, one common fallacy, a legacy of the incorporation of the doctrine of ethno-nationalism into the so-called Marxist-Leninist theory on the nationalities question, unites them both. It is derived from the notion that a “people” or a “nation” is first of all an ethnic community, that from the beginning it has an inherited “historical” right to its “own” state, and that each ethnos must have its own state which it must nationally determine itself. Such is the credo of ethnic nationalism.

This view radically differs from world (not only Western) political experience and dominant scholarly conceptions. Its weakness lies in its impracticability, in spite of the great emotional and mobilizing power of the ethno-national idea. Moreover, a choice of one of the above-mentioned variants could lead to serious consequences in a new, irresponsible social engineering for Russia.

It would seem that the Sakharov variant has been partially realized in 14 of the former “socialist nations”, which during the collapse of the Soviet Union created their “own” sovereign nation states. Twenty-one peoples (or nations) of the Russian Federation have raised their status to the level of nation states. The fact remains that all new states (besides Armenia after it deported all Azerbaijanis), and the republics within Russia, are formations with multi-ethnic populations (see Table 1). The peoples which give the states and republics their name (titular nationalities) and dominate in terms of culture and language only lend the state a characteristic appearance and ensure a basis for social consolidation. But these very states, and their sovereignties and institutions of power, are realized and act in the name of all citizens. All new states accepted their boundaries at the moment of the collapse of the Soviet Union as the basis for their national borders. Therefore, the entire population of their territory represents new co-citizenships. These multi-ethnic nations were accepted into the United Nations.

In order for these new states to survive, and not endure ethnic unrest and possible disintegration, sooner or later they must disclaim the conception of ethno-national state systems and build new nations based on common citizenship: those living in Kazakhstan, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, etc. Only then will the fundamental concepts of national interest, symbols, economy, safety, currency, army, etc., be put in their proper places and rid of ambiguity. The term “national” must lose its ethnic connotation and become synonymous with “state”. Only by accepting that Georgia is a state for all of its citizens and that in Kazakhstan it is not the “Kazakh ethno-nation” but the citizens of Kazakhstan who are nationally self-determined, can the state

authorities demand that not only ethnic Georgians or Kazakhs serve in their “national armies” (or guards). **Thus, along the whole spectrum of state activity and throughout the entire former Soviet Union, sooner or later a dismantling of the political doctrine of ethnic nationalism and a change to principles of building and functioning of state systems on the basis of common citizenship, must occur.**

Does this imply disrespect for the interests and rights of peoples as ethno-cultural communities, or for the needs of citizens with respect to their ethnic affiliation? The opposite is probably true: narrow ethno-nationalism includes a claim to power, access to resources and privileges, control of the cultural-informational domain on the behalf of members of one group of the population (even if the majority) as members of the so-called “indigenous nation”. The remaining “minorities” of the “non-native” or “Russian-speaking population” (in a number of instances forcibly deprived of their citizenship) cannot reconcile this situation. In the best case, they move from apathy or a boycott of the political process to ethnic self-organization and begin to fight for their own representation in institutions of power — for their rights and interests. In the worst case, they turn to violence or separatism (under the very same slogan of national self-determination), or prefer emigration. I include the latter among negative alternatives, since it is associated with enormous losses for the people themselves and deprives neighboring states of favorable relations. Thus, in analyzing the situation in the former Soviet Union, we observe rules for group behavior in complex societies, especially on the part of diminished ethnic minorities. This rule, “voice or exit”, means that minorities without proper representation prefer to leave the socio-political arena and to organize other societal units where they can improve or completely change their status — preferably into the status of a ruling majority.

As the events in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and, recently, in Russia show, is not possible to deal successfully with this question using force. Internal conflict and devastating wars render senseless the primary goal of self-determination, which is the improvement of the social and cultural conditions of the peoples themselves. Even hastily declaring official status for languages, for example, goes against the interests of a significant part of the population, who, after lasting contact with the Russian culture and language, have adopted the Russian language, remaining in their consciousness the same Kirgizians, Ukrainians or Kazakhs. This portion of the population in the new states is much larger than censuses indicate. According to our estimates, among peoples such as Belorussians, Kazakhs, Kirgizians, and Ukrainians, this portion comprises from 30-50 per cent of the overall population.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the only answer is to substitute the impracticable ethno-national idea, which played a mobilizing role during the struggle against the former system, with a new formula and a new idea. The idea can be cultural pluralism, and the formula can be one used in other multi-ethnic states. In India it is “unity in diversity”, in Canada a “cultural mosaic” or “multi-culturalism in a bilingual framework”, in Jamaica “out of many, one people”, etc. Thus far, in the post-Communist world there has been movement in that direction in Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and very recently in Georgia and Moldova. To avoid internal conflicts and interstate wars, the new political formations must come to an understanding of “nation” that unites citizens of a state and confronts ethnic separatism and tribalism. This is exactly how the Canadian nation unites two peoples (French and Anglo-Canadians), the Spanish nation four distinct groups (Basques,

Castellans, Catalans, Galicians), the British nation four (English, Irish, Scots, Welsh), and the Indian, Nigerian and Indonesian nations dozens of ethnic communities. There are no fundamental reasons why the Russian Federation and the states of the former Soviet Union cannot follow the political paths of other states that have multi-ethnic populations.

3. Separatism and its consequences

In spite of the difficulties facing multi-ethnic states, the international community is unlikely to follow the path of the “balkanization” of the world political arena. At the same time, however, one must not discount the mobilizing power of successful secession movements. One of the first such breakthroughs was the victory of Eritrean separatists in Ethiopia, which was achieved after decades of struggle and support from anti-centrist guerrilla movements. In Somalia, one separatist movement has formulated a demand to create an independent state. Similar groups exist in a number of other African states, like the Sudan and South Africa. For the first time since decolonization, the political map of Africa is in question. The reason for this, however, is not the borders created artificially by colonizers, but rather the inability and difficulty of these states to solve social and political problems.

It is important to recognize that all borders are the result of political will and historical precedent, and searching for “natural” or “just” borders, especially along ethnic lines in Africa or the regions of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Volga, is both absurd and extremely dangerous. Responsible politicians or scholars would not dare draw a new map of the “re-self-determined” Africa or the ethnic states of the Eastern European plain and the Caucasus, let alone those of Central Asia, where ethnic nations were constructed in the Soviet period and where religious, dynastic and regional identities were always much stronger than ethnic ones, and therefore served as a basis for polities.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the division of Czechoslovakia have had both internal and international repercussions. Secession movements have already led to the emergence of more than 20 new states in the ex-Communist world. The readiness of the world community, especially the West, to recognize the separatists’ claims to their own states could initially be explained by world sympathy for the Baltic countries, which provided a “legitimate” basis for their claims to independence. With respect to Yugoslavia, the propitious positions of West Germany to Croatia and of Austria to Slovenia played decisive roles in support and recognition of secession. In addition, the inertia and logic of superpower confrontation during the Cold War years influenced the departure from previous principles of non-support for separatism and of respect for territorial integrity. It seemed natural to enhance the victory of Western democracies not only by overthrowing totalitarian regimes in the Soviet bloc and agreeing to radical disarmament, but also by reducing the size, and therefore the resources, of the state that had been the source of the nuclear threat. Yugoslavia, too, may have seemed to be powerful and unstable to the small countries of Western Europe, although the Yugoslav state was no less legitimate than other European states.

In this way, the geopolitical factor for the Western states who won a liberal victory over Communism encouraged them to overcome their resistance to the principle of national self-determination in its most radical form. This is the third time in the course of the twentieth century that the victors have dictated, albeit in camouflaged form, terms to the vanquished. It was with this slogan after the First World War, under the initiative of Woodrow Wilson, that the Entente leaders created a new political map for Europe. Leaders of ethno-national movements in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire acquired their “own” states. In the final analysis, however, the very same unsolved problem of ethnic minorities and “unfair” borders became a source of instability and hastened the unleashing of a new world war.

After the emergence of Nazi Germany, and during the course of the war itself, the manipulation of borders and displacement of populations, including that of about 10 million Germans in Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltics, were realized under the very same slogans. On that occasion the victor in the action was Stalin. More recently, the fall of the Soviet régime spurred politics of secession. Western democracies in every way encouraged ethnic self-determination in the former Soviet Union and now are unlikely to come out in favor of the territorial integrity of Russia and of other self-determined states. Again, however, this principle is not likely to spread to the countries of the West, which nevertheless have their own ethno-racial problems and separatist movements.

Thus, in recent years the forces of separatism achieved inspiring successes in the struggle against central governments and one-party systems. For the first time the international community has easily departed from support of the integrity of states, instilling hope in and providing a powerful stimulus to potential separatists in many regions of the world, including the newly self-determined states.

In and of itself, the process of dividing states cannot be considered an exclusively negative phenomenon. In the contemporary epoch large states demonstrate a series of inherent weaknesses. They are likely to be involved in dangerous rivalries in the world arena and to create strict hierarchical structures which, for citizens, spawn immovable bureaucracies. Also, they almost always include difficult problems in interrelations between diverse groups within the population.

Meanwhile, however, there are new, difficult issues raised by current realities and by the possible increase in the number of states in the international system that politicians should address. First, it must be made clear that realizing the right to “national self-determination” through separation does not lead to the creation of more homogeneous states. Just like the territories that move towards separatism, the truncated states that emerge from separation remain cultural mosaics. Even the separation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia, and its possible division into ten autonomous units, does not solve the problem of inter-ethnic relations. Those who know the ethnic map and possible ethnic manifestations are skeptical of the choice of ethnically homogeneous states in the Balkans.

Second, one must keep in mind that separation leads to the emergence of interstate borders between previous ethnic rivals. These former opponents then acquire the legal basis to build an army and mobilize for war. In this way, the potential is created for what once was an internal conflict or inter-communal tension to escalate into interstate military action. The probability that this might happen is

increased by the fact that new state boundaries may separate culturally related communities from their brethren or divide some groups as, for example, the Lezgin were between Azerbaijan and Russia. The participation of Russians in the military actions in Moldova, of the Abkhaz-Adygei peoples in Georgia and of the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia is evidence of the internationalization of ethnic conflicts. Separatism almost unavoidably engenders its antipode: irredentism — that is, the desire to be reunited. This phenomenon is not new and has been well known since the bloody wars in Biafra and Bangladesh.

Third, the growth in the number of states resulting from dismembering of the Soviet Union, a superpower in the bipolar world order, contains the possibility for a rise of a new asymmetry in world geopolitics. A number of powerful and centralized Western European states, as well as Japan, China and the United States, are not inclined to use the principle of national self-determination with regard to their own ethnic minorities. In China there are 55 million such people who live quite densely along the Han Chinese periphery. In Western Europe there are about 50 ethnic minorities, each of which numbers no less than 100,000 people. However, it is doubtful that these states will allow themselves to be “balkanized”. The new asymmetry caused by the now unchallenged military dominance of the United States could tempt it to dictate its will and understanding of international norms through more forceful means.

Thus, secession under the slogan of national self-determination is still not a response to the main mission of a state, that is, the safeguarding of proper conditions of social existence for its citizens. Rather, it is a reaction and the result of the inability of existing political régimes to respond to this challenge by improving governance. If the newly self-determined states fail to do so, the same fate of disintegration awaits them as well.

4. The specifics of Russia

The most complex situation in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations is found in the Russian Federation. Besides Russians, who comprise 82 per cent of the country’s population, there are also approximately 100 other ethnic groups, totaling about 27 million people. In the Soviet period, territorial autonomy was granted to the larger and homogeneous peoples. These territories now exist in the form of national republics — subjects of the Federation and autonomous *okrugs*. However, only about half of the non-Russian population actually lives on the territory of its respective state formation (see Tables 2 and 3). More than 10 million non-Russians, dispersed throughout the Federation, have no nation state formation. Among them are 4.3 million Ukrainians, 1.2 million Belorussians, 700,000 Germans, 600,000 Kazakhs, 500,000 Armenians, and 100,000 each of Koreans, Gypsies, Poles, and Greeks (see Table 4). Practically all ethno-nationalist projects, including secessionist ones, are formulated on behalf of titular nationalities living on the territories of their “own” republics. That comprises only about 8 million people out of the total 27 million non-Russians.

In spite of far from favorable socio-political conditions and a high degree of assimilation of the Russian culture, the majority of peoples in Russia retain their ethno-cultural characteristics and strong identities. For this reason, it is difficult to

agree with the option that calls for the abolition of existing ethno-territorial autonomies. First of all, the non-Russian peoples themselves, considering the republics to be their “own” nation states, would not accept this. These formations played a positive role in preserving ethnic cultures and languages even during totalitarian times. Especially now, they ensure access to power, and in a number of republics the majority (or close to it) titular population has acquired complete control of state institutions, as well as a dominant economic position (in Kalmykia, Chechenia, Tuva, Chuvashia, Tatarstan, etc.). Large, powerful political and intellectual élites of such titular nationalities have been able to organize opposition to efforts to abolish their republics or to change arbitrarily their status. The latter is impracticable; it is evidence of the helplessness of our political thinking and of a dangerous reverence to Russian national-patriotism. Even in tsarist times, some non-Russian peoples had various forms of autonomy, including freedom from serfdom and state service.

Even more senseless is the proposition that “if you don’t agree, you may leave!”. First, Russia is not made up exclusively of ethnic Russians; it was created and arranged in an equal measure by other peoples. Some national leaders, breaking with the former Communist centre, are too ready to disassociate themselves from Russia. “Scratch a Russian and you’ll find a Tatar”, states the proverb. Who, if not the Tatars and Russians, built the major cities of Russia, including Moscow, and colonized the regions of the Volga, the Urals and Siberia? The Chuvash, Udmurt, Mordvinian and Mari have no less of a claim to be the founders of Russia. And they could tell any other people, “‘if you don’t agree, you may leave’, as it was suggested by G. Popov”.

The situation of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus is more complex. There, memory of the Caucasus War during the nineteenth century, and Stalinist deportations, remains. The region has an extremely complicated ethnic mosaic, and many current “nations” are constructions of the Soviet period: either the unification of a dozen groups with various languages into the Avar people in Dagestan, or the separation of the former Cherkess into the Kabardin, Cherkess and Adygei. The interrelations between these people have always been complicated. Today, they are undergoing a search for new identities and for a place in the new order. Cultural and other ties to Russians in this region among Caucasians run quite deep. Russians there comprise the largest group and, in their way of life and traditions, are closer to Caucasians than to the Russians of the northern Pskov and Arkhangelsk *oblasts*. The Northern Caucasus is a historical, cultural and economic region with a complex ethnic mosaic that could become the basis for separate state-political units. In this region, under responsible political leadership, multi-ethnic formations are more viable than any drawn along ethnic lines.

But the most difficult problem in the Russian situation lies in the Russians’ need to share the general logic of “nation state building” — that is, to realize their own “national self-determination”. Should Russia become the nation state of Russians, or should, in the framework of the Federation, a Russian Republic “like the others have” be created? Both options are impossible to realize for two reasons. The first is that the geography of the ethnic territory of Russians would not allow the creation of a whole and “exclusively Russian” territory. But this is not a sort of “historical guilt” of a people that must pay for its own expansionism. Other peoples, especially large ones, do not have such distinct ethnic areas or “historical territories”.

Much more often these territories intermingle or form separate enclaves. The Tatars in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia colonized land where smaller peoples — primarily the Chuvash and Bashkir — lived, and forced them to assimilate. The Yakuts resettled on the land of the Tungu (Evenki), and, if the latter realize the demand raised by certain leaders of northern peoples to recognize their right to the territory they historically settled, the Yakuts might find themselves without a territorial basis for a nation state.

The administrative borders of national republics in Russia do not correspond to the ethnic areas of its peoples. In the Soviet period, these borders were established with an eye to the interests of national minorities and with the task of developing the economies of the republics. This conventionality was acceptable in the framework of one state, but there is no justifiable basis for creating one more such case in the name of the largest people or to attempt to realize an ethnic principle of the organization of state. The ethnic Russian republic, even if it could be configured along the parameters of other national republics, would not be populated only by ethnic Russians. Russians themselves do not comprise a culturally homogeneous group. Neither do Ukrainians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis or other large peoples.

Choosing a formula for plural society is the way to a new understanding of the Russian state. This choice requires a break with many old stereotypes and myths and a realization of more conscious and consensual efforts of citizens and politicians. This choice requires more time and resources, more responsibility and compromise. But it is the only choice and, most important, has been proven correct by world experience. This choice is also a legal imperative, since the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Russian Federation and recently approved constitution were pronounced in the name of its multi-ethnic people.

We resolutely subscribe to the formula of multi-culturalist plurality for Russia because it is a way to keep the country together — and a response to the problem of possible disintegration, with all its drastic results for international politics.

Stability is important for a nation with thousands of nuclear weapons and continuing territorial tensions with its newly independent neighbors. Too much disunity in Russia (as appealing as it is to those who ‘love’ that country so much that they would prefer to see several Russias) increases the likelihood of a civil war that could easily engulf most, if not all, of the post-Soviet states, creating not only nuclear and environmental disasters but a grave threat to world peace as well (Simes, 1994:74).

What are the primary paths to building a civil society of people living in Russia? What can be the mechanisms of an improved nationality policy in the Russian Federation?

III: STRATEGIES AND MECHANISMS FOR GOVERNING A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY

The issue of governance and the functioning of state systems in ethnically complex societies is a subject of special concern for academicians and politicians in the contemporary world. Thus far, Russian social science and practice have made scant use of the results of the multitude of research and political experiences.

Research and strategy have acquired a marginal, dogmatic, improvised, political character, justified by arguments about “uniqueness”, “exceptionalness”, or “imperativeness”. The difficulty of the domestic situation is compounded by the fact that scholars, politicians, and society have no tradition or experience even in discussing these issues. The opinion has prevailed that the national question is “extremely delicate” and, implicitly, that a policy of double standards and hidden agendas is preferable. Members of the intelligentsia, including academicians and journalists, prefer short-term prognostics, which are often based on the very same observations of the general myths and emotions driven into the mass consciousness they create. The normative-legislative activity in the field of inter-ethnic relations significantly reflects, with its language of law, decrees, and resolutions, the results of local lobbying, political bargaining, and populist gestures.

Below we offer some fundamental suggestions for political strategy and mechanisms as concerns the nationalities question in the Russian Federation, and in all of the states of the former Soviet Union. These suggestions stem from the author’s opinion that **democratic co-citizenship and cultural pluralism must form the basis of a political formula for state formation**. The multi-ethnic composition of their populations can make such countries in all respects richer but may also engender difficult problems and bitter conflicts. In order to find solutions, the following are required: a professional, expert understanding of the situation, the development of innovative mechanisms of influence and conflict resolution, and the political will and proper resources for its implementation.

1. Demography and migrations as political factors

Specialists on ethnicity (for example Horowitz, 1985) categorize ethnically complex societies as “centralized” or “dispersed”. In the former, some ethnic groups are so large that concerns about their interrelationships are constantly at the centre of socio-political life. In these systems the greatest potential for conflict can be found, since dominating groups often make claims to exclusive control of state institutions. Political desires become the grounds for polarization of societies on ethnic (race, religious) principles, as they have for example in South Africa, Angola, Sri Lanka and Fiji. The “dispersed” ethnic systems include those states with a number of small ethnic groups, each of which is too weak and small in number to be able to dominate. Such systems better facilitate inter-ethnic consensus. Nigeria and India are possible examples.

The Russian Federation, as well as other successor states, does not fit neatly into either of these two categories. Rather, it is an asymmetrical system, where one ethnic group dominates unconditionally. In Russia, it is the Russians; in the other states, it is the titular nationality. Such systems predominate in several Russian republics where the titular groups form a definite majority (Chechenia, Tuva, Chuvashia), or, alternatively, where Russians form the majority (Chukotsk, Karelia, Komi, Adygeia).

According to their formal demographic characteristics, some of the new states, as well as the majority of the republics within Russia, fall into the category of “centralized” ethnic systems with two or three groups comprising the majority of the

population. These include the Kazakhs and Russians in Kazakhstan, the Latvians and Russians in Latvia, Tatars and Russians in Tatarstan, Yakuts and Russians in Yakutia, and Bashkirs, Tatars and Russians in Bashkiria. The very doctrine of the ethno-national state, however, precludes or limits claims to dominant, or even equal, status on the part of non-titular peoples. According to this doctrine, these peoples are classified as minorities or “non-indigenous populations”, although the group could comprise the majority in certain republics.

By introducing equal civil rights and universal democratic electoral norms and a process of political self-organization, the “non-native population” would be able to transform its demographic potential into political will. In other words, the answer to titular nationalism must be a striving on the part of the non-titular population to ensure both personal representation in state structures and equal civil rights. In Latvia or Kazakhstan, for example, this could mean 40 per cent or more of the seats in representative bodies, and in Estonia at least one-third of the seats. This was the main ulterior motive when Estonians deprived the Russian-speaking population of their citizenship, allowing them to elect a 100 per cent ethnically Estonian parliament. Recent national elections (5 June 1993) in Latvia brought results with 92 out of 100 members of parliament with an ethnic Latvian background.

The demographic factor is a powerful determinant in inter-ethnic relations. A narrowly nationalistic approach tends to see a threat to its own positions in a multi-ethnic electorate and uses various means to change the demographic situation to benefit one group. This includes the “ousting” of a different ethnic group from state territory, imposing limits on citizenship, introducing preferential electoral procedures, etc. Both the immediate wish of nationalistic élites to preserve a majority on their own territory, and the fear of losing that status, represent major obstacles to establishing a democratic order and are sources of inter-ethnic tension in new states. In the longer term, however, preserving the non-titular population in these countries is very important both for the development of the states themselves and for ensuring favorable relations with Russia.

It is thus in the interest of inter-ethnic co-operation to counteract the policy of forced change of the demographic situation in the states of the former Soviet Union, especially when accomplished through violence and methods violating human rights. All possible mechanisms of influence, including international ones, must be used to ensure basic legal equality for all those living in the new states, beginning with the unconditional acceptance of the so-called “zero” variant of citizenship (all who live on the territories of successor states at the moment of dissolution are eligible for citizenship).

Such a position is optimal for Ukraine, as well, whose ethnic diaspora in the former Soviet Union is large and maintains a high status, especially in the Russian Federation. In contrast to Russians in Ukraine, Ukrainians in Russia are more dispersed and much more assimilated in the Russian-speaking environment. The majority of each group has a double identity — that is, they are at once Russian and Ukrainian, both in culture and in self-perception. The two are not mutually exclusive. Only the continuing fixation on ethnic identity through one parent forces millions of former Soviet citizens to choose between two mutually exclusive alternatives (either Russian or Ukrainian; either Chuvash or Tatar). The formation of an independent Ukraine also elevates the “prestige value” of the Ukrainian nationality for those of Ukrainian or mixed Russian-Ukrainian origin living in Russia.

The needs and interests of Ukrainians in Russia (just as those of Russians in Ukraine) must become the subject of particular attention and joint efforts by both states. Both minorities constitute a most important humanitarian bond between two countries and the basis for good-neighbor relations between the two culturally and historically close peoples. Meanwhile, the current position of the Ukrainian diaspora in such countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Lithuania and Latvia, where their problems are similar to those of Russians, present a greater concern for Ukraine. Here, joint action and programmes designed, first of all, to assist the integration of their ethnic compatriots more optimally into the new polities are needed.

Ethno-demographic factors must be taken into consideration when states initiate large-scale economic and political development on their territories. The population reacts painfully and negatively not so much to its ethnic composition as to sudden changes in the usual state of affairs or to changes in interrelations between ethnic groups. For this reason, any mass displacement of citizens, labor recruitment or projects that involve large-scale migration are undesirable for multi-ethnic states, since they heighten inter-group competition for scarce resources and social goods, create additional psycho-cultural barriers, abruptly change the socio-political situation, and, in the end, provoke tension and conflict between ethnic groups.

Tension can also arise among those of a single nationality who subscribe to different socio-cultural traditions and norms or social behavior. This was the case, for example, during the displacement of South Ossetian refugees from Georgia into North Ossetia, and as a result of the movement of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan into Armenia. In the same way, the social climate may deteriorate where migrants and refugees have been resettled among a Russian population. The same holds true for people of Russian nationality whose cultural profile and behaviour developed in the regions of the Caucasus or Central Asia and who differ significantly from the Russians of the central and northern parts of Russia.

Priorities of migration policy must be to limit migration, to assist potential migrants in their social accommodation and to integrate them into the recently changed political environment of the countries where they reside. Integration does not mean assimilation and should include guarantees for preserving cultural distinctiveness and group integrity.

2. The Russian question

The second notable peculiarity of the former Soviet Union, lending its ethnic system an asymmetrical character, is the situation of the dominant ethnic group, Russians, which comprised 51 per cent of the population of the former Soviet Union, and which now comprises 82 per cent of Russia's population (see Table 5). Although Russians officially never had their "own" national system of government before the collapse of the Soviet Union — and still do not even in today's Russia — in the political and cultural arenas of the Russian state this group had, and retains, ruling status. Russians control the power structures of the federal centre and the administrative districts and regions, as well as the autonomous *okrugs* created officially for the small populations of the north and Siberia. Russian culture and especially the Russian language serve as a core culture for the whole Federation and

maintain strong positions in the republics within Russia, as well as in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

For a long time this dominant status was so obvious and unconditional that it did not require either formulation into a doctrine of “national self-determination” or the creation of an ethnic Russian state. Russians felt quite comfortable in all regions of the former Soviet Union and were characterized (along with Ukrainians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis) by their mobility. They used their advantages in the areas of education and professional skills. Russians, however, never had an advantage in the sphere of access to political power outside of Russia, and within Russia itself their socio-economic position was no higher than that of other ethnic groups. In the majority of the former union republics, it was noticeably lower than that of the titular groups.

The process of disintegration of the Soviet Union and analogous trends in today’s Russia raise questions of the interrelations between Russians and the other peoples and of the place of Russians at the centre of the entire system of inter-ethnic relations. Russians have so far been neither the target of open violence, nor participants in the most bitter and bloody ethnic conflicts. The scale of anti-Russian sentiment and action, however, has grown in regions such as the Baltics, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia and has become an element of state policy, especially in questions of citizenship, and property and political rights. The growing migration of Russians into Russia is the most obvious of their reactions to the factors forcing them out of these areas. In Russia itself, Russians’ loss of their former status has spawned various patriotic and chauvinistic movements as well as uncertainty about self-worth (Drobizheva, 1993). **The political and moral disorientation of Russians, as well as the projection of all misfortune and injustice of the once dominant Communist political system onto this group, contains the seeds of the most bitter and large-scale conflicts of all states formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union.**

I do not agree with the populist rhetoric of some politicians, nor do I share the hysteria of Russian nationalist-patriots about the “genocide of the Russian nation”, the “anti-Russian politics of the government”, etc. This is a dangerous political trend, which is unfortunately gaining power, and which is caused not only by the above-mentioned factors, but also by social problems of enormous scope. A professional diagnosis of the problems and measures for their resolution are imperative. **Russians as an ethnic community, their status and their culture, must become subjects of nationality policy in the Russian Federation.**

The demographic situation is unfolding quite unfavorably for Russians. In recent decades the more traditional centres for Russian culture (non-black soil Russia and the European north) have become zones of depopulation, environmental degradation and social decay. The growth of the Russian population was accomplished almost exclusively at the expense of southern Russia and Siberia. But this increase lagged behind the population increases in the non-Russian populations of Russia.

A great surprise awaits Russians with the next census in 1999. My prognosis suggests that in Russia, the percentage of the population declaring itself Russian will decrease sharply (possibly from 82 per cent to 70 per cent). This will not be exclusively the result of lower birth rates. Millions of those of mixed origin who live in Russia and who previously considered themselves Russian, will opt to change their

ethnicity and “join another people” under the influence of socio-political and cultural circumstances.

Since ethnic identification (in Soviet terminology, “nationality”) is not a biological category or a primordial characteristic of a person, but rather an “internal referendum” and a conscious choice, it is imperative that scholars and politicians take this into account. In today’s and tomorrow’s situation, to be Russian may become less “expedient” than being, say, Jewish, German, Greek or Korean, since the latter promise better chances for emigration to countries which have higher living standards and greater professional opportunities. Henceforth, a move to the category of the titular nationality on the territory of the Russian republics by people of mixed origin will provide unquestionable advantages. This will have a particular impact on the ethnic composition of the population in regions of long-standing cultural contact with a highly mixed population, where the Russian nationality was previously preferential (the Volga region and the Northern Caucasus, for example).

Analogous processes will occur outside of the republics, in favor of other ethnic minorities. Here the activities of national groups and “cultural brotherhoods” (*zemliachestva*) are likely to create a new cultural climate. Moscow, for example, may experience a significant increase in the number of people — who had previously chosen to identify themselves as Russians — considering themselves Tatars.

All of these processes, however undesirable they might seem to the Russian population, should not be classified by scholars or politicians as “negative”. Ethnic identification for those living in Russia is a personal matter. As a major priority of nationality policy, it is imperative **to adopt strategies to separate three different domains: state, ethnicity and economy. The *de-étatisation* of ethnicity and the de-ethnicization of state is a way to weaken the importance of exclusive ethnic loyalty in favor of multiple identity. One of the pressing and important steps in this direction must be the repeal of the state’s fixation on the nationality of citizens of the Russian Federation. Also, those living on Russian territory during the census must be allowed to choose any nationality, or multiple (dual or triple) nationality, or not to indicate any at all.** Such is world practice.

None of this excludes the development or adoption of special programmes and measures for improving the socio-economic position of regions where primarily Russians live, for supporting and developing the cultural traditions and values of the Russian people, and for guaranteeing the rights and cultural needs of Russians living in the Russian republics, where they are becoming new minorities.

In this perspective, it is possible that Russians will raise demands to have territorial autonomies within the borders of non-Russian republics, as may those minorities living in republics and administrative regions. (For example, Russians in Tuva, Tatars in the Ulianovsk or Perm *oblasts*, Koreans in the Primorsk *krai*). Such plans are analogous to past experience of national regions and village soviets in creating in *krais* and *oblasts* for ethnic minorities and small population groups. However, before returning to the practice of the 1920’s, when there were some 5000 such units, more thorough study is required. Perhaps, instead of territorializing ethnicity in the future, more productive mechanisms for organizing multi-ethnic communities may be introduced.

3. Federalism and local self-government

The most promising avenue for reducing conflicting ethnicity is, as Donald Horowitz writes, “proliferating the points of power so as to take the heat off a single focal point” (Horowitz, 1985:598). This can be accomplished through the classical instrument of decentralizing state power by implementing federalism as the fundamental guiding principle for internal state structures in complex societies.

Federalism can only be territorial, as can any other state or administrative formation. The doctrine of so-called “socialist federalism”, which is based on the ethno-national principle, is impracticable. It provokes claims by members of one nationality to exclusive control of power and resources, and it affects the non-titular population that predominates in many subjects of the Federation (within the Russian Federation, in 15 of 21 republics).

Territorial boundaries of federation subjects may be established simultaneously on the basis of regional-economic and ethno-cultural commonality. The 1959 reorganization of the Indian states along linguistic lines strengthened the federal system and decreased inter-ethnic tension in that large, multi-ethnic state (Prazauskas, 1990). In Russia, national-territorial autonomous regions for the larger of non-Russian peoples have existed for many decades and play an important role in preserving the integrity and cultural diversity of the nationalities of Russia. The very idea of national statehoods has already acquired great political and emotional legitimacy and produced a powerful practice. World experience has shown that placing limits on acquired status or privilege engenders stubborn resistance and may even encourage violence in response.

The negative consequences of this political legacy can be eliminated not through the dismantling of government, but rather by extending authority to more subjects of the Federation and by affirming full civil rights for all. **Federalism does not mean allotting ethnic groups their “own” state governments but rather bringing the institutions of power and the service of state closer and making them more sensitive to the interests of culturally diverse people who live in the same state. The dispersal of power from a unified centre and the extension of sovereignty to federal units implies giving the smaller territories their own governmental authority. These territories tend to have a more homogenous ethnic composition.**

The subjects of the Federation would preserve, in the form of the national republics, their own cultural mosaic — which must in every way be respected and supported. This also concerns the ethnically heterogeneous *krais* and *oblasts* of Russia, where the cultures of various national groups (Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Armenians, etc.) exist. **The nationality policy of the Russian Federation must have in its field of view all of the state’s territory and must reflect more than simply the interrelations between the federal centre and the republics.** Special programmes for optimizing inter-ethnic relations and resolving conflicts must be developed in each individual republic, *krai* and *oblast*.

For this very reason, **federalism must be coupled with strong local self-government.** By extending rights, resources and initiatives to local communities, a significant portion of the problems of inter-ethnic relations, as well as those of

preserving cultural traditions and characteristics, may be resolved. Ethnic conflicts most often arise from local problems, and their escalation often occurs as a result of the inability of local level power structures to solve them, primarily because of limits imposed on rights and a scarcity of resources. It was the weak and submissive nature of local authorities and the lack of responsible intervention on the part of both ethnic communities in the disputed area, which allowed outside ethnic agitators and federal/republican authorities to unleash a violent conflict between Ingush and Ossets in the fall of 1992. However, on a number of occasions local powers, the public and traditional institutions of social control have demonstrated greater effectiveness in resolving inter-ethnic problems than have the federal or regional organs of power. For the first time a step towards a strong local government was made in the Russian constitution of December 1993, which includes a formula for municipal government independent of federal structures.

4. Making multi-ethnic centres

Another strategy involves changing the character of power structures and the cultural realm to make the federal and regional centres more ethnically mixed. In order to outline this mechanism, I would like to begin with the recent example of the President of the United States, Bill Clinton. The President openly formulated a principle that his 14-member cabinet should “look like America” — that is, reflect the ethnic, race, and gender mosaic of society. From critics of this approach came the response that dignity, professionalism and representation are not mutually exclusive requirements. “The President’s cabinet can and must reflect the plural character of the American population, without sacrificing competence. This must be done in order to preserve the unity of this country”, noted an American newspaper (**USA Today**, 7 January 1993). As a result of these special efforts, 4 African-Americans, 2 Hispanic-Americans, and 3 women took cabinet posts. The same principle was used to fill the approximately 3,000 high-level government posts which usually turn over to members of the winning party.

What is the situation in Russia, where this question is much more urgent? The democratic changes of recent years have led to a practically complete change in the composition of power structures on all levels. Instead of “*nomenclatura*” calculations, an electoral struggle for the representative organs of power has ensued. One must admit that the former Union and Russian Supreme Soviets since 1989 have reflected more or less proportionally the ethnic composition of the electorate (Tishkov, 1991b). Bicameralism is an additional guarantee of representation for various nationalities. However, the problem of representation of groups that have no official status, that is those without their “own” nation state formation, remains (about 20 dispersed minority groups numbering about 9 million people; see Table 4). This also concerns the approximately 8 million out of the 18 million (39 per cent) members of the non-Russian titular nationalities living outside their “own” republics. The indigenous peoples of the north and Siberia are also under-represented.

Representation in elected and executive power institutions on the regional and local levels is a much more pressing question. A few extremes are observed: the obvious over-representation of the titular group — mainly in republics and administrative units (Chechenia, Tatarstan) — or its under-representation — mainly

in autonomous *okrugs* — as well a weak representation of the minorities (practically all republics and administrative units).

Here serious legislative changes are needed, as well as negotiation, dialogue, and concession. The democratic principle “one person, one vote” is not a universal one in societies with complex populations. It ensures no more than a basis for democracy and is concerned, first of all, with individual civil rights. A system of checks, balances and incentives aimed at ensuring collective rights and the interests of culturally diverse communities will help guarantee true democracy.

On the Federation level, the question of representation in institutions of executive power and in prestigious state services thus far remains unaddressed and unregulated. Moreover, open discussion of this factor is considered to be a departure from universal democratic principles. But rumors and speculation abound as to the ethnic composition of the Russian Federation government, and of ethnic origins of major political figures. Russian nationalist leaders have declared that Gaidar’s government was a “non-Russian government”, and that “Central Television was also non-Russian”. This issue is too important to let it be discussed in such a fashion. High-ranking members of Russia’s federal government are genuinely from multi-ethnic family backgrounds, but the point is not to reduce this question to a topic for genealogical or physiognomic research or “proportional representation”.

It is clear, however, that representation of the larger peoples, especially those in the Volga regions and the Northern Caucasus, must be ensured at the very highest level. For example, a representation on the level of deputy prime-minister might come from the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and Volga. In the same way, this approach must be considered in making appointments to the federal ministries, the diplomatic corps, the military command, etc. The creation of the Council of Heads of the Republics in October of 1992 represented an important political innovation, but it was reduced to the utilitarian goal of strengthening the President’s position. **In the Russian Federation, additional initiatives to give the centre a multi-ethnic character which reflects the ethno-cultural profile of Russia’s population must receive support from the federal government.**

Like the power structures, the informational-cultural domain formulated at the centre must also acquire a more plural character. The press, television, radio, official government information and documentation, even parliamentary debate on the federal level, must be conducted in other languages in addition to Russian. This may alleviate the alienation from the centre that some non-Russian peoples feel, especially those from rural areas. It is necessary immediately and radically to extend the volume of radio broadcasts in the languages of the peoples of Russia, to organize the release of regular programmes and the work of separate channels of the central television in the language of the larger groups, and to create government newspapers and other informational publications in the primary languages of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus, the Volga region and Siberia. **The Russian Federation must introduce a governmental programme of support and development of the languages of the peoples of Russia, as well a state language translation service.**

The question of fair ethnic representation in state structures is no less pressing for the republics and other members of the Federation. Experience shows that the usurpation of power by the representatives of one ethnic group, not to mention the legislative introduction of privilege or discrimination on ethnic grounds,

heightens inter-ethnic tension and exacerbates ethnic conflict. The limited political status of the Ingush in the former Chechen-Ingush Republic, as well as discrimination against Ingush living in Northern Ossetia, were powerful incentives for political activists of this nationality to formulate their programme of creating a separate Ingush republic. Dissatisfaction with political representation in the republican institutions of power stands behind the dis-integrationist programmes of the Balkar leaders in Kabardino-Balkaria, of the Kumyk and Nogai leaders in Dagestan, of the Cossack atamans in Karachai-Cherkessia and Adygei, etc. The diminished status of the Buriats in the Chitinsk and Irkutsk *oblasts* prompts a desire on the part of Buriat autonomous regions to unite with the Republic of Buriatia. The situation is analogous with the Kalmyks in Astrakhansk *oblast*, who have long been subject to discrimination.

In recent years, the problem of proper representation in the power structures of national republics of the so-called “non-native population” has become more acute. The political *status quo* is being affirmed and attempts are being made to lend it legal legitimacy by granting exclusive rights to the highest posts only to members of the titular nationality. Numerous attempts have been made to include in the texts of republican constitutions a requirement that presidential candidates be of the “indigenous nationality”. Other attempts have been made to provide titular groups with minority status control of the seats in local legislative bodies. This mechanism for establishing “ruling minorities” was tested by the Abkhazians in their autonomous region of Georgia and precipitated major unrest, because the ethnic Georgian majority in the republic would not tolerate political discrimination. Unfortunately, the response was given in a form of military force, and Abkhazia’s parliament was destroyed. Furthermore, representation of small groups in autonomous *okrugs* and of urban ethnic minorities presents a complex problem, especially in Siberia.

Two positions which attempt to resolve these problems exist. The first is based on the belief that the group which controls power in nation state formations must acquire a titular status. The second is guided by the seemingly universal principle of representation: “one person, one vote”. This principle discounts the possibility of ethnic quotas or preferences. Modern political experience, however, leans toward more complicated formulae for inter-ethnic co-operation. In societies divided along ethnic lines, the process of democratization requires particular constitutional creativity and special ways of configuring political institutions. In addition to elementary political realism, a readiness to create consensus and co-operation on an inter-ethnic basis, a democratizing society must include several fundamental mechanisms for solving a number of key problems.

- What is the best way to encourage ethnic minorities to participate in a system of representative democracy and simultaneously to protect them from possible exclusion from the institutions of power?
- What is the best way to protect the rights of minorities through the legal and judiciary systems?
- What type of electoral system might best help reduce or eliminate ethnic conflict and encourage interaction between ethnic groups?
- Is it possible to encourage politicians used to the “ethnocratic” character of power to distribute democratically their power and political appointments among the representatives of other ethnic groups?

It is both imperative and possible to find answers to these questions. In doing so, one must adhere to the principle that nationality is the personal matter of each citizen and that the law must not create any privileges or special rights based on ethnicity, race, or religion. A possible exception may be the smaller groups that preserve their traditional systems of economy and that live in unique ecological environments, as do, for example the indigenous populations of the north and Siberia.

Developing and introducing an electoral system that would encourage inter-ethnic coalitions and co-operation, and would elect to representative bodies those candidates who are ready and able to defend the interests of other groups, must become a fundamental goal.

5. Inter-ethnic coalitions and co-operation

The electoral system is the most powerful lever for managing inter-ethnic relations in ethnically diverse societies. Unfortunately, domestic experience in this matter is extremely poor. In the course of recent reforms, politicians and specialists have taken only the most elementary routes to democratizing the old nomenclatura system that controlled election procedure strictly from above. They thought that changing from “declarative” to “real” the system based on the Anglo-American model would be sufficient to ensure democracy in the former Soviet Union. The essence of this model rests on two principles: “one person, one vote”, and “the winner is the one who has obtained the majority of the votes”.

After the political lethargy spawned by totalitarianism, even an elementary electoral process — nomination of candidates from below, relative breadth of choice, pre-election competition, a free voting process, public control, etc. — seems to, and does in fact, represent enormous political achievement. However, as is becoming more evident, the usual Western representative system of elections works poorly in the countries of the post-Communist world. Moreover, it creates very serious problems in the area of inter-ethnic relations. The current situation, both in the former union republics and in the republics of Russia, is characterized by a demarcation of political coalitions, and of the electorate, along ethnic lines. To a certain degree this is caused by an electoral system focused on receiving absolute or relative majorities in elections and on establishing a majority of seats in representative bodies. In Russia and other new states, lawyers and legislators have not yet been able to offer more than the “winner take all” principle — even if the winner has received only one vote more than 50 per cent, and sometimes even less than 50 per cent. In countries with a multi-ethnic composition, however, it seems that a different principle to ensure agreement and co-operation, that of **distributing power to all**, is more appropriate.

The English scholar Arthur Lewis correctly noted 30 years ago that “the surest way to kill the idea of democracy in a plural society is to adopt the Anglo-American electoral system”, which operates on the principle that “whoever comes first wins” (Arthur Lewis, 1965:71). Many young states fell into the trap of Anglo-American democracy after the collapse of the world colonial system, as did some old ones, both European and not. It seems that the same mistake is being made by the emerging democracies of Russia and other successor-states, where the population

includes compact and distinct ethnic groups with troubled interrelations and complex and painful legacies of living together under the Russian and Soviet empires.

The primary weakness of the Western representative system is that minorities are destined to be under-represented, and a simple majority of the electorate, or even less than a majority, can dominate in representative bodies. This system acquires still other deficiencies when coupled with the principle of selecting from party lists — something already approved in a few new states (Georgia, Lithuania) and intended for introduction in the Russian Federation after a multi-party system is created. In such a case, a party often receives the majority voice in the power structures without having received a majority of votes, and vice-versa. Such was the case, for example, in South Africa, where for many decades bitter racial and ethnic conflicts created turmoil. Between 1948 and 1953, the Nationalist Party received a majority of seats in the upper legislative body, although less than half of the voters chose it. Meanwhile, the United Party received more than half the votes and suffered a defeat. After the 1953 elections, what was approximately the same break-down in votes yielded a similar result: 60 per cent of the seats for the Nationalist Party and only 37 per cent for the United. In 1989, the Nationalists won again, having received 56 per cent of the seats in parliament for 48 per cent of the vote (Horowitz, 1991).

The system of proportional representation, on the other hand, envisions the distribution of mandates among parties approximately according to the percentage of votes received. Under this system, elections are held in multi-mandate electoral regions. This system, too, has its limitations in solving problems of fair representation, although it doesn't permit the open usurpation of seats at the expense of the representation of minorities.

Recently, the notion of “consociational” democracy, or the democracy of consensus, was developed on the basis of the proportional model and is gaining a wider acceptance and greater use. One of its architects, Arend Lijphart, believes that a whole system of measures and mechanisms must be developed to allow even small groups seats in government. In some cases, these groups would possess the right of absolute veto on questions of cultural autonomy and temporary veto on other questions concerning their group's interests. Lijphart has also developed suggestions for the creation of institutions of executive power, including, for example, a mechanism for drawing candidates for prime minister from large groups or coalitions on a rotating basis. The inevitable inconsistencies in representative structures and in key government appointments would thus be perceived as less painful than they would be in other circumstances (Lijphart, 1977).

An analysis of the Russian experience, especially the results of the 1990 elections, reveals that the existing electoral system did not solve the problems of ethnic representation, and in a number of ways served to exacerbate them. Among them, we note the following:

1. On the level of the federal Supreme Soviet, the Council of Nationalities included representatives of ethnic territories where titular groups were quite often from the minority, but it was extremely difficult for these minorities to bring their representatives to the federal parliament. Representation of the dispersely settled peoples and the small groups of the north and Siberia has in no way been guaranteed.

2. In the Supreme Soviets of the republics, *oblasts*, and *krais*, a number of cases of serious disproportions in favor of one ethnic group have arisen. The absence

of bicameralism on regional levels complicates the problem, for no mechanism exists to ensure a more or less accurate reflection of a population's ethnic mosaic.

3. In the autonomous *okrugs*, small peoples, in whose name these areas were formed, do not have a guaranteed right to execute power — even on questions that directly concern the basic rights or needs of the group, such as issues of the environment and natural resources.

4. The existing system has encouraged representatives of the dominating or numerically largest nationality to solidify its dominant status, specifically on the basis of its mono-ethnic electorate. In cases with ethnic groups of approximately equal numbers, the system has encouraged the use of any means necessary, including gerrymandering, to achieve an even insignificant majority and, on this basis, to realize its will.

5. In the absence of well-organized parties and party election lists, the ethnic affiliation of each separate candidate has acquired extreme significance, pushing voters often to choose not a programme, but a politician belonging to their own ethnic group.

6. Finally, the most important contradiction in many republics and autonomous *okrugs* is that in spite of a declared nation state government, its titular group has not automatically been granted the highest political appointments or control of representative bodies. With no guarantee of decisive influence, the groups have in some cases used any means to establish such influence by locking up a majority of seats and developing the exclusive right to the highest government appointments. This has led to the so-called “positive discrimination” of the majority.

In the Russian Federation an electoral system must be developed to achieve two goals. First, representation of ethnic groups must be ensured in the narrow sense — that is, by holding seats in legislative bodies. Second, representation in the wider sense must be guaranteed by encouraging politicians of various orientations and party affiliations to consider the interests of all ethnic groups and to base their strategies on multi-ethnic programmes. The second goal is no less important or effective than the first, which may superficially seem central. It is important to keep in mind that ensuring the representation by mandate of a certain minority group does not necessarily mean that this minority group's interests are considered in the political process, nor does it mean that the group achieves real influence or access to co-operative decision-making. Sometimes it even leads to the opposite result: either the representative himself/herself is incapable or just stops being a voice and a fighter for the group's interests, or his/her real influence is ephemeral and presence in the representative body is no more than symbolic. That is the situation which exists in the resource-rich autonomous *okrugs* of Russia where tiny titular minorities (Chukchi, Khanti, Mangi, Dolgan, Nenet, etc.) enjoy high prestige but only symbolic power. On the other hand, legal and other measures designed both to consider the demands and interests of one or another group and to ensure them a chance at decision-making influence, don't always lead to automatic proportional representation. Number of seats in parliament and councils and real influence are not the same things.

If the political goal is to guarantee inter-ethnic consensus and to resolve discord and conflict, then the second of the above-mentioned goals is even more important than the first. **The electoral system in multi-ethnic Russia must prevent**

the representatives of one group from usurping power on any level at the expense of others. It must also keep politicians dependent on the votes of the electorate of other ethnic groups and encourage joint obligations to ensure the interests of various groups and to achieve inter-ethnic consensus.

In some multi-ethnic states, political parties built on race or ethnic grounds may not legally be registered. This mechanism operates poorly, however, since parties may always recruit token members of a different ethnic group to avoid this prohibition. A more successful practice has been developed in Nigeria, Malaysia, and certain other countries (Montville, 1990; Horowitz, 1991).

A reform of the electoral system that is aimed at a poly-ethnic electorate and that renders impossible election in the name of one single community is the best option for the Russian Federation. Suppose that to be elected president of Russia, a simple majority of votes would be insufficient; a majority of votes from a majority of republics would also be necessary. This would necessarily require that candidates focus on the interests of various ethnic groups, not only on those of the majority of Russia's population. The highest officials of multi-ethnic administrative regions, as well as those of the republics, would be required to adhere to this principle. A mechanism for transferring votes in which a given party's candidate grants his/her votes to another party's candidate whose platform is close to the interests of his/her representative electorate, would allow elections to be decided in favor of the candidate most able and ready to solve the problems of those minorities who, because of their small numbers, are unable to elect their own candidate. Finally, all representative bodies on the federal, republic, *oblast* and *okrug* levels, would have to be bi-cameral. Representatives to the upper chamber of the Federation and Republican Soviet might be chosen on a quota basis, allowing the same ethnic over-representation without being strictly related to the population's composition. These upper chambers should consider the right to address, as a priority, the questions that directly concern the interests of ethnic minorities.

In a poly-ethnic society, associations, unions and collectives built on territorial, economic, and professional interests must be encouraged in every way. These coalitions must cross ethnic lines, hamper the formation of mono-ethnic coalitions, and channel rivalry by intra-ethnic parameters.

In societies polarized by ethnic factors, it is necessary to choose between the democracy of the majority and the democracy of union and accord. In such societies the simple art of state government from above is not enough to alleviate conflict. What is needed is a system of encouraging motives and incentives that would create a union of voices among voters and make inter-ethnic political accord more expedient than ethnic solidarity.

6. Reducing ethnic disparity

Disharmony, competition, and domination are unavoidable elements of human societies. Social disparity and contradiction motivate societal dynamics and development. Equality can thus be assimilated to social entropy and death to society. The task of the state is therefore to ensure not full equality, but equal rights, as well as

the use of proper mechanisms to reduce the striking degree of inequality, to protect any one group from diminished status, and not to allow discrimination.

In a multi-ethnic society, there is always a tendency to use group affiliation, including ethnic affiliation, to create social and political preferences at the expense of those of another nationality. When social stratification, ethno-political inequality and the distribution of power occur only along ethnic lines, inter-ethnic tension arises and conflict is almost unavoidable. As Nash has observed, “ethnicity is a reservoir for unrest in a world where power, prosperity and rank are distributed in an unequal and illegal way between and within nations” (1989:127).

In the former Soviet Union, the socio-economic positions of nationalities varied widely, especially for reasons of initial historical conditions and differences in the level of development of regions and territories where different peoples live together. (Arutiunian and Bromley, 1986) Differences in living conditions between urban and rural populations also affect inter-ethnic relations, since the ethnic compositions of cities and villages differ even on the republic, *krai*, *oblast*, and *okrug* levels.

In the Russian Federation, cities are generally the focal point for the ethnically Russian population. This includes the ethno-territorial formations, where the majority of the titular nationalities lives in rural locales (Guboglo, 1992). At the same time, a large stratum of creative and scientific intelligentsia, substantially from the local ethnic cadres, has emerged in recent decades in the republican capitals and other cities of the Russian republics. A stratum of native student youth has also developed. The non-titular population has continued to dominate the technical intelligentsia in industry. Ethnic parameters for socio-professional stratification of society are to a certain degree inescapable, although they are quite amenable to change and lend themselves to being influenced. **The task of politicians is to avoid the strict channeling of ethnicity along social lines, to prevent the emergence of obvious disproportions in social conditions that directly affect certain groups, and to guarantee the possibility of social mobility for all citizens, regardless of nationality.**

Difficult problems and potential conflicts have arisen in this sphere of inter-ethnic relations as a result of recent market reforms and the privatization of state property. In the long term, however, these processes will yield positive results. First, in obtaining property, citizens gain both a greater degree of responsibility and a good of life-long value — something worth more than any group sacrifice for the sake of transparently nationalistic ideas. They acquire additional entrepreneurial possibilities — something especially important in regions where the population is underemployed and where conflicts most often arise. Second, the market economy creates business that is by nature cosmopolitan and that, to be effective, must not be affected by ethnic or other boundaries. Third, active and self-interested economic activity presupposes the mobilization of the labor and spiritual values of the peoples in order to facilitate successful competition. It is no accident that growing Russian commerce actively motivates traditional arts and crafts production.

Finally, when market reforms are successful and the economy is improved, more favorable conditions ensuring a social basis for peoples’ subsistence are created. In addition, in a prosperous economy, political and legal guarantees and better conditions for the development of culture are also established. Nonetheless, radical

economic changes, especially in the short term, exert some negative influences in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. Of these, we shall note the following.

Under weak state control and insufficient civil culture, aggressive entrepreneurialism can lead to over-exploitation of natural resources, as did the centralized state economy. This can cause harm to the environment of certain ethnic groups, especially those who retain traditional means of economic subsistence. In recent years, because of the weakened control over the sale of alcohol and of deteriorating state medical inspections, as well as environmental devastations brought by joint ventures in forest and fishing industries, the indigenous peoples of the far east and the north have suffered greater losses than ever before.

The division of state property and resources in the course of privatization exacerbates competitive relations among groups, leading to the consolidation of clan and narrow ethnic groupings which use blood solidarity to entirely pragmatic ends.

The nature of the distribution of political power in the republics, *krais* and *oblasts*, limited land resources and privatization funds in a host of regions leads to changes in the economic interests of certain groups at the expense of the rights of the rest of the population. This particularly concerns the region of the Northern Caucasus. The violent conflict between the Ossets and the Ingush in the republic of North Ossetia had as one of its main causes a competitive desire to own land plots in agricultural zones such as Prigorodni.

Several promising mechanisms do exist, however, for the reduction of inequality. First, committees for public control of land reform and privatization can be created on a multi-ethnic basis on the republic, regional and local levels. Among their tasks must be observation and the development of recommendations for resolving the difficult questions and conflicts which emerge in the course of reform. Specifically on the communal level, the distribution of land, resources, and property is sometimes openly fixed according to the ethnic structure of the population and the interests of those immediately involved in the process. This type of discrimination must be eliminated in order not to lay the grounds for future conflicts or for possible “redistributions” by violent means.

Second, in a series of republics and autonomous *okrugs* the “usurpation” of economic resources and means of economic activity for the benefit of the non-titular population can be observed, with negative effects on the livelihoods of the indigenous people of a given territory. This especially concerns the regions of the Volga, Siberia, and the North. In the processes of privatization and selling stocks of industrial enterprises, it is imperative to ensure the meaningful participation of members of the titular nationality and other groups among property owners and shareholders, in addition to the collectives of the enterprises themselves, the staffs of which generally consist of the so-called “Russian-speaking population”. The guarantee of more proportional representation must be based on an individual or community principle.

Third, the ethnic factor must be considered during the development and realization of particular and urgent measures of economic support. Several regions where various nationalities live densely together have negative ecological, demographic, and socio-cultural characteristics. This concerns a number of urban industrial centres. Regions where Russians, Yakuts, Kalmyks, Bashkirs and others primarily live are among such unfavorable, dissatisfaction-provoking areas.

Fourth, a process to determine which territories and surrounding regions primarily, and which exclusively, belong to the small populations of the north must be conducted under the control of the State Committee on Nationalities and The State Committee on the North of Russia, with the participation of local authorities and native associations. These territories must not become the property of local authorities, but be placed under the control or property of territorial communities and family groups.

The communities themselves must determine their membership and the right to participate in the use of land and resources, including the right to income from the lease of industries. The fundamental criterion must not be so much the passport's fixation on nationality as the traditional way of life.

Reindeer breeding, hunting, and other traditional occupations must receive particular support during the course of reform. However, **a genuine rebirth of the small populations is possible only through their energetic integration into modern forms of economy. This may include the development of independent community entrepreneurialism and resource development projects.**

7. National-cultural autonomy

Extra-territorial national-cultural autonomy, both on the collective and individual levels, is the most promising and effective way to guarantee the rights and interests of all nationalities living in one state. Practically all of the world's multi-ethnic states use this institution either fundamentally (in the case of the absence of territorial autonomy) or in conjunction with a system of federal organization and mechanisms for the distribution of power in the framework of consociational democracy. The policy of national-cultural autonomy is practiced on an especially wide scale in the developed democracies of the West, in states which arose because of immigration or resettlement, or where there are ethno-cultural minorities but where the state-administrative organization has a definitely territorial character. National-cultural autonomy is one of the most important accomplishments of world democratic powers. It is the result of a long political struggle which began with the European social democrats (including Marxists) during the second half of the nineteenth century. The principles of national-cultural autonomy lie at the heart of the system of international legal documents that guarantee protection of the rights of citizens, peoples and minorities.

Pre-revolutionary Russia and the early years of the Soviet state witnessed some experience in guaranteeing national-cultural rights on an extra-territorial basis. A wide network of institutions of national and cultural education, periodicals, book-printing and religious organizations existed. Beginning in 1920, the representation of Russia's nationalities in the organs of power, including the highest executive body — the People's Commission on Nationalities — began to develop on an extra-territorial basis (Nenarokov, 1991). However Bolshevism, and Lenin personally, were skeptical about national-cultural autonomy, the latter calling it a "utopian, opportunistic, nationalistic" theory, directly opposed to the doctrine of "nation state systems". In order to strengthen totalitarianism, even weak manifestations of cultural autonomy in the Soviet Union were eliminated.

What are the possible ways to strengthen cultural autonomy in the Russian Federation (along with the existing forms of ethnic federalism), and what are its goals, advantages, and achievable results? If we operate on the principle that primarily due to the ethno-demographic situation (less than half of non-Russian peoples live in nation state formations, and more than half of the populations of the republics and *okrugs* consist of non-titular people) **nationality policy must be conducted in all territories of the country, and all peoples and separate groups must benefit from it.** National-cultural autonomy, so conceived, allows us to realize this principle and to overcome limited possibilities for nation state organization.

Second, the institution of national-cultural autonomy aims at the very essence of ethnic problems — that is, satisfying cultural and spiritual demands of different peoples, preserving and developing important components of ethnic identity, such as tradition, way of life, language, education, art, and self-perception. Realizing this policy and programme will reach and embrace culturally different groups, regardless of their numbers and the pattern of their settlements, down to the very smallest community and individual citizen.

Finally, national-cultural autonomy concerns to a small degree the sphere of inter-group rivalry, as well as problems of territorial borders and the distribution of power. Realizing this policy on the level of state government is much easier, since it is based on the grassroots principle, competition and support of low-level initiatives. It directly addresses the issues without the interference of spendthrift bureaucratic mechanisms. The policy results in mutual enrichment and inter-group conciliation and should benefit all groups.

However, the policy of national-cultural autonomy in the Russian Federation may, in the course of its realization, face some serious difficulties and counter-tendencies. Among them we note the following:

First is the influence of long-standing propaganda against national-cultural autonomy, ostensibly as means of replacing the “solution to the national question” with more palatable, less significant means, which hide the same old imperialistic and chauvinistic policy towards non-Russian nationalities. Enthusiasts and leaders of ethno-national state systems are either against national-cultural autonomy or are quite cautious about it, seeing in it a dangerous alternative to their programmes and the possible dismantling of nation state systems, and the possible loss of personal status and achieved political positions.

The second difficulty is that ethnic Russians are not morally or psychologically prepared to take deep and generous measures in support of the cultural interests of other peoples on the federal or regional level. Growing propaganda and political campaigns of national-patriots make Russians even less willing to take these steps. In the same way, in republics where the titular nationality maintains a strong position, support for other groups is far from a priority.

Third, guaranteeing national-cultural interests in a multi-ethnic state requires material resources and the financing of areas that have never been considered a priority. Declarations, the enactment of law and political struggles cost far less than do the construction of schools, training of teachers, publication of texts, language translations, etc. This is, of course, if one doesn't consider the cost to peoples that have suffered material destruction and been the victims of conflicts caused by

irresponsible declarations and political actions. Socio-economic crisis hampers the implementation of policies of national-cultural autonomy.

Finally, there is a lack of experience and no legislative basis for implementing appropriate programmes. Instead, bureaucratic paternalism and a centralizing syndrome remain on various levels. In this light, autonomy for groups and communities, even in the cultural sphere, is a foreign concept.

And yet, in spite of such serious limitations, national-cultural autonomy is too important a mechanism for implementing nationality policy, ensuring inter-ethnic consensus, and on the whole developing the multi-ethnic people of Russia, to be ignored. Moreover, it must include deeper and more varied policies not considered a part of narrowly understood cultural programmes. One of its main goals must be the support and development of various forms of socio-political organization and activity to guarantee political influence and political representation on an extra-territorial basis.

In this sense, a legislative strengthening of the bases for national-cultural autonomy is imperative. The bases include the status of public and cultural associations, brotherhoods, cultural societies, and institutions for governing local communities; and their rights to participate in elections, to be represented in the organs of power, to legislative initiative, and to economic and cultural and activities abroad.

In the entire territory of the Russian Federation, on the federal, republic, regional and local levels, programmes for the preservation and development of ethnic traditions and culture, for the creation of cultural centres, institutions in the educational system, the development of press, radio, and television in local languages, must be implemented. Ethnic communities must have the right to own property, to conduct culturally oriented business activities, to have various forms of public self-government, to organize the educational process on every level, to have their own information, printing and cultural institutions, social funds, and communication with related ethnic groups within Russia and abroad. National-cultural autonomy, not instead of ethno-territorial formation, but along with it, is the most important form of national self-determination for the peoples of the Russian Federation.

Table 1: Republics and autonomous regions in the Russian Federation

Republic/Region	Location	Language group and population
Adygei Republic	Northern Caucasus, near Krasnoyarsk (Maykop)	North Caucasian. 432,046 (Adygei 22%, Russians 68%)
Bashkir Republic	Upper Volga, north of Kazakhstan (Ufa)	Turkic. 3,943,113 (Bashkirs 22%, Tatars 28%, Russians 40%)
Buriat Republic	Siberia, West of Lake Baikal (Ulan Ude)	Mongolian. 1,038,252 (Buriats 24%, Russians 70%)
Chuvash Republic	Central Russia, near Mari, Tatars, etc. (Cherbokarsi)	Turkic. 1,338,023 (Chuvash 68%, Russians 27%)
Chechen-Ingushetia Republic (before separation)	Northern Caucasus, border with Georgia (Grozny)	North Caucasian. 1,270,429 (Chechens 58%, Ingush 13%, Russians 23%)
Dagestan Republic	Northern Caucasus, border with Georgia (Makhachkala)	Plethora of Turkic groups. 1,802,188 (Russians 9%)
Gorno-Altai Republic	Siberia, border with Mongolia (Gorno-Altai)sk)	Turkic. 190,831 (Altai 31%, Russians 60%)
Kalmyk Republic	Volga Basin, NE shore of Caspian (Elista)	Mongolian. 322,579 (Kalmyks 45%, Russians 38%)
Karachai-Cherkes Republic	Northern Caucasus, border with Georgia (Cherkessk)	Abkhazian-Adygei. 414,970 (Karachai 31%, Cherkes 9%, Russians 42%)
Agin-Buriat Autonomous Okrug	Siberia, Chita Oblast (Aginskoye)	Mongolian. 77,188 (Buriats 55%, Russians 41%)
Kabardino-Balkar Republic	Northern Caucasus, border with Georgia (Nal'chik)	North Caucasus and Turkic. 753,531 (Kabardins 48%, Balkars 9%, Russians 32%)
Karelian Republic	Border with Finland (Petrozavodsk)	Finnish. 790,150 (Karelians 10%, Russians 74%)
Khakass Republic	Siberia, near Krasnoyarsk and Tuva (Abakan)	Turkic. 566,861 (Khakas 11%, Russians 79%)
Komi Republic	Northern Russia, Urals (Syktyvkar)	Finnish. 1,250,847 (Komis 23%, Russians 58%)
Mari Republic	Upper Volga (Yoshkar-Ola)	Finnish. 749,332 (Mari 43%, Russians 47%)
Mordovian Republic	Upper Volga, south of Nizhny Novgorod (Saransk)	Finnish. 963,504 (Mordovinians 33%, Russians 61%)
North Ossetian Republic	Northern Caucasus, border with Georgia (Vladikavkaz)	Iranian. 632,428 (Ossetians 53%, Russians 30%)
Tatar Republic	Upper Volga (Kazan)	Turkic. 3,641,742 (Tatars 48%, Russians 43%)

Table 1 (continued)

Tuva Republic	Border with Mongolia (Kyzyl)	Turkic. 308,557 (Tuvins 64%, Russians 32%)
Udmurt Republic	Central Russia, East of Urals (Izhevsk)	Finnish. 1,605,663 (Udmurts 31%, Russians 59%)
Yakut Republic	Eastern Siberia (Yakutsk)	Turkic. 1,094,065 (Yakuts 33%, Russians 50%)
Jewish Autonomous Oblast	Russian Far East (Birobidzhan)	214,085 (Jews 0.4%, Russians 83%)
Chukchi Autonomous Okrug	North East Siberia, on Bering Sea (Anadyr')	Chukot-Kamchatka. 163,934 (Chukchi 7%, Russians 66%)
Evenk Autonomous Okrug	Siberia, north of Krasnoyarsk	Tungus-Man'chzhur. 24,769 (Evenki 14%, Russians 67%)
Khanti-Mansi Autonomous Okrug	Tyumen Region, west of Urals (Khanti-Mansiisk)	Ugor/Uralic. 1,282,396 (Khanti 0.9%, Mansi 0.5%, Russians 66%)
Komi-Permyaki Autonomous Okrug	Siberia, Perm Region (Kudymkar)	Finnish. 158,526 (Komi-Permyaki 60%, Russians 36%)
Koryak Autonomous Okrug	Kamchatka Peninsula (Palana)	Chukot-Kamchatka. 39,940 (Koryaks 16%, Russians 62%)
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	Barents Sea coast, Archangel region (Kar'yan-Mar)	Ugor/Uralic. 53,912 (Nenets 12%, Russians 66%)
Taymyr (Dolgan-Nenets) Autonomous Okrug	Kara Sea coast, Krasnoyarsk region (Dudinka)	Uralic. 55,803 (Dolgans 9%, Nenets 4%, Russians 67%)
Ust'-Ordyn Buriat Autonomous Okrug	Lake Baikal, Irkutsk (Ust'-Ordynskii)	Mongolian. 135,870 (Buryats 36%, Russians 57%)
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	Tyumen region, Yamal Peninsula (Salekhard)	Ugor/Uralic. 494,8444 (Nenets 4%, Russians 59%)

Source: **Fact Sheet on Ethnic and Regional Conflict in the Russian Federation**, Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Harvard University, September 1992

Table 2: Nationalities of Russia with territorial autonomy (1989)

	Population of given RSFSR		Living in autonomous regions
	Total	Per Cent	
Total population of Russia	147,021,869	100	
1. Russians	119,865,946	81.53	
– outside autonomous regions	108,063,409	73.50	
– within autonomous regions	11,802,537	8.03	
2. Tatars	5,522,096	3.76	1,765,404
3. Chuvash	1,773,645	1.21	906,922
4. Bashkir	1,345,273	0.92	863,808
5. Mordvinian	1,072,939	0.73	313,420
6. Chechen	898,999	0.61	734,501
7. Udmurt	714,833	0.49	496,522
8. Mari	643,698	0.44	324,349
9. Avar	544,016	0.37	496,077
10. Jew	536,848	0.37	8,887
11. Buriat	417,425	0.28	341,185
12. Ossetian	402,275	0.27	334,876
13. Kabardin	386,055	0.26	363,492
14. Yakut	380,242	0.26	365,236
15. Dargin	353,348	0.24	280,431
16. Komi	336,309	0.23	291,542
17. Kумык	277,163	0.19	231,805
18. Lezin	257,270	0.17	24,370
19. Ingush	215,068	0.15	163,762
20. Tuvин	206,160	0.14	198,448
21. Kalmyk	165,821	0.11	146,316
22. Karachai	150,332	0.10	129,449
23. Komi-permiak	147,269	0.10	95,215
24. Karelian	124,921	0.085	7,928
25. Adygei	122,908	0.084	95,439
26. Laks	106,245	0.072	91,682
27. Tabasaran	93,587	0.064	78,196
28. Balkar	78,341	0.053	70,793
29. Khakass	78,500	0.053	62,859
30. Nogai	73,703	0.050	28,294
31. Altai	69,409	0.047	59,130
32. Cherkess	50,764	0.035	40,241
33. Nenets	34,190	0.023	29,786
34. Evenki	29,901	0.020	3,480
35. Khanty	22,283	0.015	11,892
36. Rutul	19,503	0.013	14,955
37. Agul	17,728	0.012	13,791
38. Chukchi	15,107	0.010	11,914
39. Koriak	8,942	0.0061	6,572
40. Mansi	8,279	0.0056	6,562
41. Dolgan	6,584	0.0045	4,939
42. Tsakhur	6,492	0.0044	5,194
Populations which have autonomous regions	17,714,471 (12.05%)	12.05	10,318,511 (7.02%)

Source: USSR Population Census, January 1989

Table 3: Nationalities of Russia and their territory of residence (1989)

	Total population in the USSR (thousands)	Per cent of total living		
		in own autonomous region	outside autonomous regions	
			within Russia	outside Russia
Avar	601	82.5	8.0	9.5
Agul	19	73.6	21.0	5.4
Dargin	365	76.8	9.9	3.3
Kumyk	282	82.2	6.1	1.7
Laks	118	77.6	12.4	10.0
Lezgin	466	43.9	11.3	44.8
Nogai	75	37.6	60.4	2.0
Rutul	20	73.4	12.3	4.3
Tabasaran	98	80.2	17.8	4.0
Tsakhur	20	26.0	6.5	67.5
Peoples of Dagestan	2,064	70.0	14.7	15.3
Balkar	85	83.2	8.8	8.0
Bashkir	1,449	59.6	33.2	7.2
Buriat	421	81.0	18.1	0.9
Ingush	237	69.0	21.6	9.4
Kabardin	391	93.0	5.8	1.2
Kalmyk	174	84.2	11.2	4.6
Karelian	131	60.3	35.1	4.6
Komi	345	84.6	13.0	2.4
Mari	671	48.3	47.7	4.0
Mordvinian	1,154	27.2	65.8	7.0
Ossetian	598	56.0	11.3	32.7
Tatar	6,649	26.6	56.5	16.9
Tuvin	207	96.0	3.8	0.2
Udmurt	747	66.5	29.2	4.3
Chechen	957	76.8	17.2	6.0
Chuvash	1,842	49.2	47.1	3.3
Yakut	382	95.6	4.0	0.4
Total in autonomous republics	18,503	49.2	39.9	10.9
Adygei	125	76.5	12.0	1.5
Altai	71	83.5	14.6	1.9
Jew	1,378	0.6	38.3	61.1
Karachai	156	83.0	13.4	3.6
Khakass	80	78.3	19.4	2.3
Cherkess	52	76.9	20.0	3.1
Total in autonomous oblasts	1,863	21.3	32.9	45.8
Dolganin	6.9	71.2	23.6	5.2
Komi-permiak	152	62.7	34.1	3.2
Koriak	9.2	71.1	25.7	3.2
Mansi	8.5	77.6	20.1	2.3
Nenets	35	85.9	12.7	1.4
Khanty	23	52.8	46.1	1.1
Chukchi	15	78.5	21.0	0.5
Evenki	30	11.5	87.6	0.9
Total in autonomous okrugs (excluding Buriats)	279	61.1	36.5	2.4
Total in autonomous regions	17,759	47.3	38.7	14.0

Source: USSR Population Census, January 1989

**Table 4: Nationalities of Russia without territorial autonomy
in the Russian Federation (1989)**

Peoples with their own nation state formations in the former USSR and in Russia	
1. Ukrainians	4,362,872
2. Belorussians	1,206,222
3. Khazakhs	635,865
4. Armenians	532,390
5. Azerbaijanis	335,889
6. Moldovans	172,671
7. Georgians	130,688
8. Uzbeks	126,899
9. Lithuanians	70,427
10. Latvians	46,829
11. Estonians	46,390
12. Kirgizians	41,734
13. Turkmenians	39,739
14. Tadjiks	38,208
15. Abkhazians	7,239
16. Karakalpaks	6,155
Total 5.31%	7,800,217
Peoples with a state outside the USSR	
1. Germans	842,295
2. Koreans	107,051
3. Poles	94,594
4. Greeks	91,699
5. Finns	47,102
6. Bulgarians	32,785
7. Turks	9,890
8. Romanians	5,996
9. Hungarians	5,742
10. Chinese	5,197
11. Czechs	4,375
12. Arabs	2,704
13. Persians	2,572
14. Vietnamese	2,142
15. Khalka-Mongols	2,117
16. Other	10,805
Total 0.86%	1,276,066

Table 4 (continued)

Peoples of Russia without territorial autonomy	
1. Abazin	32,983
2. Evenki	17,055
3. Shorts	15,745
4. Veps	12,142
5. Nanai	11,883
6. Nivkhi	4,631
7. Selkup	3,564
8. Ulchi	3,173
9. Itelmen	2,429
10. Udegei	1,902
11. Eskimo	1,704
12. Chuvan	1,384
13. Nganasan	1,262
14. Yukagir	1,112
15. Kets	1,084
16. Orochi	883
17. Tofalar	722
18. Aleutian	644
19. Negidal	587
20. Izhor	449
21. Ents	198
22. Orok	179
Total 0.79%	115,715
Populations whose majority resides outside the former USSR	
1. Gypsy	152,939
2. Assyrian	9,622
3. Kurd	4,724
4. Uigur	2,577
5. Saami*	1,835
6. Dungans	635
7. Beludzh	297
8. Talysh	202
Total 0.12%	172,831
Populations whose majority resides in other republics of the former USSR	
1. Crimean Tatars	21,275
2. Tat	19,420
3. Jew-mountain	11,282
4. Gagauz	10,051
5. Jew-Sephardic	1,407
6. Jew-Georgian	1,172
7. Udin	1,102
8. Karaim	680
9. Crimchak	338
10. Livs	64
Total 0.045%	66,791
Other nationalities	3,319
Per cent of population of Russia	0.002%
No nationality indicated	15,513
Per cent of population of Russia	0.011%

Source: USSR Population Census, January 1989

Table 5: Russians in the Russian Federation (1989)
(Total: 119,866,000)

Republic or Autonomous oblast	Total population	Russians	Per Cent
Bashkiria	3,943,113	1,548,291	38
Buriatia	1,038,252	726,165	70
Dagestan	1,802,188	165,940	9
Kabardino-Balkaria	753,531	240,750	32
Kalmykia	322,579	121,531	38
Karelia	790,150	581,571	73
Komi	1,250,847	721,780	58
Mari	749,332	355,973	47
Mordovia	963,504	586,147	60
Nothern Ossetia	632,428	189,159	29
Tatarstan	3,641,742	1,575,361	42
Tuva	308,557	98,831	30
Udmurtia	1,605,663	945,216	56
Checheno-Ingushetia	1,270,429	293,771	23
Chuvashia	1,338,023	357,120	26
Yakutia	1,094,065	550,263	50
Adygei	432,046	293,640	67
Gorno-Altai	190,831	115,188	63
Jewish	214,085	178,087	80
Karachai-Cherkess	414,970	175,931	41
Khakass	566,861	450,430	80
Autonomous okrug			
Agin-Buriat	77,188	31,473	40
Komi-Permiak	158,526	57,272	36
Koriak	39,940	24,773	64
Nenets	53,912	35,489	65
Taimyr	55,803	37,438	67
Ust-Ordyn-Buriat	135,870	76,827	56
Khant-Mansi	1,282,396	850,297	66
Chukot	163,934	108,297	63
Evenki	24,769	16,718	68
Yamalo-Nenets	494,844	292,808	59
Krai			
Altai	2,822,092	2,469,669	86
Krasnodar	5,052,922	4,300,451	85
Krasnoyarsk	3,605,454	3,110,972	86
Primorsk	2,256,072	1,960,554	87
Stavropol	2,825,349	2,199,999	77
Khabarovsk	1,811,828	1,558,958	86
Moscow	8,875,579	7,963,246	90
Leningrad	4,990,749	4,448,884	89

Note: In *oblasts*, Russians on average comprise 85% of the population.

Source: **USSR Population Census**, January 1989

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